

THE BAŤA LEGACY: THE REALIZATION OF A UTOPIA

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In June of 1984, I happened to hear an interview with Tomáš Baťa Jr on the airwaves of Radio Free Europe on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. In a young and confident voice, he made no attempt to hide his desire to one day resume his business partnership with his native Czechoslovakia. It seemed like a surreal dream. It would never have occurred to me that hardly five and a half years later I would witness his triumphant return to Wenceslas Square in Prague on the evening of 14 December 1989, and that two years later – on 12 September 1991 – I would be escorting him through an exhibit entitled *Baťa 1910-1950 – Architecture and Urbanism*, in what used to be Zlín's memorial to his father. After the Velvet Revolution, there was a moment of hope that Tomáš Baťa's interrupted tradition would resume. But in reality, the transformations brought by the 1990s were different – the manufacturing of shoes in Zlín came to an end, the land the factory occupied was slated for sale and lease, the terraces of the Community House (Společenský dům) developed into private apartments, just as the terraces of Voženílek's post-war Collective House (Kolektivní dům) were developed into residences. The chessboard-like arrangement of detached and semi-detached homes on the slopes of the Dřevnice River Valley was given an insulating layer, sometimes with ceramic facing. Only the renovation of 'No 21' – Baťa's corporate skyscraper – into the administrative seat of the Zlín Regional Government at the turn of the millennium has shown an attempt to preserve the *genius loci* and traditions of Baťa's Zlín. Baťa's architecture and urbanism is now beginning to attract the attention of foreign experts who have attended several conferences on the subject. This has led to a gradual international discovery of the Zlín phenomenon, which has already become an irreversible part of domestic history. New building renovations in Zlín, particularly the residential buildings close to the Community House, the library, and the rectorate – the one-time



Tomáš Baťa's villa in Zlín, by Jan Kotěra (1911).

site of Gahura's schools – are testament to a new era of thinking and a new era of ideas.

BAŤA'S BEGINNINGS, 1894-1918

In September 1894, when Tomáš Baťa and his siblings Antonín and Anna established a shoemaking enterprise on Zlín's town square, the company employed 50 workers to make its coarse-cloth shoes and slippers at a rate of just 50 per day. Zlín at the time had a population of barely 2,500. Thanks to the growth of the company, this small town grew in forty years to be the modern global headquarters of the company, far exceeding the region's significance with its 40,000 residents. Within the Zlín conurbation, sometimes called the 'America of Wallachia', some 30,000 people worked, making 200,000 pairs of shoes a day. Such growth would have been impossible without the managerial talents of Tomáš Baťa (1876-1932). In 1896, he began producing light canvas shoes and quickly began distributing them throughout the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The same year, he came upon modern manufacturing technology during a stay in Frankfurt. Upon his return, he introduced this technology at his factory and significantly improved its productivity. By the end of the century, he had rented the neighbouring building on the square and was using 34 machines to make 300 pairs of shoes a day. The completion of the Otrokovice-Zlín-Vizovice railway in 1898 enabled faster distribution; as a result, in June 1900, he moved the whole enterprise to a ground-level steam-powered workshop close to the railway station where he employed 50 labourers in the shop

and 120 domestic workers, thereby becoming the eighth-largest domestic shoe manufacturer in the Czech lands. In 1903, he built a new workshop and his employees numbered 250. In December 1904, Tomáš Baťa travelled with three colleagues for a visit to America where he worked as a labourer in Lynn, Massachusetts, even becoming a labour leader. Impressed by high productivity which surpassed European standards of manufacturing, he returned after stops in Leeds and Leicester in England, as well as in Germany. Upon his return in 1906, he built a modern three-storey manufacturing plant, took a hard stand against organized labour, and broke a strike. After the death of his brother Antonín in 1908, he took over the company's operations completely and entered European markets in Germany, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, the Balkans, as well as the Middle East. By 1910, he was making 3,400 pairs of shoes a day, eighty per cent in his own factory.

At that time, he also began building his private villa designed by Vizovice builder František Novák. But by 1910-11, he chose a newly-named professor at Prague's Academy of Fine Arts, Jan Kotěra, to complete the project, most likely on advice from his future wife Marie Menčíková, daughter of an administrator at the Royal Library in Vienna. Kotěra completed the representative villa with a well-appointed garden (see image left). At that time, Kotěra was interested in the social problems of architecture and habitat and in the English garden cities movement, subjects he most certainly discussed with Tomáš Baťa. This led to Kotěra becoming Baťa's architectural consultant and during the war he drafted designs for the Zlín centre, the city's cinema, and especially the first colony of family residences at Letná which began construction during the war and was based on the garden city Kotěra had built in Louny.

Baťa had a chance to check up on American production practices influenced by Taylorism and Fordism on his second trip to America in 1913. By the eve of the war, Baťa's company was making 4,000 pairs of shoes a day with 400 employees, and was thus the seventh-largest shoe producer in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

The start of the First World War saw the company grow even more. Through his interventions in Vienna, Tomáš Baťa managed to secure an order for 50,000 pairs of boots for the mobilizing forces. In doing so, he saved many potential recruits from military service. He also began using prisoners of war in his manufacturing process. In 1915, he increased production to 5,000 pairs of shoes a day, and in 1917 he had 3,900 employees – almost ten times as many as before the war. He immediately used the profits to build another five-storey factory in Zlín along with a branch office in Pardubice, and for the purchase of land, all of which helped strengthen his capital and his investment capacity. In 1917, he also began building a network of retail stores in Zlín, Liberec, Prague, Vienna, České Budějovice, Pardubice, Kladno, Plzeň (Pilsen), Brno, Moravská Ostrava, and elsewhere. He had eighteen stores by the end of the war and he was the largest manufacturer of shoes in the crumbling Austro-Hungarian Monarchy when he was making between 8,000 and 9,000 pairs of shoes a day.

A RADICAL SOLUTION IN THE EARLY YEARS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The new political realities of central Europe after the war and the economic complications which accompanied them affected Baťa's company. The economic potential of Czechoslovakia accounted for 75 per cent of the manufacturing capacity of the former Austria-Hungary, but the new borders led to weaker sales and Baťa became dependent on exports. In 1919, production dropped to 1,600 pairs of shoes a day and the number of employees dwindled by a quarter to roughly 3,000. Following a 250 per cent rise in the value of the Czechoslovak currency on the Zurich bourse and the resulting deflationary policies implemented by Finance Minister Alois Rašín, Baťa was confronted with further difficulties in sales. Baťa responded by creating companies in the United States, England, Holland, Yugoslavia, Denmark, and Poland, which organized sales in these countries and built domestic distribution networks consisting of 70 stores by 1920. Sales continued to be problematic and in 1921 the company had only 2,277 employees. It was not until August 1922 that Baťa opted for a radical solution. On 1 September 1922, he slashed employee wages by 40 per cent, but at the same time he cut the cost of shoes and other basic necessities by half. As a result, in the first week alone he sold 98,711 pairs of shoes for a total value of 8.1 million crowns. He was thus able to liquidate surplus goods, balance the books, and acquire operating and investment capital which he immediately began to re-invest. First he implemented rationalized manufacturing and spurred company growth based on scientific management influenced by his American experience and Taylorism – investment into building further manufacturing facilities. He also introduced social standards for his employees that had never been seen before: the creation of the Baťa Relief Fund, and support for health care and cultural facilities. A year later, when he was elected mayor of Zlín by a large majority in the communal elections of 29 September 1923, he created for himself the ideal conditions for his programme to succeed.

In 1924, he also introduced the assembly line – an innovation in the manufacturing process which further automated shoe production and led to greater efficiencies in production and a lower cost to the customer. In 1920, Baťa's company made 8,000 pairs of shoes a day, in 1930 82,000 a day, and by the end of the 1930s, production reached 200,000 pairs of shoes a day. With such growth in production came not only the reconstruction and development of the factory complex, but also, after 1930, the development of industrial satellite cities in Czechoslovakia, Europe, America and Asia; the growth of sales and distribution networks; the construction of department stores in all major cities in Czechoslovakia and in major foreign centres; and also the development of Zlín itself – not only in the construction of residences, but also the development of cultural and social aspects of the city. As mayor, he was able to combine the interests of the company with plans for the strategic development of the city's infrastructure when the city's chief planner, František Lydie Gahura, a graduate of Kotěra's master class at the Prague Academy, began to implement his urbanist visions for an industrial garden city.

THE GROWTH OF THE FACTORY AND CITY IN THE 1920S

Gahura's work for Zlín and Baťa's company began while he was still a student in 1921 with his design of a garden city, based on the principles of Kotěra's master plan, and also with the winning design of the new town hall which was slated for construction, even though architect Josef Gočár created a much more ambitious design in the style of high Rondocubism. Tomáš Baťa's general building strategy is evident in his decision to opt for Gahura's design in his inclination towards rational and cost-effective measures as opposed to the design ambitions of individual architects. After completing his studies at the Prague Academy and the death of his professor, Kotěra, in 1923, Gahura became chief architect. In accordance with Tomáš Baťa's vision, he became the creator of the rapidly-growing industrial city's urbanist and architectural form. Kotěra's successor at the Prague Academy of Fine Arts, Gočár, became Baťa's chief architectural consultant.

While designing the master plan for the factory grounds, which was guided by the idea of a 'factory in gardens' and was to feature assembly-line manufacturing according to the American model, Tomáš Baťa could draw on experience from his third trip to America in 1919-20, this time accompanied by Jan Antonín Baťa. A configuration was selected of standard volumes for five-storey factory buildings of approximately 80x20m with a 13 x 6.15 m module along the long side and a 3 x 6.15 m module on the transverse side, along with symmetrically-placed buttresses, and with cloakrooms and a stairway in the middle of the entry side. It was the first applied use of the 6.15 m system later known as the 'Baťa skeleton', the metric version of the twenty-foot module used in American projects which Jan Antonín Baťa is said to have brought back with him from the United States. Sharing in the development of this building system from the very beginning was builder Arnošt Sehnal, who throughout the 1920s and 1930s was one of the leading figures of Baťa construction. Initially the system used square columns, which were replaced by the end of the 1920s with round ones made with sliding formwork. The 'Baťa skeleton' and its brick parapets formed the universal character of Baťa's buildings and all industrial and public buildings were built in this way, giving the city a unique structural character.

In conjunction with this rapid growth, the factory complex grew as well. In 1924, an electrical sub-station and transformer were added as well as an eductor and tanning silo, and within three years, by 1927, there were thirty buildings in the Zlín factory complex. Thanks to the introduction of the assembly line, production rose from 25,000 pairs of shoes a day in 1925 to 75,000 in 1928, accompanied by a jump in the number of employees from 5,200 to 12,000. Such dynamic growth necessitated the development of the city and its social infrastructure – particularly housing, schools, health care, and commercial areas. For this reason, Gahura followed up on Kotěra's final master plan of 1922, first with plans for a colony of family homes in the Letná district already begun by Kotěra, and then in the Zálešná district which was built at first with gabled roofs and later with flat roofs (see image p. 59). Houses were not to cost more than a worker's annual salary and were rented out to employees for a symbolic amount. By the end of the 1920s,



Zlín, Labour Square with the Market Hall (1928), Department Store (1929-30), and Masaryk Schools (1927) in the background.

over a thousand apartments had been built and in the 1930s, between 300 and 600 were built each year.

In early 1927, Gahura began formulating the design for a new city centre above the park and castle with Baťa's schools in a key location at the intersection of the city's main axes – east-west along the Dřevnice River, and transversely in the north-south direction. A boys' and a girls' school were built in 1927 using this design in the shape of 'open arms' with a memorial to T.G. Masaryk, from which a traverse axis later ran on the slope, fringed with dormitories for young men and women, and completed in 1932 with the Tomáš Baťa Memorial as the *point de vue* of the whole composition. Gahura's original urbanist work was complemented first by the low building of the Market Hall (Tržnice) across from the boys' and girls' schools in 1927, and by the beginning of the 1930s, the ten-storey Department Store was built. The open, rhomboidal composition created an interesting spatial dialogue with both of Baťa's schools at the base of the city's central axis.

The creation of the Baťa Relief Fund allowed for the construction of a district health insurance office and social institutions (1926-7). After May Day celebrations in 1926, where Tomáš Baťa announced a donation of one million crowns for the construction of a hospital, he hired Bohuslav Albert as the hospital's founding director. Known for his success in organizing health care in Carpathian Ruthenia, Albert became consultant for Gahura's design of the hospital. It was built in a symmetrical pavilion configuration on a green space in the northeast corner of the city with a capacity of 270 beds.



Apartment houses in the Zálešná district of Zlín with Zadní Díly in the background. Master plans by F. L. Gahura, c. 1936.

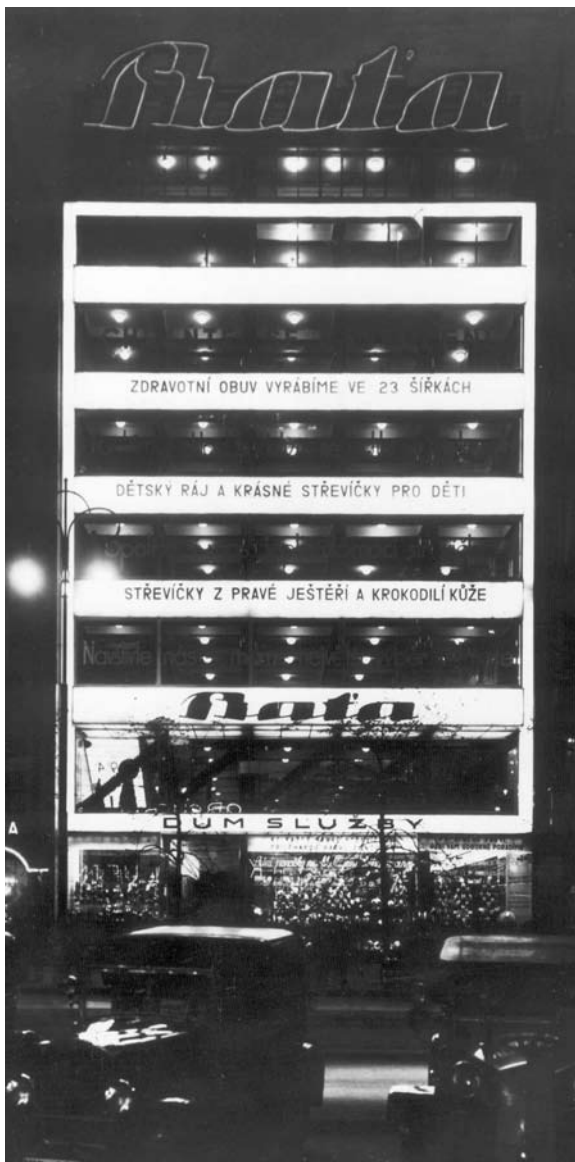
The growing population base and their cultural needs led Baťa back to the idea of the cinema, which had been originally designed in 1917 by Kotěra as part of the garden city's centre. The designs by Gočár and Gahura remained on paper for several more years, however.

BUILDING SATELLITES AT THE DAWN OF THE 1930S

The company's prosperity at the end of the 1920s led to a new investment strategy, initiated and executed by Jan Antonín Baťa, which included the purchase of land abroad and the construction of satellite factories.

This vivacious investment and construction activity required the expertise of other professionals. Miroslav Drofa had worked in the company's construction department since 1927 and he would eventually become one of its top architects. Early in 1930, Antonín Vítek, who had studied under Pavel Janák at Prague's School of Industrial Arts, came to Zlín, and from June 1930 to September 1931, one of Gočár's students, Miroslav Lorenc, worked for the company. And finally, during a stay in Chicago shortly after the New York stock market crash, Jan Antonín Baťa was able to persuade the young but experienced architect Vladimír Korfík to come to Zlín. Korfík had just completed internships at Holabird & Root Studios in Chicago and with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin West and East. He arrived in Zlín on 20 April 1930.

By 1931, there were 1,825 stores in Czechoslovakia with which Baťa literally dominated the domestic market. In addition, the company had over 60 stores in Germany and Poland, and several in other European cities.



F. L. Gahura, J. Svoboda, L. Kysela, and J. Gočár: Baťa department store, Wenceslas Square, Prague (1927-30).

These projects, along with the planned industrial satellite cities, provided opportunities for the newly-hired architects. While Gahura had designed the master plan for the closest satellite city – Otrokovice, Ottmuth in German Silesia and Best in the Netherlands were already substantially designed by Antonín Vitek; in the meantime, Karfík was tasked to design East Tilbury, east of London. These industrial cities – set in nature and attached to a factory – were to be home to between 10,000 and 15,000 people.

Plans by Gočár and Ludvík Kysela for a department store ‘palace’ on Prague’s Wenceslas Square, which began construction in 1927 and was finished in 1930, featured designs for so-called ‘service centres’, a new approach to sales offering customers complete foot care including pedicures and massages (see image left). Service centres were built in most larger Czechoslovak cities, first in Prague and Zlín, then in Moravská Ostrava, Karlovy Vary, Liberec, Brno, Kroměříž, Bratislava, Košice and Užhorod. They were built in the tradition of the ‘Baťa skeleton’ with glass façades whose parapets provided enough space for advertising, while inside they were carefully equipped with standard furniture featuring chrome armchairs in the same white and light green colours as Baťa shoe boxes. This confident modern style with its elevated cornice and large corporate logo was often in conflict with monument preservation practices. Even though the company used external architects to help ease the approval process (Kysela and Gočár in Prague, František Stalmach and Jan Svoboda in Moravská Ostrava), most of

Baťa’s plans were prepared by the company’s own architects, and exclusive projects were usually done by Karfík (Brno, Liberec, Bratislava). Especially difficult to push through was the service centre in Brno, where plans stalled in 1927 despite attempts by Gahura, Kumpošt, Fuchs, and even Gočár (1929) to build a skyscraper over objections from city hall and monument preservation authorities. Eventually in 1931, Karfík’s design was approved, even though the building was now only six storeys in height.



Foreground: Grand Cinema (Velké kino), by F.L. Gahura, built in 1932.

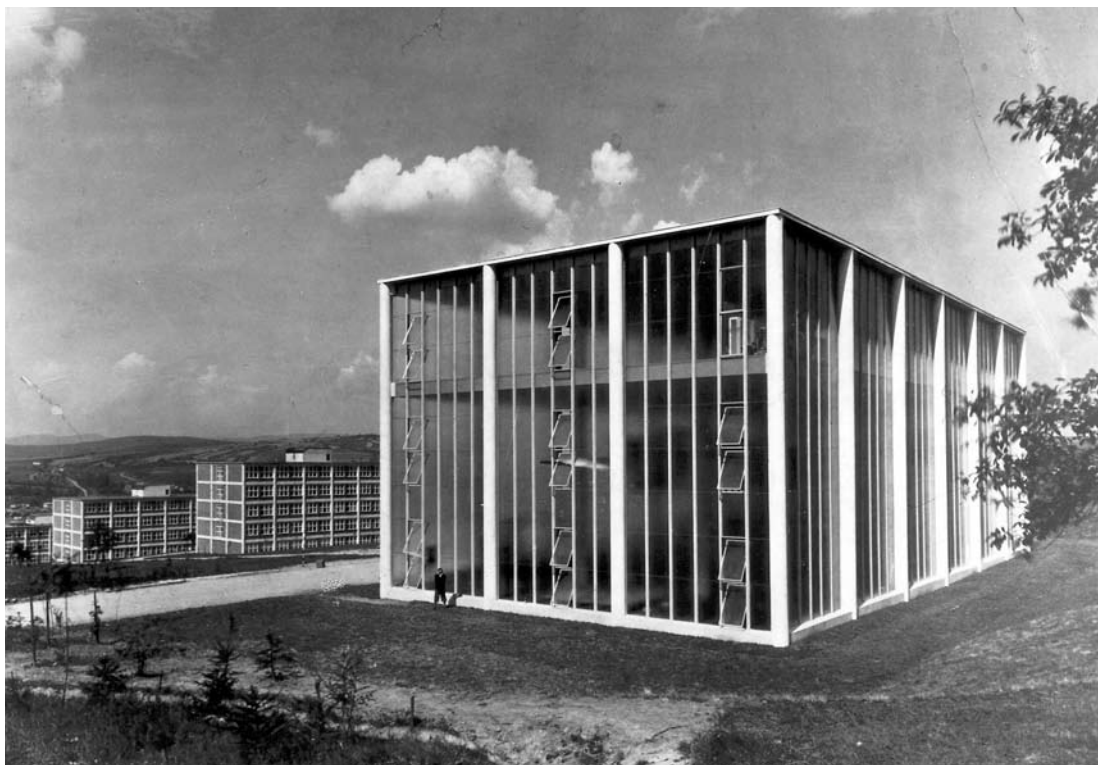
Background: Community House, by V. Karfík (1931-3), who modified the original design by M. Lorenc.

At the beginning of the 1930s, Labour Square (náměstí Práce) in Zlín began to take shape in the shadow of Gahura's Market Hall and Department Store (see image p. 58). Low, terraced kiosks which were thematically linked to the Market Hall and adorned the north-south axis of the city were demolished and plans were made for the Grand Cinema and Community House adjacent to the Department Store on the slope above the factory complex.

This task was first undertaken by Miroslav Lorenc, whose design called for the cinema's foundation to be built against the natural slope of the location, rendering the project too expensive (at a cost three times over budget) and Tomáš Baťa rejected it, resulting in Lorenc's departure from the company. Lorenc continued to work as an independent architect in Zlín, where he designed several Functionalist structures until his arrest in October 1940. His work is evident in the skeletal design of the Community House, while Grand Cinema, with its steel-frame ceiling and simple particle-board walls, was built by Gahura (see image above). These structures defined the new city centre.

JAN ANTONÍN BAŤA TAKES OVER, 1932-9

After Tomáš Baťa's tragic death at the airport in Baťov on 12 July 1932, Jan Antonín Baťa (1898-1965) took over the leadership of the company. Tomáš Baťa had frequently been criticized, especially by the left-leaning media (for example, Prague's ferocious journalist Egon Erwin Kisch and the Soviet writer Ilya Ehrenburg), but Jan A. Baťa never reached such heights even though the results of some of his actions were remarkable. One of the first



Tomáš Baťa Memorial (Památník Tomáše Bati), Zlín, by F.L. Gahura (1932).

was the Tomáš Baťa Memorial (see image above). Inside the impressive glass 'maisonette' gallery, Gahura hung a copy of the Junkers aeroplane in which the company's founder crashed. The first installation in the gallery was also quite interesting, featuring one-time Bauhaus student Zdeněk Rossmann.

The further development of the whole Zlín conurbation was very important to Jan A. Baťa. For this reason, Gahura designed a new master plan for all of Greater Zlín in 1934, encompassing the entire area of Zlín, Baťov and Otrokovice, with plans for up to 50,000 residents. He initiated the regulation of water flow on the Morava River and made it navigable, as the first step in linking the Black Sea to the Baltic through the Danube and Oder Rivers. He was also responsible in the 1930s for the zoning and management of land in southern Moravia, carried out by Brno architects Bohuslav Fuchs and Jindřich Kumpošt. It was also his idea to make Zlín into an important transportation hub (road, rail, water, and air) for all of Czechoslovakia and central Europe, which would have benefited the company immensely.

Jan A. Baťa was led by a vision to make Czechoslovakia into a country 'for forty million people'. In 1935, he organized a large international competition to address the issue of housing for which he received 289 proposals from nine countries. He invited top Czech architects to serve on



The jury of the Baťa International Competition for Residential Housing, April 1935. From the left: B. Fuchs, E. Šen (Schön), F.L. Gahura, A. Sehnal, D. Čípera, J.A. Baťa, J. Syříště, Le Corbusier, D. Jurkovič, and H. Vavrečka.

the jury including Dušan Jurkovič, Pavel Janák, Bohuslav Fuchs, Jaroslav Syříště, and also professor Edo Šen (Schön) from Zagreb, but also, most importantly, Le Corbusier. A film clip from the first sitting of the jury on 28 April 1935, shot by young filmmakers Elmar Klos and Alexandr Hackenschmied, remains the second-oldest clip of Le Corbusier, after Laszló Moholy-Nagy's 'movie' of him from 1933. Four proposals were chosen – detached houses by Swedish architect Eric Svedlund, and by Karfík, and semi-detached houses by Antonín Vítek and the Prague duo of Adolf Benš and František Jech. They were immediately built in a model colony above the Tomáš Baťa Memorial, but other proposals also aroused interest, such as those of the PAS group (Janů, Štursa, Voženílek), Brno's Josef Kranz, Jaroslav Kosek – a Prague student of Gočár, and Emanuel Josef Margold from Berlin. Jan A. Baťa commissioned Le Corbusier to work on regulating the Dřevnice River Valley between Zlín and Baťov, to design a master plan for the French industrial town of Hellocourt, to design the Baťa pavilion for the World's Fair in Paris, and standardized department stores in France. This final project served as a singular model for the Baťa store, designed by Vladimír Karfík in conjunction with Dutch architects on Kalverstraat in Amsterdam at the end of the 1930s and without Le Corbusier's input.

Immediately after the competition and completion of the four types of model colonies, another development of family homes was built for the middle class in the Lesní quarter, in Na Nivách, and in Díly – for teachers, engineers, etc., but also for the upper middle class – doctors and such, which helped broaden the spectrum of housing in Zlín.

Jan A. Baťa's major contribution was the building of satellite industrial cities, not only in the former Czechoslovakia and Europe – Germany, Holland, Switzerland, England, Poland, Yugoslavia – but also in India, Africa,



The Baťa administrative building – Building No 21, Zlín, by V. Karfík (1936-9).

and North and South America. This expanded the company and made it a global corporation. Urbanism and regional planning remained a central interest of his and for this reason he founded the urban planning division of the company in 1937, for which he hired young architects Jiří Voženílek and Robert H. Podzemný. They both focused on developing Gočár's ideal industrial city for the needs of the company.

The Jan A. Baťa era of the second half of the 1930s also saw the completion of the central town square in Otrokovice-Batov with the Community House on a Y-shaped groundplan and other structures by Karfík, Gahura's Study Institute in Zlín flanking the Tomáš Baťa Memorial, and last but not least one of the most significant icons of Baťa architecture: the sixteen-storey company headquarters – Building No 21 (see image above), featuring the famous mobile office in an elevator. Jan A. Baťa, who had to flee suddenly on 13 March 1939 – two days before Hitler's invasion, reportedly never set foot in it.

Jan A. Baťa is also credited, along with Hugo Vavrečka, with enriching the cultural life in Zlín by establishing the Zlín Salon, the Film Harvest, the support of theatre and concerts, support for literary awards, and also with founding the Study Institute and the Baťa School of Arts.

FORCED ASSIGNMENTS, 1939–45

The war and German occupation led to activities being limited to tasks required by the times and the preparation of several post-war investments, none of which were ever realized. Changes occurred in management as well, with the insertion of German supervision into the highest levels of management – first with the appointment of August Miesbach (formerly head of the Wessels factory in Augsburg), and later Jiří Voženílek in the urban planning division who began to focus on studying the ideal assembly-line industrial city. This became the prototype for functionally-zoned industrial cities and spurred the creation of master plans for Baťa's satellites in Bohemia (Chvalčovice na Labi), Moravia (Červenka u Litovle), Slovakia (Baťovany), and Hungary (Martfű), the last two of which were built, as were the satellite cities Zruč nad Sázavou and Sezimovo Ústí.

Gahura concentrated on the further development of the master plan for Greater Zlín, and re-opened the issue of completing Labour Square with input from Karfík, as well as external architects Gočár, Fuchs, and Emanuel Hruška, who attempted to integrate the high-rise administrative building in the area around the Grand Cinema and the Community House.

A competition was announced for a Catholic church and a memorial to Tomáš Baťa in Baťov, in which the Modernist protagonists (Gočár, Roškot, Štěpánek, Sokol) along with the traditionalists (Rothmayer, Zasche, Madlmayer) came into opposition with Zlín architects Gahura and Karfík.

Apart from more efforts to expand Gahura's hospital in its current location and in the city centre, plans emerged during the war for Josef Havlíček's garages which anticipated his structural post-war stylistic evolution, as well as an ambitious and elegant design for the central train station by Gočár, and plans for an export facility for Baťa by František Cubr and Zdeněk Pokorný, which was meant to create, in the spirit of Italian rationalism, the front of a block between the old and new city centres. Plans for residential buildings in Zlín by Jaroslav Pelan and Lubomír Šlapeta remained unrealized, even though they would have tied in with the work of Miroslav Lorenc from the 1930s.

However, the luxurious villas of executives Čipera, Vavrečka, Hlavnička, and Malota were built by Karfík, their style inspired by romantic English cottage houses. Another wartime structure worthy of note is Voženílek's rendering plant in Baťov for its purely industrial design. The planning and construction division of the company was commissioned to design a section of housing projects on newly-acquired land to the east for which some experimental designs were prepared. The turn of events of the war fortunately prevented the German Reich from completing them.

The year 1944 even saw the introduction of an electric trolley bus system in the city. The targeted attack on the factory by the Allies on 20 November 1944 signalled the impending end of the Third Reich.



AFTER THE WAR

The political situation after the war led to the Communist putsch in February 1948. The Baťa company had already been nationalized on 27 October 1945 and its management politicized. According to leading expert Otto Wichterle's account 'everything connected with the company's excellent organization became politically damned'. Management and top experts, including such architects as Gahura and Karfík, soon had to leave Zlín, and Communist Jiří Voženílek became the new leader. Initially in 1945-8, he managed – with the cooperation of Gahura's original team – to create a new master plan, in which the city would grow eastwards with apartment buildings rather than detached houses, according to the two-year budget of 1947-8, and following examples from Sweden where the architects all went on a professional excursion in 1947. The development of the Obecniny quarter, designed by Karfík and Drofa, is one of the best examples of residential apartment construction in 1940s Czechoslovakia (see image right);

Collective House, Zlín, by J. Voženílek (1948-51).

on 25 November 1947, the famous French architect Auguste Perret even came to inspect the quarter. Thanks to a certain resistance in the Baťa environment, this high level of work held on until the early 1960s. The city's infrastructure was embellished with covered spas and an office building, the last projects in the city by Karfík, and the Collective House by Voženílek, calling to mind an old dream of the leftist Czech avant-garde about collective living in the style of the Soviet constructivists (see image above).

After the February 1948 coup, Voženílek was summoned to Prague to become the first director of all newly-nationalized architectural firms under the name Stavoprojekt, and his position in Zlín was taken over by Vladimír Kubečka, creator of the new central warehouses. Kubečka was able to maintain high design quality despite the difficult conditions of the communist regime with the support of Zdeňek Plesník, Drofa, and the remaining 'Baťa boys', particularly in the design of light industrial projects in which the team, later named Centropjekt, specialized. On the other hand, the design of public buildings changed with the implementation of socialist realism. The Baťa phenomenon was beginning to become a thing of the past, recalled by the physically imposing industrial city. This reminder of the past surely eased the dark days of Communism and provided hope for the future.

The last twenty years following the Velvet Revolution began with the triumphant return of Tomáš Baťa Jr in December 1989 and the renaming



Apartment house, Zlín, by M. Drofa (1947).

of Communist Gottwaldov to its original name, Zlín. This period was accompanied by difficult changes and economic transformation, but also sent out signals of an attempt to build on the traditions of Baťa's pre-war legacy. One of these was the establishment of Tomáš Baťa University on the basis of a presidential decree signed by Václav Havel, at which young managers have been studying since 2000. Another is the positive conversion of certain buildings on the former Baťa factory grounds, first and foremost the careful renovation of Karfík's high-rise administrative building – Building No 21 – for use by the Zlín Regional Government in 2003-4, according to a design by architects Ivan Bergmann and Ladislav Pastrnek in cooperation with Petr Všetečka. Finally, the conversion of Building No 23 – originally a manufacturing facility – into the Business Innovation Centre in 2006 by architects Pavel Mudřík and Pavel Míček (see Všetečka, this volume). These enterprises are a promise that the Baťa tradition of construction and business have not disappeared and are reflected – even in physical form – in contemporary society.

The words of M. Bittermann, published in the *Prager Rundschau* (1932) immediately after the death of Tomáš Baťa, foretell the essence of his legacy:

Baťa proved that even in the narrow confines of Czechoslovakia, it is possible to grow into a great and economically-strong individual. He gives hope to the young that they need not and should not rely on social support, corruption, and other external factors, but only with their own strength, courage, and diligence can they achieve success in life. It wasn't only cheap shoes which he gave Czechoslovakia; it was faith in the success of work, if it is done with love, and a tough, genuine personality. This bright side of Baťa's personal example is one of the main assets of the great legacy he leaves behind.

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