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THE OFFSET PRESS

Offset Nyomda
/The Offset Press/
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Unsigned Article

March 1948 was a turning point in the life of the Hungarian printing industry, for that was when the large plants came into the possession of the public. One year after nationalization the Gyorgy Klosz and Son Graphic Arts Institute Corporation and the Hungarian Geographic Institute Corporation were merged to form the Offset Press.

The Klosz plant began functioning in 1867 as a photographic studio and dealt with portrait photography, later gradually extending its operations to photoreproduction and photolithography. By the turn of the century it was doing a good deal of business printing technical drawings and simple maps, using a rapid lithographic press.

In 1921, the enterprise set up an offset press, which was followed within a few years by a newer type offset machine. The greatest change took place in the previously small-scale lithography plant in 1933, when the plant adopted the color-offset process, which had been introduced in Hungary by Pal Bayer. This resulted in a considerable expansion in the field of activity of the plant, and a new, modern reproduction process was born. The new method resulted in a considerable increase in the number of jobs and in more efficient functioning of the enterprise, which in turn resulted in increases in the plant area and investments.

The Hungarian Geographic Institute Corporation began in 1890 as a branch of the Holzel company of Vienna, and was Hungary's first enterprise dealing exclusively with the construction and production of maps.

Shortly thereafter it operated under the title of Kogutowitz and Associates, and in 1910 it became a joint stock company. During World War I the majority of its stock was acquired by the Franklin Society. At the outset the enterprise was concerned exclusively with the production of maps and instruction material. Its structure was vertical, and in addition to map plotting it included cartolithography, litho and offset high speed presses, a book printing section, and separate book-binding and globe production sections. The economic crisis of the 1920's

reduced the sphere of activity of the enterprise. As a result its sphere of activity was supplemented with lithographic jobs of commercial nature.

The two merged plants were housed in the Gorkij Faszor Plant building under the title of the Offset Plant. The merger necessitated considerable reorganization and partial modification of the plant building in order to provide space for personnel of the Geographic Institute.

The merger was very useful and satisfactory both for the enterprise personnel and from the point of view of work space. With respect to maps the increase in work space resulted in a complete reorganization of the production program of the new Offset Press, and enabled the new plant to effect an increasingly strong trend in the development of newer and more modern work methods in graphic reproduction. In the field of map reproduction the unification represented an inestimable improvement because the well-equipped photomechanical installation which was available and the excellent technical personnel developed a work method for map reproduction which was exceptionally well suited to the requirements of offset printing and raised the quality of the maps to a first-class level on a world-wide scale. During the years following nationalization and unification, there was an increasing drop in the number of propaganda publications devoted to the interests of commerce and commercial competition, and the output of textbooks, maps and informative publications serving socialist culture increased from year to year. The production of the enterprise during recent years consists almost entirely of artistic reproductions and of various maps. A considerable portion of our publications proclaim the status of development of the Hungarian printing industry beyond our national boundaries. Although the plant does not have at its disposal all the modern equipment which the developments of recent years have offered our profession, nevertheless the quality and methods of production of our publications have earned the acknowledgment of foreign experts.

Our publications not only reflect the development of the Hungarian printing industry, but also are advertisers of Hungarian culture, because through them the masterpieces of Hungarian artists and the preciously guarded treasures of Hungarian museums may become known abroad. Among recent works along the line mentioned above, the book by Jenő Barcsay entitled "Művészeti Anatómia" [Anatomy of Art] won first prize in the 1953 "Most Beautiful Book of the Year" competition. In 1957, our enterprise won first prize in the technical book division for work in connection with the album by Lajos Vayer, entitled "Rajzművészet Mesterei" [Masters of Draftsmanship]. It is to our special gratification that in addition to domestic awards, this work has won several international recognitions for the Hungarian printing industry.

The enterprise received praise in 1954 and 1955, and received a certificate of commendation in 1956 for the quality of the books and textbooks produced.

During the ten years which have elapsed since nationalization, qualitative and quantitative improvement of flat-bed printing stood as an imperative requirement before our plant. In this interest slow-operation machines were replaced with modern high-speed machinery. The development of the plant is indicated by the fact that the number of our offset presses increased from four at the time of nationalization, to nine offset presses ten years later. This resulted in a complete reorganization and considerable increase in the capacity of our photomechanical color division, which continues to cover ever larger fields. We are, however, not neglecting the classical methods of lithography and embossing. This professional step is in the interest of the public economy because economic and professional viewpoints always decide the work method which is to be used in any concrete situation. In this evaluation the possibilities of the cheapest production and economizing on imported materials are taken into consideration. Professional training also is more thorough and broader when basic training in the classic methods is given.

In addition to constant attention to possibilities for reduction of production costs, improvement in quality always is in the fore of our efforts. This is our central task. Our experiments in connection with the introduction of aluminum printing forms also were devoted toward this end. The anticipated good results, however, are hindered for the time being by the unsatisfactory quality of aluminum plates.

In the interest of secure printing, and due to the lack of printing room climatizing equipment, our enterprise designed and built a paper conditioning machine for processing the paper prior to printing, which was based on the accumulation of data over several years. Our goal in this respect produced satisfactory results.

Research and development of new work methods for photographic reproduction are being conducted throughout the world. The trend of development is the complete realization of the four-color process in offset printing.

Our enterprise also considers the domestic resolution of this problem to be a primary task. The advantages of our independently developed mask and contact grid method are expressed in the qualitative and quantitative achievements of our products and in the economic results of our enterprise. Our most important area of research is in gradation of color and perfect reproduction of color. Our subsequent research in the

field of flat bed printing will consist of the identification and possible elimination of the causes of presently existing technical uncertainties. The designing and acquisition of reliable instruments for this purpose will be of considerable assistance.

We follow the development and results of foreign experiments and trends with an interest which exceeds mere love of profession. We strive to utilize these according to our own theories.

We consider the present status of photographic reproduction to be transitional, the proof of which is that a detailed work method or technology which ensures perfect quality, economic and fast work has been developed nowhere in the world. This requires us, also, to conduct ever more thorough research. We submit the present enclosures as an indication of the results which we have achieved. The above have been selected from among our recent products.

Although photographic reproduction accounts for a small area of the printing industry, there was considerable unemployment in this field during the capitalist times. After Liberation of our country and after nationalization of the plants, it soon became apparent that we must deal effectively with the problem of replacements, because the building of socialism also means the development of culture, and thus we encounter ever greater tasks in the field of photographic reproduction. The earlier sporadic industrial apprentice training was replaced by purposeful replacement practices. With the assistance of our plant personnel during the past ten years we have trained 80 young professional men and 18 skilled workers for the printing industry. The work of our enterprise personnel was recognized eight times with the outstanding plant award. In 1957, in addition to the paying-in of profit which was received as a task, our personnel received a profit refund equal to 25 days' wages on the basis of results achieved.

In addition to labor union vacations our plant personnel have access to a six-room resort building at Agard, beside Velence Lake. This is especially favored by our personnel who have children.

Our group outings, which are held several times each year, also are very popular, and in addition to acquainting the personnel with various parts of the country, these outings also serve to reward the good work of our personnel.