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## MISS KIN in the World of Fashion: 1902–1939

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# MISS KIN in the World of Fashion: 1902–1939

## Introduction

Waldes & Co. (Waldes a spol.) was founded in 1902 in Prague by Jindřich Waldes and Hynek Puc as a small workshop for metal products. Over the following thirty-seven years, the company became the world’s leading manufacturer of “modern dress fastening devices” with six factories in Prague, Dresden, Warsaw, New York, Paris and Barcelona, exporting to over seventy countries.

The company experienced its first outstanding decade of economic growth in the Austro-Hungarian Empire before World War I, benefitting from the rapidly developing machinery industry in the Czech lands. The Czech lands (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) accounted for about one quarter of the monarchy’s population, land and agriculture, and about 60–70% of its industrial capacity (Kubů and Pátek, 2000; Lacina, 1996). Supporting the industrial and business development in Bohemia and other Czech lands was a mission of the Union for Encouragement of Industry in Bohemia (Jednota pro povzbuzení průmyslu v Čechách), which was founded in 1833, and the Chambers of Commerce and Trade (Obchodní a živnostenské komory) in eight cities (Praha, Liberec, Cheb, Plzeň, České Budějovice, Brno, Olomouc, Opava), which were founded by the Empire in 1850. (Doležalová, 2018; Jelínek, 2024) The Czechoslovak statistician F. Bíbl estimated that Czech lands accounted for 41.2% of the gross national wealth of Austria (Cisleithania) before 1914 (Jakubec, 2023). The level of economic development of the Czech lands is also further illustrated by the collection of direct and indirect taxes. In 1913, direct taxes represented 32.9% of direct tax income of the Austrian part of the monarchy, while indirect taxes from the Czech lands reached 59.5% (Sandgruber, 1978). After World War I, Czechoslovakia was established in October 1918, leading to a customs and monetary separation from the former monarchy. Waldes & Co. became one of the pro-export-oriented enterprises in the newly established Czechoslovak Republic (comprising the Czech lands, Slovakia, Subcarpathian Russia), with its main co-founder and managing director Jindřich Waldes (1876–1941) emerging as a member of the Czechoslovak business elite with strong international ties. Czechoslovakia was at the forefront of the economically moderately developed countries, on the edge of the industrial core of Europe. In terms of per capita national income, Czechoslovakia ranked seventeenth in the world. However, it is important to note that the Czech lands accounted for most of this national income (Jakubec, 2023).

When Waldes & Co. entered the haberdashery market in 1902, it did so during a period characterised by two significant trends that were driving demand for their products. There was a dramatic development in the scale of ready-made clothing production in the most developed economies (for more details, see for example (Green, 1997)). Also fashion was an increasingly dynamic force in modern consumer society, influencing dressing habits across all societal sectors, with Berlin serving as an inspiration for Jindřich Waldes (for more details, see for example (Westphal, 2019; H. Waldes, 1935; Palmén, 2023)). Richard Lokesch, in the catalogue for the Jubilee Exhibition in Prague in 1908, states that snap fasteners had been produced for the glove-making industry in Prague since 1886. From 1898, sewn-on snap fasteners began to be manufactured. In 1900, there were 196 button manufacturers in Prague, including those producing snap fasteners, employing a total of 2,512 workers. Initially, snap fasteners were imported into Austria from Germany and France. According to Lokesch, by 1908, the consumption of snap fasteners in the Austro-Hungarian Empire was already met by manufacturers from Prague, who also exported their products abroad. (Lokesch, 1908)

The success of Waldes & Co. in this highly competitive market was due to its three core focuses: on continuous production improvements, on highly developed marketing targeted at individual markets and on investment in employee education and loyalty. The company strategy from the early years concentrated on world export beyond Austro-Hungarian boundaries and on geographically diversified production, which on one hand helped to overcome different trade barriers while on the other hand, it enabled collection of know-how on innovations and market trends from individual markets to share across the group. It seems that trends from the US market in production management and marketing were particularly studied by the company leadership, who also collaborated with leading American experts. Jindřich Waldes visited the USA more than fifty times during his life and the American experience with advertising inspired the company to introduce a new logo in 1912, featuring a face of a young girl with the press-stud Koh-i-noor (KIN) in her left eye as a monocle. Miss KIN has been part of various logo variations up to the present day.

Since 1913, the company has systematically focused on developing unified marketing tools across all markets. Historically, they employed standard advertising methods, but complemented them with highly effective PR activities. For example, in 1918, they founded a Button Museum in Prague, which became an opportunity to educate the general public in the Czech lands and to impress company stakeholders from around the world. It is no coincidence that Waldes & Co. was awarded the Grand Prix for advertising at the World Fair in Paris in 1937.

The company was a family business involving three families of different cultural and

religious backgrounds-Czech and Germans, Jews and Catholics: Waldes, Puc and Merzinger. Their productive cooperation ended with the Nazi occupation of the Czechoslovakia in 1939, Jindřich Waldes being arrested by the Gestapo on September 1, 1939 and imprisoned in the Buchenwald concentration camp. In exchange for transferring his and his brother's shares in their European companies to Nazi Germany and paying additional USD 250 000, he was released to travel to the USA to join his family. He developed nephritis during the voyage and died in a Havana sanatorium on September 1, 1941. (Králová and Sovák, 2021)

The business legacy of Waldes & Co. in Czechoslovakia was so enduring that it survived both the Nazi and Communist regimes, despite restrictions on international trade and the absence of foreign branches. Today, there is a joint stock company KOH-I-NOOR MASSAG, based in the Czech Republic, which owns original trademarks (including Miss KIN) of Waldes & Co. This company continues to export snap buttons to more than fifty countries in the world. Our paper focuses on the development of Waldes & Co.'s marketing from 1902 to 1939, during which time the company evolved from a local workshop into a global producer of haberdashery. This successful expansion was halted by the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany, the seizure of the Waldes family's assets by Nazi authorities, followed by the death of Jindřich Waldes. Waldes's genius in marketing remains inspirational for businesses today.

This paper primarily draws on a study of contemporary documents relating to the history of the company Waldes & Co., which are housed in the State Regional Archive in Prague. These documents were transferred here in 2007 from the corporate archive of the successor to the historical firm. The collection, titled Koh-i-noor, a.s., is divided into three sub-collections and comprises a total of 2,015 items: 1,593 boxes, 286 packages, and 136 official books, representing 217.21 linear metres of archival material. As the archival documents have not undergone professional processing, no finding aids have been prepared. The only available means of orientation is the inventory list, which was created gradually during the sorting of the company's archive. This unorganised collection also includes product samples, advertisements, and photographs. For the purposes of this study, 19 boxes and books from the period 1902–1945 were examined. It is important to mention certain limitations in our work with primary archival sources. Prague was not only the location of one of the key production facilities but also represented the company's headquarters. This means that it does not include detailed information about individual branches. As we are focused on the international marketing of Waldes & Co., we assume that this bias is negligible, as a general marketing policy has been implemented by the headquarters since 1913, as we will demonstrate later.

## **Building the Waldes button empire**

The company Waldes & Co. was founded in 1902 by Jindřich Waldes (1876–1941) and Hynek Puc (1856–1938) as a public trading company with a registered capital of 4,000 crowns. Initially, it operated out of a small workshop in Karlín. Later that year, a new partner Eduard Merzinger (1872–1932) joined the company with a contribution of 10,000 crowns. In 1908, Jindřich Waldes's younger brother, Zikmund (1877–1961), also became involved in the company. (Králová, 2020)

The initial success of the company was largely attributed to Jindřich Waldes's partnership with the outstanding Czech mechanic Hynek Puc, whom he met while working for the Jewish firm Eduard Lokesch & Son in Prague's Old Town. Waldes always deeply respected his twenty year's older business partner, who was crucial for technological innovations. He is believed to have begun working for Lokesch at the age of seventeen, where he secured a position as a sales clerk. Lokesch's product line included fashionable cuff links, which were successfully sold both within the borders of the monarchy and abroad. Jindřich was first sent abroad at the age of twenty, likely due to his proficiency in languages. In addition to Czech and German, he probably already spoke French and English at that time (Králová and Sovák, 2021). He was gaining international business experience to start his own enterprise. In one of the radio talks in 1937 he claimed to have travelled across Europe including the Balkans, Turkey and North Africa. It seems that understanding foreign demand from developed and developing countries for suitable clothing items influenced the international development of the firm from the very beginning. He also visited different trade capitals during significant cultural shifts in fashion and innovations in shopping.

As early as 1904, a branch was established in the German city of Dresden. This branch remained a significant part of the Waldes group throughout the First Czechoslovak Republic, contributing to the development of a number of manufacturing innovations. The same year, plans were also made to establish a branch in Paris, although it was likely intended only as a commercial representation by an agent at that time. In the following years, similar commercial representations were created in Warsaw, New York, Chicago, and Montreal (Králová, 2020). Establishing its first branch in Germany offered several strategic advantages. At the turn of the century, the German market experienced positive turbulent changes in the role of fashion in the social life of mainly middle-class families, with the building of new department stores as "women's paradises", and an increase in clothing manufacturing, representing a high potential demand for the products of Waldes & Co. Germany was becoming a European economic power with a growing role in international trade. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Germany's protracted industrialization gained momentum, catching up with European rivals like France and Britain. The expanding German middle-class was attaining new levels of political and purchasing power. Traditional conservative and religious values increasingly met their match in the emerging mass media and advertising industry in shaping the lifestyle choices and identities of the bourgeoisie. Women were gaining

visibility in the public sphere, gradually being admitted into higher education and the professions. (Palmén, 2023) Despite the lack of archival evidence explaining the opening of the German factory, it can be assumed that there were two main advantages. One was to be inside a developed market avoiding barriers of trade. The second could be a better exporting position for some foreign markets when perceived as a German company rather than a company from the less technologically advanced Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

Such an early business expansion required access to credit. Little known is about which banks financed the growth of Waldes & Co. during their first decade, as archival resources are available only from 1913 onwards. Joseph C. Pick notes that Jindřich Waldes was acquainted with a Jewish banker Otto Freund (1876–1939), who had allegedly helped him with both friendly advice and financial support at the start of his business (Pick, 1968). It seems that this testimony can be verified by the recent finding that Landärbank, where Otto Freund worked until 1916, was providing loans to Waldes & Co. as early as 1913. After Otto Freund moved to Böhmisches Union Bank in 1916, this bank started to provide comparable loans to Waldes & Co. (Králová, 2023). This anecdotal evidence highlights one of Jindřich Waldes's strong assets visible throughout his business career. He was extremely capable of building strong social networks. His Jewish family came from a small village in South Bohemia, where Jews historically lived in a small minority. Their social and business success was very much dependent on their ability to adapt to the majority population. Despite his recognized Jewish heritage, Waldes was very well-integrated into Czech and German culture, which enhanced his networking potential not only in the Central Europe but internationally. (Jelínek, 2024)

The global growth of the textile and clothing industry ensured increasing demand for Waldes & Co. products. According to available promotional publications and a November 1913 article by Jindřich Waldes (Waldes, 1913), which provided an overview of marketing activities, the year 1904 marked the beginning of their international marketing planning in Europe. The key product, at that time, was a snap button (spring press stud) Koh-i-noor. Even the very name of this product, taken from the famous diamond, was a clever marketing move for both domestic and international customers. So far, no document has been found that explains why this name was chosen. However, one relevant source of inspiration might have been the Company L. & C. Hardtmuth from České Budějovice in Bohemia, which began manufacturing a yellow graphite pencil KOH-I-NOOR 1500, a product that was awarded a Grand Prix Award at the World Fair in Paris in 1900 (KOH-I-NOOR HARDTMUTH history). Waldes might have thought that if the world adored the modern Czech Koh-i-noor pencils, it would quickly take a liking to the new Czech snap fasteners of the same name.

Their marketing strategy on the snap button Koh-i-noor was based on endorsements

from leading fashion designers of Paris, London and Vienna, who provided testimonials for advertising campaigns and also direct communication with selected groups of clients for example, dressmakers and wholesalers. On behalf of House of Worth in Paris and London, Monsieur Worth responded on May 25, 1905: "I reply to your enquiry I am pleased to say, that after thoroughly testing your Koh-I-Noor Dress Fastener, I have found them perfectly satisfactory in every way. Kindly accept my best thanks for introducing these Koh-I-Noor press studs to me." John Redfern (1853–1929) also expressed his satisfaction with Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners for blouses and skirts in April 1905. Other endorsements came from the House of Drecol of Vienna and Paris (April 1905), Maison Lévilon (May 1905), Georges Camille Doeuillet (May 1908) and others similar.

From the very beginning, Waldes & Co. faced significant competitors in the market from Germany and France. The invention of the snap button is attributed to Heribert Bauer from Pforzheim in Germany, who received the world's first patent certificate for a two-part snap fastener, issued by the Imperial Patent Office in Berlin on 5th March 1885 (Deutsches Reichspatent Nr. 32496 vom 5. März 1885). However, successful production of this snap button in Germany was initiated by Hans Prym from the William Prym family company, who managed to improve Bauer's invention. He enhanced the press fastener by incorporating a spring and obtained a patent for the design in 1903 (The Prym Group History).

Albert-Pierre Raymond (1840–1913), from Grenoble in France, patented a snap button in 1886. This button consisted of four parts and was originally developed for the glove industry. At that time, some women wore long gloves that extended almost up to their shoulders, and the snap concept allowed them to easily fasten the gloves at the top, replacing more cumbersome buttons. Raymond's business flourished and he established a subsidiary in Lörrach, Germany, in 1898. The company won a Grand Prix at the World Fair in Paris in 1900 for the corozo press-stud "figurines" (ARAYMOND History). Both companies were exporting their products to the same markets as Waldes & Co. Unfortunately, the current state of research does not allow us to draw any conclusions regarding the interactions between these companies in various markets. We can only assume that, from the very beginning, it was essential for Waldes & Co. to allocate significant resources to advertising and public relations.

The advertising campaigns of Waldes & Co. varied significantly in individual European countries. In Austria, they began with billboards; in Germany, with lectures for dressmakers' associations; in France, it involved circulating and the free distribution of samples by mail; and in Spain, samples were distributed through wholesalers and retailers. Additional elements of the campaigns included advertisements in dressmaker publications, magazines and daily papers. The advertisements in each country were tailored to national tastes and habits. They were more scientific and facts based in Germany, more aesthetic in France, and more humorous in Russia.

(Waldes, 1913)

In 1906, the famous factory (initially called Waldeska) began construction in Prague-Vršovice. Its grand opening in 1908, attended by the press, highlighted the importance Waldes attributed to PR and marketing at that time. The factory was presented as a modern operation with unprecedented facilities for employees, who were provided with not only heated separate changing rooms for men and women but also access to baths with hot water, a gym, and a library. The factory's capacity quickly became insufficient, so it was significantly expanded with manufacturing facilities and a distribution centre between 1912-1920 (Krállová, Sovák 2021, pp. 15–16).

The US market was increasingly attractive for Waldes & Co. during the first decade of its existence. Jindřich Waldes believed that demand in America could exceed the combined demand from the rest of the world. However, according to Jindřich Waldes, entering the US market was like hitting the stone wall. The marketing strategy that worked well in Europe did not deliver the expected results. The company office was opened, after some preparation, at 315 Fifth Avenue in New York City in December 1912. Waldes & Co. began to immediately execute its marketing plan (see Figure 2.), which was based on research by the Federal Advertising Agency. There were two issues to be addressed. First, the retail trade was exceedingly unsympathetic towards a new dress fastener. The market was already saturated with a number of different devices, which were not selling well, and retailers did not want to purchase the Koh-i-noor buttons until there was demand for them. A more serious issue was the condition of the garment manufacturing industry. According to Jindřich Waldes, while in Europe most clothing was made by dressmakers or within the home, the situation in the US was very different. Waldes suggests that “about 90% of the dresses, waists, skirts, etc. were manufactured ready-made in factories and only 10% made by dressmakers and at home”. Waldes & Co. had to invent sewing machines specifically for the Koh-i-noor buttons to be able to sell its products to garment industry. (Waldes, 1913)

The US campaign had an important impact on the entire Waldes group as a new trademark was adopted at that time. It featured an attractive girl's head with the Koh-i-noor fastener placed like a monocle in her left eye. It was accompanied by a slogan: “Good-by, Old Hook and Eye!” According to Jindřich Waldes, the idea for the new trademark came into his mind on his voyage across the ocean to America in 1912, while he was chatting to a young American actress, Elisabeth Coyens, who placed a big Koh-i-noor fastener in her eye. Waldes photographed her and sent the picture to his friend, Czech artist František Kupka, to create a painting. Graphic designer Vojtěch Preissig then made a logo based on this painting. The new trademark was very juvenile, female, optimistic, playful and well-suited for the US market. It became an iconic international symbol for the company and the painting by Kupka was later displayed in Waldes's office in Prague. This logo came to be known as Miss KIN (an abbreviation of **K**ooh-**I**-**N**oor) or KIN girl

(see Figure 1.)

The main goal of the US campaign was to convince wearers of garments to prefer Waldes fasteners. The initial focus was on dressmakers and their clients. Even though it represented only 10% of the market, it was thought that it would also generate demand in the retail trade, who would later request Waldes fasteners from manufacturers. A substantial advertising effort was targeted via print media towards women (*Ladies Home Journal*, *Woman's Home Companion*, *Ladies World*, *McCall's*, *Vogue*, *Dress*, *Pictorial Review*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Harper's Bazar*, *Criterion of Fashion*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Theatre*, *New York Morning Telegraph*, *Holland's Magazine*, *Sunset*, *Monthly Fashion Book*, *May Manton's Monthly*, *People's Home Journal*, *Woman's World*, *Housewife*, *Mother's Magazine*, *American Sunday Magazine*, *Semi-Weekly Magazine*), retailers and wholesalers (*Dry Goods Economist*, *Dry Goods*, *Dry Goods Reporter*, *Drygoodsman*, *Fabrics*, *Fancy Goods*, *Notions*, *Pacific Coast Merchants' Journal*, *Commerce*), and for dressmakers and garment manufacturers (*Woman's Wear*, *American Cloak and Suit Review*, *Le Costume Royal*, *Elite Styles*, *L'Art de la Mode*, *Nugent's Bulletin*, *American Dressmaker*, *Smart Styles*, *Le Bon Ton*). There was also special focus in direct communication with dressmakers in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Philadelphia and Boston, which was entrusted to a number of young women as demonstrators, who always emphasized that dressmakers could get Koh-I-Noor fasteners from their wholesaler. It was also accompanied with selling campaign calling retailers and wholesalers in person with special offers. The first department store to use Koh-I-Noor fasteners on all ladies' garments was Gimbel Brothers, with branches in New York, Philadelphia, Milwaukee and Paris. There were also testimonials from US celebrities. Louise Dresser (1878–1965), an American actress, was one of them. "The best dressed woman on the American stage says she owes the fit and appearance of her gowns to Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners" was the line from the print advertisement. She was then performing on Broadway in comedies "Hokey Pokey" and "Potash and Perlmutter", the advertisement appearing in the programme of the latter show. (Waldes, 1913)

It is important to note that we are citing information from Jindřich Waldes's article, which was published in *Printers' Ink* on November 6 in 1913. The *Printers' Ink* was a leading business publication for advertising professionals. One of the contributing authors was, for example, Paul T. Cherington, who at that time taught advertising at Harvard School of Business Administration. He published a book *Advertising as a Business Force* in 1913, which marked the beginning of modern literature on marketing (White, 1935). Jindřich Waldes was active among the founders of a new field that became essential for modern entrepreneurs, engaging with their work through their published articles.

From the early twentieth century, Jindřich Waldes was deliberately developing the marketing of the company. This included not only the well-known collaboration with painter

František Kupka and graphic artist Vojtěch Preissig, and investing in advertising and selling campaigns but also the ability to capture the attention of the media and public. Waldes was a master at creating opportunities for the media to cover Waldes & Co.'s agenda. He managed to elevate the perception of his merchandise to be a piece of art as well as part of the history of culture. In 1916, he established a Waldes Museum of Buttons and Fastening Devices in Prague, which, after using provisional spaces, celebrated the opening of a new building in September 1918 (Hrušková, 2020; Králová and Sovák, 2021). With a clear focus, Waldes developed the company reputation by active participation at different international and regional trade fair venues.

The expansion of Waldes & Co.'s activities from 1902 to 1913 resulted in the need to share know-how between different branches and offices, which were under the responsibility of the four individual co-founders. In December 1913, the process and organizational structure was described in detail by chief clerk Hermann Schoeps in a two-hundred-page document, of which only four copies were printed to be assigned to each individual co-owner. The chapter on advertising management has twenty-seven pages and was written by J.A. Köstler. It provides a comprehensive account of the logistics involved in preparing, printing and storing all the different forms of advertisement and promotion materials. There is an additional supplement "The advertisement in Waldes factories" comprising eleven pages written by Hermann Gruber, which tries to define "Waldes' style". Gruber, who was responsible for the Advertisement Department in Prague, claimed that such a department should not be given excessive administrative work overload such as budget controls; instead, it should have freedom to act. From his writing, it is evident that the Waldes group had grown faster than its ability to coordinate advertising campaigns across different markets. The marketing department did not always have up-to-date information about new products and sales plans. On the other side, Waldes & Co. had many innovative devices at its disposal, such as a multigraph printing machine and an addressograph. The company was well prepared for direct mailing with the capacity of twenty-five thousand letters per day. It also owned a system for storing data about its clients. By 1913 at the latest, Waldes & Co. was using a wide range of marketing tools internationally, including advertisements in newspapers and publications, billboard advertising, direct mailing of letters and product samples, consumer competitions, premium books with Waldes coupons, and personal advertising by demonstrators. As mentioned above, the company collaborated with various artists on the visual aspects of packaging and advertisements.

Despite the success of the American marketing campaign, Waldes & Co. did not succeed in opening a factory in the US before World War I. Alongside its large plant in Saxony (see Figure 3.), it also had smaller productions sites in Paris and Warsaw. In 1909, the company also became a silent partner in Eduard Lokesch & Son, which had encountered serious financial

difficulties after relocating from its plant in Prague Old Town to a new factory in Prague Holešovice-Bubny. Prior to this partnership, Josef Wurm (1871–1942), the husband of the elder sister of the Waldes brothers, Olga, had served as a silent partner in Eduard Lokesch & Son. In 1912, the company was definitively taken over, with Hynek Puc and Eduard Merzinger as partners. Even though the Holešovice factory was later sold and production shifted to Vršovice, the company name was retained. Thus, Waldes & Co. acquired an established brand of Lokesch in both domestic and foreign markets. The period of World War I brought on the one hand the disintegration of the branch network and a decline in demand, but on the other hand, a new production line in the form of military snap buttons, capsules, artillery shells, shrapnel, and other similar items (Králková, Sovák 2021, pp. 28, 40).

### **Waldes & Co. as a Czechoslovak success story**

Prague became the capital of Czechoslovakia after World War I. Czechoslovakia was considered part of the winning Allied countries of World War I, although it was not officially established as an independent state until after the war ended. With its headquarters in Prague, Waldes & Co. had access to the markets of Allied countries, particularly France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, who supported the creation of Czechoslovakia.

The interwar period represented the fulfilment of earlier plans and new opportunities for Jindřich Waldes and his partners. In 1919, a factory was finally established in New York on Long Island, owned by the Stock Company Waldes & Co., with capital amounting to one million US dollars. The Prague-based Waldes & Co. held the majority stake (58.5%), with the remaining shares owned by local entrepreneurs, including Czechoslovak entrepreneur Tomáš Baťa, shoe manufacturer, who was a business partner of Waldes & Co. in various markets. Later, in light of developments at the parent company, the firm was renamed Waldes KOH-I-NOOR Inc. Foreign expansion continued and, in 1920, a public limited company was founded in Paris, which was transformed in 1932 into the limited liability company Waldes & Cie with capital of one million francs, to oversee the Paris production. The director of the French subsidiary was Čestmír Puc, the younger son of Hynek Puc. The Waldes brothers controlled 53.1% of the French plant, the Puc brothers held 25.2%, and the Merzinger family owned 20.7%. In 1921 or 1922, a sales office was established in London, WALDES & CO., which was almost entirely controlled by Jindřich Waldes. In 1922, the public trading company WALDES Y CIA was established in Barcelona, owned by Zikmund Waldes and Spanish citizen Alberto Bassat-Strunza, who managed the local factory. In 1935, Zikmund's son Harry Kurt Waldes (1909–1983) replaced him as a co-owner. The Spanish firm was 60% owned by Zikmund and 40% by Harry. Interestingly, a representation in Vienna was only established between 1920 and 1922. In the 1920s, another plant in Lichtenberg, Saxony, was

also established. From 1927, the Warsaw factory was owned by the limited liability company WALDES I SPOLKA, with 90% owned by Richard Lebenhart, director of the Prague plant and brother-in-law of the Waldes brothers. Local merchant Eduard Manczyk owned the remaining 10%. The Waldes & Co. group had a complex ownership structure, where personal shares of co-owners of the Prague plant and their family members interlinked several of the aforementioned foreign branches. The group successfully weathered the economic crisis and continued to expand in the 1930s. In the domestic market, it acquired the competing Wolf & Co. factory in Prague's Nusle district in 1935. In its promotional materials, Waldes presented itself as an innovative firm, owning 465 patents and 2,300 trademarks in Czechoslovakia and abroad. (Králová and Sovák, 2021)

The Long Island company in the United States was important for Waldes & Co. not only as a production facility in the biggest market but also a place for know-how transfer of the latest marketing innovations emanating from America. Hermina Axthelm was sent from Prague to be the general manager of the US factory, where she served for several decades. She was probably one of the first female managers to run an industrial production site with about a thousand employees. According to *Nassau Daily Review-Star* (January 5, 1940), she was selected for the job due to her good knowledge of languages. Her son Ralph worked in an advertising agency at the same time, most probably the already famous Grey Advertising Agency in New York, which had a contract with the factory from at least the mid-1930s. According to the minutes of a board meeting from November 16, 1936, a new contract with Grey Advertising Agency was approved, with a budget of up to USD 5,000 per month. It covered merchandizing, advertising, and advising the Sales Department. The agency fee was set as USD 10,000 per year plus 3/8 of 1% of total sales. Waldes & Co. also worked with Percival White (1887–1970), who considered himself a marketing engineer because of his background in industrial engineering. He was one of the leading experts in modern marketing during the early twentieth century, his major contributions to marketing thought focussing on market research and the application of scientific management to marketing. He published eleven books dealing with marketing. His company, Market Research Corporation of America, represented some of the best technical practices of the 1930s (Jones and Tadajewski, 2011). His articles also appeared in the *Koh-i-noor Magazine* in the 1930s and he was on Jindřich Waldes's list of US recipients of the German version of the *Koh-i-noor Magazine* for 1939 along with Ralph Weinbaum of the Grey Advertising Agency.

Waldes and Co. not only focused on learning from the best around the world but also contributed to the development of advertising and marketing in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Advertisement Association (Reklamní klub Československý) was founded in November 1927. Its mission was to study modern forms of advertising and sales organisation and to support research and education in these fields. Oskar Pacovský, who led the advertising department at Waldes & Co.,

was active in the Association during its early years. (Pavlů, 2019) The monthly company newsletter, published from 1930 to 1939 and distributed among workers and external stakeholders, also featured expert articles on advertising and sales organisation in the US and Czechoslovakia.

In 1930s, some employees and co-owners were giving lectures, publishing expert articles and books. For instance, Harry Waldes (1909–1983), son of Sigmund, published a book in German titled *Die Mode in der Volkswirtschaft* (Fashion in the National Economy) in 1935, where he estimated that fashion was influencing about one fifth of industrial companies and 22% of all professions in Germany. The intuitive approach of Jindřich Waldes from the early years, who showed “his new button” to dressmakers around Europe before introducing them to the market, was increasingly replaced by a more scientific, consumer-focused approach, synchronizing all the parts of production and marketing.

The company also had to innovate its products. The demand for Koh-i-noor snap fasteners in the American market declined. In 1923, the company advertised hook and eye fastening tapes although zippers were subsequently introduced in 1931. By the end of 1935, the American company was selling 400 thousand zippers per month, and considering trying to increase sales to 600 thousand. Besides the clothing industry, the company was also selling its modern fasteners to shoe, glove and handbag manufacturers.

The Waldes museum in Prague attracted influential industrialists, as well as artists and cultural figures, who were interested in the intersection of art, design, and industrial production. The museum’s unique focus on buttons and fasteners, as well as its association with the successful Waldes & Co. company, drew interest from international visitors, including business delegations and professionals in the fashion and textile industries. A list of VIP visitors was published every month in the *Koh-i-noor Magazine*, Jindřich Waldes personally guiding some of them. The photograph of Waldes and French fashion designer Paul Poiret (1879–1944) from March 1924 appeared in full page advertisements in the United States, stating that “Paul Poiret says Koh-i-noor is indispensable to all my creations”. Poiret wrote:

I went with great pleasure through the halls of your fascinating museum which is a review of the history of costume. I will not fail to come again and send designers to get new inspirations. With such an affection for your art and with such a scientific knowledge of your technique, you cannot fail to achieve manufacturing perfection so characteristic of all Koh-i-noor products, which are indispensable to all our creations. (see Figure 5.)

Waldes & Co. was always looking for new products and also for new markets. Many

innovations were introduced during the interwar period, such as a strip with a Koh-i-noor button to join together straps of underwear, suspenders, changeable cuffs, corset fasteners and many others. (see Figure 6.) The company entered into the shoemaking industry, at least in the United States, Germany and Czechoslovakia. It supplied metal snaps and other metal parts to companies such as Baťa, a Czechoslovak shoemaker with a successful international export history and an international production comparable to Waldes & Co. In the company archive is a collection of 'American Advertisements' with undated advertisements of heels and sandals for Saks-Fifth Avenue in New York with jewel clasps, which at that time were offered by Waldes & Co. under patent in the United States. The Waldes company in Dresden also had a portfolio of decorative buckles and snaps for shoemakers in Germany. (see Figure 7.)

The language used in the advertisements changed in the 1930s. For example, zippers were presented as an innovation and part of American and English fashions in European markets. Koh-i-noor snap buttons were making life easier for modern women and all fasteners were perfect for the body skimming fitted dresses then in fashion. Some fasteners were designed to be fashionable accessories themselves. Kover-zip was an innovative product, which had the potential to repeat the success of the Koh-i-noor snap button. In the late 1930s there was a debate about the possibility of producing a plastic zip. The company, in its marketing communication, was promoting the revolution of zip flies, Kover-zip covering 'ugly metal teeth' with fabric to have a 'smarter look'. (see Figure 8.)

By 1930, the ownership structure had remained without significant changes when Hynek Puc decided to leave the firm due to his age and transferred his share to his eldest son, Vojtěch. After Eduard Merzinger's death in 1932, further changes in the company's ownership occurred, but Eduard Merzinger Jr. was only admitted as a partner in the Dresden branch in 1938 (Králová, 2020).

The Prague headquarters holds in its archive some stories written for Czechoslovak radio and even some transcripts of lectures given by Jindřich Waldes and his wife "Ička" on political and cultural issues during the 1930s. It can be assumed that Waldes & Co. also used radio advertisements, but no historical documents have been found showing how this was incorporated into their marketing strategy. In 1937, there was a well-documented promotion of the Waldes dynamic knitting needles, which were first sold that year. Waldes & Co. advertising department came up with the idea to establish a first Gentlemen's Club for Knitting in Prague in 1938. This was a very good "earned media" project with wide public presentation. This initiative aimed to encourage men to embrace knitting as a hobby and was part of the company's marketing strategy to promote their knitting products. In February 1938, the story was picked up by the Fox Movietone News (Fox Tönende Wochenschau) and the film was shown in cinemas across Czechoslovakia.

Newspaper articles about the Gentlemen's Club for Knitting in Prague were published across several European markets and in the United States.

In 1937, Waldes & Co. participated in the International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life in Paris (Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne), the company's exhibition being part of the Czechoslovak pavilion. It received two Grand Prix awards for its presentation and advertising. The accolades from Paris were then communicated in contemporary advertisements in major markets and to their business partners. This was the company's last significant marketing success before the Munich Treaty in 1938 and the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939.

During almost four decades of existence the company became a world-renowned manufacturer of modern fastening devices, particularly for clothing, with its own precision wire drawing mills, machine works, letter press, lithographic printing works, rubber vulcanizing plant, celluloid goods factory but, most importantly, with its own marketing style. This was originally based on the intuition of Jindřich Waldes but later grew with contributions from other marketing and advertising professionals.

## Conclusion and implications

The examination of Waldes & Co., and the marketing strategies surrounding the brand identity from 1902 to 1939, reveals the ingenuity and foresight of a company that not only embraced technological advancements but also integrated cultural elements of fashion and art into its marketing approach. The insights gained from the archival research highlight how Jindřich Waldes and his collaborators adeptly utilized both innovative products and dynamic marketing techniques to carve a niche for his company in a highly competitive global marketplace.

From its inception in 1902, Waldes & Co. established itself as a significant player in the dress fastening industry. The strategic placement within the socio-economic context of the Austro-Hungarian Empire allowed the company to flourish, particularly due to its focus on export and geographical diversification. The implementation of design feedback from renowned fashion designers showcased a sophisticated understanding of branding, setting the stage for the playful Miss KIN not merely as a product but as a stylish statement in the fashion world.

A crucial turning point for Waldes & Co. came with its marketing initiatives in the United States. The introduction of the Koh-i-noor fastener, complemented by a well-versed marketing campaign that included testimonials from prominent fashion figures and a playful branding strategy symbolized by the Miss KIN logo, revolutionized how fasteners were perceived. By transforming functional objects into fashionable accessories, Waldes & Co. positioned itself at the forefront of a trend that would resonate with consumers on multiple continents.

The history of Waldes & Co. offers valuable lessons for modern businesses. Starting as a small "start-up" in Prague, the company successfully introduced its Koh-i-noor snap button to international markets with established competition. Rather than relying on offering low-cost products from a region on the global periphery, the company focused on building an internationally recognized brand based on contemporary U.S. marketing principles, which were not well-known in Central Europe at the time. Jindřich Waldes was deeply involved in studying the U.S. market in person, exploring not just marketing but also modern management and sales techniques. He spent about ten years in total in the U.S., establishing strong networks with business and expert partners, a unique level of firsthand experience among Czech entrepreneurs. He also encouraged his younger colleagues to undergo similar learning experiences in the U.S.

For today's marketing professionals, it is interesting to see that Waldes & Co.'s approach to advertising and sales organization over 110 years ago was quite advanced (see, for example, Kotler and Keller, 2013; Pavlů, 2018). They tackled questions which we still face today but without the technologies and methods that we now have, understanding their clients in individual markets and promoting a client-centered approach within the company. This led them to use market research and direct communication strategies, focusing on women and dressmakers to understand their preferences. After a decade, they rebranded using "Miss KIN" to present a modern concept for developed markets, establishing themselves as a global company. They created a geographically diverse production network with factories in Prague, Dresden, Warsaw, New York, Paris, and Barcelona, allowing market access across five continents. Waldes & Co. standardized marketing tools across their markets while supplementing them with effective public relations efforts, adeptly employing celebrity and fashion designer endorsements and actively participating in international trade fairs, to boost visibility among stakeholders. They introduced new products like zippers and fashionable fastening solutions to meet the evolving needs of female consumers. By the late 1930s, Waldes & Co. was producing thousands of different products under the "Miss KIN" logo with the slogan "The symbol of quality".

The achievement of receiving two Grand Prix awards at the 1937 World Fair in Paris is emblematic of the brand's international recognition and solidified its reputation as a leading innovator in the industry. These accolades not only served as a testament to the quality and artistic merit of the products but also enhanced the company's visibility and appeal within the global market. Moreover, initiatives such as the Gentlemen's Club for Knitting illustrates Waldes & Co.'s dedication to expanding knitting as a cultural phenomenon, thus broadening its consumer base. The partnership with institutions including fashion houses and the engagement with international exhibitions contributed to the ongoing narrative of the company's identity, allowing it to continually adapt and thrive.

In summary, Waldes & Co.'s journey from a modest workshop in Prague to an internationally recognized brand underscores the crucial interplay between innovation, marketing strategy, and cultural relevance. The legacy of Waldes & Co. reminds us that successful marketing transcends product functionality, tapping into the aspirations and identities of consumers. This study not only reveals the historical significance of Waldes & Co. but also sets a foundation for further research into the evolution of marketing strategies in the fashion industry in Central Europe throughout the twentieth century.

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- a. The advertisements in the United States presented only the Long Island factory.
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- a. A story about the museum was also published in the United States (1921).
- b. A visit of Paul Poiret to the museum was used for an advertisement in the United States (1924).

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- a. A French advertisement offers a strip with a Koh-i-noor button to join straps of underwear.
- b. A German advertisement for suspenders “without sewing”.
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- b. A sample for dressmakers promoting the Kover-zip.
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- a. A leaflet presenting Waldes & Co. with its six factories.
- b. A Czechoslovak advertisement stating that the company is producing 1800 different items every day.

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Figure 1. MISS KIN evolution (1912–1937).

- a. The American actress Elisabeth Coyens was a model for Miss KIN.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

669x865mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 1. MISS KIN evolution (1912–1937).  
b. The first Miss KIN was without the Koh-i-noor button in her eye.

Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

587x526mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 1. MISS KIN evolution (1912–1937).

c. Miss KIN with the Koh-i-noor button in her left eye as a monocle, becoming the trademark of Waldes & Co.

Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

231x335mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 1. MISS KIN evolution (1912–1937).  
d. The playful logo for the New Year Greeting in 1935.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

445x520mm (72 x 72 DPI)

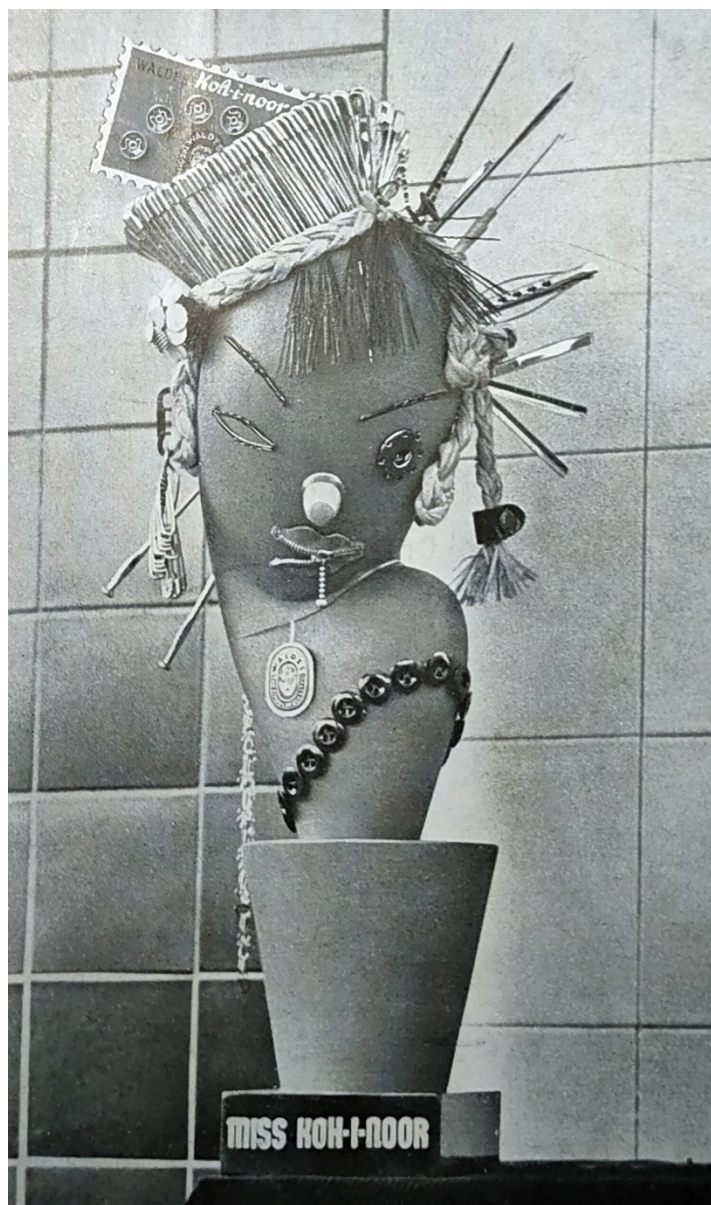


Figure 1. MISS KIN evolution (1912–1937).  
e. A surrealistic Miss KIN statue for the World Fair in Paris in 1937.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

439x738mm (72 x 72 DPI)

No.

1272-Aviation Cap (Australian wool, hand crochet, plain white, white and sky blue, white and tan, or tan and havanna).....

Coupons

117

No.

1273-Lady's Knitted Vest ("Hug Me Tight," fancy rack stitch, 2 rows of pretty pearl buttons. In navy, white, gray, red or black, sizes 24 to 44).....

Coupons

122

No.

1274-Infant's Sweater Coat (Australian yarn, rack stitch. In white and baby blue, will fit a 1, 2, or 3 years old child. Sizes 22, 24 and 26).....

Coupons

166

No.

1275-Combination Knitted Romper with Cap to Match (Very serviceable. In two sizes, large and small and fits children from 1 to 5 years of age. Comes in white, gray or red).....

Coupons

169

No.

1278-Imitation Ermine Fur Set (Pocketbook on muff, scarf small zaza, good for children from 1 to 5 years of age. Some sizes in a brown coony).....

Coupons

156

No.

1279-Lamb Set of Furs (White, good for child from 1 to 5 years).....

Coupons

117

No.

1280-White Thibet Set of Furs (Muff trimmed with ribbon bow good for child from 2 years to 6 years of age).....

Coupons

229

No.

1281-Imitation Ermine Fur Set (Combination; pocket book on muff, scarf zaza with silk ornaments. Can be had in plain white or brown with white border, also plain brown for children from 2 to 8 years).....

Coupons

256

ONLY GENUINE WHEN STAMPED K-I-N



U.S. PAT. PENDING

# Koh-i-noor

PAT. WALDESPRING

## DRESS FASTENER

**What M. Worth says of Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners.**  
*(Ladies will scarcely need reminding of the unique position occupied by M. Worth in the world of Dress.)*  
PARIS: 7 Rue de la Paix. LONDON: 4 Burlington Street, W.  
May 25, 1905.  
"In reply to your enquiry I am pleased to say that, after thoroughly testing your Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners, I have found them perfectly satisfactory in every way. Kindly accept my best thanks for introducing these Koh-I-Noor press studs to me."—Worth.

**Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners praised by "Redfern."**  
*(Redfern is a name world-recognized in the realms of Fashion.)*  
PARIS, April, 1905.  
"I beg to inform you that your Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners have given entire satisfaction and I shall continue the use of Koh-I-Noors for blouses and skirts."—Redfern.

**"Koh-I-Noors" give satisfaction to Drecoll.**  
*The world's greatest costumiers are unanimous in their praise of Koh-I-Noors.*  
PARIS and VIENNA, April, 1905.  
"We regularly use your Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners for our skirts and blouses and are glad to be able to say that we are thoroughly satisfied with them."—Ch. Drecoll.

**Another noted Paris House extols Koh-I-Noors.**  
May, 1905.  
"We have tried your Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners and it gives us great pleasure to inform you that these press studs give our customers and ourselves great satisfaction."—Maison Lévilon.

**A noted Parisian Tailor says of Koh-I-Noors.**  
PARIS and LONDON, May, 1905.  
"We have the pleasure to inform you that your Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners have been thoroughly tested on our skirts and costumes and that we have found them to give entire satisfaction."—G. Doeuillet.

**Testimony from another well-known Paris House.**  
May, 1905.  
"We beg to express every satisfaction with your Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners which we use regularly for our blouses and skirts."—Maison Laferrière.

**"I consider Koh-I-Noors the best Fasteners."**  
PARIS, April, 1905.  
"I am indeed pleased to inform you of the satisfaction Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners are giving daily, and I shall continue to use them for frocks and costumes as I consider them the best."—Rouff.

**Will continue to use Koh-I-Noors.**  
PARIS, April, 1905.  
"In reply to your favour we have to express our complete satisfaction with Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners and we propose continuing their use for blouses and skirts."—Martial, Armand & Co. Ltd.

**Francis & Co. are pleased with Koh-I-Noors.**  
9 RUE AUBERT, PARIS, May, 1905.  
"It is with pleasure we write you to say that your Koh-I-Noor Dress Fasteners have given us entire satisfaction. We are now using them regularly for our skirts and blouses."—Francis & Co.  
(16)

Figure 2. The beginning of the American advertisement campaign.  
a. Testimonials of fashion houses from the US premium book, 1912.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

671x1032mm (72 x 72 DPI)

Chicago December 26, 1914

*Dry Goods* **REPORTER**  
**WHOLESALE'S NUMBER**  
*Including Monthly Variety Section*

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

*"Good-bye  
 Old Look & Eye"*

**To the Jobber's Salesman:—**  
 This Display Cabinet Works for You While You're Away

It stocks 14 gross assorted Koh-I-Noors  
 —sells by continuous counter-display  
 —selects the right size for each fabric  
 —takes stock for you at a glance  
 —gets re-orders for you right along

It is Free to your customer with an order  
 for 14 gross assorted sizes and finishes

**Koh-i-noor**  
 SNAP FASTENER  
*Pat. Walde & Co.*  
 (one gross each 5-6, 4-0, 3-6, 2-0, 0, 1, 2, black and white)

**Take This With You on Your Next Trip**  
**WALDES & CO. 137 Fifth Avenue NEW YORK CITY**  
*The World's Largest Snap Fasteners Manufacturers*

Figure 2. The beginning of the American advertisement campaign.  
 b. The Dry Goods Reporter in 1914.  
 Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

684x1003mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 3. The advertisement for the German market presented only the Dresden factory.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

797x1109mm (72 x 72 DPI)

Now you are SURE.  
No "pull-apart perils" when  
you use Koh-i-noor  
Fasteners.

They always hold—they will  
not slip open.

The little *Waldepring* and  
curved sockets have made mil-  
lions of American women  
confident of their good ap-  
pearance in the dance,  
on the athletic field, and  
in every active pursuit.

At your dealer's, a size  
for every use.

WALDES & COMPANY, Inc.  
315 Fifth Ave., New York  
Factory: Long Island City, N. Y.

**Koh-i-noor**  
TRIUMPH FASTENER  
*Patented Spring and Holes*

**Advance Proof Roto Advertising**

This is the first of a series that will carry the Koh-i-noor message convincingly to  
your trade through the Rotogravure Sections of Leading Newspapers.

**NATIONAL MAGAZINES**

Now carrying Koh-i-noor advertising in a large way include the following:

<b>DRESSMAKERS</b>	<b>TRADE PAPERS</b>
Bon Ton	Dry Goods Economist
Elite Styles	Dry Goods Reporter
Costume Royal	Drygoodsman
	Atlantic Coast Merchant
<b>HOME CIRCULATION</b>	Pacific Coast Merchant
Butterick Quarterlies	Garment Manufacturers' Index
Fashionable Dress	Women's Wear
Delineator	Daily Garment News
Fashion Art	Notion and Novelty Review
McCall's Magazine and Quarterlies	Dresses
Pictorial Review and Quarterlies	Better Waists
Style	Apparel Producer
Vogue and Quarterlies	
Woman's Home Companion	

This advertising and the well-known merits of Koh-i-noor will bring you the business.  
Order as you used to and we'll get the goods to you quickly.

**WALDES & CO., Inc., 315 Fifth Avenue, New York**  
Factory, Long Island City, New York

Figure 4. The opening of the factory in the United States was accompanied by continuous massive advertising campaigns.

a. The advertisements in the United States presented only the Long Island factory.

Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

505x1016mm (72 x 72 DPI)

July, 1922

THE NOTION AND NOVELTY REVIEW

3



**You Are Cordially Invited**

to visit our exhibits where we will demonstrate our newest selling plans, which we have employed in co-operation with our trade to such great success, that the first six months of the year 1922 have surpassed all previous records for Koh-i-noor sales.

The merchandise, selling helps and methods are yours to inspect and investigate at:

National Merchandise Fair Grand Central Palace (Booth 340) New York, N. Y. August 7th to 25th, 1922	Baltimore Fashion Show Howard Street Armory (Booth 47) Baltimore, Md. August 7th to 19th, 1922	Chicago Merchandise Fair The Coliseum (Booth 311) Chicago, Ill. August 1st to 11th, 1922
--	---	---

*Because of 3 U. S. A. Patents there is no substitute for* **Koh-i-noor**

Where the best Snap is made



Koh-i-noor Factory, Long Island City, New York

THE TIME SAVER

THE BEST SNAP

**WALDES & COMPANY, INC.**  
World's Largest Snap Fastener Manufacturers  
LONG ISLAND CITY, N. Y.

Figure 4. The opening of the factory in the United States was accompanied by continuous massive advertising campaigns.

b. The campaigns always included products demonstrations and participation at fashion shows and different fairs.

Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

800x1076mm (72 x 72 DPI)

May, 1922

THE NOTION AND NOVELTY REVIEW

*The Woman's Institute of Domestic Arts & Sciences*

will send in June to its

153,000

Students of Dressmaking a treatise on

**Koh-i-noor**

"the time-saver"

THE BEST SNAP



THESE Students are located all over the country. Through the Institute's authoritative recognition of Koh-i-noor superiority, Koh-i-noor dealers everywhere will feel an increase in business from local consumers.

Order from your jobber

WALDES & CO., INC., LONG ISLAND CITY, N. Y.  
Largest Manufacturer of Snap Fasteners in the World

*The Home of the Woman's Institute of Domestic Arts & Sciences Scranton, Pa.*

The largest institution in the world engaged in teaching women the Domestic Arts and Sciences



Figure 4. The opening of the factory in the United States was accompanied by continuous massive advertising campaigns.

c. Finding relevant stakeholders to promote Walde goods was the key.

Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

709x953mm (72 x 72 DPI)

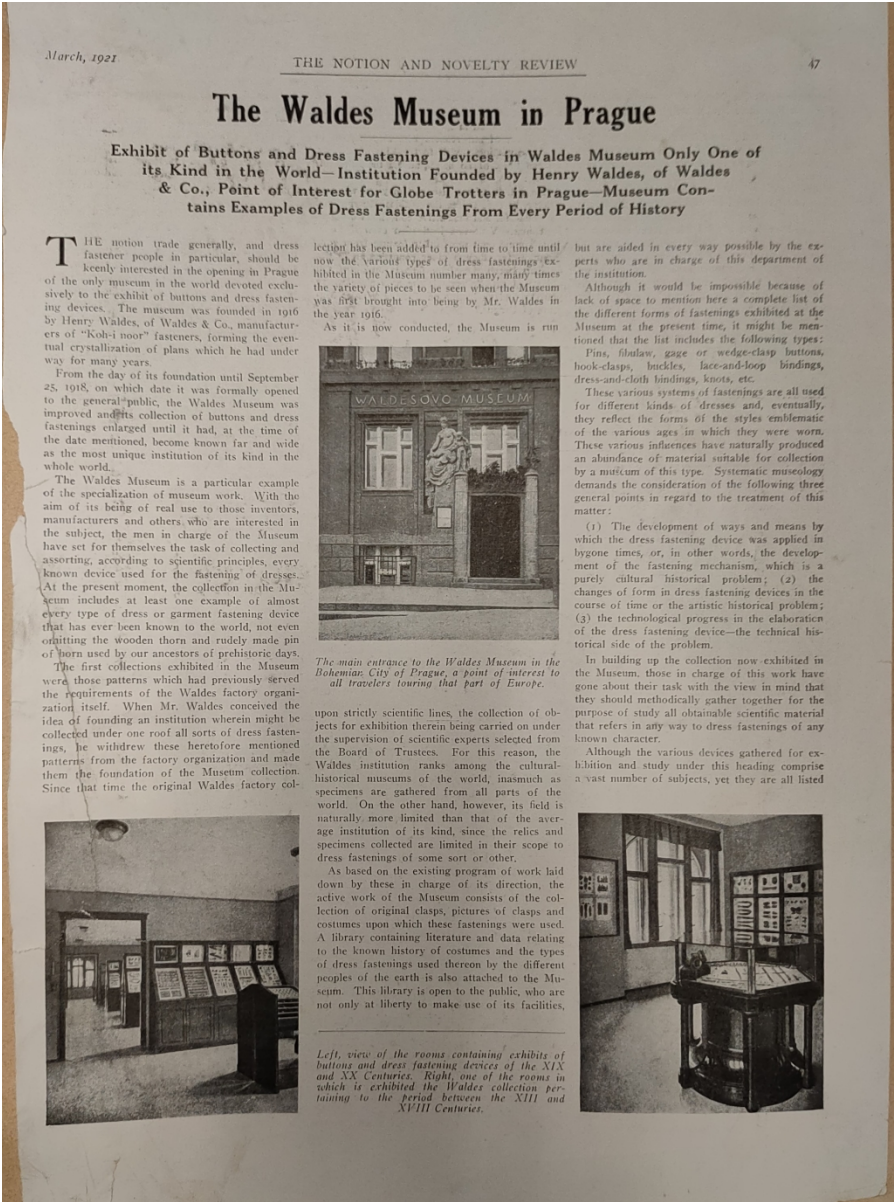


Figure 5. The Waldes Museum of Buttons and Fasteners in Prague was part of the marketing strategy. It built relationships with key stakeholders and increased the company's international reputation.  
a. A story about the museum was also published in the United States (1921).  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

784x1053mm (72 x 72 DPI)

PAUL POIRET says "Koh-i-noor is indispensable to all my Creations."

*Prague*  
PARIS, le 12. Mars. 1924.

PAUL POIRET  
COUVRIER  
FAVSTHONORE 107  
ET AVENUE VICTOR  
EMMANUEL III 26  
PARIS TEL ELYSEES 15-80  
46-82  
ADR TELEGR: PAULROB  
REG. DU. CT. SEINE N° 25.338

Monsieur,  
C'est avec un vif plaisir que j'ai parcouru les  
salles de votre musée et j'ai recueilli de  
cette histoire des costumes.  
J'en ai beaucoup pour y puiser et y puiser des  
inspiration nouvelles.  
Avec un grand amour de votre art et une grande  
conscience de votre technique, nous ne pourrions manquer d'atteindre  
la perfection matérielle qui caractérise les produits Koh-i-noor, devenue  
indispensable dans tous vos créations.

*Paul Poiret*

PRAGUE, March 12, 1924.  
I went with great pleasure through the halls of  
your fascinating museum which is a review of the his-  
tory of costume.  
I will not fail to come again and send designers  
to get new inspirations.  
With such an affection for your art and with  
such a scientific knowledge of your technique you cannot  
fail to achieve the manufacturing perfection so charac-  
teristic of all Koh-i-noor products which are indis-  
pensable to all our creations. PAUL POIRET.

**WALDES**  
**Koh-i-noor**  
**TIME SAVER SNAP**  
RUST PROOF  
EASY TO SEW  
THE BEST SNAP  
MADE IN U.S.A.

13 Sizes  
Rust Proof  
Extra Flat

4 PATENTED FEATURES  
The Beveled Eyelet prevents  
thread cutting.  
The Curved Walde's  
spring eye freely and re-  
turns smoothly.  
The Safety Socket prevents  
snapping from side strain.  
The Guide Hole allows free  
insert without measuring or  
marking.

BEVELLED  
EYELET  
CURVED  
WALDES  
SPRING  
SAFETY  
SOCKET  
THE GUIDE  
HOLE

MUSEUM  
DUPUIS & WARD  
Prague  
WALDES & CO., Inc.

"Koh-i-noors are essential to all our creations"

writes Paul Poiret, the famous fashion creator of Paris, in the letter reproduced above. In the  
photograph M. Poiret is shown (at the extreme right) on the occasion of his visit to the Walde's  
Museum in Prague early this year. Koh-i-noors are essential also in the workrooms of every American  
dressmaker who values her reputation for neat, well finished work. Insist upon them at the notion  
counter of your store.

**WALDES & CO., Inc.** **Long Island City, N. Y.**  
World's Largest Snap Fastener Manufacturers  
Also makers of Koh-i-noor Hook and Eye Tape and Koh-i-noor Snap Fastener Tape.

Symbol of Quality

Figure 5. The Walde's Museum of Buttons and Fasteners in Prague was part of the marketing strategy. It built relationships with key stakeholders and increased the company's international reputation.  
b. A visit of Paul Poiret to the museum was used for an advertisement in the United States (1924).  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

920x1215mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 6. Waldes & Co. was always looking for new products during the 1920s and 1930s.  
a. A French advertisement offers a strip with a Koh-i-noor button to join straps of underwear.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

594x1037mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 6. Waldes & Co. was always looking for new products during the 1920s and 1930s.  
b. A German advertisement for suspenders "without sewing".  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

1027x711mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 6. Waldes & Co. was always looking for new products during the 1920s and 1930s.  
c. A French advertisement for changeable cuffs.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

408x818mm (72 x 72 DPI)

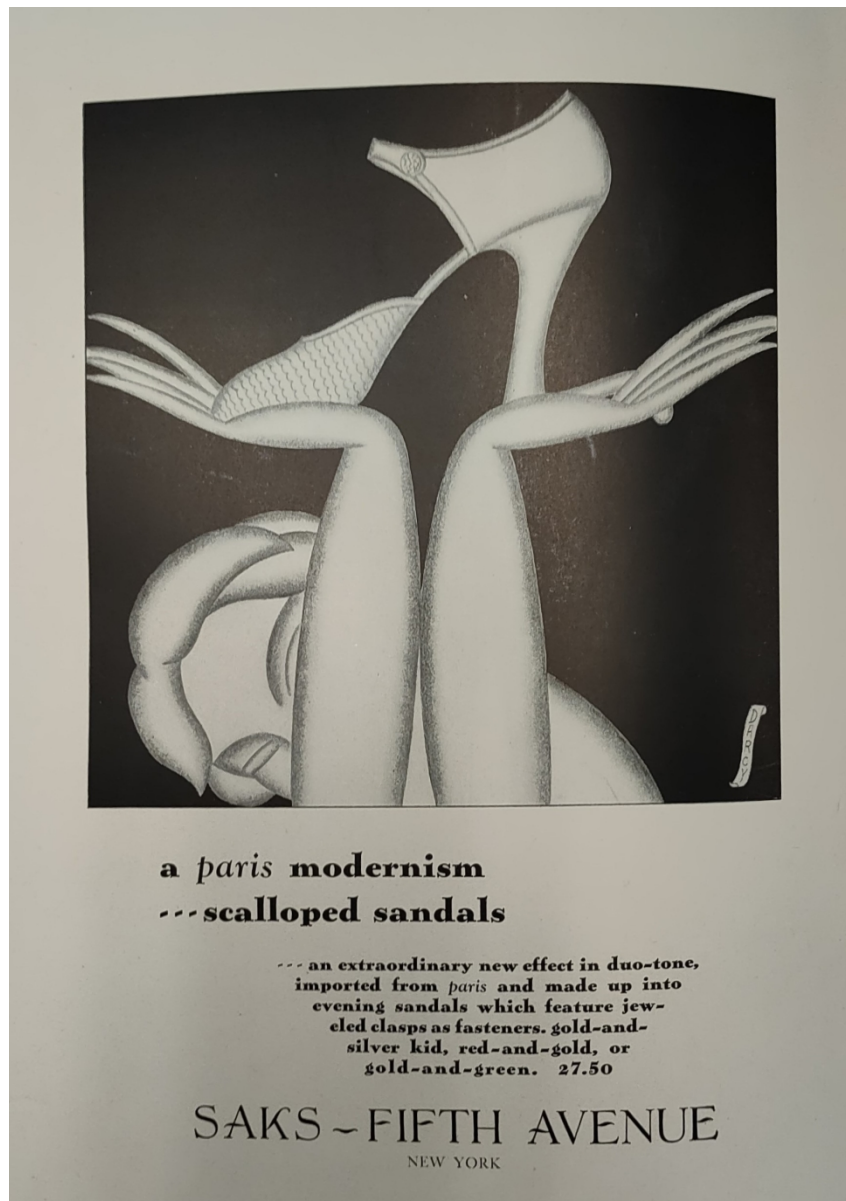


Figure 7. Production of (jewel) clasps and other metal parts for shoemakers and shoe manufacturers was an important part of the Waldes & Co. business.

a. Saks Fifth Avenue advertisement with Waldes jewel clasps.

Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

616x869mm (72 x 72 DPI)

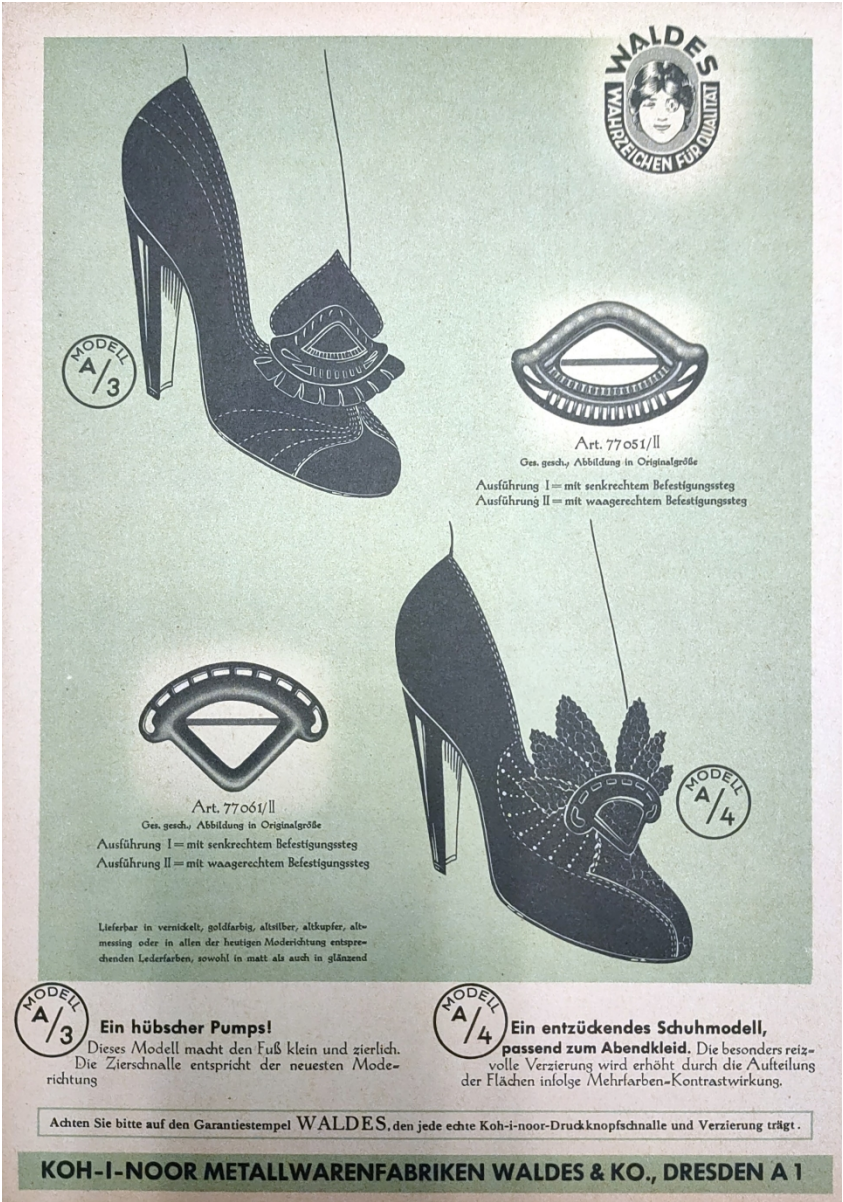


Figure 7. Production of (jewel) clasps and other metal parts for shoemakers and shoe manufacturers was an important part of the Waldes & Co. business.  
b. A sample book for shoemakers in Germany.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

706x1007mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 7. Production of (jewel) clasps and other metal parts for shoemakers and shoe manufacturers was an important part of the Waldes & Co. business. An advertisement for the shoe fastener Regula. Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

687x854mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 7. Production of (jewel) clasps and other metal parts for shoemakers and shoe manufacturers was an important part of the Waldes & Co. business.

d. A Swedish advertisement for shoe snaps.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

710x1045mm (72 x 72 DPI)

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**170**  
**TÄNZERINNEN**  
*des weltbekannten Vergnügungsetablissement*  
**MOULIN ROUGE IN PARIS**  
*tragen auf ihren Schuhen*  
*mit grossem Erfolg*  
**Kohinoor** WALDES  
auswechselbare  
**DRUCKSPANGEN**  
(Patentiert)  
Gibt es einen kräftigeren Beweis  
einer absoluten Verlässlichkeit ?  
dieser zierlichen Spange,  
welche leicht an jedem  
Schuh anzubringen und  
jeder Robe anzupassen  
ist?  
Für die Qualität bürgt  
**WALDES & COMP. PRAG XIII.**

45 Figure 7. Production of (jewel) clasps and other metal parts for shoemakers and shoe manufacturers was an  
46 important part of the Waldes & Co. business.

47 e. A German advertisement for shoe clips, which "are used by 170 dancers from the Moulin Rouge".

48 Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

49 579x869mm (72 x 72 DPI)

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DAILY NEWS RECORD, TUESDAY, MAY 14, 1935

# Style Flashes From London

By Cable from LONDON BUREAU  
Copyright, 1935, Fairchild News Service

## Promoting Zipper Flies

For the first time Harrods are promoting gray flannel sport trousers with zipper flies. It is understood that Harrods are using the **Walden covered zipper**, and the idea is to introduce it into other ranges later. This is the first important retail ready-to-wear promotion of this style, which hitherto has been chiefly confined here to custom tailors.

—DAILY NEWS RECORD, APRIL 29, 1935

In England, as in America, smart, conservative, well-dressed men prefer Kover-Zip as a closure for clothes because:

- ★ Kover-Zip is in good taste—there is no flashy gleam of metal.
- ★ Kover-Zip is always in harmony with the fabric of the garment.
- ★ Kover-Zip gives a smooth seamline finish; it insures smart appearance, correct fit.
- ★ Kover-Zip is superior in design, in materials, in workmanship—it is the finest slide fastener made.
- ★ Typical of the preference for Kover-Zip is its acceptance by American college men. A recent poll of fifty thousand students, made by college newspapers in thirty leading colleges, showed *Eighty-Five Per Cent* prefer Kover-Zip as the closure for all men's wear.

# KOVER ZIP

Write or phone for prices and full information to

**WALDES KOH-I-NOOR, INC.**  
LONG ISLAND CITY, N. Y.  
PHONE: BRonsides 6-6540

World's Largest Manufacturers of Modern Fastening Devices; *Originators* of the Largest Number of Patented Device Patents

PARIS PRAGUE WARSAW BARCELONA Branch in LONDON



Figure 8. Kover-zip was the innovation of 1930s.  
a. A US advertisement for Kover-zip.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

767x1243mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 8. Kover-zip was the innovation of 1930s.  
b. A sample for dressmakers promoting the Kover-zip.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

788x1041mm (72 x 72 DPI)

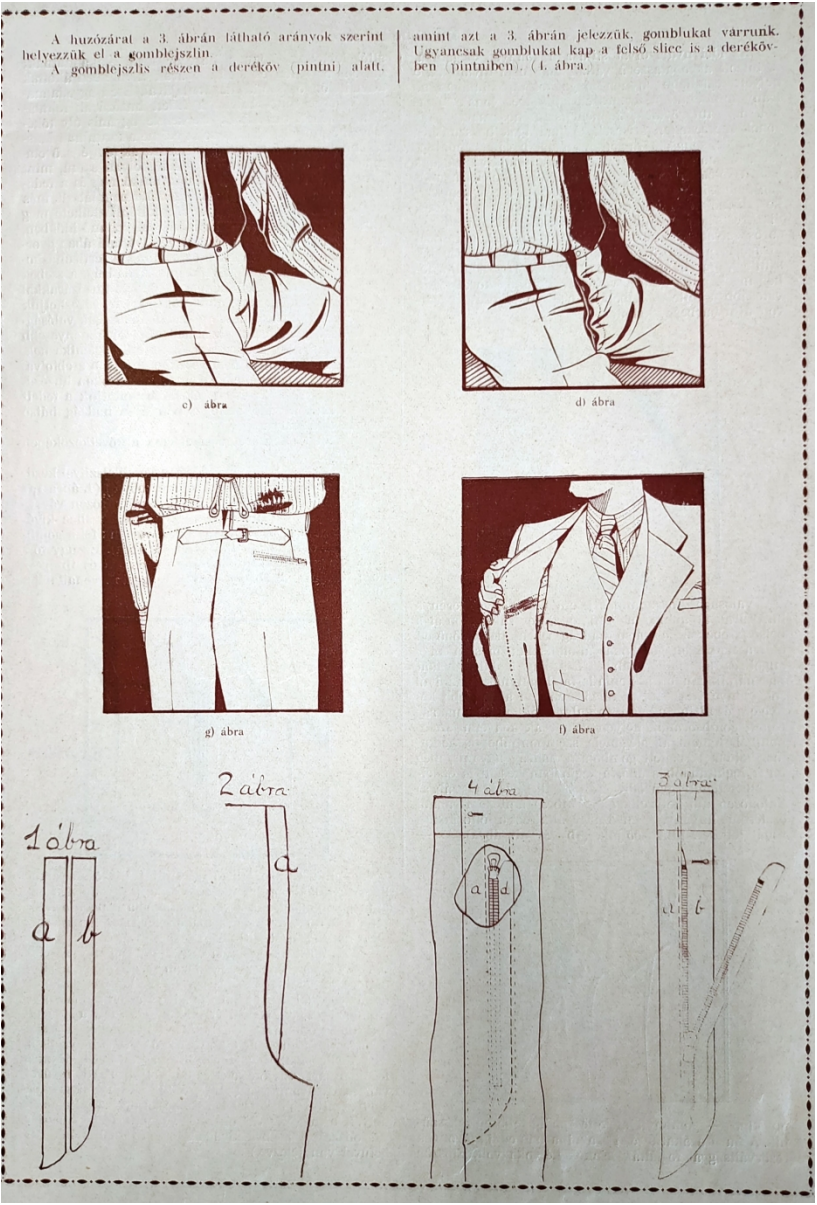


Figure 8. Kover-zip was the innovation of 1930s.  
c. A Hungarian supplement to a sample book explaining the advantages of trousers with Kover-Zip flies.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

885x1304mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 9. Waldes & Co. before World War II.  
a. A leaflet presenting Waldes & Co. with its six factories.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

651x927mm (72 x 72 DPI)



Figure 9. Waldes & Co. before World War II.  
b. A Czechoslovak advertisement stating that the company is producing 1800 different items every day.  
Source: Courtesy of the State Regional Archives in Prague

598x886mm (72 x 72 DPI)