

Social and Architectural Phenomenon of the Bataism in Slovakia¹

(The example of the community Šimonovany – Baťovany – Partizánske)

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Social and Architectural Phenomenon of the Bataism in Slovakia (The Example of the Community Šimonovany – Baťovany – Partizánske) The impact of the Baťa's enterprise on the economical, social and architectural environment of the Czechoslovak Republic was significant. However through the whole history it was perceived with hesitation. In 1930s the Baťa's activities have faced the criticism from the representatives of leftist avant-garde, later from the representatives of the communistic regime. These negative attitudes caused that the rationalist conceptions of town planning, typification and unification of Baťa architecture appeared in professional press only occasionally. Only in the 1990s several studies and exhibitions have emerged that reflected and evaluated from a distance the architectural and social work of the Baťa concern in Czechoslovakia. Most of the attention is being paid to Zlín, the seat of the company and to the most important personalities of the Baťa Company like Tomáš Baťa and Jan Baťa and architects as Vladimír Karfík and František Lydie Gahura. However, Slovak satellites of the Baťa Company have been mentioned only rarely and evaluated as marginal.

This paper carries the principle information on Baťa town planning, architecture and social engineering generally and on the example of the Baťovany settlement in particular. It focuses on the new knowledge connected with the history of the industrial town Baťovany – Partizánske, its town-planning, architecture, social environment and the relations between the Baťa headquarters in Zlín and the local branch in Baťovany. At the same time it examines the role of Baťa's social and architectural activities in the process of modernization of Slovakia.

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“For a village person that was used to the richness of shapes and decorations, variety of contours in nature, this austere geometric rigidity was shocking, it was as if he found himself in a different, sort of unreal world.”
(E. Čepčková)

After the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, Slovakia was an early industrial, rural society respectively and unlike Czech lands, its transition from traditional to modern industrial society was going on only slowly. The way of life was directly determined by the majority employment of inhabitants in agriculture that build the main part of local economy³. After the Great Depression in the 1930s, which dramatically affected Slovakia in particular, the Czechoslovak government started to solve the local situation. It has founded the National Economic Institute for Slovakia and Ruthenia where the plan for industrialization of Slovakia was elaborated. However, this plan was met only in part. The efforts to build industrial factories in the territory of Slovakia included the expansion of the Baťa Group into the regions of Upper Nitra and Sub-Tatran basin.

In the 1930s, the Baťa Company was a well-known and prosperous business. The production of shoes started up by Tomáš Baťa (1876 – 1932) in the 1920s continued successfully and expanded also beyond Zlín, its hometown. Production facilities were established both in the territory of Czechoslovakia and abroad, for example in Croatia (Borovo), Poland (Chelmek, Otmęt), the Netherlands (Best), Switzerland (Möhlin), France (Hellocourt, Vernon) and even outside Europe in the USA (Belcamp), India (Batanagar) or Brasil (Batatuba). The Baťa Group founded a number of production facilities in Slovakia, which were united in 1940 under the name ‘Baťa, Slovak Joint-stock Company, Šimonovany’⁴. The Baťa Group, a European example of the Taylor-Ford business model, was a unique phenomenon in the Pre-Modern situation of predominantly agrarian Slovakia – it was a synonym of progress and modernization. If we admit that social micro level is an essential factor of the transformation of society into the modern one, then we can also consider the shoe-producing Baťa Group one of the players of modernization in Slovakia. Its activities immediately influenced the settlements it had established (Baťovany, Batizovce), but it had also broader economic, social and cultural effects. Baťa's satellite towns were highly attractive mainly for the young. Education, work, social benefits, independence and liberation from the Christian patriarchal tradition of Slovak countryside – these were the values that lured hundreds of young people to Baťa's schools and factories. This social phenomenon also included Baťa architecture that was the bearer of new aesthetics developed beyond traditional patterns. In Baťa's satellites establishment of new social relations was supported that related to the production facility, education and work, and the organization of life in the town. On the other hand, it has to be mentioned that technical progress, architecture, and social organization of the Baťa firm came to Slovakia from the outside as alien import and the target group of inhabitants coming mostly from backward rural environment was

¹ The first comprehensive studies on Baťovany architecture and society originated on the base of complex research in the frame of the Modern Movement Neighbourhood Cooperation project, which was carried out at the Department of Architecture of the Institute of Construction and Architecture Slovak Academy of Sciences and supported by the program Culture 2000 of the European Union in the year 2003.

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³ In 1918, 60% of inhabitants of Slovakia worked in agriculture, compared with merely 30% in the Czech lands. Only 17% of the population was employed in industry compared with 40% in the Czech lands.

⁴ Its registered capital amounted to 75,000,000 crowns, which was the second largest capital within the Czechoslovak Group of the Baťa Company, Zlín. The company named Baťa, Slovak Joint-Stock Company, Šimonovany included: the works for the processing of leather and shoes in Bošany, a factory for artificial silk, footwear and underclothes in Batizovce, coal mines in Obyce, Lomy and Tuhár, a factory for the production of cream in Liptovský Mikuláš, the spa and forest and land farm in Bojnice, and the Kotva Export – Import company in Bratislava. The Group's companies also produced buildings materials used for the construction of its buildings. A fast-growing chain of company's outlets and Service Centers was also part of the Group. In 1930, there were 1211 sales outlets and 31 Service Centers in the territory of Czechoslovakia. For more details see Kudžbel, Marek: Baťa. Hospodársky zázrak. (Baťa. An Economic Miracle.) Bratislava, Marada Capital Services, a. s. 2001, 195 pp., here pp. 121 and 178-178.

not prepared to such an extent of innovation. The slower tempo of changes in the field of values and social behaviour of the Slovak Baťa community could be observed in the situation that arose after the nationalization of Baťa shoe factory. The modern way of life disappeared step by step together with the Baťa's organization of production and life in the town.



Baťovany in the process of modernization, 1947 (Archives of the Partizánske Municipal Office)

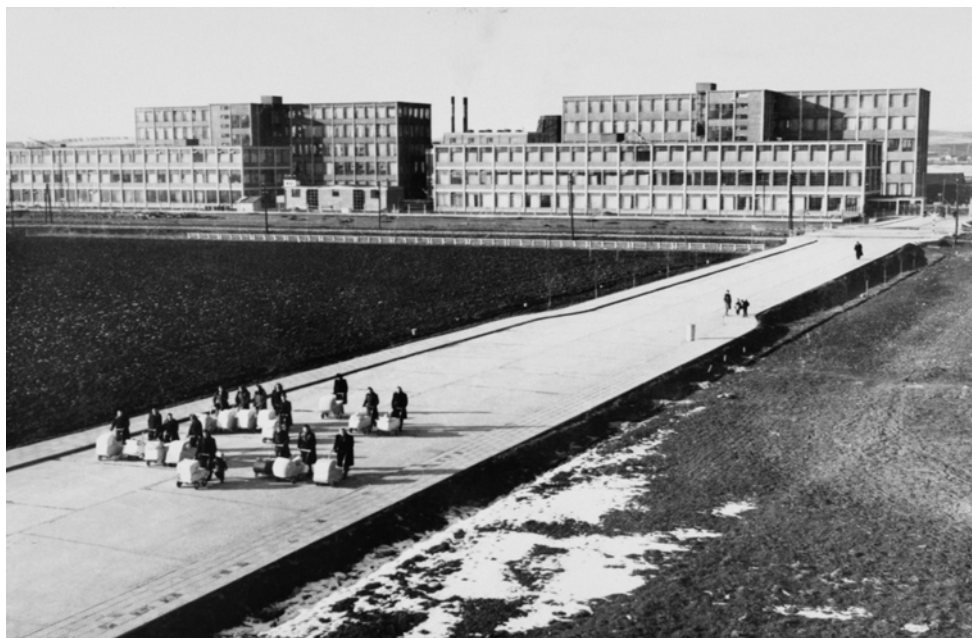
Baťovany – An Exemplary Slovak Industrial Town

Baťovany originated as a materialization of the then reflections on an ideal town that were very popular in the 1900s. Throughout the whole century, modern architects, town planners, sociologists and economists, seeing into the future, were producing visions of a better world, which were to be realized based on their plans. Leading representatives of the European architectural avant-garde, such as Tony Garnier (*Une cité industrielle*, 1917), Ludwig K. Hilberseimer (*Projekt Hochhausstadt*, 1924), Le Corbusier (*Plan Voisin*, 1925) or Nikolaj Milutin (*Socgorod*, 1930) designed new models of human settlements. In their reflections, towns originated based on the single justification – industrial production. Industrial production and its rational organization also determined the concept of a functionalist town. Frederick Winslow Taylor's Scientific Management theory and practical experience of Henry Ford, who was a cult figure of European radical Modernism, inspired architects to plan identically rational, standardized towns. In the visions of modernists, an ideal functionalist town was divided into autonomous functional units serving for production and work, housing and recreation. This was to eliminate the negative impact of production on housing and to provide an undisturbed relax after the work. The efforts of architects, however, were also aimed at influencing social relations and modelling the life of modern people. And it was Tomáš Baťa, who was the most important representative of American Taylorism in Europe. Not only he applied the ideas of pragmatism and productivism in his industrial plant, but with the same intensity he also supported related town-planning and architectural concepts. The town of Zlín whose development T. Baťa directly influenced was the prototype of a rational industrial settlement based on standardization and repeated use of identical spatial modules and nearly “literally the realisation of Garnier's project of *Cité industrielle*” (Švácha, R., 1999, s. 218). In the same time we can consider it to be “the very first execution of a functionalist town” (Moravánszky, Á., 1998, s. 60).

The architects of Baťa Construction Department in Zlín were working on the concept of an ideal industrial town since mid 1930s. While majority of European Avant-garde architects had no opportunity to implement their visions in practice, the planners of Baťa's studio made modern dreams happen rapidly and in a large scale. They thus gathered a lot of theoretical knowledge as well as practical experience. In 1937, they even wrote a book named *An Ideal Industrial Town*, however, it was never published. Despite that fact three satellite towns of the Baťa Group – Baťovany, Zruč nad Sázavou, and Sezimovo Ústí – were planned based on the principles of the book. One of the most important representatives of Baťa's planning department, Jiří Voženilek (14. 8. 1909 – 4. 11. 1986) was the key person in the preparation of the general plan of Baťovany. J. Voženilek became the member of the Zlín general plan working team in 1937. With regard to his previous specialization, he was predestined to meet with the Baťa Company. While “Tomáš Baťa created and spread the Czechoslovak version of Scientific Management in the ČSR” (Sedlák, M., 1998, p. 29-30), Jiří Voženilek ranked among the leading representatives of scientific functionalism and promoters of scientific architecture.

J. Voženílek cooperated with K. Janů and J. Štursa on setting-forth the principles of scientific architecture immediately prior to his start at Baťa's planning department. And it was there where he could later fully implement his ideas, in which architecture was no longer a mere "aid of the required industrialization of the building industry, but became part of the planned management of the entire society" (Janů, K. – Štursa, J. – Voženílek, J. 1936 – 1937, p. 176-182). Together with his colleagues K. Janů and J. Štursa, J. Voženílek also dealt with a functionalist town; they even prepared a number of plans of a linear town. His working on general plans of Baťa's satellite towns was a logical result of his long-term interest in the layout of a town of the future.

The surroundings of the Šimonovany village that the Baťa Group chose to build its Slovak satellite town were in accordance with the long-term strategy of the company. The aim was to position new production facilities in underdeveloped regions with strong labour force potential, adequate traffic connection and a perspective of controlling large territories. At the beginning of the 20th century Šimonovany was counting about 100 houses, having own notary and active railway (since 1896). During the first Czechoslovak Republic, the surrounding of Šimonovany was mostly agricultural and unemployment was relatively high there. Salzberger's estate with a distillery was the only important factory in this area. Jan Baťa, who was the Tomáš Baťa assignee in the management of the company, bought the distillery as early as in 1933. At that time there were 509 inhabitants in the village of Šimonovany. Five years later, in summer 1938, the construction of the first production hall began. However, immediately after this, the Czechoslovak Republic was split and the independent Slovak State was established. Being considered a foreign investor in Slovakia, the situation of the Baťa Group was partly complicated. Nevertheless, Jan Baťa was an extremely capable, pragmatic businessman and so he concluded mutually advantageous agreements with the Slovak government (Bata granted the Slovak government a loan and got freedom in doing business in return). In this way he guaranteed prosperity for the plants in Baťovany for the long years of war. From 1939 on, the construction of the factory and adjacent residential and social districts of the newly established settlement was continuous. The local press commented on the development of Baťovany as "the construction of an exemplary Slovak industrial town"⁵. At that time Baťovany was still administrative part of Šimonovany. Despite the official name of the settlement was Šimonovany, the name Šimonovany-Baťovany was used in common practice. At the same time Baťovany represented the larger and more dynamic part of this alliance. In the year 1948 the mother settlement Šimonovany had only 650 inhabitants, while Baťovany 3450 inhabitants and even with increasing perspective. In the year 1948 Baťovany finally became town and the two settlements were separate. Nevertheless Baťovany town existed only for a short time. Already in the year 1949 it was renamed to Partizánske (after the resistance fighters in the World War II).



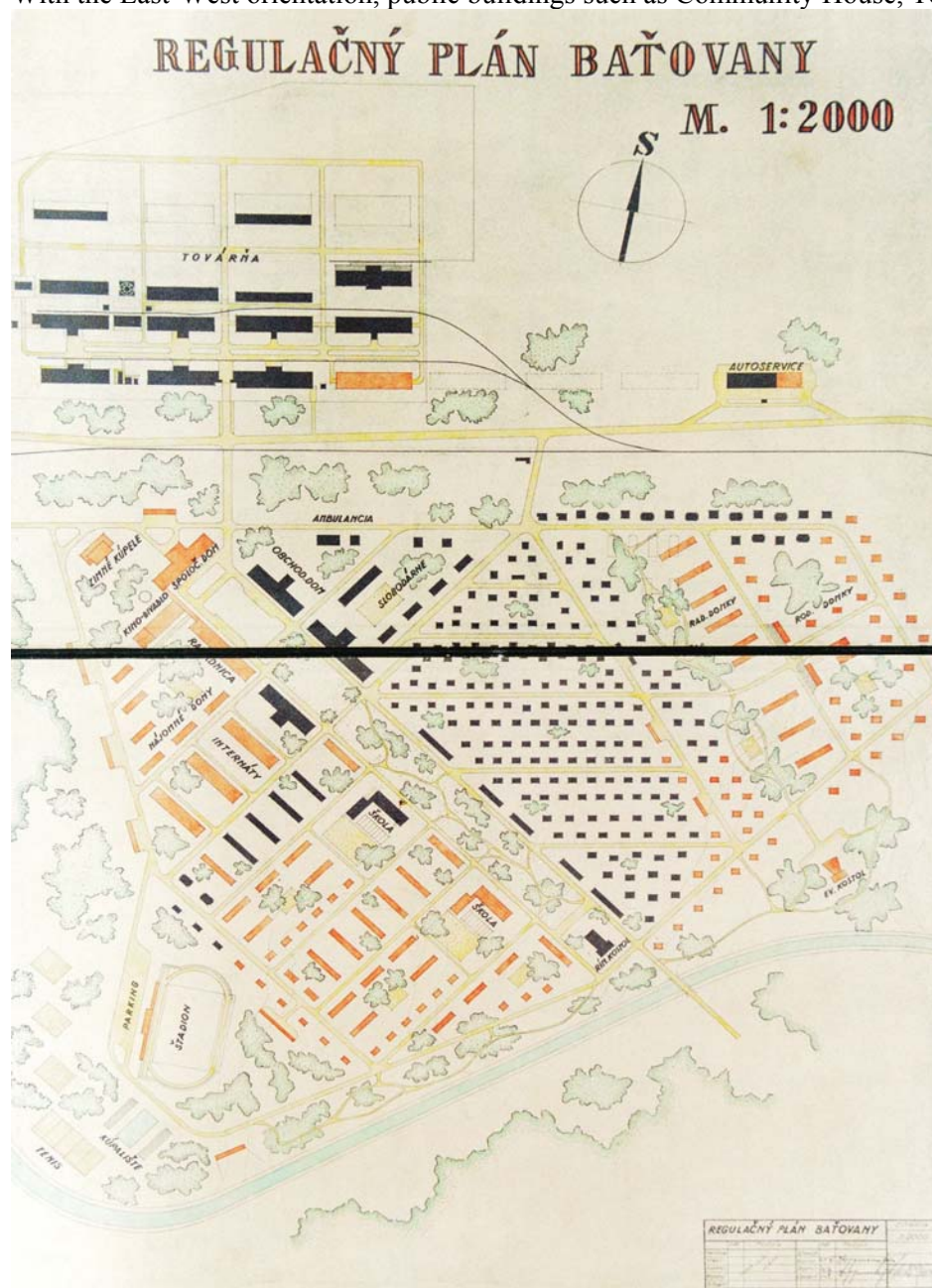
Baťovany starting its population explosion, 1941 (Archives of the Partizánske Municipal Office)

The general plan, according to which development of Baťovany began in 1939, was based on an ideal plan of industrial town with 5,000 to 15,000 inhabitants, which J. Voženílek had dealt with before⁶. The spatial layout was based on the division of individual functions into relatively independent units depending on cardinal points and prevalent wind directions, and spacious placement of solitary buildings. The factory complex was located on the

⁵ Budovatel' (weekly), 1939, No. 18.

⁶ Jiří Voženílek, the General Plan for the 2nd phase of the Development of Baťovany, 1945. The Regional Gallery of Fine Arts, Zlín, Documentation Archives S-691. Other drawings of the 1945 Baťovany General Plan signed by J. Voženílek are stored in the Svit Archives under the numbers 245-000245-000001/0,24 and 1146-001146-001705/0,11.

northern border of the planned town. It was separated from the rest of the build-up by a strip of traffic and greenery, but at the same time, a wide street, the so-called Promenade, connected it to the main public space – Námestie práce ('Labour Square'). Labour square was the main compositional and symbolical axis of the town. With the East-West orientation, public buildings such as Community House, Town Hall, cinema,



General plan of Baťovany, J. Voženílek, 1946 (Archives of the Partizánske Municipal Office)

department store, schools, student dormitories and a church rimmed it. Residential quarters were built along both sides of the square – a quarter of detached and semi-detached family houses, and a quarter of row houses and apartment houses. The houses were positioned in order that their southern orientation was maximally exploited. In the southern outskirts of the town, there was a sporting area with a football stadium and a swimming pool. Greenery was an integral part of the spatial concept, in line with the Baťa's idea of "a factory and town in gardens". An urban park covered major part of Labour Square. A lot of attention was paid to the landscaping of the park. The planning departments in Zlín and later in Baťovany – Partizánske, were dealing with it from 1944 till 1955. The park landscape of the Square was designed as two different zones. The zone near the Community House looked like a relatively compact urban space and the zone in front of the church was to resemble English parks. Here the park naturally interfered with the residential development that was freely located in the greenery without any borders between individual plots. The general plan of Baťovany was slightly modified several times, and there were plans to use differently sized areas for a new development⁷. Nevertheless, local town planners adhered to Voženílek's town planning concepts until the 1960s. A number of public buildings such as the House of Culture or

⁷ In 1946, F. Fackenberg drew up a development plan for the extension of the original settlement of Šimonovany. Šimonovany was to be connected with Baťovany through a new residential zone. Town planners were working on this plan till 1948. However, the plan was not executed eventually.

the Town Hall were built on the locations determined by the original general plan. The monofunctionality and layout spaciousness of new residential suburbs in the town's outskirts further developed the ideas outlined by modern town planners, including Jiří Voženílek, in the first half of the 1900s. Probably the worst detriment to the original appearance of the town, or the central part thereof, is the building-up of a residential tower house in the middle of the former Labour Square⁸.

Construction According to Baťa

Besides functionalist town planning, the satellites of the Baťa Group are also characteristic for their unique, well recognizable architecture. Like in case of Baťa's shoe production, standardization, typification and unification were maximally applied at the construction. From 1924 on, a structural skeleton bay of 6.15 x 6.15 meters was the basic standardization unit of Zlín architecture; it was used at all production, administrative and public structures. Circular columns built with the help of travelling formwork characterize the ferro-concrete skeleton. The outer walls were made of brick and had window openings of different sizes. This characteristic system was used in the construction until the 1950s.

František Lydie Gahura, the key person of Zlín architecture, commented on the Baťa standardization of construction: "Architect's invention also had to cope with the problem of adjusting the layout of a public building to factory construction standard. This standard is the module (element) of Zlín architecture. It is a structural bay of 6.15 x 6.15 meters. The ground plans of all building are based on the module. The external picture of Zlín architecture is therefore defined by the unity of style with many variations." (Gahura, František Lydie, 1933 – 1934, No 14).

At the construction of family and apartment houses, different typification and standardization were applied. All residential houses were built according to a number of basic disposition types, using traditional filling technology. The outer treatment varied between unplastered and plastered brick and between flat and saddle roof.

Standardization, typification and unification made the construction process more efficient and faster. To an extent, a compensation scheme implemented in the Construction Department contributed to it, too. At the beginning of any building project, a bonus was specified for each day of completing the construction before the deadline. Therefore, it is no wonder that majority of buildings grew up during a single construction season.

The characteristic way of project preparation was an integral part of Baťa architecture. Most of projects, including those concerning satellite towns, were drawn up directly in the Zlín headquarters, especially in case of general plans or designs of more important buildings such as Community Houses, churches or schools, or standardized structures of factory halls and family and apartment houses. However, each satellite had its own Construction Department with planning and implementation units. It was here where projects coming from the Zlín centre were adapted to local situation, but autonomous solutions of local projects were also prepared here. František Fackenberg (20. 6. 1904 – 2. 4. 1972), who came to Baťovany in 1938 from the Zlín planning studio, was the head the Construction Department in Baťovany. In the same time he was the key person of the local construction. He checked and approved practically all project drawings and designed a number of buildings in Baťovany and in the Batizovce town under the Tatras. The staff of his Construction Department in Baťovany also tried to develop own improvements and innovations of technological procedures and projects. František Fackenberg was ready to boast this in 1941 when he was showing Slovak industry representatives round the town and the factory: "In case of family houses, we pursue the principle of changing the types every year. We draw from the experience of previous years and we seek to eliminate what we considered less advantageous and suitable for our dwellings...." "We also do the same at the construction of the factory." (Fackenberg, F., 1941).

Authorization of drawings was an interesting phenomenon of projects preparation in the Baťa Group. Most of projects by Planning or Construction Departments resulted from the co-operation of unknown authors. Such practice was well in-line with the then efforts to suppress authorial subjectivity and it reminds of the collectivism and anonymity promoted by Le Corbusier in relation to modern architecture.

Bataism: Organisation of Production and Work in Baťovany

Baťovany was supposed to be an ideal industrial town. It was established on a green field site as a 'machine for living and work', paraphrasing the statement of Le Corbusier, the Modern Movement magus. The production was both an initiating and driving force of all Baťa satellite towns. Its rhythm also conditioned the rhythm of the life in the settlement whose very existence depended on the prosperity of production. In Baťovany, too, the production plant was the alpha and omega of each inhabitant's life. Everybody participated in the production somehow, be it was directly by working at the machines or in the construction or in service units. This dependency started to weaken only at the end of the 1950s

⁸ Building a thirteen-story prefabricated residential house in the center of the Square was undoubtedly ideologically motivated. The siting of the structure divided the Square into two parts: the representative part with the Municipal Office, the House of Culture and the hotel, and the recreational one with the park, housing, and the church. The church thus got into the desired inferior situation. Its dominant position in relation to the Square was thus also limited.



Main Entrance to the Plant, round 1949 (Archives of the Partizánske Municipal Office)

when other production plants were established in the town, with more new jobs being created subsequently. The Baťa phenomenon did not become famous only for the characteristic architecture, but primarily for the so-called 'Bataism' – a highly efficient organization of production and sales. Baťa's system was a unique product of the era when technological progress met with the application of new scientific methods in economy and production.

The system included, for example, introduction of workshop autonomy (individual workshops operated as autonomous economic units); compensation taking form of employee participation in profit (the variable part of wage motivated to better performance); implementation of detailed planning (both long-term and daily plans of production, work, sales, development, etc. were being prepared); building own chain of retail outlets (in 1931, there were 2 500 houses of Baťa Services world-wide); selling strategy based on low prices together with tactical pricing (for example, all prices ended by the number 9 from 1922 on); and strong advertising as an important tool to make the system successful (in the spirit of the slogan "Our customer is our master"). Thanks to the above; Baťa company employees had a feeling of social security, sense of belonging and employee pride. And this was in spite (or, maybe thanks to) the fact that "during the seven years of Jan Baťa's government, exploitation of workers has become extremely insidious..." as was stated by the architect Vladimír Karfík, head of Zlín Construction Department, who was involved in the running of the company (Karfík, V., 1933, p. 109). Baťa was an enemy of labour unions and the Communist ideology. His approach to social issues was far from leftist ideas of the Avant-garde. For example, he introduced social benefits such as the five-day working week primarily for well-thought-out and well-calculated economic reasons. The conditions in the Baťa Company were uncompromising. Perfect performance and total devotion to the company were required. The above-the-standard relations with employees were kept with the help of various benefits, such as good salaries, loans, provision of housing and education, but also through uncompromising immediate firing⁹.

Originally, there were plans to produce shoe-making machinery directly in Baťovany. This intention was still considered in 1938, when the construction of the first production hall began. However, with regard to economic and political situation after the split of Czechoslovakia at the beginning of 1939, the plant was built as a shoe-making factory only. The production of shoes started in July 1939. Production machinery and the first workers came to Baťovany from Zlín. A number of trained staff returned home in fact, as they were Slovaks. Other employees of the factory were recruited from local population. The fourteen-year old came to the shoe-making school in Baťovany from wide surrounding areas and later became the production force of the town. Baťovany with its perfect organization of production and employment benefit system were a unique island of modernization in mostly agricultural Slovakia. That continued to attract newcomers, who sought to find a job in the well-functioning concern.

Despite Baťa founded his shoe making company in today's Partizánske at the dawn of the World War II, its prosperity was really high. "The lives of all people changed...only the Baťa Group was capable to use the new situation and thus experienced a new boom, based primarily on war supplies to Wehrmacht. The mystery of how it managed to benefit from the boom at both sides of the war will probably never be revealed. And the strangest thing

⁹ At the Baťa Company, people got fired immediately. Although the company paid the fired a six-week salary, he (she) had to leave the workplace immediately; the company did not trust him (her). Writes V. Karfík in his memoirs. (Karfík, V., 1993, p. 102.

is that this happened with bilateral approval,” V. Karfík commented on the economic miracle of Baťa’s war business (Ibidem, p. 132).

On January 1, 1949 Baťa’s plants were nationalized by the state and later renamed to Závody 29. augusta (‘the Works of the 29th August’ – in honour of the Slovak National Uprising declaration). The town was also renamed – on February 2, 1949 Baťovany became Partizánske. Nevertheless, the production of shoes continued. The inertia of the well-established production plant was strong. It only began to decay with diminishing labour productivity that accompanied increasing political pressure in the 1970s. The decay process culminated, paradoxically, due to ‘November 1989’, subsequent privatisation of the plant and disintegration of East European markets. At the beginning of the 1990s – immediately after social and political changes in Czechoslovakia, the Baťa Group in Canada showed interest in its former operations. However, the state representatives and Thomas Bata did not achieve agreement¹⁰. Today, the complex of former Baťa plants in Partizánske houses a number of companies that deal with production of shoes and shoe components, or perform other business activities such as storage management.

The Town of Baťa-Men and its Social Environment

Like other satellite towns of the Baťa Company, Baťovany – Partizánske was a large community since its foundation. All inhabitants of the settlement worked at one company, lived in similar houses in one quarter and spent their leisure time together. They were mostly young people, with the average age of Baťa employees being 26 years. About 30% of the company’s employees were young people aged 14 to 21. Many of them were trained in Zlín and later moved into one of the satellite towns. Others studied in local schools of work and afterwards began their careers in the production or other units of the company. Baťa’s School of Work was a unique institution. It was a boarding school where studying was combined with working in the factory. The craft of making shoes was taught there, but students were also provided with a more general education; they could learn foreign languages or basics of social conduct. The learners were called “young men” and “young women”. As the parents did not need to pay for the studies of their children, many people not only from the town were interested in it. The admission requirement was to successfully pass entrance tests. An elegant school uniform also confirmed the exceptionality of Baťa school students. The Slovak writer Elena Čepčeková mentioned the uniqueness of this institution in her social-critique novel *Nezabudni Monika* (Don’t forget, Monika). She described the feelings of the main character coming to the Baťa School of Work like this: “Even now she doesn’t clearly know what the “young women” and the “young men” mean. She only knows that they wear nice uniforms and that there are tutors and tutoresses at student dormitories. And that later, the best out of hardworking young men and young women are chosen and given a chance to study and to become well-paid Baťa-Men” (Čepčeková, E., 1974, p. 130).



The Baťa School of Work parade, 1941 (Archives of the Club of Baťa School of Work Alumni)

The education at the Baťa School of Work in Baťovany began as early as in September 1939. Continuous inflow of students was the basis of local population growth. Education acquired, good working conditions, above-the-standard wages and a chance to obtain a modern dwelling strengthened the feeling of identification with the

¹⁰ Thomas Bata Jr. visited Partizánske as early as in 1989 and then again in summer 1990. His visits met with a tremendous response in local as well as nation-wide press. Opportunities for cooperation were discussed with hope; the cooperation was, however not achieved. See more in Hlas ľudu (Voice of the People) daily dated December 15, 1989 and June 5, 1990, Pravda (Truth) daily dated July 11, 1990, and Dnešok (Today) weekly dated April 9, 1991.

company among school graduates. In this natural way they formed a community. They were called 'Bat'a-Men'. Bat'a-Men also included another type of immigrants – the intelligentsia. Teachers, engineers, physicians came to Baťovany with expectations of good salaries and better living conditions, but they also sought participation in something special – in the development of a modern society in a modern town. They brought a modern urban way of living into the town, including affection for motoring, photography or tennis. Nonetheless, all new inhabitants felt the exceptionality of the local community and tried to integrate in it. Prosperity of the company, social benefits and the unique character of the town made them proud and firmly committed with both the location and the community. The company's management enhanced such climate on purpose. Collectivism was part of the strategy of Bat'a – he considered it a good tool to control his employees. It is therefore somewhat difficult to identify how much the relations within such communities are spontaneous. At any rate, we can state that natural human desires successfully met with well thought out business strategy in case of the Bat'a-Men community. The brightness of Bat'a's intentions was fully manifested here.

Although the aim of the company was to get maximum profit possible and social benefits were mostly an effective tool to achieve this goal, the company's management cared about education, health and leisure time of their employees. Good education, health care, and a feeling of well-spent leisure time were assumptions of good performance at work. According to this philosophy the company also built schools, cultural and health-care facilities – almost synchronously with production halls. Social aspects thus became a natural part of Bat'a's economic program. A hospital with high-quality staff, a Community House, primary and technical schools, as well as a number of sports grounds were established in the town. The company built a football stadium with a stand, tennis courts, and a summer swimming pool. It also initiated a sports club (well known for its football and boxing teams were, in particular), amateur theatre, company's brass band and a photography club. The Community House was used for concerts, movies and theatre performances, but there were also held balls and public dance parties. The company's newspaper was a remarkable part of the life of the community. The weekly called *Budovatel'* ('The Constructor') brought detailed information on town's life, but it also informed about the Bat'a Company and contemporary politics. The importance of this media is emphasized by the fact that its editor-in-chief, J. Dado, was invited to important meetings of the company's management.

The nationalization of the production plant in 1949 did not change the life of the community significantly. In fact, Bat'a collectivism was close to the leftist state. It was the political pressure in the 1950s that influenced the social environment of the city noticeably. The leading representatives of the factory and of the city have become victims of the political processes. "People who used to be proud of themselves to be Bat'a-Men were at once afraid even to talk about their city" (Kvasnicová, O., 2000, p. 107). The strong influx of new inhabitants and the incorporation of surrounding villages into the town in the 1970s finally put an end to traditional social relationships in the town. In the year 1977 Partizánske was a city with a population of more than twenty-two thousand. The communist, anti-Bat'a propaganda interpreted the Bat'a history of the town as a damnable period of capitalist exploitation. Local population thus showed only little interest in the Bat'a tradition. Only the political changes in the year 1989 brought back the Bat'a history in to the public discussion in the town. A petition for changing the town name from Partizánske to original Baťovany took place in the beginning of the year 1990. However, the town council did not approve this proposal. Today the only representative of the continuity of Bat'a tradition in Partizánske is the Club of the Bat'a School of Work alumni. They administer an archive of school writings and photographs. The question therefore is how much the relations within the former community resulted from a smart manipulation, and how much they stemmed from natural emotions of local inhabitants. In the 1990s Partizánske became for the second time in its history a district centre. However, the dynamics of its growth did not reach the level of Bat'a years. Today Partizánske has 24937 inhabitants.

Labour Square

The town planning of the settlement substantially influenced the life of the Bat'a community. A Labour Square was the centre of public life in each of Bat'a satellite towns. Its concept got a lot of attention. Labour Square was the main gathering place of the town. This was the place of the Bat'a School of Work graduates parades as well as May Day parades, which were spectacular and very representative both in Bat'a's satellites, and in Zlín, the hometown. The more compact part of the square, the so-called "Kalverstraat" was supposed to enable Bat'a employees to do everyday shopping when going to or from their work. The development consisted of two-story buildings with sales outlets on the ground floor and apartments of employees and shop tenants on the first floor. The Community House with a hotel was the first building on Labour Square in Baťovany (František Kučera, 1939 – 1941). Together with production halls and



General view of Bat'ovany, 1947

residential buildings, it was a typical part of every satellite. The Community House ground floor housed shops and services outlets, on the first floor was a restaurant and a café with a podium. The second floor served for the accommodation of guests and non-resident employees and managers. Managing director's apartment was here, too. There had been a cinema on the east side of the building. The simple architecture of the Community House was determined by the rhythm of structural system and characteristic large window openings. The Community House played a significant role in the settlement – it was the centre of public life. Public meetings and cultural events took place in it. The living witnesses remember the motivation role of these facilities in the process of socializing. The good manners and proper attires were promoted there. A specialty of the Bat'a social life organization was the prohibition. The alcoholic drinks were served only in the Community House by some special social events.

Synchronously with the Community House, the first building of the Bata School of Work was being built nearby – it was Dormitory I for Boys (Bata Construction Department, 1939 – 1941). Three years later, Dormitory II for girls (Bata Construction Department, 1939 – 1944) was built in the opposite part of the square. The design of both buildings is based on the model of Zlín dormitories, which were being built from 1927 on. Rooms in boarding school were situated on both sides of the central corridor. They did not have own sanitary facilities; there were shared ones at both ends of the corridor where there was also a small apartment of tutor, or tutoress. Student rooms were equipped with built-in cabinets and simple furniture. Ten young men or young women inhabited one room. While upper floors of the dormitories served for accommodation, the ground floor housed social and service facilities, and a canteen in the girls' dormitory.

Schools were other important public buildings that rimmed Labour Square. Both of the two schools were built based on the design of the important Zlín architect Miroslav Drofa. Miroslav Drofa also co-operated on another important project in the town – the movie-theatre building (1944). It was supposed to stand in the western part of the Square, next to the Town Hall building. However, the generous representative structure was not built eventually. On charming coloured drawings by Miroslav Drofa, the dynamic interior of both halls as well as an elegant lobby were preserved. The Protestant Church project by Eugen Kramár and Štefan Lukačovič (1948) had a similar destiny. The intention to build a Protestant church in Veľké Uherce district originated in the time when the Roman-Catholic church construction was almost finished. Updated 1948 general plan of the town included plans for the construction of another church. The project was commissioned to Kramár – Lukačovič, a well-know architectural studio in Bratislava. They designed the Protestant church as an impressive asymmetric composition of one-nave ceremonial space and a separate slim belfry tower that were interconnected by a side wing. The plan of the church bears the signs of advanced Modernism, anticipating courageous artistic gestures of later period. The church undoubtedly ranks among the authors' best works and it is a pity that it has never been built.

The most grandiose building of the square has always been the Roman-Catholic church of Divine Heart of Jesus (1943 – 1949), the work by the Zlín architecture's key person, Vladimír Karfík (26. 10. 1901 – 6. 6. 1996)¹¹. The original project of the church dates back to 1937. V. Karfík designed it for the Moravian satellite Bat'ov (today's

¹¹ The building permit was approved on August 31, 1943. The occupancy permit was issued in spring 1949 and the consecration was planned for June 1949. However, political reasons prevented the public consecration to be performed eventually and the church was consecrated in a narrow circle of church representatives on June 25, 1949. The State Archives, Topoľčany, 2697/1949 and Grežďová, Helena: *Premeny cirkevného života* (Transformations of Church Life). In: *Partizánske. Staré a nové epochy*. (Partizánske. Old and New Eras) Ed. Jozef Vladár, Egon Wiedermann. Bratislava, Mesto Partizánske 2000, 230 pp., here p. 139.

Otrokovice). However, the church was not built. In line with practices of the Baťa construction office, the architect used this project later as the basis for the construction of the church in Partizánske. However, the original design underwent a development, which was required by different location and a decade between the first project and the execution. The resulting appearance probably reflects broader European contexts, when in the first half of the 1940s monumental tendencies in architecture prevailed again. Within sacral buildings by Karfík, the church in Partizánske is the most expressive and the most grandiose one. The basic volume, spatial concept and layout of individual internal spaces follow his previous works. Here again, layering of prisms is used, but their mutual proportions and the elevation of tower are unique. Verticality – the theme that attracted V. Karfík throughout his entire architectural career – is the key motive of the church, both in the original and the executed versions. His lifelong “inclination towards skyscrapers” (Bencová, J., 2001, p. 79) was undoubtedly displayed here. After all, what might better express desires of believers than a temple – skyscraper?

While paintings were planned in the original design, in the church built there are 14 realistic monochromatic reliefs on the walls of the main nave that figure the Stations of the Cross (by Tibor Bártfay). Artificial lighting of this work is also worth mentioning. Despite tradition prevalent in catholic churches, ceiling lights were not planned in this case. The range of lighting devices used highly surpassed the conventional wall lamps designed. A neon tube is the basis of all lighting devices. Pop-art crosses on the main-nave pillars are also shaped out of neon tubes. The admitted riveting of aluminium elements further strengthens the technicist look of the lighting. The lighting devices have a charm of ad-hoc solutions, and at the same time they are surprisingly ahead of the overall appearance of the church, although they logically reflect the fact they originated in the town of industry and unification.

To Work Collectively, to Live Individually

If we were to choose one element that critically influenced the appearances of all Baťa satellite towns, it would definitely be a ‘family house’ of unplastered brick. Looking at whichever of the settlements that originated during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, be it Zlín, Best, Netherlands, Möhlin, Switzerland, Belcamp, the U.S.A., or Baťovany, in each of them red houses organized in a neat structure are dominant. The prevalence of family houses in Baťa satellites results from the opinion of Tomáš Baťa; he wanted his employees to “work collectively, but live individually”. The main Zlín architect, F. L. Gahura commented on it: “Mister Baťa, the boss, thinks that a person living in a house with a garden is not a job-jumper and instead of politics he prefers working in his garden or relaxing in the grass; he doesn’t go to pubs or political meetings” (Karfík, V., 1993, p. 99).

In Baťovany – Partizánske, several types of detached houses were built. They differ in the number of apartments, roofing, interior layout, and surface treatment. As far as the number of apartments is concerned, three types of detached houses were being built – for one, two or four families, with the semi-detached houses clearly prevailing. Roofing of the houses can be classified into two basic types: flat roof and saddle roof. Unlike other settlements, saddle roof is definitely dominant in Baťovany. In terms of surface treatment, there are also two types of houses – unplastered and plastered ones; in both cases building construction is made of brick. In this aspect, Baťovany differ from the other settlements again as most of the houses are plastered here. Besides single-family houses, or semi-detached houses, also decent apartment houses were built in Baťovany – Partizánske, the six-flat detached houses and eight-flat detached houses. The situating of individual types of houses within the settlement corresponds with the chronology of the residential development. The part around Červená (Red) Street is the oldest one, where the influence of Zlín pattern is the strongest. The younger the houses, the more influenced they are by tradition and local particularities.

The major part of Baťovany – Partizánske was planned and built during the World War II. In countries under German and Italian political influences the architectural models coming from these centres gradually prevailed. The conservative residential architecture of Germany, bound to Romanesque tradition, influenced the character of residential development in Baťovany, too. Saddle roofs (required by construction regulations of the Slovak State), arches above the entrances and wooden shutters or decorative details corresponded more with “Blut und Boden” German architecture than Zlín Modernism. In Baťovany, this trend was so strong for two reasons probably. Firstly, it was the influence of the Slovak State’s cultural policy that set Italian and German architecture an example to local architects. In that period, most of residential districts at industrial plants supported by Germans in Slovakia were built in line with the traditional opinion. To exemplify we can mention the family houses for the Herman Göring Werke employees in Nová Dubnica (1943), the residential settlement of the Dynamit Nobel Company in Bratislava (1942), or the residential houses at Ružomberok paper mill (1941) (For more details see Dulla, M. – Moravčíková, H., 2002, pp. 162-173). Secondly, the management of Baťa’s Zlín headquarters was directly under the German influence. The new German director Miesbach prompted Baťa’s architects not to design “Bolshevik or American projects”, and he even organized an excursion to show them the right German architecture (Karfík, V., 1993, p. 134). The position of the town in close proximity of Hauerland settled by Germans could also play a role in the positive inclination of Baťovany towards conservative forms. Unlike the above-mentioned residential settlements in Nová Dubnica or Bratislava, where also traditional town planning applied, the modern general plan

by J. Voženílek was followed in Baťovany. And it is this combination of modern town planning and conservative architecture that gives Baťovany – Partizánske its unique position.

Baťa's residential houses had simple functional equipment. They had public water supply, sewerage, and electric network; in their neighbourhoods were roads with hardwearing surface and public lighting. The houses had local solid-fuel heating and standardized sanitary and kitchen facilities. Both system and individual equipment of the residential development met basic functional requirements. Nevertheless, for people coming from a background without running water, sewerage or electricity this was a significant change in the way of life. In this respect, Baťa's School of Work played an important role where students learnt how to use modern conveniences. Individual family or apartment houses were not fenced; hedgerows demarcated the residential area around the house only. The maintenance of public greenery was provided by the Construction Department of the Baťa Company. However, the immediate neighbourhood of a house was to be maintained by its own inhabitants and the company newspaper directly criticized those that neglected the surroundings of their homes. No domestic animals were allowed in residential quarters, including even pets such as dogs or cats. Construction of shelters or sheds was prohibited, too. In this way the company's management directly tried to eliminate rural habits of their employees. Paradoxically, constructing various shelters, as well as growing small plants and raising small animals began in Partizánske after the nationalization in the 1950s only, and to a small extent it has preserved till today. After the nationalization of the factory, and with growing number of inhabitants, fencing the plots of family houses started. Nevertheless, the relative proximity of family houses has always lead to higher frequency and level of mutual social contacts among inhabitants. The strong neighbourhood relationships within the residential structure were also caused by the system of cross pedestrian sidewalks that complemented the network of parallel concrete roads. They lead to public wells originally. Even after the plots were fenced these paths have remained preserved, together with the wells; they have been an important tool of social relations in the territory and have given the residential development a unique character till today.

Baťa's Architecture: Problematic Cultural Heritage?

In the second half of the 20th century Czechoslovakia the architecture of Baťa's industrial empire represented a problematic heritage. It was the materialization of rational and economical architecture propagated also by the totalitarian ideology on one hand, but on the other hand it was too immediately connected with the successes of the first Czechoslovak republic free market. Even the Baťa contemporaries used to have an ambivalent relation to his architecture and town planning. The representatives of Czech leftist avant-garde saw in Baťa the capitalist exploiter in particular. Nevertheless, few of them have recognized that their architecture ideals might be turn to reality by Baťa and joined his project office. These differences of opinion have caused that the rationalist conceptions of town planning, typification and unification of Baťa architecture appeared in professional press only occasionally. Only in the 1990s several studies and exhibitions have emerged that reflected and evaluated from a distance the architectural and social work of Baťa concern in Czechoslovakia. Most of the attention is being paid to Zlín, the seat of the company and to the most important personalities from the Baťa architecture office like Vladimír Karfík and František Lydie Gahura. Slovak satellites of the Baťa Company have been mentioned only rarely an evaluated as marginal. The first comprehensive studies on Baťovany – Partizánske architecture and society originated on the base of complex research in the frame of the Modern Movement Neighbourhood Cooperation project, which was supported by program Culture 2000 of the European Union.

Baťovany, or Partizánske, has a unique position within architectural heritage in Slovakia. It is a well-preserved ensemble of modern architecture that documents an international dimension of the Zlín architectural model, but also the structure of local influences that had a large impact on the character of this settlement. The Slovak periphery with strong traditions 'recast' the central Zlín model in a number of ways. However, this does not mean that the typical Zlín buildings made of unplastered brick were something unknown in the local setting. In Slovakia – from the beginning of the 1900s – unplastered brick was associated with search of new expressions in architecture. This can be seen on the works of Hungarian Art-Nouveau architects or the later works of modernists such as Klement Šilinger, Artur Szalatnai, Alois Balán and Jiří Grossmann; it is also apparent on production facilities, railway buildings, electrification facilities, and residential houses for workers and railway men built of exposed brick in the wave of industrialization and modernization. In Slovakia, modern unplastered brick architecture was one of the important ways of transformation from traditional to modern architecture – the Zlín construction model could become quite a natural link thereto.

A number of places with Zlín-architecture elements have been preserved in Slovakia. However, it is only Batizovce – Svit, a part of Bošany village and Baťovany – Partizánske that are more comprehensive examples of the Baťa's system of development. All these settlements were established during the wave of industrialization that hit Slovakia in the first half of the 1900s. In this regard we can also mention other production plants that also built housing and basic amenities for their employees beside production facilities. The example are Coburg Steel Works in Trnava, the munitions factory in Dubnica nad Váhom, or the Dynamit-Nobel plant in Bratislava, and other factories, too. Nevertheless, these plants were limited both in dimensions and functions and did not get over the

limits of a residential neighbourhood. Unlike them, efforts of the Baťa Company were aimed at the development of autonomous settlement units. For most of its satellites, the “application of spatially demarcated schemes of ideal industrial towns, regardless of different territorial situation or historic and demographic development of the area and its possibilities, as well as dependence on a single production plant and the required isolation from the rest of the settlement, later became barriers to further organic development” (Hornáková, V. – Ševeček, L., (eds.), 1998, p. 22). In Baťovany – Partizánske this was not quite the case. A lucky coincidence of favourable circumstances enabled the settlement to develop in compliance with the original intentions for several decades. Undoubtedly also because of this the today’s Partizánske is the best-preserved and actively functioning example of the Zlín construction model in Slovakia.

In the context of the other Baťa satellites, but also other comparable functionalist settlements, Partizánske is a surprisingly living organism that underwent a whole range of changes, yet it preserved the original spirit of a “town in gardens”. Baťa quarters have kept the character defined by Voženílek’s general plan despite modifications of individual buildings and they constitute the principal parts of the town organism. The relation of the inhabitants to the town’s architectural and cultural values is however problematical. Except of the old, founding generation of former Baťa-Men they even did not know about the Baťa history of the town. Today, the former functioning of community is impossible because of the size of the town and its population. The Baťa history together with the tangible cultural heritage of those times could still become a source of pride and sense of belonging of present-day inhabitants of Partizánske. The confused relation of Partizánske population towards the own history resulted in its contradictory interpretation. In the 1940s the people of Partizánske lived with a strong feeling of belonging to the Baťa community. Already in 1950s became the Baťa history undesirable. The partisan resistance took the dominant position in the historical memory of the town. Only the 1990s brought the Bataism back to the social discussion on towns history. Shortly even the possibility to rename the town to Baťovany has been discussed. This euphoria originated in the economical sphere and was connected with the endeavours of Baťa heirs to get back the production halls in the town and take over the shoe production. However, the ambitions of Baťa concern have not been fulfilled and the interest for Baťa history waned again. The anniversary of the town’s constitution illustrates the complexity of the town history as well: paradoxically it is celebrated at the same date as the Slovak National Uprising day.

The attitude to town’s own history together with the power to cop with it is directly connected with relation towards the architectural heritage. Partizánske has not enacted a comprehensive model of monument protection till today. The only exception is the Roman Catholic Church that was declared a cultural monument in 1955. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Monument Protection Institute in Topoľčany drawn up a concept of monument protection of the original Baťa part of the town, where also buildings meriting protection were specified. These efforts were aimed at the development of regulations for further construction activities in that zone. However, the Monument Protection Institute and the town representatives did not achieve agreement. It is difficult to clearly answer the question of how to solve the monument protection of a functionalist assembly such as the central part of Partizánske, as it depends on a lot of variable factors such as a social need, the physical condition of buildings, property rights in the location, funds available and the attitudes of the inhabitants as well as their willingness to participate. Variability of the above factors as well as previous experiences indicate that it is difficult to express a generally accepted opinion on monument protection approaches. We can only say with certainty that a thorough architectural and historical survey and documentation should precede any interventions in the territory. It is the first and inevitable step that, although relatively inexpensive, can serve as a background for physical renovation of buildings, if required, or as a study material where it is impossible (for different reasons) to preserve the building. The very meaning of monument protection seems to be its key problem. It is definitely not easy to identify reasons and the perspective of architectural monument protection intended to be time-limited at the very beginning. Standard arguments such as the value of age or artistic, architectural and cultural values must be formed in such a way that would hold out in a discussion with the public. Finally, it is always the inhabitants of a particular protected location that are to bear the burden of financial and social impacts of monument protection. The examples of other functionalist ensembles that have also undergone the problematic phase of seeking the monument protection meaning can be a good starting point for the search of motivation and proper monument protection approaches. Monument protection bodies and local authorities can perform a wide range of activities in the fields of research and education, renovation of the local population’s cultural memory and the development of sufficiently wide and attractive range of possible solutions concerning, e.g., the modifications of houses. If we consider the town planning of Partizánske to be an important influence over its character, then this very town planning can be the basis of protected merits of the town, together with selected examples of Baťa architecture preserved and carefully reconstructed (e.g., one of the production buildings and a number of family houses). There is no such a complex ensemble of a functionalist residential quarter in Slovakia as Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart, Werkbundsiedlung in Vienna, Baba in Prague or Nový dům in Brno. Partizánske could thus become a good opportunity to obtain a vivid representative ensemble that would constitute a concentrated opinion on housing and work in the spirit of

modernist ideals of the 1930s. Such recognition could form the basis of a future model of monument protection in the town, acceptable for all parties.

Baťa architecture could play the very important role in the process of constructing, arguing and reflecting the complex history of the town. Immediate experience in organizing the international seminar and exhibition *Modern Concepts of Living and Work in Partizánske*¹² indicates that these might be the right activities for potential development of local *Erinnerungskultur*, or culture of reminiscences respectively.

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¹² The international seminar *Modern Concepts of Living and Work* was organised in Partizánske by the Department of Architecture of Institute of Construction and Architecture SAV in the August of 2003 in the frame of the project *Modern Movement Neighborhood Cooperation* with the support of European Union programme Culture 2000.

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