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Under the Brand Baťa

Seven years ago, the National Film Archive published a DVD collection called *Under the Brand Baťa* (Pod značkou Baťa).[1] The three DVDs contain 32 films made between 1935 and 1948; the first offers 13 films advertising shoes, the second six documentaries about life in the town of Zlín and in the Baťa's factory, and the third offers 13 advertisements for other products and services, as well as instructional films for shop assistants. The following article will sum up what we know so far about the Baťa films and then focus on the advertising and instructional films within a broader context.

The first distinctive piece of writing about Baťa's production was Jiří Stejskal's doctoral thesis *The Film Factory in Zlín* (Zlínská filmová výroba)[2] defended in 1972. It dealt with Baťa's film production from the early 1930s till the end of WWII. It was partly inaccurate, though; it was also driven by ideology, but only at some places and in a surprisingly moderate manner for the communist era. Jan Antonín Baťa was driven into exile by the communists and defamed as a Nazi collaborator (see the biased documentary *Baťa /Baťa/* by Drahoslav Holub[3] whose lies were later debunked by Pavel Jandourek in his documentary *The Rise and Fall of the Shoemaker Kingdom /Vznik a pád království ševců/[4]*). In the doctoral thesis, Jan is described as a big capitalist for whom the film-makers shot advertisements as contracted only until they could fulfil their potential by making socially conscious works.

These "film-makers" referred mainly to the photographer, critic, cinematographer, editor, documentary film-maker and avant-garde film-maker Alexander Hackenschmied, whose contributions to the communist-despised avant-garde films were discussed by Michal Bregant in his paper *Avant-garde Tendencies in Czech Film* (Avantgardní tendence v českém filmu).[5] Published by *Filmový sborník historický 3*, the study also includes Hackenschmied's advertisements for Baťa. Unlike Stejskal, Bregant considers them remarkable, mainly for their avant-garde features and the

independence of thought and aesthetic banalities, present despite the fact that they served promotion purposes. Deployed in the early 1990s, Bregant's view revises the communist and Normalization-era optics: instead of serving the big capitalists, the artists are reflected for their independence and the remarkable, avant-garde-influenced advertising films. The fact that Bregant adopts Hackenschmied's view[6] of films shot by independent artists to be art rather than part of an industry, can be considered a weakness of the paper.

Bregant later slightly rethought his opinions. In the chapter titled *Hammid's Czech Years: Space and Time in his First Films* (Hammidova česká léta. Prostor a čas v jeho prvních filmech) in the collective monography *Alexander Hackenschmied: A Purposefully Purposeless Walk* (Alexander Hackenschmied: (Bez)účelná procházka),[7] he describes the advertisements as a compromise between the given function and the desire for experimentation. He pointed out their technical mastery, their facility and the sense for hyperboles, their simplicity, functionality, and their mature compositions. Bregant claimed all of this is easy to spot, even though the studio had come up with a unified style and Hackenschmied himself had not been able to say what exactly he had been working on.

The emphasis on the individuality of the authorship, albeit within film-maker groups, is typical not only for more expert studies but also for popular science books. Most were written by contemporary witnesses and can be described as written-down oral history that may turn to some other sources at some places but otherwise is as reliable and objective as human memory. This is true both about the books published before the Velvet Revolution, such as *The History of the Gottwald Studio Through the Eyes of Witnesses and Contemporaries and in Documents* (Historie gottwaldovského studia v pohledu pamětníků, očima současníků a v dokumentech, 1984) by Elmar Klos and Hana Pinkavová,[8] and for the books published after the Velvet Revolution, such as *Light and Shadow of the Zlín Film Industry* (Světla a stíny zlínského filmu, 2002)[9] by Antonín Horák, or the epic series *Film Studios KUDLOV* (FA KUDLOV).[10] The subjectivity and the lack of distance can be observed already on the level of the authors' vocabulary – in using shortened, familiar versions of the names of the film-makers (for example Saša instead of Alexander Hackenschmied). This is also the case of the short book *It Started with Ferdý the Ant* (Začalo to Ferdou Mravencem)[11] edited by Jiří Madzia, which uses subjective vocabulary to celebrate the Kudlov

studios and their production in relation to the Zlín Film Festival for Children.

The works mentioned in the paragraph above use the studios' history as a starting point for the personal and professional histories of the authors (independent of both the studios and the Festival) and relate everything through the memories of particular people relating to the place at a certain time. It was the film and media critic Petr Szczepanik who approached the subject with the necessary detached view and revised it in his study *Media Construction of the "Ideal Industrial Town": The Media Network in Baťa's Zlín in the 1930s* (Mediální výstavba „ideálního průmyslového města": síť médií v Baťově Zlíně třicátých let).[12] He noted that what had been written about the films considered the artistic qualities and authors' approaches, and that the production had been put into the historical context of the domestic film industry through a reductive narrative of development. Szczepanik adopted a new perspective from Thomas Elsaesser and Vinzenz Hediger: he examined the intertwined and supporting network of media around the institution. Focusing on several films, he discussed their relation to the rest of the production and their role within it (for example, the advertisement *The Road Sings /Silnice zpívá /* in relation to the presentations at the exhibitions).

Szczepanik succeeded in deconstructing the myth of the independence of the authors of the pro-Baťa advertisements, news coverage and instructional films, built by the Kudlov personas and later uncritically adopted by many researchers. The film and media theoretician and historian Lucie Česálková, who specializes in domestic short films, also put these short film in a broader context in her book *Atoms of Eternity* (Atomy věčnosti)[13] as well as in the collection of studies *Film – Our Helper* (Film – náš pomocník)[14] that she edited, while taking into account the form of the films. In the first aforementioned book, subtitled *Czech Short Films 1930s–1950s* (Český krátký film 30. až 50. let), she only wrote a few words about Baťa films, though. She gave an example of a short film that was used for several purposes: the documentary footage from J. A. Baťa's trip abroad, made by Hackenschmied.[15] Česálková also chose Novotný, who had been part of the Kudlov studios from the very beginning, as an example to demonstrate the introduction of school films in Czechoslovakia; various edited versions were used to cover a diversity of topics due to the lack of film-makers available, and the distribution channels varied as well (schools, factories, cinemas) since the institutional intents (education, promotion, sales) intersected.[16] In the

second aforementioned book, subtitled *A Study of the Usefulness or Uselessness of Czech Short Film in the 1950s* (Studie o (ne)užitečnosti českého krátkého filmu 50. let)[17], there is no mention of the Zlín films, given the decade of interest.

Directly in *Atoms* and indirectly in *Our Helper*, Česálková criticised the approach towards short films in which interest in the formal methods and qualities prevailed.[18] This was not the case for most of Baťa's advertisements, instructional videos and news coverage, as proven by the texts mentioned above. As for unpublished texts, there is one exception: the diploma thesis *Film Advertisements of Baťa before 1938* (Filmová reklama firmy Baťa do roku 1938) by Kateřina Hloučová.[19] It deals with selected advertisements, but mostly on the descriptive and evaluative levels, and similarly to Bregant, considers the creativity of the authors to depend on the effectiveness required. Its merit lies in the recognition of the Zlín advertising style, which is defined in comparison to other advertisements of the era. While these other advertisements combined the story and promotional message in an inorganic way, Baťa's films did it the other way round. They worked with humour and exaggeration, original topics, quality music, and perfect editing.[20] Hloučová defines the Zlín advertising style in an evaluative manner, based on the comparison of Baťa and non-Baťa advertisements. She uncritically adopts how Klos, one of the authors, defined the advertisements. Klos described them as dynamic footage edited in accordance with the music and openly promotional, which made them different from the competition's advertisements, which used fictional plot as a base for promotion.[21] Similarly to Hackenschmied, Klos and his opinion should be viewed critically since it is a self-presentation aimed at promoting the brand and corresponding with the company's strategy.

Hloučová claims that the Baťa advertisements were unique in their form but fails to analyse it any further. Česálková criticized the short film production for focusing on the formal aspects to such an extent that it becomes mostly limited to them. When reflecting the available relevant literature on the topic, though, we can see that despite these isolated analytical observations made by Česálková and Szcapanik, this was not the case of Baťa advertisements. This study, limited to the films from the DVD collection and structured in accordance with the DVDs' content (advertisements for shoes, advertisements for other products and services), strives to remedy this shortcoming.

Advertisements for shoes

Before starting to analyse the advertisements, we need to sum up the milestones of the Kudlov Film Studios from the very beginning till the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (and, in the next section, also since the establishment of the Protectorate till the end of WWII). The bilingual DVD booklet covers the milestones well and in a clear manner within its 30 pages.[22] At the turn of 1927, the film department was founded to perform tasks such as choosing the topics, commissioning, approving screenplays, casting, making copies, and distributing. For more than four years, it published a quarterly news magazine called *Baťa's Journal* (Baťův žurnál).

Between 1929–1933, several advertisements were shot, most of them silent and not preserved: *Save your Feet* (Šetřte svých nohou), *Relieve us of Worries* (Zbavte nás starostí), *Into the Nature* (Do přírody), *Indispensable Little Things* (Nepostradatelné maličkosti), *Home Fire* (Teplo domova), *Carnival* (Karneval). Later, both silent and sound versions were made, but these were commissioned in Prague. The public also participated in the advertisements; based on the chosen ideas, two advertisements for stockings were made – *The Mistake Does Not Count* (Zmýlená neplatí) and *The New Director* (Nový pan ředitel), one of them silent (shot in Zlín), the other one sound (shot in Prague).[23] There were also special advertisements combining feature sequences and animations, such as *An Elephant Comes to the Rescue* (Slon zachráncem), promoting rubber toys for children, and completely animated advertisements, such as *Our Children* (Naše děti), promoting the repair shop and working with “living” shoes.

J. A. Baťa decided to expand and invited applications for the post of a managing director of the film department for in-house production. At the end of 1934, Elmar Klos came to the “Kudlov barn” (as a director and a screenwriter), and thanks to him, Alexander Hackenschmied (cameraman and editor), Ladislav Kolda (producer) and František Pilát (sound) joined the team in the months to follow. They often collaborated with Jan Drda (writer) and František Škvor (composer) as contract workers.[24]

The positions mentioned are only indicative, since in some closing credits, we can find the “names” of A. H. Panthok (e.g. in *New Song /Nová píseň/*) and F. Šestka (e.g. in *The End of Vacation /Konec prázdnin/*, *One Should Know /Člověk ani neví/* and *Three Men on the Road (Young Lady Not Including) /Tři muži na silnici (slečnu nepočítaje)/*).[25] In reality, they refer to several people working on the advertising/instructional films. “A. H. Panthok” refers to Alexander Hackenschmied, Jaroslav Pagáč, Ladislav Kolda, Elmar Klos and Jaroslav Novotný, altogether known as “the Film Five” because they were among the first authors of short films in the Kudlov Studios. The second acronym refers to “the Film Six”, which includes all the people above except for Jaroslav Pagáč, plus František Pilát and Josef Míček.

In spring 1935, the original team decided to produce 24 films every year – 12 advertising films and 12 instructional ones.[26] Kolda, Klos, Hackenschmied and Pecina left for the USA to learn from their colleagues/competitors while visiting the Disney Studio and to find information about preservation and distribution of audio-visual school films.[27] They went around RCA and Tobis-Klang, which had a monopoly for sound systems at the time, and bought sound film equipment from New-York-based Bendt and Mauer (the sound master František Pilát came to see it and take it back with him in July) as well as studio lamps and reflectors. (The first sound advertising film was made already in 1934 – *Messenger of Peace /Posel míru/* commissioned to the Barrandov Studios.)[28] The most important event for the advertising films was the “dance films and dance shoes” event under the collaboration of the Baťa company and the Czechoslovakian MGM branch. Klos and Hackenschmied used the sequences and shots of the dance scenes from *Queen Christina* (starring Greta Garbo) and “Dancing in the Rain” (starring Fred Astaire) as well as from Ernst Lubitsch’s *The Merry Widow*. They added new shots with Baťa dance shoes.[29] Thanks to the resourceful montage, both the archive and the new materials seem to blend into a very clever and funny film. The living contemporaries[30] often mention the scene in which the successor to the British throne lifts the queen above his head, which is followed by a shot of the Baťa shoes lying on the ground.

During the following years, the plan changed in accordance with Baťa’s needs, company employees’ availability and political requirements: Hackenschmied shot Baťa’s journey around the world in 1936 and then got Baťa’s permission to follow his

own hunch to obtain good shots; in 1938, he collaborated with Herbert Kline on the anti-Nazi documentary *Crisis* (Krize); and in 1939, he emigrated and was replaced by yet another avant-garde film-maker: Jiří Lehovec.[31]

The Film Department moved under BAPOZ (Baťa's Auxiliary Industries), which got a film permit in the beginning of 1938. Thanks to Baťa's presidential ambitions, within which he strived to produce a feature film about Charles IV as "Jan's parallel personality", there was a plan to build new studios in Prague-Modřany, a competition to Barrandov Studios. The plan was stopped by the Munich Agreement and the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.[32] Early in 1939, Baťa rented and renovated the HOST Studios in Prague-Hostivař, where the advertisement *Rubens' Caper* (Podvod s Rubensem) was shot, among others, despite the fact the Baťa did not have a permit for it. In November, a new German administrator was put in charge with an anti-Semitic explanation that HOST's owners were of non-Aryan origin. Less than a year later, in June 1940, Baťa's company was forced to leave the studios.[33]

The first DVD, containing 13 sound advertisements for shoes from 1935–1940, disproves Klos' claim that Baťa's promotion was different from promotions of any other competitor who pretended their advertisements were fictitious films and only revealed their true nature at the very end. It also shows a greater diversity. The dynamic works edited in accordance with the music, as described by Klos, were not the only approach. Generally speaking, the advertising films, both the narrative and the musical ones, were based on a conflict between everyday life and its disruptions. This conflict came from the narrative, the formal aspects, and the double function of the films: (1) a story offering a comparison-based presentation, and (2) an attempt to persuade the viewer to buy the product. The story/presentation were subordinate to the persuasive function: the advertising function prevailed.

The everyday life was depicted in many ways and used as a starting point for change – a change for better, thanks to Baťa. Parents stand at their child's bed and talk about how quickly the child has been growing up – and the only invariable are the shoes (*The End of Vacation* /Konec prázdnin/). A father helps his son with an essay, but the only thing that helps is when the mother comes home with her shoes from the spring collection – and the son gets an A for his essay promoting Baťa (*Homework* /Školní

úkol/). A father walks with his daughter through a panopticon and teaches her about history, but the daughter is only interested in shoes because hers are too small and she would love to have a new pair from Baťa (*The Golden Age /Zlatý věk/*). Having watched a documentary about Eskimos, a young couple feels grateful that they can buy their shoes cheap (*Once at the Movies /Jednou v kině/*). A managing clerk remembers his youth when he hears female copyists talking about a ball (*Round and Round /Kolem dokola/*). In these narrative-based advertisements, the contrast between everyday life and its disruptions is not only present in the plot but in the style. It points out the difference between the ordinary (related by the story) and its disruption (related by the persuasion, i.e. by promoting the product).

Usually, the first part is a dialogue with no accompanying music, while the second part is a swifter advertising montage accompanied by music (*The End of Vacation, Homework, Once at the Movies*) and off-screen comments (*The Golden Age, Round and Round*). Despite the schematic character of the films, typical for the advertisements of the era, the Baťa short films were more creative when it came to the formal aspects. Some of the aforementioned films are self-reflective and introduce the audience to a deliberate game that makes the promotion convincing even thanks to the exaggeration. *Once at the Movies* contains a film (a reportage documentary) within a film (the advertisement); in *The Golden Age*, there is a man turning into the camera/the audience and talking like if it was a voiceover. In *Round and Round* one of the characters asks: “Is this a shoe ad, or a buffoon exhibition?” and then, in the end, tells a colleague: “It’d be better if you whispered in in my ear; otherwise, it’d look like an ad.”[34]

The films described vary, though. After *The End of Vacation, Homework* and *The Golden Age*, which were more explanatory (usually a parent explains something to their child) and used a more conventional storyline, the narration became more complicated. *Once at the Movies* contains not only the film within the film and the final voiceover montage, but also a “what if” main character thinking aloud what she would do if she were one of the social parties in the film within the film (a reportage documentary). In *Round and Round*, the self-reflectiveness is stronger, and there is also a mental projection of the main protagonist – the narrative advertisement suddenly becomes a musical show once the protagonist starts dreaming about balls and his youth. The form is hybrid: a fictitious story, a musical show, a promotion.

There is also a specific subcategory of the narrative advertisements: some tend to resemble a certain genre, working with it in a rather exaggerated way. These are the formally dull promotional films *Searching for Mrs. Polášková* (Hledá se paní Polášková) and *The Rubens' Scam* (Podvod s Rubensem) which are not based on an everyday life situation because everyday life has already been disrupted, either by a true crime (falsification) or by a made-up one (disappearance). In addition to the fact that the plots head towards promotion, the films work with a more elaborate genre scheme in which the mystery is solved thanks to the shoes since taking care of the shoes reveals one's character, and the number of pairs of shoes, along with the multifunctionality of the shoes, reflects the whole household.

The innovative approach described by Klos was a fairly new way of promotion. It still turned to the established methods (ordinariness and its disruptions, formal contrasts), though, as well as to hybridizing (narration in the early videos). Everything serves for advertising purposes, and the differences between before and after are shown ostentatiously.

Unlike the above-mentioned advertisements, these have a different complexity of stories (no visions, less self-reflectiveness) and emphasize different stylistic aspects (songs/music dominate; the transition does not happen between the dialogue passages and the musical montages, but between rhythms and voices within the songs, and sometimes between different frame sizes or different costumes). This applies to video clips/musical advertisements such as *New Song* (Nová píseň), *Deep Breaths* (Dýchej zhluboka) or *Work is Like a Song* (Práce je jako písnička), and to certain extent also to *A Lady's Shoe* (Střevíček), *Carrying Morana* (Vynášíme Morenu) and *Eight Steps to the Beat* (Osm kroků v taktu). *New Song* is very distinct thanks to the reference to Ilya Repin's painting *Barge Haulers on the Volga*, which the film also parodies in the rendition of "The Kocourkov Teachers" choir. *Work is Like a Song* and *A Lady's Shoe* are special because they are not only musical advertisements but also instructional documentaries about rubber processing and production of rubber boots (a look at the history, design, manufacture, inspection, distribution, and sale of such footwear). *Eight Steps to the Beat* is dominated by sounds of various shoes; instead of swiftly changing the characters, the places, and the time slots, it stays inside an apartment, focusing on one protagonist and the loud neighbours.

Carrying Morana is the most original one. While the other advertisements show a common narrative of a journey and of shoe development (rubber boots, ladies' shoes, clogs, etc.) in relation to the ever-changing space-time continuum (a new season is coming – a new collection is coming), *Carrying Morana* remains mostly ethnographic. This may be thanks to Karel Plicka,[35] one of the authors, who was an award-winning documentary film-maker, focusing on folk customs (*Over the Hills, Over the Valleys /Po horách, po dolách/* and *The Earth Sings /Zem spieva/*).

Other products and services

Even Baťa's advertisements were appreciated. In 1937, The International Film Congress was held within the International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life. Three advertisements were awarded gold medals: *Autumn Whims* (Podzimní rozmary), *New Song* and *The Road Sings*. In June 1939, Baťa left for the USA with the permission/command of the occupation authorities.[36]

During the Protectorate and WWII, short films were still produced, though in much smaller numbers. The advertisements were on the decline; after Hermína Tyrlová (the first woman on the team), Karel Zeman and Bořivoj Zeman also joined, and the focus shifted to animated and combined films. In the early 1940s, the advertisements stopped being produced – when there is nothing to be sold, there is nothing to be promoted (shoes were rationed). Most of the production were “long-term consumption” films – instructional films for sales assistant trainings, pedicurist education, etc.

A new sound system was introduced: German Tobis-Klangfilm with obligatory licence fees.[37] In January 1942, the ban on the production and distribution of films for the Baťa company (FAB, BAPOZ) took effect, and Elmar Klos lost his permission to make short films. Two months later, an order came to sell Zlín Studios to the German company Deutsche Schmalfilm Gesellschaft (DESCHEG). The studios, the laboratories and the staff were moved under the new subsidiary Českomoravská společnost pro úzký film; Ladislav Kolda negotiated favourable terms, though (no German superintendent; no employees were dismissed; more employees in the laboratories; focusing on art, puppet and cartoon films).[38] Kolda was arrested in the late summer of 1942 and sentenced to eight years in jail after having been denounced for

economic crimes (buying grain for the inhabitants of the colony). Berlín sent Oskar Fridrich to take his place. A year later, Kolda was temporarily released and made the head of the department of cartoon film developments.[39] By the end of the war, the laboratories were converted to process 16mm film.

In 1944 the cutting room caught on fire after a bulb cracked; the fire also spread to the top floor of a nearby warehouse with film negatives, which caused an explosion (part of the roof was also destroyed). Both some already published (film negative for Plicka's documentary *The Earth Sings*) and some prepared films (Hermina Týrlová's *The Christmas Dream /Vánoční sen/*) were destroyed.[40] A number of Prague film-makers found refuge in the studios (Jan Kučera and Jaroslav Brož); some of the previous employees re-joined the company (Elmar Klos), including those with wives of Jewish origin (František Pilát, Vilém Morýs), and DESCHEG also hired new film-makers, some of whom became later known for animation and feature films (Miler, Kábrt, Dvořák, Hubáček, Kachyňa, Kaněra). In November, the Allied bombing hit "The Big Cinema" (Velké kino)[41], where airplane flyovers were recorded on a phonograph, and the preserved sound track was used in *Six Years of Zlín (Šest let Zlína)*, a reportage edited from footage shot illegally during the occupation.

During the Protectorate and WWII, the instructional films prevailed. The third DVD from the collection presents two of them: *Mind your Manners (Chovej se slušně)* and *The Most Profitable Sale (Nejvýnosnější prodej)*. Once again, they both worked with a contrast, showing the difference between a good and a bad sales assistant and bad and good manners while further enhancing it with a formal contrast – the commentator in the voiceover changes. Unlike the promotional films where "lecturing" (in schools and school-like environments in which a child is lectured by an adult) was only part of the whole scheme, though, "lecturing" dominated in these films and was not subordinate to any promotional purpose. Quite to the contrary, everything was subordinate to this lecturing in these instructional films.

For the reasons stated above, most of the advertisements for products and services other than shoes were made between 1935–1941 (with the only exception of *5-HP Bed or Waking Up on the Street /Postel o 5HP aneb Probuzení na ulici/* from 1948). In the narrativized advertisements we can find, in defiance of the schematisation (the everydayness, the contrast in plot and form), an embellishment. In *Sunday on the*

Grass (Neděle v trávě), the everydayness (of taking a rest in the meadow at the weekend) is disrupted by a shot from the above and off-screen glosses; similarly to *The Golden Age* (made a year before), one of the characters talks with the commentator in the end. In *One Should Know*, a film promoting shoe repair shop and pedicure services, the character played by Jára Kohout meets himself thanks to a special cutting effect. (*One Should Know* was among the first, if not the very first, film remakes – it was a remake of a silent advertisement for pedicure services called *Save your Feet* /Šetřte svých nohou/).

The advertisement *Four People – One Language* (Čtyři lidé – jedna řeč), promoting linoleum and its benefits, uses a similar scheme to the one-year-old *Eight Steps to the Beat* – it takes places in an apartment out of which we see several places. These places are not connected by sound enabling the authors to switch between the characters and parts of the apartment, though, but by an off-screen commentary through which the tenants have a dialogue with a shoemaker. In *Jungle for Sale* (Džungle na prodej) and *Animal Studies* (Živočichopis), promoting rubber products primarily for children, the lecturing is done by an authoritative person in an educative, yet humorous way, similarly to *Homework* and *The Golden Age*. Unlike the two latter short films, the stories (shown in the form of a lecture, obscuring their promotional nature) contain attractive features: cartooned toys in *Jungle for Sale* and shots of animals in *Animal Studies*.

The form of *Jungle for Sale* is hybrid because the story is disrupted by the cartooned toys, and everything heads towards persuasion. Something similar happens in *But Why?* (A proč...?), the argumentation of which supports the technological advances, using the example of the contrast between sewing machines and knitting. The film starts with an ordinary situation: a grandmother is knitting while watching her grandchild. In both these films, the first half of the story combines the lecturing (*Homework*) and a certain glance back (*Year's End* /Konec roku/), and the turn is then made by introducing a new character who initiates the change in the form. In *But Why?*, this introduction makes a space for a musical part and, later, for an avant-garde, documentary passage. A similar hybridism combining three different approaches (storytelling, a musical video, and avant-garde) can be observed in *The Road Sings*. We follow the journey of a tyre, just like in *A Lady's Shoe*, beginning with the production and ending with its practical use within the city transport, focusing on

various functions of tyres in various means of transport. The first half, which is usually used for storytelling and lecturing, is musical from the very beginning. The second half is a musical video, which was typical for many other musical advertisements (*New Song, Deep Breaths, Work is Like a Song*). The whole film is a “city symphony.”

The last DVD contains several advertisements that subvert genre schemes and are based on a rapture from the mundane (sneaking out of a residence hall, a “near accident”, a car theft). Similarly to *Searching for Mrs. Polášková* and *The Rubens Scam, The Magical Love Story* (Kouzelný příběh lásky), promoting Baťa repair shops, plays with the conventions of the crime genre – there is only one clue for finding the girl who left the residence hall to meet her love: a run on her stocking. The culprit gets away with it thanks to the cheap services at the Baťa repair shop!

The off-screen commentary enhances the self-reflectiveness when the story is first called “a tragedy of a run on a stocking with a happy end”, then “a comedy enjoyed by everybody except the affected one”, and finally “a suspenseful story about escaping an awkward situation.”[42] In the end, the commentator tells us it was not a film but an everyday reality based on real people and a true story – and with that, the genre disruption from the mundane returns back to everyday life. The humorous *Three Men on the Road (Young Lady Not Including)* uses Baťa’s advertising slogan “The last in the alphabet, the first on the road” for promoting tyres that help avoid a collision of celebrities .

Stars were frequently cast in Baťa advertisements (most often Adina Mandlová, Hugo Haas, Theodor Pištěk, Jiřina Štěpničková, Marie Bečvářová); in *Three Men on the Road (Young Lady Not Including)*, both famous actors/actresses (Václav Burian, Hana Vítová, Čeněk Šlégl) and famous athletes (Pepa Maleček) play themselves. Celebrities were quite often used in audio-visual advertisements by Baťa’s competitors, too (Ferenc Futirista, Saša Rašilov, Raoul Schráníl, Lída Baarová).[43] Familiar faces, cast in accordance with their fame, served the same purpose as today: they enhanced the product’s attractiveness, drew attention to the advertisement, became associated with the product, and were seen as a symbol of quality/guarantee. For the Baťa advertisements, unknown actors were also sought; newspaper advertisements for casting started to be printed in the early 1930s.

For some actors, this was the start of their careers. The actor Jiří Adamíra made his debut in *5-HP Bed or Waking Up on the Street*, the only post-war advertisement included in the DVD collection. This advertisement is not a crime story, but a Sennett-esque slapstick comedy: a vehicle tied to a bed is stolen by thieves, which results in a pursuit full of funny ideas and creative film tricks (unusual angles, the camera placed on the driving car, and taking the bed, quick editing). The poetics of the early slapstick comedies reflects in the form as well: there is no talking in the film till the very end, and the story is only accompanied by background music and some sound effects. The advertising purpose is only revealed with the punchline when the first dialogue comes – the thieves stole the old car because it had new tyres from Baťa.

Baťa Superb

The last frame of *5-HP Bed* shows a Barum Superb tyre in the centre of which then appears the modern centre of the town of Zlín, where the film takes place. Zlín was dominated by the Baťa's monopoly. This paper focused neither on the outlined hierarchical relationship and interdependence of media (unlike Szczepanik's study), nor on the form, the functions and the rhetoric strategies of school films (unlike one of the chapters in Česálková's book), nor on the authors' poetics with regard to certain cinematography trends (unlike Bregant's studies), nor, finally, on personal memories of one building and the persona bound to it (unlike the narrativized testimonies of the contemporary witnesses). It focused on the advertisement and several instructional films and their formal aspects, so far mostly ignored except for several diploma theses.[44]

Elmar Klos claimed that Baťa's films were different because they did not hide their purpose. The analysed films[45] proved that this was not the case; the point of the advertisements – when it is revealed what product is advertised, by which producer and for how much – was only shown in the very end, and most often the films were based on seemingly everyday situations (doing homework, dating, working, weekend relaxing) disrupted by or resulting in promotion. Just like his competitors, Baťa cast celebrities in his advertisements to be associated with his products and put the emphasis on humour, which resulted in amusing yet promotional punchlines. What made his advertisements different was the formal ingenuity. They were strongly self-conscious and even self-reflexive (the winking into the camera, the hints in the

dialogues, the talking to the off-screen commentators, the “fiction within fiction”, etc.), narratively more complicated and complex (various ideas and dreams, character development even in instructional shots), formally more varied, drawing on different traditions (both genre-related – especially crime films and slapstick comedies – and poetics-related – ethnographic documentaries, urban symphonies and the avant-garde). By observing the advertisements, their formal sophistication and the monopolistic interconnection of different industries depicted in them, one can see that we need to be wary of anyone who would, similarly to Jan Antonín Baťa, have presidential ambitions and want to continue to run not the city but the state itself as a company.

Sources:

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Notes:

- [1] Knihovna národního filmového archivu – Pod značkou Baťa. Online:
<https://arl.nfa.cz/arl-nfa/cs/detail-nfa_un_cat-178314-Pod-znackou-Bata/>.
- [2] Jiří Stejskal, *Zlínská filmová výroba (Vznik a činnost do r. 1945)*. Brno: Universita J. E. Purkyně, Filozofická fakulta 1972.
- [3] See *Baťa*, 1966, 25:25–27:05.
- [4] cf. *Vznik a pád království ševců*, 2004, 34:48–37:10 and 38:20–44:55.
- [5] Michal Bregant, Avantgardní tendence v českém filmu. In: Ivan Klimeš (ed.), *Filmový sborník historický 3*. Praha: Český filmový ústav 1992, p. 137–174.
- [6] cf. Michael Omasta, Alexander Hackenschmied, „To ostatní je víceméně rutina.” Korespondence Michaela Omasty s Alexanderem Hackenschmiedem, Vídeň – New York (září 2001 – leden 2002). In: (ed.), *Alexander Hackenschmied: (Bez)účelná procházka*. Praha: Casablanca 2014, p. 165–207.
- [7] Michal Bregant, Hammidova česká léta. Prostor a čas v jeho prvních filmech. In: (ed.), *Alexander Hackenschmied: (Bez)účelná procházka*. Praha: Casablanca 2014, p. 29–55.
- [8] Elmar Klos, Hana Pinkavová, *Historie gottwaldovského filmového studia v pohledu pamětníků, očima současníků a v dokumentech*. Praha: Československý filmový ústav 1984.
- [9] Antonín Horák, *Světla a stíny zlínského filmu – volné vyprávění*. Vizovice: Lípa 2002.
- [10] Marcel Sladkowski (ed.), *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45. Kudlovská stodola. Založení a první léta filmových ateliérů ve Zlíně*. Zlín: FILMFEST, s.r.o. 2016; Pavel Taussig (ed.), *FA KUDLOV 2: 46–60. Kudlovská stodola. Filmové ateliéry ve Zlíně v poválečném období*. Zlín: FILMFEST, s.r.o. 2017.
- [11] Jiří Madzia (ed.), *Začalo to Ferdou Mravencem. 80 filmových let. 55 festivalových let*. Zlín: FILMFEST, s.r.o. 2015.

- [12] Petr Szczepanik, Mediální výstavba „ideálního průmyslového města“: Síť médií v Baťově Zlíně třicátých let. In: *Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty Brněnské univerzity*. Brno: 2005, p. 23–66.
- [13] Lucie Česálková, *Atomy věčnosti: Krátký film 30. až 50. let*. Praha: Národní filmový archiv 2014.
- [14] Lucie Česálková (ed.), *Film – náš pomocník. Studie o (ne)užitečnosti krátkého filmu 50. let*. Praha, Brno: Národní filmový archiv, Masarykova univerzita 2015.
- [15] L. Česálková, *Atomy věčnosti*, p. 39.
- [16] Ibid, p. 139–149.
- [17] See L. Česálková, *Film – náš pomocník*, p. 16–25.
- [18] cf. L. Česálková, *Atomy věčnosti*, p. 15–58; L. Česálková, *Film – náš pomocník*, p. 16–25.
- [19] Kateřina Hloučová, *Filmová reklama firmy Baťa do roku 1938*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, Filozofická fakulta, Ústav hudební vědy 2009.
- [20] Ibid, p. 65–70.
- [21] Elmar Klos: Film ve Zlíně. In: *Film a doba*. Praha: Orbis 1966, p. 660.
- [22] Václav Kofroň (ed.), *Pod značkou Baťa*. Praha: Národní filmový archiv 2013.
- [23] See K. Hloučová, c. d., p. 41–42.
- [24] See M. Sladkowski, *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45*, p. 15–16. cf. V. Kofroň, c. d., p. 22. cf. J. Stejskal, c. d., p. 19–20.
- [25] See K. Hloučová, c. d., p. 53–55.
- [26] V. Kofroň, c. d., p. 22.
- [27] See M. Sladkowski, *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45*, p. 16. cf. E. Klos, H. Pinkavová, c. d., p. 3.

- [28] See K. Hloučová, c. d., p. 55–56. cf. Jiří Stejskal, c. d., p. 42.
- [29] See M. Sladkowski, *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45*, p. 16. cf. A. Horák, c. d., p. 22.
- [30] See A. Horák, c. d., p. 22.
- [31] See M. Bregant, *Hammidova česká léta*, p. 29–55. cf. M. Sladkowski, *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45*, p. 20, 25.
- [32] V. Kofroň, c. d., p. 23. cf. A. Horák, c. d., p. 34–35.
- [33] See M. Sladkowski, *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45*, p. 25–26. cf. A. Horák, c. d., p. 34–35.
- [34] *Kolem dokola*, DVD NFA 2013.
- [35] M. Sladkowski, *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45*, p. 226.
- [36] *Baťa, první globalista* (r. Peter Kerekes), 2018. cf. M. Sladkowski, *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45*, p. 45–46.
- [37] See K. Hloučová, c. d., p. 61–65. cf. A. Horák, c. d., p. 36.
- [38] M. Sladkowski, *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45*, p. 29–30. cf. V. Kofroň, c. d., p. 23–24.
- [39] See M. Sladkowski, *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45*, p. 33–34. cf. A. Horák, c. d., p. 48.
- [40] M. Sladkowski, *FA KUDLOV 1: 36–45*, p. 35–36.
- [41] See Kateřina Majdanová, „*Dlouhá je cesta přes pravidla, krátká přes příklady*“: *Baťova podpora kultury*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, Filosofická fakulta, Ústav hudební vědy 2019, p. 55–59. cf. Zuzana Němcová, *Kulturní profil města Zlína ve 20. letech 20. století*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, Filosofická fakulta, Ústav hudební vědy 2019, p. 44–45.
- [42] *Kouzelný příběh lásky*, DVD NFA 2013.
- [43] K. Hloučová, c. d., p. 39–41.
- [44] The article *Under the brand Baťa* (Pod značkou Baťa), named after the NFA collection of 3 DVDs, was limited only to the formal aspects. It did not consider the

rhetoric strategies of the advertisements and instructional films; on the other hand, the second DVD including six reportage-documentaries (*Labour Day in Zlín 1936* /Svátek práce ve Zlíně 1936/, *Youth Ahead!* /Mládi vpřed!/, *The Face of Zlín* /Tvář Zlína/, *Jan A. Baťa, Honorary Doctor of Technical Sciences* /Jan A. Baťa čestným doktorem technických věd/, *Film Harvest II 1941* /II. Filmové žně 1941/, *6 Years of Zlín* /6 let Zlína/) could be helpful to have a better understanding of the wider context of building the Baťa brand and its influence on the whole town. *Labour Day in Zlín 1936* puts an emphasis on working and on the slogan “the customer is king” which also reflects in some instructional films, such as *Mind your Manners* and *The Most Profitable Sale*. *Youth Ahead!* is based on the “cult of youth”, represented by a young girl living in Baťa’s hall of residence in *The Magical Love Story* and the rollicking teenagers in *Jungle for Sale* and *Animal Studies*. *The Face of Zlín* shows the Baťa group as a ubiquitous one: apprenticeship, job in the factor, life in Baťa’s shops, community centres etc. *Jan A. Baťa, Honorary Doctor of Technical Sciences* introduces the visions and the personality which can be also observed in some advertisements, including several films such as *A Lady’s Shoe*. *Film Harvest II 1941* accentuates the national aspect (cf. Petr Chowaniec, *Protektorání přehlídka Filmové žně: Vznik festivalu jako nové formy propagace domácího filmu na základech výstav, cen a filmových týdnů*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, Filosofická fakulta, Ústav filmu a audiovizuální kultury 2007), which was suitable both during the First and the Second Czechoslovak Republics and the Protectorate (as well as afterwards, during the eras of communism and capitalism), and was reflected in the advertising films by the emphasis on tradition, folklore and the connection with specific actors and directors working for Baťa. *6 Years of Zlín* is a compilation documentary film emphasizing the work efficiency both during the war and in the post-war era – because the “happy tomorrows have been built in every regime.

[45] The Baťa advertisements would also require another, hitherto unusual approach: to be subjected to criticism that would consider the stereotypical representation of other cultures and women. The reproduction of contemporary norms in the films is related to the advertising strategy of comparison and the function of the narrative abbreviation based on simple oppositions, but this does not change the problematic nature of theirs. In *Once at the Movies* the Eskimos are orientalistically portrayed as primitive (compared to Baťa), not using modern tools to make and process shoes –

and the (petty)bourgeois view of the exoticism of another – belated – culture is enhanced by the film’s framing as an authentic reportage. Women are typecast because their job is to take care of the children/the household (*The End of Vacation, A Homework, Once at the Movies*), be lectured by smart men (*The Golden Age, Once at the Movies*), or to represent an object of desire for hard-working men, to be – as they are also referred to in two of the films – “chicks” (*Round and Round, A Lady’s Show, Animal Studies, The Magic Love Story*). Men were the active one, they managed everything, while women were not taken seriously (except as wives and mothers), as the title *Three Men on the Road (Young Lady Not Including)* could be interpreted given the rest of the advertisements.