

The Goldbergers and Their Factory

In 1784, a small blue-dyeing manufactory, the predecessor of the Goldberger factory, was founded by Ferenc Goldberg (1755–1834) in what is now the Textile Museum in Óbuda.

The Goldbergers were staunch supporters of the 1848 War of Independence and contributed by supplying uniforms for the army. For this, the Austrian General Julius Jacob von Haynau made them pay substantial reparations, and requisitioned the products of the Óbuda factory.

Later, as a tribute to the factory's outstanding success, Emperor Franz Josef paid it a visit while staying in Pest-Buda. The family was ennobled in 1867 and became known as the Buday-Goldbergers.

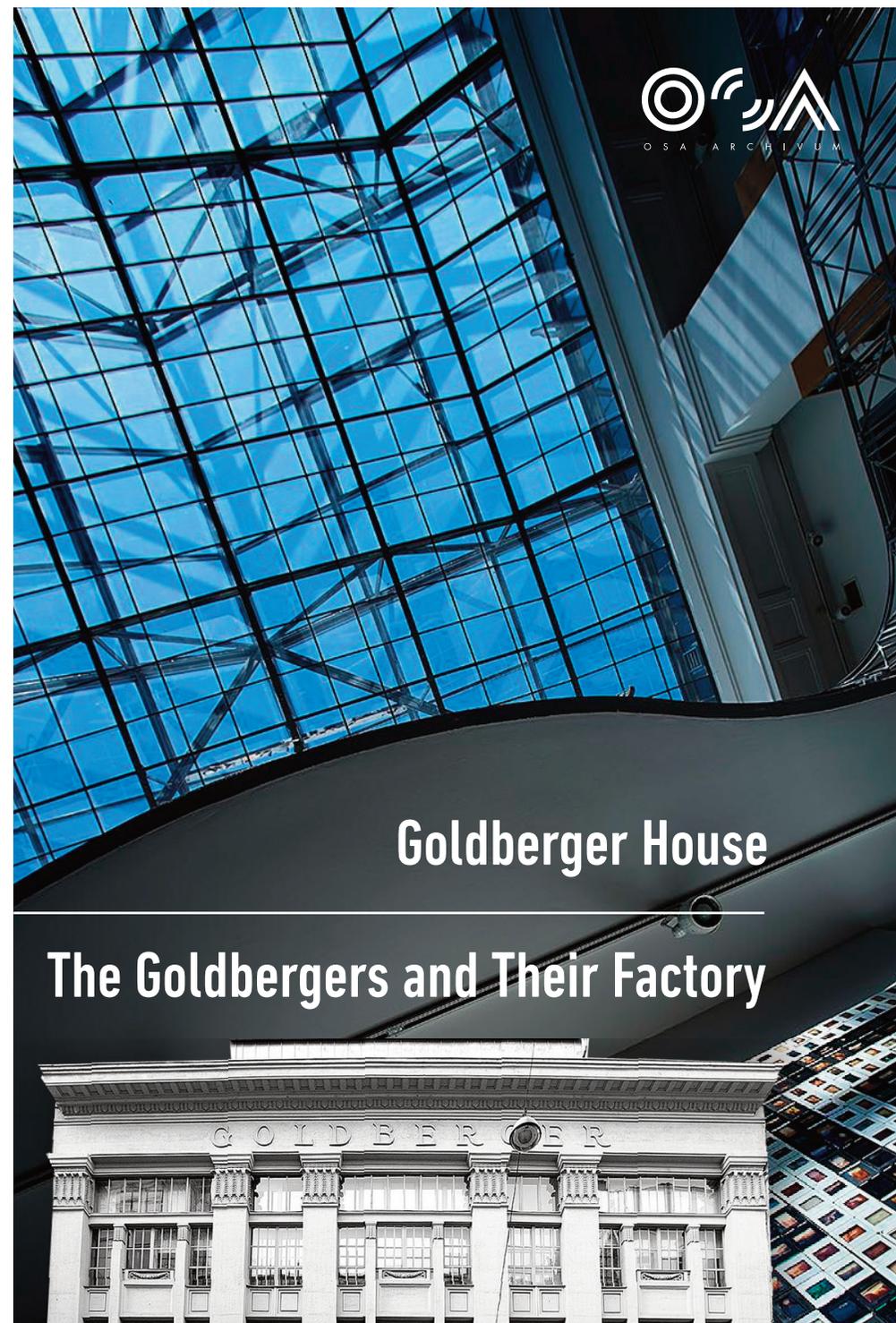
One of the most successful managers of the company was Bertold Goldberger (1849–1913), who modernized the factory, purchasing up-to-date machinery and embarking on the production of new materials. In 1905, he founded Sámuel Goldberger and Sons Ltd. Bertold Goldberger's second son, Leó Goldberger, was born on May 2, 1878. He became executive director in 1905, general manager in 1908 and, after the death of his father in 1913, first vice-president director and later managing director of the factory.

The weaving factory was established in Kelenföld in 1923, and in 1927 a spinning factory was added. In the 1920s, the Goldbergers began producing Bemberg Parisette rayon, which became so popular that counterfeit versions soon appeared on the market. Another novelty introduced by the Goldbergers was the production of shrink-proof materials, following an American patent. The Great Depression of the 1930s passed the factory by; indeed, its most successful years were 1936 and 1937, when exports totaled more than two million American dollars.

After the Germans invaded in March 1944, Dr. Leó Buday-Goldberger was one of their first victims. He was deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria, where he died on May 5, 1945, the day that the camp was liberated. On March 26, 1948, the Goldberger Factory was nationalized; the Goldberger National Company's central offices on Arany János Street were closed down on December 31, 1950.



The text above is based on the research done by Mate Millisits in 2003/2004 with the support of OSA.



Goldberger House

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Today, the Goldberger House at 32 Arany János Street houses the Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives at Central European University (Blinken OSA), a research and cultural institute which houses one of the most important archives on post-World War II history.

By the 1820s and 1830s, what is now Arany János Street was lined with two-storey, neo-classical buildings. One of these, built probably around the 1830s, was the predecessor of the Goldberger House. In 1909 it was replaced by a new, modern office building commissioned by Goldberger and Sons Ltd. to be used as central offices and a wholesale outlet for the Óbuda-based Goldberger textile factory.

The plans for a pre-modern style building were drawn up by architects Dávid Jónás (1871–1951) and Zsigmond Jónás (1879–1936), and the building work was carried out by Lipták and Co. Construction and Iron Works Ltd. The façade is dominated by vertical ornamentation, most notably the tall, narrow, oriental-style pillars connecting the two floors. In the frieze just below the roof, the name Goldberger is inscribed.



Goldberger House

In 1922 Sámuel Goldberger and Sons Ltd. bought the building, which until then they had been renting. The interior was remodeled in the 1930s, and new premises were rented for the offices next door, at 34 Arany János Street. The Goldberger House survived World War II without major damage.

After being nationalized in 1948, the building was used as a storehouse for the National Textile Factory (Róviköt, later Centriköt). In 1981, Konsumex opened its exclusive "dollar shop" in the building, where goods could be purchased only with hard currency until the fall of the Socialist regime. The building then stood empty for several years.

Most of the original design has been retained: the main staircase, for example, was fully reconstructed following the original plans. Though some alterations were carried out to meet new requirements and needs, the most characteristic feature of the building, the huge glass roof above the inner court, has remained unchanged throughout its one hundred years of existence.