

Bata shoe magnate seeks Czech compensation

by UPI

PRAGUE, Czech Republic -- Tomas Bata Jr., Czech-born owner of Bata shoe empire, said he planned to seek compensation from the Czech government for his confiscated property. Bata, 93, said his family wants restitution of the value of property nationalized by the Czech communist regime in 1947, Prague Radio reported Wednesday. Sixty years later, the Czech state attorney in August cleared the name of Jan Antonin Bata when it ruled he had committed no crime during World War II. In 1947, a Prague court sentenced J.A. Bata, uncle of Tomas Bata Jr., to 15 years in absentia for reported collaboration with the Nazis. That led the communist regime to seize the Bata family property. Tomas Bata Sr. opened a shoe plant in the southeastern Czech town of Zlin in 1894. As all Bata shoe factories were confiscated by communist regimes in Eastern Europe in the late 1940s, the Bata family has rebuilt its footwear empire in Canada and other Western countries.

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