

100 Years of Berli Jucker
Compiled by Walter Meyer



Dear Reader,

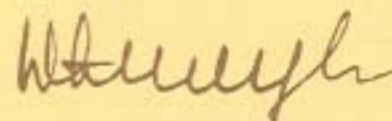
The Berli Jucker story is one of human enterprise and achievement. Since Albert Jucker started the firm in Bangkok in 1882, the company has served Thailand under 5 reigns of the Chakri Dynasty, and has survived two world wars.

In 1982, we celebrate our Centennial year, coinciding with the Kingdom's Rattanakosin Bicentennial, marking 200 years of peace and prosperity under the Chakri Dynasty.

We feel it appropriate to publish this collection of pictures and a short story of the growth of Berli Jucker over the last 100 years to serve both as a record for posterity and a souvenir of our Centennial.

Unfortunately, the records of Berli Jucker were destroyed during the war. For data on the firm's history before World War II, we are indebted to the National Library of the Government of the Republic of Singapore who kindly put at our disposal the Colonial Directory and the Straits Directory from 1873 until 1934, listing all the foreign firms established in Thailand at the time together with the names of partners, European staff and the firm's principal agencies.

All other information was obtained by me verbally from members of the Jucker and Berli families still alive after World War II. To them I am also grateful for the pre-war pictures given to me from their private collection.



Walter Meyer
Chairman, Berli Jucker Co. Ltd.
Bangkok, November 1982.



It all started in Winterthur, Switzerland, where on the 26th August, 1844, Albert Jucker was born, the only son of an old established Swiss middle class family of that town. After attending primary and high school, he had the urge to leave the narrow confines of his town in order to learn international trade and see the world. As a German-speaking Swiss, his first aim was to get fluent in French and so he left for Paris at 19, not knowing that his ultimate destination would be Siam, and that he was never to see his home country again.

In Paris, Albert found employment with a French merchant house, Malherbe & Jullien & Co., trading mainly in French Indochina with a branch office in Saigon. When they opened a new branch office in Siam in 1866, in the reign of His Majesty King Mongkut, Albert was sent there at the age of 22 to work as an Assistant, becoming Manager of the firm in 1872. He was able to persuade his cousin Henry Sigg, also from Winterthur, to follow him to Siam. Henry arrived in Bangkok in 1873 to join the firm as an Assistant.

It was in 1882 when Bangkok celebrated its Centennial in the reign of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn, that Albert Jucker had the idea of setting up his own firm. The French partners, L. Malherbe and St. Cyr Jullien, agreed to sell their shares in the Siamese venture to Albert. Jucker & Sigg & Co., a Swiss company, and the precursor of Berli Jucker today, was born. With his cousin Henry Sigg as partner, Albert also employed two young Swiss, B.E. Mohn and A. Hoffmann, as Assistants.

Albert Jucker lays the foundation stone in 1882



Albert Jucker

Jucker & Sigg & Co. continued the activities of Malherbe & Jullien & Co. as general merchants, ship chandlers, exporters of teak, rice millers (they owned one of Bangkok's largest rice mills, the Samsen Steam and Rice Mill), rice exporters, as well as insurance and banking agents. Among the banking agencies taken over from Malherbe & Jullien & Co. was the representation of the Banque de l'Indochine and the Comptoir d'Escompte de Paris. In 1885, the firm also acquired the agency of the Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation. Among the insurance companies whom they represented were the Swiss Lloyd Transport Insurance Co., Winterthur, the Switzerland Marine Insurance Co., Zurich, the Universal Marine Insurance Co., Ltd., London, the North British & Mercantile Insurance Co., Ltd. and the Transatlantic Fire Insurance Co., Hamburg. They also represented several shipping companies, among them Compagnie Nationale de Navigation, Marseilles, and the Navigazione Generale Italiana, Genoa.

Albert Jucker possessed drive and enthusiasm. At the age of 38 he was already the principal owner and manager of a prosperous Swiss firm, and was well known both in the business community and at the Royal Court. He was decorated by His Majesty King Chulalongkorn and by King Umberto I of Italy who conferred on him the title of Cavaliere and made him

Jucker & Sigg established itself

Honorary Consul of Italy in Siam.

Life in Bangkok at that time had its hazards. Cholera and typhoid epidemics were frequent and many young Westerners did not survive these hardships. Albert Jucker was among the unfortunate ones. He died of cholera on the 3rd December, 1885, at the age of 41, leaving behind a widow with five children, the youngest of whom was only five months old.

Jucker & Sigg & Co. had taken over the office of Malherbe & Jullien & Co., situated in the old Portuguese settlement of Santa Cruz Village (today called Kudi-chin) on the west bank of the river, close to the old Catholic Santa Cruz church which was built in Thai style when the Portuguese colony moved from Ayudhya to Dhonburi around 1780. It was re-built in European architectural style in 1916.



The Mae Nam Chao Phraya as it looked in Albert Jucker's time

Thais at that time had a different outlook on beauty. Siamese ladies wore their hair short-cropped like men, chewed betel nut which blackened their teeth, and wore traditional Siamese clothes. Marriages between Westerners and Siamese were rare. In the Santa Cruz village, however, Siamese girls of Portuguese origin, attending the Santa Cruz church school, wore long shining black hair and dressed Western style. On his daily walks between his office on the river bank and his lodgings behind the Santa Cruz church, Albert Jucker had to pass the house of a Siamese family of Portuguese ancestry, da Cruz, and it did not take long for Albert to fall in love with their pretty daughter Paula. They were married in 1868 when Albert had just turned 24 and their first daughter Mary (later to marry Albert Berli) was born in 1870, followed by sons Henry in 1873, Albert in 1880, Edward in 1882, and youngest daughter Elise, in 1885.

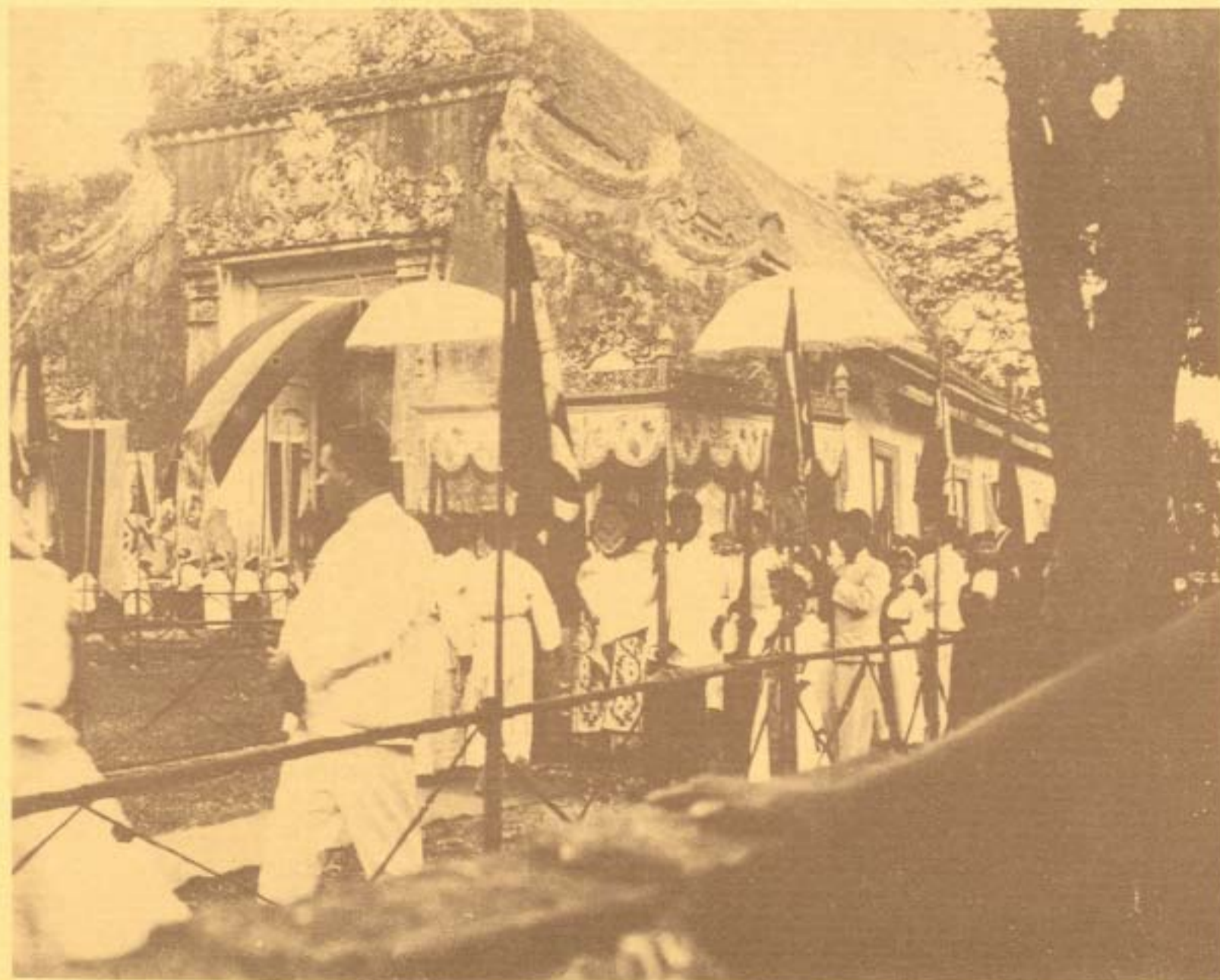
Paula Jucker was a courageous woman. When her husband died, she thought only of the future of her five children. She decided that they should be brought up in their father's country, Switzerland, and in 1886 she booked passage



Albert Jucker meets Paula da Cruz



on a ship to Genoa for the whole family, settling down in Winterthur, in a country with a language and culture that was strange to her. Through her singleminded dedication, all her children had a fine education in Switzerland.



The old Santa Cruz church

In Bangkok, Paula was well known in Court circles as "Mae Phan" and often visited the Royal Palace to sell jewelry. In his "Travel Tales" (in Thai called "Klai Baan"), His Majesty King Chulalongkorn describes how he met "Mae Phan" again in Zurich during his visit to Europe in 1907. While in Switzerland, Paula Jucker, born a Catholic, travelled to Rome for an audience with Pope Pius X and was the first Thai woman ever to be received by a Pope.

When all the children were grown up, Paula returned to Bangkok for good, spending the rest of her life in her beautiful residence on Surawongse Road where she died in 1934 at the age of 84.

Of her sons, the eldest, Henry, returned to Siam in 1901 to join the firm as



Paula Jucker in 1890 with her five children (from left to right) Henry, Edward, Albert, Elise and Mary.

partner and at the outbreak of World War I returned to Switzerland where he managed the firm's Geneva office and died there in 1954. The second son, Albert, returned to Siam in 1901, joined the firm in Bangkok as a partner and later became manager of the firm's branch office in Nakhorn Srithammarat where he died in 1936. He was famous as an excellent tennis player and won many tennis tournaments both in Switzerland and Siam, as well as a big-game hunter in the jungles of South Thailand. For many years he even kept his own private zoo in Nakhorn Srithammarat.

The story of the Jucker family



Edward Jucker in 1912.

It was third son Edward, who contributed most to the firm's growth. Graduating from the Polytechnicum Technical University of Zurich with a Master's degree in engineering in 1908, he practised as a mechanical engineer in Switzerland and Germany. He returned to Siam in 1912 and tried to develop the firm's engineering business. Not finding sufficient scope in this field of activity at that time, he joined his brother Albert in Nakhorn Srithammarat where he looked after the firm's tin and wolfram mining business until his return to Bangkok in 1943.



After World War II, Edward Jucker presided over the firm, first as Managing Partner, and when Berli Jucker went public in 1965, as its first Chairman. He retired in 1968 and died in Bangkok in 1976 at the age of 94, survived by an only daughter, Ella Jucker, who still resides in Bangkok as one of the firm's main shareholders.

As for the two daughters, the younger one, Elise, married a Swiss banker and never returned to Siam. She died in Switzerland in 1970, survived by an only son, Max Moser, also a Swiss banker.

It was the elder daughter, Mary, who was to play an important part in the firm's future.

After the death of Albert Jucker in 1885, Jucker & Sigg & Co. continued their activities under the management of the surviving partner, Henry Sigg. He suffered from dyspepsia and was forced to return to Switzerland in 1890 where he died in his home town of Winterthur.

It is interesting to note that when the famous English novelist Joseph Conrad came to Bangkok in 1888 to take command of the Barque "Otago", he had her outfitted at Jucker & Sigg & Co. He describes his meeting with Henry Sigg in Chapter 19 of his famous novel "Lord Jim", but in the novel he calls him "Sieg-mund Yucker" of "Yucker Brothers".



Albert Jucker junior (right) on one of his many hunting expeditions.

Meanwhile, another young Swiss pioneer, Albert Berli of Zurich, at the age of 21, decided to try his fortune in Siam and joined Jucker & Sigg & Co. in Bangkok as an assistant in 1888. After the death of Henry Sigg, the Jucker family commissioned Albert Berli with the firm's liquidation. The Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation appreciated his talents as a promising young businessman and backed him to establish his own firm to take over the business of Jucker & Sigg & Co. In 1896, Albert Berli, together with a Swiss partner, R. Zuercher, established A. Berli & Co., continuing operations as general merchants, rice millers, exporters of rice, timber, gums, lacs and hides. Albert Berli also started an import business and was the first to introduce Swiss canned milk into Siam, later adding Swiss, British and German textiles, Swiss dyestuffs, German hardware, Dutch cocoa powder and American paper tissues.

Albert Berli joins the firm in 1888

In 1905, Albert Berli moved the office of A. Berli & Co. to the east bank of the river close to the Rajawongse Landing where it remained until World War II.



The Berli Jucker office (right) at the Rajawongse Landing next to Diethelm, another Swiss firm (left).

In order to broaden distribution throughout the country, Albert Berli established a branch office in Chiang-mai and Paknampoh in 1899, and in Lampang in 1900. In 1913, A. Berli & Co. became active in the mining and export of tin and wolfram and established an office in Nakhorn Srithammarat. The business in ores and rubber prompted Albert Berli to establish an international distribution organization with offices in Zurich (1914), Saigon and Singapore (1915), with corresponding offices in London and Rio de Janeiro. However, all these overseas offices were closed down after World War I when the ore trade died down and the rubber boom collapsed. Only the Thailand operations continued and in 1924, the firm's name was changed to Berli, Jucker & Co.

During one of his frequent visits to Switzerland, Albert Berli met the eldest daughter of Paula Jucker, Mary, and persuaded her to follow him to Siam. They were married on her arrival by ship in Singapore in 1910 and lived part of the time in Bangkok and partly in Zurich.

Albert and Mary Berli had one daughter, Nellie, who grew up in Switzerland and married a Swiss hotel owner, Paul Elwert. Today Mrs. Elwert-Berli lives in retirement in Zurich at the age of 82.

Albert Berli marries Mary Jucker



The Berli family in the twenties: Albert Berli (left), daughter Nellie (seated) and wife Mary (right)



A rare view of Bangkok in 1905



Albert and Mary also had two sons. The younger one, George, died at an early age in Switzerland. Herbert, the elder son, returned to Bangkok after completing his education in Switzerland and joined the firm as partner in 1924. He died in Bangkok in 1943 and is survived by a son, Paul Berli, who retired from the firm's management team in 1980 and continues to live in Bangkok, and by a daughter, Eva Berli Smith, who married an American businessman and today lives in California.

Upon outbreak of the Pacific war in 1941 when the Japanese entered Thailand, Swiss firms were allowed to continue their operations but Albert Berli decided to close down his office at Rajawongse Road and evacuate his family to Hua Phai in Chachoengsao Province to escape the danger of war operations.

When World War II ended, Albert Berli found himself unable to reopen the firm due to ill health. His wife Mary then appointed her brother Edward Jucker as



World War II and the early post-war years



Managing Partner and the firm Berli, Jucker & Co. reopened its office at New Road, next to the General Post office, in September 1946.





Walter Meyer presenting donations for Royal Charities to H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

To strengthen the management team, Edward Jucker engaged a German merchant born in Hamburg, Gustav Heitmann, with many years experience in China and Thailand, as Manager in charge of exports, finance and administration and a 31 year old Swiss with previous experience in India and Shanghai, Walter Meyer, as Assistant in charge of imports. Both of them later became partners, but in 1957 Gustav Heitmann decided to retire in Spain, leaving Walter Meyer in sole charge of the firm's management.

In 1965, Walter Meyer, finding the firm's growth restricted by the family partnership, convinced the other partners to change the firm into a majority owned Thai Limited Company by selling shares to customers, friends and the general Thai public. When Thailand's stock exchange was established in 1974, Berli Jucker Co. Ltd., was one of the first six companies to be listed at the SET (Securities Exchange of Thailand), and its shares are today widely traded between over 600 shareholders.

Berli Jucker grows into a Thai public company



In 1967, H.M. the King graciously awarded a Letter of Appointment to Berli Jucker Co. Ltd. allowing the firm to use the Royal Garuda emblem.



The Royal Garuda Letter of Appointment being presented by the Lord Chamberlain, Dr. Kalaya Isarasena Na Ayudhya, to Mr. Edward Jucker.

In 1972, the firm's headquarters were moved from New Road to its present premises in Ploenchit Road.

As we have seen, Edward Jucker, son of the firm's founder Albert Jucker, was elected as the first Chairman of Berli Jucker Co. Ltd. Following his retirement in 1968, he was succeeded by Gustav Heitmann with Phya Manava Raja Sevi as Resident Chairman. When the Resident Chairman retired in 1979, he was succeeded by Dr. Prakob Hutasingh.

In 1980, Walter Meyer, having reached the age of 65, decided to retire from all executive duties in the Company, and was elected Chairman of the Board, succeeding Gustav Heitmann who is now one of two Deputy Chairmen.

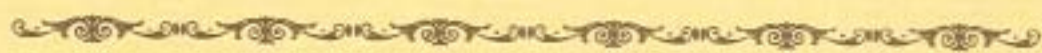
New offices in Ploenchit Road

Walter Meyer handed over the Company's Management to another Swiss resident of Thailand, Joseph Kronenberg, who arrived in Thailand in 1948 and had worked in the firm first as Assistant, then as Department Manager, and since 1966 as Assistant Managing Director. Mr. Kronenberg's management team includes three other experienced business executives, Edgar Rodel, a Swiss who joined Berli Jucker in 1952, Dr. Som Jatusipitak who entered the firm in 1962, and Volker Fischer, a German who arrived in Thailand in 1963.

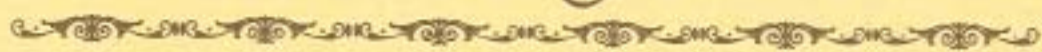


Under postwar management, Berli Jucker grew into one of the leading import and export firms of Thailand, branching out into various activities. Berli Jucker became prominent in general import business with the representation of many leading manufacturers such as Sandoz Ltd., Basel (dyestuffs and chemicals), Agfa-Gevaert AG, Leverkusen and Agfa-Gevaert N.V., Mortsel (Photographic material), Leitz, Wetzlar (Cameras and microscopes), Geha, Hannover (stationery), Scott Paper Co., Philadelphia, USA (paper products) and many other manufacturers of Europe, USA and Australia. When the Import Department grew too large to be handled as one unit, it was split up into Consumer Products, Industrial Products, Photo, Medical Products and Cosmetic Divisions.

In 1947, Berli Jucker started an Engineering Department and acquired agencies of such leading engineering manufacturers as MAN Maschinenfabrik Augsburg-Nuernberg AG., AEG-Telefunken, Kraftwerk Union AG, Transformatoren Union AG, Escher Wyss, Buhler-Miag



Postwar growth



and many others. Berli Jucker have since established a reputation as one of the leading importers and consultants in the engineering field. They also set up an Engineering Workshop with an assembly of power distribution and control switchboards to serve the local building industry and various industrial plants. For engineering consultancy and special engineering products, a Special Projects Division was added in 1974.

Board of Directors, Berli Jucker, 1982



Gustav Heitmann
(Deputy Chairman)



Walter L. Meyer
(Chairman)



Dr. Prakob Hutasingh
(Deputy Chairman)



John J. Hollenkamp



Chingchai Manothai



Sukhum Phongsathorn



Piti Sithi-Amnuai



Joseph A. Kronenberg
(President & Chief Executive)



Edgar Rodel



Dr. Som Jatusipitak

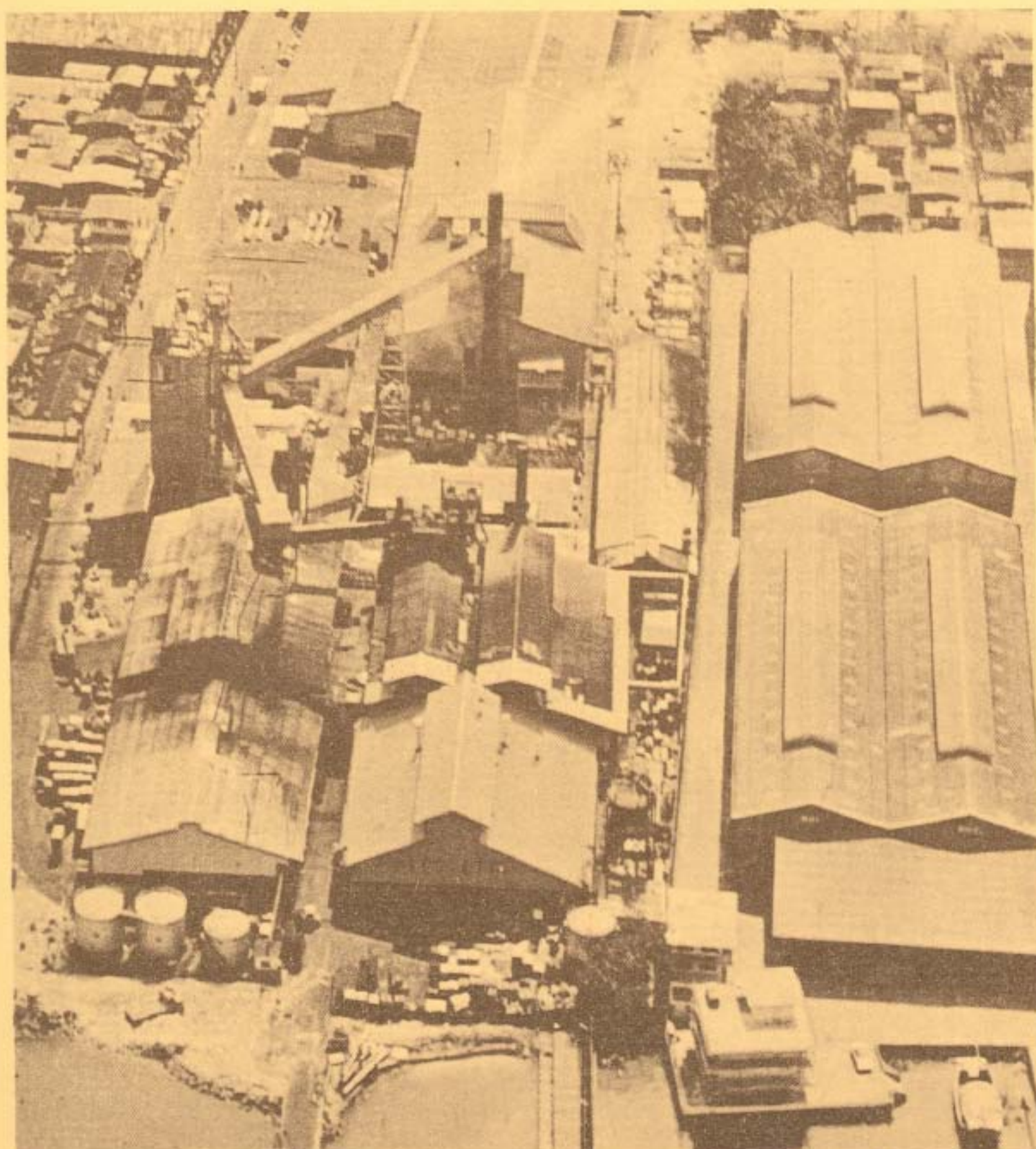


Volker Fischer

The most successful venture of Berli Jucker after the war was the promotion of local industries and the distribution of locally manufactured goods. At the initiative of Berli Jucker, a leading Australian concern, the Australian Consolidated Industries Ltd., built the first automatic glass factory in Thailand in 1953, called Thai Glass Manufacturers, situated at Rajburana, Dhonburi. This factory was gradually expanded and in 1973 Thai Glass went public and is now called Thai Glass Industries Ltd., with 60% of its shares held by some 900 Thai shareholders. The present paid-up capital of Thai Glass Industries is Baht 195 million, of which 20% is held by Berli Jucker. Thai Glass Industries now operate three furnaces with a capacity of 480 tons of glass per day. Their products range from bottles of all kinds to drinking glasses and other household containers.

The first modern glass factory in Thailand

Berli Jucker's Glass Products Division is the sole distributor of Thai Glass Industries Ltd. for Thailand.



The Thai Glass Industries Plant in Rajburana, Thonburi.

In 1950, Berli Jucker promoted another firm, Rubia Industries Ltd., which is a 99% owned subsidiary and for whom they act as distributors. Rubia Industries produce various brands, and also manufacture toilet soap and cosmetics under licence for leading US, German and British manufacturers, such as Armour & Co., Chicago (Dial Soap), Wella AG, Darmstadt (hair cosmetics), "4711" Eau de Cologne & Parfuemerie-Fabrik, Koeln, and Yardley International Ltd. (perfumeries). Rubia also manufacture confectionery, including Sugus caramels made under licence from Interfood, Lausanne, Switzerland, and Trebor sweets under licence from Trebor Ltd. of Maidstone, England.

Berli Jucker also helped to promote and became shareholders in Thai-Scott Paper Co. Ltd., Crown Seal Co. Ltd., and joined in the shareholding of Phranakorn and Alaska Milk Industries. Their latest industrial joint venture together with Pepsico Foods International is Siam Snack Co. Ltd., manufacturing various snack foods under licence from Pepsico Foods International.

Pioneers in local manufacturing

Berli Jucker is presently studying the establishment of further industries in the food and engineering fields. The Company believes that manufacturing and packaging in Thailand will become more and more important, and being a Thai public listed company, Berli Jucker have all the advantages and know-how to establish such industries.



The Rubia Industries factory at Samutprakarn.

At the same time, Berli Jucker decided to spread over the entire ASEAN area and in 1978 purchased a soap and cosmetics factory in Singapore which is now being operated under the name of Berli Jucker (Singapore) Pte. Ltd. This company has since added general trading to its activities, concentrating on the import of Thai products.

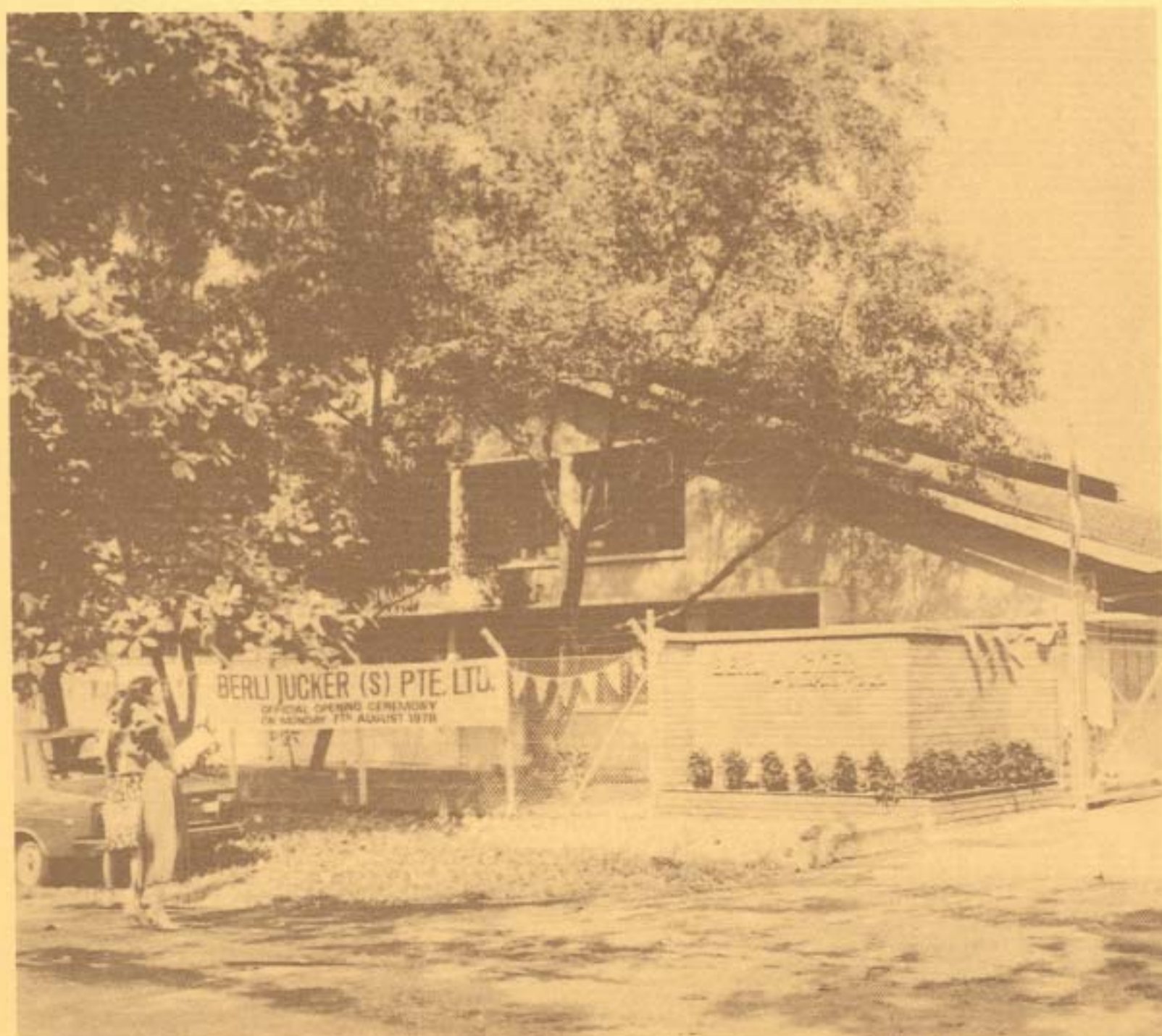
Berli Jucker (Singapore) Pte. Ltd. has also participated in two joint ventures in the Philippines, Berli Jucker Industries Ltd., Manila, engaged in the manufacture of toilet soap and cosmetics, and Berli Jucker Philippines Inc., Manila, a marketing company in the soap and cosmetic fields, as well as engineering ventures.

Plans are also underway for a joint venture with an Indonesian firm for the marketing and distribution of soap and cosmetics, and for engineering projects.

In Malaysia, an affiliate company has been set up under the name of Berli Jucker (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd., situated at Johore Bahru where a soap and cosmetics factory is now under construction. This firm will later expand into trading activities in the Malaysian market.

Berli Jucker's arm spreads across the ASEAN area

Berli Jucker believes in the future of ASEAN as an area with prospects of large economic growth and is proud to participate in this development.



Berli Jucker's factory and office in Jurong Estate, Singapore.