

East Tilbury: A Small Piece of Zlín in the UK

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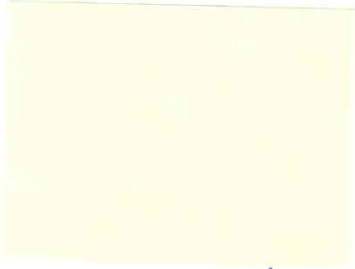

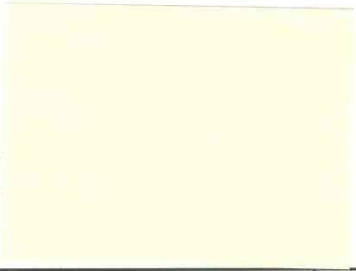
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na město East Tilbury v Anglii ve Spojeném království, jakožto malou část Zlína v Anglii a jedno z mnoha měst, na které měl vliv podnikatel Tomáš Baťa během jeho budování obuvního průmyslu po celém světě. V první části je popisována historie firmy Baťa od založení po současnost. Následuje kapitola, která popisuje podnikání Tomáše Bati a jeho záměry, jak vést podnik, a také jak k těmto záměrům přišel. Rovněž je zde popsán princip továrního města a historie budování Zlína. Poté je popisována historie East Tilbury s hlavním zaměřením na samotný průmyslový areál a jeho postupný rozvoj a následně také popisuje odkaz, který zde průmyslový areál po svém konci zanechal, a jak vypadá East Tilbury v nynější době. V bakalářské práci je i zmínka o Bata Heritage Centre, jenž je centrem zaměřující se na celou historii Baťova průmyslového areálu se sídlem v East Tilbury.

Klíčová slova: East Tilbury, Tomáš Baťa, architektura, Zlín, Bata Heritage Centre, průmysl, tovární město, boty

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis focuses on the city of East Tilbury in England, United Kingdom, as a small piece of Zlin in England and one of many cities, which were influenced by the entrepreneur Tomas Bata during his building of the shoemaking industry all around the world. The first chapter describes the Bata Shoe Organisation from its history to the present. The following chapter describes how Tomas Bata ran the business and his intentions on how to lead the company and how he came to these intentions. Also, the principle of a company town is described, as well as the history of Zlin development. Next, the history of East Tilbury with the main focus on the industrial area itself and its development, and then also the legacy that the industrial area left here after its end is described and what East Tilbury looks like nowadays. The bachelor's thesis also mentions the Bata Heritage Center which is a center focusing on the entire history of the Bata industrial area located in East Tilbury.

Keywords: East Tilbury, Tomas Bata, architecture, modernism, Zlin, Bata Heritage Centre, industry, company town, shoes

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INTRODUCTION

As I live in Zlin now and have ever since I was born, it feels beneficial to research the enterprise that Tomas Bata built and to find out about the urbanization that he started during his lifespan. He helped the city of Zlin to grow, but thanks to him, many small Zlins were built in a similar way all around the world.

Tomas Bata and the Bata Shoe Organisation are well-known names in the world of shoemaking. Tomas Bata is remembered as one of the greatest entrepreneurs, innovators, and industrialists from Czechoslovakia who knew how to run the business and who had an impact on the shoemaking industry as a whole. The company accomplished to be not only the leader of the Czechoslovakian shoemaking industry but had its say in worldwide production.

In order to gain experience in the business world, Tomas Bata realized many expeditions to other factories, both in his country and abroad. He utilized this experience to come up with certain techniques on how to organize the company and the employees, how to arrange the best conditions for his employees and get the best performance from them, how to advertise the company, and therefore how to sell his products and services, and how to expand his company to raise its awareness.

The company's expansion abroad marked the beginning of company towns, which Tomas Bata built on every continent on the basis of Zlin, which he developed throughout his active years. He offered the inhabitants of these company towns a great job opportunity with a sufficient wage and good living conditions.

One of the small Zlins is East Tilbury near London in the United Kingdom, where the factory started arising in 1932. Even though Tomas Bata died that year, the development of the city continued by his successors in an effort to continue the expansion of the organization. The company town and the community of East Tilbury are examined and described in this thesis.

1 BATA SHOE ORGANISATION

1.1 Tomas Bata

Tomas Bata was born on April 3, 1876, in Zlín. He belonged to the seventh generation of the shoemaker's family, alongside his older siblings – sister Anna and brother Antonín.¹ His family was poor, and they lived in a small house, but he used to watch his father who was working in their workroom, which was also a kitchen, a living room, and a bedroom. At the age of 6, when Tomas started attending primary school, he started to make shoes from cuttings for dolls by himself. He had to work for a whole day to create one pair of shoes, only to sell them for 4-10 pence. This taught him how to make money, which he could keep as pocket money. He was also attending craft fairs, where he helped to put on or put off merchants' shoes.² When he was 12 years old, two years after his mother's death, his family moved to Uherské Hradiště, and at that time, he already knew what to do to feed the family to avoid hunger.

1.1.1 Tomas Bata as a Mature Person

Tomas Bata left the school when he was 14 years old and together with his brother Antonín started to gain real industrial and business experience from a shoe factory, where they worked with their father and another 50 workers, producing stitched coarse-woolen shoes, and Tomas' focus was mostly on the marketing of the factory.³ During that time, their father also started to produce slippers which were expected to make a lot of money, but Tomas Bata started to feel undervalued for his work. This led him to leave his father's company and move to Prostějov, where he worked for a company called Fäber and this was a turning point for him, as the shoes were produced by machines that fascinated him. Unfortunately, the company knew that his family has a long tradition of shoemaking, thus they felt spied on, which forced them to dismiss him. He returned to Uherské Hradiště with the knowledge that he wanted to apply at his father's factory.⁴ However, his father did not want to use machines to produce shoes and continued to stick to his guns, which led to a dispute over the shoemaking business. With the knowledge of the utility of the machines, he decided to go away from his father again when he was 15 years old, but now his steps were headed toward

¹ "Biography – Important Dates in Tomas Bata's Life," Bata Information Centre, accessed March 10, 2022, <https://en.tomasbata.org/biography/>.

² Tomáš Baťa, *Úvahy a projevy*, (Zlín: TISK Zlín, 1932), chap. 1, <http://tomasbata.org/uvahy-projevy/>.

³ Zdeněk Pokluda, *Baťa v kostce*, (Zlín: Kniha Zlín, 2014), 13.

⁴ Baťa, *Úvahy a projevy*, chap. 1.

his sister in Vienna. She lent him money so he could start a business in the district of Döbling as he wanted to produce slippers like his father, but he did not speak German, resulting in a bad outcome leaving him to come back to Zlín.⁵

1.2 Bata Shoe Organisation

Tomas Bata wanted to set up a company, that would produce shoes by machines. This resulted in him and his siblings leaving his father again, who paid off them the inheritance after their deceased mother, and on August 24, 1894, the siblings Tomas, Antonin, and Anna Bata, founded the company called “A. Baťa,” with Antonin being able to register the company because he was the only one of full age.⁶

1.2.1 The Beginnings

The company came with new working conditions that were not practiced until then – a fixed work schedule from 6 AM to 6 PM with a lunch break, also they paid a wage to their workers every week. The workshop of the company was situated in the town square in Zlín and the production was divided into two parts – the workers produced the stitched, coarse-woollen shoes at the workshop where they cut the footwear, and tailored its upper sides, followed by completion carried out by home-working craftsmen. The business was prosperous at the beginning, but soon after that, there was a problem with these shoes, and it was that they were seasonal which led to no sales in the summer months resulting in a crisis as the company was in debt and had problems with its creditors.⁷

They needed to find a way out of the unpleasant situation in an effort to continue with the business, but it was complicated by the compulsory military service concerning Antonin as he had to go to the army, but he continued to be a shareholder. Furthermore, Tomas’ sister Anna married a man from Vienna and followed him, which left Tomas alone in charge of the company.⁸

Tomas Bata had enough experience to be able to run the firm on his own and therefore prevent the bankruptcy which was around the corner at that time. He had to do everything on his own, including doing all the required paperwork, issuing orders to workers, and buying and preparing the material which he carried on his back to Zlín from the railway

⁵ Baťa, *Úvahy a projevy*, chap. 1.

⁶ Baťa, *Úvahy a projevy*, chap. 1.

⁷ Martina Urbanová, and Jana Dundelová, “Work Culture of the Bata Company,” *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis* 7, no. 7 (2012): 488, <https://doi.org/10.11118/actaun201260070487>.

⁸ Bata Information Centre, “Biography – Important Dates in Tomas Bata’s Life.”

station in Otrokovice.⁹ But the situation changed in 1897, when he came up with new light canvas shoes that were viewed as ground-breaking as they were produced in a short period of time, and they were sold at an affordable price, which attracted not only the local customers, but also people from Austro-Hungarian monarchy.¹⁰ Tomas Bata wanted to speed up the production and visited a factory that used steam-powered machines in Frankfurt in 1899, because until then, the company was making shoes on machines without mechanical drive.¹¹ Since 1900, the company was called “T. & A. Baťa” with the objective being the production of canvas shoes, and moreover, Tomas Bata was now the head of the company. They were finally able to afford mechanically driven machines that Tomas admired in Frankfurt, and these machines were used in their first factory building with its smokestack that was built opposite the local railway station.¹²

1.2.2 The Growth of the Company

Tomas Bata wanted to gain more experience, thus his next steps were headed to the United States where he and his 3 young employees stayed throughout 1904-1905, even though he was in touch with the US factories before, and therefore, he knew about the machines they are using. Nevertheless, he was interested in the management and production practices, as well as the worker’s performance. After struggling to find a job, they found their position in a shoe factory in Lynn, Massachusetts, thanks to the intercession of their acquaintance. Tomas Bata was regularly meeting with his co-workers to share their findings which were mostly related to the workers and their ability to control the machines and their knowledge of the production process, and before coming back home, they also visited shoe factories in England and Germany.¹³ After their return, he utilized plans from the US to build a new three-floored factory building in 1906, but at the same time, the workers declare a strike because of their contrasting political views, and also because of their wage, which leads to Bata’s ban on political opinions on the workplace.¹⁴

On June 8, 1908, Antonin Bata died of tuberculosis, and as a direct result of this, Tomas Bata became the sole owner of the company. In the first decade of the 20th century, the business was growing, as they implemented staff catering in the canteen and established a

⁹ Baťa, *Úvahy a projevy*, chap. 1.

¹⁰ Pokluda, *Baťa v kostce*, 16.

¹¹ Urbanová, and Dundelová, “Work Culture of the Bata Company,” 489.

¹² Pokluda, *Baťa v kostce*, 17.

¹³ Urbanová, and Dundelová, “Work Culture of the Bata Company,” 489.

¹⁴ Pokluda, *Baťa v kostce*, 19.

new printing house, and the overall production was increasing, leading the firm to belong to one of the biggest shoe-making companies in the country.¹⁵ In 1911, Tomas Bata traveled to the US for the second time to deepen his knowledge about the relations in the company. Next year, 1912, marked 3 important milestones for Tomas Bata and the company – Tomas Bata's villa was completed as well as the first houses for the employees, both designed by architect Jan Kotěra, and moreover, Tomas Bata married Marie Menčíková, with whom he had his only child – Tomas Bata Jr.¹⁶

In 1914, World War I began, and Tomas Bata acquired an order to produce 50,000 pairs of military shoes for the army, and he asked the mayor of Zlín to divide the work between his company and 4 others so they would be able to finish the shoes in time.¹⁷ This required employment of new workers and construction of new facilities such as a power plant or farm to supply the workers and citizens, and the opening a new subsidiary in Pardubice, resulting in huge production of footwear during the war, and thus the success followed with the production reaches 10,000 pairs a day.¹⁸ As soon as the war ended, another development continued, because the company had 4,000 employees. The workers could enjoy new working hours as the shifts lasted for 8 hours, and also the kindergarten, library, newspapers, and training courses were available for them.¹⁹

1.2.3 The Impact of WWI

On October 28, 1918, Czechoslovakia was created, but, alas, the end of the war brought a depletion of the material, and the workers demanded higher wages. The crisis lasted for four years, and Tomas Bata took measures against it by reducing the prices by 50%, and wages by 40%, that seemed devastating, but the stores in Czechoslovakia and other European countries were full of customers, thus profiting.²⁰ In the following year, Tomas Bata visited the US for the third time, and his destination was now Henry Ford's plant in Detroit, and Endicott-Johnson's shoe plant in Binghamton. The vision of building a bigger city is appealing to Tomas Bata as Jan Kotěra presents him with the plan for a residential area, and facilities such as a cinema, hospital, school, and department store.²¹

¹⁵ Bata Information Centre, "Biography – Important Dates in Tomas Bata's Life."

¹⁶ Zlín, *Po stopách Baťů* (Zlín: The Department of Tourism and Information and The Press Department of the Municipality and the City Hall of the city of Zlín, 2019), 12.

¹⁷ Baťa, *Úvahy a projevy*, chap. 1.

¹⁸ Pokluda, *Baťa v kostce*, 26.

¹⁹ Bata Information Centre, "Biography – Important Dates in Tomas Bata's Life."

²⁰ Baťa, *Úvahy a projevy*, chap. 1.

²¹ Pokluda, *Baťa v kostce*, 27; Zdeněk Pokluda, *From Zlín into the World – The Story of Tomas Bata*, (Zlín: The Thomas Bata Foundation, 2019), 21.

In 1923, Tomas Bata became the new town mayor, therefore he led both the company and the town, which helped him to construct new buildings for the factory during the twenties, and to increase the production, more manufacturing equipment and electronic motors were implemented, as well as a conveyor belt that he saw in Ford's plant was used for the first time.²² In 1925, a Professional School of Footwear was established, which allowed the company to educate its people in order to teach them about the economy, responsibility, discipline, and politeness.²³ At the end of the decade, the production was immense as the company made almost half of the exported shoes from the country – over 21,000,000 pairs of shoes were made per year by over 21,000 employees and sold in 1,211 shops in Czechoslovakia, European and Asian countries.²⁴

1.2.4 Factories Abroad

The thirties were hit by Great Depression, which was an economic crisis that influenced the international trade through customs barriers and restrictions, therefore affecting Bata's production and export with people protesting against his business in Czechoslovakia, and also Poland, Palestine, Estonia, Syria, Germany, or Hungary. However, Bata dealt with it by opening more stores outside of Czechoslovakia, and moreover, by establishing factories abroad, namely in Germany, Poland, Switzerland, France, Yugoslavia, India, Netherlands, and East Tilbury in the United Kingdom, and this allowed the company to operate in new fields, such as the production of tyres, toys, socks, shoe polishes, and provided repair services, moreover they took part in coal mining, rail and sea transport, food processing, printing.²⁵ In 1931, the company was renamed Bata, a. s., Zlín, being now a joint-stock company, and in addition, Tomas Bata established a holding company Leader AG in Switzerland which served as a business connection for affiliates abroad.²⁶

On July 12, 1932, Tomas Bata died in a plane crash in Otrokovice, and this tragedy was mentioned in newspapers all around the world. Tomas' half-brother Jan Antonin Bata is taking over the company, alongside a new mayor Dominik Čipera, and Hugo Vavrečka, and on top of that, they have Tomas' son Tomas Bata Jr. at hand as he was apprenticed as a shoemaker, continuing the legacy and gradually works his way up to lead a factory in East

²² Pokluda, *From Zlin into the World – The Story of Tomas Bata*, 25.

²³ Pokluda, *Bata v kostce*, 47.

²⁴ Pokluda, *From Zlin into the World – The Story of Tomas Bata*, 32-35.

²⁵ Pokluda, *From Zlin into the World – The Story of Tomas Bata*, 53.

²⁶ Bata Information Centre, "Biography – Important Dates in Tomas Bata's Life."

Tilbury.²⁷ The new management continued in the operation of the firm after Tomas Bata, as they introduced new company periodicals that were dealing with a broad range of focus, and more importantly, new schools were built to educate local people and to allow them to find employment in many fields – Bata Industrial School, management school Tomasov, Art School, secondary grammar school and subsequently the business academy.²⁸

1.2.5 The Impact of WWII

After the Great Depression ended, the world was hit by the second world war from 1939 to 1945. As a direct consequence of this, people started to flee the country as they could seek an opportunity in Bata business abroad as new companies were also established in South Africa. Jan Antonin Bata and Tomas Bata Jr headed to North America, where they built factories in Batawa, Canada, and Belcamp, US.

The war interrupted the contact of headquarters in Zlín from the rest of the company's factories, stores, and subsidiaries. However, current leaders of the firm Vavrečka and Čipera, alongside with Marie Bata, who replaced Jan Antonin Bata in the meantime, held their ground and tried to stay in touch with the employees and inhabitants in Zlín by establishing movements against Nazis and by organizing events such as film festival in order to get their mind off things while the management of the company was under the control of German occupiers. During this time Jan Antonin Bata was not able to communicate well with both the family and the government due to his views and also his stay abroad, resulting in his expulsion. He settled in Brazil to develop new communities, while he was put on the blacklist in the UK and the US, and the firms in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary were nationalized. Tomas Bata Jr continued to lead the company and moved the headquarters from Zlín to the company town of East Tilbury, and then to London because Czechoslovakia was led by communists who renamed the company to Svit, and the city to Gottwaldov.²⁹

1.2.6 The Continuation of the Company

With the new headquarters in England, Tomas Bata Jr continued to develop the company by communicating with his partners, and by supporting the affiliates in democratic countries. He aimed to strengthen the name of the company by restoring the production, technology, education, and overall influence all over the world as new facilities and factories were built.

²⁷ Pokluda, *Bata v kostce*, 82-85.

²⁸ Pokluda, *From Zlin into the World – The Story of Tomas Bata*, 58-62.

²⁹ Pokluda, *From Zlin into the World – The Story of Tomas Bata*, 63-66.

By 1962, there were 79 countries with the Bata presence – they were led by its own management to understand local wants and needs owing to a production of 175 million pairs of shoes sold in 4,100 shops, manufactured and sold by 80,000 employees.³⁰ In the same year, Jan Antonin Bata gave up his ownership in favour of Tomas Bata Jr, and the headquarters were moved again, now from London to Toronto, Canada.³¹

In the remaining years of the 20th century, the company maintained development even though there were difficulties. More affiliates were nationalized – in Egypt and Sudan, others were seized or dispossessed – in Tanzania, Algeria, and Vietnam, and some of them were simply closed – in Kenya, India, Malaysia, Canada, the US, and Switzerland. Another thing was the growing sector of imports as Eastern Asian countries challenged the global market. It was mainly Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea that affected the import of then well-established organizations in the rest of the world. The company dealt with these circumstances once again by opening new factories, now in Chile and Colombia in South America, in Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, and Congo in Africa, and Pakistan and India in Asia. Finally, Tomas Bata Jr returned to Czechoslovakia in 1989 after the Velvet Revolution, when Gottwaldov was renamed back to Zlín, to re-establish the Czechoslovakian part as a part of the whole Bata corporation in 1991, and by 1996, 3 years after the country separated into the Czech Republic and to Slovakia, the company regained its sole ownership.³²

Nowadays, the company is called Bata Shoe Organisation and is still one of the biggest shoe manufacturers in the world with its headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, and the current CEO of the company is Sandeep Kataria from India.³³ To understand and adapt to the local situation, the organization is split into three Meaningful Business Units – Bata Europe located in Lausanne, Switzerland, Bata Asia Pacific, and Africa in Singapore, and Bata Latin America in Mexico City, Mexico. This allows them to operate on every continent where they produce 150 million pairs of shoes on average. They currently employ over 40,000 people, manage 40 manufacturing facilities in 25 countries, and sell their products in 5,000 own shops.³⁴

³⁰ Pokluda, *From Zlin into the World – The Story of Tomas Bata*, 66-70.

³¹ Bata Information Centre, “Biography – Important Dates in Tomas Bata’s Life.”

³² Pokluda, *From Zlin into the World – The Story of Tomas Bata*, 70-74.

³³ BusinessToday.In, “Sandeep Kataria Quits as Bata India CEO to Take Up Mantle of Global CEO,” *Business Today*, August 12, 2021, <https://www.businesstoday.in/latest/corporate/story/sandeep-kataria-quits-as-bata-india-ceo-to-take-up-mantle-of-global-ceo-303968-2021-08-12>.

³⁴ “Baťa ve světě,” Baťa, accessed March 2, 2022, <https://www.bata.cz/bata-ve-svete.html>.

2 TOMAS BATA'S MANAGEMENT

2.1 The Bata System

Tomas Bata is portrayed as one of the most significant entrepreneurs who innovated and applied new systems and strategies in the sphere of management which was important for his working conditions in the workplace. He used to work since an early age, therefore he was able to learn progressively, understand the business, and develop his hardworking mindset. Before learning to read and write, he got to know the business aspects – to not produce anything unless you are sure that it will sell, sales are more important than production, and that price is a dictator.³⁵ His management was oriented toward exceptional and effective production, the integrity of the company, continuous improvement of the work and employees' abilities, and involvement of everyone in the organization in the running of the company. As soon as he established the Bata Shoe Organisation with his siblings, he implemented the aforementioned adjustments – the fixed work schedule from 6 AM to 6 PM with an hour-long lunch break, and the weekly paid wage. His employees respected him due to his approach as he was in touch with them and he was also admired for his diligence because he not only managed the company, but also did the accounting, and helped with carrying the materials. Appearance mattered to him, he was well dressed in a tie, and he and his siblings portrayed themselves as manufacturers running a factory in order to give the impression of a higher class. He referred to the company as “our” when talking to the employees and used “we” instead of “I.” The capability of an individual and the cooperation of a team was inculcated in his mind in the gymnastic classes of the Sokol association that he visited twice a week, and that was what he applied in his concept – many individuals in his company competed, collaborated, and in the end supported each other.³⁶

Time was an important aspect for him, as he spent his time working and learning. Working fast and efficiently was key for him so he did not waste any opportunity. To put shoes on people, because many of them were walking barefoot as shoes were intended for the rich, he introduced the light canvas shoes – they were made of cheap materials and the production was fast, hence they were sold for a cheap price which allowed the ordinary people to buy them, and even though they lasted for a season, the cheap price enabled them to buy them again instead of repairing them for a higher price. Due to their material and

³⁵ Cekota Antonín, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata* (Rome: Edizioni Internazionali Sociali, 1968), 13-16.

³⁶ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 20-30.

price, other shoe producers looked down on them as a desperate piece of work, and because of that, the distributors refused to sell them. He came up with his own selling technique by putting the shoes in general stores, groceries, newsstands, or hardware stores, and besides that, he paid a traveling salesman on a horse carriage to sell them on his routes, and the shoes were advertised on signs that he gave to his sellers.³⁷

The first US trip to the shoemaking factory in Lynn opened his eyes from the worker's production point of view as the workers there produced 1,200 pairs of shoes on average per person which is a huge difference from the average of 10 of Bata's workers. As a result, he wanted to implement daily control of production costs, and the production itself. Moreover, he wanted to create a day plan to define the process from the beginning of procurement of the material to the final product. Furthermore, Tomas Bata applied a ban on political opinions in the workplace due to disputes, followed by employment contracts to penalize the workers if they have not reached the output standard or made defective shoes.³⁸ The machines that he saw in the US were expensive, so instead of buying them, he bought a lathe and other tools to build his shoe machines. He even bought a bookbinder's press to cut parts of shoes instead of its purpose of cutting books. With the first machines in hands, he wanted to learn about them by himself to know them from the point of view of an investor and also a shoemaker.³⁹ Trade-wise, he realized that his products could be sold in different places further away from the place of production and that he needs to advertise whenever there was a change and by any means. He knew the strength of an individual and team from his Sokol classes, but in America, everyone was chasing their dream by being more interested and thus efficient in their work which led to overall better outcomes. He used to brainstorm with his employees to evoke their ideas on how to do something and how to fulfill the problem he wanted to realize. He believed that everyone should put their shoulder to the wheel as someone could come up with an idea that was stuck in their mind, and he wanted to get to that.⁴⁰ After their return from the US, he wanted to have everything planned ahead for the daily production, so the regular production planning for the manufacturing shoes, and a system of business administration and incentives occurred to him as he thought of the issue that the employees did not know the process of the manufacturing apart from their contribution, and that they had no idea about the trade part of the production – the export

³⁷ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 37-39.

³⁸ Urbanová, and Dundelová, "Work Culture of the Bata Company," 489.

³⁹ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 39-42.

⁴⁰ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 56-60.

and the cost of the procedures, therefore he started collecting information, analysing every part of the production process and then adjusting it from dividing shoes into size, to assigning work to specialised machines, which took him over 20 years of finding out the right production system that would eliminate all the unnecessary work activity, when finally in 1924, he gave the employees a share of the profit to reduce the manufacturing costs.⁴¹ The employees participated in the profit of the company thanks to the self-government workshops as the company was divided into many departments that had their own management and working methods. Everything was checked weekly and by that, the production was still under control during its manufacturing process. This system allowed them to calculate the expected costs and incomes, therefore it enabled them to divide the profit of the unit for both the company and the employees.⁴² The system was called the autonomy of workshops and departments and Dominik Čipera had an important role in creating this with Tomas Bata. They invented this modern business that included aspects such as goal setting, responsibility delegation, the development, and they paid attention to the price and quality of their shoes. As the employees had their profit under their hands, they were able to elevate themselves to precise work, which resulted in their growth.⁴³

After World War I, the employees could enjoy the 8 hours shift and new conveniences – the conveyor belt to increase production, and new facilities to improve their lives. It was his managing abilities and approach not only to his workers, but also to the inhabitants of Zlín that helped him to become the new mayor. His success allowed him to expand beyond Zlín and abroad, because everything was paid by his own funds as the company paid off all the debts. These factories abroad were already under Bata's system that consisted of these facts – that everyone needs to be in a friendly relationship and mutual cooperation, then that the company must serve entrepreneurs, employees and customers, followed by rejection of any intervention into the company's relationships and rejection of trade unions and political organizations, and finally the employees' possibility to climb the position ladder by showing their skills.⁴⁴

Tomas Bata was not afraid of firing or penalizing the employees, but he was not afraid of reducing their wages either. He did that during a crisis in 1911, as he took a loan from a bank, and he did that in 1918 during the crisis after WWI, and in 1922 during the deflation

⁴¹ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 66-68, 178.

⁴² Urbanová, and Dundelová, "Work Culture of the Bata Company," 490-491.

⁴³ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 178-184.

⁴⁴ Urbanová, and Dundelová, "Work Culture of the Bata Company," 491.

policy. At the same time, he reduced the prices of his products by half, and offered his services like a canteen for as cheap as possible, with more work opportunities in new facilities where women could work, and even Tomas Bata himself worked overtime both physically and mentally to get things done.⁴⁵

His product promotions were looking very elaborate – in 1922, the poster with a fist punching the word “drahota,” meaning high costs and shortage of supplies, supplemented by the explanation of Tomas Bata’s actions in newspapers, became very popular as it attracted people to buy his shoes.⁴⁶ Tomas Bata used psychological pricing to attract more customers, as these prices looked more appealing, which is based on ending the price of the product with the number 9, instead of rounding the price off to zero.⁴⁷

2.1.1 Fields of Business

Before Tomas Bata died, he managed to run the biggest Czech footwear organization as he was able to cover a wide range of industry, trade, service, and manufacturing fields – footwear production, precision engineering, printing, tannery, power station, retailing, agriculture, shoe, and shoe repair shops, forestry, brickworks, newspapers, specialised magazines, and book publishing and publishing house, woodworking plant, company savings bank, advertising, rubber, textile, and chemical industry, building department, research department, freight, railway, sea and air transport, building projects, paper processing, film production, food production, pedicure, tyre production, the insurance industry, gas industry, coal mines, and accommodation services. On top of that, he provided non-manufacturing activities and built important facilities for the community – company canteen and food shop, kindergarten, library, houses and hotels, educational courses and programs, film projections, factory excursions, company band, health, and social department, sports club, schools, hospital, cinema, department store, zoo, shoe museum, and he also employed handicapped people. Additionally, the new company leaders secured more industry fields and facilities after Tomas Bata’s death – aircraft production, artificial silk production, more schools specialized in arts and managers, spa, and gallery.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 122-130.

⁴⁶ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 158-162.

⁴⁷ Hitesh Bhasin, “Marketing Mix of Bata,” *Marketing91*, February 3, 2019, <https://www.marketing91.com/marketing-mix-bata/>.

⁴⁸ Pohluda, *Bata v kostce*, 130-131.

2.2 Company Town

The first concepts of company towns emerged in Europe and North America during the industrial age between 1830 to 1930, and afterwards, they developed in Latin America, Africa, Oceania, the Middle East, and Asia. As the name suggests, the company towns were built by the certain company as these towns were intended to serve as a place for manufacturing, mineral extraction, and a stable workforce in remote areas, where the characteristics of the company towns depended on the business activity of the company as they often were built near the source that was needed for their production. The company towns were divided into two parts – the industrial area, where the source was extracted and processed, and the residential area, where the workers lived and spent their free time, which led to the creation of communities.⁴⁹ The company towns were usually built in a short time, and they grew with the company itself as the purpose of them was production and profit. Most of the company towns were planned in advance, and they were developed over time.⁵⁰

Before company towns, there were 3 types of company towns – mill villages that were made up of cottages built around a water source, and later, some of them grew into larger company towns. The next type was a work camp – a location created by a businessman for men living in residential areas or bunkhouses, which were something like hostels for workers, in order to be close to mines and forests, and later, they grew into a company town as mill villages, or vanished. The last type was a communitarian settlement, which was an industrial area with a more complex structure, but they were not as successful as previous predecessors of company towns and were mostly abandoned. The first established so-called company town was in Appalachia in the eastern US, which was built in the late 19th century for miners and smelters. The company provided work in their facilities for their community, but also they had to take care of their well-being by providing housing, services, water, and electric supply.⁵¹ To strengthen the relationship between the employer and the community, the inhabitants were offered schools, libraries, parks, and many social programs.⁵²

The communities needed these facilities to live their lives, instead of just working as they were mostly situated in areas without infrastructure and transportation further from the

⁴⁹ Marcelo J. Borges and Susana B. Torres, *Company Towns – Labor, Space, and Power Relations across Time and Continents* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1-3.

⁵⁰ John S. Garner, *The Company Town – Architecture and Society in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3-5.

⁵¹ Borges and Torres, *Company Towns – Labor, Space, and Power Relations across Time and Continents*, 4-6.

⁵² Garner, *The Company Town – Architecture and Society in the Early Industrial Age*, 5-6.

city, where the materials were not extracted. Each company town had its significant features based on its specialization, but there were common features among company towns – in the heart of the city, there was a large building, mostly a hotel, then the residence of the businessman, and a company store, and around these buildings, other facilities were built – schools, stores, church, hospital, and more. This centre was surrounded by houses for the company workers, that were built in the same style, same colour, and from the same materials to maintain the united architecture.⁵³

The Bata Shoe Organization established many company towns that were like Zlín, this includes towns Borovo in Yugoslavia, Ottmuth in Germany, Chelmek in Poland, Möhlin in Switzerland, Hellocourt in France, Best in the Netherlands, Martfü in Hungary, Battawa in Canada, Belcamp in the US, Batanagar in India, other 8 towns in Czechoslovakia, and finally a company town in East Tilbury, England.⁵⁴

2.3 Garden City

Garden city is a concept popularized mostly by Ebenezer Howard. He thought that the cities should be an ideal place for both employers and employees who would live in single-family houses with gardens, and recreational facilities in the city. His vision was that the ideal city population is 32,000 living in an area of 6,000 acres – 30,000 of these people living on 1,000 acres around the city centre, and 2,000 people living on 5,000 acres of agricultural lands that separated the city from the countryside. This plan included the layout of the areas in the city and how they connected. As the city was meant to be for a set amount of people, another city with the same layout and same circumstances would be built near the fully populated one, and they would be connected by railroad and still separated by the countryside.⁵⁵

The Endicott-Johnson shoe company that Tomas Bata visited had features of the garden city, such as single-family houses and four-square houses for workers. The city also had social and medical programs, parks, a profit-sharing plan, and facilities where the citizens could spend their free time, which led to workers' happiness and loyalty.⁵⁶

⁵³ J. D. Porteous, "The Nature of the Company Town," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, no. 51 (November 1970): 129-135, <https://doi.org/10.2307/621766>.

⁵⁴ Martin Jemelka, "The Factory Towns of the Baťa Company: Ideals in Corporate Practice," Zlin Architecture Manual, Zlin.eu, accessed March 16, 2022, <https://zam.zlin.eu/en/studie/the-factory-towns-of-the-bata-company-ideals-in-corporate-practice/6>.

⁵⁵ Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler, *From Garden City to Green City – The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 7-8.

⁵⁶ Zachary Austin Doleshal, *In the Kingdom of Shoes – Bata, Zlin, globalization, 1894-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 57.

2.4 Zlín

Tomas Bata loved Zlín wholeheartedly and he wanted to stay and build his organization there. Even though there was a pressure that he should move the company to a city like Prague or Brno, he was a part of this city as he enjoyed every second in this area, but he also knew that the city needs him, which led to his expansion and development of the company in Zlín.⁵⁷

2.4.1 Architecture

Zlín was not located in a rural area as company towns were, but it has certain features of a company town and also a garden city, after all, Zlín is called the city of greenery.⁵⁸ The plans from the architects Jan Kotěra, who designed the houses for workers in 1918, and František Lýdie Gahura, who designed the projects “A Factory Among Gardens” and “A City Surrounded by Gardens” in 1924, helped to achieve this name, furthermore, he proposed this idea to Zlín citizens when he became the mayor. The development of the city started in 1906 with the first factory building, and to provide homes for workers, Tomas Bata built the first group of houses between 1912 and 1916.⁵⁹

The company grew as new factories were built and new fields of business were gradually implemented, therefore the number of employees kept increasing and they needed a place for living. By 1924, the company had a building department that helped in the construction of these industrial and residential buildings. The buildings were built in the same style and from the same material – red bricks and white concrete. The factory building was built with these materials, its standard size was 6.15 x 6.15 meters, the framework was from reinforced concrete with brick lining, and they were spacious and lit by the sun. To make the development faster, other large buildings were built on this basis, such as another factory buildings, a department store, a school, a hotel, a cinema, and a hospital.⁶⁰ The construction of roads, sewers, power plants, river flood control, and water supply was also secured.⁶¹ The houses for workers were also constructed from red bricks and white concrete, and they were situated in residential districts around the industrial city centre – in Letná, which was the quarter that Tomas Bata bought and where the first houses were built. They were distributed

⁵⁷ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 101-102.

⁵⁸ “About the City: Zlin – the City of Greenery and Healthy Lifestyles,” Zlin.eu, accessed April 10, 2022, <https://www.zlin.eu/zlin-the-city-of-greenery-and-healthy-lifestyles-cl-1941.html>.

⁵⁹ Zdeněk Pokluda, Jan Herman, and Milan Balaban, *Baťa na všech kontinentech* (Zlín: Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, 2020), 95.

⁶⁰ Pokluda, Herman and Balaban. *Baťa na všech kontinentech*, 95-96.

⁶¹ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 232.

into blocks and rows, there were over 200 houses in Letná, and in 1929, one-quarter of all Zlín citizens lived there and in quarters.⁶² Other districts were Nad Ovčárnou, Zálešná, Kúty, Padělky, Podvesná, Díly, Lešetín, Tyršovo nábřeží, Hluboká, and Lazy. The common aspect for both industrial and residential areas was that they were surrounded by greenery – trees, bushes, and a park in the city centre and around the factories and various facilities, and also around the houses which had also a garden and courtyard in the back that were not fenced off.⁶³

The construction of detached houses, semi-detached houses, and quarter-detached houses was well organized and divided into sequential steps – first of all, the districts needed the sewer system, water piping, and also the roads constructed before the actual construction of the houses. The succeeding step was the laying of foundations for the house and at the same time, the basements were added. Next, the remaining part of the house, the ground, and first floor, was built. The houses had a flat roof, and the finishing touches included plastering, pointing, window and door installing, and metal fitting, and all of this was done in a united style.⁶⁴ The flats in the houses had a small hall, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, pantry, and a basement, and later, there were larger variants with two bedrooms, and a variant with three bedrooms. The location away from the city centre represented private life, but still close to the factory, and to make the living more private, the entrances were facing in different directions.⁶⁵

Although the red brick houses that František Lydie Gahure projected in the Letná district are the most iconic, there were many types of houses built throughout the years. Gahura also designed a new type of quarter-detached house in Letná that had a white coating. In the same style as factory buildings, the Bata Dormitories were built in between 1930 and 1937. Moreover, he designed some of the most important buildings in the city, including the Zlín Town Hall which was finished in 1924 and served as a town centre, the Department store located on Práce square was finished in 1931, the Grand Cinema which is located next the Department store was finished in 1932 and belonged to one of the biggest cinemas in Europe regarding the capacity, the Tomas Bata Memorial which was opened 1 year after Tomas Bata's death in 1933. On the same street as the Tomas Bata Memorial is located, on Tomas

⁶² Zlín, *Po stopách Baťů*, 20.

⁶³ Pokluda, *From Zlín into the World – The Story of Tomas Bata*, 46-48; Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 232.

⁶⁴ Martin Jemelka and Ondřej Ševeček, *Tovární města Baťova koncernu: Evropská kapitola globální expanze* (Prague: Academia, 2016), 77-78.

⁶⁵ Cekota, *Entrepreneur Extraordinary: The Biography of Tomas Bata*, 231-232.

Garrigue Masaryk square, two learning institutes were built in 1938. The hospital, that was built from 1927 to 1938, was also designed by Gahura, and it was located in the eastern part of Zlín and comprised of many hospital buildings, two villas for doctors, and also a farm. The location further away from the factory secured a calmness in the greenery area away from the busy city centre. Furthermore, he designed villas for important persons – Jan Antonin Bata, the head doctor of the hospital Bohuslav Albert, and also for himself.⁶⁶

Jan Kotěra, the architect of Tomas Bata's villa, projected a family house in Letná too, when the house was finished in 1923. It was a quarter-detached house, but instead of a flat roof, it had a mansard and yellow coating, and apart from the garden, it also had a henhouse and a pigsty.⁶⁷ Besides Gahura and Kotěra, there were much more architects that contributed to the Zlín style. One of them was Vladimír Karfík, who designed a few types of family houses that were finished in 1935-36. In the Díly district, 21 single-houses of the same style were built, and they have a unique mover window on the first floor that may be accessed from the patio, and this style is accentuated by their nice view. Multiple samples of houses were designed by Karfík, Adolf Benš, František Jech, Antonín Vitek, Eric Svedlund, Jiří Voženílek, and Miroslav Drofa, but they were mostly sole variants of the red brick houses with small adjustments. Furthermore, Karfík, Drofa, and Voženílek designed apartment houses in the forties, therefore providing housing for more people.⁶⁸

Apart from the residential houses, Vladimír Karfík was mostly contributive to the development of the public buildings in Zlín. The construction of the Community House, nowadays Hotel Zlín, based on Karfík's and Miroslav Lorenc's design, began with the completion of the skeleton of a conventional module measuring 6,15 x 6,15 meters like other large factory and public buildings, and it was located in between the Department Store and the cinema. In the same module was built Tomášov, the school for managers, which groomed them for top positions. Moreover, he designed the Commercial and Community House in the Díly district, Film Studio and Laboratories in Kudlov, Winter Spa, and Evangelical Church.⁶⁹ The most known building designed by Karfík is the Administrative Building, called the Bata's skyscraper, built in 1939 – it's a three-corridor structure with the same module platform as the manufacturing buildings, it has 16 storeys and it is 77.5 metres tall.

⁶⁶ "Architecture: Villas; Family houses; Public buildings," Attractions, IC-Zlín, accessed March 19, 2022, <http://www.ic-zlin.com/24994-architecture>.

⁶⁷ IC-Zlín, "Architecture: Family houses."

⁶⁸ IC-Zlín, "Architecture: Family houses; Apartment houses."

⁶⁹ IC-Zlín, "Architecture: Public buildings."

It has a unique elevator-office has size of 6 x 6 metres where the leader of the company operated, and there is also a doorless and continuously moving elevator.⁷⁰



Figure 1. Bata Houses, “KAM Zlín hledá svou hlavu,” Architect+, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://www.architect-plus.cz/kam-zlin-hleda-svou-hlavu/>.

⁷⁰ IC-Zlín, “Architecture: Public buildings.”

3 EAST TILBURY

3.1 London

One year after World War I, in 1919, the expansion of Bata's company abroad began. Even though the United Kingdom was going through high unemployment and the public debt increased, it was still seen as one of the world's superpowers and a key country, where Tomas Bata wanted to expand his business and after a while, the base for sales was established as London was still the centre of international trade. Czechoslovakian shoe production started to compare itself to other nations in the shoe export, mainly because of the Bata Organization, as it challenged the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and other growing countries in this field.⁷¹

Four years later after the arrival in the United Kingdom, on June 11, 1923, the subsidiary Cumfy Feet Ltd., London was registered in the Commercial Register and the sister company Bata Shoe and Leather Comp., London was active in England and the shops of the Tomas Bata's business were open. During the next 10 years, the company was successively growing in London. Tomas Bata was regularly visiting London to meet with his co-workers to discuss the shoe collections. Cumfy Feet Ltd., London continued to grow and opened its two stores and the company had 9 employees by 1931. The name of the company in London was changed to The British Shoe Company Bata, Ltd. on January 24, 1931, and two years later, on June 27, 1933, to The Bata Shoe Company British Ltd., London. What was important for the company, was the co-operation with the company of Victor E. Schmidt, who was a shoe manufacturers agent. His company was a connection between Zlín and London which helped with the export and import.⁷² Apart from the stores that the Bata Organization owned, the cooperation with the British shoe producers, namely J Sears & Co., Freeman, Hardy & Willis Ltd., Upsons Ltd., and Saxcon, contributed to the sales as they sold the imported shoes in their stores, which generated revenue for the company.⁷³

Besides Tomas Bata's intention to expand his business from Czechoslovakia to other countries, the situation in the United Kingdom contributed to the search for the most suitable place for a company town. This situation was a consequence of the Great Depression that lasted from 1929 to 1939, and it caused the depreciation of the British currency, the British

⁷¹ Jemelka and Ševeček, *Tovární města Baťova koncernu: Evropská kapitola globální expanse*, 599.

⁷² Pokluda, Herman and Balaban, *Baťa na všech kontinentech*, 246.; "Europe: Great Britain," Bata's World, accessed January 12, 2022, <http://world.tomasbata.org/europe/great-britain/>.

⁷³ Jemelka and Ševeček, *Tovární města Baťova koncernu: Evropská kapitola globální expanse*, 600.

pound, the implementation of shoe marking in order to show the country of origin, and the United Kingdom imposed a duty on shoes, which, as a result, impacted the shoe business by reducing its import by one-third, and these precautions affected the sales and import of the Bata Organization.⁷⁴

3.2 East Tilbury

Tomas Bata wanted to build his factory in the United Kingdom, therefore he started looking around to find the best possible place. This search began in November 1931, when he arrived in England again.⁷⁵ He was accompanied by Alois Gabesman, an employee of Bata company working in the export department.⁷⁶ The most suitable place for his plans to establish a British branch of the Bata Shoe Company was found in East Tilbury, after a suggestion from Reverend Bown of Tilbury, resulting in the purchase of 600 acres of land on January 28th, 1932, from a local farmer William W. Wilson.⁷⁷ Tomas Bata chose East Tilbury even though he had 35 areas to choose from, but the placement of East Tilbury near the water, with the site having good sandy soil, and the possibility to give work to a heavily unemployed area that focused on farming, were all key arguments to build there.⁷⁸

3.2.1 Location

East Tilbury is a small town located near the River Thames in the county of Essex, East of England in the United Kingdom. Before the arrival of Tomas Bata, East Tilbury was a settlement for farmers. The location of the town was very convenient for the settlers because of the Thames Estuary, as well as the branch line from London to Southend and also the nearby towns such as Tilbury or even London, which is only 46 kilometres away. Later on, a railway station was built, and also the docks in Tilbury were used for the exportation of finished products.⁷⁹ Even though Essex was viewed as a brash part of England, it was not a belief that could influence Tomas Bata, as the working and living conditions were key for his business.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Jemelka and Ševeček, *Tovární město Baťova koncernu: Evropská kapitola globální expanse*, 600-2.

⁷⁵ Pokluda, Herman and Balaban, *Baťa na všech kontinentech*, 246.

⁷⁶ Zdeněk Pokluda, *Baťovi muži* (Zlín: Kovárna VIVA, 2012), 58.

⁷⁷ Pokluda, Herman and Balaban, *Baťa na všech kontinentech*, 246.; "Bata Memories: History," Bata Heritage Centre, accessed January 13, 2022, <https://www.bataheritagecentre.org.uk/bata-memories/history/>.

⁷⁸ M. A. Rumsey, *The Origin and Development of the Bata Factory and Estate and Social Examination of the Community* (East Tilbury: Bata Reminiscence and Resource Centre, 2010), 10-11.

⁷⁹ Joanna Smith, "Work Collectively and Live Individually: The Bata Housing Estate at East Tilbury," *Twentieth Century Architecture*, no. 9 (2008): 59, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41859736>.

⁸⁰ Tim Burrows et al., *Radical ESSEX* (Southend-on-Sea: Focal Point Gallery, 2018), 9.

3.2.2 Development of East Tilbury

Tomas Bata planned to create a company and garden city that would employ people who would manufacture Bata's boots and other goods. The plan was to build many houses for the workers, who would work in tens of factories and also necessary facilities for their lives such as shops, a cinema or a stadium. Vladimír Karfik and František Gahura, the architects, were responsible for creating the layout of the factory and residential site in East Tilbury. The development of East Tilbury into an industrial centre was supposed to start in the spring of 1932. Unfortunately, Tomas Bata died in a plane crash, but the intention of construction of the city lived up to his promise and it all began on January 23, 1933.⁸¹

The material for the construction was already in East Tilbury in July 1932. The contractors that were in charge of the construction were Walsham Ltd., with the help of Gravesend Welding and Electrical Engineering Works Ltd. The buildings were characterized by their modern movement style, which was typical for Zlín. It took them five months, from January 23 to the end of May, to build up the first building of the project. It was a factory that was focused on the production of rubber boots, and it was in function from July 31, after the machines were brought there from Zlín. The central office and administration block were there. One month before this, on June 27, the company changed its name again, to The Bata Shoe Company British Ltd., East Tilbury.⁸²

The development of the industrial part of the city continued with other factory buildings, that were added to the first one, and they were built in the upcoming months of 1933-1934. These buildings dealt with the chemical production and the production of leather footwear. From 1934, the workers and the public could read the news in the company newspaper Bata Record and Salesman Bata. On June 22, 1936, the company changed its name again, now to The British Bata Shoe Co. Ltd. Other factory buildings that focused on footwear were built from 1936 to 1938 and they were directed at the leather and rubber shoes. The factories were five storeys in height, with one being three storeys in height, and the factory buildings had the typical Zlín skeleton of a conventional module measuring 6,15 x 6,15 meters. The Bata Company had its own boiler house, providing steam for machinery located inside the buildings.⁸³

⁸¹ Smith, "Work Collectively and Live Individually: The Bata Housing Estate at East Tilbury," 60.

⁸² Smith, "Work Collectively and Live Individually: The Bata Housing Estate at East Tilbury," 60.; Bata's World, "Europe: Great Britain."

⁸³ Bata's World, "Europe: Great Britain."; Pokluda, Herman and Balaban. *Bata na všech kontinentech*, 248.

It was a normal thing to look after the employees, as Tomas Bata demanded a high performance in his company in return for the facilities that he ensured for them. The new leaders continued to lead the company in his footsteps and secured the best circumstances for the workers. The factory had to be clean all the time, as the workers had to keep their workplace clean by themselves, and in addition, the cleaners stayed in the factory after the workers left in order to clean the remaining dust and dirt. The toilets and showers were provided with soaps and towels, the cloakrooms with the workers' ordinary clothes, and the cloakrooms with the working clothes were separated by a bathroom to avoid getting stained. In case of an accident, a first aid kit is provided in every department, and managers gather regularly to record the injuries and discuss possible precautions. The protection of the factory against fire is secured by a sprinkler system, a fire escapes, and a prohibition of smoking on the premises of the factory.⁸⁴



Figure 2. The rubber and leather factory buildings, “East Tilbury character appraisal,”
Thurrock Council, accessed January 13, 2022,
<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/conservation-areas/character-appraisals>.

3.2.3 Residential and Communal Area

Apart from the industrial area, the residential part was also greatly developed during the thirties on Bata Avenue. The first houses for the workers were built in the course of the building of the first factory. They could either move to twenty semi-detached modernist houses or two hostels.⁸⁵ This continued throughout the decade, resulting in a total of 95 houses in 1941, even though World War II started at the end of the thirties.⁸⁶ These houses

⁸⁴ Rumsey, *The Origin and Development of the Bata Factory and Estate and Social Examination of the Community*, 17-21.

⁸⁵ Smith, “‘Work Collectively and Live Individually’: The Bata Housing Estate at East Tilbury,” 60.

⁸⁶ Pokluda, Herman and Balaban, *Bat'a na všech kontinentech*, 248.

were also located on Tomas Bata Avenue, George VI Avenue, and Queen Elizabeth Avenue.⁸⁷

Further development during this era was related to the communal area where the public could spend their free time. The first thing they could make use of was the sports grounds, which were built in 1934. Two years later, in 1936, the tennis courts and a swimming pool were built.⁸⁸ People enjoyed many sports there, such as football, hurling, and cricket and it was all supported by the Bata Sports and Social Club, and a Sports Day were taking place each July. This day was divided into morning and afternoon. In the morning, workshops were showing the work of the factory and in the afternoon, the sports part took place. Sportspeople were then able to represent the company in various teams, competing with each other or even with another team from Bata's company from different countries. They even regularly played against West Ham United FC, a well-known football club from Stratford, London, which used the football grounds for their training.⁸⁹

The social life lived up in 1936, when the Community House was constructed and opened to the public. Not considering the factory, this was the largest building in the city. It provided accommodation for workers that were single and also for migrants, also with a ballroom, canteen, top-floor gymnasium, supermarket, and shops. The canteen had the capacity of 1,000 people that were offered a three course meal and a refreshment bar.⁹⁰ The supermarket was supplied by the local farm, which was founded in 1932 and had its dairy herd and fruit orchards. The next building for the public was a cinema for up to 396 people, which was built in 1938, followed by a company vocational school in 1939. Each Christmas, the cinema building was used for a Nativity Play, which was performed by local families and the vicar. The premises of the company also functioned as a venue for Catholic Masses.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Tony Crosby, Adam Garwood and Adrian Corder-Birch, "Workers' Housing in Essex," *Industrial Archaeology Review* 30, no. 2 (2008): 122, <https://doi.org/10.1179/174581908X347319>.

⁸⁸ Bata's World, "Europe: Great Britain."

⁸⁹ "Bata Memories: Sport," Bata Heritage Centre, accessed January 14, 2022, <https://www.bataheritagecentre.org.uk/bata-memories/sport/>; "Bata Memories" Bata Heritage Centre, accessed January 14, 2022, <https://www.bataheritagecentre.org.uk/bata-memories/joan-james/>.

⁹⁰ Rumsey, *The Origin and Development of the Bata Factory and Estate and Social Examination of the Community*, 15-17.

⁹¹ Bata's World, "Europe: Great Britain."; Smith, "'Work Collectively and Live Individually': The Bata Housing Estate at East Tilbury," 60.



Figure 3. Bata Hotel. “Bata Memories: Joan James,” Bata Heritage Centre, accessed January 20, 2022, <https://www.bataheritagecentre.org.uk/bata-memories/memories/joan-james/>.

During and after World War II in the forties, the development carried on. Education was an important aspect for the Bata Organization, as they wanted to educate their own people who would work in the company, ranging from the workers to managers, as they started with this in Zlín where they built schools for these purposes, and for that reason, the Bata Primary School was opened in 1943 for the youth of East Tilbury. The children were involved in many activities in the city. They attended the Church of England Sunday School which was held each week in the ballroom of the Community House. The next educational system was built in 1948, which was a technical college, that focused on the shoemaking industry in the fields of rubber and leather footwear making or administration.⁹²

The residential area kept on growing in stages, with another 34 houses constructed between 1946 and 1947, and 52 more houses between 1953 and 1963 resulting in 362 houses on the estate by 1966. Other facilities were built from 1952 to 1967. This included the pantry, the boiler room, the plastic department, hosiery, the fire station, warehouse, and Espresso bar, which was a popular place for the residents to meet and it included a coffee machine and jukebox, and it was also a popular place for smoking.⁹³

⁹² Pokluda, Herman and Balaban, *Bata na všech kontinentech*, 248.; Bata Heritage Centre, “Bata Memories.”

⁹³ Pokluda, Herman and Balaban, *Bata na všech kontinentech*, 250.; Tim Burrows, “The Town that Bata Built: A Modernist Marvel on the Marshes of Essex,” *The Guardian*, September 8, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/sep/08/essex-architecture-weekend-east-tilbury-bata-shoe-factory>.

Ten years after World War II, a bronze statue of Tomas Bata was erected outside the factory. It was made by the English sculptor Joseph Hermon Cawthra and it was unveiled on July 12, 1955, which is the day Tomas Bata died in 1932. This day was then named Founder's Day, with people and workers of East Tilbury placing a wreath at the Memorial. On top of that, a memorial arch shape was erected nearby, and it was dedicated to those who gave their lives in World War II. This meant 81 workers and civilians of the British Bata Shoe Company.⁹⁴



Figure 4. Tomas Bata Statue, “Bata Memories: Tomas Bata,” Bata Heritage Centre, accessed January 20, 2022, <https://www.bataheritagecentre.org.uk/bata-memories/tomas-bata/>.

3.2.4 Branches of the British Bata

The company town of East Tilbury was the main locality of the British Bata in the United Kingdom, however, the company branched out to other English cities to expand its business. A factory that focused on rubber footwear was bought in Maryport in 1940, the tannery that supplied East Tilbury with leather was acquired in Leicester in 1944, the textile industry was starting in Adlington in 1949, and in the same year, a shoe factory focusing on heavy working, army, or football boots was acquired in Dudley.⁹⁵ These cities were located north

⁹⁴ Pokluda, Herman and Balaban, *Bata na všech kontinentech*, 250.; “Bata Memories: Tomas Bata,” Bata Heritage Centre, accessed January 20, 2022, <https://www.bataheritagecentre.org.uk/bata-memories/tomas-bata/>.

⁹⁵ Jemelka and Ševcůček, *Tovární města Baťova koncernu: Evropská kapitola globální expanse*, 604.

of London, which covered a wide territory with Bata influence, as it was another opportunity to employ more people and to raise public awareness of the company itself.

Moreover, subsidiaries were established in order to improve the services. In 1937, it was Atlas Importers Ltd. in London, then in 1939, Impeco Ltd. in London, and in 1946, Exico Ltd. in Nottingham. Business companies were under the control of the British Bata in Glasgow, Scotland, and, naturally, in London – it was Bata Shoe Co. Ltd, Scotland, and Essex Commercial Enterprises Ltd., London, respectively. As trade was an important part not only for British Bata, but also for the whole enterprise all around the world, it was fundamental to British Bata to have more organizations concerned with trade, which led to affiliates in Gibraltar and Spain in Europe, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Ghana in Africa, and in Jamaica in the Caribbean, which helped in opening new stores in these locations and surrounding countries.⁹⁶

3.2.5 Production

In order to become the biggest exporter of footwear in the United Kingdom, British Bata had to employ many people for the purpose of increased production. The first employees for the factory in East Tilbury were chosen in advance, as 20 men from the United Kingdom attended the Bata school in Zlín which taught them the expert knowledge regarding the factory and manufacturing functioning.⁹⁷ The number of employees was increasing, from the 200 workers that were there during the opening of the first factory, to eight-times more than 1,645 workers in 1939. During the next decade, the factory in East Tilbury employed 3,000 people, which was a stable number of employees up until the seventies.⁹⁸ The workers and managers were working on weekdays from 7:30 AM until 5 PM, with a 10 minute break at 10 AM, and an hour long lunch break at 12:30 PM.⁹⁹ This was similar to the working hours of the Zlín factory, where they worked a bit longer, from 6 AM to 6 PM. However, the British Bata as a whole had twice as many employees. Including the other cities with factories, affiliates, stores, and offices, the number of employees amounted to 6,000.¹⁰⁰

The shoe production increased from 1,230,400 in 1934, to 2,972,000 in 1937, which was a huge increase that proved the industriousness of the company, and during the peak

⁹⁶ Bata's World, "Europe: Great Britain."

⁹⁷ Pokluda, Herman and Balaban, *Bata na všech kontinentech*, 248.

⁹⁸ Pokluda, Herman and Balaban, *Bata na všech kontinentech*, 249.; Burrows, "The Town that Bata Built: A Modernist Marvel on the Marshes of Essex."

⁹⁹ Rumsey, *The Origin and Development of the Bata Factory and Estate and Social Examination of the Community*, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Pokluda, Herman and Balaban, *Bata na všech kontinentech*, 251.

production years in the sixties, the company exported 3,540,000 pairs of shoes that confirming the company's position as the biggest exporter of footwear in the United Kingdom. They were sold in over 400 Bata stores, 300 of them were in the United Kingdom, and the rest was in the countries where British Bata operated.¹⁰¹

3.2.6 Housing

All residents of East Tilbury are linked to the company, which represents a true picture of a company town. The housing for the workers was built by the company in Zlín, and the top management wanted to provide this possibility also to the workers of East Tilbury. The houses were mainly meant for the families, while the hotel was available for single people or couples. The hotel offered flats, large rooms for 3 people, double rooms, and single rooms with or without baths. The hostels were mostly occupied by young women.

The architecture of the family houses was based on the Zlín design. They were constructed in different layouts, as the semi-detached two-storey houses consisted of three bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen and a bathroom. Other semi-detached houses had four bedrooms with a lounge, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, and, moreover, a garage and a balcony. These houses had a flat roof, but there were also houses with two bedrooms, that had a slopping roof. The houses were equipped with a heating system, furnishing, and kitchen equipment. The houses that were built earlier had wooden windows, as metal windows were used for later houses. To provide garages to people that lived in a house without a garage, rows of garages were built next to each other. The locations of the residential areas guaranteed a calm lifestyle in between greenery, but at the same time, close to everything in the city.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Bata's World, "Europe: Great Britain."

¹⁰² Rumsey, *The Origin and Development of the Bata Factory and Estate and Social Examination of the Community*, 29-42.

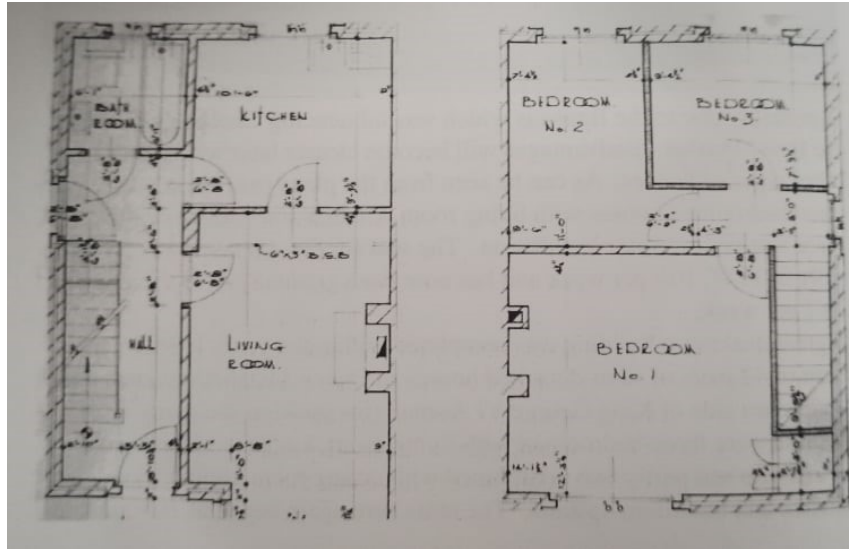


Figure 5. Plan of 3 Bedroom Type in King George VI Ave and Queen Elizabeth Ave, M A Rumsey, “The Origin and Development of the Bata Factory and Estate and Social Examination of the Community.”

The houses were made from concrete and bricks, and they were laid out in a checkerboard pattern with residences at opposite ends of the estate of the houses to maximize garden space. The open space surrounding the estate and factory was important for the aspect of a garden city, therefore grassing areas and planting flower beds, shrubs, privet hedges, and trees were planted throughout the city, while cherry trees were planted in the gardens of company houses.¹⁰³



Figure 6. Aerial View of the Bata Factory and Estate, Bata Heritage Centre, accessed January 20, 2022, <https://www.bataheritagecentre.org.uk/>.

¹⁰³ Smith, “‘Work Collectively and Live Individually’: The Bata Housing Estate at East Tilbury,” 66.

3.2.7 East Tilbury Today

After the successful years that lasted from the beginning of the factory in East Tilbury up until the sixties, the company started to decline. The production and the number of employees dropped significantly after 1980, which resulted in the selling of houses and stores, and in demolishing no longer important premises, such as the swimming pool or the farm. However, the production kept going until 2005, when the factory finally shut down, and nowadays, the city has a new company to work in, as the world-wide known technology company Amazon is located there.¹⁰⁴ The company existed there for over 70 years, as the globalisation, which was related to the export and import of cheaper shoes from nowadays top exporters in Asia, had some influence on the end of the company in East Tilbury.¹⁰⁵

3.3 Bata Heritage Centre

The Bata Reminiscence and Resource centre, nowadays called The Bata Heritage Centre, was opened in April, 2002. It was constructed within the local library to contain the memories of those who have lived in this community, as well as images and objects provided by them. The Centre currently includes information about all of the British Bata subsidiaries in the United Kingdom, as well as a modest amount of information on other Bata communities across the world. The people that contribute to the functioning of the Centre are mostly volunteers, and apart from the information about the company, it includes the memories of people that lived and worked in the company town of East Tilbury.

The Centre is open three days a week – on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the weekdays, and on Saturdays on weekends. Some of the artifacts of Bata Organization stored in the Centre are sports trophies, shoelaces, football shields, shoe polish tins, egg timer, rulers, labels, or programmes of local events. The Centre organizes open days for the public, as well as for groups that are interested in history, and architecture students.

Furthermore, they collect photographs related to the company's activity in the town. The photographs, that show the industrial, residential and communal buildings, employees, leisure activities, meetings, or produced goods, can be seen on their website. Apart from that, there is a "Bata memories" section, which includes short articles about the history of East

¹⁰⁴ Louise Lazell, "Life on Essex's 'Forgotten' Utopian Estate in the Shadows of a Shoe Factory," *Essex Live*, July 29, 2020, <https://www.essexlive.news/news/essex-news/bata-factory-east-tilbury-shoe-4375642>.

¹⁰⁵ "Alphaville," Phil Le Gal, accessed March 17, 2022, <https://www.phillegal.org/alphaville2#1>.

Tilbury and the information about youth, education, sports, residents, and more that they were able to gather so far.¹⁰⁶



Figure 7. East Tilbury Library and Bata Reminiscence and Resource Centre, Sludge G, Flickr, Accessed April 16, 2022, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sludgeulper/6473143081>.

¹⁰⁶ Bata Heritage Centre.

CONCLUSION

Tomas Bata established the Bata Shoe Organization with his siblings, and even though they left, he was able to develop the business in an exceptional way of his own accord. The journeys he took to different countries, as several of them were headed towards the United States, where he gained most of his ideas for running the business, helped him to accomplish his goals of establishing a company with a world-wide influence.

The creation of small Zlín played a key role in expanding the business abroad. The combination of a company town and a garden city concepts that were applied in Zlín, was also implemented in East Tilbury. The layout of the city and the city areas in Zlín, where the industrial area was in the centre of the city, surrounded by the residential areas with communal facilities located in convenient places, was used in East Tilbury. The factory was the main location, with residential areas located near it. The greenery was an important part of both cities as it was ubiquitous in gardens, around the factories and communal areas, with both cities having a park.

The housing system that consisted of concrete and red brick houses, mostly semi-detached, with the same furnishings and equipment, built in rows in set residential areas is a typical style that represents the Zlín architecture. The factory and communal buildings used the same skeleton of a conventional module measuring 6,15 x 6,15 which became standard for these buildings. The Bata company made use of their knowledge of the process and applied these techniques in other company towns of the enterprise. This architectural style was something new for the society of United Kingdom, but it was proven for the company that it works, hence there was no need in creating different buildings, as it were the British people that had to adapt.

Tomas Bata's system worked, and it was used by his successors in the management of the company. Both Zlín and East Tilbury grew into industrial cities that produced immense numbers of shoes and affected people's lives by offering them opportunities to work in the company.

Unfortunately, the production in East Tilbury ended, but the impact that it had on the production and export of shoes in the United Kingdom is indisputable. However, the legacy in East Tilbury lives on thanks to the people that tell their stories and pass them onto the next generations.

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