

Bat'a: export of architecture from Zlín to India

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Over a period of thirty years, Bat'a's company (founded in 1894) grew to include many businesses, creating a huge complex with comprehensive manufacturing operations. Quite logically, the company started expanding to the whole Czechoslovakia, and later also across the border. This boom was managed with thought, uniformly and economically from the Zlín headquarters, which also involved architectural and urban concepts. Josef Gočár appositely described Bat'a's construction activities in the 1930s: "You are producing projects for the whole world in bulk quantities. I think you should not talk about architecture, but about 'industrial project design'."

Batanagar / Batizovce / Baťovany

Architecture as marketing

The establishment of a large sales network was a major component of Bat'a's business strategy and investment programme and excellent marketing and advertising step. At the end of the 1920s, the company started setting up its own network of large department stores - Houses of Service. Thanks to their typical architectural design, they immediately became a distinctive promotional feature for Bat'a. The first large representative House of Services with a glass facade full of corporate mottos and advertisements was built at the Wenceslas Square in Prague (1928 - 1929). It was followed by Houses of Service in Karlovy Vary, Brno, Šumperk, Kolín, Mariánské Lázně, Mladá Boleslav and many other cities, including cities in Slovakia, and also Amsterdam.

Best in the past / Best now / Borovo

Factory, flats, services

After founding a factory in Zlín, Tomáš Bat'a could not expect such a rapid growth of the company, the whole city and its infrastructure, which was one of the reasons why the company started establishing sales offices as well as branches and affiliates focused on manufacture, along with social and residential zones for employees, outside Zlín and later also outside Czechoslovakia.

The common denominator for this sui-genesi construction boom was Zlín's unified building style based on the well-tested standard. Attention was also paid to theoretical studies of construction of industrial towns. In addition to Zlín's architect and town planner František L. Gahura and Bat'a's special construction and urban planning department, the designs were also the work of other major figures, such as Le Corbusier, Josef Gočár and Emil Hruška.

House of Service Brno / House of Service Liberec / House of Service Praha

Satellites around the world

In 1930, Tomáš Baťa started building Baťov - Otrokovice and Chelmek, Poland, but did not live to see the completion of the first satellite towns. His stepbrother Jan A. Baťa took over the company and was in charge of the construction of many other satellite towns in Europe, Asia and America. The dream of Tomáš Baťa came true - the company provided footwear for the whole world and its architectural and urban planning concepts were spreading globally.

Satellite towns in Czechoslovakia

Otrokovice - Baťov (1930), factories in Bošany (1931), Třebíč - Borovina (1933), Nové Zámky (1935), Batizovce (today Svit, 1934), Napajedla (1935), Baťovany (today Partizánske, 1938), Liptovský sv. Mikuláš (1938), Zruč nad Sázavou (1938) and Sezimovo Ústí (1939).

Otrokovice - Baťov / Hellocourt / Le Corbusier - Hellocourt

Satellite towns in Europe

Borovo, Croatia (1931), Ottmuth - Otmet, formerly Germany, now Poland (1931), Möhlin, Switzerland (1932), Chelmek, Poland (1932), Hellocourt and Vernon - Bataville, France (1932), Tilbury, England (1932), Best, Netherlands (1933) and Martfü, Hungary (1941).

Chelmek / Bošany

Satellite towns outside Europe

Batanagar, India (1934), Konagar, Syria, near Beirut (1934), Belcamp, USA (1936), suburb of Alexandria, Egypt, Batavia - Kalibata, Java Island, Indonesia (1938), Batapur, Pakistan, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Gwelo (later Modrat), Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), Pinetown, South Africa, Limur, Kenya, Chosica, Peru, Sandak, Mexico, Batawa, Canada (1939), Batatuba, Bataypora, Bataguassu and Mariapolis, Brazil (1941) and other.

The exhibition "The Baťa Phenomenon, Zlín's Architecture 1910 - 1960" (for more details see www.kgyu.zlin.cz) is scheduled to end on 31 May.

Pictures:

1. Zlín - city centre
2. Batanagar
3. Batizovce
4. Baťovany
- 5-6. Best in the past and now
7. Borovo
8. House of Service Brno
9. House of Service Liberec
10. House of Service Praha
11. Otrokovice - Baťov
12. Hellocourt
13. Le Corbusier - Hellocourt

- 14. Chelmek
 - 15. Bošany
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