



IDEAL OVERALL VIEW OF THE VÍTKOVICE IRONWORKS AND THE FACTORY TOWN OF VÍTKOVICE IN 1914. PRODUCTION, COMMUNITY, AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS WERE GENETICALLY INTERLINKED WITHIN THE AREA OF THE COMPANY TOWN, AND ITS VISUAL CONNECTOR WAS THE UNIFYING RED COLOUR OF THE BRICKWORK


IDEÁLNÍ CELKOVÝ POHLED NA VÍTKOVICKÉ ŽELEZÁRNY A TOVÁRNÍ MĚSTO VÍTKOVICE Z ROKU 1914: NA PŮDĚ FIREMNÍHO MĚSTA BYLA GENETICKY PROVÁZÁNA VÝROBNÍ, KOMUNÁLNÍ A OBYTNÁ VÝSTAVBA, JEJÍMŽ VIZUÁLNÍM POJÍTKEM SE STALA UNIFIKUJÍCÍ ČERVENĚ REŽNÉHO ZDIVA

Source Zdroj: Otto Bollhagen: Panorama des Eisenwerkes Witkowitz, 1914. In: Jemelka, M. (ed.). In. Ostravské dělnické kolonie III: Závodní kolonie Vítkovických železáren a dalších průmyslových podniků. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita, pp. 18 – 19

Employee Colonies: Nomenclature, Typology, and (Dis)continuity

Zaměstnanecké kolonie: nomenklatura, typologie a (dis)kontinuity

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Tématem této studie je zaměstnanecké bydlení. Ambicí studie je přispět k nomenklatuře a typologii zaměstnaneckého bydlení minulosti jako k aktuálnímu tématu současnosti. Nejčastěji je zaměstnanecké bydlení éry klasické a socialistické industrializace spojováno s fenoménem dělnických kolonií a sídlišť vzorných socialistických měst. Dělnické kolonie jsou sice produktem industrializace, mají však své genetické předchůdce v manuální éře a také následovníky v poválečné výstavbě. Proto je ve studii věnována pozornost otázce (dis)kontinuity zaměstnaneckého bydlení s chronologickým těžištěm v éře klasické a socialistické industrializace 19. a 20. století.

Text se zabývá pojmem dělnická/zaměstnanecká kolonie, jeho historickým původem, etymologií a hodnotícími souvislostmi. Cílem je poukázat na nepřesné a vágní používání termínu, který je již dávno etablován v odborném jazyce i běžných komunikačních souvislostech. Termín *dělnická kolonie* (anglicky *workers colony*, francouzsky *colonie ouvrière*, německy *Arbeiterkolonie*) se objevil nejpozději v polovině 19. století, nejprve na britských ostrovech, záhy ve francouzsky a německy mluvícím prostředí. Do konce 19. století se etabloval i ve slovanském jazykovém prostoru. Protože byly kolonie obývány i příslušníky jiných než manuálně pracujících vrstev (*dělnické kolonie*) a protože kolonie byly budovány i pro jiné zaměstnance než v průmyslu (*firemní/podniková/tovární kolonie*), například ve státních službách, zdá se autorovi studie nejvhodnější užívat univerzálnější termín *zaměstnanecká kolonie*.

Trojice následujících kapitol usiluje o typologii zaměstnaneckých kolonií, a to podle tří základních kritérií. Prvním kritériem je dělení zaměstnaneckých kolonií podle stavebníka. Investor rozhodoval do značné míry o stavebně-architektonickém řešení, kvalitě a způsobu využití bytového fondu. Nejčastěji byly investory zaměstnaneckých kolonií větší *průmyslové závody* napříč výrobními odvětvími. Podniková bytová výstavba často probíhala s přímou či nepřímou podporou státu, nejčastěji formou daňových úlev na tzv. levné dělnické byty. *Stát* také investoval do výstavby zaměstnaneckých kolonií, před rokem 1918 hlavně v roli většinového kapitálového vlastníka. S daňovou podporou státu a nejednou i za vydatné pomoci podnikatelských subjektů realizovala zaměstnanecké bydlení stavební bytová družstva. Typologie zaměstnaneckého bydlení v koloniích by neměla pominout účast *komunálních samospráv* na výstavbě sociálního a zaměstnaneckého bydlení. Velmi často měla podobu

nízkonákladového bydlení situovaného na periferiích průmyslových měst. Nejčastěji bylo koncentrováno v tzv. *nouzových koloniích*, zvláště v metropolitních městech, méně v tradičních průmyslových městech, výjimečně na venkově. Nejčastějším investorem v nouzových koloniích byli vedle komunálních samospráv jednotlivci z řad nejnižších pracujících vrstev. Ve velkých průmyslových městech investovali do výstavby zaměstnaneckých kolonií také *privátní stavební podnikatelé a majitelé realit*. Tyto formy bydlení pro pracující měly tržní charakter nájemního bydlení bez ambicí řešit bytovou otázku průmyslového dělnictva.

Typologie zaměstnaneckých kolonií podle socioprofesionální příslušnosti jejich obyvatel úzce souvisí s typologií podle investora. O většině zaměstnaneckých kolonií můžeme právem hovořit jako o dělnických koloniích, protože byly obývány průmyslovým dělnictvem. Zaměstnanecké kolonie byly budovány i pro střední vrstvy, například pro učitele, důstojníky, legionáře, úřednictvo a další zaměstnance státu, a to většinou státem či komunálními samosprávami. *Úřednické kolonie* nabízely vyšší komfort bydlení, což se odráželo v řešení interiéru i exteriéru. Specifická sociální situace panovala v *nouzových koloniích*, které byly sociálně a socioprofesionálně nejrozmanitější. Nouzové kolonie nebyly obývány jen nejnižšími společenskými vrstvami bez přístupu k zaměstnaneckému nebo jinému nájemnímu bydlení. V nouzových koloniích bydleli jak průmysloví dělníci s rodinami, jimž zaměstnavatel nemohl z mnoha důvodů nabídnout podnikové bydlení, tak příslušníci nižších středních tříd na straně jedné a deklasované a sociálně vyloučené osoby na straně druhé (nezaměstnaní, osoby bez pravidelného pracovního vztahu, kriminální živly ad.).

Třetí klasifikace sleduje kritéria urbanistická a architektonická na pozadí sociálního inženýrství. Tato část studie se zamýšlí nad úsilím zhmotnit v architektonickém řešení a urbanistických konceptech stavebníkovy ambice disciplinovat zaměstnance a intervenovat v jejich životě mimo pracovní dobu a pracoviště. S notnou dávkou generalizace můžeme ve střední Evropě ve „zlatém věku zaměstnaneckých kolonií“ 1850–1950 hovořit v zásadě o dvou typech kolonií – typu kolonií s převahou *hromadného ubytování ve vícepodlažních domech kasárenského typu* a typu s bydlením v *rodinných domech* se dvěma až čtyřmi bytovými jednotkami. Vedle rozdílných nákladů byly zvažovány socializační, akulturační a disciplinační přednosti obou typů bydlení.

Dělnické kolonie nejsou tématem, jemuž by nebyla věnována pozornost odborné i laické veřejnosti. Současně s budováním prvních zaměstnaneckých sídlišť industriální éry vycházely nejstarší odborné stati, které tematizovaly sociální bydlení v podmínkách průmyslové společnosti. V první polovině 20. století se k tématu stále častěji vyjadřovali politikové, sociální reformátoři, podnikatelé, angažovaní autoři napříč politickým spektrem, stavitelé, urbanisté, architekti. V polovině minulého století se k nim připojili historici, etnologové, antropologové, sociologové a další reprezentanti sociálních a humanitních věd, kteří objevili dělnickou kulturu a každodennost. Cílem této studie není přinést ucelený přehled bádání na toto téma. Autor se o to ostatně v minulosti pokusil v českých (československých) a polských souřadnicích nebo v souvislosti s dějinami koncernu Baťa. Nelze však zamlčet, že stále chybějí ucelené, komparačně pojaté monografie sociálního, dělnického či obecně zaměstnaneckého bydlení, které by se fenoménu věnovaly z delší chronologické perspektivy a v rozlehlejších geografických a sociokulturních souřadnicích. Téma zaměstnaneckého bydlení v sobě přitom ukrývá enormní odborný potenciál. Nemluvě o jeho společenské aktuálnosti v podmínkách postindustriální společnosti s globálním trhem práce a pracovními silami.

Zaměstnanecké kolonie dnes mají rozličnou podobu. Stále slouží k bydlení v osobním vlastnictví nebo pronájmu, ať již jako adaptované rodinné domy, nebo nevyhovující ubytování nízkopříjmových skupin obyvatelstva či osob s nižšími nároky na bydlení. Využívány jsou rovněž k podnikání jako výrobní, prodejní či skladovací prostory. Výjimečně slouží sociálním účelům, jako například domovy seniorů. Na rozdíl od sousedního Německa neexistuje v českých zemích zaměstnanecká kolonie, která by dnes sloužila k ubytování alternativních

skupin obyvatel. Mnoho zaměstnaneckých kolonií ovšem chátrá a je odsouzeno k demolici nebo divokému rozebrání na stavební materiál bez vědomí majitelů či úřadů. Stále však platí, že k sobě poutají pozornost zájemců o rodinné bydlení, developerů nebo rostoucí komunity zájemců o industriální dějiny.

Cílem této studie je akcentovat historické kořeny zaměstnaneckých kolonií a jejich poválečné osudy, poukázat na typologické rozdíly mezi různými zaměstnaneckými koloniemi, a zvláště upřesnit jejich nomenklaturu. Zahledění do minulosti dnes již v podstatě neexistující průmyslové společnosti zdánlivě nemá vztah k současnosti. Opak je pravdou. Bydlení v kontejnerech a vagónech je dnes adorováno bez znalosti sociálních souvislostí a nutných obecných nákladů na infrastrukturu. Velké podniky v éře globální postcovidové krize a válečného konfliktu na Ukrajině znovu zvažují zaměstnanecké bydlení jako investici a racionální strategii do firemní podnikové politiky současně. Postindustriální města střední Evropy hledají využití pro chátrající zaměstnanecké kolonie.

Zaměstnanecké bydlení, jak je známe z dělnických kolonií 19. a 20. století, není uzavřenou minulostí určenou k dožití či demolici. Expanze home office během pandemie covidu-19 a privatizace výrobních nákladů přenášených na zaměstnance (náklady na energie, stravování, dopravu, pracovní pomůcky ad.) vrátily do veřejného prostoru diskuzi o státních či firemních investicích do nájemního a zaměstnaneckého bydlení. Komparace zaměstnaneckých strategií 19. a 20. století a experimentálně ověřovaných modelů urbánního a architektonického řešení zaměstnaneckého bydlení, nejčastěji formou dělnických kolonií, se současným stavebním, architektonickým a urbanistickým řešením a novými formami firemní sociální politiky v oblasti bydlení se přímo nabízejí.

Introduction

On Sunday, 7 August 2022, the internet daily *Seznam Zprávy* published an article entitled *Jako Baťa: český podnikatel vybuduje celou čtvrť za čtyři miliardy korun* [Like [Tomáš] Baťa: Czech Entrepreneur to Build an Entire Town Quarter for Four Billion Czech Crowns]. The promo text, accompanied with an extensive online discussion, was dedicated to Vlastislav Bříza, owner of the Koh-i-noor holding, which exports writing implements to 80 countries around the world. Having invested in expensive reconstructions of historical buildings in Český Krumlov and Třeboň and adaptations to the Sporthotel in Churáňov, South Bohemia, he announced a new development project in the town of České Budějovice. Not far from the Koh-i-noor factory (founded in 1848), a new commercial and residential quarter is to be built at an estimated cost of 4 000 000 000 CZK, co-financed by banks. "I would like to create something relatively unique in the context of České Budějovice: a place with shops as well as apartments", said Bříza. Even though he was not specific regarding the type of housing, the author of the internet article made a subliminal link between his development project, which combines a company presentation and the investment plans of the enterprise, and the name of Tomáš Baťa (1876–1932). As a result, an image was created in the minds of the readers of Baťa as a philanthropic builder of factory housing, and Bříza as a 21st-century Baťa who is not afraid to make investments in housing. Whether the housing part is designed for the staff of the Koh-i-noor holding is unclear from the article.¹

The article and the accompanying forum not only reveal the persistence of many naïve ideas about the Baťa company, but additionally show the interest of the Czech public in company housing. The extensive development made by the Baťa, a.s. concern in Zlín (where its headquarters were located) and in the company's housing colonies is offered to the public in a notably misleading way, presenting the factory owner Baťa as a philanthropist generously providing social housing

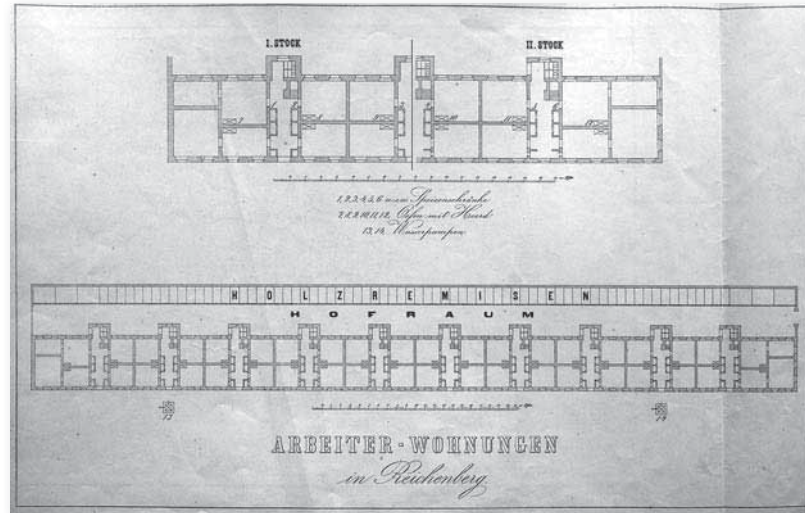
rather than an entrepreneur who rationally calculates and understands the link between effective performance at work and the living conditions of his staff.² However, when confronted with the Baťa legacy and other past examples, the Czech public has begun to reconsider ideas of cooperative, company, and other forms of shared housing, all happening at a time of tension on the development market. The expansion of home office work during the pandemic and the privatisation of production costs that are transferred to employees, such as costs of energy, catering, transport, protective aids, etc., have revived public discussions on state and company investments in rental and employee housing.³

Employee housing is the topic of this study, which primarily hopes to contribute to the nomenclature and typology of employee housing in the past as an actual topic of the present. In the period of classical and socialist industrialisation, employee housing was most often linked to the phenomenon of workers' colonies and settlements in model socialist towns. Workers' colonies are themselves a product of industrialisation, but their genetic predecessors date back to the manufactory era, and have their successors even in post-war development. Hence, this study draws attention equally to the discontinuities alongside the continuities in employee housing, chronologically based in the period of the 19th- and 20th-century classical and socialist industrialisation. The text elaborates on the notion of the workers'/employee colony, its historical origins, etymology, and related values, aiming to underline the inaccuracies and vagueness in the term's use that have become deeply rooted in academic language as well as in common communication. The following three chapters seek to establish a typology of employee colonies according to three basic criteria. The first division concerns the type of builder; the second is the classification of colonies by their socio-professional profile. The third classification follows urbanistic and architectural criteria against the background of social engineering. This part of the study elaborates on the effort to materialise, in the architectural design and urbanistic concepts, the builder's ambitions to discipline the workers and intervene in their life outside working hours and their workplace.

Workers' colonies have never lacked attention from academia or the lay public. Appearing in parallel with the building of the first industrial-era settlements for employees were the earliest academic papers that thematised social housing in the conditions of industrial society.⁴ In the early 20th century, politicians, social reformers, entrepreneurs, politicians, authors from all political parties, builders, urbanists, and architects increasingly made statements pertaining to this topic.⁵ By the mid-20th century, they were joined by historians, ethnologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and representatives of other areas of social sciences and humanities who discovered workers' culture and everyday life.⁶ It is not the aim of the present study to provide a comprehensive overview of research into this topic, which the author attempted previously in respect to Czech (Czechoslovak)⁷ and Polish⁸ academia, or in connection with the history of the Baťa concern.⁹ However, it should be stressed that full-fledged comparative monographs are still lacking on the topic of social, workers' or, in general terms, employee housing that would elaborate on the phenomenon from a longer chronological perspective and in greater geographical and socio-cultural dimensions. The topic of employee housing nevertheless has enormous academic potential, not to mention its societal topicality in the conditions of post-industrial society with its global labour market and labour force.¹⁰

Workers' Or Employee Colonies?

The term *workers' colony* (French: *colonie ouvrière*, German: *Arbeiterkolonie*) emerged no later than the mid-19th century, at first in the British Isles, soon followed in the French-speaking and German-speaking world. Before the end of the 19th century, it also became established in the Slavic area. The term *colony* (Latin: *colonia* = *colony, settlement*) involved several simultaneous connotations. Primarily, it evoked *terraced housing*, which was then a distinguishing mark of mass-designed workers' colonies, or a villa colony or allotment gardening colony. At the same time, the term suggested the image of persons concentrated in one place for the purpose of shared interests and joint existence, for instance, insect colony, artists' colony, or holiday colony. As early as in the 19th century, this term carried many negative connotations. Colony inhabitants were to be civilised, domesticated, disciplined, or colonised for the purposes of mass industrial production, like those in overseas or penal colonies. For this reason, especially in the environment of social reformers, the terms (*workers' settlement* or (*workers' estate*) were promoted to avoid these socially downgrading connotations. The professional vocabulary around the year 1900 increasingly accentuated the notion of *settlement* or *town* in greenery under the influence of the garden towns movement.¹¹



OVERALL VIEW AND GROUND PLAN OF THE OLDEST WORKERS' HOUSE IN LIEBIG'S TOWN, TODAY SVATOPLUKOVA ST., LIBEREC: THE PHOTOGRAPH DATED 1867 CAPTURES THE ORIGINAL APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING

CELKOVÝ POHLED A PŮDORYS PŘÍZEMÍ NEJSTARŠÍHO DÉLNICKÉHO DOMU LIEBIGOVA MĚSTĚČKA V DNEŠNÍ SVATOPLUKOVĚ ULICI V LIBERCI: SNÍMEK Z ROKU 1867 ZACHYCUJE PŮVODNÍ PODOBU OBJEKTU

Source Zdroj: Die Industriellen Etablissement von Johann Liebig & Co. Friedland: Franz Jannasch, 1867

We can find one example in the Slovak-based Svit company, part of the Baťa concern. Through the company press, it recommended its correspondents to use, instead of the declassing notions *settlement* and *colony* (the Baťa colony in Velká), preferably *residential quarter* when referring to the company town Batizovce.¹² However, the term *colony* continued to be used in Batizovce as well as in other company towns of the concern, even including Zlín, the parent company's seat, to refer to the company's residential complexes, most aptly for a South Moravian colony called Baťovka in Ratíškovice, whose conservative design is very close to the layout of traditional workers' colonies.¹³ The Swiss researcher Markus Widner actually considers the term *colony* fully applicable in the case of the Baťa settlements, as it captures well the representational, colonising, and modernising ambitions of the Baťa concern.¹⁴ At the same time the Baťa satellite in Möhlin in Rhineland was built, another pioneering project for a company colony, the work of none other than Adolf Loos, was being carried out in north-eastern Bohemia by the S. Katzau weaving company in Náchod, NE Bohemia. Here, the design documents also used the term *colony*.¹⁵ And in colloquial speech, the term *colony* prevailed over workers' *settlements* and *estates*, and its use continued even in the mid-20th century when the company settlements of prefabricated Finnish or other wooden houses were built.¹⁶ In fact, the term accurately captures the character of the mass housing developments for workers who were to become colonised by industrial society and civilised through the company's paternalistic social policy.

Rather than the noun *colony*, we should perhaps pay greater attention to the adjectives usually attached to it. The most frequently used, and most traditional, is the term *workers' colony*, attested since the mid-19th century. Workers' colonies, however, were not designed solely for workers, and were not inhabited merely by the working classes: often, they housed middle management, or could include directors' villas or the residences of the company's owners.¹⁷ In the Czech environment, a quite misleading distinction between workers' and miners' colonies has become widespread in recent years, implying that miners' colonies were not workers' colonies.¹⁸ As the colonies were also inhabited by non-manual workers (*workers' colonies*) and as colonies were also built for other than industrial employees (*company/enterprise/factory colony*), for instance, public servants, the term *employee colony* seems most appropriate.

(Dis)continuity I – The Proto-Colony

Just as the processes of industrial revolution and industrialisation closely followed changes in technologies, distribution of wealth and organisation of the labour force, so projects for the oldest employee colonies were not created in a historical vacuum devoid of older examples and inspirations. Quarters for artisans, wage labourers and other workers, homogeneous in social or socio-professional terms, already arose in the Ancient and Medieval Periods. The oldest example of *social housing* in continental Europe is deemed to be the Fuggerei district in Augsburg, Germany (Bavaria), which owes its creation to the philanthropic involvement of the Fugger banking family. Fuggerei (1516–1523) can be seen as an example of a late mediaeval social housing project, but not as a reproducible example for employee settlements of the New and Modern Period. It was not actually created as

to accommodate employees, but as charity for impoverished artisans of the Roman Catholic faith, whose obligation, besides paying a symbolic rent, included a daily prayer for their benefactor and his family – which still holds true today.¹⁹

The situation saw a major change with the emergence of the manufactory era, marked by the concentration of production, labour force, and housing near energy sources (water) and raw materials (wood), regardless of whether the locality was urban or rural. The ideal example of this are glassmaking factories and ironworks, and manufactories producing paper, leather, and textiles. Glassworks and ironworks, tanneries and bleacheries were established in forests that provided enough wood to generate potash, near ore deposits, or by the outskirts of towns along watercourses, with both production facilities and housing for the most qualified staff on their own premises. In the Czech lands alone, dozens of such sites were established before the end of the 18th century, usually situated in the Czech mountain ranges, often not surviving into the subsequent industrial era.²⁰

There were several ways in which employee housing was created in these enterprises. It could be built by the investor or the owner at the same time as the plant, or soon after production was launched. The tenants from among the staff were provided it in the form of a service or for rent. As a popular alternative, employees would build their own house with support from the establishment, usually in the form of the land, building materials, and financial exemptions. There were also cases when the employee housing was built ad hoc with the awareness of the owner of the enterprise, who passed on the building and maintenance costs to his employees. This form was most prone to dissolution after production ceased, as the results were only primitive or at best provisional habitations. When the factories were situated in suburbs or in urbanised countryside, these settlements did not cease to exist even after the end of the manufactory, and still exist, often with no visible link to industrial-era production. Some were converted into town streets or whole town quarters (Liberec) or persisted as traditional rural villages (Filipské Chaloupky, near Polná). Several examples became tourist attractions and much sought-after locations for their wooden or timbered rural houses, whether inhabited or adapted for museum purposes, as in the former weavers' settlements of Betlém near Hlinsko, or Chaloupky in Rychnov nad Kněžnou.

Sufficient attention has been paid to proto-industrial-era manufactories in Central European historiography. However, it has mostly focused on the technologies and distribution networks, and only rarely on housing.²¹ The dwellings of manufactory-era employees have not yet been researched in the chronological and typological context of employee development in the industrial era, thus granting this topic great research potential, intensified by the interest of experts in the history of technology, production, landscape, countryside, or environmentalism. The first attempt at systematically including manufactory-era employee settlements in the history of industrial-era social

**THE FUGGEREI ARTISAN DISTRICT
IN AUGSBURG, GERMANY, THE
OLDEST EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL
HOUSING IN CONTINENTAL
EUROPE, IN 2018**

ŘEMESLNICKÁ ČTVRŤ FUGGEREI
V NĚMECKÉM AUGSBURGU,
NEJSTARŠÍ PŘÍKLAD SOCIÁLNÍHO
BYDLENÍ NA EVROPSKÉM
KONTINENTU, NA FOTOGRAFII
Z ROKU 2018

Photo Foto: Martin Jemelka



housing is *Dělnické kolonie (Workers' Colonies)*, a web portal project carried out since May 2022 by the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences, where the subject of manufactory-era employee housing is elaborated in chronological continuity with social housing for early-modern and mid-modern employees.²² In connection with the already established term “proto-industrialisation”²³, this project advocates the term *proto-colony* to denote pre-industrial-era employee housing. This is a term that has not as yet become established, and is still awaiting validation in the academic terminology of historical sciences. However, it provides an adequate link between proto-industrialisation and the initial genetic stage of workers' colonies.²⁴

Typology of Employee Colonies: Classification by Type of Investor

The basic classification criterion for employee colonies is the type of investing entity. It was the investor that determined, to a considerable degree, the technical and architectural solution, the quality of the dwellings, and the manner of use. Even though accurate numbers are lacking, all possible indications suggest that the most common investors in employee colonies were larger *industrial enterprises* from various industries.²⁵ By building colonies, the industrial plants sought to establish a stable supply of manpower, reduce the time spent travelling to work when public transport was still limited, bind the employees to the plant through combining a labour contract and a rental contract, and furthermore to make investments in real estate and draw upon the synergies by involving the company's design offices (Baťa, Vítkovické horní a hutní těžířstvo, a.o.) in civil development.²⁶ As they were emerging, many company colonies were presented as philanthropic projects aiming to improve the living standards of the workers, though in fact the building of colonies was primarily a rational action based on the company's personnel and social policy.²⁷

The construction of company housing was often carried out with direct or indirect state support, most often in the form of tax reliefs on so-called cheap workers' apartments.²⁸ The *state* also invested in the construction of employee colonies, and before 1918 it mostly did so as the majority owner of capital. Typical examples of such processes are employee colonies for railway staff, namely the colony of the Austrian North-Eastern Railways in Nymburk, built from a design by Camilo Sitte and Carl Schlimp.²⁹ The situation changed between the wars, and then even more so in the era of state socialism, under which nationalised enterprises had to follow central economic planning and depended entirely on finances allocated from the state budget. The most important state investments in employee housing in Czechoslovakia were made in the interwar period when housing projects for public servants were created in large administrative centres as well as in structurally problematic regions and strategic areas of the state.³⁰

With the tax reliefs granted by the state, and more than once with massive support from entrepreneurial entities,³¹ the construction of employee housing was often carried out by *housing cooperatives*. Adequate attention has yet to be paid to the topic of building cooperatives and housing cooperatives, which are still seen by wide echelons of Czech society as a phenomenon attributable to state socialism. However, even before World War I, and especially between the wars, many important examples of technically and architecturally valuable cooperative housing were built, such as the Lešetín I and Lešetín II colonies, which the Svěpomoc cooperative established in Přerov.³² We still lack more precise quantification and detailed studies to assess the importance of housing cooperatives for the working classes. However, there are many indications that apart from employers, it was housing cooperatives that participated most in employee housing construction.

When speaking of the typology of employee housing in colonies, the participation of *local (community) governments* in the development of social and employee housing should not be forgotten. Putting aside the specific situation of so-called company towns such as Vítkovice and Zlín, where the dominating industrial enterprise took over all spheres of public life and many spheres of private life,³³ investments by municipalities in employee housing were made either in the form of co-financing and various fiscal benefits or subsidies, or as their own social housing projects. Quite often, this resulted in low-cost dwellings situated on the outskirts of industrial towns. Such housing was most often concentrated in so-called *provisional colonies*, especially in the metropolitan centres of Brno and Prague, less often in traditional industrial towns, and only exceptionally in rural areas. As we can see from numerous examples from interwar Prague and Brno, apart from local governments, individuals from the lowest social strata were most frequently the investors in provisional colonies, which were also inhabited by members of the middle classes who were unable

**VAGÓNKA, A PROVISIONAL
RAILWAY-CARRIAGE COLONY
IN STARÁ BOLESLAV, UNDATED
INTERWAR PHOTOGRAPH**

NOUZOVÁ VAGONOVÁ KOLONIE
VAGÓNKA VE STARÉ BOLESLAVI
NA NEDATOVANÉ FOTOGRAFII
Z MEZIVÁLEČNÉHO OBDOBÍ

Source Zdroj: Prague-East Regional
Museum in Brandýs nad Labem – Stará
Boleslav



to cover normal rent. A very specific example of employee housing, the provisional colonies have attracted a great deal of attention from ethnologists and architectural historians,³⁴ while today they attract many ordinary people interested in urban and industrial history and tourism.³⁵ Many are still occupied by those less demanding as regards housing standards.

Investments in the construction of employee colonies in major industrial towns were also made by *private development businesses* and *real estate owners*. In Ostrava alone, several private colonies were built in the last third of the 19th century, often inhabited by the poorest members of the working class (e.g., the Krausovec colony in Moravská Ostrava and in Přívoz).³⁶ These forms of workers' housing were run as market-priced rented accommodation and had no ambition toward resolving the question of housing industrial workers. The owners of private employee colonies treated the tenants as customers irrespective of their financial standing, family status or position at work. As these colonies were of a temporary character and not regularly maintained, this type of colony most often ended in demolition.

Socio-Professional Classification

The typology of employee colonies by social and professional standing of their inhabitants is closely linked to the typology by investor. It would be laborious to provide an exhaustive quantification of employee housing by social and professional standing of their inhabitants; however, we can justifiably speak of the majority of employee settlements as workers' colonies, as they were inhabited by industrial workers. Still, not even *workers' colonies* were a socially homogeneous environment. Family houses, or even villas for the middle and top management, were often built within these colonies. One example of this is the largest workers' colony in Moravská Ostrava, the Šalomoun miners' colony, where, amidst workers' houses and hostels, several villas for engineers were built,³⁷ while the neighbouring Hlubinská colony included the company director's villa.³⁸ Colonies housing Miners, foundry, chemical, textile, ironworks, and railway workers were most often characterised by the prevailing number of industrial workers and unqualified labourers, which to a considerable degree justifies the use of the term 'workers' colonies' for these sites.

Employee settlements were also built for the middle classes, for instance, teachers, military officers, veterans of the Czechoslovak Legions in World War I, public servants and other state employees, and this was usually done by the state or the local governments. *Public servant colonies* offered a higher standard of living, which was reflected in the design of both the interiors and the exteriors. As in workers' colonies, accommodation was only provided on the grounds of mutually interlinked employment and rent contracts, or as a service. A specific social situation could be seen in the *provisional colonies*, as the most diverse in their social and socio-professional profile. Provisional colonies were inhabited not only by the lowest social orders with no access to employee or other

**WORKERS' COLONY OF THE
MATTAUSCH COMPANY IN
TEREZINO ÚDOLÍ, FRANTIŠKOV
NAD PLOUČNICÍ; UNDATED LATE
19TH CENTURY PHOTOGRAPH**

DĚLNICKÁ KOLONIE FIRMY
MATTAUSCH V TEREZINĚ ÚDOLÍ
VE FRANTIŠKOVĚ NAD PLOUČNICÍ
NA NEDATOVANÉ FOTOGRAFII
Z KONCE 19. STOLETÍ

Source Zdroj: Österreichische Nation-
albliothek. Available at: https://www.europeana.eu/cs/item/92070/BibliographicResource_1000126220067



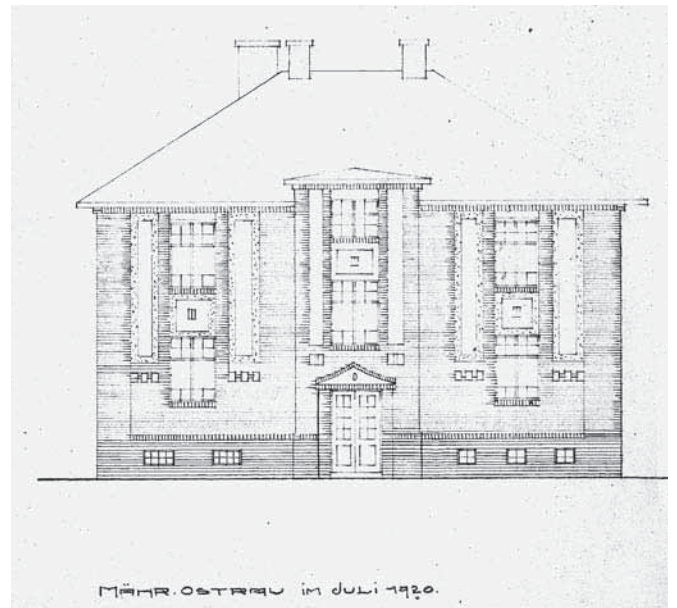
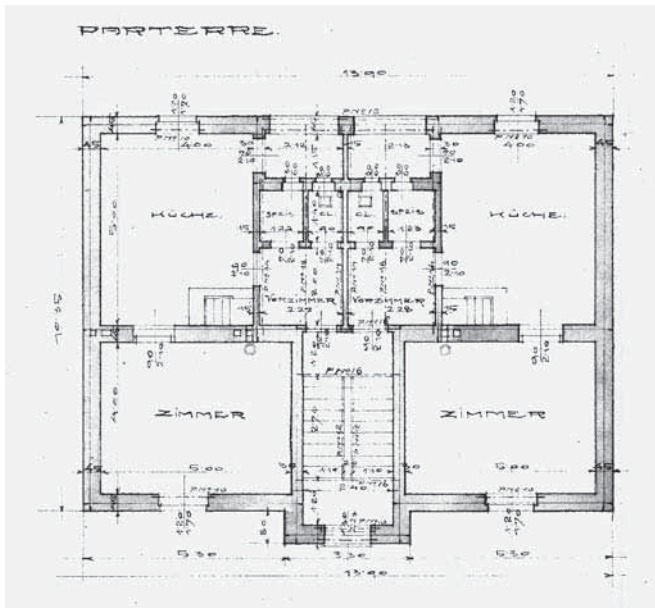
rental living. The provisional colonies in Prague and Brno also included industrial workers and their families who, for various reasons, could not be offered company housing by their employers and members of the lower middle classes on the one side, and the underclass or socially excluded, such as the unemployed, persons without a regular labour relationship, criminal delinquents, etc., on the other.³⁹

The great industrial enterprises (Vítkovické ironworks, Baťa), in their social practice, verified that separation or segregation by socio-professional groups may have a number of adverse social consequences. The companies that implemented their social policy, including employee housing, within so-called company towns sought to remove the spatial barriers between individual socio-professional groups. They built various types of employee housing depending on position in the company's hierarchy (hostels, villas, etc.), yet also strove to disrupt this hierarchy through the urban planning of company towns: e.g., with mass lodging houses and workers' or officials' colonies built in the vicinity of engineers' or directors' villas intended for the middle and top management. An example is the company town Nové Vítkovice, in which socially diversified types of employee housing physically adjoined each other though differing in architectural and technical design, quality of execution, and comfort of living.⁴⁰ Their merging in the company town, however, undoubtedly contributed to the formation of a shared company ethos and mutual social control across the company's hierarchy.

Technical, Architectural, and Urbanistic Classification

The technical, architectural, and urbanistic typology of employee colonies should be the subject of a separate study, or even a monograph. With considerable generalisation, we can speak of two specific types occurring in Central Europe in the "golden age of employee colonies" (1850–1950). Let us take the industrial region of Ostrava as an example, a region with the highest occurrence of employee colonies in the Czech Lands.⁴¹ As early as around 1850, the management of mining companies discussed the advantages and drawbacks of various forms of employee housing. At the end of the *provisional stage*, during which miners were accommodated directly in the plant buildings, the *experimental stage* followed in the 1850s when the discussion continued as to whether *multi-storey barracks-type buildings*, or *residential houses with two to four apartments*, should be chosen for *mass accommodation*. Besides differing costs, the socialising, acculturation, and disciplining advantages of the two types of housing were also assessed.⁴²

Living in company houses evoked life in the countryside, the place of origin for most of those migrating for work. Vegetable gardens and individual houses were supposed to fulfil the rural man's traditional anthropological ideas of harmonic family life, thus satisfying his visions of securing his family's existence in their own house. Accommodation in multi-storey barracks-type buildings with unified apartment units, in turn, meant lower costs and also easier control.⁴³ However, a complication lay in the co-habitation of many worker families, for instance, in the use of shared



PLAN OF THE GROUND FLOOR AND FRONT ELEVATION OF THE FAÇADE OF A TWO-STOREY FOUR-APARTMENT EMPLOYEE HOUSE, NO. 1605 IN DESIGN DOCUMENTS DATED JULY 1920

PŮDORYS PRÍZEMÍ A ČELNÍ POHLED NA FAŠÁDU JEDNOPATROVÉHO ČTYŘBYTOVÉHO DÉLNICKÉHO DOMU ČP. 1605 VE STAVEBNÍ DOKUMENTACI Z ČERVENCE 1920

Source Zdroj: Collection of Building Documents of Demolished Houses: Ostrava – Moravská Ostrava, No. 1605, inv. no. 1001, Box 207. Archives of the municipality of Ostrava

bath and toilet facilities, which was a common source of conflict.⁴⁴ After a decade of considering both alternatives, eventually the concept of residential houses for two to four families won in the Ostrava region in the 1860s for use in employee colonies where, from the 1880s, company hostels (barracks) were more often built to provide accommodation for single persons and those who would have to commute.⁴⁵

While the mass construction of one- and two-storey residential houses won over mass accommodation in multi-storey buildings in the Ostrava region, various forms of housing estates with a higher capacity can be found across the Czech Lands. In the Ostrava region, the discussion over the financial, spatial, and discipline benefits of barracks-type accommodation revived again before the year 1900 when a new type of workers' housing appeared there, later to become widespread and allegedly highly popular with the inhabitants.⁴⁶ It was most often an eight-apartment three-floor house with shared sanitary facilities on the landings that served as the central communication space. The exterior design of these houses was much more urban in character, and their planning satisfied the demands of municipal development better than before.⁴⁷

The dispute over whether the character of employee housing should be more rural or more urban became quite heated in the region in the 1920s, as can be seen in the reconstruction of the Kamenec miners' colony in Slezská Ostrava. While the mining company as the colony's owner planned reconstruction investments that would emphasise its rural character, for instance, by using an archaic exterior design, the municipal council demanded that the colony be demolished and replaced with new municipal housing with at least three aboveground floors. As in many other cases, financial pragmatism eventually won out: Kamenec stood until the end of the 1960s, when it was replaced by a concrete-tower block estate, also named Kamenec.⁴⁸

The definite victory of worker accommodation in block-type multi-storey developments over residential houses occurred between the wars. The spatial, capacity, and financial benefits of multi-storey structures were eventually appreciated both by Ostrava's mining companies and the Vítkovické horní a hutní těžířstvo, and by the Baťa concern, whose strategists turned their backs on the construction of detached residential houses in the early 1940s and opted for multi-storey structures. Mass construction works by the end of World War II were only prevented by the building ban introduced during the Protectorate. However, that did not apply to the Ostrava region where the ideals of family housing were revived during the Protectorate and materialised for the last time in prefabricated houses from around the year 1950. Afterwards, block-type multi-storey constructions⁴⁹ definitely won both in the Ostrava region, and in Zlín, where the Baťa company's design offices helped the emergence of concrete tower blocks.⁵⁰

The building of employee colonies could serve as a showcase of important architects and urban planners who contributed to the realisation of employee housing, even before the garden

city movement appeared and brought major stimuli to the building of colonies.⁵¹ Besides renowned architects, the development of colonies was shaped by often forgotten or anonymous architects in company design offices. As such, we shouldn't not forget the marginalised anonymous builders from the inhabitants of provisional colonies themselves, who exhibited much skill and invention, and often also all available finances, to build provisional dwellings from the most diverse building materials available. Even though there were considerable differences between the provisional colonies, there was a common feature, i.e., the use of discarded railway cars subjected to various adaptations to make them liveable. The discarded railway cars thus became a sort of modular basis for many provisional colonies, in which concrete blocks were seen as the supreme building material.⁵²

(Dis)continuities II. – Tower Block Housing Estates

In Brno, Ostrava, Prague, and many other metropolitan and industrial towns and areas, the employee colonies demolished in the late 1950s gave way to new tower block estates. These housing estates not infrequently assumed the names of the demolished colonies which, besides urban planning, technical or sanitary reasons, were removed also for ideological reasons as a symbol of old times, obsolete capitalism, and a paternalistic resolution of worker housing. The continuity of the area and local name (in Ostrava, for instance, with the colonies and estates Jindřich, Jiří, Kamenec, Šalomoun, etc.) led to these tower block estates being referred to as the employee colonies of state socialism. However, regardless of undeniable similarities between the colonies and housing estates, the principal differences and discontinuities are no less telling. A prominent instance, for instance, could be Vítkovice, a part of Ostrava, in the small area near the railway station, formerly occupied by the Jeremenko settlement. From the end of the 19th century, it was occupied first by a miners' colony, then by a housing estate built during the Protectorate, after which it was a post-war settlement of prefabricated houses, and eventually a smaller tower block estate.⁵³

As pioneers of building unification and the prefabricated building industry, the 19th century employee colonies can, to a certain degree, be termed as predecessors to the later tower block estates. The professional and local specifics of employee colonies, however, gave way to centralised design work and anonymous unification of social homogenisation. At least in the first generations of state socialism, they were – not surprisingly – worked on by designers and architects with rich experience in company housing before 1945, for instance, the leading personalities of the building office of the Baťa company in Zlín, Miroslav Drofa, Vladimír Karfík, and Jiří Voženílek. In the new societal circumstances, they drew on their experience acquired in Baťa's Zlín and its company towns.⁵⁴

The principal difference between employee colonies and tower block housing estates was in the much greater residential capacity, and the absence of household vegetation and small gardening lots with fruits and vegetables. It was this absence, and the considerably more anonymous interpersonal relations in high-capacity estates, that often lay behind the reluctance of the inhabitants of the declining employee colonies to move to these new and more comfortable estates, usually only under pressure from the authorities and often immediately before the demolition of the colony. Despite the objectively higher living comfort in the new housing estates, especially the older inhabitants preferred living in the Mediterranean-style semi-municipal, semi-rural environment of employee colonies with access to urban fauna and flora, and with the possibility of growing their own fruits and vegetables.⁵⁵ And this held true even when the declining employee colonies were converted, following state plans, into socially excluded locations in which the state concentrated the Roma population, condemned to living in substandard housing.⁵⁶

While those moving to tower block estates were greeted by standardised units with unified furnishings, the privatisation of employee colonies in the 1960s and 1970s was a principal impulse for their revitalisation. Factories disposed en masse of older housing stock which was approaching the end of its lifetime, either transferring it to municipalities or selling it to the current tenants, and by doing so, they actually enabled quick improvement of the quality of living after reconstruction, even despite the environmental burden that had stigmatised more than one colony.⁵⁷ One example of this is the former miners' colony called Mexiko in Ostrava-Petrkovice, still sought after by house buyers today.⁵⁸

In the ten years around the year 2000, when the need to revitalise tower block estates was increasingly being discussed, many employee colonies saw uncontrolled demolition, or removal of the building materials for reuse, outside the control of authorities. Some residential structures or entire colonies were commonly adapted for commercial purposes (the U Koule miners' colony in Ostrava

THE ŠALOMOUN MINE MINERS' COLONY, BEING DEMOLISHED AT THE SAME TIME AS THE TOWER BLOCK HOUSING ESTATE ALSO CALLED ŠALOMOUN IS BUILT IN MORAVSKÁ OSTRAVA IN A PHOTOGRAPH DATING BACK TO 1965: IN THE 1970S, A WORKERS' COLONY FOR APPROXIMATELY 3,000 PERSONS WAS REPLACED BY A TOWER BLOCK ESTATE WITH HUNDREDS OF APARTMENT UNITS

SOUČASNĚ DEMOLOVANÁ HORNICKÁ KOLONIE DOLU ŠALOMOUN A NOVĚ BUDOVANÉ PANELOVÉ SÍDLIŠTĚ ŠALAMOUNA V MORAVSKÉ OSTRAVĚ NA FOTOGRAFII Z ROKU 1965: V SEDMDESÁTÝCH LETECH 20. STOLETÍ NAHRADIL DĚLNICKOU KOLONII PRO PŘÍBLIŽNĚ 3 000 OBYVATEL PANELOVÉ SÍDLIŠTĚ VYSOKOPODLAŽNÍCH DOMŮ SE STOVKAMI BYTOVÝCH JEDNOTEK

Source Zdroj: Oldřich Baran's private collection of photographs



- Mariánské Hory). The potential for family housing in small-sized apartments in houses surrounded by small flower or vegetable gardens was not rediscovered by developers, small investors, or house owners until after 2000, when employee colonies in some locations finally lost the stigma of primitive living. There are even cases of successful adaptations of provisional colonies into high-quality housing (Brno).⁵⁹ Provisional colonies are, however, more often socially excluded locations whose inhabitants and living standards are subject to media criticism calling for a “remedy”, preferably by demolition (Čelákovice).⁶⁰ The Bedřiška colony in Ostrava - Mariánské Hory, often mentioned in the media, is an example of a site whose inhabitants stood up against the pressure from the authorities to demolish it, and breathed new life into the colony based on civil society principles.⁶¹

Conclusion

At the beginning of December 2021, the Czech Press Agency (ČTK) published some surprising news. The Agrostroj Pelhřimov company built 96 rental apartments for their employees, having made an investment of 920 mil. CZK. Agrostroj, owned by Lubomír Stoklásek, has a staff of 2500 in the parent company in Pelhřimov, and a further 600 in the German subsidiary Stoll Maschinenfabrik, as well as recruiting potential employees in South Moravia near the Austrian border, in Slovakia and Lithuania. The Pod Hájkem estate is situated in one of the nicest locations in Pelhřimov, within walking distance of the parent company. The eight residential buildings with three-room flats 95 sq.m. in size, with two terraces and garages, are designed for the staff of the company, which operates in the region with the lowest unemployment rate in the Czech Republic (1.7%), producing sophisticated farming technology, and employs mostly younger staff, with a secondary certificate in technical disciplines and high interest in further education. The rent was set at 14,000 CZK and employees in good standing are entitled to apply for the housing. Further development is planned of a villa quarter with one hundred residential houses that the employees will be able to build with the company's support.⁶²

Hardly anyone today would refer to the development project by the Agrostroj concern as an employee colony. Still, it shares clear traits with earlier forms of employee housing in colonies. The development is situated near the parent company and is designed for qualified and reliable staff, built to stabilise the labour force, especially the highly specialised experts that the company seeks in Lithuania, Slovakia, and the Austrian border regions. Compared to the 19th and 20th century employee colonies, it certainly offers higher living standards, including built-in appliances, which corresponds to higher living costs (approximately 25% of the annual income in Agrostroj), while in Ostrava's miners' colonies before World War I had no more than 15%⁶³). Terraced houses are planned for ordinary staff members with financial support from the company. A similar scheme was used in the Štítová, or Družstevní, colony for the staff of the Vítkovické Ironworks, built in

Vítkovice in 1883–1885; however, it had to be finished by the factory as the employees lacked the necessary investment capital.⁶⁴

Employee colonies today are of diverse appearance. They still serve as housing in private ownership or rental accommodation, whether as adapted family houses or unsatisfactory accommodation for low-income members of the population or those who are less demanding as regards housing standards. They are also used for business purposes as production, sales or warehouse premises. Only rarely are they used for social purposes, for instance, the old people's homes in Vítkovice. Unlike in Germany, there is no employee colony in the Czech lands today that would provide accommodation to alternative groups. Many employee colonies are in a dilapidated state and are threatened with demolition or uncontrolled dismantling to reuse the building material without the owner or authorities knowing. It is still true, however, that they attract those who are interested in family housing, developers or the growing community of those keen on industrial history.

This study was intended to accentuate the historical roots of employee colonies and their post-war history, stress the typological differences between various colonies and, especially, make their nomenclature more precise. Looking into the past of an industrial society that basically no longer exists today might seem to have no relation to the present, yet quite the opposite is true. Housing using containers and railcars is now praised without knowledge of the social circumstances and the necessary general costs of infrastructure. In the era of the global post-covid crisis and the war in the Ukraine, major corporations are again considering employee housing as an investment and, at the same time, a rational strategy for company social policy. Post-industrial towns in Central Europe are looking for a use for decaying employee colonies. Employee housing as we know it from 19th and 20th century colonies is not a phenomenon of the past, destined to be shut down at the end of its lifetime or demolished. The situation calls for a comparison between 19th and 20th century employee strategies and experimentally verified models of urban and architectural solutions to employee housing, most often in the form of workers' colonies, on the one hand, and current technical, architectural and urbanistic solutions and new forms of company social policy in the area of housing on the other. However, that is already the subject for another study.

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