Dear Mr. Nash,

the Simplizissismus-title from 1930 - years before the Nazis came to power - gave me the idea to check files from the pre-Nazi period on documents concerning Bata. I found heaps of material, including documents on boycott, back until 1927. These documents are in three volumes of files of Abteilung II (Tschechoslowakei - Rohstoffe und Waren: Lederwaren, vols. 1-3, R 89856-58 and in Tschechoslowakei Handel 37: Boykott, R 89732). This earlier boycott movement was partly ´anti-Czech and originated from some radical organisations of the ethnic German minority and did not only aim at Bata but at other Czech companies as well. Bata especially became a target due to alleged exploitation of their factory workers and the harm Bata as a factory caused to small shoemaker workshops. Even the official organ of the Berlin Chamber of Crafts joined in that campaign in order to protect small craftsmen. The German Foreign ministry in its reply to an official complaint of the Czech legation showed some sympathy with this argument. I enclose some copies of these 1931 (i.a. pre-Nazi) documents from archive-volume R 89732.

My first impression is that the Nazis adopted this older Bata boycott-movement during their 1933 anti-Semitic boycott campaign, and mainly called Bata a Jewish company to make things easier or because they didn't know better. (The early Nazi propaganda often used a kind of "protect small business"-pattern to promote anti-semiotic propaganda, like in opposing big department stores in general, although some of them were not owned by Jews.)

I am afraid the documents are not quite what you had wished to find but I thought you'd better know about their existence.- The "Lederwaren"-files which I mentioned above are full of material on a law suit of Bata against the author of the book "Der unbekannte Diktator Thomas Bata" (Vienna / Berlin 1928), Rudolf Philipp. As far as I gathered from a quick view into the file Philipp after all succeeded.

If you cannot come over to examine the files yourself or do not want to hire someone to do it for you, copies could be made. This would be done by a private company. For details please check the leaflet in the attachment (paragraph 5). I did not count the pages, but it could well
be several hundreds which might make a copy order quite expensive.

The registers of the press-division of the Foreign Ministry (1933-1938) only indicate one document where Bata is mentioned (Tschechoslowakische Republik 2: Allgemeine Angelegenheiten, vol. 4; R 123050; copy in the attachment.)

The online research machine of the Bundesarchiv indicates that in their holding "Neue Reichskanzlei" they have a file from 1930 on Bata branches in Germany and trade-union protest against the company (Bundesarchiv-signature R 43/I-153). The Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin (gsta.pk@gsta.spk-berlin.de ) where the files of the Prussian ministries are kept, also has files on similar matters (GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 120 MfHuG, C IX Innerer Handel, vols. 2943, 2944, 2946).

A search for newspaper articles on Bata requires not only complete newspaper-archive (there a several) but also a refined press-clipping archive. I am not aware of one at the moment (I know that the Ullstein archive was bombed and destroyed in the last weeks of the war.)

A www-research showed me that Professor Susanne Hilger of Düsseldorf university (hilger@phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de) has done research on the history of the Bata company; she might be able to provide useful additional advice on archival sources or 1930's newspaper articles.

Sincerely
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Dr. Gerhard Keiper

23.3.2011

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Bei Antwort bitte das Geschaeftszeichen ("Gz.") angeben. Please quote the reference no. ("Gz.") in your reply. Auswaertiges Amt, Werderscher Markt 1, 10117 Berlin, Deutschland
Tel. (+49-30) 5000-3168, Fax (+49-30) 5000-53168 <http://www.diplo.de/archiv>

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