

# From Burden to Resource: Uses of Industrial Heritage in East-Central Europe

Edited by

Dóra Mérai, Zsuzsa Sidó, Hanna Szemző, and Volodymyr Kulikov



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# Table of Contents

Dóra Mérai – Volodymyr Kulikov From Burden to Resource: Uses of Industrial Heritage in East-Central Europe .....	5
Györgyi Németh TICCIH and Industrial Heritage in the Visegrad Group countries .....	13
Milan Balaban The Industrial Heritage of Four Bata Company Towns in the Visegrad Group Countries .....	18
Gábor Bindics Rethinking the Grössling Bath .....	24
Katarzyna Sadowy – Justyna Biernacka An Essay on the Post-Industrial Heritage of Everyday Life: The Bakery in Praga District, Warsaw .....	30
Yonca Erkan Industrial Heritage as a Resource for Urban Development: Management Models from Istanbul .....	35
Piotr Kisiel European Industrial Heritage: Between Technical Monuments and Post-Industrial Landscapes .....	40

# From Burden to Resource: Uses of Industrial Heritage in East-Central Europe

## Introduction

Some more than thirty years ago, a series of significant structural changes started in East-Central Europe, as a result of which the region was left with a legacy of many redundant industrial sites. Several waves of deindustrialization have led to the present landscape where once prosperous industrial sites and buildings lack a proper function that would benefit the local communities and the national economy. The burden of this is well-known to all European countries, but due to their shared past in the Soviet block and their present EU membership, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia – the so-called Visegrad Group countries – are facing a situation that is similar in many respects.

This collection of papers presents the results of the international project “From Burden to Resource: Industrial Heritage in Central-Eastern Europe.”<sup>1</sup> The project connected experts focusing on the preservation and reuse of industrial heritage. The aim was to identify the challenges specific to the Visegrad Group countries and find new solutions by adapting strategies of heritage management developed in those deindustrialized regions where such approaches have a long tradition and are happening in the context of supportive policies. The project also addresses the gap that exists in these countries between heritage specialists focusing on heritage assets and policymakers and developers in urban planning focusing on social and economic development.

The process of heritagization of redundant industrial sites started in Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. First, mostly aesthetically pleasing and architecturally significant buildings were labelled as heritage, but later the perception of the valuable remains of industrial culture broadened, for example, by involving intangible heritage as well. Public bodies and local communities started to protect diverse industrial sites which did not always represent the oldest and most “beautiful” constructions and landscapes but included controversial examples, such as the Gasometer in Oberhausen, Germany, which was ultimately, in the 1990s, turned into an exhibition space (Gasometer Oberhausen, n.d.).

The inheritance of the industrial era, that, in the East-Central European region, partly overlaps with the era of state Socialism, is rather complicated; consequently, it requires a complex approach. This heritage is often toxic in both physical and social sense: industrial production generated a large amount of waste often poisonous for the environment, and some of these sites became (or remained) places of harm and trauma for various communities (REYNOLDS 2012; HARRISON 2020; WOLLENTZ, MAY, HOLTORF, & HÖGBERG 2020). Thus, a more systematic and collaborative approach is needed to handle this legacy for the benefit of deindustrialized societies. However, this is a challenging task that requires the cooperation of several agents such as policymakers, urban developers, heritage experts, social entrepreneurs, and scholars.

In post-socialist East-Central Europe, as in other regions in a post-industrial phase, many redundant industrial constructions have already been destroyed, some adjusted for other purposes, and some were preserved for the future because they were found valuable by experts or the local communities. The latter category is known as “industrial monuments” belonging to the broader category of “industrial heritage” here understood as “a heritage which emerges in industrial spaces and which impacts, through words of work, urban

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<sup>1</sup> The project took place in 2020–2022, and it was supported by the Visegrad Fund (Grant No. 22010048). Participating organizations: Metropolitan Research Institute (Budapest, Hungary), Tomas Bata University in Zlín (Czech Republic), MOD LLCB (Warsaw, Poland), Alliance of Old Market Hall (Bratislava, Slovakia), Central European University (Budapest, Hungary).

spaces, and transportation, on the everyday life of people living in such industrial spaces” (BERGER 2020, 304).<sup>2</sup> Not just architecture but any object or knowledge about the industrial past, any aspect of industrial culture associated with heritage values – in terms of historical significance, age, memory, uniqueness, technological innovativeness, nostalgia, aesthetics, emotions, etc. – can be industrial heritage (BOLE 2021). Immobile and mobile, tangible and intangible heritage are closely interwoven, which is still to be acknowledged in the conceptualization and the legal framework for managing industrial heritage in the Visegrad Group countries.

Cultural heritage policy and management, both at the national and international level, tends to focus on the preservation of sites defined as valuable, for the benefit of future generations, with the material conservation of buildings and sites at its core. However, heritage has increasingly been recognized as a resource for social and economic development over the past decade (COUNCIL OF EUROPE 2005; LILLEVOLD & HAARSTAD 2019; VELDPAUS & PENDLEBURY 2019). The adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings as applied in the recent discourse does not only focus on the material interventions but also on how such projects can offer a response to social, economic, and environmental challenges (EIRINGHAUS 2020, 27–50; FAVA et al. 2021; PENDLEBURY & VELDPAUS 2021). Exploring the heritage value of a site and identifying new functions that build on and communicate these values distinguishes adaptive heritage reuse from the mere recycling of an old building. A substantial amount of literature identified the benefits of repurposing heritage buildings rather than demolishing them (SHIPLEY, UTZ, & PARSONS 2006; PLEVOETS & VAN CLEEMPOEL 2011; CLARK 2013; MEURS & STEENHUIS 2017; MORRISON & WATERSON 2019; STONE 2019). Besides saving the costs of demolition and of erecting new buildings, adaptive heritage reuse helps to extend the lifecycle of a building, reuses its embodied energy, and thus decreases the carbon footprint of the community (DOUET 2016, 136–141). Moreover, adaptive reuse has the potential to add value in other ways too. For example, it can be a lever for an upward-pointing social mobility scheme in a more sustainable model of regional development (RODERS & VAN OERS 2011) or for strengthening local communities who share values associated with certain industrial sites (OEVERMANN & JONES 2021). Adaptive heritage reuse plays an essential role in the transition towards a circular economy by maintaining existing values and creating new ones (FOSTER & SALEH 2021).

The understanding of heritage, including industrial heritage, as a resource in the above sense, has been incorporated in the development policies of the EU and various European states (MÉRAI et al. 2020). However, in East-Central Europe, adaptive heritage reuse has not been established as a part of the narrative in official heritage policies. Legislation, state programs, and many heritage experts still prioritize conservation over change, privilege material heritage over the intangible and emphasize monumentality and the grand, the old, and the aesthetically pleasing. The discourse about heritage is hierarchical: heritage professionals and politicians often speak on behalf of communities and decide what is and what is not heritage, the latter understood as protected monuments in terms of buildings. Thus, many entrepreneurs and civic organizations perceive heritage experts, and heritage as such, as an obstacle to development. Industrial heritage rarely appears as a distinct category in this respect, which contributed to very limited use of its potential.

Still, as Györgyi Németh demonstrates in her paper in this collection, industrial sites *are* successfully adapted and reused in the Visegrad Group countries. The two major directions of general criticism of how industrial heritage sites are presented to the public are relevant here as well: they either develop feelings of nostalgia or focus on creating an aesthetically pleasing environment for entertainment (TAFT 2016; ZUKIN 1993). The core of this criticism is that industrial antiquarianism (the former case) and commodification of heritage (the latter) do not provide a suitable framework for critical reflection on the past. This critical reflection in East-Central Europe cannot be divided from a critical reflection on the Socialist era. Industrial nostalgia is, on the one hand, a desire to go back to a past where people had their jobs and income and were respected

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<sup>2</sup> The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage defines industrial heritage as: “the remains of industrial culture which are of historical, technological, social, architectural or scientific value.” Besides the places of production and transportation infrastructure of industrial goods, the definition mentions “places used for social activities related to industry” such as housing, religious worship or education (TICCIH 2003, 2).

members of their society, on the other hand sentimentalizing industrial labour and working-class neighbourhood often by those who did not experience directly that kind of life (STRANGLEMAN 2013; see also the paper by Piotr Kisiel in this volume). As Maria O'Donovan pointed out, heritage professionals often "are highly distrustful of the emotion of nostalgia and its sentimental, idealized images of the past" (O'DONOVAN 2019, 1). However, there is evidence that powerful emotions of nostalgia can mobilize resources to protect something people value (SMITH & CAMPBELL 2017; O'DONOVAN 2019; NOVOA, 2021). Nostalgia is not equal to passivity; it can produce a "variety of practical pasts with highly divergent agendas" (BERGER 2019, 43). The distinction of industrial and post-industrial heritage as suggested by Piotr Kisiel in his paper below might help to develop a new sensitivity towards the transitional period in order to explore the potentials of "constructive" nostalgia in coping with not just de-industrial heritage but also the heritage of the Socialist era still present in many fields of life.

The commodification of industrial heritage is a general phenomenon where industrial sites are used as "stages" for modern development without any real engagement with their past. While these initiatives can potentially turn former industrial complexes into vibrant and welcoming spaces, former employees might have a feeling of bitterness about the changes if they are not given a voice. As presented in the essay by Katarzyna Sadowy and Justyna Biernacka, the Praga district in Warsaw started to move towards this direction where revitalized industrial heritage sites appear as islands of gentrification disengaged with the local communities. Such a simplistic approach to heritage deprives stakeholders of the opportunity to use the potential of culture as a resource for constructing regional identities, increasing human and reputational capital, or using the past for strategic entrepreneurial decisions. As a result, many important but uncomfortable or problematic elements of the past are left out from the discourse and omitted in the conversation about the future of the deindustrialized regions. For example, the harsh conditions of work, the history of the labour movement, the workers themselves, or the environmental problems caused by industrial production tend to be invisible in the narratives. This is both an ethical and a practical issue: as Stefan Berger and Jana Golombek reasonably pointed out, "if there are no debates about the past, there is also no debate about how that past may or may not relate to the present and ideas about the future for the region" (BERGER & GOLOMBEK 2019, 211).

Instead of "sterilized" narratives telling the success stories of entrepreneurs or businesses, deindustrialized communities need a more critical narrative addressing contemporary issues; heritage must be a part of a conversation about the future, not just about the past. Listening to and building on the stories of former employees and the local communities whose daily life used to involve the site when it still operated, giving them agency via participative processes and in decision-making is not just an ethical practice addressing the issue of exclusion, but also has practical implications concerning the future of their neighbourhoods, which impacts the actual heritage revitalization projects as well. The story of a bath in Bratislava narrated and analysed by Gábor Bindics demonstrates how this works when it works.

Participation of the locals in the heritagization process is important also because it makes them embrace the shared responsibility. This is an essential precondition when considering the fundamental principles of sustainable development – a long-term and holistic process and the participation and empowerment of stakeholders (LANDORF 2009, 500). The theory and practice of heritage management have been shifting for a while now from the conservationist regime towards an understanding of heritage as a resource for development, both in economic as well as in social terms. This approach is combined with formulating everyone's right to their heritage in international policy documents such as the Faro Convention (COUNCIL OF EUROPE 2005) as well as its adaptations at national levels (VELDPAUS, FAVA, & BRODOWICZ 2019; MÉRAI et al. 2020). Due to this shift, many organizations worldwide started focusing on connecting communities to their heritage and involving them in its management. There is also an increasing number of bottom-up initiatives working in the same direction. Though this is a global trend, these projects and practices are developed in their specific local socio-cultural context with their own understanding of community and participation (PATTI & POLYÁK 2017; OPEN METHOD OF COORDINATION WORKING GROUP 2018). Such an understanding of heritage processes in East-Central Eu-

European policies and the related practices is still in wanting. While some bottom-up initiatives operate along these concepts, public-private-people partnerships are rare, and state policies promoting these are entirely missing in the region. As a result, adaptive reuse projects of industrial heritage are almost exclusively private, or public enterprises, and the concept of development does not encompass social or community development, thus neglecting at least one of the three sustainability pillars. The project presented by Yonca Erkan in this book is searching for sustainable management models for industrial heritage in this sense: where the environmental, social, and economic spheres mutually support each other; such models are desperately needed in East-Central Europe as well.

An important factor in the social domain is the experience of discontinuity between the socialist and post-socialist era and the break between various segments of society due to their different trauma experienced in the first half of the twentieth century, which is constantly producing further political and social discontinuities. All these challenges are magnified as the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic hitting hard on the Visegrad Group countries and further increasing the feeling of uncertainty. Heritage is a resource in this respect too, due to its therapeutic potential. Deindustrialization has generally led to the marginalization of certain social groups, the deprivation of neighbourhoods, and social unrest: the gap between the past and present causes conflict and frustration. Cornelius Holtorf and Anders Högborg call this phenomenon the “depriving of historical consciousness” that is losing “the perceptions of the association between past, present and future that govern and are established and reproduced in the use of history” (HOLTORF & HÖGBERG 2015, 518). The misuse or abuse of heritage by various political forces causes anxiety and makes people feel unsafe. However, heritage can also be an instrument to help cope with the scars caused by the consequences of deindustrialization combined with political change: losing one’s job, daily routine, social position, and most importantly, social ties. The research presented in this collection by Milan Balaban following the story of three company towns demonstrates how industrial heritage can be an important reference point over time when local identities are endangered in periods of uncertainty.

When it is not just heritage experts who have a voice about industrial heritage, it proves to be an important resource for deindustrialized communities (OEVERMANN, DEGENKOLB, DIESSLER, KARGE, & PELTZ 2016; OEVERMANN & JONES 2021). Consequently, we need a more robust conversation about the future of the industrial heritage of East-Central Europe, which involves not only archaeologists, historians, experts in cultural studies but also urbanists, environmental specialists, social entrepreneurs, economists, social activists, and the local communities too. The discourse should broaden from the issue of what to preserve and what not from among the industrial relics and address the following questions: how can the industrial past be embedded in the long-term process of transformation of post-industrial cities? How can redundant industrial remains and memories about industry be used productively for a better future of the communities? Who can and should be an agent in these changes?

Turning industrial heritage from burden to resource requires a paradigm shift when culture is not just “an aspect of free time,” leisure, but is “entrenched in the fabric of daily life” (GUSTAFSSON 2019, 25). Numerous examples from Western, Central, and Eastern Europe demonstrate that industrial heritage can be a magnet that attracts tourists and investments (OPEN METHOD OF COORDINATION WORKING GROUP 2018; FAVA et al. 2021). Moreover, it can be a magnet for talented, creative people and be “a dynamic force that drives social, cultural and economic changes and thereby strengthening societies” (GUSTAFSSON 2019, 27). So far, in the Visegrad Group countries, the focus was mostly on the potential of cultural heritage to generate value in terms of political goals or tourist attraction. The possibility of developing social value also should be taken into consideration. Successful projects of uses of industrial heritage can create jobs, attract creative workers, mitigate gentrification. Besides that, they can increase a sense of belonging and understanding of contemporary society.

The articles presented in this book contribute to a better understanding of the potential role of heritage for the region’s sustainable future. They identify the benefits and side effects of approaching heritage as a lever for economic development, the wellbeing of communities, and a sustainable future. The six papers

address various aspects of the conceptualization and management of industrial heritage in the Visegrad Group countries against the background of European and global trends. The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH) and its activity in this region is the focus of the first paper by **Györgyi Németh**. TICCIH was established as an international forum to foster the preservation and interpretation of industrial heritage, and the organization's activity in the past forty years largely influenced what is understood under this term in the Visegrad Group countries, primarily through nominating industrial sites to UNESCO World Heritage status. As the examples collected in the paper demonstrate, preservation by reuse has been a widespread practice in the region, but these primarily affect the pre-socialist heritage, while sites dating from the second half of the twentieth century pose a specific challenge for how industrial heritage is conceptualized and managed, and a new discourse, as well as good and adaptable models, are in urgent need.

The following three papers discuss three case studies from the Visegrad Group countries. **Milan Balaban** did a "close reading" of three company towns built by the Bata Shoe Factories in Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary. Based on archival and field research, he follows how the towns transformed in the face of political and related economic changes and how local identity, as well as daily life, has been anchored in the Bata heritage as a resource over time. The Grössling Bath project presented by **Gábor Bindics** demonstrates that the heritage of the industrial era has the potential to be a resource for urban development if the revitalization is based on the active involvement and cooperation of a broad range of stakeholders and takes into consideration the role of the site in the life of the local community in the past and the needs in the present. The contribution by **Katarzyna Sadowy and Justyna Biernacka** is an essay on a vacant industrial complex in Warsaw's Praga district that their group aims to revitalize. The authors contemplate on the meanings of such a site in a modern city and its potentials to address the current challenges such as climate change, speeding urbanization and its effects on human life, and the gentrification of the urban environment.

**Yonca Erkan** addresses the question of how to find sustainable management models for industrial sites so that they can be a resource and not an obstacle for urban development. Based on a set of case studies from Istanbul, she argues that it is essential to make a thorough assessment of the past and present of the site. The success of the future management models is determined, for example, by the historical and present ownership and funding structure, as well as the level of local embeddedness. The significance of the EU-funded project of her team and their partner organizations for the East-Central European countries is that the models are developed in order to shift the centre of discourse from the Western European "success stories", thus fostering knowledge transfer in both directions.

The paper by **Piotr Kisiel** closing the volume takes a step back and examines why to preserve industrial sites in general and what are the values based on which decisions are made and should be made with a special focus on the Visegrad Group region. He explores the relevance of industrial heritage and the connection between its preservation and the perception of the industrial past in the context of the deindustrialized present.

Reusing industrial heritage is still an emerging discipline in East-Central Europe, so there is a need for a multidisciplinary body of experts, including those from the field of heritage, who can recognize these opportunities and help industrial heritage become a driver for economic growth, development, and community empowerment. The expert network and new knowledge generated by the project "From Burden to Resource: Industrial Heritage in Central-Eastern Europe" can be a resource for policymakers and developers focusing on industrial heritage.

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## **TICCIH and Industrial Heritage in the Visegrad Group Countries**

The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage, better known by its acronym TICCIH, is the international organization for industrial heritage. The main goal of the organization is to promote international cooperation in researching, documenting, protecting, conserving, interpreting, and advancing education of the industrial heritage (TICCIH 2021a). While acting in the global arena, TICCIH advocates a regional approach by nurturing network establishment to consider properly the territorial specificities of industrial heritage. How does TICCIH contribute to industrial heritage conservation in Central-Eastern Europe, particularly in the Visegrad Group countries? Which are the major achievements in this field? What problems, specific to the region, need to be overcome? These are the questions this paper will investigate in short.

### **TICCIH and Its Role in the Region**

The primary task of TICCIH, beyond doubt, is to counsel ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, an advisory body to the World Heritage Committee, on historically significant industrial sites for the World Heritage List. These counsels rest firmly in the Nizhny Tagil Charter and the Dublin Principles (TICCIH 2021a), the basic documents adopted by TICCIH and ICOMOS, defining the fundamental concepts and accepted methods for the conservation of industrial heritage sites, structures, areas, and landscapes. Coordinated by TICCIH for ICOMOS, so-called thematic studies, that is, a series of comparative reports are prepared on the heritage of different industrial sectors to facilitate the well-grounded selection of industrial World Heritage sites. Therefore, the interchange of scientific knowledge and best practices in the global community of industrial heritage researchers, professionals, and enthusiasts is a priority for TICCIH, an objective accomplished mostly at the triennial conferences of the organization, and through its various publications, such as the TICCIH guide to industrial heritage conservation, or the TICCIH Bulletins (TICCIH 2021b).

The industrial heritage of Central-Eastern Europe, especially that of the Visegrad Group countries, has always been in the focus of the organization. As early as in 1975, academics and heritage professionals were invited from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland to the second International Congress on the Conservation of Industrial Monuments, held in Bochum, Germany, to share their work experience and collaborate with western European colleagues, among others, in the creation of the emerging organization (KROKER 1978). Afterwards, a major TICCIH conference was organized in Hungary in 1999, with a special study tour to Slovakia, concentrating on the novel challenges related to industrial heritage conservation, originating in the recent political system change in the region (NÉMETH 2007). These issues have remained the subject matter of various conference sessions initiated by the Global and Local Thematic Section of TICCIH, including even the forthcoming triennial conference in Montréal, Canada, in 2022. Besides the major international conferences, the organization maintains a stable connection with industrial heritage researchers and practitioners from the Visegrad Group countries, first and foremost, through TICCIH national committees, such as in Poland and Hungary, or other industrial heritage associations and institutions, such as the one in the Czech Republic, and also through individual TICCIH members. Having developed full understanding of the regional specificities of industrial heritage conservation, the TICCIH Board appointed a director for a definite time period to support industrial heritage related activities in Central-Eastern Europe.

### **Industrial Heritage in the Visegrad Group Countries: Major Achievements**

Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List due to their outstanding universal value gain international recognition, legal protection and also benefit in terms of their conservation. Largely due to TICCIH's advocacy, there are six industrial sites inscribed currently on the World Heritage List from the Visegrad Group coun-

tries (Table 1), while five other industrial properties are considered for nomination on the Tentative List (Table 2). In consequence, the region is represented by seven per cent in the total number of industrial sites on the World Heritage List. Even the first industrial site on the List, the Wieliczka Salt Mine (Fig. 1), was inscribed from the region, Poland, when the first inscriptions were made in 1978. All industrial World Heritage sites from the Visegrad Group countries denote the valuable heritage of mining, for the most part metal mining, from the Prehistoric Period to the twentieth century.

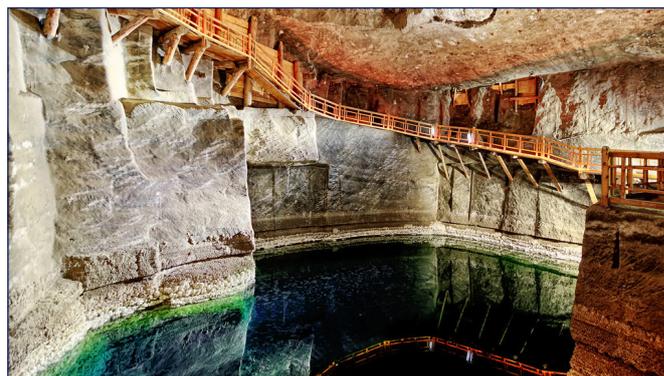


Fig. 1. Underground works, salt mine, Wieliczka, Poland  
(Photo by ntrinkhaus)

Countries	World Heritage Sites
Czech Republic	Kutná Hora – Historical Town Centre with the Church of St Barbara and the Cathedral of Our Lady at Sedlec
Czech Republic	Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Mining Region
Poland	Wieliczka and Bochnia Royal Salt Mines
Poland	Tarnowskie Góry Lead-Silver-Zinc Mine and its Underground Water Management System
Poland	Krzemionki Prehistoric Striped Flint Mining Region
Slovakia	Historic Town of Banská Štiavnica and the Technical Monuments in its Vicinity

Table 1. Industrial World Heritage sites in the Visegrad Group countries. (Source: UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2021a)

Industrial properties on the Tentative List, located in the Czech Republic and Poland, represent a variety of industries and historical periods, from early modern paper making to recent large-scale coal mining and iron making, including a nineteenth-century artificial waterway and a wastewater treatment plant from 1907.

Countries	Industrial Properties
Czech Republic	Paper Mill at Velké Losiny
Czech Republic	The Industrial Complexes at Ostrava
Czech Republic	Old Wastewater Treatment Plant in Prague-Bubeneč
Poland	Augustów Canal
Poland	Paper Mill in Duszniki-Zdrój

Table 2. Industrial properties from the Visegrad Group countries on the Tentative World Heritage List.  
(Source: UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2021b)

Except for the World Heritage sites, adaptive reuse is apparently the most sustainable way of ensuring the conservation of industrial heritage sites and structures, according to the Nizhny Tagil Charter and the Dublin Principles. Numerous superb revitalization projects implemented in the region demonstrate that adaptive reuse has been highly rewarding also in the Visegrad Group countries. Urban development based on the regeneration of abandoned factory sites and industrial buildings has fundamentally transformed the whole cityscape of once prominent industrial towns in the region, for example, Ostrava, the center of heavy industries in the Czech Republic (Fig. 2), or Łódź, the old capital of textile industry in Poland (Fig. 3). Likewise, Katowice, the former center of heavy industries in Upper Silesia, Poland, has been emerging as a cultural metropolis mostly due to the emplacement of cultural institutions on regenerated industrial sites, such as the Silesian Museum in the Katowice coal mine area (Fig. 4), bringing new life even to tunnels, shafts and underground workshops. Several industrial districts in the regional



Fig. 2. Cultural and recreational center, former iron and steelworks, Ostrava, Czech Republic (Photo by Györgyi Németh)



Fig. 3. Commercial and recreational center, former textile factory complex, Łódź, Poland (Copyright: Sebastian Glapiński)



Fig. 4. Silesian Museum, former coal mine, Katowice, Poland (Copyright: Wojciech Kryński)



Fig. 5. Zsolnay Cultural Quarter, ceramics factory, Pécs, Hungary (Source: <http://kirandulastervezo.hu/celpont/pecs/zsolnay-kulturalis-negyed>)



Fig. 6. Science center and museum, former power plant, Piešťany, Slovakia (Copyright: Pato Safko)

capital cities have also been substantially renewed by reutilizing the site of world-famous firms, such as the Ganz electric works in Budapest, converted into the Millenáris Park comprising premises for public meetings and cultural events or the Norblin metalware factory in Warsaw, turned into a commercial and entertainment complex with the neighboring Haberbush and Schiele breweries. The urban fabric of Pécs, a major city in Hungary, was also remodeled by transforming nearly the whole site of the Zsolnay factory, internationally famed for its ornamental ceramics, into a cultural quarter in parallel with ongoing production (Fig. 5). Adaptive reuse has proved to be an excellent method to preserve individual industrial buildings as well, enriching the built environment for the local communities even in smaller settlements, for example, in Piešťany, Slovakia, where the municipal power station was re-designed as a hands-on science center and power generation museum (Fig. 6).

## Industrial Heritage in the Visegrad Group Countries: Problems to Solve

Despite the promising developments with regard to World Heritage inscription as well as revitalization, there are numerous problems afflicting industrial heritage conservation in the Visegrad Group countries. Some difficulties are well-known globally, such as the extensive demolition of industrial heritage sites, structures and buildings, due mostly to the financial interest of real estate developers, as in the case of the magnificent nineteenth-century public slaughterhouse in Budapest. Adaptive reuse projects worldwide also frequently endanger, or even annihilate the heritage value of the regenerated sites, not respecting their historical material, components, patterns of circulation and activity, for example, in a large number of cases in Warsaw (KLIMAS 2021, 11–12). Industrial pollution encumbering oftentimes the regeneration of industrial heritage sites is also a common concern all over the world, as it happened, for instance, in the former iron and steel works in Miskolc, Hungary.

The majority of industrial heritage challenges, however, originate in the regional, mainly historical specificities of the area. First and foremost, it is hardly disputable that industrial heritage from the second half of the twentieth century has not been appropriately represented in the cultural heritage of the Visegrad Group countries. Since immensely accelerated industrialization was the main driving force of the state socialist system within the framework of the Eastern Bloc, the evaluation of its industrial heritage appears particularly problematic. Albeit the material evidence of a roughly forty-year period in the region's history, displaying also architectural specificities – like the socialist realist style as well as socialist modernism –, state socialist era industrial sites, structures and buildings seem to fall into the category of contested heritage, considered in many cases scarcely worth preserving. In consequence, a multitude of historically valuable industrial and technological facilities were dismantled and destroyed, while the industrial heritage-based regeneration of twentieth-century industrial regions, like in the Ruhr region in Germany, or in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region in France, has not been taken into account in Central-Eastern Europe, notably in the Visegrad Group countries (PETRIKOVÁ, FINKA & ONDREJČKA [2013]). Even if the industrial complexes at Ostrava, comprising elements from the state socialist period, were considered suitable for inscription on the World Heritage List twenty years ago, they have remained on the Tentative List so far. Likewise, joint proposals for the international serial nomination of heritage sites from Central and Eastern Europe highlighting socialist realism and socialist modernism have also proved to be fruitless (BRANDT, HASPEL & ZIESEMER 2013).

Rejection of the state socialist past through eliminating its heritage, in addition, has resulted in identity issues. First of all, the construction of an authentic post-socialist identity, principally within the communities of declining industrial regions, as well as in former socialist cities, such as Łódź (YOUNG & KACZMAREK 2007, 53–70) and Katowice in Poland, or Ózd in Hungary, has been frequently deranged. While state socialist industrial sites and buildings were demolished mostly due to negative connotations, smaller-size movable objects from the state socialist period, for example, tools, instruments, furniture, badges, or public announcements have been cherished as the specificities of the Central and Eastern European region. However, widely utilized as tourist attractions or elements of design, they have not been preserved for their veritable historical, technological, and social values.

## Conclusion

As international cooperation is a priority for TICCIH, there can be no doubt that establishing a regional network within the organization for the Visegrad Group countries, or for the whole Central-Eastern European area, is a particularly appropriate approach to address specific problems related to industrial heritage conservation in the region. Obviously, coordinating initiatives and developing common projects in the framework of TICCIH, industrial sites, structures and buildings, especially from the state socialist era, can be more efficiently safeguarded. Elaborating consistent selection criteria at regional conferences, seminars, and workshops, as well as uniting forces and ideas with ICOMOS can finally result in the successful transnational serial

nomination of state socialist industrial heritage sites for the World Heritage List. Moreover, regional and international routes developed on the basis of state socialist industrial heritage can clarify concerns regarding the period, facilitating its proper evaluation in the whole region.

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# The Industrial Heritage of Four Bata Company Towns in the Visegrad Group Countries

The Bata Company specialized in shoe production has left a significant industrial and architectural heritage in the four cities of the Visegrad Group countries analyzed in this paper: Otrokovice in the Czech Republic, Svit in Slovakia, Martfű in Hungary, and Chełmek in Poland. The primary goal of this research was to answer the following questions: how is life at these sites of Bata industrial heritage today? In what condition are the buildings and other constructions built by Bata? How are they used? Do they still serve their original purpose? The research also targeted the local perception of Bata heritage, both historical memory and architecture. Is the Bata heritage something seen as a burden or as a resource for future development today? What kind of policies and instruments, if any, are used to protect Bata's industrial and architectural heritage?

To answer these questions, the primary research method applied was site visits in the four Bata company towns, complemented by a review of scholarly and popular literature. Interviews were conducted with experts involved in the preservation of the Bata heritage (museum and heritage protection professionals, archivists), and with the inhabitants of Svit, Otrokovice, Chełmek, and Martfű.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a semi-open, anonymous questionnaire was used.

## The History of the Bata Company

The firm was founded by three Bata siblings, Anna, Antonin and Tomas, in 1894 in the provincial town of Zlín in Moravia, that time Austro-Hungary (POKLUDA, HERMAN & BALABAN 2020, 14). During the first decade of the company's existence, the youngest brother, Tomas Bata, took over its management and introduced new production methods as well as new machines, which were developed based on the equipment he saw during his visits to Germany and the United States (BALABAN, HERMAN & SAVIĆ 2021, 298). With the outbreak of the First World War, the firm's development accelerated due to the large military commissions and new technologies. However, after the war had ended, the company lost the large internal market of Austro-Hungary and accumulated significant debts because the government failed to pay for the delivered military goods.

The post-war crisis was solved by introducing a new production system, based on American models originating from Ford, Endicott, Johnsons and other similar firms, which had fascinated Tomas Bata during his several visits to the US. The company's management increased the autonomy of workshops within the factory and the employees received a share from the profit. The company invested significant sums into improving the quality of life of their employees (POKLUDA 2015, 14–16). They built houses for workers and their families as well as schools, hospitals, cultural and sport facilities. These investments entirely changed the appearance and structure of Zlín and were aimed at creating an "ideal industrial city" and a "factory in a garden" in an original functionalist style (KLINGAN & JUST 2009, 40). The goal was to create the perfect worker for the modern age, a motivated employee who is more productive. This model was expanded in the 1930s to more than two dozen Bata company towns over the world.

After the Second World War, the Bata sister companies were nationalized in the Central and Eastern European countries of the socialist bloc. The Western European remnants of the company were reorganized as the Western Bata Organization (later Bata Shoe Organization, BSO) and became the world's largest shoe producer by the 1970s and 1980s. With the onset of globalization, in the 1990s, Bata started to close its factories in Western Europe and North America. Nowadays, the focus of its production and sales network is in the Global South.

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## The Four Bata Company Towns in the Visegrad Group Countries

The Bata company established in Zlín started to expand already in the late 1920s, and the first company towns were built in the relative proximity of the original complex. The pioneering venture was the establishment of a company town in **Otrokovice** (1929–1939). In addition to the large factory complex, Bata also built 334 family houses and many buildings for social purposes: a community house, schools, cinema, sport grounds, and swimming pools (POKLUDA, HERMAN & BALABAN 2020, 97). Shortly afterwards, Bata expanded over the borders of Czechoslovakia and established a company town in **Chelmek**, near Oświęcim in Poland (PYKA 2012, 31). Between 1932 and 1937, the firm built in Chelmek fourteen dwellings with two, four, six, and eight flats and four dormitories (SYSKA 2013, 263–264). Eight single-story factory buildings were constructed, following the Polish governmental building regulations (MUCHA & PACTWA 1998). Besides that, the Bata company built sport grounds, schools, and a kindergarten. This company town remained relatively underdeveloped because of the positive discrimination practiced by the Polish government towards the local producers.

The Bata factory in **Svit** (today in Slovakia), at the foot of the Tatra mountains, was founded in 1934 (MALOVCOVÁ 2009, 73–74). This factory produced primarily chemical products, viscose, cellophane, and other artificial materials (MALOVCOVÁ 2013, 158–159). The factory covered a large area with about a dozen factory buildings, and a residential area where houses with two, four, and six flats were built, a total of 267 flats (POKLUDA, HERMAN & BALABAN 2020, 214). The company also built a community house, a department store, a kindergarten, and sport grounds.

The fourth town presented in this paper is in Hungary, **Martfű**, near Szolnok. The factory was founded here in 1942 (HEGEDŰS 1974, 45). Martfű was the most modest among the four towns because the Second World War broke its development soon after the foundation, and the factory was nationalized after the war. A large, three-story factory building was erected before 1945 as well as some single-story buildings, fifteen dwelling houses with two, four, and six flats, and three dormitories (JEMELKA & ŠEVEČEK 2016, 708). The company had plans to build a large town for the employees, but it was not realized, only a school was established. After the Second World War, all Bata company property was nationalized in the Visegrad Group countries. The new state-owned enterprises continued to develop and belonged to the largest firms in their field in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary.

## The Bata Towns Today

Nowadays, the four Bata towns display significant differences, however, also many similarities. In **Svit**, Slovakia, the production continues in most of the original factory area (*Fig. 1*). It is occupied by successful companies which emerged from the former Bata enterprise: Chemosvit, Tatravit, and a German company named Socks. As a result of the successful transformation and privatization of the factory in the 1990s, the basic features and characteristics of the prosperous factory town were preserved. For this reason, there was no significant emigration from Svit, and the number of inhabitants did not change significantly after the 1990s. In the factory area itself, several buildings were revitalized, but those few which were in the worst state of conservation were demolished. One building is being repaired and revitalized now, and will be used as a museum of architecture, and probably the archive of Chemosvit. The companies in the area of Svit had to invest large sums of money in preserving the environment, which was quite polluted after decades of chemical production. At the same time, the old production, based on outdated technology, was ended, and new products were introduced.

Most of the Bata buildings in Svit still serve their original purpose, such as the community house, the hotel, restaurant, and schools. The former dormitory for unmarried workers was transformed during the socialist era into a department store (Prior). Today it continues to serve as a shopping mall.



Fig. 1. Factory building in Svit (Photo by Milan Balaban)



Fig. 2. Bata housing quarters in Svit (Photo by Milan Balaban)

The buildings in Svit are not protected monuments (Fig. 2). During the 1990s, many people reconstructed their houses according to their wishes and needs, which transformed the originally uniform image of the company town. However, the town council has been trying to save and reconstruct the original Bata look for the last two decades, and now all reconstructions are regulated and monitored.

The Bata heritage still has its impact on the life in Svit, and two busts of Tomas and Jan Antonin Bata stand in the main square. Graduates of the Bata School of Work still live in the town and have a very positive perception of the Bata era. There is a certain level of pride among the elderly inhabitants too.

In **Martfű**, Hungary, there is only one building standing today from the former Bata factory (Fig. 3). It serves as a warehouse for the Lorenz Shoe Group, which, after the privatization and transformation, took over most of the production capacity in the factory area. In addition, the shoe producer company Legero Hungary has only its logistics center and warehouses there. Before the privatization in the 1990s, the Tisza Shoe Company operated with more than 5,000 workers in the factory complex as the largest employer and the engine of development in the region, continuing the tradition of Bata-Cikta. Today, the workforce in the factory area has been reduced to only a quarter of that number and Hungary's largest edible oil factory is the largest employer in town.

The original plans of the Bata Company to build a large company town for 5,000 inhabitants, were not implemented. Only four factory buildings and about fifteen residential buildings were erected. These houses, unlike Bata houses elsewhere, were not made with flat but with hip roofs.

Nowadays, an idealization of the past can be observed, and the town has repeatedly attempted to establish contacts with other Bata localities. A cooperation with Zlin through the local vocational schools lasted until



Fig. 3. The last remaining Bata factory building in Martfű (Photo by Milan Balaban)



Fig. 4. The last factory building in Chelmek constructed by Bata in 1946 (Photo by Milan Balaban)



Fig. 5. A Bata house in Chelmek  
(Photo by Milan Balaban)



Fig. 6. The reconstructed and revitalized factory building  
in Otrokovice (Photo by Milan Balaban)

the end of the 1990s and the efforts made by the municipal leadership to revive it a decade later did not brought success. However, a few years ago, closer relations were established with a Bata town in Slovakia, Partizanske. During the last decade, the town itself was visited several times by Czech diplomats in Hungary and members of the Bata family to celebrate the Bata heritage. In 2013, a bust of Jan Antonin Bata was set up in Martfű, and the square was named after him as well as a street.

In **Chelmek**, production activities continue in almost the entire factory area. However, shoe production stopped in the middle of the last decade and was replaced by that of windows and machinery. All the eight Bata factory buildings built in the 1930s have already been demolished. There is only one left which was erected later, in 1946, according to pre-war plans and the typical functionalist Bata design (Fig. 4). The factory is not protected as a monument. Since production, even if not of shoes, has been continuous in the factory, the company town did not experience any significant population decline.

The accommodation units still provide housing: seventeen residential buildings, houses with six and eight flats, and three former dormitories for unmarried workers were turned into apartments after 2000 (Fig. 5). The Bata houses, unlike in the socialist period and the 1990s, are today perceived as a desirable place for living. The few community buildings of Bata – the school, the sport ground – are still in use. Today people have a nostalgic admiration towards the Bata period and there is a local museum dedicated to the history of the Bata company, with an exhibition of photographs and numerous items from the Bata period.



Fig. 7. Former community house in Otrokovice, today a hotel  
(Photo by Milan Balaban)



Fig. 8. A reconstructed Bata house in Otrokovice  
(Photo by Milan Balaban)

**Otrokovice** still resembles a company town: the factory complex produces and processes paper, leather, wood, rubber, construction materials, food. The largest employer is the Barum tire manufacturing company, a direct descendent of Bata. The residential area with schools, a department store, and a swimming pool, all built by Bata, are still in use (Fig. 6). The community house was turned into a privately owned accommodation facility with shops and restaurants on the ground floor (Fig. 7).

The community house and some parts of the residential zone are under heritage protection. Still, many houses and some streets have lost their original "Bata appearance" when they were renovated by the owners after a catastrophic flood in 1997. The Bata houses are still popular among the residents due to the proximity of Zlín and memories of the Bata period (Fig. 8). Most people, especially the older generation, appreciate the Bata heritage. In addition to a statue of Tomas Bata, a copy of the one in East Tilbury, England, a monument is being made for Jan A. Bata.

## Conclusion

Although the history of the four case studies is different, Svit, Otrokovice, Chelmek, and Martfű have a lot in common. The rich Bata historical, architectural and industrial heritage still has its impact on life in these towns. The Bata built heritage is at a different state of preservation, and their contemporary use also displays differences. Many buildings left behind by Bata are still used for their original purposes, i.e., for housing, production, or as an educational facility. However, due to the changing circumstances in a globalized world, most of the production in the company towns has changed compared to the original purposes.

The apartments, which were, according to the Bata company narrative, built just for one generation, and were supposed to be replaced by more suitable and modern buildings, are still in use and, in most cases, are perceived as a desired dwelling place. Most of the houses were sold to their present inhabitants during the 1990s, after the change of regime in the Visegrad Group countries. Thereafter, the buildings were reconstructed and adapted to the modern standards while they preserved some elements of the Bata functionalist style, but the transformation often resulted in mixed, sometimes poor results. The municipal management in Svit and Martfű has tried to take steps to keep the original look and structure for the last two decades. The function of the factory areas was kept everywhere even after the production of shoes and other traditional Bata items ended. Other firms moved into the factory sites to build their own production on the excellent location and trained industrial workforce. Because of this, the population number remained approximately the same in all four towns as it was at the time of industrial monoculture. In this respect, the Bata architectural and industrial heritage is seen as a resource and not as a burden from the perspective of future development.

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## Rethinking the Grössling Bath

Grössling City Bath is an iconic building in Bratislava (Fig. 1). The building is a cultural monument under national protection, the only remaining historic bath building in the city, representing three distinct architectural periods and their prominent architects: the Austrian Adalbert Swoboda (1895), the Hungarian Károly Gratzl (1914), and Friedrich Weinwurm with Endre Vécsei (1930) from the era of Czechoslovak modern architecture. Today's Bratislava was part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and when the bath was opened in 1895 and enlarged in 1914, it belonged to the Kingdom of Hungary. The official name of the trilingual – German, Hungarian, and Slovak – city was Pozsony, and besides that, the German and Slovak versions, Pressburg and Prešporok were also commonly used. Since 1919, the official name of the city has been Bratislava.



Fig. 1. Grössling swimming pool, 2020.  
(Photo by Jakub Čaprňka)

During the hundred years of its existence, the Bath went through many reconstructions and modifications. It has not served its original purpose since 1994. Since then, the building complex has been vacant and fallen into disrepair. These uncertain conditions and for long unresolved situation has led to a series of technical problems concerning the built structure and made its maintenance extremely difficult. The perception of the significance of the bath and its irreplaceable role in the social and cultural life of the city, its contribution to the quality of urban life also vanished over time. The object that has lost its function does not communicate with its surroundings and does not offer the residents anymore the possibility to participate in the public life. However, revitalizing the city bath by giving back its original function is a difficult task according to preliminary assessments. The first essential step is to understand the history of the bath culture and the history of the building.

## The History of Grössling Bath



Fig. 2. Newspaper advertisement about the opening of the bath  
(Source: Nyugatmagyarországi Híradó, 1895)

In May 1895, the city bath named “Pozsony fűrdő” (as the oldest inscription says in Hungarian on the building's façade, above the entrance), also known in German as “Bad Pozsony” was opened at the corner of today's Medená and Kúpeľná streets (Fig. 2). The neighbouring plot (at the intersection of today's Kúpeľná Street and Vajanského nábrežie, originally Justiho rad) had housed a similar function even before: there was a small bath facility in the eighteenth century, the so-called Binderhofer Bath Institution. As Tivadar Ortvy wrote in his book *Pozsony város utcái és terei* (Streets and squares of Pozsony city; ORTVAY 1905, 126–127), this immersion bath facility was extended in 1774 and ceased to exist in 1902. The new bath named Bad Pozsony at the adjacent

corner became popular very quickly. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, bathrooms were not yet part of the basic standards of residential houses or apartments and, therefore, most visitors attended this place for complete body cleansing.

According to the advertisement in the local daily newspaper *Nyugatmagyarországi Híradó* (News from Western Hungary), the bath “Pozsony fürdő – Bad Pozsony” in 1895 offered various levels of bath comfort, from the hygienic standard of the third class – showers, immersion and steam baths for men and women – through second-class mineral and aromatic bath procedures and inhalation, up to the highest, first-class services with a state-of-the-art equipment – electrotherapy, massage, and rehabilitation exercises. The newly opened bath immediately gained a very good reputation, and it was awarded a medal of honor at the Millennial Exhibition in 1896 (OBUCHOVÁ 2020, 255).

The 1897 volume of the magazine *Ezeréves Magyarország* (Thousand-year-old Hungary), mentioned the Pozsony Bath as one of the most modern healing institutions in the region (FERENCZY 1987, 67). The author praised the director, Doctor Maximilian Schlesinger who had worked for many years in Vöslau-Gainfarn, the largest and oldest hydrotherapeutic institution in the continent, together with the respected expert Sigmund Friedmann. After gaining such a serious professional experience, he returned to Bratislava. The advertisement mentions various treatment procedures applied in Pozsony fürdő, such as salt bath with iodine and bromine.

### From Bad Pozsony to Grössling

The building, which up to this day forms the street line of the bath block at Kúpeľná and Medená streets, was designed by the Viennese architect Adalbert Swoboda in 1893 who created the plans for the Zentralbad (Central Bath) in Vienna as well. When the new complex was opened, the contemporary press described the visitor experience in detail: “The first door leads into a spacious changing room with comfortable cubicles.

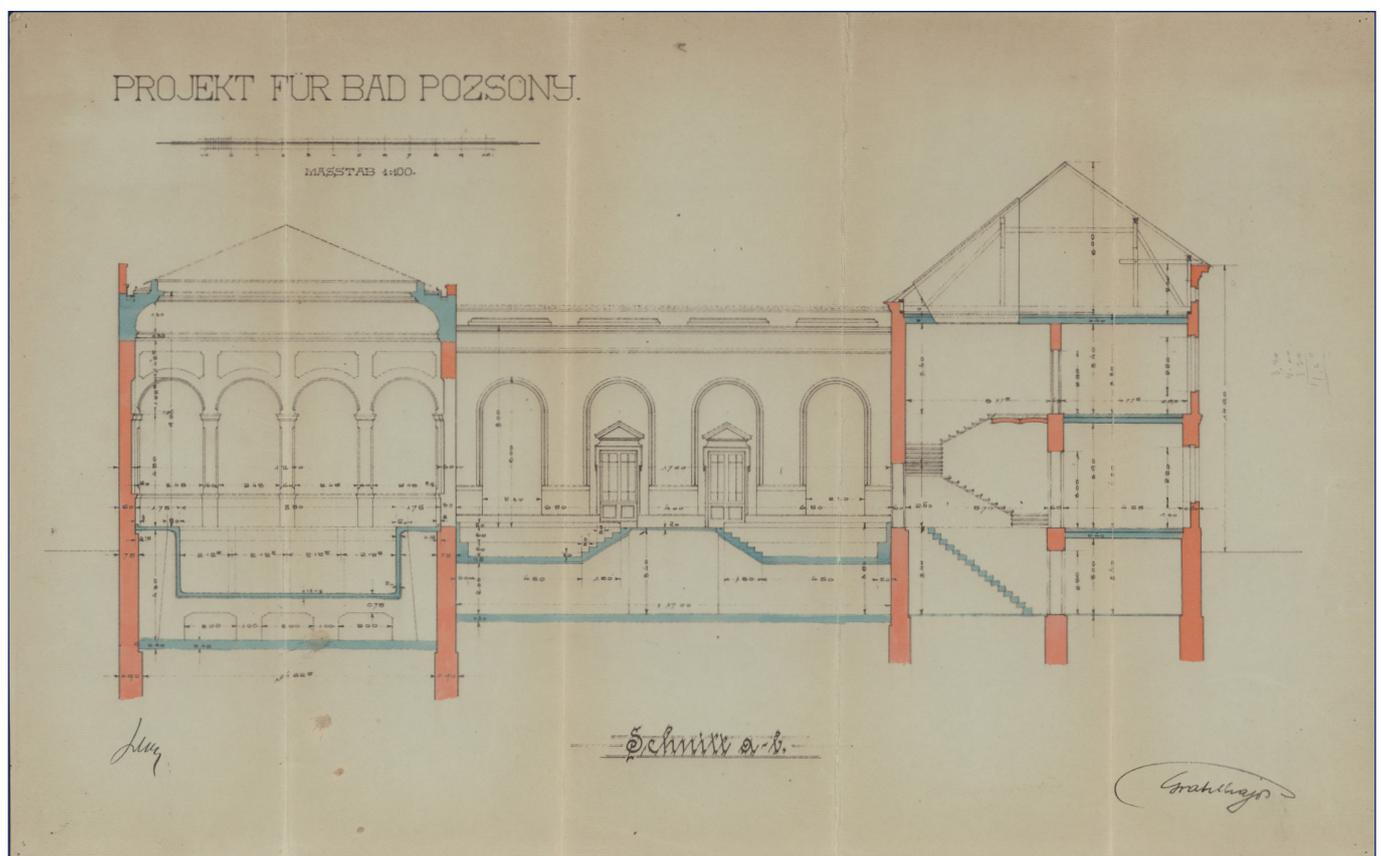


Fig. 3. Section drawing, 1914 (Source: Bratislava City Archive, File “Grössling Street”)

From this longitudinal room one gets to a smaller room with a mirror bath with lukewarm water. The nearest door opens into a room filled with steam. This room is followed by a massage room from which one can walk into a spacious room with a large mirror bath. Here, the visitor can fully enjoy the pleasant bathing experience, until he enters the changing rooms. The nearest room is equipped with a smaller pool with cold water, where the visitor can cool his heated body. Then he passes through another room where his body is wiped dry, he gets clean clothing and in this costume, he enters the atelier of barbers and the personnel removing corns. In this room he can rest, read the newspaper, have his hair cut, have the corns removed – everything according to his wishes” (BORKA 2017).

Over the first twenty years of the operation, the services provided by the bath were gradually broadened. Carbon dioxide baths were introduced in a few years, and in 1906, the press wrote about the installation of electricity. In addition to the extended offer of special procedures, the visitors could also use hairdryers and electric fans. At the end of the first decade of the bath’s existence, the capacity of the building became insufficient due to the high number of visitors. In 1904, the Iparbank (Industrial Bank) established a joint stock company to purchase the adjacent empty land for the purpose of a new bath wing they planned to add.

The construction works started in 1911 based on the design by Lajos Gratzl, whose father, Károly Gratzl was the creator of the main building in 1895. The new wing was finished in April 1914 with three new pools, a steam chamber, and a hot-air chamber (Fig. 3). For the request of the fencers in the city, a fencing hall was built in the building part oriented towards the River Danube. The new wing also included a forty-meter-high bath chimney. This structure erected in 1914 was regarded as the highest feature in the city center in the following decades, and it is still an important landmark. Besides washing the dirty linen from the bath, the laundry room in the basement of the new section also provided washing services for the Savoy and Carlton Hotels. The period around the year 1914 may be regarded as the golden era of the Grössling Bath.

After the end of the First World War and the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the façade of the bath building was marked with the central inscription “Kúpeľný ústav” (Bath Institution) with its Hungarian and German equivalents (“Füüdó intézet – Bade Anstalt”). The pool in the Bath played a crucial role in the development of swimming sports in Bratislava. However, the smaller recreational pools (sitting pools), also remained popular among the clients. The demand was still growing on behalf of the Bratislava residents; therefore, the Bath was further extended in 1929–1930, and by that, reached its present size (Fig. 4). A new functionalist building was added based on the architectural plans of Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, with a new main entrance opening to the Vajanského nábrežie (formerly Justiho sor). This part of the complex housed a new steam bath and changing rooms, while apartments were established on the top floors.



Fig. 4. The façade of the building in the 1930s (Source: Archive of the Monuments Office SR, <http://www.pammmap.sk/?miesta=767>)

### The years of the Second World War

During the Second World War, the newly established Sedliacka banka (Peasants' Land Bank) became the owner of the bath for a short time and in 1942, the wings along the street were converted to house the bank premises based on a design by the architect J. E. Sporzon. “The premises of the Bath – with the immersion baths, barber, steam bath cubicles and hydrotherapy on the ground floor located in the premises of the former women’s pool and small pools were accessible through the newly created entrance in Kúpeľná Street. A new entrance was created in Medená Street where three steps lead into the hallway, then to the offices, con-

ference room, storage room and the archives. From the main staircase on the first floor, one could access the premises of the bank's office by passing through a narrow corridor into the wing overlooking Kúpeľná Street. Clients could also reach the offices in the wing overlooking Medená street by passing through the narrow corridor on both sides" (BORKA 2017). The records of the bath from 1945 show that the operation of Grössling Bath was interrupted at the end of the war.

### The Grössling Bath in the Socialist and Post-Socialist Era



Fig. 5. Swimming lesson in the 1970s  
(Source: Archive of The News Agency of Slovak Republic)

The bath was purchased by the municipality in 1946. Under the influence of the new socialist ideas, besides sport and relaxation, mass swimming lessons became a priority (Fig. 5). The Grössling Bath played a crucial role in the realization of this strategy since its indoor swimming pool was the only one in Bratislava until the opening of the indoor swimming pool at Tehelné pole in 1974. The City Bath was last used by swimmers and visitors of the steam bath in 1994. Since then, the bath premises have only been occasionally open to the public.

The city decided to close the bath due to the poor technical conditions in the mid-1990s. Until 2007, the corner wing at Medená and Kúpeľná streets was used by a bank. In the recent years, only maintenance works were implemented.

### The Revitalisation of the Bath Complex

In 2019, the City of Bratislava, the owner of the building started to prepare the redesigning of the bath (Fig. 6). The newly formed Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava was tasked with executing this project.

There are two common ways of revitalizing derelict buildings: either to fill them with new functions or to reimagine the old function. In our case, the revitalization of the old city bath involves both.

The first important question in the revitalization process of the public bath complex is how to deal with the abandoned function and what does the function mean here in a broader sense. An important starting point in the design process was to understand that traditionally a bath is an important social meeting point, technically similar but not comparable in function to a swimming pool or spa. In this respect, it is closer to the sphere of café culture than that of swimming pools.

The second issue is the consistency between the newly added function and the future of the site.

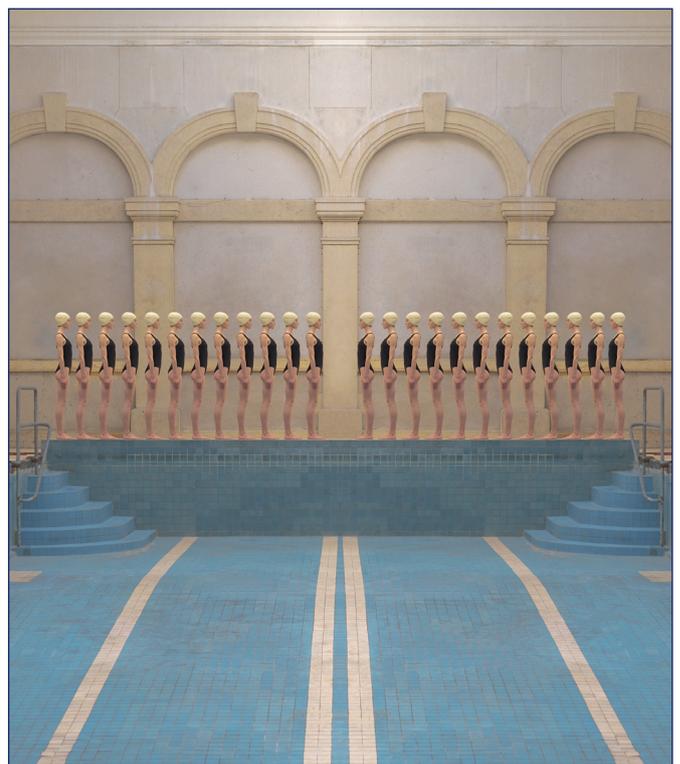


Fig. 6. Grössling city bath, 2020 (Photo by Mária Švarbová)

Adding a new function is not just a technical issue here, but the chosen function supports a second aspect as well: that of rethinking the old function. Reestablishing the former bath function did not require the entire building, so the plan is to move a department of the City Library into the complex, which has long been struggling with space constraints. By adding the educational and cultural functions, the building becomes a fully-fledged and accessible public institution. The leading concept behind linking these two functions is “immersion”. The bath atmosphere invites to relax and rest, while the calm space of the library offers an opportunity to immerse in books, culture, and literature. Both functions offer the visitors a possibility to relax and gain new impulses. The two separate spaces will be connected by a café which, together with the park at Medená Street, are the parts most open to the public. The park is envisioned as a meeting point of both the local inhabitants and the visitors of Grössling. The connection of various activities and spaces of public institutions is a model that proved operational in many other cases contributing to the sustainability of the site by its adaptation to the new forms and methods of freetime activities.

## The Grössling Bath and Library

When revitalizing the building, it is important to fill it with content step by step and to involve people through a participatory process. The old font of the bath was redesigned based on old photos and it was a starting point for communication. In the framework of artistic collaboration, we created a sound map of the building and asked photographers – for example, Mária Švarbová and Jakub Čaprňka – to take photos of the bath spaces from different perspectives. When addressing the functions, more than two thousand participants took part in the participatory process, and four focus groups were set up to answer specific questions. 78.8% of the respondents considered it a good approach to combine the two functions (METROPOLITAN INSTITUTE OF BRATISLAVA 2020a). The participatory exercise mostly focused on service segments, such as the program needs of younger children, the need for a separate learning zone with long opening hours. The outcome of this process was also used during the international architectural competition.

In 2020, the Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava selected the winning entry from a two-round international architectural competition from a total of 77 entries from 17 countries: the one by the Florence-based architecture company OPPS (Fig. 7). The jury assessed the final result as follows: “The winning proposal of the architectural competition allows not only to restore the architectural significance of Grössling, but also to rediscover the ancient social and cultural value it has for the city of Bratislava. The design fulfills the vision of connecting the function of the bath, the city library and the house of literature, allowing you to create a contemporary model of a complex building that benefits from its diverse functions” (METROPOLITAN INSTITUTE OF BRATISLAVA, 2020b). The first steps of the renovation started in 2021 expect to open the Grössling Park, Library and Bath in three phases in 2023, 2024, and 2026.



Fig. 7. Architectural competition 1<sup>st</sup> place, 2020  
(Photo by OPPS Architettura, Florence)

## Summary

According to the philosophy of Henri Lefebvre (1901–1991) on creating social space as presented in his book *The Production of Space*, the interrelation of political, social and corporeal spaces is an important basis

to understand how physical space is only one attribute of functioning spaces (LEFEBVRE 1974, 68–169). The so-called imagined space is equally important. The artistic tools used throughout the project to understand and communicate the bath culture of the past are an important element in creating this imagined social space.

In the process of reimagining the built heritage, we aim to answer the question whether and in what extent a locally forgotten function can be revitalized when redesigning a public bath. When providing it with a social function, in addition to creating a technically inclusive space, it is also important to design the social place.

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## **An Essay on the Post-Industrial Heritage of Everyday Life: The Bakery in Praga District, Warsaw**

Post-industrial heritage carries a multitude of different values. Its rough and “honest” aesthetics creates an interesting contrast with all that glitters in modern architecture, smooth and elegant. Former industrial sites are valuable in the context of local identity, memory, including personal and social history. As we gain a better understanding of the challenges of sustainability and circular economy, we also come to appreciate the value of built-in energy, of materials and assets which should not be wasted in a conscious and responsible society.

As the building and construction sector contributes significantly to the global greenhouse gas emission and hence, to climate change, investment decisions should be made with great caution, considering their potential impact on the social and natural environment. The consumption of resources in this sector reaches nearly 50% of the total use of raw materials and 36% of the global primary energy use, accounting for almost 40% of the energy and process-related emissions. Therefore, nowadays the design (or re-design) process of a building must comprise aesthetic factors, modern flexible functionality, and a set of solutions that will prolong the life cycle of the building and its components.

However, technical solutions corresponding to the modern requirements of adaptation to climate change often collide with considerations related to heritage preservation. This dilemma is especially relevant at the level of urban environment which has witnessed turbulent transitions and experiments over and since the twentieth century. It is crucial to transform cities into more sustainable, circular, and just spaces. This, however, implies a series of decisions on what should be lost and changed in the process and what should be preserved as an important part of culture and heritage. These decisions are made in the context of questions such as “who we are” and “who we want to be” in a, hopefully, safer, and more just world. Architectural heritage, a testimony of transitions in the previous century, a testimony of work and daily life of ordinary people has a broader relevance than being merely the material environment in this respect.

### **Bakery – A Short Story about a Long History**

In the above sense, the building of a former bakery at 2/4 Stolarska Street (hereafter: Bakery) is a testimony to the past of the whole Praga District or an even broader area of Warsaw located on the right bank of the Vistula River (Figs 1–8).<sup>1</sup> The area used to have an agricultural character and until the eighteenth century it consisted of a conglomeration of rural and urban settlements surrounded by a forests. The importance of the area increased by that time due to the establishment of Warsaw as a royal center. The construction of the railway in the 1860s was a major turning point in the development of Praga. The railway connected Warsaw with Russia, but also provided better connection between the left and right banks of the river. Praga emerged as an area of transition between Warsaw and the large Russian market, and – in a broader perspective – between the Eastern and Western European trade. It also offered a favorable environment for the development of industry.

First, politicians and aristocrats acquired plots on the fringes of the city in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, followed by merchants and craftsmen. This is where the working-class character of the district is rooted. Later on, Praga developed into an area where workplaces of various kinds were concentrated. The most modest workplaces here were based on homeworking carried out in over-populated rooms: small-scale manufacturing, repairing, mending, or washing. Urban manufacturing in workshops, backyards and in large factories resulted in a landscape of varied industrial sites, and Bakery was one among these.

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<sup>1</sup> I hereby express my gratitude to Bałżej Pindor and Natalia Daca for their contribution to this project, including the photos in this essay.



Fig. 1. The Bakery's building today.  
Photo by Bałżej Pindor



Fig. 2. The Bakery is now surrounded by residential buildings.  
Photo by Bałżej Pindor

The construction of the Bakery (probably in 1900) was linked to the activity of one of the most influential entrepreneurs in mid-nineteenth-century Praga, Ksawery Konopacki, who purchased a significant piece of land, today located between 11 Listopada Street, Szwedzka Street, and Solidarności Boulevard. He divided the land into relatively small plots to encourage the settlement of various industrial facilities and artisan workshops. The urban fabric of present-day Praga, with its network of streets, dense residential housing spotted by smaller and larger industrial facilities, is rooted in this period. It is a testimony of economic ventures both by the flagships of industry and by several small entrepreneurs who populated the yards, streets, and stores.

Industrial production in Praga was diverse both in its scale and in its type. Factories produced goods for export: medical products, kerosene, paper and books, leather, tobacco products, but also products for other industries, such as steel, engines, or spare parts for machinery. The traditional, commercial character of Praga and its suburbs turned into an industrial one, and such an important production hub was surrounded by commercial facilities, including marketplaces. This vibrant and dynamic environment was interspersed with workshops providing basic, everyday goods for the inhabitants, including bread. The Bakery is a unique site in Praga because the same type of production remained there for over a hundred years: during two world wars, under the Russian occupation, in the independent state after 1918, and in the centrally planned economy after 1945. It even survived for some time in the midst of the challenges of economic and institutional transition in the 1990s. Bread was still baked there until the early twenty-first century. Even today several people remember buying their breakfast there. However, expectations towards the urban living environment have changed and the presence of industrial sites in a residential district proved too inconvenient: as normally in bakeries, people worked at night or started very early in the morning. The noises of delivery and other activities caused conflicts and discontent in the neighborhood. Even if they have nostalgic feelings, some people still remember the clamor of moving the baking trays at 4 am.

## From Yesterday to Tomorrow – Why Should We Care?

What can be labelled as the heritage of Praga is a testimony to this rapid economic change and variety of economic activities. The proximity of the workplaces to the places of residence, urban density and the variety of spaces used for labor characterize the environment inherited from the past. All these are not just a testimony from the past but also a lesson and potential for the future.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, arguments for creating a market-driven urban development dominated the debate about what should happen to similar sites. The reasoning followed two different lines. According to the first, post-industrial sites offered vast plots of land for new development, in several cases well-connected to the city or even located near the center. The existing buildings could either be demolished or partially

preserved. If preserved, they were to serve as a marketing attraction, something to make the development “unique”. Second, some recognized the potential of post-industrial heritage to become a magnet for the fast-growing touristic industry, something to visit during holidays where people can take a selfie for social media. In both cases, what mattered was the market value. Identity, memory, and authenticity were perceived as selling points for a visit in the shopping mall, a stay in the hotel, an expensive dinner in a restaurant, or a fancy suit in the “loft”.

On the other end of the spectrum, arguments in the public discourse for the conservation of such heritage were mostly history oriented. Management of architectural heritage in Poland primarily focuses on the material preservation of “brick and mortar” without much attention to the intangible aspects. New uses and the preservation of heritage have often been perceived as being in conflict, which was resolved by keeping some elements intact and bending the rest as much as possible under the control of monument protection authorities. The industrial aesthetics dominates over all other aspects of such re-use projects, which can be seen in the case of the Koneser Center, a repurposed former vodka factory, now serving predominantly as an events center.

The recent years have been characterized by an increasing awareness of some other aspects of building preservation. One is strictly societal and related to the expanding knowledge of and interest in the history of “ordinary people” and everyday life. The Bakery is a perfect example of how tangible heritage can connect to this perspective, as it was an ordinary place of work producing one of the most commonly purchased products. The second aspect relates to a new paradigm in architecture. The role of the architects is increasingly seen as a careful intervention in adapting the building with respect to built urban environment, instead of creating new buildings (See the Pritzker Architecture Prize laureates, Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal in 2021). This view has also appeared in the public media discourse. Demolishment is perceived as the last resort for several reasons, one of which is rooted in the need for circular economy and preservation of the existing assets as long as possible. This consciousness about the existing resources gains an increasing importance in the profession and could vastly benefit from a discourse on the relationship between heritage preservation and a circular approach to architecture. With time it might also encompass the relationship between heritage sites and restorative or regenerative architecture.

As a result of the accelerated growth of the population and the consecutive human pressure on the natural environment, the conceptualization of sustainability as a reduction of negative impacts is not sufficient anymore. A regenerative approach aims to create a self-sufficient built environment based on renewable resources, energy exchange within urban boundaries and positive ecological footprint. When the lifespan of



*Fig. 3. The abandoned building testifies to the past industrial activities in the Praga district.  
Photo by Bałżej Pindor*



*Fig. 4. Built around 1900, production in the Bakery was uninterrupted during the turmoil of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.  
Photo by Bałżej Pindor*



Fig. 5. The building is now empty and easy to pass by.  
Photo by Bałżej Pindor

the building is considered as “from cradle to grave” (from the construction material extraction through the construction process, a long period of use and its end), prolonging the use of buildings and its components reduces the pressure on the environment since no new materials need to be extracted.

While we search for contemporary and responsible architectural practices for the re-use of buildings, we must do so with respect to the values of urban heritage and history. There are several contradictions and conflicts between sustainable reuse and heritage values, especially because industrial heritage is part of the economic paradigms we do not want to continue. Finding the right solutions in this respect is an important element of contemporary architectural practice.

## Eye on the Bakery – Now You See It, Now You Don’t. Now You See It Again

The Bakery has been vacant for several years now. Despite its characteristic architectural form, it is easy to pass by without noticing the empty building. The site which used to be productive, busy, noisy, and had its own role in the life of the neighborhood, slowly disappears. After baking stopped in the complex, there were two attempts to revive it, both characteristics for the specific time of political and economic transition and the related trends. In the early 2000s, manufacturing seemed to be a thing from the past, while services and entertainment were perceived as the future of the local economy. Though a few years before the Bakery was to be turned into a restaurant/club, the potential investor decided against this venture after a preliminary modernization. Shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, another entrepreneur planned to open a more up-to-date venue, also a restaurant, but with small-scale production and food manufacturing workshops. However, the lockdown period proved to be too challenging. These two attempts demonstrate how the perception of local production has been changing. They also illustrate the challenges of such re-use projects: high costs, long-term planning, and difficult decisions about the elements to be preserved and those which should not be kept.

The current project entitled [“From Burden to Resource: Industrial Heritage in Central-Eastern Europe”](#) helped to document the site, providing valuable visual material showing how decay and potential appear side-by-side. The [OpenHeritage](#) project included a workshop aimed to provide recommendations for the future reuse of the Bakery. Two



Fig. 6. Multiple attempts were made to reuse the building but a permanent solution is still to be found.  
Photo by Bałżej Pindor

teams proposed solutions in terms of architecture, business models (non-profit and not only for profit), with the support of various stakeholders: the PragaLAB/OpenHeritage team, the Director of the Architecture and Spatial Planning Office of The Capital City of Warsaw; the Deputy Mayor of The Capital City of Warsaw; the Director of the Warsaw Conservation Office of The Capital City of Warsaw; representatives of the Economic Development Department of the Capital City of Warsaw; the Deputy Director of the Department for Housing Policy of The Capital City of Warsaw; architectural studio WXCA; NÓW. New Craft Association; the [Museum of Praga](#). The results were published on the [PragaLAB website](#).



*Fig. 7. The photo documentation of the Bakery shows how decay and potential appear side-by-side.  
Photo by Bałżej Pindor*



*Fig. 8. Industrial heritage is the remnant of past economic paradigms and post-industrial sites face specific challenges.  
Photo by Bałżej Pindor*

The Bakery represents a category of post-industrial sites that is characterized by specific challenges. Being too small to attract large business, it remained physically intact. However, it is not an ideal site for a small venture, either. The Bakery could become a model project for post-industrial heritage management, the new paradigms of circular economy, as well as for regenerative architecture. It has the potential to become an example of cooperation and debate between various stakeholders: the municipality, experts, inhabitants from the neighborhood and the broad heritage community. The public sector on the local level is in need of new models for managing municipality-owned sites and buildings of heritage value, and a common ground is needed for the various stakeholders to start a discussion. The photographic documentation of the Bakery is aimed to create such a common ground and help to find viable solutions in the future.

## Industrial Heritage as a Resource for Urban Development: Management Models from Istanbul

Industrial heritage consists of the remains of industrial culture which are of historical, technological, social, architectural, scientific, or economic value. The motives for protecting industrial heritage are based on the universal value of this category, and on the singularity of unique sites. Adaptive reuse of industrial heritage is a culturally sustainable option in urban transformation and heritage is a potential resource for regional development. This approach allows conservation through development – utilization and integration of redundant industrial constructs in the contemporary urban landscape (YILDIRIM & ERDEM 2013).

Industrial sites all over Europe and the deindustrialization process has led to a range of social, economic, and environmental problems resulting from structural change (BERGER 2019). Therefore, there is an urgent need to find sustainable management models to overcome these challenges (VELDPAUS & PENDELBURY 2019). For the European context, giving industrial heritage an economic and social meaning in the context of the deindustrialization process has been a priority since the 1970s and the discourse has been channeled into significant policy documents over the last years (Parliamentary Assembly of European Council, Document No: 13134, 15 February 2013). Following the deindustrialization process, the appreciation of the relics of industrial culture, as well as questions about how to deal with them emerged first in Western Europe, North America and Australia in the discourse led by professional organizations (ICOMOS, TICCIH). The CONSIDER project aims to extend the debate in a systematic way to the Central, Eastern European, and Asian regions.

In order to deepen our knowledge about ways and means of seeing industrial heritage as a resource for urban development, funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska Curie RISE Program has been granted to the CONSIDER Consortium for the project entitled “Sustainable Management of Industrial Heritage as a Resource for Urban Development”, starting in October 2021 and ending in October 2025 ([www.considerproject.eu](http://www.considerproject.eu)). As a Research and Innovation project, CONSIDER brings together twelve academic and sectoral institutions from six countries. The coordinator of the project is Kadir Has University (TR, UNESCO Chair on Management and Promotion of World Heritage Sites). Newcastle University (UK), Ruhr University Bochum (DE), Central European University (AT), Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design (IL, UNESCO Chair on Urban Design and Conservation) represent the academic institutions, while Kadikoy Municipality

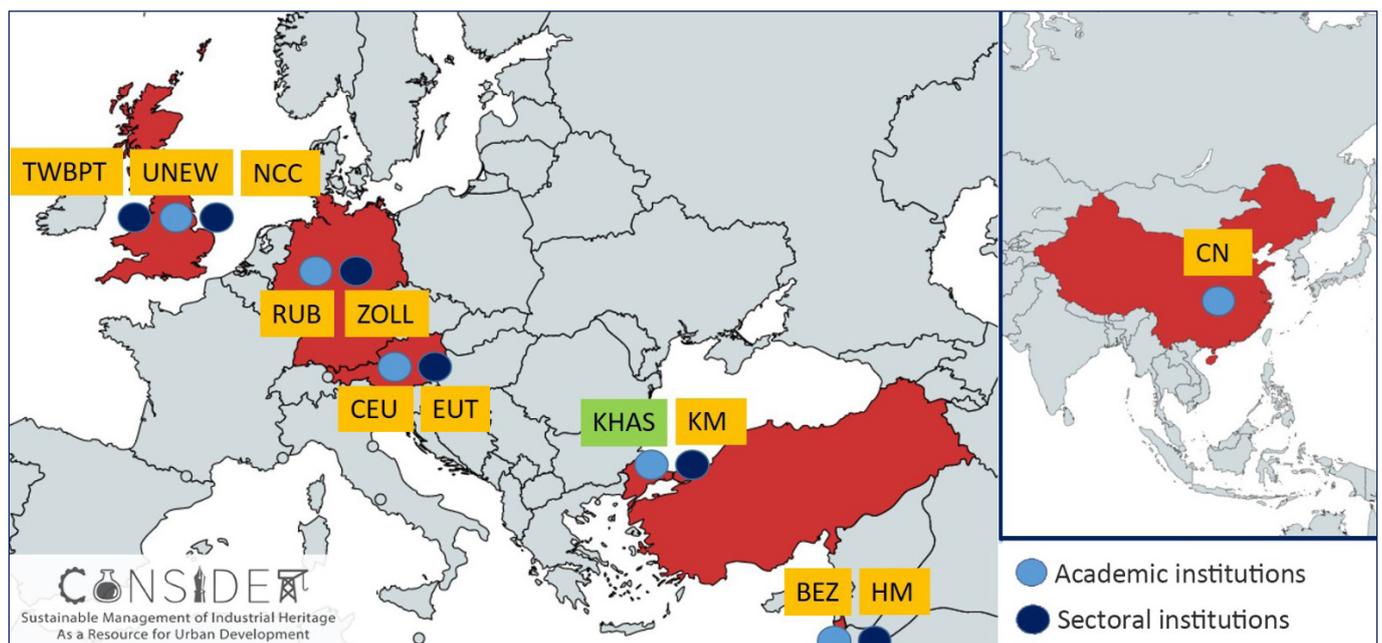


Fig. 1. Participants of the CONSIDER Project

(TR), Newcastle City Council (UK), the Tyne and Wear Preservation Trust (UK), Zollverein Stiftung (DE), Eutropian (AT), Haifa Municipality (IL) are the sectoral partners. The Huazhong University of Science and Technology (CN, UNESCO Chair on Industrial Heritage) acts as Third Country (TC) partner (*Fig. 1*).

CONSIDER aims to develop sustainable management models (SMM) for industrial heritage sites (IHS) for the benefit of the local communities as a resource for strengthening collective identities, improving the urban landscape, promoting eco-friendly solutions, and contributing to the urban economy and the sustainable future of the city. The project will investigate SMM for industrial heritage while exploring participatory governance models as a tool to better integrate IHS with the European societies. Motivated by these, the three research objectives of the project are:

- i) To expand on what is considered industrial heritage and how to safeguard it;
- ii) To investigate the history of sites in order to identify the most influential factors used to maximize their benefit;
- iii) To explore inclusive governance and participatory models as a tool to better integrate industrial heritage with the society.

**Furthermore, CONSIDER aims to bridge the gaps in research by:**

- i) **Investigating the past:** The research of case studies (Istanbul, Newcastle, Haifa, Vienna) will target the history of the sites and the transfer of technology, labor, machines, expertise, as well as the soundscapes. Oral history is one of the main research methods.
- ii) **Research on the deindustrialized present:** good practices and failures on sustainable management and conservation will be addressed through investigating and identifying the meaning of industrial heritage and its values in different countries; investigating the legislative frameworks in partner countries; expanding existing inventories and creating relevant inventories of industrial heritage sites in partner cities; mapping stakeholders to understand diverse interests.
- iii) **Developing management models towards an economically and socially sustainable future:** CONSIDER will develop Sustainable Management Model(s) that will help integrate industrial heritage in planning processes, enhancing participatory processes in decision making concerning IHS and in assessing the potentials of IHS for integration to the SDGs.

## Management Models of HIS from Istanbul

Although many of the modern societies have gone through a sort of industrialization, socio-political differences have given way to different models of ownership, management, and preservation status of industrial heritage sites. The Ottoman Empire, with its modernization process that started in the eighteenth century extending into the Turkish Republic until the first half of the twentieth century, imported technologies from the Western countries, especially from Britain, France and Germany. However, this technological transfer cannot be identified with a pure act of imperialism or colonialism that shaped, for example, India under the British rule. In Istanbul, several different financing models were in place for industrial construction, such as state funding, concessions to western entrepreneurs, foreign investment, etc. These industrial complexes changed their statutes at the time of nationalization during the establishment of the Turkish Republic in different ways. Due to these basic differences – for example, one continued as an independent state enterprise, while another was placed under the municipality –, their adaptation to reuse processes display a variety. Although Istanbul can't be listed as one of the global centers of industrialization, due to its important strategic location and historical importance throughout the modernization period, it holds nearly fifty industrial buildings with heritage value. Much of this building stock have lost their function and has been abandoned (KÖKSAL 2005). However, over the last decades, there is a growing interest for adaptive reuse of industrial heritage sites.

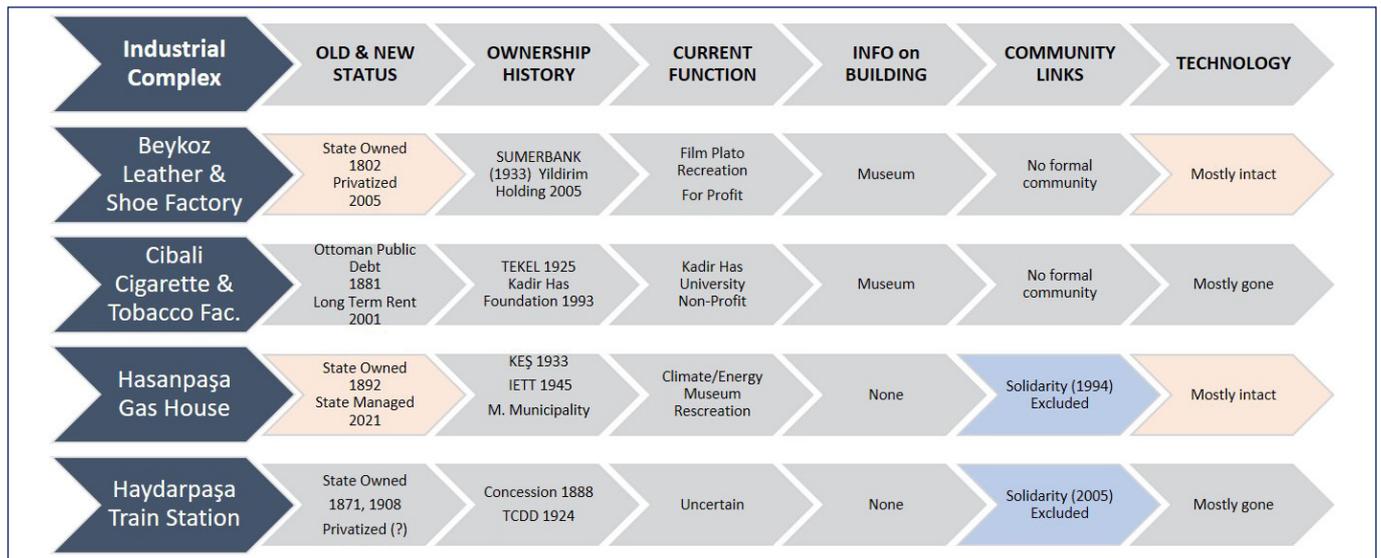


Fig. 2. Industrial Heritage from Istanbul (Source: Y. Erkan)

I would like to bring forward four case studies from Istanbul and critically discuss their contribution to the urban development under the criteria detailed in Fig. 2. In Istanbul, most industrial heritage complexes are located at the peripheries of the historic city. The Cibali Tobacco Factory is in the north-west (along the Golden Horn estuary), the Beykoz Leather and Shoe Factory in the north (along the Bosphorus Strait), and on the east side are the Haydarpaşa Train Station (along the Marmara Sea) and the Hasanpaşa Gas House (near Kurbağalidere Creek). All these industrial complexes were established in the late Ottoman period, adopting differing models of funding and ownership:

- a) State-funded and rented to a foreign concession (Haydarpaşa-İsmid Railway);
- b) With foreign concession (Hasanpaşa Gas House);
- c) State-funded (Beykoz Leather and Shoe Factory);
- d) Ottoman Public Debt Office – an organization under European control to collect the public debt of the Ottoman Empire towards European firms (Cibali Cigarette and Tobacco Factory).

All of these complexes were nationalized after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The deindustrialization process took place around the 1990s together with Turkey's shift to a liberal economy. The only exception was the Haydarpaşa Railway complex which survived another decade until the effects of the neo-liberal economy hit hard around the millennium. The natural flow of the deindustrialization process put the three other industrial complexes out of use around the same time, but after that, their fate differed in terms of the ownership and funding model.

Hasanpaşa Gas House remained in state ownership. The incentives to protect the site came from a neighborhood solidarity group which was established in 1994. Their collaborative efforts enabled the preservation of the authentic structures and technological edifices on the site. The conservation took a long and troublesome path due to the involvement of different stakeholders within the local government. By 2021, the site was adapted to a multifunctional use, where the gasometers have been re-designed to accommodate theatres, and the other industrial buildings have been turned into a climate and energy museum.

The Beykoz Leather and Shoe Factory was sold to a private investor in 2005. The incentive to protect the site came from the owners and due to their care, the site preserves its authenticity in terms of buildings and technological equipment. The complex benefits from a research component focusing on the memory aspect through oral histories which are presented at various exhibitions. The site now makes profit with a multifunctional use centered around the film and cultural sector. The Cibali Cigarette and Tobacco Factory



Fig. 3. Beykoz Kundura, 2021 (Photo by Y. Erkan)



Fig. 4. Kadir Has University, 2021 (Photo by U. Tosun)

has been turned into a university campus with a long term rental contract. The new function reduced the dominance of the ruin aesthetics and industrial feel. The history of the building and a few historical objects are displayed in an exhibition.

The Haydarpaşa Railway complex is suffering from a coerced deindustrialization process through the Marmaray Project. The project is aimed to connect the railway lines of the European and Asian sides by an underwater tunnel, bypassing the Haydarpaşa and Sirkeci railway terminals previously used mainly for inner-city urban transportation. Due to the high land value of the site and the plans under consideration according to which the railway would be removed, numerous proposals have been tabled in the last twenty years. In addition, the Haydarpaşa Station suffered from a major fire in 2010 and became severely dilapidated over the years when it was out of use. To deal with these, restoration works were implemented; however, these lacked transparency. Devoid of trains since 2013, the new use for the Haydarpaşa Station and other elements of the railway heritage is still not entirely clear. Furthermore, in the last years, archaeological evidence from the Roman and Byzantine periods were discovered in the Haydarpaşa railway area, resulting in further problems concerning the site's future. It seems to be a desirable solution to present the site as an archaeological park, but adaptation for the purpose of a terminal for the inter-city train is still under consideration. The combination of the two functions as an optimal solution is problematic since the railway tracks cut through the archaeological site. Due to the political uncertainties surrounding the decision-making process, the heritage of the main terminal of the Anatolian–Baghdad Railway and Haydarpaşa Port is still under threat (ERKAN, 2007; ERKAN, 2016). The solidarity group established in 2005 is actively promoting the idea that the site should be saved as a terminal area for inter-city railway transportation, even if not for inner city trains.



Fig. 5. MuzeGazhane, 2021 (Photo by Y. Erkan)



Fig. 6. Haydarpaşa Port and Train Station, 2021 (Photo by Y. Erkan)

As I have demonstrated, the richness of Istanbul's industrial heritage (Figs 3–6) will be one of the areas in focus as part of the CONSIDER project. This project is aimed to provide a structured methodology to better understand and assess industrial sites in Europe, as well as learn from good practices that exist in various forms in the other countries represented by the project partners. Building upon this experience, the CONSIDER project will offer sustainable management models that will enable industrial heritage sites to be facilitators of urban development with the involvement of industrial and local communities.

For further information on CONSIDER, see [www.considerproject.eu](http://www.considerproject.eu). The coordinator of CONSIDER, Prof. Dr. Yonca Erkan can be contacted at [consider@khas.edu.tr](mailto:consider@khas.edu.tr).

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## European Industrial Heritage: Between Technical Monuments and Post-Industrial Landscapes<sup>1</sup>

The protection of industrial monuments is not a particularly new phenomenon in Europe. The first registers of technical monuments were created already in the 1920s (KALINOWSKI 1985, 164; STEINER 2011, 106). The first technical museums were established even earlier (SCHAAL 2015, 147–148). Further developments, especially from the 1960s onwards, led to the institutionalization and canonization of industrial heritage. In 1973, the First International Conference for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage was organized in Ironbridge in the UK, which led to the creation of the International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage (STEINER 2017, 81–82). Although the 1970s witnessed the first industrial sites being placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, today these kinds of places constitute almost a tenth of all listed sites (KIERDORF & HASSLER 2000, 126; GRIMA & CASSAR 2013, 26). It might seem like a very small number, however, it is worth bearing in mind that the list is meant to name the outstanding examples of heritage from the dawn of human civilization, as exemplified by the Cave of Altamira. In such a context, the number of industrial sites obviously have to be very limited. Read in this context, the number of industrial sites marked as world heritage is not as problematic as it might seem at the first glance. In 2003, the Charter for Industrial Heritage, equivalent to the 1964 Venice Charter, was published (LANE et al. 2013, 24).

This gradual change also meant the reconceptualization of the actual object of protection. Initially, “technical monuments” were seen as “authentic evidence” of “the progress of civilization” (BELLÁKOVÁ 2016, 1926). With the passing of time, notions of “industrial monuments” and then “industrial heritage” emerged. Marion Steiner points out that while “technical monuments” are not time-specific, “industrial” ones are limited to the “industrial age”, that is, of the last 250 years (STEINER 2011, 109). “Heritage” differs from monuments by virtue of its significance to a given group which perceives it to be relevant for its identity, making it an emotionally loaded concept (GALUSEK & JAGODZIŃSKA 2014; MATTHES 2018).

Despite these developments, there is still some unease about industrial heritage. The broader public does not perceive it as equal to medieval churches or Baroque palaces, nor are specialists in the field united regarding its status and the extent of protection needed (EDWARDS & LLURDÉS 1996, 350; HOSPERS 2002, 402; OGLETHORPE 2014, 88). At the same time, economic transformation in many European countries has led to the destruction of numerous industrial sites across the continent.

### What is at Stake?

In 2013, Miles Oglethorpe asked: “why do we bother? Does industrial heritage really matter that much?” He went on to say that “the time has come for a re-think. It is becoming clear that, even now, we cannot expect everyone to automatically accept and understand the value of our industrial heritage” (OGLETHORPE 2014, 88). It might seem like a truism, but I consider the issue raised by Oglethorpe fundamental to recognize and address. Too often, in my view, actors treat the need to preserve the remains of the industrial past as self-evident, which is by no means always the case (*Fig. 1*).

It could be argued that the underlying values justifying the preservation of the houses of social elites or religious temples are not clearly stated either. However, the big difference is that in such cases, the relevant values – commemorative value, historical value or age value, to use Riegl’s terms (RIEGL 1996 [1903]) – are relatively straightforward. The sensitivity to those issues is learned through public education, and in general there is social acceptance that these are indeed values worth protecting. One could make a similarly compelling argument for preserving industrial remains, but this does not happen often enough.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on my research conducted at the University of Konstanz (2018–2020) in the framework of the Balzan research project “Memory in the City”, financially supported by the Fondazione Internazionale Premio Balzan [2017 Balzan Prize (for Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann)] and the Thyssen-Krupp Stiftung [2019 for Aleida and Jan Assmann].



*Fig. 1. Ravennaschlucht. The need to protect industrial heritage is not always self-evident and self-explanatory  
(Photo by Piotr Kisiel, 05.01.2020)*



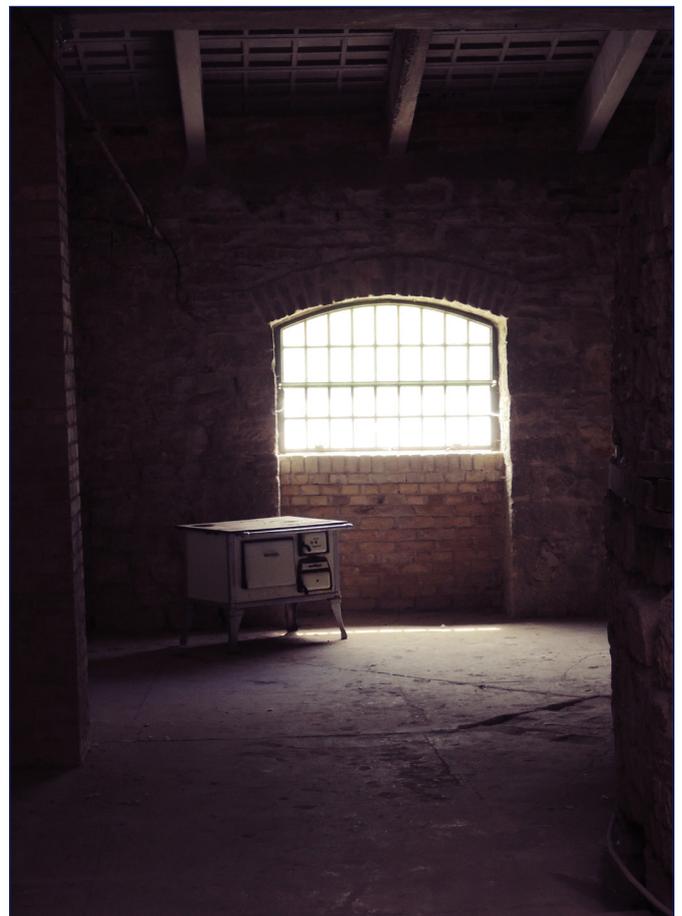
*Fig. 2. Carreras Cigarette Factory, London. The aesthetic value and thus appeal of some industrial sites fit well into the predominant framework of historic preservation  
(Photo by Piotr Kisiel, 27.01.2020.)*

When one considers what kind of industrial monuments are most often protected and promoted and how they are framed, the extent to which these tend to be visually arresting is striking. Hermann Sturm argues that the industrial sites' monumental size produces a sublime feeling among visitors resulting in the preservation of those sites (STURM 2007, 12). Similarly, Steven High and David Lewis observe that in the USA and Canada, "historic factories" are "typically picturesque stone mills" whose aesthetic value is beyond doubt (HIGH & LEWIS 2007, 29). It is easy to understand why such places are preferred: aesthetic value fits neatly into existing patterns of historic preservation (RIESTO 2017, 24) (Fig. 2).

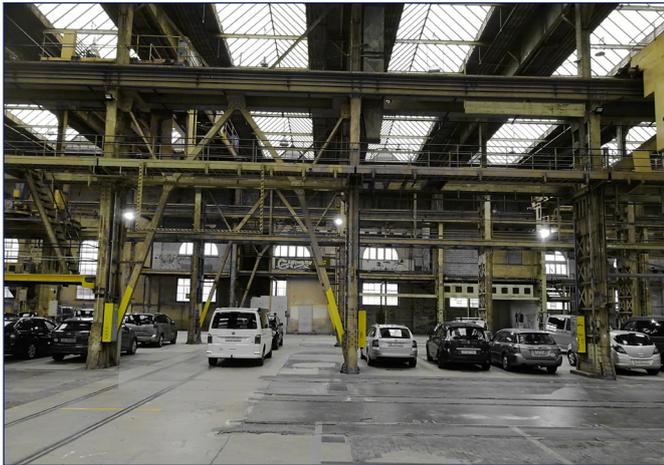
It is pointless to argue against evaluating former industrial sites through the prism of aesthetics. Not only does their beauty draw public attention, but it also serves other important functions. For instance, it has been argued that industrial ruins can prompt one to reflect on the passing of time and thus encourage meditation and reflection (EDENSOR 2005, 25; WALCZAK 2015, 21; DUNHAM-JONE & DREYFUSS 2019) (Fig. 3).

Having said that, it is an unsustainable approach to make aesthetic value the prime factor when it comes to preserving industrial remains. For instance, more recent structures are unlikely to pass such a test which would lead to irreparable loss, as the experience of the post-socialist transformation in Poland shows (PIELESIAK 2015, 89; WALCZAK 2016, 136).

Another way to understand the values attributed to industrial sites is to look into frameworks used to preserve the mass-produced, standardized architecture of high modernism (TRIFA 2016, 209). Because the uniqueness of their design cannot be argued for



*Fig. 3. Empty industrial sites with visible signs of past use can prompt visitors to meditation or nostalgia  
(Photo by Piotr Kisiel, 02.07.2017.)*



*Fig. 4. Car parking in a former industrial plant in Winterthur, Switzerland. The most feasible path to safeguarding the preservation of former industrial sites is the diverse forms of continuous use (Photo by Piotr Kisiel, 18.11.2018.)*

protected sites can or should be used to house cultural institutions. There are only that many museums and art galleries that one city needs and can afford. Other forms of continuous use should be considered and encouraged (Fig. 4).

## Industrial Islands?

Demonstrating what values justify the preservation of a factory building might not be enough to convince the wider public that it is not only a historic monument, but also a heritage site. I would argue that the presentation of industrial history also needs to be much better rooted in the local context and, at the same time, interwoven with the international as well. Industrial history is most often presented as an isolated narrative, which, in my opinion, makes it difficult for the broader public to engage with it. To illustrate this point, let me turn to Chemnitz in Germany and Łódź in Poland. The latter developed during the nineteenth century into one of the biggest industrial centers in the Russian Empire. The first industrialists were immigrants from Saxony (and to a lesser extent from Prussia), many of whom were from Chemnitz or its immediate surroundings (GRZEGORCZYK n. d., 96–101; RAUTENBERG 2014, 173). The development of industry in Chemnitz was, on the other hand based on the import of technology from England (BOCHMANN, DRESLER & TIETZE 1995, 39–41). Both cities have their own local history and industrial museums but neither present a narrative that would demonstrate this link particularly well. While in Chemnitz, the connections with Britain are highlighted, the historic link between Chemnitz and Łódź is not. Furthermore, the industrial history of the two sites is not incorporated into the developments across the continent. It is almost as if both cities were lonely islands, not part of a much more extensive network of urban settlements catapulted into modernity by the factories that were built on their edges.

Secondly, industrial history is often treated in isolation from the urban history of the respective city. In the city museum of Łódź industrial aspects play only a marginal role; in Chemnitz, arguably, it is slightly more present. However, all in all, the history of these two workers' cities is told without ever mentioning labor unions, strikes or the living conditions of a large segment of the city dwellers. In Chemnitz, industrialization is part of the general story of urban development and growth; in Łódź, it basically functions as a background for the narrative of a multireligious city.

Making the industrial past an integral part of the history of a given city, not something separate reserved for technology enthusiasts, would possibly make the need to preserve industrial heritage more understandable

and their aesthetic value is at best debatable, other criteria have been introduced – namely, “points of transition”, referring to prototypes, test buildings and model buildings, as well as those buildings that are particularly well preserved in their original form (ESCHERICH 2012, 18).

Preserving all former industrial sites is neither feasible (PADUCH 2000, 9; STEINER 2011, 112) nor desirable (HEWISON 1987, 107). One should not forget that many industrial sites were not meant to last for centuries and therefore their preservation might require substantial resources and possibly replacement of large sections of their original structure (MIEG et al. 2015). Moreover, soil decontamination might be necessary as well (DUŽÍ & JAKUBÍNSKÝ 2013, 55). This means that it is crucial that we make very clear which structures should be preserved and why. Furthermore, not all

for the broader public. Furthermore, presenting the industrial past within an international, pan-European context could foster a better understanding of European history in general (KISIEL 2019) and enhance the understanding of former industrial sites as being of historical significance, not just places where cement was mixed.

## Does It Sell?

This leads me to my next point – namely, that industrial heritage is often treated as something relevant to only a few “(post-)industrial” cities. And while, of course, the industrial past is particularly important to cities like Essen, Katowice and Manchester, it should also be treated as an integral part of the history of supposedly “non-industrial” cities across the continent. For example, when we examine the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is hard not to notice that London, Paris, and Berlin played a fundamental role in the history of the so-called Industrial Revolution in Europe. Fortunately, it is not the case that only “(post-)industrial” cities engage with their industrial past. Berlin, for instance, has not only its Center for Industrial Culture (*Berliner Zentrum Industriekultur – bzi*) but also a tourist route called “Elektropolis Berlin.” It is, however, not an exaggeration to say that only few people (tourists as well as inhabitants) are aware of those and similar initiatives.

Why do cities so seldom engage with their industrial past if other histories are available? Undoubtedly the ambiguity surrounding the public perception of the built industrial heritage plays an important role. Another aspect is the unclear meaning of the industrial past itself. This is a problem in an age when cities must compete against each another for attention and financial resources. To achieve these goals, they engage in “city branding”, an attempt to establish a coherent and positive image designed to enhance their economic standing (PALMER 2004; VANOLO 2008; HANKINSON 2015). The industrial past is often too risky to include in such a portfolio, even if cities try to expand their offer to stay competitive in the race. Moreover, visiting former production sites, does not fit well into the existing patterns of tourism, even cultural tourism (EDWARDS & LLURDÉS 1996, 359). For this reason, I think that education is vital so that people learn to understand (and thus appreciate) industrial heritage, which might create more demand for it.

## Who are the Heroes?

The final point I wish to examine here is the issue of the ambiguous character of industrial heritage. As I mentioned before, the term “heritage” implies that it is important for the self-understanding of a given group (possibly helping to draw this group together), and in this sense, it is an identity bearer. Is it the case, though, with former factories and mines? Sociological research in Łódź indicates that it is not the former workers who are the biggest champions of historic preservation for industrial sites, but rather university-educated city dwellers (SZAFRĄŃSKA 2010, 46–47). Research conducted in the 1990s in the region of Silesia showed that former miners wanted the industrial sites to be used most of all as production sites, and only a small minority wished them to be converted to cultural uses. Significantly, hardly any believed that those sites had aesthetic value (KRONENBERG 2013, 26). In Berlin, some workers followed the redevelopment of the industrial zone, while others had no interests in the post-industrial changes (OEVERMANN et al. 2016, 55). This means that identification with industrial heritage should not be taken



Fig. 5. “Żyjesz w mieście rewolucji 1905” [You live in the city of the 1905 revolution]. Łódź. The history of labour movements and class conflict is one of the difficult and rarely addressed parts of industrial heritage (Photo by Piotr Kisiel, 10.02.2019.)

for granted. In any case, as time passes, industrial heritage will increasingly become the acquired heritage of those who have no first-hand experience about this past. Can such people really identify with the industrial past, and if so, in what way?

The history of industrialization is not only the story of communities and collective identities built around work in general or the history of mass migration and transfer of knowledge across the continent, all of which could resonate very well with contemporary societies. It is also a story of worker exploitation, child labor, the pains of deindustrialization and the destruction of the natural environment (Fig. 5). This makes it a rather problematic heritage (STORM 2008, 10). Some go further and place it in the category of “dark tourism” along with sites of mass violence and human rights violations (HIGH & LEWIS 2007, 42). The challenge, therefore, is how to present industrial heritage in a way that it does not distort the past, but, at the same time, makes people willing to engage with it and protect it.

In Eastern Europe, this issue overlaps with the question of the legacy of state Socialism, the collapse of which led to the deindustrialization of those countries. So far, the hegemonic discourse of the “return to Europe” has dominated the public discourse (BORÉN & GENTILE 2007, 96–97; MURZYN 2008, 319; RISSE 2010, 7), leaving little room for other stories of the past. It is yet to be seen whether the new generations who experienced neither state Socialism nor the post-socialist transition will be more open to other grand narratives about the history of their cities, regions, and countries.

## Conclusions: Heritage of the Post-Industrial Period?

This brief overview does not cover all aspects of the topic. It is instead an attempt to sketch some of the biggest challenges for industrial heritage in Europe today. I do not claim to have answers to all or even most questions that I have posed here. However, I hope that they can be useful when considering specific case studies, as well as when thinking about how industrial heritage relates to other forms of heritage. For me, it is precisely this that makes industrial heritage so fascinating. Looking at heritage from the margins allows a much better understanding of the core. Industrial heritage allows to more clearly see questions and tensions which might go unnoticed at the royal residences and other sites that fit very well into the hegemonic discourses of the past.

Finally, a discussion of industrial heritage entails the question whether and in what form industrial ruins could (or should) be treated as heritage objects and, if so, how they could be meaningfully integrated into the urban landscape. Maybe it would be useful to treat industrial and post-industrial heritage as two distinct but connected phenomena. The first would refer to the industrial era; the second would focus on the problems and legacies of the transformation from the industrial economy to the service/digital one. If we accept this proposal, we might want to preserve a few industrial ruins, which are the quintessential heritage of the period of transformation to the post-industrial era (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Demolition of a former hat factory in Łódź  
(Photo by Piotr Kisiel, 10.02.2019.)

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As a result of the series of political, social, and economic changes that took place in East-Central Europe some more than thirty years ago, the region was left with a legacy of many redundant industrial sites. Several waves of deindustrialization have led to the present landscape where once prosperous industrial sites and buildings lack a proper function that would benefit the local communities and the national economy. The burden of this is well-known to all European countries, but due to their shared past in the Soviet block and their present EU membership, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia – the so-called Visegrad Group countries – are facing a situation that is similar in many respects.

This collection of papers presents the results of the international project “From Burden to Resource: Industrial Heritage in Central-Eastern Europe.” The authors – experts focusing on the preservation and reuse of industrial heritage from the Visegrad Group countries – were brought together with the aim to address challenges specific to the region and the gap that exists here between heritage specialists focusing on heritage assets and policymakers and developers in urban planning focusing on social and economic development. The seven papers tackle various aspects of the conceptualization and management of industrial heritage in the Visegrad Group countries against the background of European and global trends. The authors offer an overview of the practice of protection and reuse of industrial heritage in the region, identify common problems rooted in the shared character of the structural changes, and present case studies that demonstrate that the heritage of the industrial era has the potential to be a resource for local identities, sustainable urban development, and to address the big challenges of the twenty-first century.

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