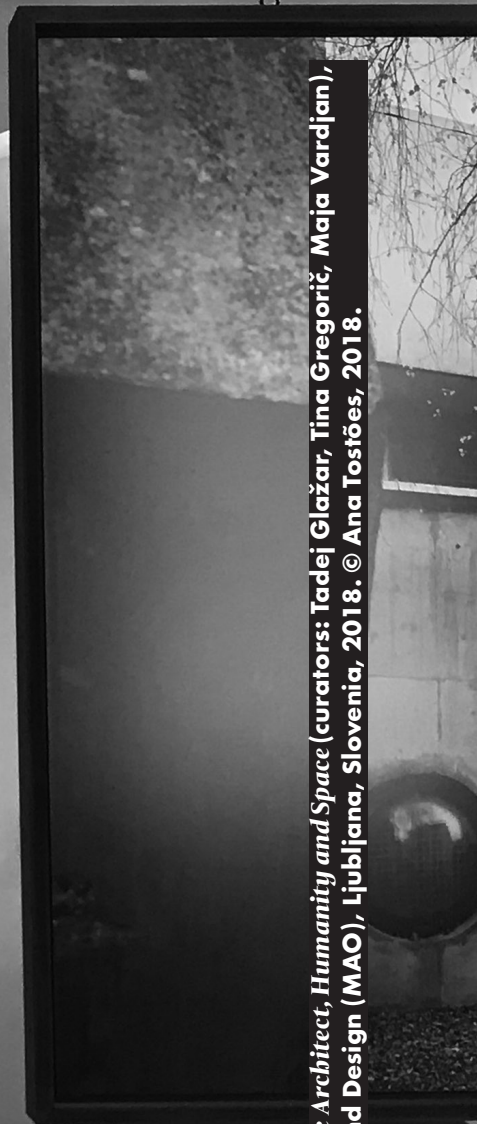




Marsipula, 1. nomenclatural Hall, 1st Dec. 1875.

Male sex, 1, noctropje@small Hall, 1st floor, 2016

Odstranjeval zelenjave in agresivni posegi smagajo na kakovost prostorov.
Removing greenery and aggressive transformations compromise the quality of the premises.
Stanke Križ, December 2016



Exhibition Stanko Kristl, the Architect, Humanity and Space (curators: Tadej Glažar, Tina Gregorič, Maja Vardjan), Museum of Architecture and Design (MAO), Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2018. © Ana Tostões, 2018.

Towards a fresh reading of MoMo historiography

While visiting the MAO (Museum of Architecture and Design) in Ljubljana one can appreciate the architectural power of Stanko Kristl's work¹. The impressive buildings of this Slovenian architect revealed through the exhibition *Humanity and Space*, illuminate the beauty of the museum space with some astonishing works and show why Eastern Europe deserves to be included in the historiography of the Modern Movement, to clearly demonstrate the contribution of Iron Curtain countries to the modern *avant-garde*. As Matevž Čelik recognizes, "through his architecture he worked to provide responses to the needs of the people — for whom it was intended. This basic premise served as a guiding principle in experiments and his search for spatial and social innovation in architecture."²

Given the scope of the 15th International **docomomo** Conference — "Metamorphosis. The Continuity of Change", which took place at Cankarjev Dom (by Edvard Ravnikar, 1960–1980), in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 28–31 August 2018, this subject is definitely on the **docomomo** agenda. The theme of this 59th **docomomo** Journal challenges us to reinterpret the modern architecture of Eastern Europe.

During the last few years, authors and editors such as Philip Meuser³ have been recounting a new history that includes the modern architectural legacy of former USSR and other Eastern European countries. The recently opened MoMA exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*⁴ and Ákos Moravánszky's (ed.) monograph trilogy *East West Central: Re-building Europe*⁵, published last year, are some of the freshest contributions to this movement towards what one might call the rethinking of MoMo historiography.

This DJ focuses on understanding the buildings, projects, personalities and phenomena located at this intersection of a world divided between the capitalist West and the socialist East. The dynamic of changing conditions in Eastern Europe countries contributed specific features to Modern Movement architecture and its local legacies. Bringing together narratives of scholars from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia, this collection of texts is an overview devoted to modern architecture in some of the countries of the former Eastern bloc.

In this issue, diversified reflections are presented: from essays dedicated to collective *habitare*, such as housing

blocks in the former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, where the hotel typology is also explored; from WWII Memorials in Yugoslavia to interventions in emblematic public building, such as the intervention in the Slovak National Gallery and the restoration of the New Synagogue in Zilina; or the question of preserving industrial complexes in Slovenia. In Hungary, the historiography of post-war modern architecture is portrayed, and its inter-war architecture is also revisited in connection with the interpretation of the diffusion of the Modern Movement made by the local journal *Tér és Forma*. Finally, there is place for discussion about architects and their masterworks, as the Slovak architect Friedrich Weiurum and the Slovenian architect Edvard Ravnikar.

These examples of the Eastern European architectural *avant-garde*, often forgotten outside of the region for which were originally designed, can now be brought to light and provoke new narratives. It is expected that coverage of these pioneering approaches will be further extended to a broader geographical area in a later DJ issue.

docomomo is grateful to Henrieta Moravčíková for accepting the challenge to be guest editor of this DJ, and the authors for generously having shared their research. Due to their commitment and meticulous work, it is possible to present this Journal, which addresses the legacy of Eastern Europe architecture and its future.

Notes

- 1 Exhibition *Stanko Kristl, the Architect, Humanity and Space* (curators: Tadej Glažar, Tina Gregorič, Maja Vardjan), MAO, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 19 December 2018–30 September 2018. © Ana Tostões, 2018.
- 2 Matevž Čelik, "Foreword", in *Stanko Kristl, arhitekt. Humanost in prostor / Stanko Kristl, architect. Humanity and Space*, Ljubljana, MAO, 2018. From the MAO see also: Bogo Zupančič, *Plečnikovi študenti in drugi jugoslovanski arhitekti v Le Corbusierovem ateljeju*, Ljubljana, MAO, 2017; Janez Kresal, *Edo Mibevc - Izbrana Dela*, Ljubljana, MAO, 2016.
- 3 Philip Meuser and Dimitrij Zadorin, *Towards a Typology of Soviet Mass Housing: Prefabrication in the USSR 1955–1991*, Berlin, DOM Publishers, 2016; Philip Meuser, *Seismic Modernism: Architecture and Housing in Soviet Tashkent*, Berlin, DOM Publishers, 2016.
- 4 Exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia*, MoMA, New York, US, MoMA, 10 July 2018 – 13 January 2019 (see p. 88).
- 5 Ákos Moravánszky, Torsten Lange, Judith Hopfengärtner, Karl Kegler (ed.), *East West Central: Re-building Europe 1950–1990*, Basel, Birkhäuser Architecture, 2016.

Is there still something behind the Iron Curtain? Documentation and conservation of Modernism in former Eastern Europe

BY HENRIETA MORAVČÍKOVÁ

Last year, three volumes of the Monograph *East West Central Re-building Europe* were published, where Ákos Moravansky outlined the possibility of reinterpreting European architectural historiography¹. He drew attention to new processes, phenomena and contexts in the history of 20th century modern architecture. Through the mosaic of texts, the European architectural scene of the last century has been brought to the fore as a complex and still undiscovered structure. Although many 20th century phenomena have seen comparisons made across the European continent, divided by the former Iron Curtain for a half of the century, there is still room for confrontation and reconciliation. Firstly, because research continues, new contexts are emerging, the perspective of evaluation and the perception of the heritage of Modernism is changing, but also because, in addition to the artificial political structure of the Iron Curtain, which has disappeared along with the disappearance of the Eastern and Western Blocs, a number of constructs such as the territorial or thematic marginalization of parts of European architectural historiography remain to be overcome. After a long period of focusing on iconic personalities and works of architecture it is time to concentrate on thematic research, which will illustrate connections and differences in the Modern Movement of Europe and worldwide. In the sense of this ambition the sense of this tradition, our aim is to draw attention to personalities, works, phenomena, or processes that have so far failed to gain traction in international discourse but which we nevertheless consider important in relation to a comprehensive view of history and the protection of modern architecture.

docomomo International can be considered as one of the first, if not the first, platforms to offer a place, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, to an equal approximation of the research positions of former Western and Eastern Europe.

This trend is obvious within the activities of scholars gathered in frame of the **docomomo** international. Since early 1990s they have prepared several international conferences, exhibitions and publications discussing common topics and intentionally crossing the former iron curtain. Let's mention some monothematic issues of international peer reviewed journals such as the British *The Journal of Architecture*, the Slovakian *Architektúra & Urbanizmus* or the Polish journal *Herito*. One of the

very first initiatives came from the side of the journal *Architektúra & Urbanizmus* in 2003². Based on the results of the international project *Modern Movement Neighbourhood Cooperation*, the editorial board prepared a monothematic issue focused on modern concepts of living and work illustrated by examples from Finish Sunila, Italian Ivrea, Danish Bellevue and Slovak Bata town Partizánske. In 2009 French scholar Carmen Popescu edited an issue of *The Journal of Architecture* that was devoted to the architecture of the former Communist Bloc³. Only one year later the issue of the journal *Architektúra & Urbanizmus* dedicated to the problems of protection and restoration of Modern Movement architecture was published. Under the title "Modern Architecture as Heritage", the leading scholars from seven **docomomo** chapters presented the latest state of art in their countries⁴. In 2012 "Mass Housing" was thematised by the same journal bringing together current research results in ten European countries. The Polish journal *Herito* published by the International Cultural Centre in Krakow focuses regularly on topics that reflect the common European cultural heritage of 20th century. Let's mention the Number 17-18 titled "Cold War Modern Architecture" or the Number 22-23 with the title "The City as a Work of Art"⁵.

For the first time after the fall of Iron Curtain in the late 1980s **docomomo Journal** is completely devoted to the research, documentation and conservation of works of modern architecture in the countries of former Eastern bloc. Texts written by scholars from Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia give readers the opportunity to learn about the state of the art in the field of architecture historiography and monument protection of the Modern Movement in these countries. Reviews of books and exhibitions even underline the variety and richness of the research carried out in Eastern European countries. It is obvious that these investigations and presentations are closely related with the general discussion on the Modern Movement. A strong need for completing and deepening the knowledge in the field of Modern Movement historiography, new interest in biographical research and the social context of architecture characterize a number of the presented studies. We should mention the remarkable investigation of the generally less-known Hungarian architectural journal *Tér és Forma* by Pál Ritoók and Ágnes

Sebestyén. That journal has shaped the local discussion on the Modern Movement in interwar Hungary and, although it only lasted a decade, it influenced Hungarian architecture historiography of a whole century. Interesting for the international audience might be the process of rediscovering of life and work of the architect Friedrich Weinwurm. Weinwurm used to be an influential personality of the Modern Movement in Central Europe, but was nearly completely forgotten after the WWII. Worth mentioning also is the research on the extraordinary achievements of Czech architecture in the process of modernist occupation of the landscape in the 1960s and 1970s done by Petr Vorlík.

Nevertheless, there is a considerable number of investigations included in this issue that reach slightly beyond the general discussion. It is visible especially in the case of topics that arose from local contexts, as, for example, the underestimation of post-war Modernism because of its relation with the era of socialism, the overestimation of the liberal economy and free market in the field of monument protection or the general lack of public finances. These contexts generated specific local positions and solutions that might be either inspiring or rather deterrent.

As an inspiring and promising local solution we should mention the conversion of the synagogue (Peter Behrens, 1931) to a gallery and concert hall in the Slovak town of Žilina based on voluntary work and fundraising. The strategy of conservation as an “open work” that was applied there, and as discussed in the contribution by Katarína Haberlandová, could serve as an inspiration for other endangered works of architecture lacking the resources for a standard conservation process. We should also stress the series of investigations on social and mass housing introducing, not only the regional histories of this phenomenon, but also its original and contemporary social background. This is especially obvious in the actual social conditions of mass housing projects in post-communist countries which represent an important counterpart to the discussions on this topic in the West. Most striking among these examples is the city of New Belgrade that represents a unique completed effort to build a new socialist city using the tools of Modernism and the planned economy. Jelica Jovanović discusses in her contribution whether and how such a project could be sustainable in the current neoliberal context. More doubts on the future of another typical product of Modernism — collective housing — are expressed in the study of Czech architecture by historian Hubert Gúzik. He argues that this unique legacy is paradoxically denied both from the side of socialist and liberal elites. The same goes for the architecture of post-war Modernism in all of the post-communist countries that generally represents marginalized or endangered heritage. One of the most exciting parts of the postwar heritage of post-communist countries are the memorial sites of national liberation that were built after 1945 under the ideological curatorship of the Communist party. This is especially the case in the former Yugoslavia where they are not only manifestations of a particular ideology but also of the strong movement of modern abstraction in art and architecture. Despite this fact,

these monuments are generally neglected and ignored, as Vladana Putnik Prica and Nenad Lajbenšperger posit it in their article. Nevertheless, there are already examples of successful conservation and renewal of postwar modernist architecture behind the former Iron Curtain. One of them might be the iconic complex of the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava (Vladimír Dedeček, 1979) that is currently undergoing restoration. Slovak architecture historian, Peter Szalay, discusses in his essay the challenges and pitfalls of this process.

In most of the countries of former Eastern Europe industrial architecture has also been recognized as a part of the cultural heritage only recently. Slovenian architect Sonja Ifko focuses on the slow change of the status of industrial heritage and illustrates this process with some cases of successful adaptive reuse.

Despite the many new discoveries, interesting insights and good examples, most of the contributions are accompanied by a certain scepticism that grows out of the discontinuity of social development and unstable research conditions in this region. This feeling of frustration is most present in the text of well-known Hungarian scholar András Ferkai, who argues that Hungarian Modern Movement architecture is of no interest to anyone, neither to a local nor an international audience. Despite this typical Central European scepticism, we have to state that this monothematic issue could be understood as a confirmation of an important assumption regarding the character of the Modern Movement. All of the manifestations of the Modern Movement discovered or rediscovered behind the former Iron Curtain confirm the position of the Modern Movement as a solid and very European phenomenon.

Notes

- 1 Ákos Moravánszky and Judith Hopfengärtner (ed.), *Re-Humanizing Architecture, New Forms of Community, 1950–1970*, Bazilej, Birkhäuser Verlag, 2017; Ákos Moravánszky and Karl R. Kogler (ed.), *Re-Scaling the Environment, New Landscapes of Design, 1960–1980*, Bazilej, Birkhäuser Verlag, 2017; Ákos Moravánszky and Torsten Lange (ed.), *Re-Framing Identities, Architecture's Turn to History, 1970–1990*, Bazilej, Birkhäuser Verlag, 2017.
- 2 “Modern Concepts of Living and Work”, *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, n. 3-4, Bratislava, 2003, 82–218.
- 3 “Behind the Iron Curtain: architecture in the former Communist Bloc”, *The Journal of Architecture*, n. 1, London, 2009, 1–160.
- 4 “Modern Architecture as Heritage”, *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, n. 3-4, 2010, 180–387.
- 5 “Cold War Modern Architecture”, *Herito*, n. 17–18, Krakow, 2015, 1–308. “The City as a Work of Art”, *Herito*, n. 22–23, Krakow, 2016, 1–350.

Henrieta Moravčíková

Architect and architecture historian. Head of the Department of Architecture at the Institute of History Slovak Academy of Sciences and professor of architecture history at the Faculty of Architecture STU in Bratislava. She is the chair of **docomomo** Slovakia.



István Bérces, Miklós Gnädig, Béla Szittyá, Old port, Tihany, Hungary, 1962. The complex seen from above. © 1960s, Fortepan photo archive, No 58863.

Historiography of post-war modern architecture in Hungary. Evaluation — research — preservation

BY MARIANN SIMON

Reviewing the research on post-war modern Hungarian architecture we find a serious backwardness. This paper presents an overview of the situation and an explanation focusing on three factors. The first is the underestimation of the socialist modern architecture by the lay public, but also by some professionals. The second field of investigation is the research background: institutes, researchers, funds and the accessibility of archival material, and the results achieved despite the difficulties. The paper also surveys the preservation of this heritage, and finally presents a recent rehabilitation project, one of the few positive examples.

Evaluation

Except for a short historicist interruption, modern architecture was a ruling trend during the 45 years of state Socialism in Hungary. The best examples of recently completed buildings were published in periodicals, and the regular anniversaries of the regime gave an opportunity to celebrate socialist building industry (and architecture) with special exhibitions and publications. However, as the main feature of the system was looking ahead, it took almost thirty years until the first post-war modern building was put under monument protection: the Budapest bus terminal built in 1949 was listed in 1977, while the next post-war building became protected only in 1991¹.

While art historian and architect advocates of post-war modern buildings tried, in vain, to make accepted their proposals to conservation officials, the architectural profession took the first step by making an overview of the period in the 1980s. The periodical *Magyar Építőművészet* [Hungarian architecture] devoted a whole issue to the architecture of the 1950s in 1984. The growing interest for 1950s architecture can be explained by the fact — that the post-modern architectural trend reached Hungary at that time and the label “1950s architecture” represented the historicism of the so-called socialist-realist architecture — although it only lasted for 4–5 years. In another respect, recalling the 1950s was part of a continuing conscious historical retrospection, as an earlier issue of the periodical had focused on 1930s Hungarian architecture. A third issue of the series presented 1960s architecture in 1988. Due to the limitations of the genre, the periodical drew attention to only some examples of this period and added their designers’ comments who lived in most of them.

The change of the political system in 1989–1990 could have given impetus to the re-evaluation of post-war

modern architecture, but circumstances delayed the research of this heritage. One of the reasons was that international and home interest alike focused on other trends and periods of Hungarian architecture: namely the Hungarian organic architecture and the socialist-realist historicism of the 1950s.

Hungarian organic architecture and especially the architecture of Imre Makovecz was present in international journals already in the 1980s and accepted a premium home evaluation when this trend was selected to represent Hungary at the *Venice Architecture Biennale* in 1991. The “rest” of the architecture during the state socialist period (socialist Modernism) was underestimated not only by the general public but also by the art historian author of the first book written with the intention of giving an overview of the period. The title — *The Compromised Modern* — perfectly expressed the author’s value judgment: half of the book was devoted to organic architecture as a positive, resistant alternative to large industrial constructions. The book, written in German but published in cooperation by a German and a Hungarian publishing company, reflected both an international and a local evaluation².

Interest in the historicist architecture of the 1950s — as mentioned before — started earlier, but as a research theme, it fully emerged only after the political change. In 1992 the Hungarian Museum of Architecture organized an exhibition from its archival material under the title *Építészet és tervezés Magyarországon 1945–1956* [architecture and planning in Hungary 1945–1956] accompanied by a catalog. As a result of the exhibition’s success, the exhibition was repeated with expanded material, this time covering the period 1945–1959. Although the exhibition and the catalog focused on the socialist-realist period — recalling an awesome history and particularity of built form — it also presented some modern



01 István Bérces, Miklós Gnädig, Béla Szittyá, Old port, Tihany, Hungary, 1962. The complex seen from above. © 1960s, Fortepan photo archive, No 58863.



02 István Bérces, Miklós Gnädig, Béla Szittyá, Old port, Tihany, Hungary, 1962. The concrete shell structure. © 1960s, IPARTERV photo archive, No 6051.

buildings. According to the curator, the expanded time scope served to present the transitional period before and after the central theme³.

Research

Against the above-mentioned problems of underestimation of post-war Modernism, the main obstacle to scientific research was the lack of accessibility of original sources. Consequently, especially in the 1990s, the first attempts to discover the modern architecture of the period were based on re-reading of contemporary public sources, periodicals, and the few collections summarizing socialist architecture: all from the 1970s or 1980s. These books had been published in a large number of copies, so even now they serve as a starting point for discovering the era. This would not be a problem if a thorough scientific research had followed, but even nowadays a lot of research remains at this level. Some retrospective writings in periodicals or blogs just scratch the surface and serve the increasing nostalgia for the Kádár-era.

The Hungarian Museum of Architecture working within the National Board for the Protection of Historic Monuments was founded in 1968 as a collection and research unit of 20th-century architecture. Its increasing archival material and the art historian staff made it a perfect place for authentic research on modern architecture. The above-mentioned exhibitions and catalogs on architecture in the period 1945-1959 were based on the Museum's collection. The Museum staff was active also in editing the archival material: between 1995 and 2009 seven books of original documents on modern architecture were published as part of the *Lapis Angularis* series. Unfortunately, only two of them were closely connected to post-war modern architecture. The exhibitions based on the Museum's collection were continued after the success of the first two exhibitions on the 1950s but were marginally extended in material and timespan. For example, the 2006 exhibition *Modern és szocreál: építészet és tervezés Magyarországon 1945-1959* [modern and social-real: architecture and design in Hungary 1945-1959] dealt with the same period as the previous ones⁴. However, the content was different, as the exhibition and the accompanying publication presented new research

results on five buildings. Ironically, the scientific research was made urgent and possible, because these monuments faced sale or rebuilding. Unfortunately, the Museum didn't present further exhibitions or published research on the period. The institute was closed in 2014, and the archival material was moved into a storage, with the hope of re-opening.

Researchers at the Hungarian Museum of Architecture focused on modern architecture before 1959, while an interest covering further decades appeared thanks to a private initiative. Barnabás Winkler, architect and head of the architectural design office, *HAP Hungaro-Austro Plan*, devoted himself to presenting and popularizing modern architectural heritage. Between 2003 and 2013 he and his colleagues organized 110 exhibitions with the support of cultural foundations. The venue was mainly the private gallery of the office in Budapest, but the materials and events often traveled within the country. The theme of the exhibitions was art, architecture and monument preservation, but one-third of them presented architects who were active after WWII. The exhibition material was based partly on the Hungarian Museum of Architecture's archive and partly on the private collections of the exhibited architects' relatives and successors. The *HAP Gallery* also edited books. Among the 10 items that were released, we find the selected writings of the exhibited architects and two books on leading architects of post-war Modernism in Hungary. The two books were not the only ones in the series as there was a total of only four, edited by two organizations, namely the *HAP Hungaro-Austro Plan* and a small publishing house, *6BT*. All four books presented architects — György Jánossy, Péter Molnár, Zoltán Gulyás and Zoltán Farkasdy — belonged to the same generation, born between 1923 and 1930 and active in the most prosperous period of post-war Modernism. The publication in each case was supported by cultural foundations which is the only possibility to finance books on contemporary or modern architecture in Hungary, while the initiators were relatives and successors.

The exhibitions organized by the *HAP Gallery* as well as the above-mentioned books presented the work of architects who had already passed away. The *Kijárat Publishing*



03 László Földes, András Farkas, Péter Sugár, Old port, Tihany, Hungary, 2015. The former bazaar now topped with a café. © Tamás Bujnovszky, 2015.



04 László Földes, András Farkas, Péter Sugár, Old port, Tihany, Hungary, 2015. Sails above the new deck. © Tamás Bujnovszky, 2015.

House approached the theme differently. Under the series title *Vallomások-Architectura* [confessions-architecture] they edited 16 books on living Hungarian architects between 1996 and 2007. The books essentially published a conversation with the architects, extended with a list of works. While these publications surely added some information to the history of architecture of the socialist period they can't be considered as new research, but as a source of later scientific research.

The above overview shows that the research on Hungarian post-war modern architecture as it appeared for the wider profession had two main tracks: presenting selected buildings or leading architects of the period. Historiography of this era sadly misses comprehensive and summarizing works accessible to the profession, too. Accessibility in this respect means a book. Since the 1990s only three such works can be mentioned. One is a book on an experimental housing estate in Budapest, built in the late 1950s. The authors combine sociological and art historian approaches. The other is the two-volume edition on *KÖZTI*, one of the largest architectural design offices during the socialist era, but its second volume is devoted to the post-1990 activity of the firm. The third book is a collection of research essays covering two periods of Hungarian architectural history, the only bilingual edition⁵.

The lack of thorough scientific research on post-war modern architecture in Hungary can be explained by two main factors. One is the difficulty in gaining access to original documents. In the 1990s the archives of state design offices, building authorities and professional organizations were still closed. After the change of the political system these institutions were slowly reorganized, transformed or abandoned, but in the meantime the documents were either withheld or disappeared. The material delivered into the state archives or to the Hungarian Museum of Architecture was consciously pre-selected or randomly sent. Some further documents – especially design materials – are in private collections. This makes it extremely difficult to discover the history of the state design offices. Even the authors of the edition on *KÖZTI* lacked data, although the

design office didn't stop after the political change, as it was only reorganized.

Adequate, high-quality research into post-war modern architecture is impossible without a historical background, without the historical processing of the era. The first results of historical and social research of the socialist period were published only at the end of the 1990s, but unfortunately that did not foster or accelerate architectural research. This fact leads us to the second main reason why there is minimal research on post-war modern architecture. There are researchers, but there are no research institutes. The Hungarian Museum of Architecture — which was founded with the intention to act both as an archive and a research locale — was closed in 2014, and though formally it has been opened recently, its research activity is unknown. Academic institutes and university departments also give background to the research, but the research theme is based on the researcher's personal interest and on the random research funds. The situation is similar to that of the few researchers who work in archives which possess types of architectural material of the period.

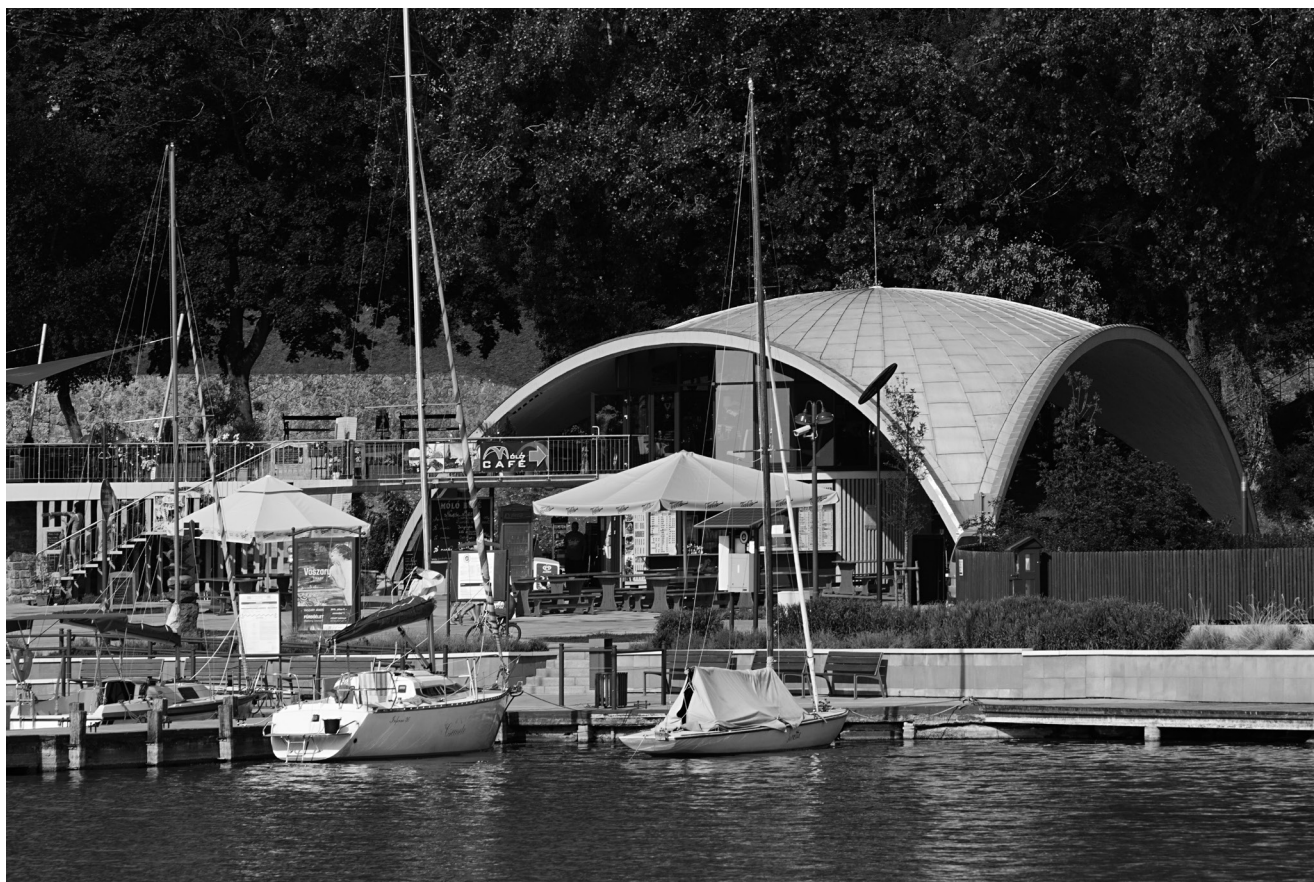
To sum up, the research themes are based on available material and personal interest. The best results are found in PhD degree theses. The list of the relevant doctoral works is short, but increasing and the results are valuable, so they are worth mentioning: Kornélia Kissfazekas, *Rural town centers in state socialism*, 2011; Rozália Marton, *Location, Configuration, Articulation — Architecture of the Balaton region in the 1960s*, 2014 and Péter Haba, *Context of structure, technology and aesthetics in Hungarian industrial architecture 1947-1970*, 2017. Although the dissertations are in Hungarian, the research results are widely published in international conference proceedings and journals.

Preservation

András Ferkai called attention to the danger threatening modern architectural heritage in Hungary already in 1998. As one of the reasons, he mentioned the general underestimation of socialist Modernism and, as another, the privatization of former state properties. This often meant that foreign developers purchased real estate just to obtain



05 László Földes, András Farkas, Péter Sugár, Old port, Tihany, Hungary, 2015. Information centre and buffet under the reconstructed concrete shell structure.
© Tamás Bujnovszky, 2015.



06 László Földes, András Farkas, Péter Sugár, Old port, Tihany, Hungary, 2015. The complex from the pier. © Tamás Bujnovszky, 2015.



07 László Földes, András Farkas, Péter Sugár, Old port, Tihany, Hungary, 2015. View of the new complex. © Tamás Bujnovszky, 2015.

a site of high value and they were not interested in costly reconstruction⁶. The situation has not been changed in twenty years. Many, once valuable, special or innovative modern buildings from the socialist period are now demolished, fully rebuilt or out of use which leads to a slow but guaranteed destruction. In 1992 a new level of monument protection was introduced, so-called local protection, which gave more opportunities for the authorities to also list post-war modern buildings. However, this didn't result in a radical extension of such items, despite the fact that scholars proposed a long list of modern buildings worth protecting in 2000⁷.

The situation described above explains that it is difficult to find successful examples of preservation or reconstruction of post-war modern architecture from the last decade. Some buildings in Tihany are the rare exceptions. The socialist government started an intensive program for the development of tourism around the Lake Balaton in 1957 which resulted in several innovative modern buildings completed around 1960. The architecture of the 1960s attracted professional attention already before the political change, so it is not surprising that the buildings in the old port of Tihany were put on the conservationists' wish-list to protect — without success.

The architects László Földes, András Farkas and Péter Sugár began to work on the development of the whole Tihany peninsula in 2008. As a part of this project, they suggested the local protection of the buildings in the old port: the post-office, the bazaar and the snack bar. It took seven years, but the reconstruction of the first two items was completed in 2015. The core of the project was the concrete shell structure which was preserved as well as the cylindrical shape of the former post-office under the roof. The single story bazaar was also kept but at one end, it was transformed into a two-story building. The ground floor houses shops and stores, while upstairs there is a café with a

deck now connecting the upper level to the shell structure. An originally existing but meaningless structural connection now had a function. The result is reconstruction and reinterpretation simultaneously.

Notes

- 1 Pál Lővei, "Aközelmúlt emlékeinek műemléki védelméről" [about preservation of the recent past], *Műemlékvédelmi Szemle*, n. 1, Budapest, Országos Műemléki Felügyelőség, 1996, 147-169.
- 2 Anna M. Eifert-Körnig, *Die kompromittierte Moderne: Staatliche Bauproduktion und oppositionelle Tendenzen in der Nachkriegsarchitektur Ungarns* [the compromised modern: large industrial construction and resistant tendencies in post-war Hungarian architecture], Budapest/Berlin, Új Művészet/Reimer, 1994.
- 3 Endre Prakfalvi, Virág Hajdú (ed.), *Építészet és tervezés Magyarországon 1945-1959 / Architecture and Planning in Hungary 1945-1959*, Budapest, Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, Magyar Építészeti Múzeum, 1996.
- 4 Zoltán Fehérvári, Virág Hajdú, Endre Prakfalvi, *Modern és szocreál: építészet és tervezés Magyarországon 1945-1959* [modern and social-real: architecture and planning in Hungary 1945-1959], Budapest, Magyar Építészeti Múzeum, 2006.
- 5 Márta Branczik (ed.), *Korszerű lakás, 1960* [modern housing, 1960], Budapest, Terc, Budapesti Történeti Múzeum, 1956-os Intézet, 2011; András Ferkai, Erszébet Rubóczy (ed.), *KÖZTI, egy tervezőiroda története* [KÖZTI, history of a design office], vol. 1-2, Budapest, Vince, 2015; Mariann Simon, *Restarts. Hungarian architecture 1956-1969 and 1990-2010*, Budapest, Terc, 2016.
- 6 András Ferkai, "Recording and preserving the modern heritage in Hungary", in Allen Cunningham (ed.), *Modern Movement Heritage – A Challenge to Manage*, London, Routledge, 1998, 44-49.
- 7 Pál Lővei (ed.), *A műemlékvédelem táguló körei* [expanding circles of heritage protection], Budapest, Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 2000.

Mariann Simon

PhD, architect. She is a professor at Szent Istvan University, Budapest, Hungary. She is the author of the book *Valami más* [the other] (Terc, 2003) and co-editor of the book *Ideological Equals: Women architects in socialist Europe 1945-1989* (Routledge, 2017). Her collected essays about 20th-century Hungarian architecture were published in the book *Restarts* (Terc, 2016).



István Janáky, Palatinus bath, Budapest, Hungary, 1936-1937. Portico of the main building, renewed by Archikon in 2017.
© Bujinowszky Tamás, 2017.

Revisiting *interbellum* architecture of Hungary

BY ANDRÁS FERKAI

Though there are fans of the “Bauhaus style” and the term is largely used by the real estate market (in an incorrect way), modern architecture cannot arouse interest and sympathy in the majority of Hungarian society. Far from being a closed chapter, interwar architecture does not stand in the lime-light of Hungarian historiography either. This paper tries to find causes of this indifference and highlight achievements in historiography and preservation. Its aim is in particular to report on new scholarly publications as well as case studies that are occasionally good examples but more often controversial.

Historiography

The moment the curators of the *Shaping the Great City* exhibition visited the Hungarian Museum of Architecture in 1998, and pushed aside all archive materials the staff prepared for them, was astonishing. It turned out that they only were interested in Bauhaus related architects and works of the CIAM-group from the period. All the rest (the majority of our architecture, in fact) did not fit into their concept. By that time, our historiography exceeded long since the phase in which only progressive architecture mattered. Publications of the 1980s already broke with the monolithic view of the Modern Movement and observed how the International Style was domesticated. When preparing a large topographic survey of Budapest building stock¹, I realized that the majority of the production is far from pure Functionalism. Hungarian Modernism is heterogeneous: besides foreign influences, there are atypical and hybrid styles plus local and national aspirations. Lately, Art Deco laid claim to a certain portion of modernism². The other feature of modern architecture in Hungary is discontinuity. The promising debut with splendid rationalist buildings and pioneering ferrocement structures before the Great War was cut by the conservatism of the 1920s. The Modern Movement gained ground at the end of the decade and spread well into the WWII when few European countries had any modern architecture at all.

A splendid album entitled *Light and Form*³ presents the best of this production with vintage photographs, as a recompense for the absence of comprehensive monographs. Books on New Budapest or Hungarian Modernism comparable to the volumes published by the MIT Press on Czech and Rumanian modern architecture and the like are yet to come. Scholarly monographs on leading modern architects, with but a few exceptions, are also missing. No doubt, this lag may contribute to the indifference of people and even historians towards Modernism. Public taste that prefers 19th century historicism also may have a share in this problem.

Even the aversion to mass architecture of the socialist period may be transferred to the previous era.

The scant amount of historical studies on Modernism offer a critical reading of both life works and building types under scrutiny. Two architects’ monographs and some articles on mass housing of the period, the speculatively built apartments, must be mentioned. For lack of extensive social housing, apartment blocks constitute the majority of modern residential buildings in Hungary. An emblematic area of middle class rented apartments in Budapest is Újlipótváros with the grand Szent István Park complex in its center. Inhabitants have been proud of its modernity and tended to call its architecture “Bauhaus-style”. At the 7th *International docomomo Conference* (Paris, 2002), I stressed the discrepancy between modern imagery of the apartment houses and their floor plans. The terrace of nearly forty apartment houses that surrounds a new public park facing the Danube, bears all the superficial marks of modernity, smooth and colored elevations, corner-windows, even roof-terraces on the top, yet some contemporary architects did not consider them modern, since they were not designed from inside out. Indeed, the generic type of floor plans rather was the outcome of building regulations and interests of the investor than the decision of architects. Recent studies, therefore, investigate real living conditions in these houses, instead of describing aesthetic values and the “illusion of comfort” in them⁴. While the typical dwelling was the two-room-and-hall flat the number of one-room flats increased. The latter was equipped with a bathroom, sometimes with a hall or kitchenette and what is really absurd, a servant’s room. These minimum flats were leased not only by bachelors but couples often with a child or other relative. It happened that tenants even took in lodgers. This “hedge-hopping of bourgeois needs”⁵ reflects well the weakened financial status of the middle-classes after the Great Depression which was more or less successfully disguised by spectacular facades and luxurious entrance halls.

New monographic volumes shed light on the less-known aspects of famous architects' life-work. A large book on Farkas Molnár⁶, graduate of the Weimar Bauhaus and leader of the Hungarian CIAM-group, first surveyed the whole oeuvre including art, architecture as well as his theoretical and propaganda work. For a new reading of his career, chapters discuss how this avant-garde artist desperately tried to introduce rational building in Hungary and was confined by political conditions to small private commissions and eventually compelled to compromise. In this process, however, there are bright moments such as the ingenious fan-shaped family house in Mese Street (1937) clad with diagonal and corrugated Eternit plates or the first project for the oval Holy Land Church in Budapest (1938) meant to be covered with a paraboloid in section concrete shell cupola (engineer: István Menyhárd).

Another elaborate book with a collection of essays on modern buildings by Lajos Kozma, a similarly many-sided talent of the older generation, tries to look behind the scenes and disclose the architect's way of thinking about living. He has been known as the designer of luxurious villas and apartments with custom-made furniture, and his writings portray him as a functionalist. His definition "the house as an article for personal appliance" is consonant with Le Corbusier's term "living-machine". Kozma's uniformly designed interiors, however, have more to do with the Gesamtkunstwerk idea of earlier times. They "in effect allowed relatively little scope for the owner's individual taste and personal effects"⁷. Moreover, as another essay proves it, Kozma arranged not only the interiors as directors do scenes but also photographs taken of them. A funny sign of the cooperation of architect and photographer are those "wandering" objects that appear on the photographs of various flats⁸.

The author of the latter essay recently published her thesis in which several layers of modernity intertwine: aviation, airports, aerial photographs and photomurals that all meet in the streamlined building of Budaörs Airport (Virgil Bierbauer and László Králik, 1937). In the passengers' hall a photo frieze by Mrs. Elemér Marsovszky psyched up passengers to the flight⁹. The dissertation placed the airport in a broad international context and confirmed its significance within the genre. When UNESCO requested **docomomo** International to propose a tentative list for the World Heritage List, Budaörs Airport was raised as a nominee, but members of the ISC/Registers were frightened on the spot by the decayed condition of the building. The structural concrete was reinforced in a brutal way that destroyed the gracious spatial effect of the hall and sliced the photomontage. The terminal building and the large hangar were granted monument status in 2000, yet there are no funds for a restoration, and this can lead to its falling into ruin soon.

Preservation

In my contribution to **docomomo's** *Modern Movement Heritage* (1998)¹⁰, an account of the state of affairs in preserving our recent heritage was given. No more than two accurate reconstructions could have been reported:

a shop front and a semi-detached house the exterior of which had been meticulously restored while the interiors were freely adapted to the new function of a branch bank. Whilst there are some more good examples now, conditions have obviously worsened since. The preservation of significant buildings would require a shared recognition of their cultural and social value, yet this consensus is missing more than ever. Scholars and specialists in vain joined forces to propose authorities nearly two thousand sites of the 19th and 20th centuries to be included in the national list of monuments¹¹, not a tithe was actually accepted. Most people still do not like modern buildings and cannot understand why they should be protected. Their bad state of repair, after many decades of neglect, and technical deficiencies discourage investors. Players in the economically driven world are not concerned with heritage unless they are forced to do so or are subsidized by the state. The government ruling since 2010 has been interested in using EU support but have regarded experts and long proceedings of the National Office for Monument Protection as a hindrance for spending these funds and hence, disbanded the office. Its former functions had been delegated to the prime ministership and to government customer services. Subsidies related to heritage go mainly to the reconstruction of medieval castles and manor houses and not to 20th century buildings. Consequently, modern monuments are seriously endangered and, indeed, we are losing more and more of them.

Another difficulty is that expertise is missing. Hungary had long taken part in the activity of **docomomo** International but recently the cooperation has weakened and transmission of knowledge broken. Few Hungarian architects make an effort (or can afford) to participate in **docomomo** activities, conferences and seminars. It is mainly technological experience that is missing but most architects are also not familiar with the principles either. The similarity of modern and contemporary architectural forms obscures the importance of authenticity. Renovating architects tend to replace original materials with new ones to such an extent that listed buildings lose their character. In the case of a terminal building for streetcars on Móricz Zsigmond square, Budapest (József Schall, 1943), the winner of an ideas competition only kept the slender *pilotis* and the thin ring-shaped reinforced concrete slab on the top of them. The three pavilions underneath were replaced by new ones where exposed concrete superseded smooth stone cladding and curved glass panes the original aluminum-coated curtain walls. A former sketch of a pavilion surrounded by curved glass proves, the architect argues, that the original designer might have a similar idea in this case too, only the severe war-years prevented him from realizing his dream. The **docomomo** manifesto indeed admits the priority of the idea against materials but never has encouraged architects to turn a modern monument into a contemporary artefact with no respect of façade proportions and detailing.

A far more acceptable attitude is that of Tamás Tomay, an architect highly sensitive to Modernism, who extended some 1930s villas on the Buda hillside by adding new parts



01 János Beutum, Balassa House, Budapest, Hungary, 1935. The building was restored by Margaréta Mészáros, Ákos Pfemeter and Ágoston Szőke. © Ágoston Szőke, 2009.



02 Károly Weichinger, Pánczél House, Budapest, Hungary, 1932. The building was reconstructed by MM Művek (Miklós Miltényi). © Bujnovszky Tamás, 2010.



03 Virgil Bierbauer and László Králik, Public airport, Budaörs, Hungary, 1935-1937. Terminal building seen from the runway. © Fortepan.hu 132.877. Hungarian Museum of Transport. Kolbányi Collection. Unknown photographer, 1938.



04 Virgil Bierbauer and László Králik, Public airport, Budaörs, Hungary, 1935-1937. Reinforced structure of the passenger hall. © Ferkai András, 2001.

in a contemporary manner. The coexistence of the two substances is convincing in the case of Kajos House (Peter Kaffka, 106, Pasaréti Street, 1931. Reconstruction: 1999), but less felicitous at the duplex house in Kavics Street (Lajos Kozma, 1933. Reconstruction: 1996) where the two-story villa, enlarged both vertically and horizontally, is literally lost in the new bulky and intrusive mass.

A significant modern house at the Napraforgó Street model housing estate (György Masirevich, 1931) was recently renewed. The floor plans and the double-height living room with gallery were basically retained but some parts like the bathroom were redesigned with trendy pixelated mosaic walls. Single-pane glass walls of the living room have been preserved but a second layer was put behind to improve thermal and sound insulation. The thick white French windows behind the slender black metal frame of the original glass walls compromises the look of the building. A replacement window installed within the existing frame would have been more favorable. The greatest mistake of the reconstruction is a new exterior steel stair leading to the rooftop transformed into a roof terrace. The architect proudly imparts that he used the stair of another house in the same street as a model. This one, designed by József Fischer, was alone equipped with a roof pavilion and an exposed stair leading up to it. This sort of imitation is more than dubious in a conservation area. For that very reason, it is beyond my grasp how this reconstruction could be awarded a prize by ICOMOS Hungary.

Napraforgó Street, a Werkbundsiedlung-like model housing estate mirrors every problem of our modern heritage. Nearly thirty years after the regime change, a portion of the twenty-two houses have not been renovated yet, and several reconstructions do not match the expected quality or have resulted in the loss of original details. Fences and lamp posts once were uniform in the street, now every owner decides in what form to reconstruct them. Unlike at the Werkbund estates abroad, there is no local regulation and coordinated preservation here, every reconstruction is unique and designed by different architects. Consultation is prescribed with the local inspector and plans have to be based on previous research. Yet the scientific documentation with a proposal for the reconstruction is financed by the client which guarantees the clash of scholarly and private interests. I undertook research and scientific documentation for three houses in Napraforgó Street. At the first building



05 Virgil Bierbauer and László Králik, Public airport, Budaörs, Hungary, 1935-1937. Passenger hall. © Marsovszky Elemérné és Társa, 1937. From *Magyar Művészet* 6, 1938, 180.



06 József Schall, Streetcar terminal, Budapest, Hungary, 1942-1943. © Marsovszky Elemérné és Társa, 1943. Private collection.



07 József Schall, Streetcar terminal, Budapest, Hungary, 1942-1943. The building was reconstructed by Hetedik Műterem (Levente Szabó, Zsolt Gyüre). © Bujnovszky Tamás, 2015.

(by Fischer) the disclosed color scheme was messed up by the contractor, and original windows were removed despite recommendation at the second house. The third client concerned proposals for the exterior while the complete interior had been transformed earlier. Though there are a few appropriate reconstructions in Napraforgó street, exemplary ones are to be looked for elsewhere. The most successful one is Balassa villa (20, Dobsina Street, János Beutum, 1935) where both façades and interiors regained their original splendor in 2009 (Margaréta Mészáros, Ákos Pfemeter and Ágoston Szőke). In the case of Pánczél villa (20, Töröcsvár Street, Károly Weichinger, 1932), the building has been slightly adapted to the needs of the new owners without seriously affecting its character (Miklós Miltényi, 2010).

It is far more difficult to deal with large public buildings. Two modern churches (Franciscan Church and convent by Gyula Rimanóczy, Pasaréti Square, 1934; Catholic Church in Városmajor Park by Aladár and Bertalan Árkay, 1932–36) are more or less intact, whereas office buildings, department stores and hospitals have kept their original façades at best. A reconstruction fraught with risks finished in 2017 on Margaret Island (Archikon, Csaba Nagy Károly Pólus). The Palatinus Bath, originally inaugurated eighty years earlier (István Janáky, 1937), had been Budapest's first open-air pool. The directorate decided to install a heated indoor pool and a wellness section in the listed building so that the pool park be able to welcome the public all year-round. New pools were to be sunk into the basement of the south wing that contained previously dressing rooms. Works caused such grave structural problems that the whole wing had to be demolished and rebuilt according to the original exterior. It looks exactly like before from the outside but the white-washed brickwork is all round new. The restoration gave back the Italianate building its original colors and lightness, even the perished fresco above the entrance hall by István Pekáry had been repainted. In this respect, Palatinus Bath

is an unrivalled example where the bright and light spirit of Modernism is felt again.

Notes

- 1 András Ferkai, *Buda építésze a két világháború között* [Buda's architecture between the two World Wars], Budapest, MTA Művészettörténeti Kutatóintézet, 1995.
- 2 Zoltán Bolla, *A Magyar art deco építészet 1–11* [Hungarian Art Deco architecture], Budapest, Arítion, 2016, 2017.
- 3 Plank Ibolya, Virág Hajdú, Pál Ritoók, *Light and Form. Modern Architecture and Photography 1927–1950*, Budapest, Vince Kiadó, 2010 [2003].
- 4 Judit Valló, "Belbudai modern bérházak és lakóik az 1930-as években" [Tenement houses and their inhabitants in inner-Buda in the 1930s], *Tanulmányok Budapest múltjából* 35, 2011, 245–273.
- 5 Eszter Gábor, "A polgári lakásigények mélyrepülése — Az egyszobás cselédszobás lakás" [The hedge-hopping of bourgeois housing needs — the one-room flat with a servant's room], *Budapesti Negyed* 63 (Spring 2009), 91–122.
- 6 András Ferkai, *Molnár Farkas*, Budapest, Terc, 2011.
- 7 Éva Horányi, "The New House — Lajos Kozma's Buda Villas", in Éva Horányi (ed.), *Modern Buildings by Lajos Kozma*, Budapest, Terc, 2006, 103.
- 8 Plank Ibolya "Decorative Pictures — Photographs by Zoltán Seidner of Lajos Kozma's Interiors", in Éva Horányi (ed.), *Modern Buildings by Lajos Kozma*, Budapest, Terc, 2006, 28–67.
- 9 Plank Ibolya, "Budaörs Airport and its Photomontage — Symbols of Modernism", *Acta Historiae Artium* 58, 1, Budapest, MTA, 2017, 167–275.
- 10 Allen Cunningham, *Modern Movement Heritage*, London, E&FN Spon, 1998.
- 11 Pál Lővei (ed.), *A műemlékvédelem táguló körei* [Expanding circles of historic preservation], Budapest, Országos Műemlékvédelmi Hivatal, 2000.

András Ferkai

(Hungary, 1953). DSc, architect, professor of architectural history (Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design). Visiting Scholar of CCA Montreal (1998). Member of **docomomo** ISC/Registers (1996–2002). Ybl Prize for architecture (2002); Lajos Németh Prize for art history (2007). His research focuses on intellectual and professional history of 20th century architecture and housing.



Bertalan Árkay, Sándor Faragó, József Fischer, Károly Heysa, Pál Ligei, Farkas Molnár, Móric Pogány, Gábor Preisich and Mihály Vadász, Apartment Houses of the National Social Insurance Institute, Budapest, Hungary, 1934–1935. © Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center – HMA, Olga Máté, 1935.

Communicating “space and form”: The history and impact of the journal *Tér és Forma* as the Hungarian pipeline of Modernism

BY PÁL RITOÓK AND ÁGNES ANNA SEBESTYÉN

In the interwar era, architectural journals were at the forefront of professional attention and had the power to disseminate the Modern Movement in architecture globally. The Hungarian journal *Tér és Forma* (1928–1948) took the lead to introduce international modern architecture to the Hungarian public, while continually reporting on the newest building projects in interwar Hungary. Virgil Bierbauer, the periodical's long-time editor (1928–1942), presented the broad panorama of contemporary architecture and his followers from 1943 intended to continue his legacy even in wartime. The impact of the periodical did not halt at its cessation in 1948 but, directly as well as indirectly, continued to define 20th century architectural historiography in Hungary.

Introduction

The dissemination of the Modern Movement in architecture was primarily fostered by publications as major communication tools of the interwar era. Architectural periodicals were key platforms where modern architecture started to gain recognition and later, predominance. In Hungary, this impact was much needed as though in the early 1910s, the first pre-modern buildings were constructed, these tendencies stopped being continued for many years after the war. Most of the designers drew inspiration from historical styles, while some of them pursued a national style under the late Ödön Lechner's influence. In pursuit of a national style, a few architects found the source in the so-called crenelated Renaissance characteristic of the north-east of historic Hungary, while others in Eastern cultures, which were thought to be related to the Hungarians. Tendencies of the Arts and Crafts also outlived WWI, but the typical style of the 1920s became Neo-Baroque, which perfectly echoed the conservative political climate of this era. The first examples of Art Deco, however, also emerged in Hungary, preceding Modernism.

In the aftermath of WWI, architectural periodicals in Hungary remained conservative and avant-garde art journals such as Lajos Kassák's journal entitled *MA* [today] antedated architectural ones. The journals like *Magyar Építőművészet* [Hungarian architecture] (1907–1943) and *Építő Ipar — Építő Művészet* [building industry — architecture] (1914–1922, 1926–1932) represented a conservative approach and the shortcomings of the architectural media created a need for fresh air. The periodical *Vállalkozók Lapja* [contractors' journal] (1879–1944) regularly listed current architectural projects while also publishing essays. This

journal took an important step in 1926, which proved to be a milestone concerning the distribution of principles of modern architecture in Hungary.

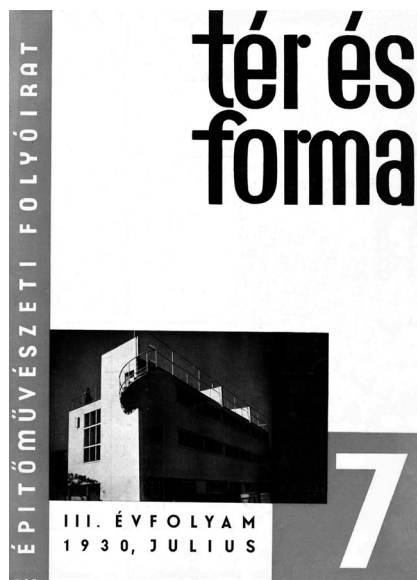
From information to content: Virgil Bierbauer as the editor of *Tér és Forma*

In 1926, the journal *Vállalkozók Lapja* launched an appendix entitled *Tér és Forma* [space and form], which became an independent monthly periodical in May 1928. The publishing company of *Vállalkozók Lapja* appointed the architects Virgil Bierbauer (also known as Virgil Borbíró, 1893–1956) and János Komor (1900–?) as the editors of the newly established journal. As the letter of appointment dated 6 April 1928 stated, the editors would bear full responsibility for the acquisition, the selection and the editing of the publication material¹. As the subsequent years followed, this declared editorial independence truly prevailed as, especially after the resignation of János Komor in 1931, Virgil Bierbauer became the magazine's principal voice².

Virgil Bierbauer proved to be an excellent choice for an editor even at the beginning, as by 1928 he had an established career as an architect and writer and he was also well-informed about contemporary architectural production due to his travels and his lively interest in current publications. He was born into a family of architects and engineers. His father, István Bierbauer, was the chief director of engineering at the Royal Hungarian Post, while his maternal grandfather, Gyula Seefehlner, was the head engineer of the building of two major bridges in Budapest at the end of the 19th century. Virgil Bierbauer obtained his architectural diploma at the Technical University of Munich



01 Virgil Bierbauer and his wife, Adrienne Bierbauer (née Graul). © Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center – HMA, József Pécsi, late 1920s.



02 Bohdan Lachert and József Szanajca, Apartment House, Warsaw, Poland, 1928–1929. The cover of *Tér és Forma*, n. 7, 1930.



03 József Fischer, Hoffmann Villa, Budapest, Hungary, 1933–1934. © Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center – HMA, Olga Máté, 1934.

in 1915, where he was oriented towards the humanities while attending art history courses held by Heinrich Wölfflin among other notable scholars at the University of Munich. He began his career as an architect after WWI, obtaining his doctorate in 1920 and, in 1925, he started his long-term and career-defining project for the extension of Kelenföld Power Plant in Budapest (1925–1934). Now it is a listed monument just like Virgil Bierbauer's other major project, Budaörs Airport (1936–1937), which he co-designed with László Králik. In 1927, he participated in the international congress of the *Comité Permanent International des Architectes* (CPIA) in the Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam. During his stay, he took the opportunity to visit notable building ensembles in the Netherlands such as the works of Willem Marinus Dudok and Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud³. He also traveled to neighboring Germany where he visited the *Weißenhofsiedlung* in Stuttgart (1927), which was at that time at the forefront of professional attention. Virgil Bierbauer published his experiences extensively in Hungarian art and architectural magazines, while his encounters with both architects and buildings in foreign land proved to be deeply beneficial during his editorship at *Tér és Forma*.

Tér és Forma as an independent architectural journal was established in the pivotal year of 1928, when the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM) was founded at the *Chateau de la Sarraz* in Switzerland by a group of European architects including Le Corbusier, André Lurçat, Hannes Meyer, Gerrit Rietveld and Alberto Sartoris, among others. Also in 1928, the founder Walter Gropius left the Bauhaus along with leading artists such as László Moholy-Nagy and Marcel Breuer and started to promote his ideas and works outside of the school⁴. The year 1928 was also hallmarked by the launch of other influential periodicals of the era such as the Italian *Casabella* and *Domus*. Regarding

Hungarian architecture, it is important to point out that the architect Farkas Molnár (1897–1945), who studied at the Bauhaus in Weimar between 1921 and 1925, obtained his architectural diploma in Budapest in 1928. He quickly became one of the major promoters of modern architecture in Hungary as architect, writer and activist. He was initially involved in the production of the magazine *Tér és Forma* as the designer of its cover for the first two years and a contributor writing on topics such as the Bauhaus, social housing and minimal existence. In addition to these definitive momentums, the turbulent years around 1930 created an intellectual arena where there was a lot to explore, communicate and interpret.

In the last issue of 1928, the editors of *Tér és Forma* defined the principal goal of the magazine articulating the necessity of introducing the newest products of contemporary architecture to the Hungarian audience from a global perspective with the intention of promoting modern architecture and eliminating the isolation of Hungarian architecture⁵. This ambition was successfully realized over the years, especially under Virgil Bierbauer's editorship between 1928 and 1942. János Komor acted as the co-editor until the end of 1931 and from the January issue of 1932, Virgil Bierbauer was the sole editor until 1942, when he was called to join the Army. The architect József Fischer (1901–1995) and an editorial board took over the journal, but Virgil Bierbauer's name was still indicated as one of the founders of the magazine and he was even able to publish some of his essays. Soon after, the magazine ceased to be published in 1948.

Virgil Bierbauer eagerly collected an immense amount of information that he – using his editorial filter – transformed into publication material. As the major content provider of the magazine, he collected textual and visual information, made selections, created narratives, developed interpretations and defined messages. In addition to creating a huge

local impact, he also managed to introduce Hungarian architecture to the international architectural community. His status as a cultural mediator was also reinforced by his activities as curator, lecturer and representative in international exhibitions, congresses and other professional events such as the *Triennale di Milano*.

To collect information, Virgil Bierbauer relied on three essential bases: his continuously expanding international network of professional connections, his travels abroad and contemporary publications such as architectural periodicals, books and comprehensive volumes of referential status like Alberto Sartoris' and Agnoldomenico Pica's corpuses⁶. His network can be traced by studying Virgil Bierbauer's remaining correspondence, particularly its segment of approximately 900 letters, which is related to his professional work and now held at the Hungarian Museum of Architecture in the context of the Virgil Bierbauer archive⁷. This remarkable archival material contains letters written by several notable architects of the era such as Marcel Breuer, Walter Gropius, Heinrich Lauterbach, Fritz Höger, Alberto Sartoris, Howard Robertson, Wells Coates, Alvar Aalto, Willem Marinus Dudok, Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud, Agnoldomenico Pica, Giuseppe Terragni, Bohuslav Fuchs, Josef Havlíček and Karel Honzík among many others. Even though Virgil Bierbauer had never managed to go overseas, his network not only covered Europe but also reached the USA and Japan as his correspondence with Richard Neutra and Masakazu Koyama (the editor of the Japanese architectural periodical *Kokusai Kenchiku*) demonstrates. Virgil Bierbauer was an avid traveler in European countries and he documented some of his journeys in his published travel reports. His trips were also mentioned in the memoir of Virgil Bierbauer's wife, Adrienne Graul (1896–1973) entitled *Bottle Post*⁸. Graul was deeply involved in Virgil Bierbauer's professional life as his secretary and translator managing his correspondence. As Graul once joked after Virgil Bierbauer was elected as Honorary Corresponding Member of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1931, "you are the Honorary and I am the Corresponding Member!"⁹. Aside from the memoir's highly biased narrative, it includes crucial information about Virgil Bierbauer's life and work. The publications that he followed are traceable in the reviews that he wrote for *Tér és Forma*, as he constantly reported on the current issues of architectural periodicals from all over the world and published comprehensive introductions to important books. His restless accumulation of information can be compared to Alberto Sartoris' undertakings on a similar scale as they both aspired to create the broad panorama of contemporary architecture. However, due to the limited spread of the issues, Virgil Bierbauer restricted himself to monthly compilations for 15 years that reflected his thoughts, preferences and struggles but also the external factors, which lay beyond Virgil Bierbauer's power.

On the basis of these three ways of acquiring information, Virgil Bierbauer was perfectly aware of the best targets to turn to. Therefore, he managed to collect publication material rather quickly and, if it was required, he was in the position to have them published in a matter of just a few months.

The textual and the visual information were equally significant for his editorial work and he eagerly collected photographic images to illustrate the journal. Unfortunately, however, this remarkable photographic material did not survive in Virgil Bierbauer's archive as he was always asked to send the images back after use. Consequently, lots of crucial information was lost in this process for today's researchers if we take into account the fact that, in many cases, the versos of vintage photographs provide information about the photographer, the route of the image and give an insight into editorial decisions. Even though the layout of *Tér és Forma* changed at times, the importance of the visual material prevailed. Virgil Bierbauer consciously used the photographs to illustrate the texts, emphasize certain aspects and make statements thus creating noteworthy word and image relationships. Furthermore, though he usually used the pictures taken by professional photographers in *Tér és Forma*, he benefited from his own experiences as an amateur photographer in selecting, arranging and editing images¹⁰. In the Hungarian scene, the professional architectural photographers worthy of special attention were Ernő Bánó, Tivadar Kozelka and Zoltán Seidner as well as those photographers who occasionally took on commissions for architectural photographs such as Ferenc Haár, Olga Máté, József Pécsi and Klára Wachter, whose names were regularly credited in the journal.

Although photography served as a globally understandable universal language, Virgil Bierbauer used captions and sometimes even added summaries in English, German, French or Italian. Due to his attention to potential foreign readers and especially because of his expanded international network, *Tér és Forma* gained a referential status for not only the Hungarian, but also for the international architectural community. Thus, it frequently served as a source material for even foreign journal editors, who either transmitted the published material from *Tér és Forma* or reached those architects directly whose work was acknowledged by the magazine.

Between the national and the international: Virgil Bierbauer as the creator of a narrative

Virgil Bierbauer worked with his editorial apparatus professionally and systematically. In addition to editing every single issue, he wrote a significant amount of the articles himself, but he also invited his prominent colleagues to express their thoughts on theoretical issues and the most modern architecture, and he was also willing to engage himself in open debates. Driven by his belief in the power of the written word, he wrote heated polemics, definitive statements, theoretical arguments, simple building descriptions, travel reports as well as book and press reviews. He continually accentuated his deep-rooted ideas about the essence of modern living, economic design solutions and the local relevance of modern architecture.

Concerning the arrangement of the material he collected and produced, Virgil Bierbauer at times compiled thematic issues concentrating on certain building types such as housing, sanatoriums, baths, sport facilities and churches,



04 Virgil Bierbauer, Kelenföld Power Plant, Budapest, Hungary, 1925–1934. Boiler house III, 1931–1932. © Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center – HMA, Tivadar Kozelka, 1934.



05 Farkas Molnár, Molnár's apartment in Delej Villa, Budapest, Hungary, 1929. Tubular steel furniture designed by Marcel Breuer. © Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center – HMA, Ernő Bánó, 1929–1930.

which let us reflect on the abundance of the material and his conscious planning. This explanation chiefly applies to the early 1930s, when each yearly volume had about 400 or 500 numbered pages, while after the mid-1930s, the spread of the magazine started to diminish along with the decrease in the foreign material and the parallel increase in the Hungarian material. In July 1938, Virgil Bierbauer wrote a letter to Richard Neutra, in which he informed him that he could not publish those buildings Richard Neutra proposed for publication in *Tér és Forma* owing to the priority of the Hungarian material and due to the fact that the journal's length was limited because of financial problems¹¹. It is all the more remarkable that the buildings Richard Neutra recommended included such highlights as the Barsha House (1938), the Beard House (1934), the Miller House (1937) and the Landfair Apartments (1937) among his other notable buildings¹².

Virgil Bierbauer's understanding of the modern, the progressive, the international, the national and the vernacular had all specific meanings and places in his narrative that he articulated in *Tér és Forma*. As many of his modernist peers, he referred to life, climate and function as essential starting points of architectural planning with regards to the life of the inhabitants, the local climatic conditions and the function of the building and each room. He used the words progressive and modern based on functional and not formalist considerations. Ironically, he indirectly stimulated formalistic tendencies as a magazine editor since numerous contractors regarded *Tér és Forma* as a source for direct inspiration. Virgil Bierbauer was well aware of this fact and he vehemently commented on readers' letters and other feedback condemning these, so to speak, distortions of his modernist beliefs. Whatever was the exact topic, he expressed such opinions repeatedly, especially in his editorials. One of his editorials was especially targeted at this subject as the title — “Progressive architecture: form or content” — indicated this distinction¹³.

His deep-rooted interest in vernacular architecture closely correlated these ideas as he paralleled the

anonymous architecture of the rural with the rationalism of modern design, both of which – according to Virgil Bierbauer – originated from the local climate, local building materials and function in general. He shared his valorization of vernacular forms in relation to modern architecture with many of his contemporaries such as the Italian Giuseppe Capponi as well as Giuseppe Pagano, the editor of the journal *Casabella*¹⁴. As Pagano expressed in his article “Documenting Rural Architecture”, “The repertory of rural architecture reveals an immense encyclopedia of abstract forms and creative expressions with obvious connections to the land, climate, economy, and technology”¹⁵. This was a focal point for Virgil Bierbauer too, who eagerly observed vernacular architecture during his journeys in the Hungarian countryside as well as, for example, in Capri and around Lago Maggiore in Switzerland.

Virgil Bierbauer's notions about the national and the international originated in his concepts of the modern. Therefore, he objected to the idea of an International Style as he believed in local solutions while aspiring to modern spaces and forms. With regards to the regions and countries incorporated in *Tér és Forma*, the magazine was quite inclusive as, although it basically covered Europe, it still addressed the USA, South America and Japan. It can be argued that the content followed Virgil Bierbauer's journeys as both an actual and an armchair-traveler considering his travels in modern architecture as a travel of the mind pursuing to create content from his readings and via his network. *Tér és Forma* was also inclusive with regards to different tendencies in contemporary architecture, which originated in Virgil Bierbauer's premises about content over form. Therefore, it was a reasonable editorial decision to include in the same volumes such contemporary building ensembles that, although representing the finest contemporary architectural ideas, were formally not based on the same grounds. The Hilversum Town Hall (1924–1930) representing Willem Marinus Dudok's Wrightian architecture featured in 1931, in the same year as the hard-line



06 Group photograph of the 2nd meeting of CIAM-Ost in Brno in May 1937.
© Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center - HMA.

Modernism of J. J. P. Oud's Kiefhoek Housing Estate (1925–1930) and the Van Nelle Factory in Rotterdam (1927–1931). In about 1930, the German content equally comprised the Expressionist architecture of the Hamburg-based Fritz Höger and the *Neue Sachlichkeit* of Walter Gropius. With regards to Sweden, for instance, Ivar Tengbom's Classicism was not overshadowed by Sven Markelius' and Uno Åhrén's Modernism in *Tér és Forma*. This variety also applied to the thematic issues and especially the materials on interior design, which covered a broad range including the Hungarian-born Marcel Breuer's standardized — and supposedly machine-made — tubular steel furniture, exquisite Art Deco interiors and the Hungarian Gyula Kaesz's furniture representing modern solutions rooted in traditional craftsmanship. Beyond Virgil Bierbauer's openness to a great variety of tendencies and regions, his German and Italian orientation prevailed over the years, which originated in his studies, his journeys and especially in the political climate of interwar Hungary. After the Nazis' rise to power, the German content of *Tér és Forma* comprised the works of the German émigrés, while the Italian content remained steady and also incorporated Fascist architecture.

With regards to Hungarian architecture, Virgil Bierbauer systematically covered the newest projects emphasizing the best practices in pursuit of modern solutions. The Modern Movement in Hungary unfolded firstly in the field of housing due to the fact that the major state and ecclesiastical commissions succeeded private ones within a few years. It also meant that villas, family houses and corporate-owned tenement houses preceded and greatly outnumbered social housing. It created an arena of experimentation limited only by the clients' willingness and building regulations. *Tér és Forma* undertook the task of following the changes in the urban fabric, especially in the Hungarian capital, Budapest. The journal featured the new building ensembles such as the housing estate in Napraforgó Street (1931), the ensembles in Újlipótváros as well as the apartment houses of the National Social Insurance

Institute (1934–1935). The importance of the latter lies in the fact that the complex is an early Hungarian example of high-rise, free-standing slabs uniquely constructed at that time and, being beautifully photographed by exploiting the oblique views of the high-rise buildings. In addition to the continuously expanding modernist material from Hungary, the issues solely dedicated to the Hungarian CIAM group (founded in 1929 and including the architects Farkas Molnár, József Fischer, Máté Major, József Körner and others) reasonably stand out regarding the projects' progressiveness and simplicity as well as the occasional radical statements. The above-mentioned Farkas Molnár was the group's leading figure whose Bauhaus training continually inspired his work and defined his professional network during the 1930s. Interestingly, the CIAM issues also reported on the Hungarian émigré, Marcel Breuer's works executed in Germany, Switzerland and Britain reinforcing a sense of community between locals and émigrés.

After Virgil Bierbauer's involvement in CIAM, especially in CIAM-Ost (founded in 1937), he was able to express his views on rural architecture in another institutionalized platform. CIAM-Ost aimed at strengthening the collaboration between Central- and Eastern-European groups based on the idea that these regions had common and, in many ways, different problems than the Western-European chapters. One of these addressed the rural areas as it was emphasized that most people in this region still lived in the countryside rather than in big cities. Virgil Bierbauer acted as one of the major advocates of the question of rural architecture in CIAM-Ost and this regional approach was of course reflected in the Hungarian material of *Tér és Forma*. The issues dedicated to the region of Lake Balaton and the question of the weekend houses surrounding the popular holiday destination exemplify the endeavor to negotiate not only urban but regional problems in the magazine¹⁶.

After Virgil Bierbauer: the final years of *Tér és Forma*

After Virgil Bierbauer joined the army and resigned from his editorial post in 1942, an editorial board took over the magazine headed by József Fischer, who had been an active author for the CIAM issues in the 1930s. The editorial board and the major authors comprised architects engaged with modernist ideas such as Pál Granasztói, Jenő Kismarty-Lechner Jr, Máté Major and János Wetzl. Among them, Máté Major was a devoted Communist who later in 1948–1949, during the years of the emergence of Socialist-Realism as a style, conflicted with his comrades due to his conviction about the compatibility of leftist architecture with Modernism.

After the outbreak of WWII, the number of private building commissions was severely diminished. Due to security reasons, it was prohibited to report on the intense and sometimes high-quality building activities of the military (military hospitals, recreational facilities, educational institutions, hangars and warehouses). Therefore, the articles at many times concerned architectural history, heritage protection and even the applied as well as the fine arts.

Owing to the leftist orientation of the authors, the artists studied in the journal usually belonged to the avant-garde artistic scene. In addition, such topics as war destruction and labor shortage caused by military service were also covered.

After 1945, József Fischer was appointed as the head of the Metropolitan Board of Public Works in Budapest and from this point, *Tér és Forma* was being published by the board. Frequent topics included war destruction, ideas for rebuilding, urban planning and social housing. Some articles even covered international architecture and at that time it was still free from the imminent total commitment to the Soviet Union. As a consequence of the fact that, in 1948, József Fischer as a Social Democrat decidedly opposed the forced unification of the Social Democratic party with the Communist party, he was dismissed from his political position, which led to the dissolution of the Metropolitan Board of Public Works and even the cessation of the journal *Tér és Forma*.

Creating an impact: *Tér és Forma*'s role in Hungarian architectural historiography

The contemporary influence of *Tér és Forma* was manifold and well-illustrated by the recollections of an architect, who was a daughter of a contractor based in a village near the city of Győr. Anna Kaiser's (born in 1933) career choice was very much influenced by *Tér és Forma*, which accompanied her childhood as her father subscribed to it for many years¹⁷. She followed attentively the journal because of its abundant illustrations, novel typography and global panorama, with the result that she became attracted to an architectural career. *Tér és Forma* could thus become a source of aspiration in addition to its referential status for contemporary architects.

After the cessation of *Tér és Forma* in 1948, its importance was not completely forgotten, even though Modernism was cast out under the prevalence of Socialist Realism.



07 Virgil Bierbauer, Kelenföld Power Plant, Budapest, Hungary, 1925–1934. The stairs of the switch-house under construction as it was photographed by Virgil Bierbauer. © Hungarian Museum of Architecture and Monument Protection Documentation Center – HMA, Virgil Bierbauer, ca. 1933.



08 The streets of Anacapri (left) and Giuseppe Capponi's house in Capri (right), in *Tér és Forma*, n. 10, 1932, 338–339, Virgil and Adrienne Bierbauer, 1932.

Thus, just like in the case of modern architecture, it was not at all recommended to refer to *Tér és Forma*, which was considered as the manifestation of modernist ideas. After Stalin's death in 1953, Modernism started to become acceptable again and *Tér és Forma* was included in the definitive narratives on the history of Hungarian architecture written by Jenő Rados (1961) and Ferenc Merényi (1969), respectively¹⁸. Although Merényi studied modern architecture in accordance with the Marxist narrative as it was expected in the Socialist Bloc, he comprehensively and positively analyzed the modern architecture of the interwar period. He even highlighted Virgil Bierbauer as a leading author, who propagated Modernism and supported the ideas of CIAM.

Over the subsequent decades, the historiography of Hungarian architecture followed the narrative originally designated in the early 20th century by the architect Marcell Komor and his colleagues as authors of the journal *Vállalkozók Lapja*, which was edited by Marcell Komor. His son, János Komor, and Virgil Bierbauer appropriated this narrative as editors of *Tér és Forma* and over the interwar years they developed the discourse into a canon, in which they drew the line of Hungarian modern architecture from the architecture of the 1910s represented by the so-called pre-modern architecture of Béla Lajta and Béla Málnai. This narrative became so influential that this theoretical line of progress is even echoed by today's historians. The illustrative material of *Tér és Forma* was no less influential as the

same, now archived photographs appeared over and over again in different publications in the second half of the 20th century. In 2003, the exhibition and the related book entitled *Light and Form: Modern Architecture and Photography 1927–1950*, however, chose an alternative standpoint by putting this archival photographic material into the center of scholarly attention instead of using the images as mere illustrations¹⁹.

We may conclude that *Tér és Forma* did not only gain predominance in the press of interwar Hungary just after its inception, but it also has retained its referential status until today. Its photographic material and textual body continues to inspire today's architects, scholars as well as conservators, who use the journal as a source of inspiration, subject of study and source for reconstructions.

Notes

- 1 Virgil Bierbauer's archive is kept in the Hungarian Museum of Architecture and includes architectural drawings, architectural and family photographs, correspondence, personal records, books and periodicals.
- 2 The two chapters of this article about Virgil Bierbauer's editorial activities are based on Ágnes Anna Sebestyén's research funded by the Hungarian National Cultural Fund (ref. n. 101102/00444).
- 3 For more on Virgil Bierbauer's travels, see: Ágnes Anna Sebestyén, "Architectural Photographs as Agents of Travel and Information: Virgil Bierbauer's Travels to Circulate Visual Information in the Architectural Press in Interwar Hungary", *Revelar*, vol. 2, novembro 2017, 104–122.
- 4 For more, see: Paul Overy, "Visions of the Future and the Immediate Past: The Werkbund Exhibition, Paris 1930", *Journal of Design History*, n. 4, 2004, 337–357.
- 5 See the editors' announcement in *Tér és Forma*, n. 8, 1928, with no page number.
- 6 Agnoldomenico Pica, *Nuova architettura nel mondo: Quaderni della Triennale*, Milano, Ulrico Hoepli, 1938; Alberto Sartoris, *Gli elementi dell'architettura funzionale: Sintesi panoramica dell'architettura moderna*, Milano, Ulrico Hoepli, 1932, 1935, 1941.
- 7 Virgil Bierbauer's correspondence was catalogued by Ágnes Anna Sebestyén in the framework of the research project funded by the Hungarian National Cultural Fund (ref. n. 101102/00444).
- 8 Adrienne Bierbauer (née Graul), *Palackposta* (Bottle Post), unpublished manuscript, Budapest, 1958–1972. Holding of the Virgil Bierbauer archive, Hungarian Museum of Architecture, Budapest.
- 9 Adrienne Bierbauer (née Graul), *Palackposta* (Bottle Post), 232.
- 10 For more on Virgil Bierbauer's use of photographic images, see: Ágnes Anna Sebestyén, "Strategy and Agency in Architectural Photographs: Imaging Strategies that Shaped an Architectural Magazine in Interwar Hungary", in Rubén A. Alcolea – Jorge Tarrago Mingo (ed.), *Inter Photo Arch, Congreso Internacional, inter-fotografía y arquitectura: interpretaciones; Inter Photo Arch, International Conference, inter-photography and architecture: interpretations*, Pamplona, Universidad de Navarra, 2016, 178–189.
- 11 Virgil Bierbauer's letter to Richard Neutra, 27 July 1938, N9, Virgil Bierbauer archive, Hungarian Museum of Architecture, Budapest.
- 12 Letter by Richard Neutra's secretary, Geraldine Haas to Virgil Bierbauer, 6 July 1938, N8, Virgil Bierbauer archive, Hungarian Museum of Architecture, Budapest.
- 13 Virgil Bierbauer, "A korszerű építészet: forma vagy tartalom" [progressive architecture: form or content], *Tér és Forma*, n. 1, 1932, 1–27.
- 14 Michelangelo Sabatino is at the forefront of scholarly research arguing about how Italian modernist architects approached vernacular architecture. Michelangelo Sabatino, "Space of Criticism: Exhibitions and the Vernacular in Italian Modernism", *Journal of Architectural Education*, n. 3, 2009, 35–52.
- 15 Giuseppe Pagano, "Documenti di architettura rurale", *Casabella*, n. 95, 1935, 18–25. English translation in Michelangelo Sabatino, "Documenting Rural Architecture, by Giuseppe Pagano", *Journal of*

- Architectural Education*, n. 2, 2010, 92.
- 16 *Tér és Forma*, n. 2, 1931; *Tér és Forma*, n. 5–6, 1932.
- 17 Anna Kaiser, *Építészgondolatok, interjúkötet* [thoughts of architects, collection of interviews with Hungarian architects], Budapest, 2015, 14.
- 18 Jenő Rados, *Magyar építészettörténet* [the history of Hungarian architecture], Budapest, Műszaki Könyvkiadó, 1961, 315–328; Ferenc Merényi, *A magyar építészet 1867–1967* [Hungarian architecture 1867–1967], Budapest, Műszaki Könyvkiadó, 1969, 67–99, esp. 81.
- 19 Ibolya Cs. Plank, Virág Hajdú, Pál Ritoók, *Fény és Forma: Modern építészet és fotó 1927–1950 / Light and Form: Modern Architecture and Photography 1927–1950*, Budapest, Kulturális Örökségvédelmi Hivatal, 2003; 2nd edition, Budapest, Vince Kiadó, 2010.

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Pál Ritoók

(b. Hungary, 1961). Art historian (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 1987). Since 1987 he has been curator at the Hungarian Museum of Architecture. He has published various articles, contributed to catalogues and curated exhibitions in the field of 19th and 20th century Hungarian architecture. He is the chief editor of the six volume popular series *Architecture of Hungary* (2001–2004; second, revised edition, 2016–2017). He was one of the curators of the exhibition *Light and Form: Modern Architecture and Photography 1927–1950* presented in Budapest in 2003, later in Helsinki, Rotterdam, Vienna, Dessau, Wrocław, Győr and Pécs. Between 2015 and 2017, he was vice-president of the Forster Gyula National Centre for Cultural Heritage Management.

Ágnes Anna Sebestyén

(b. Hungary, 1987). Art historian (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 2013; guest student at Leiden University, 2011). Since 2015, she has been working at the Hungarian Museum of Architecture. She has curatorial experience in 20th century architectural history. She has research expertise in the history of modern architecture, architectural photography and cultural mediation. Her current research focuses on the editorial activities of the architect Virgil Bierbauer and his role in international architectural transfers.

Jak žijeme — jak bydlíme

Průřez činžovním domem v 11 hodin dopoledne. Tento obraz života ve dvacátém století, znásoben desettisíckrát, stotisíckrát a ještě vícekrát, je příznačný pro současné „národní hospodářství“ svojí znamenitou „ekonomií“

Kreslil F. Bidlo

V. patro (nástavba): pí. Pfeifenstengelová, manželka cestujícího ve vyssavačích prachu, převínuje svoje robátko. Pomocnice v domácnosti, stojíc u sporáku, připravuje oběd pro dvě osoby. Ráno byla pí. Pfeifenstengelová nakoupit. Dnes a denně odbývá se v této šťastné rodině prádlo.

IV. patro (nástavba): pí. zvěrolékařová, stojíc u sporáku, připravuje oběd pro sebe a svého manžela (Dr. Otakar Audolenský). Ráno byla pí. Audolenská nakoupit. Ve volné chvíli chystá prádlo pro prádlenou a výbavu pro budoucí robátko (pí. zvěrolékařová se čeká).

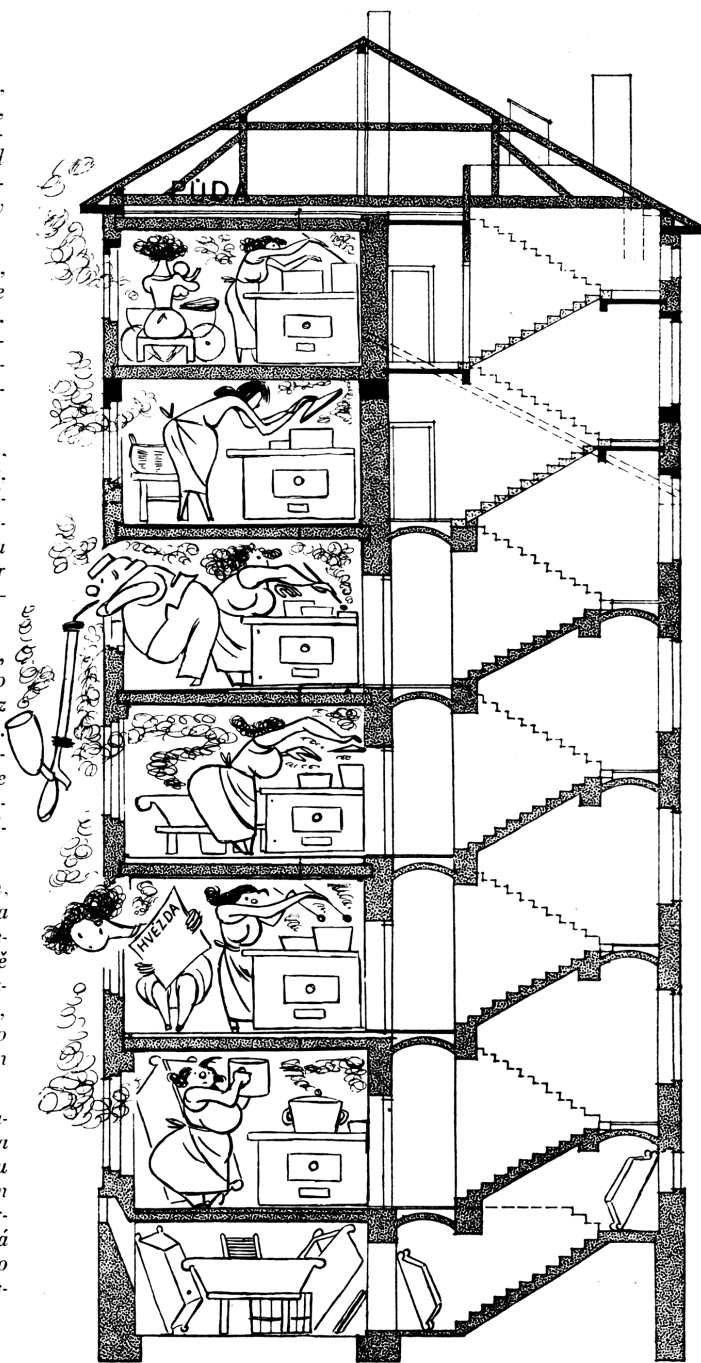
III. patro: pí. Rozsírková, stojíc u kamen, připravuje chutný oběd pro svého manžela, dvě děti a sebe. Pan Čeněk Rozsířka, podúředník, zaměstnanec ČSD, máje právě volno, dýmku v ústech, hledí z okna. Ráno byla pí. Rozsírková nakoupit, v poledne a večer skočí pí. Rozsírková pro pivo přes ulici. — Minulý týden bylo prádlo.

II. patro: pí. Habásková, stojíc u kamen, připravuje chutný oběd pro sebe, svého manžela (p. Habásko Josef, krejčí, t. č. bez zaměstnání) a svoji sestru, zdepřítomnou pí. Šefelínovou, vdovu po vrchním zřízenci. Ráno byla pí. Habásková nakoupit, v poledne skočí pí. Šefelínová pro pivo přes ulici. Právě je v této rodině prádlo, pere pí. Šefelínová.

I. patro: pí. nadstrážníková, stojíc u kamen, připravuje chutný oběd pro svého manžela (Faktor Jan, nadstrážník), sebe a svoji dceru, kterážto slečna, sedíc u okna, střídavě hledí na ulici a čte krásný román ve Hvězdě. Ráno byla pí. nadstrážníková nakoupit, v poledne a večer skočí řečená paní pro pivo přes ulici. Příští týden (některý den s neděle) bude u Faktorů prádlo.

přízemí: pí. správcová domu, stojíc u kamen, připravuje chutný oběd pro svého syna (p. Dynybyl Alfons, úředník), svoji dceru (tato slečna má vážnou známost s pánem v zajištěném postavení) a pro sebe (pí. Dynybylová je vdova). Ráno byla pí. správcová nakoupit, v poledne a večer skočí pro pivo přes ulici, minulý týden bylo u paní správcové prádlo.

suterén: každá partaj má sklep a necky.



53

František Bidlo, How we live – how we dwell: a cross-section of an apartment house at 11 am. This representation of life in the 20th century, multiplied ten thousand times, a hundred thousand times, and even more on top of that, is characteristic of today's "national economy" by its excellent "thriftness". 1933, cartoon. Reproduction: Magazin DP, vol. 1, Praha, Družstevní práce, 1933–1934.

Ignoring and erasing: collective housing in 20th century Czechoslovakia

BY HUBERT GUZIK

A concept of a collective house that would include apartments and a wide array of communal facilities was a topic of intensive debate in Czechoslovakia throughout the 20th century. This topic was popular not only among architects, but most importantly among feminists, social activists, sociologists, politicians or businessmen. Debaters projected onto these houses their ideas of a future political and social system of Czechoslovakia. For some, shared living was a way to facilitate the arrival of communism, for others it represented a means to develop liberal capitalism. This article presents the political framework behind the idea of collective housing in Czechoslovakia.

During the period of the lingering state socialism of the 1980s, mass housing development became heavily criticized by the intellectual elites of Eastern Europe. The Russian-born poet, Joseph Brodsky, at that time already living in the United States, had nothing but disapproval for what he called “ubiquitous concrete, with the texture of turd and color of upturned grave”¹. A few years later, in February 1990, Václav Havel, the newly-elected president of the now democratic Czechoslovakia, voiced a similar opinion, calling the prefabricated housing estates a rabbit hutch, “suitable only for spending the night and watching TV, but not for living in the true sense of the word”². The largest Czech collective housing building, erected in the town of Litvínov between 1946 and 1958, did not escape criticism either. Eva Kantůrková, writer and co-signatory of Charter 77 — a pivotal initiative of the Czechoslovak anti-communist civic opposition — called the building “an attempt at socialist coexistence, an attempt destined for failure, because we cannot be innocuously erecting a socialist collective house while condemning to death Závaš Kalandra and Rudolf Slánský”³, two key officials of the Czechoslovak Communist Party who fell victims to the purges of the 1950s.

This text aims to present several chapters from the history of Czech collective housing and to show how generations of intellectuals and architects ignored and erased their predecessors’ experience with this specific architectural type. It should help us understand why in the present-day Czechia there is basically zero demand for collective housing, and also why only three out of dozens of collective housing buildings currently enjoy the status of national cultural monument. In the 1980s, after decades of a remarkable boom, collective housing lost not only its appeal, but also any credibility it might have previously had. The technocratic model that saw collective houses as vanguard cells

of redistribution, was not compatible with the “economics of shortage”⁴, characteristic for the late stages of Eastern European socialism. And, due to the lethargy of the political establishment of 1980s Czechoslovakia, there was effectively no room for any bottom-up initiatives of those few communities that might have wished — despite the growing atomization of the society — to actually share living space. Thus east of the Iron Curtain we find virtually no reflections of the German *Gemeinschaftssiedlungen* or of Scandinavian co-operative housing. The consequence of this phenomenon can be felt even today: despite all efforts there has been virtually no project that would at least attempt to imitate the German concept of *Baugruppe*.

Neoliberal politicians and journalists managed to inoculate the post-1989 Czech public with a mental stereotype, in which collective housing was synonymous with a forced Soviet import, and as such it was supposed to be discarded by the Czechs, during their “return to Europe”, in the same way the East Germans abandoned their Trabants in the streets of Budapest and Prague in the late summer of 1989. The proposition of the Czech sociologist Ilja Šrubař that the process of transformation, begun after 1989, is not leading “to the liberal end of history”⁵, has till recently seemed to be no more than an unproven hypothesis. And yet, just last year (i.e. after the last economic crisis), the former representative of the Czech Republic to the World Bank, Miroslav Zámečník, claimed that “the collective house has been fully rehabilitated”. The economist pointed out that the idea of collective housing is now making a comeback, not so much because of any growing affection with shared economy, but simply because of the intolerably high housing prices in European capitals⁶. Here it might be worth mentioning that, in the first two decades of the 20th century, collective housing buildings were meant to play

an important role in the liberal economic-social system of the newly independent Czechoslovakia. Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, at that time a sociologist and future president, and Inocenc Arnošt Bláha, a disciple of Émile Durkheim, introduced collective housing to the Czech public in the form of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's American apartment houses and Berlin *Einküchenhäuser* of Hermann Muthesius and Albert Gessner. The Czechs saw them as a micro-model of a liberal society. All housework in *Einküchenhäuser* was going to be performed by professionals in communal facilities. According to the tenets of liberalism that meant that division of labor was both the source and guarantee of the inner solidarity within the modern society.

This geopolitical “framing”⁷ of the Czech collective houses is necessary if we wish to understand not just the value of the projects that were actually built but, more importantly, the discontinuity, ignoring and erasing of individual chapters in the story of collective houses. Masaryk's concept of collective housing was put into practice after WWI when the so-called *Červené domy* [red houses] were built in Prague (1919–1923, Rudolf Hrabě). This perimeter block with communal facilities soon proved unprofitable; however, the reason why it disappeared from the history of Czech architecture within only ten years' time has nothing to do with finances – the building simply never found its way onto the list of the predecessors of avant-garde housing-communes compiled in the mid-1930s by Augusta Müllerová, an architect with radical leftist views⁸. In a similar fashion, Karel Teige, the famous Marxist critic, omitted Masaryk and Bláha from his account of the history of collective housing projects presented in his *opus magnum*, the 1932 treatise *The Minimum Dwelling*. The liberal *Einküchenhaus* was simply incompatible, both strategically and tactically, with the leftist concept of a house-commune as a place for refinement of class consciousness of the working class, for generating momentum of the proletarian revolution, and for architectural framework that would fulfil Friedrich Engels' idea of the dissolution of the family⁹. Inspired by Teige, Moisei Ginzburg and Hannes Meyer, the Czech left-leaning architects Jan Gillar, Karel Honzík and Ladislav Žák designed, in the 1930s, several high quality collective housing projects. However, unlike their liberal predecessors, they were not able to get any of them built. Curiously enough, the working masses themselves were not particularly interested in the “grand domestic revolution”¹⁰, or in Teige's one-person units for emancipated proletarians, nurseries open seven days a week or, indeed, in clubrooms intended for political activities. In 1931, when the communist cooperative *Včela* [the bee] announced a competition for the design of a housing-commune in Prague, the winner was a project of traditional family apartments by Josef Karel Říha while the most radical proposals failed¹¹. Unlike the Marxist architects, *Včela* was well aware of the conservative turn in the Stalinist Soviet Union in the early 1930s.

The importance of the Soviet model for the story of Czech collective housing went beyond the period of the Great Depression. Its impact could be felt even more intensely in the late 1950s, when Prague reverberated with

Nikita Khrushchev's address delivered at the 1958 *All-Union Building Conference*. In his attempt to mitigate the housing crisis, Khrushchev gave his blessing to various experiments of architectural typology¹². In the same year Oldřich Černík, a communist official, demanded from Czech architects “types [of housing] suitable for single people, the elderly and newlyweds”¹³. Similar to the *avant-garde* concepts, the minimal living space of the proposed one- or two-person units was to be complemented by a wide array of facilities available either in the building itself or in its close proximity. Hotel-type houses, as these buildings were called based on Soviet terminology, were supposed to make up to 15 % of the sum of building development. Dozens of high-quality collective houses were built in the following years, such as starter apartments for young families (Prague-Invalidovna, Vojtěch Šalda — Josef Polák, 1960–1963) or living units for employees of industrial plants (hotel-type housing for the *Hlubina* [deep] coal mine, Ostrava, Zdeněk Kostecký, Architectural Studio of Jan Chválek, 1963–1966). The history of Czech architecture has, until recently, been quite reluctant in admitting the political context of these housing schemes; the 1960s have always been regarded as the true “golden age” of Czech architects' growing, if still limited, creative freedom, and not as the time when the process of Sovietization of mass housing was completed. Yet it was precisely this political shift in the Soviet Union which defined the limits for experimenting with architectural typologies in Eastern Europe. Architects Tomáš Černoušek, Karel Dolák and Jiří Zrotal, the authors of the first hotel-type housing scheme, which was built in Olomouc between the years 1959 and 1963, designed it for free as a part of the socialist self-obligation program. The enthusiasm with which the Czechs approached these experiments might have been rooted in genuine belief in the feasibility of the reform of the political system and in the possibility of rectification of existing housing development strategies through technological and typological innovations. At the same time there was a revival of the older concepts of the architects and theoreticians that had been erased from the accounts of history by the socialist realism and that were — in some extreme cases, like Karel Teige's — even accused of Trotskyism. Czech architects turned to the Swedish *kollektivhuset*, Le Corbusier's *Unité d'habitation*, and houses built during the first Soviet Five-year Plan. There was a surge of renewed interest in older boarding houses, such as *Ženské Domovy* [women homes] (Prague, Josef Hlaváček — Vlastimil Lada, 1931–1936) inspired by Masaryk's ideas of feminism and social activism¹⁴. The interest in this housing type was, however, limited to its functionalist architectural solution and operation – not even the relatively liberated atmosphere of the 1960s was a safe enough place to remember the social policies of a discarded democratic regime.

The hotel-type housing of the 1960s is even now eluding the attention of historians and, for the Czech public, they are virtually indistinguishable from the panel housing estates of the same era. In contrast, there are two collective housing projects, both built in the post-WWII years, that have always been appreciated by the local patriots and

occupied a prominent place in the Czech canon of cultural history. Built in Litvínov (Václav Hlský — Evžen Linhart) and Zlín respectively (Jiří Voženílek, 1947–1951), these two housing schemes cannot be regarded as a straightforward follow-up to the *avant-garde* projects of the 1930s. Their authors played high-profile roles in the architectural establishment of the 1960s. Hlský was the architect of an important housing estate in Kladno, Prague's coal mining satellite town; Voženílek was the Chief Architect of Prague. The fact that their iconic creations (designated national cultural monuments in 1963) drew from the mid-1940s theories formulated in the Baťa Shoe Company — Czechoslovakia's largest capitalist concern — was tactfully overlooked at the time. It is worth mentioning that in the pre-WWII Zlín, redistribution policy was mainly based on the lease of family houses. Tomáš Baťa, the founder of the shoemaking empire, was himself opposed to the idea of his employees living in multifamily apartment houses. He believed that because the work environment emphasizes “the collective instinct at the expense of individual development”, life in single-family houses functions as an antidote to the social homogenization represented by the factory work¹⁵. Le Corbusier created an urban development plan of Zlín which included collective houses, but Baťa eventually decided against its implementation. In the end, it was WWII that ushered in collective housing in Zlín. The breakdown of societal norms brought about by the wartime chaos and “amoral familism”¹⁶, seen as impediments of the dynamic development of the industrial city, made the management redefine the goals of the company's redistribution policy. One of the company's directors, Hugo Vavrečka, a pre-war secretary in the Czechoslovak government and grandfather of Václav Havel, was the co-author of unpublished comments in the study, *Problémy průmyslového města* [problems of industrial city], written in 1942–1943. Here we can read:

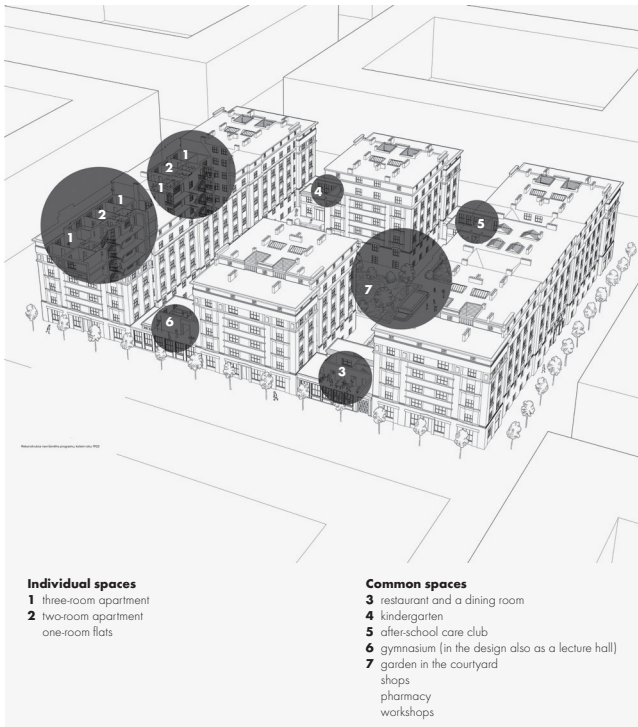
*cluster of garden houses represents in itself a totally anarchic unit, not unlike mountain villages with the scattered dwellings and the egoistical mentality of their inhabitants (...). If we aim to create a modern industrial man, a man civilized, cultured, economically-minded, socially and politically balanced, we must let him live not just in a “garden-like” environment, but also in a socially cohesive community (...)*¹⁷.

The heart of such a company town was to be formed by collective housing with hotel services, canteens, laundry rooms, nurseries, reading rooms, gyms and playrooms. The collective house in Litvínov, built for the chemical plant *Stalinovy závody* [Stalin works], followed an identical goal. The question of homogeneity and stability of working collectives was even more pressing in the case of Litvínov, as the Stalin Works was a successor of the German *Sudetenländische Treibstoffwerke*, a concern built in 1939 after the Northern Bohemian coal mining region was annexed to Germany. The post-WWII displacement of the German population from Czechoslovakia resulted in severe workforce shortages. The collective house — whose construction

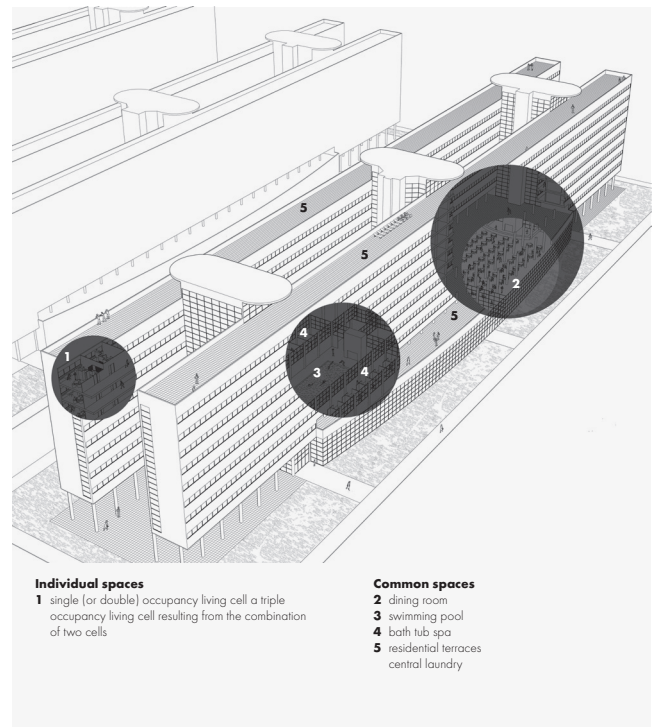
was lobbied for by the director of Stalin Works, Miloš Svitavský, himself an employee of the Baťa Company in the late 1930s¹⁸ — was supposed to function as a generator of social and economic regeneration of the Czech border areas, even before the communists took power in February 1948.

The architects of the “golden” 1960s who liked to look up to the Litvínov collective house as their architectural model, also liked to forget that the building became one of the protagonists of the first Czech socialist realist novel *Cesta otevřená* [open road]. The author Alena Bernášková painted an image of transformation of the post-German industrial behemoth into a socialist enterprise, built on the superficial Stalinist style of collectivism¹⁹. The Stalinist era of exhausting industrialization and social engineering was to be forgotten in the 1960s, when “socialism with a human face” was introduced as the latest political development. Architects of the incoming generation thus preferred to remember that the construction of the Litvínov collective housing was delayed in the years of the Stalinist regime because of the formal references to the cosmopolitan Le Corbusier and objections that “the architectural style of this housing block signifies that one could very well find it also in Finland or Argentina”²⁰. The end of socialist realism helped put the Litvínov collective housing back in the lime-light — it was precisely this building which reconnected Czech architecture with Western Europe.

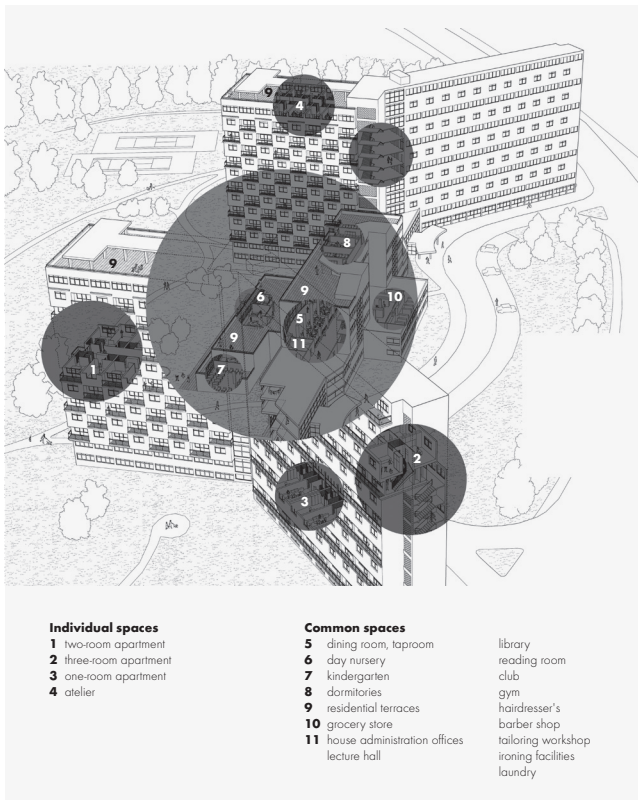
When discussing ignoring and erasing in the context of Czech collective housing, we must consider one other aspect, namely that of the inhabitants of these houses. Nearly all of the projects were guilty of ignoring social demands. Sociologist Jindřich Hoffmann, who was involved in research of unemployment during the Great Depression, pointed out that the workers “will not be interested in freedom, unless this freedom can provide bread and work”²¹. Contrary to Hoffmann, Karel Teige believed that collective housing would precipitate society's leap into the Marxist “kingdom of freedom”, ignoring the pressing social problems of the Great Depression and, instead, turning their attention to the “‘new, socialist man’ as a statistically determined and historically predestined abstraction in the grand game called the ‘classless society’”²². Before the housing in Litvínov and Zlín was built, no surveys among their future inhabitants had been carried out; no one deemed it useful to ask the workers whether they were interested in participating in this experiment. Collective housing represented materialization of a project whose goal was to discipline the working class; the function of this housing was to imbue the proletariat with specific political, sociological and moral roles²³. These concepts and projects were also intricately connected with the processes of industrialization: mechanized canteens and laundry rooms, professional staff of the nurseries and cultural establishments in this housing was meant to take on the role of service and pastime activities that had previously been performed on an individual basis. The distinctively technocratic nature of the Czech collective housing, however, stands in stark contrast to the memories of their former inhabitants. The appreciation of the communal spirit and mutual supervision of the past



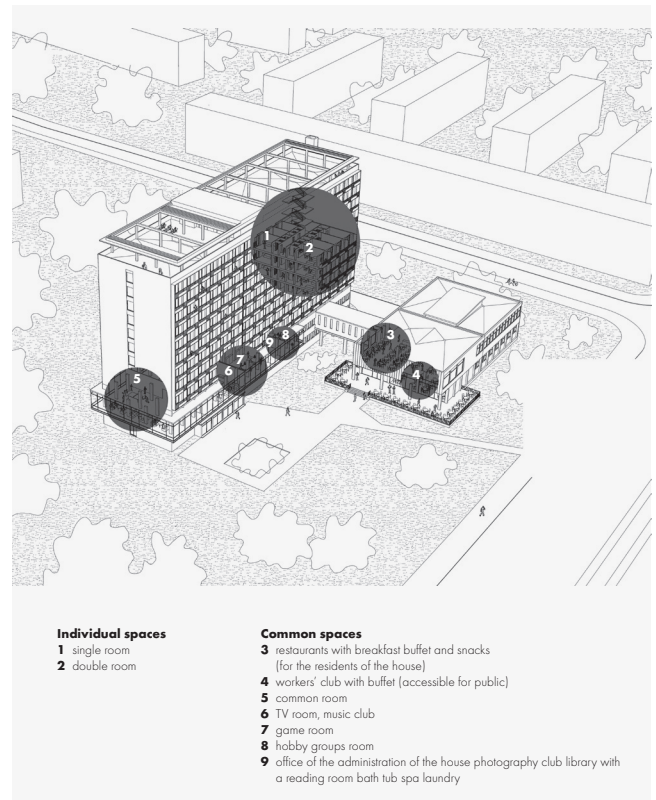
01 Rudolf Hrabě, *Červené domy* [red houses], Prague, Czech Republic, 1919–1923. Reconstruction of the planned functional arrangement of apartments and community amenities. Drawing by Ondřej Dušek and Bohdan Dušek. © Muzeum umění Olomouc, Ondřej Dušek, Bohdan Dušek, 2017.



02 Josef Havlíček, Karel Honzík, Collective house Koldom, 1928–1930, unrealized. Reconstruction of the planned functional arrangement of apartments and community amenities. Based on plans and descriptions published i. a. in Josef Havlíček, Karel Honzík, *Hotelové domy typu "Koldom"*, *Stavitel*, vol. 11, Praha, Sdružení architektů, 1930, s. 61–66. Drawing by Ondřej Dušek and Bohdan Dušek. © Muzeum umění Olomouc, Ondřej Dušek, Bohdan Dušek, 2017.



03 Václav Hlinský, Evžen Linhart, Collective house Koldům, Litvínov, Czech Republic, 1946–1958. Reconstruction of the planned functional arrangement of apartments and community amenities. Drawing by Ondřej Dušek and Bohdan Dušek. © Muzeum umění Olomouc, Ondřej Dušek, Bohdan Dušek, 2017.



04 Zdeněk Kostecký (Architectural Studio of Jan Chválek), Hotel-type housing for the Hlubina [deep] coal mine, Ostrava, Czech Republic, 1963–1966. Reconstruction of the planned functional arrangement of apartments and community amenities. Drawing by Ondřej Dušek and Bohdan Dušek. © Muzeum umění Olomouc, Ondřej Dušek, Bohdan Dušek, 2017.

is perhaps equal to the sense of disillusion with the present-day entropy of neighborly relations and the disappearance of communal facilities²⁴. Indeed, most of the shared spaces of these houses are now frequently leased out to various businesses and shops. The hotel-type housing of the 1960s, which was privatized after 1989, is now often used as substandard housing for low income households.

Still, if we consider for a moment the gradual dilapidation of The Narkomfin Building in Moscow, we can say that Czech collective housing was treated relatively kindly by the post-1989 economic transformation. The transition from communism to liberalism in Czechoslovakia was accompanied by a specific model of “post-soviet social”²⁵. The deconstruction of the socialist welfare state was a rather slow process: the state subsidisation of prefabricated housing development was discontinued in 1993 but rent regulation, in larger cities, continued until 2012. Paradoxically enough, in the same year the collective houses in Litvínov and Zlín were joined by a third building of this type with the status of national cultural monument — a collective house in České Budějovice, built in 1959–1963 and designed by Bohumil Böhm, Jaroslav Škarda and Bohumil Jarolím.

Acknowledgments

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Hubert Guzik

(b. Poland, 1975) received his PhD in history of arts at Charles University in Prague. He currently holds the position of Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Technical University in Prague. He is the author of the study *Four Paths to Collective House* (in Czech, Prague, 2014) and co-author of the exhibition *Living Together: Czech Collective Houses* at the Museum of Art Olomouc (2017–2018). He is currently finishing a project of comparative analysis of transitional periods of Czech architecture (1945–1948 and 1989–1993).



Karel Hubáček, Otakar Binar, Ještěd Tower, Liberec, Czech Republic, 1963–1973. © Jaroslav Vebř.

Czech hotels in the late-modernist style set against the landscape

BY PETR VORLÍK

This paper looks at the changes in hotel architecture in post-war Czechoslovakia. In particular, the way in which architects, either with the support of or, in some cases, in resistance to the political dictate, handled the inspirational influences that came from abroad. Namely the Soviet models forced on them, or the ideas that seeped through from the other side of the Iron Curtain that were closer to the Czech modernist environment. The resulting approach of compromises and mixing influences, typical for a small country in the middle of Europe, gave rise to imaginative combinations of the universal principles of the International Style with structural experiments, a return to sophistication and refined craftsmanship, a cautious criticism of Modernism, or an intensive effort to strike a balance and harmony with the poetic character of the landscape.

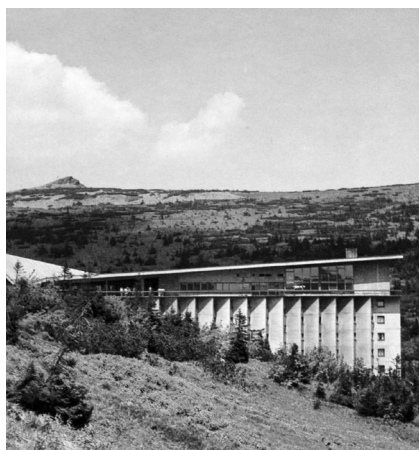
Introduction

The culture of the Czech lands has always had profoundly mixed features, the product of the country's geographic position in the heart of Europe and the diverse influences and shifting governmental hands to which the country has been subjected. The gems of Czech medieval and baroque architecture are mainly the work of builders of German, Italian, and French provenance and their successors. Architectural works in the 19th century and the early modern era were influenced by the fact that the Czech lands were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Central European system of production, its transport infrastructure, and its market. The National Revival in the 19th century and then especially the foundation of Czechoslovakia as an independent republic in 1918 created a more compact cultural ethos and economy, but international ties remained an important stimulant — many architects earlier and still obtained their education in Vienna or, later, in the Bauhaus, architects of German or Jewish background worked in the country, and some artists had direct experience of having worked abroad in renowned architectural offices (e.g. under Frank Lloyd Wright or Le Corbusier). They traveled extensively (e.g. to the Netherlands, France, the United States, Japan) and maintained active social ties (e.g. through the CIAM congresses, with Le Corbusier, or the Soviet Union). Czech architecture is consequently undeniably composite in nature, inclining towards a restrained austerity, but spiced up with witty designs and tenacious efforts to come up with refined details and compositions. Another characteristic feature of Czech architecture however is its gentle poetics and its ties to the local culture and the context of the landscape, the result of its constant search for its own identity, something

crucial for a small Central European country surrounded by bigger powers and continual external pressures. One might think that the post-war inclusion of Czechoslovakia within the Eastern political bloc would have quashed its composite character. But even in the stifling grip of the Soviet Union, most architects managed to find a way to access uncensored information from the other side of the Iron Curtain and sources of inspiration from around the world. The evolution and diversity of late-modern Czech architecture and how it could “bend” to take in foreign influences is eloquently reflected in hotel construction.

A retreat into craftsmanship

After the Communist Party won the elections in 1946 and seized power in 1948 in Czechoslovakia, the centralization of governance and control proceeded at an accelerated pace and soon spread into the field of construction. Architects were corralled into state design institutes and had to abide by the dictates of political planning, while construction itself was unable to keep up with the unrealistic demands for speedy post-war renewal and a solution to the housing shortage. From an artistic perspective the 1950s were moreover marked by the strict rejection of the *avant-garde* and the assertion of the doctrine of socialist realism. The press and artistic work were subject to strict censorship. Architects had to undergo “inspirational” sojourns in the Soviet Union, whose “model successes” sparked strong misgivings among the progressive generation of interwar functionalists. Many of them opted for a different career in the less controlled area of designing operationally complex buildings in the sectors of industry and health or, paradoxically, renovating cultural heritage. Even in this closed environment, however, architects still managed to get



01 Zdeněk Řihák, Labská bouda, Špindlerův Mlýn, Czech Republic, 1965–1975. © The Krkonoše Mountains National Park Administration – The Krkonoše Museum, Jiří Bruník.



02 Věra and Vladimír Machonin, Thermal Hotel, Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic, 1963–1977. © Jaroslav Vebr.



03 Věra and Vladimír Machonin, Thermal Hotel, Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic, 1963–1977. © Jaroslav Franta.

access to international trends and Western literature. The life of socialist realism ultimately proved fleeting, its most ardent advocates devoted themselves to theory and politics, and only several prominent residential complexes were ever built for some favored industrial compounds (e.g. Ostrava-Poruba). But even these structures show signs of attempts to come up with local alternatives that would distinguish them from the Soviet models; in order to achieve the requisite folk aesthetic in their work, architects usually drew on traditional Czech small-town features, or Renaissance or Baroque architecture, and after Stalin's death they abandoned historicisms altogether.

It is nevertheless possible to find little islands of “quiet resistance” in the 1950s, one example being the grandiose international Hotel Jalta on Wenceslas Square in Prague (Antonín Tenzer, 1954–1958)¹. Tenzer was a gentleman of firm moral principles and an architect who continued to embrace the tradition of the interwar avant-garde, and while in accordance with the post-war critique he abandoned the abstract, technicist, and dynamic forms of Czech Modernism in this project, he had no intention of submissively executing a political commission. Instead, in the heart of historical Prague he drew on his (secondary-school) education in the decorative arts and went for intelligibility and simplicity in his design, static forms, and balanced proportions, quality materials, and a focus on details. The open building plan and the accessible street-level façade contain echoes of his experience designing functionalist hospitals, but the façade is largely solid stone, and there are even some (overtly politically neutral) figural decorations. It is no accident that this sophisticated fusion of elements is reminiscent of an ageless Art Deco. It has an atmosphere that is airy and cozy at the same time, and it strikes an undisguised chord with the interwar functionalist buildings that are part of the variegated mosaic of Wenceslas Square. The note of defiance in the building and its statement of alliance with Modernism and perhaps even Western models are best observed by comparing it with the pro-regime Hotel International in Prague-Dejvice (František Jeřábek et al, 1952–1956), which was built in the typical socialist-realist style of a stepped tower. However, even in that hotel,

which was originally designed as luxury lodgings for visiting Warsaw Pact advisors, the architects cautiously stepped back from contemporary rhetoric and prioritized neutral works of art and signs of solid craftsmanship.

Plinth and tower

With the onset of the political thaw in the 1960s things began to turn. Architects re-forged severed ties and many of them traveled abroad to the West and took in late-modernist architecture with their own eyes. The collections of international journals and literature grew, and the level of censorship slackened (but it did not disappear entirely). Nevertheless, the channels by which information was obtained remained largely indirect and there were just a few examples of direct collaboration or professional contact (one being, for example, the UIA congress in Prague in 1967). How Western models were introduced into practice reflected this, as they tended to appear as belated and largely formal borrowings, with no deeper theoretical background. However, the re-espousal of the still vital and famous tradition of Czechoslovak interwar functionalism and the increase in artistic freedom, along with the tendency towards experimentation that arose in response to an ossified state-socialist construction industry gave rise to greater diversity and an unusually broad range of interpretations and variations of the International Style in architecture in Czechoslovakia.

The process of opening up to the world was accompanied by unprecedented growth in services and the construction of new and stately international hotels. Most of them uncritically adopted the tried-and-tested Western “plinth and tower” model, which was especially well-suited to combining grand social spaces and routinely arranged rows of rooms. A typical example of this is the Interhotel Olympic in Prague-Karlín (Josef Polák, Vojtěch Šalda, Milan Rajchl, Jan Zelený, 1964–1971)², named for the Olympic complex that was planned in the vicinity but never built. This hotel became the dominant structure in an experimental prefabricated housing estate called Invalidovna and its austere lines in the International Style are softened with the use of an ethereal white curtain wall, aluminum *brise soleil*,



04 Jaroslav Paroubek, Arnošt Navrátil, Radek Černý, Jan Sedláček, Hotel Praha, Prague, Czech Republic, 1971–1981. © Arnošt Navrátil.

and softly textured ceramic cladding (clearly influenced by the popular Scandinavian look).

However, even the hotel industry was marked by higher ambitions and attempts at a modern but also distinctive domestic identity. In the early 1960s the mood was one of intoxication and pride surrounding the success of the Czechoslovak Pavilion at EXPO 1958 in Brussels (František Cubr, Josef Hrubý, Zdeněk Pokorný, 1956–1958), the optimistic atmosphere of which captured the hearts of EXPO visitors from around the world and earned the pavilion a number of official awards. What came to be known as the “Brussels style” of architecture abandoned the strict social ethos and technocratic approach to construction and placed primary emphasis on dramaturgy, a light or weightless quality, a creative visual diversity, playfulness with color, a decorative aspect (but not kitschy), and oblique or curvy shapes. These features are evident, for example, in the jagged tower structure of the Hotel Continental in Brno (Zdeněk Řihák, Alois Semela, Vladimír Kovařík, 1958–1964)³.

Other hotel towers from the 1960s in contrast to the playful approach were based more on a serene and solemn experience and hospitable cozy feeling, in the sense of something solid and of good quality. Through the use of high-grade materials and more stable proportions the light, informal, technicist approach of the International Style acquires a sophisticatedly more serious tone, for example, in the Parkhotel in Prague-Holešovice (Zdeněk Edel, Jiří Lavička, Alena Šrámková, 1959–1967)⁴ or the Černigov Hotel in Hradec Králové (Jan Zídka, 1966–1975, currently scheduled for demolition)⁵, both cases evidently influenced by the strong inter-war atmosphere around them.

It is necessary to note that the political support in smaller towns was usually sluggish. Small hotels there tended to be built in connection with some sports facility, house of culture, or shopping center, and as a reduced and simple rendition of the International Style, with a prevailing use of standardized details and elements (which however sometimes resulted in a surprisingly pure, ungarnished avant-garde appearance).

Context in the foreground

The optimistic and somewhat technocratic, universal combination of glass plinth and tower established itself across the entire spectrum of building types, the objective being to demonstrate how supposedly advanced and competitive socialist Czechoslovakia was. It also gradually made its way into the unique context of the authentic mountain landscape. A typical example of the transposition of the urban lifestyle and “man’s victory over nature” is Hotel Horizont in Pec pod Sněžkou (Jan Tymich, Josef Opatřil, Zdeněk Řihák, 1964–1979), where, at the entrance to a national park, on the edge of two mountain valleys, and set in between traditional, sober, wooden buildings the tower was built and assumed for itself the role of a beacon of Modernism.

Even in the case of more ambitious hotel projects, however, horizontal or cuboid shapes began to appear over time (though somewhat exceptionally), tempering the impact of inserting a new structure into an already established setting. One such example is the famous tourist lodge Labská bouda (Zdeněk Řihák, 1965–1975). Built on the site of a 19th-century building that burnt down, it looks boldly reminiscent of a giant rock formation. It is embedded into the ground so that on the arrival side of the hotel it looks to visitors like a traditional low-rise mountain lodge, while on its opposite face it flaunts its full length and height when viewed from a distance and resonates with the grandeur of the surrounding Krkonoše mountains. Vertical sawtooth reinforced-concrete walls form the sides of the hotel-room floors, in a reference to the stepped rocky cliff of the nearby Pančavský waterfall, and they are open in the direction of the valley to provide the visitors with a wonderful view. The robust sawtooth plinth is by contrast crowned with a lighter story on top in which the restaurant is housed in panoramic glass (because of the extreme climatic conditions in the area however the large glass walls were soon replaced with small windows).



05 Zdeněk Řihák, Alois Semela, Vladimír Kovařík, Hotel Continental, Brno, Czech Republic, 1958–1964. © Architektura ČSR, 1964, V. Hořstová.

Another hotel that stands out among the Czech late-modernist works that were built with a view to reflecting their local context is the Hotel Intercontinental in Prague (Karel Filsak, Karel Bubeníček, Jan Šrámek, František Cubr, Zdeněk Pokorný, 1967–1974), whose brutalist morphology tactfully takes into consideration the specific scale of its environs – namely, the vertical and horizontal strips of picturesque urban landscape in Prague's Old Town — while its overall volume seeks to reflect the majesty of the Vltava River valley and the row of public buildings along the embankment. Sculpturesque forms similarly help to integrate Hotel Ural into the main square in Pilsen (Jaroslava Gloserová, 1967–1972), Hotel Kamyšín into the space where the lost town walls in Opava used to stand (Jan Kovář, Jiří Horák, Radim Ulman, 1979–1985), and consequently new local Hotel and grocery store Slavia with its modern interpretation of the traditional gable roof and disintegration of the volume into the scenic square of small town Třebíč (César Grimmich, Jaromír Liška, 1972–1983)⁶.

In the capital city, however, prominent international hotels still tended to be characterized by an effort to “be noticed” and tried to take advantage of the city's hilly terrain and views of Prague Castle. Hotel Forum (Jaroslav Trávníček, 1979–1988) towers up from the edge of Nusle Valley and complements the horizontal lines of nearby Nusle Bridge and the pro-regime Palace of Culture. By contrast, the gigantic Hotel Praha (Jaroslav Paroubek, Arnošt Navrátil, Radek Černý, Jan Sedláček, 1971–1981, demolished in 2014)⁷, with its softly undulating lines and fanning terraces, sought to respond to the contoured terrain of the garden neighborhood of Hanspaulka around it.

Icons with and against the regime

Two structures occupy a special place in Czech hotel architecture: Thermal Hotel and Ještěd Tower — both of them large, multifunctional, highly complex and, of course, connected to the extremely demanding landscape context they are set in.

Thermal Hotel in Karlovy Vary (Věra and Vladimír Machonin, 1963–1977)⁸ was built as a giant complex of hotel services, with an outdoor pool, and spaces for hosting the prestigious international film festival. The architects used the fashionable plinth and tower duo and erected the hotel on the site of a series of dilapidated spa buildings that were controversially demolished. The base of the structure housing the festival and restaurant areas was intended in its height, articulation, and sturdy form to fit in with the surrounding historical buildings, while the light and ampler tower in which the rooms were located had to respond to the sky and the scale of the natural and romantic spa valley. The tower also formed the dividing line between the regular part of the town and the spa area.

The long process that the design and construction of buildings typically involved at the time resulted in an interesting conceptual shift. The project that was submitted to the competition still bore features that were typical of the International Style of the early 1960s — the glass curtain walls, the solid side walls, and the fluid curves of the halls

and the pool. The more detailed version of the project later offered refinements, reflected the architects' experience abroad (they requested a study trip to England and France), and revealed an effort towards greater distinctiveness in the design. The plinth was turned into an interlayering of right-angled terraces, long, linked lines gently fracturing to follow the morphology of the terrain, accented by trios of cylindrical halls, and the tower's horizontal articulation. The smooth, uniform glass panels in the original study were replaced by the bold dimensionality and sharp contrasts of the bright solid surfaces and the dark recessed balconies. The earthy quality of the materials (exposed aggregate concrete, dark glass, an undisguised steel frame) and the right-angled geometry carefully offset the more sculptural accents, the Japanese-inspired garden arrangement, and the integrated works of art.

This general concept was naturally also applied to the outstanding design of the interior, where the architects imaginatively balanced the modernist use of transparency and openness (glass partitions and façades, an abundance of built-in elements) with the intimacy of the furnishings and the lighting (dark ceilings and light floors, bespoke furniture that was comfortable and enveloping, rich colors and works of art, tableware selected by the architects). The open spatial plan was made possible by the unusual supporting steel frame. Thermal Hotel became a monumental and stately structure, but the guests were nevertheless meant to experience it up close as cozy and welcoming. Despite its austere aspect, its deliberate internationalism, and its departure from the priorities of the regime, Thermal Hotel became an indelible part of Karlovy Vary, a symbol of the film festival and, because of its complex character, one of the most iconic works of Czech architecture (which, unfortunately, was not enough to prevent the recent drastic renovations to the surrounding public space, the garden, and the interior or the closure of the pool and its facilities).

A unique place in Czech architecture is also occupied by Ještěd Tower in Liberec (Karel Hubáček, Otakar Binar, 1963–1973)⁹, which was built on the site of a previous Romantic-style hotel that burned down. In the new hotel building, Karel Hubáček brilliantly united two required services – a hotel and a TV transmitter – into one object, which he smoothly integrated into the silhouette of the mountain, essentially extending its natural peak. Construction began in 1966 and after a long series of standard delays and complications it was officially opened on 21 September 1973. The architects, who were out of favor with the new normalization regime, were not invited to the ceremony, despite the fact that the study for the project had received a number of domestic awards and in 1969 the then still unfinished tower won the prestigious international Auguste Perret Prize for the creative use of technology in architecture.

The construction of the elegant and compact tower was only possible thanks to its sophisticated structural design, which required the development of several patents and which combines, for example, monolithic prefabricated reinforced concrete with suspended steel ceilings and a

steel shell, with the finishing touch of a unique oscillation absorber to counter the wind effect. The surface is similarly mixed, formed from stone and concrete cladding, a glass curtain wall, aluminum-steel panels and fiberglass elements (necessary to allow signal penetration). The geometry of the tower is also quite intricate: the wide cylindrical floors in the lower section of the tower transition into a truncated cone in the middle suspended section and then into a fiberglass and steel circular hyperboloid, terminating in a cylindrically shaped structure again at the peak. In addition to the experimental design of the structure and the facing, it is necessary to also draw attention to the tower's composition: Karel Hubáček inventively combined the light technicist morphology of the upper part (silvery paint, white fiberglass, and machinist windows) with an almost naturally raw plinth (exposed concrete, the stone pavement on the ground runs from there in a smooth arc up onto the wall cladding).

The basic theme of duality, of integrating a work by human hands into the natural environment around it, was also reflected in the interior of the tower, where Otakar Binar emphasized a visual openness, breath-taking panoramic views from the windows, and the poetics of "heaven and earth" (the cozy materiality of the floors and interior walls versus the airiness of the furnishings, ceilings, and windows). Experimentation was also applied to the interior – such as the rotational standing ashtrays produced by the wind instrument company Amati, the innovative polycarbonate panels of the bannisters, the ceramic tiling by artists Děviana Mírová, Marie Rychlíková, and Lydie Hladíková, the bespoke furnishings and lights by Otakar Binar, the atypical ceramic Rako tiling with cavetto molding in the corners, the similarly styled ceramic hooks and soap dishes, the light blue bed linen with a white snowflake motif by Karel Wunsch, and so on. Wunsch also designed the restaurant equipment and materials, such as the menus, the logo, the glassware and stemware, and most notably the ceramic dinner service made from an experimental material called Vitral, normally used for high-voltage insulators and employed here for a more robust appearance. The special "honeymoon" suite was also marked by playfulness and levity, with surprising historicizing furniture in the Louis XVI style. The atmosphere of the interiors was embellished with works of art, which unexpectedly in an admired technicist structure were based on Jungian psychological motifs, the closeness of the countryside, nature, and outer space.

The most famous of the post-war Czechoslovak works of architecture, Ještěd Tower, which has regularly come out as the favorite in polls among professionals and the public, even today remains a reflection of the political thaw and the atmosphere of social and cultural ferment that characterized the "golden" 1960s. It represents a unique technical experiment, resistance to the pressure for quantity, a step away from the industrialized approach to construction, a distinctive gesture, and the dream of a generation of architects. The emotional connection it forms between a beautiful landscape setting and a thoroughly executed vision is today the symbol of the town of Liberec and even of the entire region. As a national cultural monument, the tower

enjoys the highest level of protection, and since 2007 it has been on the Czech Republic's list of sites to be nominated for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

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Petr Vorlík

Studied at the Faculty of Architecture, CTU, in Prague. He has undertaken design work independently and for the studios Barva and ADR. Since 2002 he has focused on teaching and research. In 2012 he was appointed associate professor. He specialises in 20th-century architecture and is the author or co-author of a number of publications, including *The Grounds of the CTU in Dejvice in the 1960s*, *Interwar Garages in the Czech Lands*, *Architecture in the Service of Motoring*, *Jan Burin*, *The Czech Skyscraper*. He developed the concepts for a series of databases focusing on architecture: industrialni-topografie.cz, dejiny.fa.cvut.cz, registr.cvut.cz/pa.



Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Housing complex Unitas, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1930. © Jaromír Funke, Nová Bratislava, 1931.

Friedrich Weinwurm: Slovakia's nearly forgotten contribution to the European architectural *avant-garde*

BY HENRIETA MORAVČÍKOVÁ

Work of the architect Friedrich Weinwurm represents the most consistent contribution from within Slovakia to the activities of the international architectural avant-garde. Friedrich Weinwurm fully matched the idea of a socialist-minded architect, organizer of public life and visionary of a new social order. The new way that Friedrich Weinwurm followed in his architectural work ran parallel to the paths of the leading representatives of the European left-wing avant-garde. In Slovakia, these works represented the most coherent allegiance to the program of the New Objectivity, and the vision of a Marxist-inspired architecture. As such, Friedrich Weinwurm held a key role in ensuring that inter-war Bratislava formed one of Europe's important focal points for modern architecture.

In one of his essays, the leading figures of the Czechoslovak left-wing *avant-garde*, Karel Teige, drew attention to the irreconcilability of two salient conceptions of architectural creation, represented on one side by “work on a commission in the limits of the given conditions” and on the other by “the radical and pure solution of problems that moves development forward and leads, in fact, to the overcoming of these existing conditions”¹. Change in existing social conditions, the search for a new way and new radical solutions also formed the main thrust of the lifelong oeuvre of architect Friedrich Weinwurm (1885–1942). Yet, unlike Teige, he did not find the search for new ways to be incompatible with architectural realizations in the existing situation: quite the opposite, since his “work on commissions” became one of his primary implements towards realizing social change.

As such, the body of work produced by Friedrich Weinwurm forms the most consistent contribution from within Slovakia to the activities of the international architectural *avant-garde*. Friedrich Weinwurm fully matched the idea of a socialist-minded architect, organizer of public life and visionary of a new social order. In parallel, he tirelessly expounded the conception of an architecture based on objective forms determined by function and use, on standardization of layout plans, unification of construction elements and even standardization of qualitative parameters. And he was one of the few architects with a chance to test these ideas directly in actual construction. Indeed, the most original achievement of Friedrich Weinwurm lay in his ability to bring into existence this combination of a socialist program and architectural objectivity.

An architect of the central European region

Friedrich Weinwurm was born on 30 August 1885, in Borský Mikuláš, a small village at the western edge of the then Habsburg-ruled Kingdom of Hungary, in a German-speaking Jewish family. He began his architecture studies in 1906 at the *Königliche Technische Hochschule zu Berlin*. However, after only six semesters he left Berlin to continue his studies at the *Königliche Sächsische Technische Hochschule* in Dresden, attracted by the reputation of Professor Heinrich Tessenow and his work on one of the major construction projects in Germany during the era — the garden suburb of Hellerau. Tessenow's views on architectural form, his engagement with social housing policy and no less the overall utopian atmosphere surrounding the construction of Hellerau had a decisive influence on the young Friedrich Weinwurm. Here is where his creative approach was shaped by what he encountered: from the reduction of classic forms through the truthful reflection of internal functions in the volume and appearance of the building up to the search for an entirely new architecture. After his graduation in 1911, Friedrich Weinwurm returned to Hungary, taking a post in the leading Budapest atelier Pogány Móric & Tőry Emil².

Friedrich Weinwurm's initially successful career was interrupted by WWI. In the general mobilization, he was called up in July 1914, for front-line service in Galicia, where in October 1915 he suffered a serious head wound, bringing his military service to an end. Still, the dramatic events at the end of hostilities — the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the formation of an independent Czechoslovakia had an equally significant impact on the course of his life to come.



01 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Villa Lengyel, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1929. View of the villa and apartment block by the same authors. © Archive of Architecture oA HU SAV.



02 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Villa Lengyel, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1929. View of the patented steel frame window Kraus. © Olja Triška Stefanović, 2014.

A building art to match its age

After WWI, Friedrich Weinwurm settled in Bratislava, which had become the *de facto* capital of the Slovak section of the new republic. Yet for a German-speaking Jewish architect at the start of his career, the situation was far from ideal. The social situation in the new state was highly complicated, economic conditions were slow to improve, a significant proportion of German and Hungarian capital had left the region and domestic investors still lacked the funds for major building investments. Moreover, public commissions were almost exclusively directed towards Czech architects. As a result, Friedrich Weinwurm's client base was predominantly composed of the local Jewish community: it was the Jewish commercial and professional middle class who commissioned Friedrich Weinwurm in the early 1920s for his first single-family houses and villas in Bratislava, Žilina and Nitra. These dwellings are characterized by a highly unostentatious conception of form, great functionality, a complex interior space and a reserved visual aspect in relation to their surroundings. Exactly these houses formed the basis of Friedrich Weinwurm's first solo exhibition, which he arranged in 1924. The exhibition had a wide and favorable reception: the critics of the time announced that Friedrich Weinwurm's buildings "are the image of our age" and mentioned as the goal of his artistic journey "clear, internally shaped simplicity"³. Further underscoring the effect of the exhibit is the architect's own essay published at the same time in the Vienna bimonthly *Moderne Welt*, where he clearly formulated his requirements for a new architecture⁴. In characterizing the "building art to match its age" [*zeitgemässe baukunst*], he compared the organization of interior functions in the modern residence to a machine, where the external appearance is the "unchangeable result of the internal organization"⁵. The choice of illustrations only strengthened the uncompromising tone of the text: the simplified stereotomic volumes were given smooth facades and flat roofs with open terraces. In this spirit, Friedrich Weinwurm designed and realized nearly twenty buildings through the 1920s,

including, alongside many private residences, several of Slovakia's first modern public buildings, such as the "Ring" department store in Žilina (1924-1926), or the Astória Café (1925-1926) and the Jewish Hospital in Bratislava (1925-1934). In fact, the massive increase in commissions led Friedrich Weinwurm in 1925 to form a partnership with the architect Ignác Vécsei (1883-1944), with whom he worked right up until the forced liquidation of the office in 1940. During this period, Friedrich Weinwurm was not only the most productive but also the most influential figure in Slovakia's architectural scene; from the mid-1920s onward, his works inspired many successors who naturally assumed his functional schemes, formal vocabulary, or even technical solutions. Today, with the benefit of hindsight, we could assert that Friedrich Weinwurm played, through his radical emergence into the architectural scene and uncompromising critical writings, a similar role in the process of opening the paths to a new architectonic culture to the one often ascribed to Adolf Loos⁶.

The objectivity that we follow today

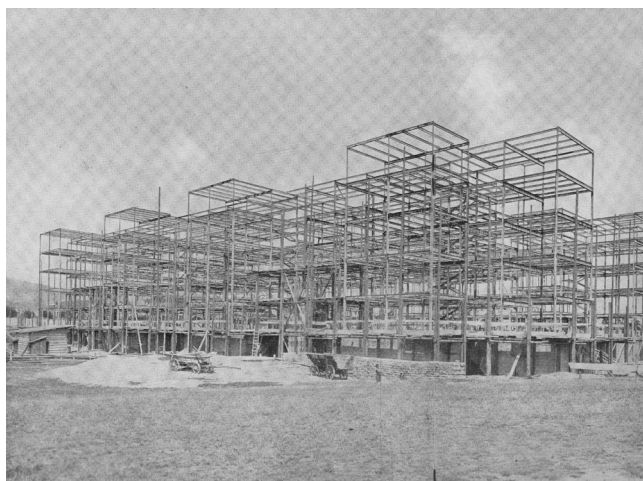
Friedrich Weinwurm's oeuvre was, following the sense of his authorial program, strictly devoid of ornament and strongly subordinated to function. In his villas and houses, we find none of the characteristic modernity-signals of functionalist architecture, such as glass walls, ceiling skylights or open galleries. The spatial concept of most of the villas he designed is marked by thorough functional separation, a traditionally conceived arrangement of living areas (with the possibility of creating larger common areas through mobile walls or door openings) and, contrastingly, unusual and imaginative treatments of staircases. The villas utilized the most modern construction plans and materials, and boasted ingenious built-in furniture, such as wardrobes, storage areas or work-tables, along with exceptional hygienic facilities integrating all the latest technologies of the era. Friedrich Weinwurm made no secret of his rejection of decorative interiors and was convinced that once "a new value emerged... then people would escape from unnecessary furniture"⁷.



03 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Villa Lengyel, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1929. View of the interior decorated by Josef Hoffmann. © Olja Triaška Stefanović 2014.



04 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Villa Tománek, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1929. © Archive of Architecture oA HU SAV.



05 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Housing complex *Nová Doba*, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1933. View of the steel skeleton structure. © Archive of Architecture oA HU SAV.



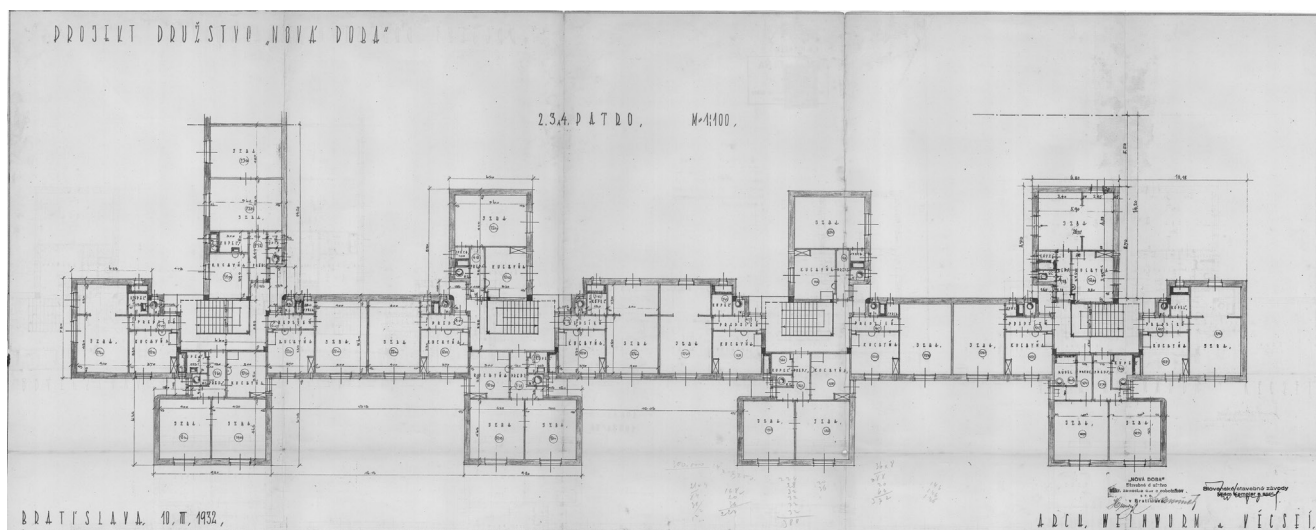
06 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Housing complex *Unitas*, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1930. © Josef Hofer, Archive of the City of Bratislava.

In his argumentation, he even went as far as to publish, in the Prague journal *Bytová Kultura*, a praise for repossessioners, defining them as the persons who “with the agreement of the law, force one... to retain from one’s furnishings only those objects that are absolutely necessary, and sell the rest. As such, they essentially help people to arrive at a new arrangement of their flats — i.e. towards modern living”⁸. Friedrich Weinwurm openly cast doubt on the role of the architect in furnishing the client’s residence, assigning this task entirely to trained craftsmen and the individual taste of the residents themselves. As such, it closely matched Friedrich Weinwurm’s ideas of modern construction, where an increasingly crucial role would be held by standardization and unification, limiting authorial creativity.

An intriguing instance of the division of labor between architect and decorator, or more accurately the connection between the era’s most divergent principles in regarding modern architecture, is found in the Bratislava villa of lawyer Arpád Lengyel. The house was completed from Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei’s design in 1929. While the spatial design of the villa bears a resemblance to Loos’s concept of the *Raumplan*, the materials used were extremely simple, while the technology was notably innovative. For one instance, Friedrich Weinwurm here employed for the first time his prototype of a steel-framed window, which he designed for the Bratislava metalworks Kraus and later became used on a massive scale in modern architecture across all of Czechoslovakia. For the interior, though, offers were submitted by two equally renowned Viennese architects, Adolf Loos and Josef Hoffmann. The client selected Hoffmann, who then covered the main living area with walnut-faced paneling and installed heavy upholstered furniture. Several items of furnishings, light fixtures and tableware were produced by the Wiener Werkstätte, or designed by Hoffmann himself specifically for the Lengyel family⁹. However, this form of interior was far from pleasing to Friedrich Weinwurm. He published the villa only once, and only with exterior photographs¹⁰.

Greater publicity, though, was given to many other of Friedrich Weinwurm’s villas from the 1920s. Many were published in the German architectural journal *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst und Städtebau*, in the Brno magazine *Salon* or the Prague revue *Žijeme*. Two of them, the villa of Florián Tománek in Bratislava (1928-1929) and the villa of the Verő family in Nitra (1924-1927), were even included in the monograph *Moderne villa’s en Landhuizen in Europa en Amerika*, published in Amsterdam in 1930¹¹. Both villas perfectly matched the ideas of the “New Objectivity” [*Neue Sachlichkeit*] and moreover innovatively managed to integrate exterior spaces into the functioning of the house, so that they no longer formed merely a supplement to the interior layout but indeed a fully integral component.

At the end of the 1920s, Friedrich Weinwurm’s attention focused increasingly on social questions. It was during this period that the idea of “objectivity” first began to appear in his writings, to indicate a creative method that “step by step, reveals the march of thought — to create elements... that would appear to everyone equally objective, practical, and of course aesthetic”¹². An “objectivity far removed from modernist games” is how Friedrich Weinwurm’s work of this period was characterized by the important German architectural theorist Leo Adler¹³. Still, the term “objectivity” no longer applied exclusively to indicating the functionally-grounded method of design, but also a socialist approach towards architecture. It is clear that precisely these social and political connotations of the term induced Friedrich Weinwurm to use it as a designation for his own creative method. The way in which Friedrich Weinwurm introduced and explained this concept was, to a certain extent, a kind of response to Teige’s argumentation of the split between working on built commissions and the development of radical new visions. The conviction that “every person has the right at least to a roof over his head” forced Friedrich Weinwurm to “search for the right formal vocabulary and construction elements that for everyone would be equally useful and aesthetic”¹⁴. This authorial program was enacted with uncompromising thoroughness in all types of



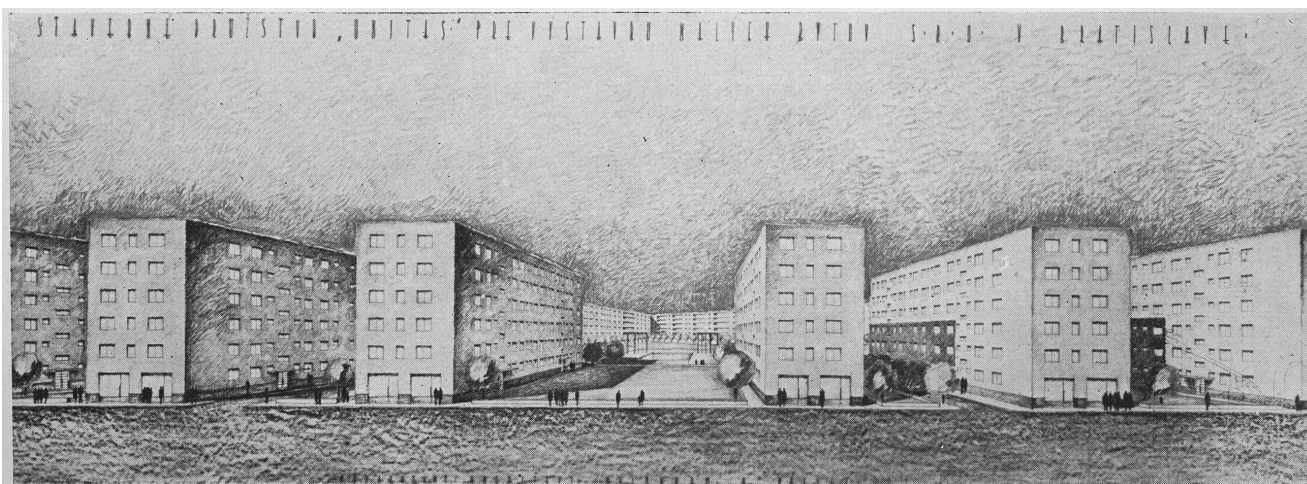
07 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Housing complex *Nová Doba*, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1932. Ground plan of the typical floor. © Archive of the City of Bratislava.



08 *Unitas, almanach stavebného družstva Unitas*, Bratislava, Stavebné družstvo Unitas, 1931. Cover. © University Library, Bratislava.



09 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Housing complex *Nová Doba*, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1934. © Josef Hofer, Archive of the City of Bratislava.



10 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Housing complex *Unitas*, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1930. © Archive of Architecture oA HU SAV.

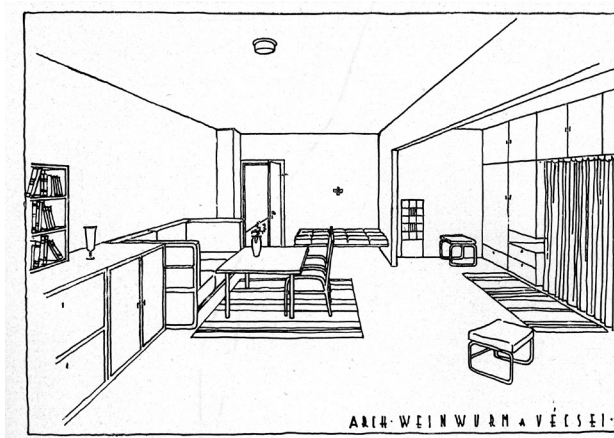
his commissions, whether the design of villas for the social elite or social housing for the masses.

The new way

At the same time that the critics were praising the “quiet self-evidence” of Friedrich Weinwurm’s villas, the architect was hard at work on two designs intended to provide a radical solution to the housing question¹⁵. The construction of the residential complex *Unitas* (1930–1931), from the very beginning, enjoyed a reputation as a “massive experiment in sociology”¹⁶ — not only because it was initiated by the Social Democratic party and aimed to test a model for cooperative apartment construction, but even more because its design strove to test all of the latest ideas for modern housing. Friedrich Weinwurm planned the complex as a row structure with semi-public spaces in between, a radical refusal of the traditional solid urban block. The individual buildings were conceived with entrances from open balconies, which Friedrich Weinwurm felt constituted, in terms of “layout and construction hygiene at this time, the only possible” as well as “the most economic structural solution”¹⁷. More radically, the choice of the open-access typology reflected the conviction that with expected social changes and the dissolution of the traditional family, the private residence would transform itself into more of a hotel-like typology. This particular aspect of the project — “collectivization of housing” — in *Unitas* was noticed even by Karel Teige¹⁸. With only one building design repeated throughout the complex, it also formed the outcome of the consistent application of the principles of standardization. Friedrich Weinwurm himself regarded “standardization in the relation of one individual to another as an exceptionally important factor, since it is based on the idea that one person does not have any demands that the other does not”¹⁹. Yet another manifestation of this egalitarian spirit appeared in the design for standardized furniture planned for the interiors of all the flats.

The success of *Unitas* encouraged the Slovak Social Democrats as well as Friedrich Weinwurm himself to start on the realization of an even more complex and extensive

residential complex, with the fitting title *Nová Doba* [new era]. The original plan of constructing 162 small and minimal flats with retail, storage and workshop sections in the parterre, eventually grew three times in size. In *Nová Doba* (1932–1942), Friedrich Weinwurm again revealed his forward-looking intellect not only in the urban plan, but equally in the floor layouts and construction methods. The greatest innovation was the steel-frame structure, used in Bratislava for the first time in a residential building. An assembled steel skeleton, it was hoped, would not only hasten construction but allow, through the unification of individual structural elements, a simultaneous reduction in cost. The realization of *Nová Doba*, no less than its precursor *Unitas*, attracted great attention from architectural critics. In an ethos of building a more just society, the reviewers welcomed *Nová Doba* as “hitherto the most important crystallization of all efforts towards a new human residence”, as “...the result of a cruel if not bloody revolution in thought and architectonic practice” and as the revelation of “a massive shift in the interest of architecture from the individual toward the collective”²⁰. As for Friedrich Weinwurm, he too argued for his construction in terms of universal human values: for him,



11 Friedrich Weinwurm and Ignác Vécsei, Housing complex *Unitas*, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1930. Drawing of the living space. © Archive of Architecture oA HU SAV.

“no longer important is the fate of the individual, but the fate of the social, dependent on... economic laws and the organizational relations of person to person, person to labor and person to the surrounding ruling forces”, i.e. that “collectivism” needed to be seen as an unavoidable “principle for organizing society”²¹.

The residential complexes *Unitas* and *Nová Doba* represented the first unified instance in the Central European cultural-geographic context of housing estates with small and minimal flats, conceived in the intent of functionalist principles, using construction innovations and modern row-planning, and realized as a cooperative project. For these basic pillars for the idea of social housing in Slovakia, both complexes were included in 1994 in the first draft of the Top Register of **docomomo** Slovakia. Today, after over eighty years of functioning, they remain vital structures, naturally stimulating community life, as it undergoes a contemporary renaissance in the new urban environment, and as such could serve as a model example for urban rental housing.

Bratislava: an authentic focal point of modernity

Friedrich Weinwurm, as a tireless defender of modern architecture and social progress, significantly influenced the architectonic scene of the inter-war period in Slovakia. The principles of his work, whether regarding architectural form, spatial organization or the construction of individual building elements, were followed by an entire generation of architects. The atelier Weinwurm & Vécsei, with nearly a hundred realized designs, shaped the visual environment of many Slovak towns, though most notably inscribing itself on the form of inter-war Bratislava. The new way that Friedrich Weinwurm followed in his architectural work ran parallel to the paths of the leading representatives of the European left-wing avant-garde. In Slovakia, these works represented the most coherent allegiance to the program of the New Objectivity, and the vision of a Marxist-inspired architecture. As such, Friedrich Weinwurm held a key role in ensuring that inter-war Bratislava formed one of Europe's important focal points for modern architecture.

Yet nonetheless, the captivating figure of Friedrich Weinwurm almost entirely vanished after WWII from architectural history. Many factors were in play: from the Slovak state's persecution of its Jewish citizens during the war, latent anti-Semitism persisting in Slovak society even after 1945, the deliberate reduction of the role of individual personalities in history as promoted by the program of Marxist art history, the post-Communist blanket condemnation of the left-wing avant-garde or Modernism in general, and no less the standard European historiography with its exclusive focus on Western centers, ignoring what emerged on the purported margins of the “cultural world”.

Today, a broader and more inclusive view of Europe's cultural heritage, as well as such organizational networks as **docomomo** International, have allowed architectural history to take into consideration such previously marginalized figures and locations as Friedrich Weinwurm and modernist Bratislava.

Acknowledgement

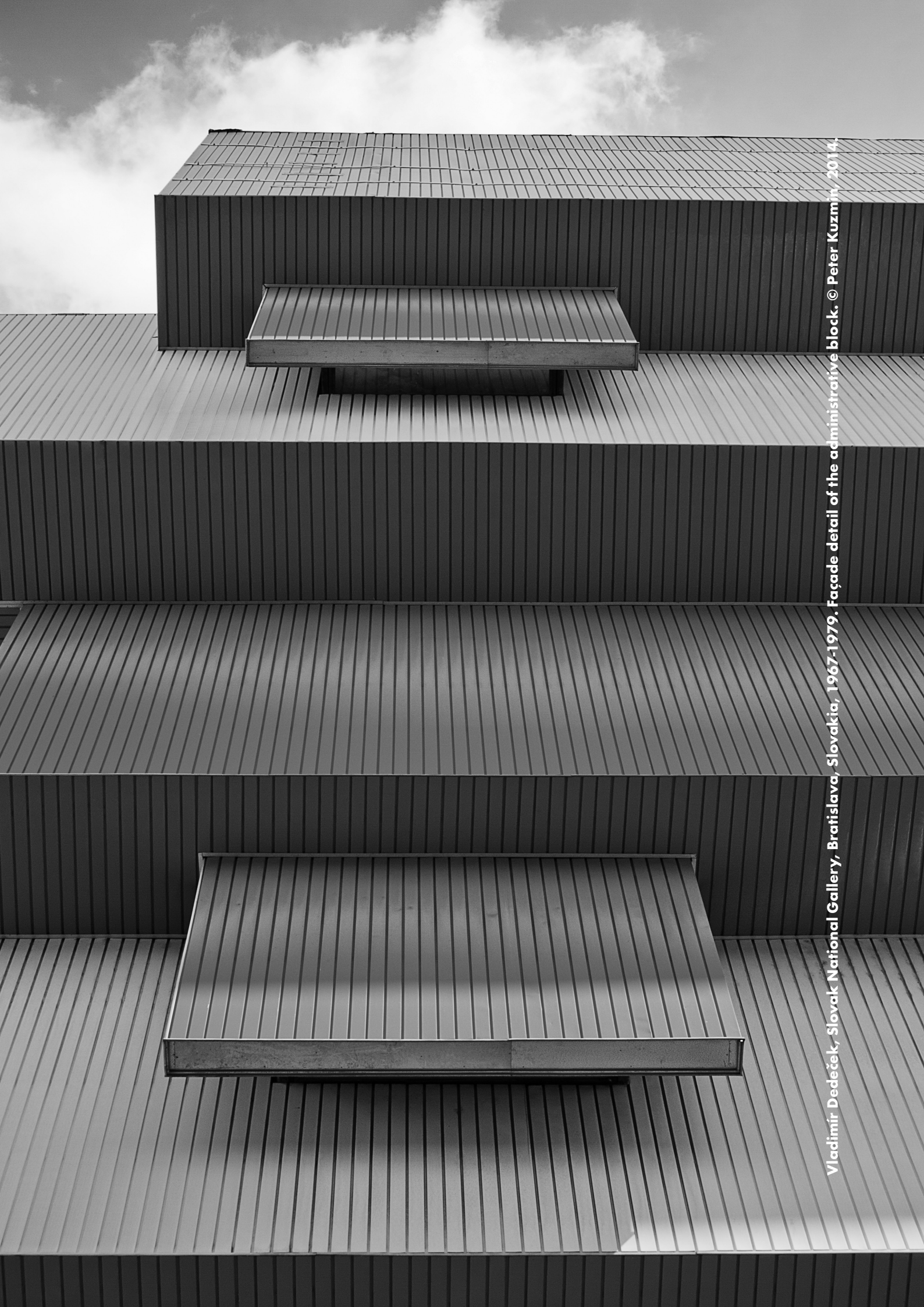
The text was made possible also through the financial support of the Slovak scientific agency (project no. VEGA-2/0074/17) and the Slovak Research and Development Agency (project no. APVV-16-0584).

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- 4 Fritz Weinwurm, “Zeitgemässe Baukunst”, *Moderne Welt. Illustrierte Halbmonatsschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Mode*, n. 10, Vienna, 1924, 19-20.
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- 6 Henrieta Moravčíková, *op. cit.*, 33-49.
- 7 Bedrich Weinwurm, “Cesta budúcnosti – Ako budeme bývať”, in Antonín Hořejš (ed.), *Obytné domy stavebného družstva Nová doba*, Bratislava, 1933, 10.
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- 17 Fritz Weinwurm, “Kleinstwohnungsbauten ‘Unitas’ in Bratislava”, *Forum*, n. 2, Bratislava, 1931, 53.
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- 19 Fritz Weinwurm, “Das Mensch und seine heutige Wohnung”, in *Unitas, almanach stavebného družstva Unitas*, Bratislava, Stavebné družstvo Unitas, 1931, 31.
- 20 Antonín Hořejš, *Nová doba*, 2. Etapa, Bratislava, 1936, 10.
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Vladimír Deděček, Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1967-1979. Façade detail of the administrative block. © Peter Kuzmin, 2014.

Metallic brutalism and its present embellishment. The addition to the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava

BY PETER SZALAY

This paper summarizes the creation and formulation of the modern addition to the Slovak National Gallery, an iconic architectural work of post-war Modernism in Czechoslovakia which instigated a major discussion between specialists and the general public already from its construction time. In the second part of the text, related to the reconstruction currently underway, I attempt to interpret the actual process of this building's reconstruction and remodeling, which could be viewed as a physical dimension of the discussion on the polarizing effects of Modern Movement architectonic concepts as well as the impoverishment of the authentic heritage value of this unique instance of Slovak modernity.

In the Czechoslovak pavilion at the 2016 *Biennale of Architecture*, a project was presented by theorists Marian Zervan, Monika Mitášová and several instructors from the Department of Architectural Design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava¹ focusing on a single work: the modern addition to the Slovak National Gallery (SNG). This exceptional work of post-war Modernism, occupying a major site in the Slovak capital Bratislava, was designed in a process starting at the outset of the 1960s, yet its construction ended nearly two decades later, and only as a fragment of the much greater concept. Drawing upon the passionate, even unbalanced discussions among experts and the general public on the value of this challenging modernist statement placed in close juxtaposition with the city's historic core, the authors attempted to indicate paths towards overcoming this clash of opinions. Through layering the many contradictory perspectives published about this building from the 1980s onward between the “conservatives and progressives” and using a variety of new text and graphic analyses, they sought a way to spur a sense of care for this architectural work, to achieve the “reemergence of *Gaia architectura* [joyful of architecture]”². Essentially a literal “linguistic turn” in reversing the philosophical standpoints of this situation, what the authors attempted at the exhibition in Venice also took place at the same time in physical form in the structure itself. Seventeen years after the gallery addition was closed for structural problems, its reconstruction was launched.

The goal of the present text is to summarize the creation and formulation of the modern addition to the Slovak National Gallery, a unique architectural work of post-war Modernism that could equally serve as a characteristic instance of the construction of large public buildings for

cultural use in post-war Czechoslovakia and, by extension, the entire Eastern Bloc. In the second part of the text, related to the reconstruction currently underway, I attempt to interpret the actual process of this building's reconstruction and remodeling, which could be viewed as a physical dimension of the discussion on the polarizing effects of Modern Movement architectonic concepts as well as the impoverishment of the authentic heritage value of this iconic instance of Slovak modernity.

Updating of a modernist concept

“I would say that they have brought me towards a more interesting conception in which the idea of the massing is in most sections similar”, reads the technical report on the alternative response to the introductory project for the addition to the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava, prepared by architect Vladimír Dedeček following the recommendation of the expert committee from the Working Group for Culture and Information in 1967³.

After 1945, Slovakia underwent a significant wave of modernization, culminating in the formation of an institutional framework for cultural activities. Among the first cultural institutions formed in post-war Slovakia was in fact the National Gallery. However, its location — in a Baroque former military barrack on a prominent position on the Danube embankment — was even then regarded as insufficient, and plans were made for its enlargement⁴. The “Water Barracks” originally formed a structure of four wings, though the riverside wing was demolished during WWII for a planned expansion of the embankment walkway; it had been adapted for office use and could only function fully as a display space after the completion of renovations in 1955. Karol Vaculík, the gallery director, commissioned an



01 Vladimír Deděček, Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1967-1979. View to the gallery exhibition block. © Archive of Department of Architecture HÚ SAV.

evaluation of the potential for expansion in the early 1960s from the young architect Vladimír Deděček. One of the most promising talents of the era, Vladimír Deděček had already realized the extensive complex of the Agricultural University in Nitra, now regarded as one of the greatest achievements of post-war Modern Movement in Czechoslovakia at the age of 35 when he completed his first sketches for the gallery addition in 1962⁵. And he confirmed his architectural talents a year later in the official invited study competition of 1963, when his design won against strong competition from highly respected architectural professionals⁶.

Vladimír Deděček's concept of forming a full city block drew upon the era's accepted approaches in the composition of vertical and horizontal slabs of built masses, which simultaneously matched the functional separation of the building's operation (exhibition block, public-events block with library and auditorium, administrative block), along with the employment of the characteristic "modern" principle of opening the parterre through raising the building atop pillars. In the end, his creation of a space allowing a view from the street into the barracks courtyard provided the impulse for the transformation of the entire project. As noted in the introductory quotation, three years after the success of Vladimír Deděček's and the subsequent expansion of the project up to the advanced pre-realization phase, the expert commission was called again to discuss the project. Since the year was 1967 and the reform impulses of the Prague Spring were already reaching full force, the experts decided to make the courageous decision to reject, almost in its entirety, Vladimír Deděček's nearly completed project as already outdated, while offering a wide range of concrete suggestions for how he should update it⁷. And the most far-reaching suggestion was, in fact, to create an even greater view into the courtyard of the building's historic section. The

task of opening up the courtyard stimulated the architect to raise the exhibition wing to a height of 7.5 m, creating almost a kind of bridge linking the wings of the historic object and framing the view from the riverside walkway.

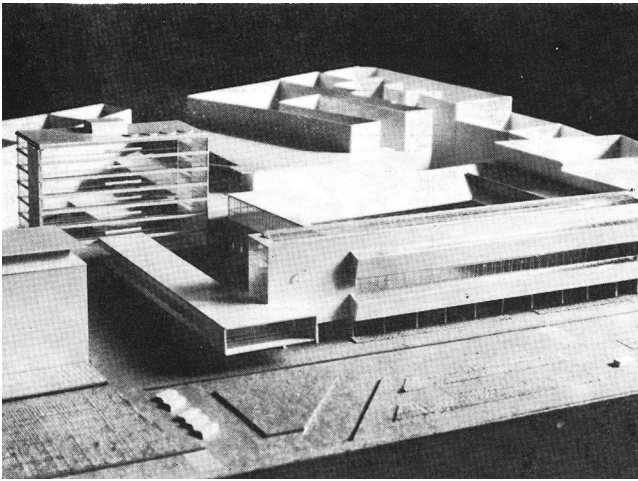
Natural light as the creator of new form

For Vladimír Deděček, light was the medium that stimulated his creative and experimental search from his very earliest years. Starting with his first designs for standardized school plans, he and his colleague Rudolf Miňovský strove to find the most effective form of lighting the classrooms with natural sunlight. His greatest successes here came through lighting the classrooms through the ceiling, thanks to the shifting of the masses of various floors backward and forward, a method used in one of his secondary schools in Bratislava and planned for application in the exhibition wing of the National Gallery. However, the task of raising this wing would, in the event of application of the same formal solution, have meant casting a shadow across the entire courtyard, and practically eliminating the hoped-for visual effect of accentuating the Baroque arcades of the original barracks⁸. Hence Vladimír Deděček decided for a stepped gradation of the wing's mass in the direction of the river bank, thus allowing direct access of sunlight into the courtyard. Simultaneously, the effect of natural lighting was transmitted as well from the main gallery spaces. The slanting surface of the roof of the bridging section, turned to face the inner courtyard like the roofs of the barracks themselves, was covered with glass to allow ample illumination of the gallery interiors. With exceptional ventilation and sunlight, the grandiose space of the bridging with its two retreating stepped terraces of exhibition areas ranked among the most striking interior concepts ever to be built in Slovakia in the 20th century.

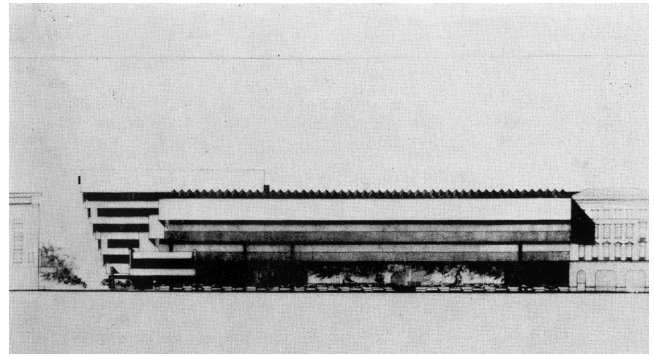
Natural light, which Vladimír Deděček tested in his technical and layout designs, was also used by the architect in the aesthetic formulation of his works. His sensitive perception of lit and shadowed surfaces inspired him to strongly plastic forms, directed not towards organic figuration but instead ruled by the abstract logic of stereometrics,



02 Vladimír Deděček, Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1967-1979. View to the gallery exhibition block. © Peter Kuzmin, 2014.



03 Vladimír Deděček, Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1967-1979. Model of the first project of the SNG addition, 1965. © Collection Vladimír Deděček, SNG Bratislava.



04 Vladimír Deděček, Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1967-1979. Sketch of the updated project of SNG addition, 1967. © Archive of Department of Architecture HÚ SAV.

rhythmic repetition and gradation. This approach is revealed most aptly in the administrative wing, which encloses the complex in the direction of the historic town center and rises in steps outward from the urban block. Originally, the protruding composition of the administrative block was planned to have its contraposition in the form of the terraced descent of the mass at the corner of the urban block, though this only remained in the planning phase, since the two apartment blocks from the 1930s and 1940s on the intended site were never demolished⁹. As a result, the present composition of volumes lacks its major counterpoint, and no less significantly, the entire complex has been deprived of its main entrance.

The difficulties of socialist construction

In the publication *Eastmodern*¹⁰, the first scholarly work to provide an extensive discussion of post-war modern architecture in Slovakia within its international context, the German theorist Oliver Elser wrote that the architecture of the socialist block is marked by a striking division, thanks to the poor economic conditions, between the cheap and mediocre production of mass housing and the imposing public structures intended to give an impression of success. "Residential buildings form a diffident grey mass that highlights architectural masterpieces even more"¹¹.

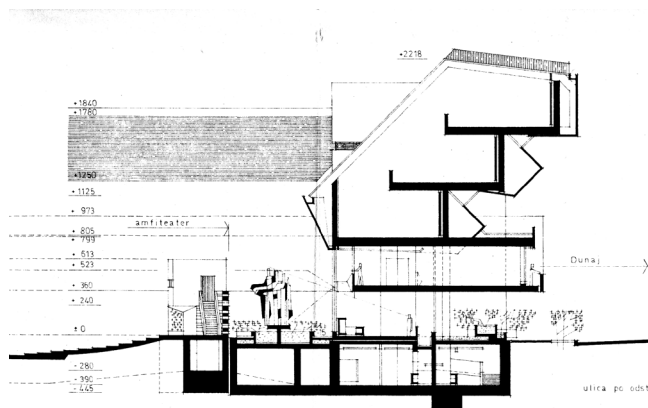
Around the year 1960, Czechoslovakia genuinely achieved first place worldwide in the share of prefabricated housing construction in contrast to traditional building directly on-site¹². The massive development of housing estates assembled from industrially manufactured concrete panels deeply marked the urban landscape of Czechoslovakia through the following three decades of communist rule. Yet the uniformity of standardized architecture was not merely an economic necessity, but in fact harmonized very well with the efforts of the communists to build an egalitarian, class-free society and a collective spirit¹³. No less in the spirit of reinforcing collective identity, display of individual

character or architectural exceptionality was demanded above all in the projects for social or public buildings: palaces not for individuals but for every member of society.

The result of orienting the construction industry towards prefabrication and industrial production of architecture was a worsening in the craftsmanship of the building trades and a degradation of the overall quality of built results. More complicated "wet" building processes that required more complex tasks on the construction site were, as a result, often reduced as much as possible by the architects: even in atypical building projects, the entire range of work from the basic structure to the final treatment was often entirely rendered in the "dry" process, as Vladimír Deděček himself recalls¹⁴.

In his early work, the architect showed a liking for the use of glass mosaics as façade treatment, a material that fully matched his interest in the interplay of light as well as allowing for a possibility of involving color. The façades of the National Gallery addition should have had the same surface treatment, yet the coral-red and white glass tiling was not applied directly to the façade: instead, the construction enterprise chose the technique of using pre-prepared façade panels with glass-mosaic surfaces, which were then simply assembled on the site. Poor-quality work as well as construction during unfavorable winter-time conditions led to parts of the tiling falling away at the joints, even in the course of construction. And the political aim of opening the bridging section to commemorate the 25th anniversary of "Victorious February" (the communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia in 1948) meant that the façade design had to be changed abruptly into a suspended metal curtain-wall of light aluminum slats¹⁵.

Steel, as one of the primary export articles of socialist Czechoslovakia, became one of the nation's most widespread construction materials for important public buildings during the 1970s. Indeed, the smoothed concrete that characterized the International Style of post-1945 Modernism was replaced by many Slovak architects with



05 Vladimír Deděček, Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1967-1979. Cross section of the gallery exhibition block. © Archive of Department of Architecture HÚ SAV.



06 Vladimír Deděček, Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1967-1979. View from the courtyard to the glass roof of the exhibition block. © Archive of Department of Architecture HÚ SAV.

different types of assembled façade systems, with a significant role played by cladding using aluminum components. The notably dynamic structure of metal slats became not only a common component of interior ceiling treatments, but even, thanks to their endurance and possibilities for color and surface treatment, were used extensively on the façades of public buildings, becoming one of the emblematic surfaces and materials for the 1970s throughout Slovakia. And just as the rawness of exposed concrete in post-war New Brutalism remained controversial among the general public, the same response held for the metal claddings and structures of similar buildings. The robustness and the radical abstraction of form revealed in the protruding bridge-section of the gallery as well as its administrative wing were given a sense of ambiguity and metallic “truthfulness” with the metal façade components, yet they also appeared a disturbingly foreign element in the complex layers of the historic structure of the embankment.

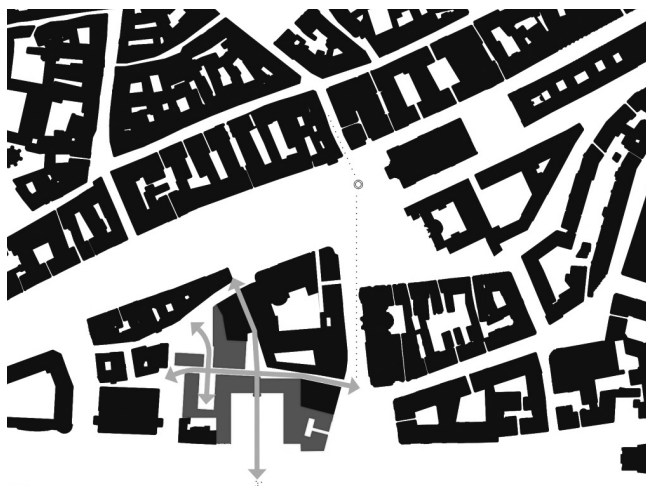
The new project: recontextualizing the SNG in the urban fabric

“Vladimír Deděček never behaved, even towards those buildings that he did not plan to demolish, with the intention of developing their exterior similarity or historical vocabulary. Indeed, he sought the opposite: he built to create his own individual, characteristic internal context of the entire complex”¹⁶ noted theorists Marian Zervana and Monika Mitášová in their interpretation of Vladimír Deděček’s addition to the National Gallery. In the architectonic concept of the gallery, we definitely find a combination of several traditional architectural and urban forms, such as the agora, atrium or arena, which give a truly urban character to Vladimír Deděček’s conception of this new block on Bratislava’s Danube embankment. And yet it was for its “lack of urban form” and “absence of context” that Vladimír Deděček’s SNG was later most often denounced.

The efforts to reform the Czechoslovak regime into “socialism with a human face” were destroyed in August

1968 with the invasion of Warsaw Pact military forces, leading to a reinforcement of conservative tendencies and a return to the political-economic models of a strictly centralized and controlled Party-State system. In architecture, as in all other branches of cultural life, for nearly two decades it was impossible to voice publicly any major critique of the official modernist paradigm, at least until the final years of the 1980s as the regime gradually weakened in its repressive force. Symptomatically, one of the first documents that started open criticism of the communist regime in Slovakia was a scientific analysis of the state of the natural environment, new construction and historic preservation in the capitol city, *Bratislava Nablas* [Bratislava out loud]. This *samizdat*¹⁷ publication presented a strong critique not only of mass housing construction but even more directly of large public projects in the city center and the overall state of architectural practice. “Until now, the work of architects usually followed the exclusive position of their architecture, which is a manifestation of anti-social thought, and the costs are borne by the entire structure”¹⁸: such was the evaluation in the spirit of the revolutionary period soon to emerge. Mentioned as the first such objects of anti-social architecture, in fact, was the modern addition to the Slovak National Gallery.

The political and social changes after 1989 significantly affected the SNG complex, not only through the sweeping, even iconoclastic critiques from experts and the lay public, but even more through the actual treatment and maintenance of the complex¹⁹, eventual leading in 2001 to the previously mentioned closure of the bridge-section primarily because of water leaks into the gallery spaces. Wide-ranging discussions on the future of the SNG²⁰ had their outcome in the decision by gallery management to reconstruct the complex, in part because of their acknowledgement of the quality of Vladimír Deděček’s addition. The path to be taken by the restoration process was formulated through two architectural competitions, in which the winning team was the atelier BKPŠ headed by architects



07 Martin Kušý, Pavol Paňák, Reconstruction of the Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2005-now. New expanded plan of the movement in the SNG. © Courtesy of studio BKPŠ.

Martin Kušý and Pavol Paňák, which is currently supervising the present reconstruction²¹.

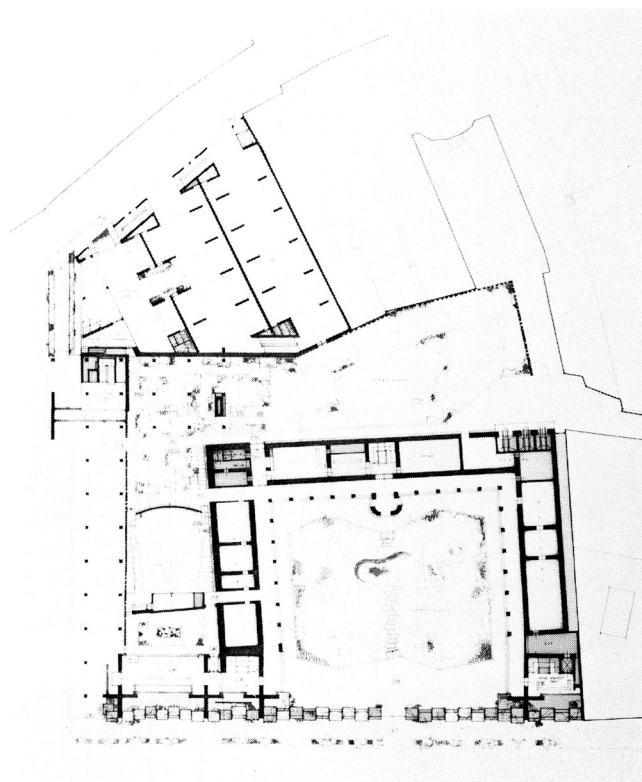
Starting from the late 1970s, Kušý and Paňák themselves assisted in the designs for large cultural or state objects similarly to Vladimír Deděček²², yet they already belonged to the younger generation of architects open to the post-modernist critique of the modernist concept, and their work reveals a renewed search for the context of urban structures using the traditional formal vocabulary of the street and the block. Though they did not play as active a role in the Velvet Revolution as some of their colleagues²³, their sensitivity towards the theme and ability to understand both sides of the conflict led them to a reconstruction method that softened the sharply individual edges of Vladimír Deděček's architecture. We could define their approach through two concepts: the recontextualization of the complex in the urban fabric and the humanization of form.

The new project of the gallery's reconstruction provided a major impulse for the more organic connection of the modernist complex with the surrounding urban structure, primarily through changing the orientation of the gallery entrance from the embankment to the inner courtyard, thus facing the historic city core, and opening new access routes to it. The architects expanded Vladimír Deděček's original layout concept and the succession of spaces, as well as movement through the complex. In the reconstruction, the aim was to maximize the concept of accessibility in the complex, planning to open the entire gallery parterre as a free-access zone while also creating a richer ensemble of more or less enclosed new gallery or public spaces with differing atmospheres and characters. Inside the former outdoor cinema, they created a large exhibition hall and close by, inside the former library, there are small exhibition spaces or "black boxes" for temporary exhibits. As for the library, it is relocated in the former depository below the bridge section, while the depository has received its own entirely new wing, which is also planned to contain the entire original interior of the lecture hall and cinema hall

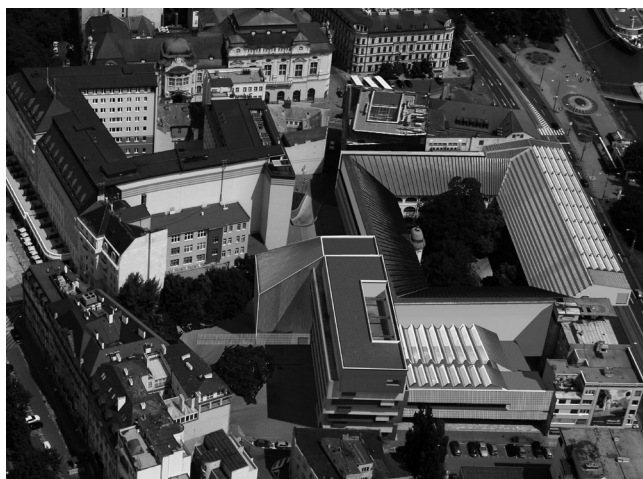
from the administrative wing. With a post-modern touch, the architects have preserved historic layers of stucco or directly exposed the brick masonry of the old barracks; additionally, they have uncovered the Baroque windows that Vladimír Deděček had ordered walled up and created new panoramic views through the modernist bridge. Indeed, the Modern Movement separation of functions along with the heritage layering are mixed together in the new project in almost a spirit of pastiche, where authenticity is subordinated to the spectacular effect of experiencing the architecture of the immediate complex and the city outside.

The humanization of metallic brutalism

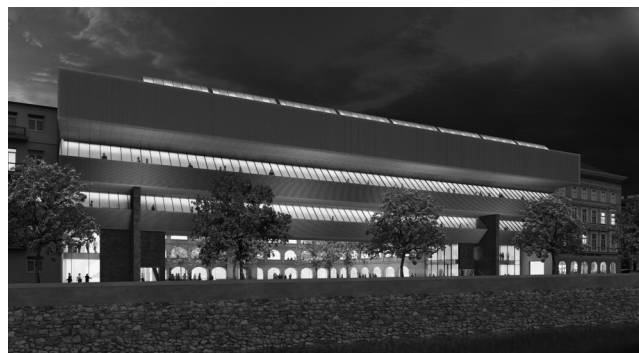
The term "humanization" was frequently deployed in Czechoslovak architectural discourse during the 1980s and 1990s, though primarily linked to the widely discussed question of the humanization of large-scale mass housing estates²⁴. At the time, the idea of fixing "inhuman" modern housing focused to a predominant extent on reducing the monotony of standardized architecture, introducing new elements and solutions that would bring individuality into the repetitive visual environment of the estates. Essentially, though, the plans focused on the effort to reduce or camouflage the prefabricated construction appearance of this architecture. Like the construction grid of panel joints on apartment façades, the dynamic raster of aluminum cladding is connected in the historical memory of many people with the products of the socialist regime and the abstract,



08 Vladimír Deděček, Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1967-1979. Ground plan of the SNG addition. © Archive of Department of Architecture HÚ SAV.



09 Martin Kusý, Pavol Paňák, Reconstruction of the Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2005-now. Aerial view, visualization of the project in the cityscape. © Courtesy of studio BKPŠ.



10 Martin Kusý, Pavol Paňák, Reconstruction of the Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2005-now, visualization of the reconstructed exhibition block at the river side. © Courtesy of studio BKPŠ.

elitist aesthetic of modernist architects. The controversial reception of the bridging-structure of the National Gallery by the public lies to a great extent in its metal cladding and what memories or associations it awakens in the viewers. Kusý and Paňák attempted to resolve this question in the spirit of the “humanization” concepts, leaving the original cladding system on the administrative block and in certain sections even using its original components. Yet for the most visibly exposed section of the building, they decided to use an entirely new exterior envelope, perhaps in the aim of weakening the historic associations of this façade. The architects designed and extensively tested a new system for a metal façade to be composed of two parts: the actual metal cladding, which will consist of larger lengthwise-placed sheet-metal elements, and an upper level of an aluminum grill. In addition to breaking up the massiveness of the volume, this second element will also function as a kind of sun-break to reduce the chance of the façade overheating.

The new façade system, as a result, significantly changed the lapidary massing and expression of the original cladding of the bridge section, reducing its somewhat monotonous character and bringing into play a dynamic element in which the outward-positioned three-dimensional gridwork will create a moiré effect for a moving viewer, similar to the effects created on windowless commercial buildings from the 1960s onward. This humanization approach, in a way, softens the controversial aspect of the bridging section, giving it a kind of elevation or even luxury that Vladimír Deděček would have rejected for his own Brutalist “truthfulness”.

“The Brutalism of today is nothing more than the same brutalism brought into architectural discussion by Reyner Banham and the Smithsons”²⁵, writes Oliver Elser in the introduction to the publication *SOS Brutalismus*, which defines a new and broader framework for using this concept in the global history of Modernism for an architecture of lapidary abstract forms and complex conceptualizations. The compilers of this publication, which forms the culmination of an international on-line campaign for the protection

of these built “monstrosities”, openly follows the wave of the “concrete-hype” now prevalent, to draw attention to this unusual stage in the development of architecture in the later 20th century. And a hyping of post-war Modernism is visible now even in Slovakia, where the “socialist monsters” are becoming icons with their reproductions filling design magazines, books or clothing²⁶ and their objects emerging as tourist attractions.

Yet the specific and salient trait of this architect is less the “unaesthetic” quality of its materials than the presentation of architecture in its physical truthfulness. In this wider view, Brutalism conjoins a humanistic and social ethos in which the structural formal or social experimentation and engineering of the Modern Movement managed to generate, to a significant extent, the culmination of the post-1945 reconstruction of buildings and societies on both sides of the Iron Curtain²⁷.

The façade replacement on the National Gallery in Bratislava thus represents a shift in the symbolic as much as the physical existence of the modern gallery addition, as a new architectonic layer reflecting the “spectacle” of late capitalism. In the wealth of new spaces, elements and contexts, the architects breathe new life into Vladimír Deděček’s provocative modernist unambiguity, and through sophisticated additions imprint a new form on the most visible element of the complex. In settling the decades-long discussions and disputes over the National Gallery and its wider section of Bratislava’s river-front panorama, the resolution has “only” implied a suppression of part of the authentic heritage of this layer of architectural history. Even in this respect, though, the restoration is an instance of the gradual search for a path towards the acceptance of “metallic Brutalism” in post-war modern architecture in Slovakia²⁸.

Acknowledgement

The text was made possible also through the financial support of the Slovak scientific agency (project no. VEGA-2/0074/17) and the Slovak Research and Development Agency (project no. APVV-16-0584).

Notes

- 1 Exhibition name: *Care for Architecture: Asking the Arché of Architecture to Dance*. Commissioners: Monika Mitášová, Monika Palčová. Curators and Participants: Petr Hájek, Benjamín Bradňanský, Vít Halada, Ján Studený, Marián Zervan. Organiser: The Slovak National Gallery and the National Gallery in Prague.
- 2 Marian Zervan (ed.), *Care (sorge) for architecture*, Praha, Česká technika – nakladatelství ČVUT, 2016, 146.
- 3 Vladimír Deděček, “Technická správa k alternatívemu riešeniu ÚP SNG”, 11.6.1967, Archive of the Department of Architecture, HÚ SAV Bratislava.
- 4 For more on the history of the construction of the National Gallery complex Monika Mitášová (ed.), *Vladimír Deděček - Interpretations of his Architecture*, Basel, Birkhäuser, 2018, 89–103.
- 5 For more information see Monika Mitášová, “Forma a jej recepcia v architecture. Na príklade areálu Vysokej školy poľnohospodárskej v Nitre”, *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, 49, 2015, n. 1–2, 120–143, or Peter Szalay, “Vysoká škola poľnohospodárska v Nitre. Technologickij a objemovij experiment v štýle neskorého moderizmu”, *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, 41, 2007, n. 3–4, 31–45.
- 6 Participants in the competition included the leading pre-war architect and professor at the Prague Academy of Fine Arts Jaroslav Frágnier, or Eugen Kramár, an experienced architect who had begun his career even during the war years, and the partnership of Martin Beňuška and Štefánia Rosincová from the Office of the Chief Architect of Bratislava. See Monika Mitášová (ed.), *Vladimír Deděček - Interpretations of his Architecture*, Basel, Birkhäuser, 2018, 92–93.
- 7 The chair of the expert group, as well as the committee for judging the study projects, was the architect Štefan Svetko, who at this time was revising his own major project, the Slovak Radio building, into its well-known expressive form of an inverted pyramid.
- 8 The architect personally explained this principle in his video interview for the exhibition: “Vladimír Deděček: Work”, accessible online at <http://magdamag.sk/2017/12/04/vladimir-dedeczek-praca/?lang=en>.
- 9 According to Vladimír Deděček, the decision not to demolish these two buildings was the result of clientelism in the local administration as well as national politics, since a leading city functionary lived in one of the flats. Personal conversation, 25.06.2012.
- 10 Herta Hurnaus, Benjamin Konrad, Maik Novotny, *Eastmodern, Architecture and Design of the 1960s and 1970s in Slovakia*, Wien/New York, Springer, 2007, 238.
- 11 Oliver Elser, “Back to the Future”, in Herta Hurnaus, Benjamin Konrad, Maik Novotny, *op. cit.*, 8.
- 12 Tibor Zalčík, Matúš Dulla, *Slovenská architektúra 1976 – 1980*, Bratislava, Veda, 1982, 19.
- 13 For more on the context of mass housing construction in Czechoslovakia see Henrieta Moravčíková *et al.* *Bratislava Atlas of Mass Housing*, Bratislava, Slovart, 2011, or Lucie Skřivánková, Rostislav Švácha, Irena Lehkoživová (ed.), *The Paneláks*, Prague, UPM, 2017.
- 14 The architect recalled that he abandoned his plans to realise a more complex reinforced-concrete structure following his experience with the tri-axial ceremonial auditorium of the Agricultural University in Nitra. Personal conversation, 10.09.2011.
- 15 This Slovak-produced façade system, under the designation “Alpo”, was manufactured in Žiar nad Hronom and offered various surfaces using coloured enamel.
- 16 Monika Mitášová (ed.), *op. cit.*, 293.
- 17 Samizdat is a dissident or underground literature secretly written, copied and circulated to prevent the official government censorship. The word comes from Russian language and mean self-publishing.
- 18 Ján Budaj (ed.), *Bratislava Nahlas*, Bratislava, ZSOPK, n. 6 and 13, 1987, 30.
- 19 At the start of the 1990s, the glass roof of the bridging section was replaced, with the flat panes exchanged for convex Plexiglas elements, which significantly increased the rain leakage into the gallery spaces.
- 20 For more on these discussions see Marian Zervan (ed.), *op. cit.*, 941127.
- 21 The competitions were held in 2003 and 2005, and the winning team completed the realisation project in 2013. For more on the project see Pavol Paňák, “Reconstruction and Addition of the Slovak National Gallery Complex”, *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, 47, 2013, n. 314, 2661279. These architects realised the new National Theatre in Bratislava, and after 1989 the central office of the Slovak National Bank.
- 23 Peter Bauer, one of the authors of the new National Theatre and a collaborator with the atelier BKPŠ, was one of the authors for the critical samizdat publication *Bratislava Nahlas*.
- 24 Currently, this theme is being discussed e.g. by Maroš Krivý, “Postmodernism or socialist realism? The architecture of housing estates in late socialist Czechoslovakia”, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 75, 2016, n. 1, 741101.
- 25 Oliver Elser, “Just what is it that makes Brutalism today so appealing? Eine neue Definition aus internationaler Perspektive”, in Oliver Elser, Philip kurz, Peter Cachola Schmal (ed.), *SOS Brutalismus. Eine internationale Bestandsaufnahme*, Zürich, Park Books, 2017, 15.
- 26 For example, the project www.localicon.sk, www.ciernediery.sk, or the recent popularising guidebooks. For more on the situation of post-war architectural monuments see Henrieta Moravčíková, “Monumentality in Slovak architecture of the 1960s and 1970s: authoritarian, national, great and abstract”, *The Journal of Architecture*, 14, 2009, n. 1, 52.
- 27 Ákos Moravánszky, Judith Hopfengärtner (ed.), *Re-Humanizing Architecture, New forms of community*, Basel, Birkhäuser, 2017.
- 28 Attesting to the gradual acceptance of this historic layer is the fact that within the past two years, two other instances of Bratislava’s most controversial post-war Modernist works have been declared to be national cultural heritage: the Slovak Radio building and the Slovak National Uprising Bridge (Most SNP).

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Peter Szalay

(b. 1982, Bratislava, Slovakia) is an architectural historian. He works as a scientific researcher at the Department of Architecture of Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. His research is focused in Modern Movement and contemporary architecture and urban planning, special its context to society and politics. He is a member of the editorial board of the *ERA 21* magazine and the member of the review panel of scientific journal *Architektúra & Urbanizmus* and also a member of **docomomo** International.



Danilo Fürst, Cultural Center, Bled, 1938-39. © Miran Kambič.

Edvard Ravnikar and *The Heart of the City*. The genesis of cultural centers in Slovenia and in ex-Yugoslavia

BY NATAŠA KOSELJ

This article discusses Cankarjev Dom and Republic Square in Ljubljana, Slovenia, by Edvard Ravnikar with the focus on three stages of the genesis of cultural centers in Slovenia, starting with the pre-war Slovenian cultural centers by Max Fabiani, Danilo Fürst and Gustav Trenz. The second phase is represented by the cultural centres of the architects Oton Gaspari, Marko Župančič and Emil Navinšek from the 1950s built in the Slovenian industrial towns of Trbovlje, Velenje, and Zagorje, and the third phase by Edvard Ravnikar and his students such as Biro71 and Marko Mušič from the late 1970s and early 1980s built in Ljubljana, Skopje (Macedonia) and Kolašin (Montenegro).

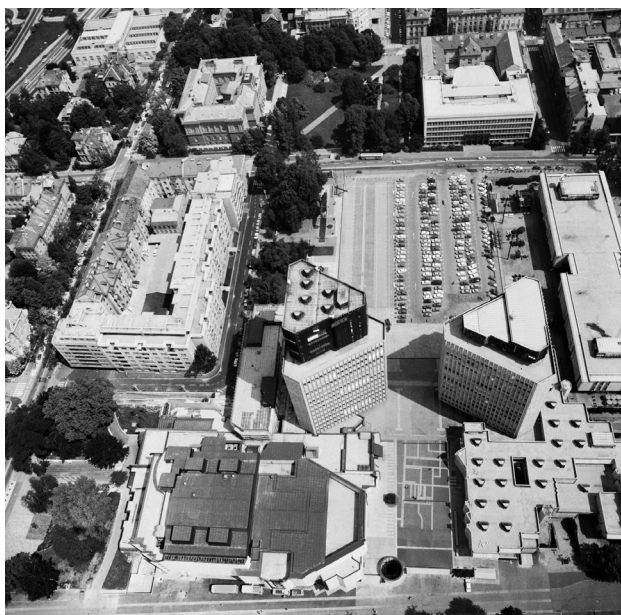
Edvard Ravnikar, Republic Square and Cankarjev Dom

On the edge of the major hubs of the Modern Movement, squeezed in between the East and the West, Slovenia has developed into a boutique-like European country, strategically located between the Adriatic Sea and the Alps, surrounded by Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia. Having been part of the Habsburg Monarchy, Illyrian Provinces, Austro-Hungarian Empire and part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and after having experienced three totalitarian regimes, Slovenia continued as a member of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for 46 years before achieving independence in 1991 and joining the European Union in 2004.

The WWII proved a radical cut in Yugoslavia's history, and from 1945 it became known as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with Marshall Josip Broz Tito as its leader. Until the so-called "Informbiro" crisis in 1948, when Tito split from Stalin, there had been a strong Soviet influence. Tito's decision to reject USSR rule shaped Yugoslavian main political orientation during the Cold War. "Non-aligned" Yugoslavia increasingly opened its borders towards the West and started a new path away from communism, through a period of self-management, towards a market-oriented society, or from a rather totalitarian state into a democracy. Experimentation became the core in Yugoslavia's move away from its past reliance on agriculture, with craft traditions being replaced by industrial prefabrication, and with Scandinavia now being the new point of reference. Historic conservation, urban planning, industry, housing, education, healthcare, culture and tourism became increasingly the main architectural tasks in non-aligned Yugoslavia.

This is clearly visible in the genesis of Republic Square (former Revolution Square), which was originally planned as a political space and, therefore, a certain degree of aggression was needed, for example the 20-story towers and the conversion of the convent garden into a concrete wilderness. Economic reform in 1964 led to a change of developers (from the state to the NLB bank and the Iskra company) and, consequently, changes to the project. The tower blocks became lower and were additionally widened at ground level, while the asymmetrical tops of the towers softened the previously symmetrical composition. The monument to the revolution, originally intended for the center of the square, was moved to the edge.

The concept of new spatial dynamics, in the sense of an intertwining of the functions outside/inside, above/below, public/private, religious/secular, old/new, found particular expression in the Republic Square complex, where the focus of the composition is the empty central space and the north-south axial orientation which, through the positioning of the prismatic towers, intensifies the movement of the wind in the space between them, thereby further emphasizing the compositional axis. Today Republic Square is integrated by a department store, a covered shopping street, restaurants, a church, a nunnery, a school, a bank, embassies, the parliament building, apartments, a square designed for public gatherings, which has also been appropriated by alternative urban sports and an underground car park, the archaeological finds of Roman Aemona, a park and the Cankarjev Dom cultural and congress center, with the opera house and a museum in the immediate vicinity. It thus incorporates almost all historical periods in the city's development, from Roman Aemona, via the baroque, to the neoclassical period and pre- and post-war Modernism.



01 Edvard Ravnikar, Republic Square, Ljubljana, 1960-1980. © Damjan Gale.

Ravnikar himself said:

It is necessary to strive for the city as a process, not the city as a view. Fullness of content develops on its own, in the flow of time, during the process. It is a matter of finding an architectural language that becomes, at the architectural level, highly differentiated, rich and exciting. Aesthetics must necessarily appear here with one principal social role, that of taming the omnipresent fear of geometrization and the stark usefulness of modern cities, of the slavery of functionalism as a merely calculative power of production. With an influence on the psyche, when the architect can add the emotive to the intellectual basis, like a sum of the real and the imaginary — until the development of something like a social anthropology of space.¹

Such thinking coincides with the philosophy of Social Dynamism (Peter Smithson) and with Action Painting in art. Ravnikar formally developed these ideas at the School of Architecture with compositional exercises for students of the new B-stream course that he devised, following the Bauhaus model, in the early 1960s, just at the time that he won the Republic Square competition. His pedagogical model was based on an erudite knowledge of history and architectural issues, a solid concept, the scientific method of analysis and synthesis, and experiment conditioned by doubt. The composition exercises of the B-stream students are full of rhythmic movement caused by the folding, shifting, layering and rotation of basic geometric figures, with their starting point in the golden ratio. It was from this stream that the first industrial designers in Slovenia emerged. The influence of these exercises can be particularly felt in the structuring of the volumes, façades and interiors of Cankarjev Dom, which was completed in early 1980s.

With the Republic Square complex, Ravnikar endeavored to create a democratic, dynamic and modern space

for urban dwellers, which, despite originally having been conceived as a monument to a revolution and what was then an authoritarian regime, does not erase collective memory but instead, with a rare sensitivity for human values and the existing, re-establishes it through movement in the flow of time. The basic distinguishing element is the diagonal, which appears both in its urban plan and in its structures, details, façades and roofs. The diagonal is the leitmotif of practically the whole of Ravnikar's architectural oeuvre. We may therefore say that his architecture is the architecture of the diagonal, of sliding, of bold experiment, the architecture of the inclusion and simultaneous transcending of the existing.

The genesis of the cultural centers in Slovenia and in ex-Yugoslavia

The first cultural centers in Slovenia were essentially buildings attached to churches that were used for cultural events within the parish. In many cases they were later converted into cinemas. An example of this is the Cultural Center in Bled designed by the architect Danilo Fürst. Built between 1938 and 1939, it directly connected the parish church to an existing building.

The Narodni Dom in Trieste, designed by Max Fabiani (1904-1920), was a special case. In 1900 the Slovene community in Trieste decided to erect a building that would combine the functions of a savings bank, a cultural institution and a hotel with a café. The building was completed in 1904 and henceforth became the central financial and cultural institution not only of the Slovene community but of all the Slavs living in Trieste. In 1920 the building was burnt down by Italian fascists. Although it was later rebuilt, it never again served its original purpose. A new Slovene Cultural Center in Trieste was built between 1951 and 1964 to plans by the architect Edo Mihevc. The project was self-financed by the local Slovene community and the center is of inestimable importance to Slovenes. The building itself is a modernist Mediterranean palace with a reinforced concrete skeleton.

Another interesting example of the pre-war concept of a cultural center is Šeškov Dom in Kočevje, which features a rationally symmetrical design and was created between

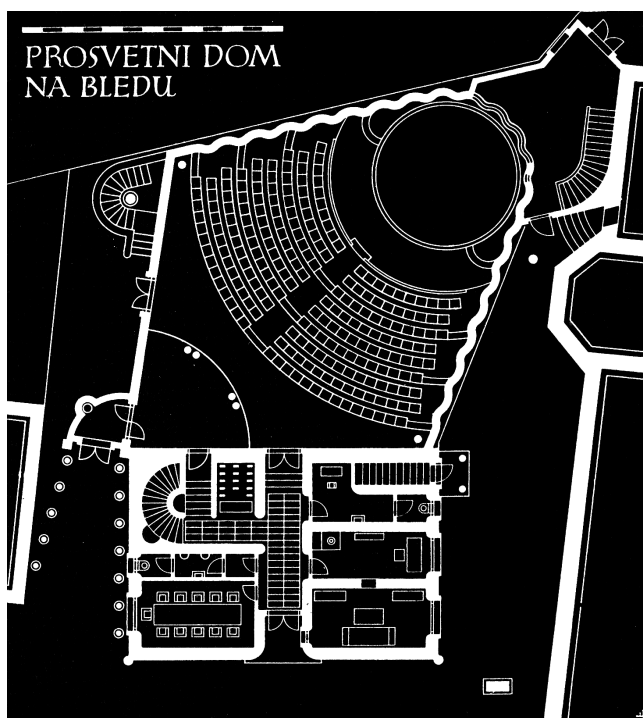


02 Edvard Ravnikar, Republic Square, Ljubljana, 1960-1980. © Damjan Gale.

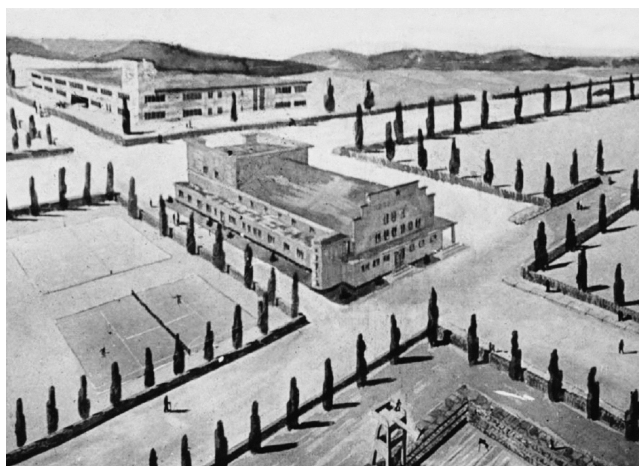
03 Edvard Ravnikar, Cankarjev Dom, Ljubljana, 1980s. © Damjan Gale.



04 Max Fabiani, the arson of Slovenian Cultural Centre, Trieste, 1904-1920. © Personal archive of Nataša Koselj.



05 Danilo Fürst, one of the plans for the Cultural Centre, Bled, 1938-39. © Personal archive of Nataša Koselj.



06 Gustav Trenz, Šeškov Dom, Kočevje, 1936-38. © Pokrajinski muzej Kočevje.

1936 and 1938 by Gustav Trenz. This was the first modern multi-purpose building in Kočevje. It centered round a large gym that simultaneously served as an auditorium, with a stage for theatrical performances. It was here that the assembly of delegates of the Slovene nation — the first directly elected representative body of an occupied nation in Europe during the WWII — took place in 1943. Dating from that period, and still present today, is the inscription over the stage reading “The nation will write its own verdict” — a quotation from Ivan Cankar’s satirical drama *The Serfs*.

Within the context of the development of the architecture of the Modern Movement in the 20th century, it is necessary to shed light on some of the important factors that influenced the building of cultural centers in the second half of the 20th century in order to gain a better

understanding of the development and importance of such centers; The eighth congress of the CIAM, which took place in Hoddesdon, England in 1951, was entitled *The Heart of The City* at the proposal of the members of the British group MARS (Modern Architectural Research). This coincided, both chronologically and in terms of content, with Martin Heidegger’s Darmstadt lecture *Bauen Wohnen Denken* [Building Dwelling Thinking], in which one of the most important philosophers of the 20th century discussed what it means to dwell and how the concept of the building coincides with the concept of dwelling. If during the pre-war, pioneering period of Modernism the focus was on economy, “mechanical aesthetics”, *ratio*, function and hygiene, in post-war Modernism it is the concepts of feeling, *locus*, history, archaeology and synthesis that become important. Writing in the middle of the last century, CIAM



07 Edo Mihevc, Slovenian Cultural Centre, Trieste, 1951-64. © Marko Korošic.



08 Emil Navinšek, Cultural Center, Zagorje, 1949-60. © Zagorje Municipality.

secretary Sigfried Giedion claimed that a shift occurred in the 20th century “when feeling became more difficult than thinking”. In short, if the pre-war world had striven for the rational division of life by functions, the post-war world once again pursued the old ideal and attempted to re-establish a view of life as a whole, without divisions.

In the 1950s, Yugoslav architects followed CIAM’s model and organised a conference on the topic of the “heart of the city” or cultural centers, which at that time were known as community centers. They found that in Yugoslavia, too, the first post-war modernist settlements were “without a heart”, without true centers, and that cultural activities for the most part took place in existing school buildings in the afternoons. In 1960 Vladimir Braco Mušič published an article entitled “Our Community Centers” in the sixth issue of *Arhitekt* magazine³, relating to precisely these new findings and to the new qualitative criteria of modern architecture. New community centers, the new hearts of cities, were not to be conceived as monumental buildings standing alone, but as living social organisms, as modern urban complexes blending culture and shopping, a technological vision of the future and history, where external and internal spaces were treated equally and holistically. Models in this period came above all from Finland (Espoo) and Sweden (Vällingby), which many Slovene architects visited in the 1950s.

Zagorje Cultural Center (1949–60) by the architect Emil Navinšek was a brand-new concept for a building in this predominantly mining town and the first large reinforced concrete structure in Zagorje. Set in the midst of greenery, the building has a large monumental plaza in front of its entrance. Like Navinšek’s corridor-free schools, it is designed around a central core, without corridors. Its different parts are connected by halls and staircases. The main hall has a circular design. The façade is a combination of travertine and rhythmically articulated glazed areas. The entrance façade is divided into three parts.

Trbovlje Cultural Center (1953–56) is the work of the architect Marko Župančič, who studied with Plečnik and Le Corbusier. It stands on the site of the former coalminers’

hall and, together with the large monumental plaza in front of it, represents a central feature of Trbovlje. The main entrance is accentuated by a dramatic canopy and three reinforced concrete columns. The white stone façade on the front of the building is adorned by a large mosaic by Marij Pregelj. Inside the building are two halls both decorated with original artistic details.

Velenje Cultural Center (1959) by the architect Oton Gaspari is the most important monumental building in Velenje’s main square. It opens towards the square with a central, concave façade, in the middle of which is a relief by Stojan Batič, flanked by stained-glass windows of a design that recalls a Mondrian painting. On either side of the windows, to left and right, stone façade panels create an intarsia effect. Stairs leading to the halls are located on the sides of the building. The building has a symmetrical ground plan. The side walls are covered with textured stone and emphasised by large concrete “lacework” panels.

Cankarjev Dom (1960–80), designed by Edvard Ravnikar and a group of his students within the context of Ljubljana’s Republic Square represents the biggest investment in architecture in Slovenia in the second half of the 20th century. In terms of both concept and appearance, it is a complex and convincing expression of the new architectural and planning paradigms of the second half of the 20th century that are described above, and the most important example of Slovene structuralism. It represents the heart of modern Ljubljana and the cultural heart of Slovenia.

Skopje Cultural Centre (1968–81) by Biro 71 (Štefan Kacin, Jurij Princes, Bogdan Spindler, Marko Uršič) is a complex of cultural facilities on the bank of the river Vardar in Skopje, Macedonia. Covering a total area of 60,000 m², the complex comprises an opera house, a concert hall, an academy of music and a cinema. In its center is a multi-level plaza that links the individual halls of the complex into a single, monumentally plastic whole, blurring the boundaries between architecture and urban planning, architecture and sculpture. The composition builds on the asymmetric tectonics of fragmented masses, de-centralized views and sharp angles.



09 Oton Gaspari, Cultural Center, Velenje, 1959. © Miran Kambič.



10 Marko Župančič, Cultural Center, Trbovlje, 1953-56. © Janez Kališnik.

Kolašin Memorial Center (1969–75) by the architect Marko Mušič is one of the most poetic examples of neo-regionalist and neo-cubist architectural design, the metaphorical language of which derives from the morphology of the scattered Montenegrin village in the center of which it is situated. The influence of Louis Kahn, for whom Mušič worked for a time, can be felt in the design. The ground plan is distinctly structuralist and divided into square sections or modules, which the architect develops prismatically on the vertical axis in various directions. The interior thus receives a mysterious zenithal light that heightens the drama of the intimate interior spatial experience.

Conclusion

To conclude, the development of the concepts of cultural centers in the 20th century went from the multipurpose structure (Slovene Cultural Center in Trieste, Šeškov



11 Biro71, Cultural Center, Skopje, 1968-81. © Damjan Gale.

Dom in Kočevje) or church connected structures (Bled Cultural Center) of the pre-war period, via the monumental modernist stand-alone structures in industrial settlements, whose aesthetics drew on the ideas of the avant-garde art of the first half of the 20th century (cultural centers in Zagorje, Trbovlje, Velenje — it is interesting to note that it was from these towns that notable Slovenian *avant-garde* groups such as Laibach emerged), to holistic architectural/urbanistic/artistic solutions that blur the boundaries between art, architecture and urban planning, between exterior and interior, between past and future. This architecture is based on the ideas and philosophy of structuralism, brutalism and regionalism developed by the younger members of CIAM, Team X, in their (sometimes polemical) discussions of new social dynamics, the anthropology of space and a gradual approach to planning as the basis of the growth of the modern city (in contrast to Euclidean modernist designs entirely planned in advance). Examples of buildings conceived on this basis are Cankarjev Dom, as part of the Republic Square complex in Ljubljana, Skopje Cultural Center and Kolašin Memorial Center. As quoted above, Edvard Ravnikar noted in one of his diaries that it is necessary to strive for the city as a process, not the city as a view, since fullness of content develops on its own, in the flow of time, during the process. Understanding the changed relationship of space and time and the synthetic treatment of architectural problems is therefore of key importance when it comes to identifying the characteristics of the planning of cultural centers in Slovenia and ex-Yugoslavia in the second half of the 20th century.

Notes

- 1 Edvard Ravnikar, *Trg Revolucije* [Revolution Square], Ljubljana, IZTR 1961–1976, 2, 1976.
- 2 Vladimir Mušič, “Naši družbeni centri”, *Arhitekt*, 1960, 81–84.

Nataša Koselj

Freelance architect and chair of **docomomo** Slovenia. She holds a PhD on post-war Slovenian architecture, the academic rank of assistant professor, and is an external lecturer at the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Architecture. In 2014 she was awarded the Plečnik's Medal for her book on the architect Danilo Fürst.



Construction of the alumina and aluminum plant, Kidričevo, early 1950s. © Miran Kambič.

Slovenian industrial heritage — complexity of meanings, their preservation and regeneration

BY SONJA IFKO

Industrialization caused the biggest technological changes in human history, which called for not only new ways of working but also of living, education, and life as a whole. Eventually the world became the global market that we know today, when we are on the threshold of 5.0 Industry, when utopia is becoming reality. Despite its peripheral role, Slovenia started to change quite early under the influences of industrialization; these changes accelerated in the 19th century and gained momentum during socialist industrialization, when organized heritage protection started to develop extremely quickly — first it was used for socialist propaganda and then increasingly for concrete protection actions and regenerations.

In parallel, relevant domestic knowledge was developed and, particularly, awareness was raised about the significance of industrial heritage, testifying to the transformation of its value in space and time. The understanding of this is necessary for an effective, development-directed protection.

At the outset, this essay focuses on determining the values of Slovenian industrial heritage through the lens of understanding its development significance as the underlying rationale of construction and urbanization over the last 200 years, to provide guidelines for protection and regeneration of the heritage of industrial sites. As industrialization also involves socially, rather than only technologically, complex and spatially extensive processes, they should be addressed comprehensively, as these interactions are crucial to preserve its complex authenticity. Here, we need to stem from the essence of industrialization — its efficiency and rationality, which I understand as the fundamental intangible heritage component of industrialization. As Sir Neil Cossons put it, “industrial heritage is, arguably, a unique cultural discourse; it brings challenges found nowhere else in the heritage sector and requires new answers”¹.

Characteristics of industrialization as the basis for designing protective measures

To have a well-reasoned discussion on approaches to the protection and significance of a comprehensive evaluation of industrial heritage for steering its regeneration in the case of Slovenian industrial heritage, the most important development characteristics of industrialization and industrial construction from the mid-19th century onwards will be presented.

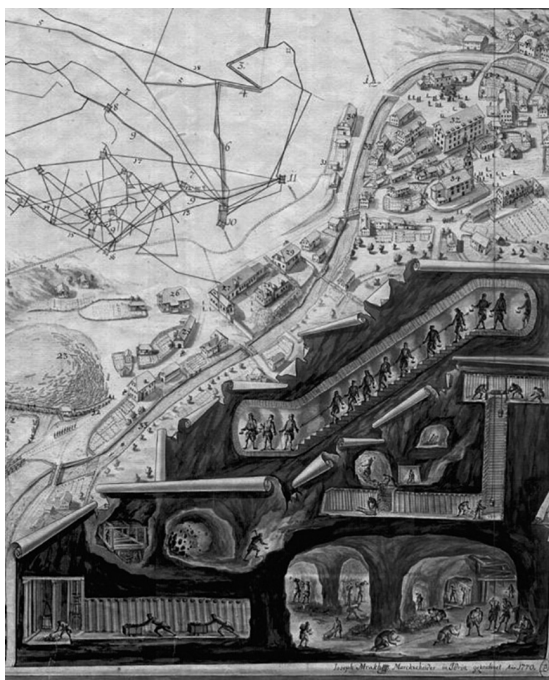
Early beginnings and the mercury mine in Idrija Slovenian lands, which were under Austrian rule for a long time, eventually also became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1876–1919). In 1919, Slovenia was united in the first South Slavic state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats,

and Slovenes and received, for the first time in its history, the power of independent management of the national economy within its own territory. The Empire's periphery became the new national center, whose industrialization and urbanization, however, was never as strong as those in the centers of the Empire at the turn of the century.

Nevertheless, with its mercury mine, Slovenia importantly helped to shape industrialization and the world economy, practically from the 17th century onwards. Idrija Mercury Mine was the world's second biggest mercury mine. By exporting the mercury to South America, where Western European owners would extract silver from the ore with the help of mercury and then launch it on the global market, it became part of early globalization processes that gave rise to the growth of European capital and favorable conditions that culminated in a series of technological innovations, allowing for industrialization, first in Great Britain, then in Continental Europe, and beyond.

The Idrija mine, which was under direct rule of the Empire, brought to Idrija many experts from the center of the Empire, while urban life in this remote, difficult to reach town, squeezed in a small basin, developed much more intensively than in other regional centers. Around 1770, Idrija was the first town in Slovenia to have a theater, an administrative building, and a mercury storage facility, built between 1522 and 1533, whose design imitated castle architecture. During the time, many important mining technical structures were built, particularly the Idrija *klavže* from the 18th century — monolithic stone water barriers to enable the transport of wood, also called Slovenian pyramids.

Until the mid-19th century some important iron works and a few textile factories emerged, mostly built by foreign



01 Idrija with its mercury mine, as presented in 1770 by Jožef Mrak, the head cartographer, speleologist, and designer of the *klavže* water barriers, ore roasting plant, and other facilities both in Idrija and other parts of Austro-Hungarian Empire (e.g. smelting plant in Banská Štiavnica). © Zgodovinski arhiv Ljubljana, Enota Idrija.

investors and partially by the domestic nobility. The paper industry, led by domestic capital, saw good progress.

Growing industrialization along the *Suedbahn* Railway

Given its scope of industrialization, Idrija was a Slovenian exception until the mid-19th century when the Austro-Hungarian Empire decided to intensify industrialization by railway construction. First the *Suedbahn* [Southern] Railway was built between Vienna and Trieste (1840–1857) to link the center with the port and beyond.

The *Suedbahn* Railway that stretched practically along the entirety of Slovenia in the northeast-southwest direction was the lifeline of industrialization, while the centers excluded from it lost their power. The towns and cities along the railway grew considerably faster, particularly those that were directly attached to it, e.g. Maribor, where the *Suedbahn* Railway company decided to set up major railway depots and workshops on an area exceeding 83,000m². The Zasavje coal mining basin in Central Slovenia was developed to provide the fuel. Both remained key industrial centers in the 20th century of Slovenia and Yugoslavia alike. Along the railway, the state built its monopoly companies, e.g. *Tobačna Tovarna* [Tobacco Factory] in Ljubljana. The railway attracted foreign capital that increasingly spread, particularly through the ports of Trieste and Rijeka (Croatia) – mostly as textile companies. Investors brought their own designs, new working methods and, as a result, urbanization.

Electrification at the turn of the centuries

In Slovenia, the first light bulb was switched on in Maribor's industrial grain mill back in 1883, only three years after

Edison's invention. Industrial plants were linked to early energy generation. The oldest, still operational, was built in 1893. The electrical energy from the Fala power plant, whose construction began before the WWI to supply the industrialization in Graz (today's Austria) became, after the changes in borders, crucial to industrialization of Maribor between the wars and the entire northeast of Slovenia, while the Završnica hydro power plant in the Gorenjska region played an important role in the industrialization of Kranj. The Fala HPP, designed as a hydraulic structure in reinforced concrete, has an extremely interesting inner shell above the power house spanning between arched girders, and is only 5 cm thick.

In particular, the textile industry developed in both towns, while Germans who came from the newly established Czechoslovakia prevailed among the investors. If pre-war factories followed the design of neo-historical styles with a growing reduction in decoration, the post-war period was characterized by not only functional adaptations of layouts to manufacturing but it followed modernist principles in design as well. The designs of the manufacturing parts are rather innovative, in line with the times. The plans were developed by construction companies, inspired by foreign examples, or foreign investors brought their own designs.

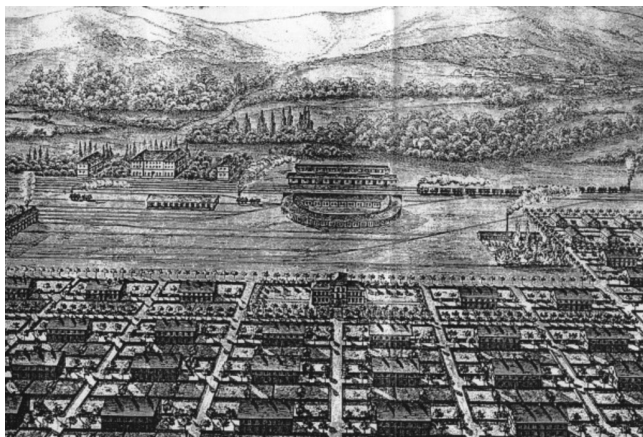
This is the time when Jože Plečnik returned from Prague to Ljubljana. Although he personally was not involved in industrial architecture, his approaches and his leading position at the newly established faculty, where he lectured, drew the path and approaches of the generations of architects to come. Some key architects parted ways with their teacher and started to follow new modernist principles, which did not correspond with Plečnik's unique architectural vocabulary. Many of them went to work or even study abroad. They mostly studied in Vienna, Prague, and Turin, and brought home functionalist and modernist principles.

In 1929, the Hennebique system of construction was introduced for the first time in Slovenia in the renovation of the tannery in Ljubljana, as used by Alois Kral, a Czech-born engineer, who joined the teaching staff at the university. The reinforced concrete frame was used already earlier, in the construction of the Catholic Printing House in 1907.

Socialist industrialization and design of industrial towns

As elsewhere in Europe, a key development milestone was WWII. The establishment of the socialist regime under the communist party, headed by Josip Broz Tito, was a complete turnaround. The new socialist state, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), was a federal association of six relatively independent republics, brought together by the central federal government in Belgrade.

This was an era that strongly influenced the present time, both in terms of industrial construction as well as our relationship to it and its heritage. Let me first briefly present the historical, political, and economic conditions that in Slovenia and Yugoslavia shaped a different socialist past than in Eastern Bloc countries, which were under



02 Southern Railway workshops at the outskirts of Maribor were the basis of industrialization of the city and the region. As early as 1863 they covered an area of 83,000 m², they had their own workers' settlement, a kindergarten, and a school.



03 *Tobačna Tovarna* [Tobacco Factory], Ljubljana, 1873. Typical industrial architecture of the 2nd half of the 19th century, situated on the city outskirts, next to the railway. Built in a brick external structure, with an internal system of cast iron columns and beams. © Sonja Ilko.



04 E. Faesch, Power House, Fala hydropower plant, 1918, with an innovative inside shell ceiling, only 5 cm thick, has been renovated into a museum, partly still operating with new generators. This is a case of symbiosis between heritage protection and the industry. © Miran Kambič.



05 L. Marscio and R. Coppa, Fish canning factory Arrigoni, Izola, 1938, is a case of design between the two wars, when volumetric compositions came to the forefront, replacing the neo-historical design and decoration characteristic until ww1. © Miran Kambič.



06 Building for bauxite processing, Alumina and aluminum plant, Kidričevo, 1943-1954. © Miran Kambič.

direct control of the Soviet Union. After Tito's conflict with Stalin in 1948, when Tito refused to conform to Informbiro's requirements, he decided to take an "independent path towards socialism". This strengthened Yugoslavia's links with the west, and included the formation of self-management socialism (1950)—if speaking of internal affairs, and the Non-Aligned Movement (1961) on the international podium. By the early 1960s, the reorganization of the system within the Yugoslav state and the implementation of the self-management system was starting to show good results reflected in a very successful economic growth, great optimism and accelerated construction activities. However, this enthusiasm slowed down in the late 1970s, and later even more so. The main causes of this were the differences between the nations and their development priorities, and unequal development within the federation; the great oil crisis started, along with the growing demands of the International Monetary Fund, which made loans to the country that Yugoslavia was unable to repay. Already in a deep economic crisis, the death of Tito in 1980 was the beginning of the end of the state, while the growing number of frictions within Yugoslavia led to the withdrawal of Slovenia in 1991.

In the aftermath of WWII, the first economic goal of the socialist state had been electrification, which was still highly deficient in the southern republics as well as in Slovenian rural areas. In 1945 in Ljubljana, the Litostroj industrial complex for the production of turbines for hydropower plants was built, which was the central Slovenian economic

and political project, also called Litostroj City. It was built accompanied by a residential area, a school, and a sports center. Its planning was based on the idea of a factory in a green setting, showcasing an innovative design and construction concept for the structures.

The main designers were Edo Mihevc and Miroslav Gregorič who studied in Turin and designed, despite the lack of materials in the post-war period, highly innovative structures with suspended roof structures, prefabricated construction elements, etc. The residential area also followed the functionalist postulate of living in greenery; further, the concept introduced the idea of a common canteen, which would relieve the working women from housework, but this was never realized.

Two further newly established industrial towns should be mentioned: Velenje and Kidričevo – the latter only in its preliminary form along the Alumina and Aluminum Plant, which Nazi Germany started to build during the war as part of an airplane production system in the framework of which the construction of a plane engine factory and a hydropower plant to supply the entire system started. After the war the socialist authorities decided to continue with the project and built a new town alongside the factory. The project was headed by Danilo Fuerst, Plečnik's pupil and a sophisticated functionalist.

The most successful one, looking from today's perspective, is Velenje which grew next to the mine, at a location outside the medieval village core. The goal of the project was, in line with the self-management doctrine, to provide workers and their families with a high-quality living environment. Supported by local politicians, an ambitious urban center with blocks of apartments surrounded by greenery, and positioned according to heliocentric principles, was designed by architects Janez Trenz, Ciril Pogačnik, and Franc Šmid. All the important structures – the administrative building of the mine, later the municipal headquarters building, the cultural center, and a workers' club – were designed and eventually built along the central communication axis with a square. Velenje was a well-designed city and mostly built according to plans – its design was consistent and it successfully preserves its original center to this day.

Expansion of the 1970s
and slowdown in the 1980s

With good economic results, the 1960s and 1970s brought more investments into industries, some state architectural firms specialized in industrial construction and several high-quality structures were built. The Gorenjska oblačila factory, built in 1974, was awarded the Yugoslavian Borba prize for architecture.

At the time, industrial plants invested in the construction of residential areas and welfare projects – sports infrastructure, public swimming pools along with factories heated by industrial water, and companies built their own holiday homes in the mountains and on the Adriatic Coast. In people's consciousness this is still embedded as an important heritage, paired with nostalgia, when companies still "took care of their workers".



07 M. Gregorič and E. Mihevc, Litostroj turbine factory, Ljubljana, 1945–1953. The industrial complex design was based on the idea of “a factory in a green setting”, providing workers with a high-quality working environment. © *Zgodovinski arhiv Ljubljana*.

08 J. Trenz, C. Pogacnik, F. Smid, Velenje, a new industrial and mining town, 1957. The image from 1964 shows one of the biggest Slovenian socialist urban projects. © *Mestna občina Velenje*.



09 Underground part of Mežica Lead and Zinc Mine Museum, where visitors can take a museum mine tour by miners’ train, by bike, or in some parts by kayak. This is a way to showcase innovative cultural and tourist programs, presenting mining heritage to a broader public. The mine museum is included in the Geopark Karavanke a member of the UNESCO Global Network of National Geoparks. © *Podzemlje Pece*.



10 The creative co-working Poligon center set up in the preserved part of Tobačna tovarna in Ljubljana. © *Poligon*.

In this period the construction industry started to increasingly introduce prefabricated systems, which were mostly used for the construction of industrial plants. In the 1980s, with the growing economic problems, the number of investments gradually started to decline. Construction mostly involved reinforced-concrete prefabrication by domestic manufacturers; the dissolution of the old system resulted in the closing down of almost all major design offices. A breakthrough came only in the 1990s when, after the economic and political shifts, the restoration and development of new programs started.

Evolution of protection activities and attitudes to industrial heritage in Slovenia today

The care of industrial heritage started relatively early – back in the late 1940s and mostly in the 1950s, when workers' museums emerged in industrial centers. They were intended primarily for consolidation of communist authorities and their values, so they were primarily oriented towards history, the workers' movement, and the workers' fight for rights in capitalism; nevertheless, the fact remains that other important materials were collected as a result and that today precisely these museums are important protectors of industrial heritage. The Technical Museum of Slovenia was established in 1951, albeit in an abandoned monastery complex, but with many technical water-powered monuments, i.e. watermills, which were later supplemented by other monuments brought from locations at risk.

In 1953 at Dno above Kropa in the Gorenjska region, where later, due to the local iron ore deposits, nail making developed, archaeological excavations of the so-called Slovenian smelting furnace (dating back to the 12th century) started. The furnace was an important Slovenian innovation from the Early Middle Ages for smelting iron. As we can see, industrial heritage protection in Slovenia started practically at the same time as the efforts of British colleagues for the preservation of the cradle of industrialization in Ironbridge, Coalbrookdale, and introduction of the new term industrial archaeology. Up until the late 1980s, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia took care of technical heritage and in 1980 a curator for technical heritage was employed. Quite a few important monuments remained preserved, particularly older heritage, railway structures, water-generated facilities, and small plants.

With the split from Yugoslavia, 1991 brought intensive economic changes, along with political changes, as many previously state-supported companies closed down in the new market economy conditions. Vacant industrial sites were in need of solutions both in the economic and spatial sense. They were mostly perceived as brownfields, while preservation of industrial heritage sites was, except for a few cases, not addressed.

Slovenian mines were an exception, as they were among the first ones that were closed down, with the Idrija mine leading the way. As part of the closing down process, financed by the state, they also made sure to preserve parts of the mining structures. The first underground

mining museum was opened in Idrija in 1994, which was followed by another two, in the Velenje Coal Mine and in the former Mežica Lead and Zinc Mine. Today, these three notable mining museums have become, together with their programs, have become central elements of the cultural and tourist activities of their regions.

In the late 1990s important restoration of two power plants took place – the Fala power plant at Maribor (1918) and the power plant Mestna elektrarna Ljubljana (1898). Initiators of the renovations were two state-owned companies, which attests to their recognition of the importance of heritage, while to a smaller scale quite a few other museum exhibits inside various companies were set up; nevertheless, the problems of preserving built structures remained and, except for the case of the aforementioned power plants, regeneration did not take place to the same extent elsewhere. The early 2000s saw the first extensive projects and implementation. The former Catholic Printing House in Ljubljana was renovated into the Faculty of Law of the University of Ljubljana and the City of Ljubljana purchased the then abandoned Rog bicycle factory to arrange there a contemporary arts center. However, when a site is occupied by civil society, particularly young people, the dynamics of change raise questions about the right to public good for everyone when the fact remains that the structure itself is deteriorating in the process. The question of social responsibility to the underprivileged is raised, which is an important topic also in the context of industrial heritage and the people who helped to create it.

Public interest in heritage, along with the promotion of, and exhibitions on, recent history, is growing, which is important also for its preservation, as the recent economic upturn brought about "regeneration" projects that were profit-oriented, while important heritage was demolished in the name of development. This has also been the case in many cases abroad. In Slovenia, the competition for the regeneration of the abandoned Tobačna factory in Ljubljana stands out, which provided for construction of high-rise buildings in the place of the former factory, with only a small part of it preserved. The project was initiated but then stalled due to the recession, leaving behind demolished buildings and new excavated construction pits.

This, without doubt, contributed to awareness raising about the irrationality of such interventions and contributed to reactivation of such sites, with a temporary use of the undemolished part of the Tobačna complex as well as some other places in Slovenia.

Organization of professional and civil society took place at the same time and we can say that nowadays heritage is at least generally understood and recognized. However its protection continues to require, particularly during the recent economic upturn, more efficient legal protection measures and particularly new innovative solutions, for which it is necessary to establish the appropriate conditions, particularly in the context of sustainable urban planning and inclusion of heritage in development policies, as provided for by the recent European documents, e.g. the *European Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century* (2017), the first

strategy of common European policy on cultural heritage, and the *Davos Declaration, Towards a High-quality "Baukultur" for Europe* (2018).

Preservation of industrial heritage and its multitude of implications for the future

The fact is that there is likely no single answer as to how to regenerate industrial heritage, as these are extremely complex structures and interrelated systems, which is best summarized by the definition from the *Nizbny Tagil Charter for Industrial Heritage*, which defines industrial heritage as:

remains of industrial culture which are of historical, technological, social, architectural or scientific value. These remains consist of buildings and machinery, workshops, mills and factories, mines and sites for processing and refining, warehouses and stores, places where energy is generated, transmitted and used, transport and all its infrastructure, as well as places used for social activities related to industry such as housing, religious worship or education².

To be able to preserve the most important parts of industrial heritage as a cultural discourse of a certain place across time, we need to understand both the past as well as the significance of heritage for the future. Firstly, a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis is necessary, which must be appropriately structured to take into account all heritage values and preserve them in regeneration processes. The methodological approach that is being gradually introduced in Slovenia was based on these starting points³. This is underpinned by a multi-level interdisciplinary analytical research basis. The basic element of analysis is the individual manufacturing unit – a factory, a mine, etc., which is treated in terms of its relationships: on the outside in the relationship to space that it belongs to (urban landscape); on the inside – the relationship between various structures that form it. Finally, individual relevant structures are addressed. For each level of investigation, analytical parameters and evaluation criteria were developed, which are the basis for determining heritage values, so that in the phase of construction protection baselines we could efficiently prepare guidelines for the project phase of regeneration, where, firstly, protection and project requirements for all three investigation levels are aligned – this is crucial as it allows for inclusion of interests of civil society and the interested public. This is followed by the planning and implementation phases. Keeping the public informed of project developments from the start across all implementation phases is crucial.

Industrialization and its growth were enabled by people, their work, and engagement. The inclusion of former workers in these processes is paramount. If they are appropriately included they can become the key generators of protection of basic heritage values and thus receive new work opportunities as industrial heritage sites are also places of difficult economic and social conditions. Participation of both former employees and interested members of the public is an important element

of regeneration, allowing for inclusion of everyone and thus promoting social cohesion.

If we focus on the values of industrial construction and industrial architecture as the material framework of all processes, we first need to draw attention to the fact that often these modest structures, lacking special architectural and structural character, can be important because of their technical, historical, and other values. This is particularly characteristic in Slovenia, as there were, in fact, not many significant outstanding achievements in the architectural design of factories. But we speak of heritage of industrial sites as of objective witnesses to development ("unintentional monuments") whose significance was underlined already by Alois Riegel.

In Slovenia and beyond, the awareness about the meaning of industrialization as the key generator of change in the development from the 19th century onwards is rising, but it is still not considered everywhere. It is without doubt clear that we cannot be satisfied with likeable design solutions of individual cases, but rather we have to design comprehensive development solutions which should become the generators of revitalization, as industrial heritage sites have — due to their nature, their rational being — the potential to build a new, sustainable future.

Notes

- 1 Cossons, N., "Why preserve industrial heritage?", in Douet, J. (ed.), *Industrial heritage Re-tooled, The TICCIH guide to industrial heritage Conservation*, TICCIH by Carnegie Publishing, Lancaster, Great Britain, 6-16.
- 2 *The Nizbny Tagil Charter for Industrial Heritage*: <http://ticcih.org/about/charter>.
- 3 This methodology was presented in detail in the *A&U journal*, in a paper entitled "Industrial Architectural heritage – re-evaluating research parameters for more authentic preservation approaches".

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Sonja Ifko

(b. Maribor, Slovenia, 1968). PhD in Architecture, University of Ljubljana. Associate Professor at the Faculty of Architecture University of Ljubljana. Her main research field is architectural heritage of the 19th and 20th centuries, especially industrial heritage, heritage preservation, and interpretative presentation. She has published several articles and book chapters in Slovenia and abroad. She is president of ICOMOS Slovenia and Slovenian national representative in TICCIH.



Leonid Lenarčić, Milosav Mitić, Ivan Petrović, Mihailo Čanak, Block 21 meander A7, New Belgrade, Belgrade, SFR Yugoslavia, 1959-1966. Experimental construction site of IMS Žeželj technology. © Ivan Petrović archive in Konstantin I. Petrović private collection, Ivan Petrović, c. 1962.

New Belgrade: past-present-future, and the future that never came¹

BY JELICA JOVANOVIĆ

It was an event that rarely happens in this part of the world: the construction of a brand-new capital city in a country which was not famous for its achievements in city building. Furthermore, it was in a country ravaged by WWII, rural and mostly agricultural, with modest industrial capacities. Today, 70 years after the beginning of its construction, New Belgrade is still one of the most contentious topics of architecture and urban planning in Serbia. It is the most beloved and the most hated, biggest success story and biggest failure, most beautiful and ugliest architecture of the city – all at the same time. It is not just a question of contested beauty: like many other post-war cities based on the *Athens Charter*, New Belgrade is a vast infrastructurally equipped urban territory, soaked in conflicted interests and interpretations of its past and its future. As we approach the saturation point of its available construction land – at least per original and many consecutive plans – the question of its future development, its reconstruction and/or restoration is looming out of every document and every conversation about New Belgrade.

When proud New Belgrade would stand here, built up with a conscious plan, and with the love, will and hands of the laborers, the youth, the People, let this plaque say and remind: April 11th 1948, three years after the end of the People's Liberation Struggle, we have finished the preparations for the start of a new working battle in the struggle for the happiness and prosperity of the people. On that day: the laborers and the youth of all the nations of Yugoslavia have burned out to build New Belgrade, to extend the beloved capital city of the state of equal peoples to this side of the Sava river².

The beginnings: the “symbol of the rise of our wishes and the imagination”³

Although located within the “greater Belgrade”, New Belgrade was conceived as a new city from the very beginning, considering the complexity of this enterprise and the power relations within the city. New Belgrade was “a federal project” that could “take away the resources” for rebuilding of the old Belgrade, or at best serve as a “reserve area while the reconstruction is taking place”⁴. From the outset a separate urban entity, it took a long time for New Belgrade to become an integral part of the city, both for the citizens and for the authorities. But planners and architects envisioned the city in this area decades before it emerged, to remediate the marshland in the city center and to physically and symbolically claim the former “no man’s land” of the historical empires.

Initial steps for Belgrade to cross the Sava River were taken before the WWII. The master plan from 1923 proposed a classical urban scheme with squares and prospects on

the left river bank; the bridge and the road were built to connect Zemun⁵ and Belgrade; the industrial zone was built from the 1920s onwards in the lower area of Zemun⁶ — most notable being the Rogožarski and Ikarus airplane factories; the new airport⁷ was built from 1927-1931 which included the two concrete shells designed by Milutin Milanković; finally the complex of the Old Fairground was built from 1936-1940 designed by municipal architects Tričković, Lukić and Tatić, which had a tragic history of being a notorious concentration camp during the war. However, these structures had been built *ad hoc* and not according to the master plan, which allowed the post-war planners to treat them the same as the rest of the territory that had yet to be ameliorated — as *tabula rasa*. Furthermore, these structures were punctual, located circumferentially to the territory that was the focus of the city’s expansion, which needed much investment since it was covered with water.

The first conceptual diagram of New Belgrade had already been made in 1944, by then director of the Department of Architecture of the Ministry of Construction, architect Nikola Dobrović. His strong personality and author’s approach to urban planning shaped (and burdened) the first post-war years of New Belgrade construction: grandiose “Haussmannic” boulevards and avenues, large-scale functionalist architecture, generous areas for various *central functions* and heavily compartmentalized zoning. He started his mission already during the war: in 1943 he managed to join partisans and immediately started working with the group of professionals, planning post-war reconstruction of

the devastated country. After liberation in 1944 he spent three years appointed as director of the key planning institutions in charge of Belgrade⁸ where he drafted the plan — actually, a series of concept sketches — that served as the basis for all the later competitions: for the buildings of the Federal Government (later Executive Council), Central Committee of the Communist Party and representative hotel (Hotel Jugoslavija). The plan changed later, but these buildings were built as planned, becoming the first fixed urban points of New Belgrade. In 1947, Dobrović was given tenure at the Faculty of Architecture, just before the Kominform Resolution took place in 1948 — these events introduced a major shift in city's planning paradigm.

The execution: several decades of the largest “organized construction site”⁹ in the country

The period 1948-1958 is considered to be “the lost decade”¹⁰ of New Belgrade development, due to the crisis in funding and the reorganization of the administration, which deeply affected the planning and construction processes. However, the “loss” is relative: although there was almost no architectural production on the New Belgrade site(s), this decade was used to regroup and build the necessary industrial capacities for construction¹¹. The amelioration and filling of the site never stopped: the sand was extracted from the bottom of the Danube and block by block the level of the area was raised. The blocks still carry the same numbers as in the amelioration layout, subtly inscribing the memory of this engineering endeavor into the city's tissue. Newly appointed planners, Stanko Mandić and Branko Petričić, started elaborating on the inherited plans, orbiting around the main concepts of the earlier iterations: the above-mentioned buildings which were already under construction, the network of main traffic corridors, and the postulates of the *Athens Charter* applicable in this case. The core concepts were already on paper: the typical size of the urban block was 400 × 400 m; the planning module revolved around the “prescribed” distances of 200–400 m; the block's architecture was planned as a set of typical modernist structures — slabs and towers dispersed in rich greenery; the entire city in rigid urban zoning.

However, already in 1950¹², the use of the *Athens Charter* in Yugoslavia was under scrutiny: it was noted that a city is too complex to be observed through CIAM's four functions — which added a new layer of creative freedom and allowed the unprecedented experimentation for which New Belgrade is famous. Already in 1960s the zoning was reassessed and more “central functions” introduced, while industry and traffic were pushed towards more peripheral locations. This was a good decision at the time, but by the 1980s clearly wrong, since industry went even further away, north-west of Zemun, near the road to Novi Sad. Planners started researching different concepts and schools of planning, Soviet *microrayons* and Perry's *neighborhood unit* were revisited. The production of space completely changed following 1958: the capacities for industrialized production of housing were in place, and the first experimental blocks 1 and 2 emerged, per the plan by Petričić.

In 1959 the competition for the urban planning and architectural design of the Central Zone of New Belgrade was launched. The “super-group” composed of members of two award-winning teams Leonid Lenarčić, Milosav Mitić, Dušan Milenković and Milutin Glavički¹³, led by the experienced Uroš Martinović, started developing the plan based on the competition designs. The results were the urban design of the zone's “modular block”, Block 21, and the Master Plan of the New Belgrade Municipality adopted in 1962, which led towards the explosion of experimental practices in the field of mass housing. The methodology of planning included public competitions for a block or a rayon, the results of which would be elaborated by the award-winning team paired with the Urban Planning Institute to develop the detailed plan, and upon the plan's adoption the construction would begin, almost exclusively in prefabricated technologies¹⁴.

Towers, slabs and meanders were still the main urban planning typologies, but architectural design became more elaborate in terms of form and materialization. Previously, crude hard-liner prefabrication technology had become more sophisticated owing to the use of local prefabricated systems, most famous being IMS Žeželj and Jugomont. The creators of these systems — in the spirit of the era — experimented with the concepts of open-system technology and offered a wide range of technical solutions, allowing architectural expression through the layouts and the envelopes. This attitude led to a vast diversity of forms, avoiding monotonous and generic urban landscapes, which was often the problem of modernist estates.

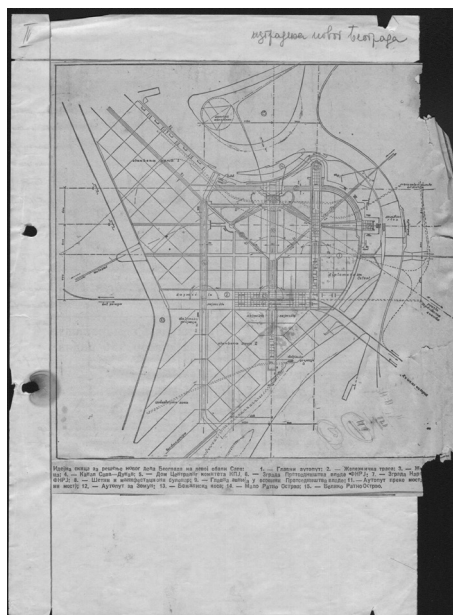
The critique: sunny skyscrapers and the tale of two competitions

During the 1960s and 1970s, New Belgrade became a veritable laboratory of integration of urban planning, mass housing design and prefabricated construction, but the lack of *central functions* and industry was still lagging behind. The *de facto* prevalence of housing structures, poor public transport, lack of stores and markets, led to indignation over the perceived status of the municipality as “Belgrade's dormitory” and “reservoir of lots for cheap housing construction”¹⁵. The problem of construction of *non-housing content* was grave: no investor¹⁶ was willing to build these premises, and there was no mechanism available to push them to build. The city came up with the plan to bypass the problem by commissioning and building many typified community centers, which was a step down — considering the progressive practices applied to other typologies, and still wasn't enough — considering the demand. Vast areas remained empty, waiting for a better, more prosperous and richer future to come.

On the other side, the empowered investors would push and negotiate to get more areas for their housing developments, changing the plans in the process. The exception soon started becoming the rule, reaching a turning point with the competition and construction of Block 24 in the Central zone of New Belgrade: the seventh housing block, that was never intended to be, replaced the planned square



01 Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade, New Belgrade in construction, Belgrade, SFR Yugoslavia, c. 1962. View from Belgrade Fortress, showing Block 21 and the Central Committee tower (left), Museum of Contemporary Art (center), and Federal Executive Council (right) in construction, while the land in the background is still covered with water. © Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade, Branibor Debeljković.



02 Urban Planning Institute, New Belgrade, Belgrade, FPR Yugoslavia, 1947. One of the concept sketches of New Belgrade, done by Urban Planning Institute led by Nikola Dobrović. © Collection of Miloš Jurišić, *Rad* [journal], 30.08.1947, press clipping.

with public buildings in front of the main train/bus station, effectively ruining the plan to build the central axis of the Zone. The competition happened in 1984, but the documentation¹⁷ shows that the agreement on the land use, signed between the investor, the Yugoslav People's Army and the Institute for Construction of Belgrade, existed already in 1981. It was a shock for professional circles, first of many to come, but the Association of Architects and then mayor, architect Bogdan Bogdanović, quickly regrouped. It was decided to announce an international, UIA-supported competition¹⁸ for the urban regeneration of New Belgrade, to try and respond to the critique of the city's development and prevent another "Block 24" from happening.

The competition was controversial from the beginning, namely because many aspects were not defined: there was no territorial limit and no focal point of this prospective regeneration, the deadline was extended a couple of times. Finally, the awarded designs were so heterogenous and even divergent, that many questioned the point of such a competition and its future applicability. Nevertheless, 490 tender documents were raised and 94 entries submitted from the teams worldwide. The first prize was split between teams from Czechoslovakia and Poland; second prize went to another team from Poland; third prize was split between one Yugoslav and one French team – team of Alexis Josic and his studio¹⁹; fourth prize went to one Yugoslav and two Polish teams. One must notice among those awarded the prevalence of (East European) teams with the substantial background in the field of mass housing and organized city planning. Apparently, many of them were well acquainted with the city and, coming from familiar backgrounds, understood instinctively many of its problems. They also understood its potential, and were excited to take the

challenge and rehearse their concepts in an environment that was different, yet very familiar to all of them²⁰. On the other side, Belgrade authorities received many ideas that would have been easily attainable given the avid level of the profession's infrastructure, even with the shift of the scale and style — but other processes interfered and eventually prevented this from happening.

Today: it is achievement of socialist Yugoslavia²¹?

The corrosive processes, that today are beleaguering Belgrade and many other socialist capitals, stem from this period. As a vast greenfield area, fully equipped and integrated in the city, New Belgrade was an easy target for those who were "knitting (their) 'games' [...] around this huge battlefield of interests"²². Yugoslavia was facing severe austerity measures in the 1980s: foreign markets were crumbling, so companies (re)focused on the domestic market, stirring up competition and acting in many ways as a "bull in a China shop". In the case of New Belgrade, Energoprojekt is the most illustrative and most drastic, albeit not solitary, example: offering know-how paired with significant capacity to pre-invest, they seemed like a blessing from the sky to the city authorities who needed a quick fix after they pompously announced results of the competition. Riding on their success, Bogdan and Vladimir Slavica²³, authors of Block 24, proposed the design for the new Arena. Using the toxic atmosphere of the postmodernist critique of New Belgrade as the "failed" embodiment of the "failed" regime, Energoprojekt lobbied for continuation of the construction in the Central Zone, presenting itself as the company most capable of developing what was envisioned by the competition in 1986.



03 Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade, New Belgrade, Belgrade, SFR Yugoslavia. Modular working-model per plan of 1962 on display in the Institute for Construction of (New) Belgrade – scale models would be inserted after the adoption of the detailed urban plan for each urban block. Most of the depicted blocks were built as designed per these plans. © Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade, c. 1970.



04 Jaroslav Kachlik, Radomil Kachlik, Juraj Koben, Jaroslav Prager, Peter Vavrica, Martin Koniar, Miloš Gašparec, New Belgrade urban renewal, New Belgrade, Belgrade, SFR Yugoslavia, 1986. Two 1st prizes were awarded to teams from Bratislava and from Warsaw. © Association of Belgrade Architects, 1986.



05 Geokarta, New Belgrade, Belgrade, SFR Yugoslavia, orthophoto. © Urban Planning Institute of Belgrade, c. 1975.

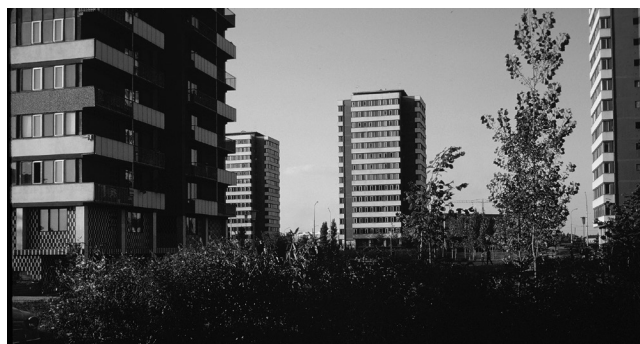
These actions, combined with financial hardship and precarious conditions in the country that was falling apart, but also the upcoming deadlines, pushed the city authorities to make a form of public-societal partnership²⁴. After a painstaking bidding process, the consortium of the Energoprojekt and Napred construction companies were awarded the job. The concession was to build the Arena – that was suddenly moved to the center of Block 25 in the middle of the Central Zone, continuing with the tendency of building on the previously planned axis, not around it as promised. The City transferred the rights to the land use of the Central Zone in Blocks 25 and 26 to this consortium, hoping they would bring more investment – which did not happen due to the Yugoslav Wars and international sanctions. However, these companies were soon privatized either fully or partially, and their new-old management decided to just sit on the empty – but extremely valuable land, waiting for the convenient moment to maximize the profit. This is just the most prominent example – many similar scenarios happened all over the country.

In the case of New Belgrade, it effectively meant transferring the responsibility for planning and shaping this part of the city onto the societal-turned-private companies, that had received the rights to land-use. Due to these processes, the newly built environment became more diverse while old structures fell into disrepair, losing their original appearance, urban environment and stylistic synergy. More housing, office and commercial space was built, sometimes even overbuilt usurping public spaces. Meanwhile, the problem of the lack of health services, daycare services, cultural centers, parking... remains. Another quite problematic consequence is the drastic loss of knowledge and experience in the field of prefabrication that these companies championed: its production, its features and the logic of its emergence, which is essential for any prospective restoration.

However, new tendencies that arose within the last decade bring some hope: with the amounting new research on the modernist architecture and urban planning in Yugoslavia, New Belgrade started to gain more international attention and exposure. The Museum of Contemporary Art and Old Fairground were protected

already in 1987, and years later the Federal Executive Council building and the remaining hangar of the old airport (in 2013), and Friendship Park (in 2014). In 2013, after many previous initiatives and attempts, the Central zone of New Belgrade was put on the tentative list of the Belgrade Institute of Heritage Protection, together with Blocks 1 and 2, the Western Gate of Belgrade (Genex Tower) and Sava Centar. Although still disputed as being “unwanted” or even “difficult” heritage, the attitude towards the blocks and the city is changing, becoming more positive among the residents, which will hopefully build up to its protection and the restoration of the original elements of its architectural and urban design.

06 Mihailo Čanak, Milosav Mitić, Block 29, New Belgrade, Belgrade, SFR Yugoslavia, 1967-1974. © Ivan Petrović archive in Konstantin I. Petrović private collection, Ivan Petrović, c. 1970.



07 Branko Petričić, New Belgrade's Blocks 1 and 2, Belgrade, SFR Yugoslavia, 1958-1962, experimental site of IMS Žezelj technology. © Ivan Petrović archive in Konstantin I. Petrović private collection, Ivan Petrović, c. 1970.

Notes

- 1 The title refers to the *The Future of New Belgrade, International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement*, held in 1986.
- 2 Čedomir Minderović's text for the memorial plaque, commemorating the beginning of the construction of New Belgrade, located in Ušće, near the Museum of Contemporary Art.
- 3 Bratislav Stojanović, Uroš Martinović, *Beograd 1945-1975 – Urbanizam Arhitektura*, Beograd, NIRO Tehnička knjiga, 1978, 42.
- 4 Branko Bojović, "Beleške o Novom Beogradu", *Izgradnja 11-12/83*, Beograd, Savez građevinskih inženjera i tehničara SR Srbije, Savez društava arhitekata Srbije, Savet za građevinarstvo Republičke privredne komore SR Srbije, 1983, 63; Ljubo Ilić, "Sećanje na godišnjicu Novog Beograda", *Ibid*, 70.
- 5 Today Zemun is one of the municipalities of Belgrade, back then it was a separate town.
- 6 Today Blocks 8 and 9 of New Belgrade.
- 7 Area between today's Blocks 1 and 49.
- 8 Department of Architecture of the Ministry of Construction of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, Urban Planning Institute of Serbia and Urban Planning Institute of the People's Committee of Belgrade Municipality.
- 9 Milutin Glavički, "Novi Beograd kao predmet istraživanja", *Izgradnja 11-12/83*, Beograd, Savez građevinskih inženjera i tehničara SR Srbije, Savez društava arhitekata Srbije, Savet za građevinarstvo Republičke privredne komore SR Srbije, 1983, 5.
- 10 Brigitte Le Normand, *Designing Tito's Capital: Urban Planning, Modernism, and Socialism*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014, 73.
- 11 Machines, war trophies, turned out to be looted from Netherlands, so they were eventually rented and remained in Belgrade. Cement production in Beočin had to be stabilized with new production lines and capacities, a new brick factory, silos and laboratories were built, patents obtained for Franki piles, but also many new local patents invented. Ljubo Ilić, "Sećanje na godišnjicu Novog Beograda", *Izgradnja 11-12/83*, Beograd, Savez građevinskih inženjera i tehničara SR Srbije, Savez društava arhitekata Srbije, Savet za građevinarstvo Republičke privredne komore SR Srbije, 1983, 70-71.
- 12 During the Symposium of Architects and Urban Planners in Dubrovnik.
- 13 Milutin Glavički kept his posting in Urban Planning Institute, and soon became the prominent lead of the Group for New Belgrade, where he remained until 1982.
- 14 This "exclusivity" was a result of the urgent need for housing on-the-one-hand, and the belief that prefabrication would deliver the needed acceleration of the process on the other hand. Since the terrain of New Belgrade was flat, unlike the rest of the city, the prefabricated technology was accommodated in the competition, planning and bidding process, which led to a specific planning practice that was, often derogatory, called "gabarit" and "crane" urbanism.
- 15 Bratislav Stojanović, Uroš Martinović, *op. cit.*, 12; Živojin Karapešić, "Okvir dostojan slike", *Izgradnja 11-12/83*, Beograd, Savez građevinskih inženjera i tehničara SR Srbije, Savez društava arhitekata Srbije, Savet za građevinarstvo Republičke privredne komore SR Srbije, 1983, 55.
- 16 The investors were either companies and agencies which were in self-managed societal property, or small investors gathered around a housing cooperative. The situation became even more complex after the reform in 1965 and introduction of the market, which meant that business associations could take a bank loan, build and then sell the flats to different entities, that would later distribute the flats to their employees, according to their ranking on the distribution list. Basically, no one was incentivized to build schools, shops, cultural centers – it was expected that the city would negotiate these with the entities and agencies in these fields to invest and build the premises they would later use.
- 17 The contract on "Arranging and handing over the land for construction of apartments in residential block 24", dated 30.06.1981, part of the General documentation of the Main Project, Historical Archive of Belgrade, technical documentation of Block 24.
- 18 *The Future of New Belgrade, International Competition for the New Belgrade Urban Structure Improvement*, deadline 21.07.1986.
- 19 In the interview to the journalists of NIN, Bogdan Bogdanović says that Aljoša Josić (Alexis Josic), Belgrader by birth and education, was "(...) personally very excited. It seems as he was really impressed with New Belgrade as an undertaking, technique (infrastructure) as a huge investment. I personally think that he even likes New Belgrade a little bit", *Stenogramme*, 11.04.1986, 23. Bogdan Bogdanović documentation, Archive of the National Library of Austria.
- 20 In an interview with Jaroslav Kachlik in 2017, Henrieta Moravčikova noted that he was inspired by a children's book: *Sunny Skyscrapers* by Mira Alečković, which brings the story of a stray dog found in one housing neighborhood by a group of children, and the group's adventures in the effort to keep the dog, in spite of strict housing rules and skeptical parents.
- 21 Bratislav Stojanović, Uroš Martinović, *op. cit.*, 42.
- 22 Borislav Stojkov in *Simpozijum "Budućnost Novog Beograda"*, Beograd, Društvo arhitekata Beograda, 1986, introduction.
- 23 Who were employees of Energoprojekt at the time.
- 24 Although these companies were still formally in societal property, they acted and had the reputation of "socialist corporations", in which self-management was more of a formality.

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Jelica Jovanović

Independent researcher, PhD student of the University of Technology, Vienna. Founder and member of *Grupa Arhitekata* and *docomomo* Serbia. Coordinator of regional projects *Unfinished Modernisations* and *(In)appropriate Monuments*. Curatorial assistant of MoMA's exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948-1980*.



Vojin Bakić, Monument to the Revolution, Valjevo, Serbia, 1960. © Nenad Lalbenšperger, 2017.

On the wings of modernity: wwii memorials in Yugoslavia

BY VLADANA PUTNIK PRICA AND NENAD LAJBENŠPERGER

Memorial sites dedicated to the National Liberation War, revolution and the victims of fascism have played an important role in the cultural and political life of the socialist Yugoslavia. The changing political course of Yugoslavia from 1948 influenced its cultural strategy. This reflected the artists' sensibility and tendency towards abstract sculpture, which culminated during the 1960s and 1970s. In this essay we will examine the influx of modern art and architecture on the aesthetics of the memorials from the era. We will also focus on their contemporary representation as an important part of cultural heritage.

Introduction

Remembering and commemorating the victims of WWII played an important role in the cultural and political strategy of socialist Yugoslavia. The 1960s and 1970s were considered to be the "Golden Age" of the memorial sites and complexes dedicated to the victims of WWII, National Liberation Fight¹ and Revolution. After the abandonment of socialist realism, memorial sculpture was greatly influenced by the idea of constructing a specific Yugoslav identity. The war memorials of this period were characterized by monumental compositions, with an often geometrized form and an associative dimension. The depiction of martyrdom through an associative abstraction became a desirable form in which the war narrative would be most acceptable to the masses. Numerous memorial parks became places of mass gatherings for important dates or student excursions. Apart from mapping the memory on the events of war upon which the communist regime built their authority, memorials also had an educational purpose and nurtured the significance of the Anti-Fascist Movement, revolution, socialism and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia².

In this essay we will try to explain the complex relationship between memorial sculpture in socialist Yugoslavia and Modernism. We will also try to answer some of the questions regarding the status the monuments had during the past three decades, how the public focus shifted from acclamation to neglect and being ignored. Finally, we will address the issue of what their future might be now, after a certain time has passed.

From socialist realism to socialist Modernism

The first years after WWII were marked by the dominant socialist realism as a borrowed aesthetic model from the Soviet Union. However, the resolution of "Informbiro" in 1948 marked a break between Yugoslavia and the Soviet

bloc and its turning towards Western countries. Yugoslavia's new economic allies also had a cultural influence which became one of the key elements in the transformation of Yugoslav art in general. Socialist realism was left during the 1950s as an unpleasant episode and a brief digression in Yugoslav modernity.

In a secular society such as Yugoslavia was, the main goal in the culture of remembrance was to create spaces which could recreate a spiritual experience, but without any religious elements. Apart from the visual concept, almost all of the most important memorial sites consisted not only of a single monumental sculpture or a composition, but a carefully defined symbolic narrative which would lead the visitor through the entire epic history of the battle, or the tragic suffering of the victims of fascism. The narrative path often resembled a concept of pilgrimage, with the monumental sculptural form as the central culminating motif at the end of the "road". This conceptual approach pushed the boundaries of the traditional understanding of what a monument is and should represent. Since the soil where the soldiers or/and the civilians had lost their lives played a decisive role in the memorial culture of Yugoslav socialism, it was treated as such by the artists. The connection between the landscape and the sculpture can also be interpreted in the context of the land and environmental art which debuted on the world art scene in the mid-1960s.

The new term which was often used for the art of the post-1948 period was socialist aestheticism. The term was invented and defined by Sveta Lukić in 1963 and it referred to literature and other forms of art. However, today we can equally define the art of this period as socialist Modernism, especially when analyzing memorial sculpture. According to the art historian Jerko Denegri, the term socialist aestheticism implied neutrality, compromise, passivity and self-sufficiency, which could not be entirely applied to the memorials. The visual aesthetics of these memorials

were largely based on two pillars: the first is the heritage of interwar Modernism in Yugoslavia and the second one is the influence of international contemporary art and architecture. In 1953 a retrospective exhibition of Le Corbusier's work was touring Yugoslavia's cities. In 1956 an exhibition called *Contemporary Art in the USA* arrived in Belgrade. The event which especially marked a turning point in Yugoslav sculpture was the traveling exhibition of Henry Moore (1898-1986) in 1955. Henry Moore became an inspirational role model to many Yugoslav sculptors³. In the personal archive of Dušan Džamonja (1928-2009) there is a photograph of him with Henry Moore from 1976. Many authors found correlations with architectural movements of the post-war era, such as Brutalism and Structuralism⁴.

National competitions for monuments and memorial complexes enabled the breakthrough of the boldest artistically superior solutions. Therefore, the most eminent Yugoslav artists actively participated in the creation of new places of memory. Architects and sculptors such as Vojin Bakić (1915-1992), Dušan Džamonja, Bogdan Bogdanović (1922-2010) and Miodrag Živković (1928) determined the path of Yugoslav memorial sculpture, but also art and architecture. However, by analyzing the erected memorials of the period, it is apparent that the individual artistic approach varied from a strong associative abstraction to a pure abstract form.

Bogdan Bogdanović was one of the first artists who introduced a new design in memorial sculpture in 1952 with his monument dedicated to the Jewish victims of WWII at the Jewish Cemetery in Belgrade (figure 03). The path led towards the two symmetrical parts of the monument which represented the ten commandments or the pillars of the temple. Bogdanović also incorporated the material from the devastated and bombed Jewish houses during the war, and also the remains of the old Jewish tombstones. Throughout his successful career, Bogdanović designed eighteen memorial sites in five out of the six of Yugoslavia's Republics. The principles behind his work are based on rich complex repertoire of symbols, which were both primordial and futuristic, universal and eternal. As Vladimir Kulić stated, Bogdanović's monuments seemed to be more focused on the past than the future. One of the most elaborate examples of this iconography can be seen on the Partisan Cemetery in Mostar from 1965 (figure 01). Here Bogdanović used numerous geometric symbols for obtaining the universal message which overcomes the main narrative. In Mostar Bogdanović applied one of the characteristic approaches regarding the urban and landscape design of memorial sites, and that is the "pathway narrative principal", where the visitor is guided through a pathway through which he is being told a story about the events from the war, with a culminating motif at the end. The same principle was applied on numerous other memorial complexes by various artists, such as the Sutjeska memorial park from 1971 by Miodrag Živković or the Mrakovica memorial complex in Kozara from 1972 by Dušan Džamonja.

Miodrag Živković was another artist who always stayed on the border between figuration and abstraction. In

an interview with him he stated that, although he used different aesthetic approaches for different types of memorials, he always tried to depict the human figure⁵. In the case of one of his first memorials dedicated to the shot pupils and professors in Kragujevac from 1963 the figures of children emerge from the white concrete V-shaped form which represented an early ended life (figure 02). The subtle texture of the monument gives us the impression of a natural stone affected by the climate. In his later work, on the Monument to the Brave in Ostra, the Sutjeska memorial park and the Kadinjača memorial complex, Živković turned towards a more geometrized form of anthropomorphic structures. On the Kadinjača memorial the faces of the fallen partisans were depicted in two contrasting manners. The emerging heads in the first sculptural group are more rounded, while in the second and third group they are depicted in a very sharp, geometrized and almost cubist manner.

On the other hand, Dušan Džamonja's approach was more abstract. He used similar complex geometric solutions for his memorials as Miodrag Živković, but leaving out any indication of figuration. His most recognizable motif is "the Sun", a symbolic representation of life, which is present on his Monument to the Revolution in Moslavina in Podgarić from 1967 (figure 04). A similar relief called "the rosette" adorns the Youth Hall in Belgrade, also from 1967. Like Bogdanović and Živković, Džamonja used reinforced concrete and aluminum for his monument in Podgarić. The circular form is also visible in Džamonja's tower-like Monument on Kozara. The monument is vertically "sliced" and the entire composition consists of convex-concave and full-empty contrasts. The unity of sculpture, architecture and landscape have been especially well executed.

Finally, the artist whose impact can be easily measured in an international context is Vojin Bakić. His approach was oriented towards radical abstraction and he was defined by Ivica Župan as one of the artists who had a tendency towards a freer analytical intuition. Other critics saw him as a typical artist of high Modernism. Unlike many of his colleagues, Bakić preferred to use reflective materials such as stainless steel or inox to concrete, so that their surface could produce a certain optical visual effect. The process of purifying his monuments towards expressive abstraction first began with the monument to the Revolution in Valjevo in 1960 (essay cover)⁶. Bakić chose an iconic photograph of Stjepan Filipović just before he was hanged, where he rose both of his hands gripping his fists as a symbol of resistance. However, the monumental figure of Stjepan Filipović is not entirely realistic, on the contrary, it is reduced to a more geometrized sign. Bakić left only the necessary elements for us to recognize the iconic image. In his later monuments, the Monument to the Revolutionary Victory of the People of Slavonia in Kamenska from 1968 and the Petrova gora memorial complex from 1981, Bakić reduced the process to total abstraction.

None of the artists chosen to be presented and analyzed in this essay applied obvious symbols of communism in their work, but rather chose to tell a universal and eternal story

01 Bogdan Bogdanović, Partisan Memorial Cemetery, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1960-1965, an undated postcard. © The private collection of Vladana Putnik Prica.



02 Miodrag Živković, Monument to the shot pupils and professors, Kragujevac, Serbia, 1961-1963. © Vladana Putnik Prica, 2014.



03 Bogdan Bogdanović, Monument to the Jewish victims of the WWII, Belgrade, Serbia, 1952. © Vladana Putnik Prica, 2016.



04 Dušan Džamonja, Monument to the Revolution in Moslavina, Podgarić, Croatia, 1965-1967. © Alberto Campi, www.plus38.info, 2018.

about the struggle between good and evil, between life and death. They all used concrete as a very suitable material for large and statically challenging constructions, but also for its expressiveness. In some cases, like in the work of Vojin Bakić, the reinforced concrete construction would be covered with metal, aluminum, in order to create an effect of reflection, Bogdan Bogdanović also experimented with different materials, such as metal in the Memorial Cemetery of the War Victims in Sremska Mitrovica from 1960 or the Dudik memorial park in Vukovar from 1980.

Even though the memorial sculpture turned towards the path of abstract association, it is important to underline that it always remained within the ideological frame of the National Liberation Fight/War and Revolution. They were in the service of daily political needs of socialist Yugoslavia. The speeches of politicians at the opening ceremonies always referred to the actual political situations, both external and internal. Therefore their faith in the post-socialist period has been mostly problematic.

WWII memorials today and their preservation

After the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia, faith in the monuments varied depending on the Republic. During the civil wars a general rise of negative attitudes towards

socialist heritage was noticed. The pre-Yugoslav heritage was suddenly glorified unlike the recent Yugoslav one and many memorials became part of dissonant heritage. A significant number of memorials dedicated to WWII was destroyed during the civil wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (and some even after them), among which are monuments in Korenica, Kamenska, Makljen and Knin. In other former Republics most memorials were simply neglected and left to decay. Many of them have been vandalized by right-wing nationalist groups, but also by the dealers of secondary goods⁷. For example, the façade of the Petrova gora memorial complex has been mostly taken off by individuals for various reasons⁸.

In the former Yugoslavia, the institutions which were in charge of the preservation of historic monuments had partially recognized the memorials of WWII as a part of Yugoslavia's cultural heritage. The state's protection of cities and places related to WWII started very soon after the war. In the beginning, the state protected the sites, buildings and locations connected to WWII. This indicated the state's desire to maintain the memory of the partisans' fight during the war. Later on, the protection of monuments and memorial complexes started, but firstly those dedicated to the partisan fight. From the 1960s, monuments connected

to former concentration camps or places where war crimes against civilians happened also appeared on the lists of cultural heritage. A certain number of important memorials dedicated to soldiers and civilians who died during the war are still not under state protection as fixed cultural property. When monuments were put under state protection, two things were marked as important – the historical event that took place at the location, and the artistic value of the memorial. Many sites have been protected only after they had become memorial complexes by receiving a monumental memorial and accompanying content.

However, state protection does not necessarily mean that the monuments are protected from various forms of vandalism. Their current condition mostly depends on the attitude of the local community and the assertiveness of the institutions. In some areas there is a strong initiative and motivation for preserving the monuments and memorial complexes, for example in Užice in Serbia, where the Museum of Užice is successfully taking care of the Kadinjača memorial complex. Unfortunately, in some other areas there is no interest for preserving the monuments of WWII from the local authorities. These monuments are usually left to decay and oblivion, and the only activities which prevent that condition are the projects of nongovernmental organizations and informal groups. During the international project called *(In)appropriate Monuments*, groups of researchers made an effort to map all the memorial sights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia⁹. The fieldwork showed that the municipalities where the heritage of the National Liberation Fight and Revolution were still strong took good care of their memorials¹⁰.

Conclusion

Memorials erected during the period of socialist Yugoslavia represented a significant part of the state's official culture of remembrance and also of the historic narrative. When we compare the works of Bogdan Bogdanović, Vojin Bakić, Dušan Džamonja, Miodrag Živković and many other contemporary artists, we can conclude that what is common for all of them is the fact that they designed monuments for "eternity", as art historian Sanja Horvatinčić noted. Indeed, today we can say that the artistic impact of the memorials often overcomes their ideological dimension. Their presence asks the observer to admire them and interpret their abstraction on an individual level. Giulio Carlo Argan once noted that Dušan Džamonja's sculptures are monumental, regardless of their scale. This statement can be applied to most of the Yugoslav sculptors of the period.

The recent international focus on architecture and memorial sculpture of socialist Yugoslavia has proven to be a good stimulus for domestic historians, art historians and architects to revalorize socialist heritage and offer a new form of interpretation which would not be burdened by subjective political opinions.

Notes

- 1 Narodno-oslobodilačka borba (NOB).
- 2 Later called League of Communists of Yugoslavia.
- 3 Interview with Miodrag Živković, 14 December 2016.
- 4 A significant amount of research was conducted during the last several years on post-war architecture and sculpture both within the territory of the former Yugoslavia and in other countries by art historians, architects, historians, anthropologists, sociologists etc.
- 5 Multiple interviews with Miodrag Živković from 2012 to 2018.
- 6 The locals often call it the Monument to Stjepan Filipović due to the fact that he was depicted as a symbol of Revolution.
- 7 Several case studies of such forms of devastation were presented in a documentary by Irena Škorić called *Neželjena baština* [unwanted heritage] from 2016.
- 8 Irena Škorić, *Neželjena baština*, 2016.
- 9 <https://inappropriatemonuments.org/spomeniki>, accessed on 24 May 2018.
- 10 Reports of researchers from 2017 (soon to be published).

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Vladana Putnik Prica

(b. Serbia, 1986). Art historian, researcher associate at the Art History Department, Faculty of Philosophy, University in Belgrade. Her field of research is the history of architecture in Serbia and the former Yugoslavia in the 20th century. She defended her PhD thesis *Architecture of Sokol Halls in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia* in 2014. She was the co-author of several exhibitions in Belgrade and other cities of the Balkan region. She has participated in international conferences and published articles in many distinguished scientific journals. She was a research fellow on the project *(In)appropriate Monuments* (2015-2017).

Nenad Lajbenšperger

(b. Serbia, 1979). Master historian, completed his undergraduate and master studies in history at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, where he currently attends doctoral studies. Since 2006 he has been employed in the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia. He deals with research and protection of war time memorials and, in that area, he has published several papers. He was an associate in several activities related to the monuments and memory on the wars, and of their victims in the Balkan region, one of which was the project *(In)appropriate Monuments* (2015-2017).

The New Synagogue in Žilina, Slovakia: participation as a method of heritage renewal

BY KATARÍNA HABERLANDOVÁ

The *Neolog* [New] Synagogue in Žilina is an exceptional work, and not only through its having been designed in 1928 by the renowned architect Peter Behrens. The present contribution discusses this work by Peter Behrens – an important landmark constructed well outside the major urban centers for 20th-century architecture in a provincial Slovak town. Its most recent restoration, completed in May 2017, lasted a full five years. During this time, many discussions took place among heritage experts, theorists and architects, which eventually formulated the architectonic idea of the reconstruction into its final form. In addition, the realization was greatly assisted not only by the team of architects but many volunteers. The project for the New Synagogue won many awards and is viewed positively as a source of inspiration, perhaps even more so since it overcame several problematic moments regarding its financing, but also in the search for the best restoration methods and met them successfully.

One of the major conditions for assigning heritage status to an architectural work is usually the personality of its author. In this respect, the New Synagogue in Žilina is heritage on the very highest level. Peter Behrens is a name of great repute, and his importance in the history of modern architecture requires no argument – yet the investigation of his works in regions situated outside the major centers of the significant phases of 20th-century architecture is one area that still requires us to pay attention. Among these buildings is, of course, his synagogue in Žilina: a work for which only a few contemporary reflections (texts and photographs) have survived – and not only for the provincial status of the location but equally, as hypothesized by architectural historian Peter Szalay, because the architect himself did not want to draw attention to it in the era when Nazism was growing and spreading through Europe¹.

Yet it is not only because of the architect that the synagogue has become a valued item of heritage. The uniqueness of this structure can be found in all of the areas that we commonly use in evaluating built heritage: from its position in the urban structure of a locality or city, through its unusual architectural form as a synagogue in Slovakia with industrial touches, up to its advanced structural plan, confirming not only the “greatness” of the architect but no less the openness of the clients towards new ideas in architecture and art. In essence, the synagogue is a modern architectural landmark displaying

one of the most consistent ranges of value within all of Slovakia.

In recent years, the Žilina synagogue underwent renovation, a process exceptional even in the composition of its team – the largest collective of professionals in various fields related to the preservation of Modern Movement architecture in Slovakia. These theorists, historians, preservation experts and architects, some with extensive experience and some with only minimal previous involvement in reconstructing modern architecture, launched in 2012 a sequence of theoretical discussions, specific physical interventions into the building, and their subsequent evaluation. Using the shared and highly contemporary language, we could call it a “participatory” guidance of restoration, which emerged as the actual method. Viewed retroactively, the renewal process has occasionally been criticized for its excessive intellectual disunity, created more from intuitive searching for the best restoration method and immediate decision-making than on a scientifically formulated set of methodological principles, as has previously been the case for heritage-protection practice in Slovakia². At the same time, though, this philosophy of restoration is in many ways worth following. The outcome of these five years of restoration work is itself regarded as highly positive: in a relatively brief period of operation, starting only in May 2017, the New Synagogue has established itself as one of the most sought-after cultural locations in the entire town.

Modern, hence less valuable

Though the renewal of modern heritage sites is hardly a question of repairing inert material, we are nonetheless, in Slovakia, often confronted with a situation that seems to take this as its sole approach. There have even been cases where the restoration of modern architecture has led to extremely dangerous precedents. Not long ago, for example, the Heritage Office in Bratislava allowed (as part of a restoration project) the demolition of part of an important modernist structure for purposes of constructing a parking garage below it³. It would almost seem that we deliberately refused to acknowledge that modern architecture is hardly less deserving of the preservation of its authenticity than its earlier forms. For the synagogue in Žilina, it was evident that answering the question of the level of presenting the authenticity of individual historic layers would be severely problematic. Since the end of WWII, the building passed through several functions and many alterations that extensively changed its original spatial concept. Immediately after 1945, preparations were made for its adaptation for cultural use from plans by Lubomír Šlapeta. However, the architect's aim at turning the synagogue into a concert hall through various changes that accepted the building's cultural value was never met with understanding. His plans were never realized, and the changes that were eventually made in the 1960s and 1970s launched an entire series of alterations that only damaged Behrens's original design. These changes primarily affected the internal arrangements of the synagogue and its original spatial orientation, which can be understood as a deliberate attempt — matching the ruling communist ideology of the era — to eliminate all traces of the original sacred function⁴. Even though there had already been discussion about declaring the synagogue a landmark as early as 1953 at the *Conference of Slovak Architects* and that such protection was actually granted ten years later, the main space was wrapped in paneling which, at the start of the most recent restoration work, became known as the “hooding” – i.e., obscuring any reference to the previous stage in the life of Behrens's work. Once a synagogue, it now served as a university building, including the main meeting hall. Paradoxically, the hooding nonetheless helped to preserve a number of interesting details (e.g. the stucco ornament in Socialist Realist style) from further destruction. It did, however, lead to changes in the building's exterior appearance: new openings were broken through the façade and several original ones bricked up. On the western side, a new office wing was added. In consequence, the original Purist form of the



01 Peter Behrens, the New Synagogue, Žilina, Slovakia, 1931. View of the exterior.
© HÚ SAV Bratislava.



02 Peter Behrens, the New Synagogue, Žilina, Slovakia, 1931. Opening of the exhibition of Dan Perjovschi in Synagogue, 2014. © Dalibor Adamus.

building was damaged to a certain extent, yet the characteristic outline of the building still remained.

Hooded Peter Behrens

The monumental force of the central space revealed after the uncovering of the cupola — once the “hooding” of the interior from the 1970s was removed just after the start of restoration — which had previously served as the university hall and then as a cinema, somehow bound the various persons engaged for restoration to work particularly sensitively with the built substance. At the same time, though, there is a case to be made that the removal of the hooding may not have been altogether positive. This very layer was, for so many decades, an integral and characteristic part of the synagogue, even if far removed from its original function, but associated with so many graduating classes of the University of Transport Engineering, which had been located here. Perhaps even more than the actual act of removal, which in principle could not be avoided — since the main goal of the restoration was to present Peter Behrens’s original conception of the space — what is controversial is the method through which it was realized. Once the greater part of restoration work had been completed on a volunteer basis, the panels that composed the hooding were removed too quickly, possibly contributing to the destruction of certain elements from earlier stages of construction.

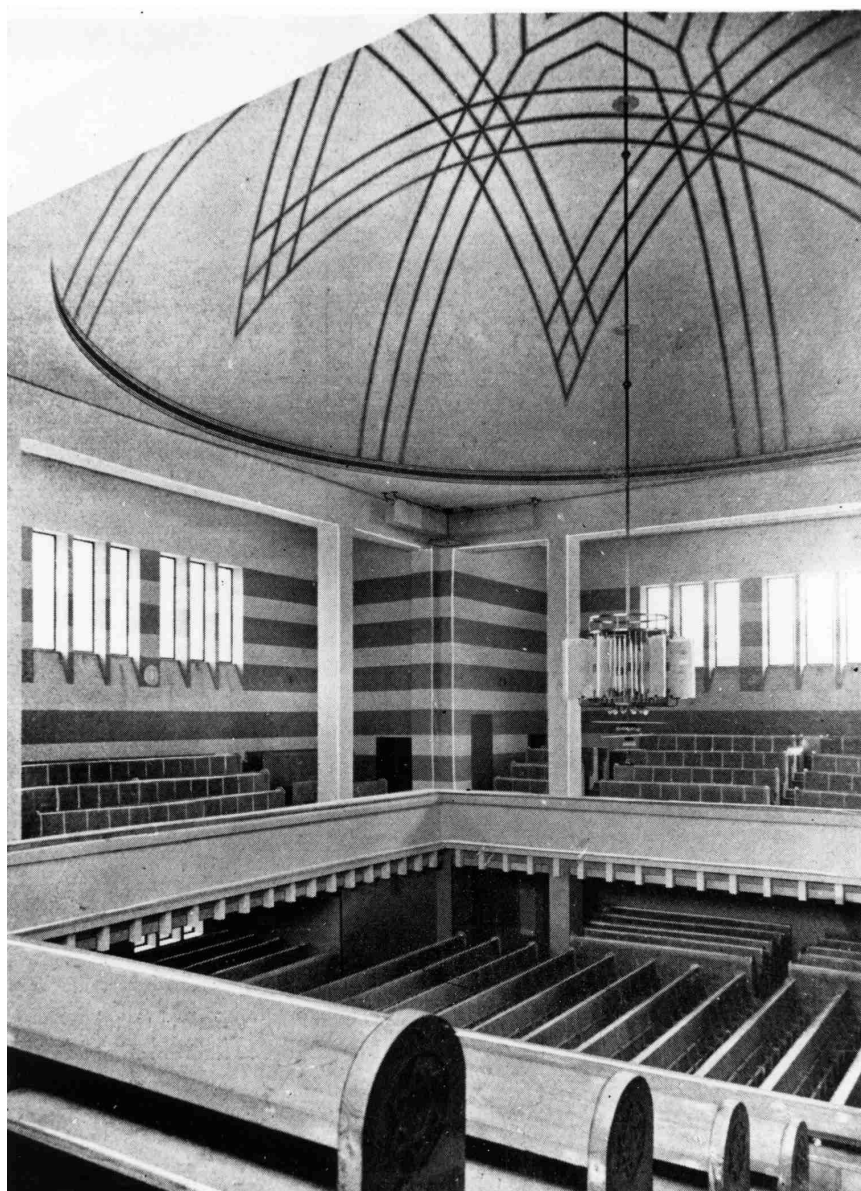
The architectural-historical investigation of the synagogue, which we will discuss at length later, had already been completed at the time of the hooding’s removal. The primary researcher, architect and heritage expert Magdaléna Kvasnicová, only had the chance to look under the hooding in a few selected points, indeed soundings, up until November 2011. This formed one of

the reasons why the plan of renewal, at the conclusion of this initial investigation, was defined only in outline and had been planned for further completion once the hooding was removed. Hence from the very outset, the hooding was regarded as a non-original, disruptive layer, one that was never intended to be preserved. Little attention was paid to the actual method of removing the hooding, not suspecting how, when, and how rapidly it would take place. Though immediately after the completion of the research investigation, the author presented the results of her work to the national Heritage Commission, a broader professional discussion about the restoration only began several months after the hooding was removed.

The authenticity of the modern: a permanent dilemma

Though the hooding in the synagogue interior is now vanished, it is still possible to ask in connection with its removal whether it was, or was not, part of the authentic form of the building and at least deserving of discussion of its retention in some sort of form. In the theory of heritage protection for modern architecture we have some resources to draw upon, since the question of the authenticity of such buildings has been addressed intensively by experts over the past decades. Still, more extensive writings that analyze the value of modern heritage and additionally are backed by experience from realized restorations of similar significance as the Žilina synagogue are, understandably, few. Pavel Gregor, an architect and heritage expert wrote, in 2010, one of the most extensive studies of heritage value in modern architecture. Modernity is analyzed in the context of all heritage structures, not only those currently given state protection in law. Gregor formulates, as we have already

noted, a position in which modern heritage may have its specifics, but definitely not in the sense of being a marginal, less important area of cultural heritage where we need not apply professional methods in its restoration. Additionally, Gregor is critical of the common view of authenticity as one of the values of built heritage, reconfiguring the idea as the “authentic state of the landmark”, in other words an independent category standing outside of the traditional heritage evaluation system⁵. Though aware that the essential portion of the value of physical cultural heritage (including modern architecture) is tied to its authenticity, he argues that the interpretation of the idea is extremely broad. According to some theories, only the original form of a building can be regarded as authentic, yet according to other approaches all of the other layers that have through time shaped a building into its current state are no less worthy of protection. In addition, authenticity included an entire (sub)grouping of values. One of them is the value of the longstanding form of a building, to be judged by the length of its unchanged persistence. From this, it ensures that the longest-lasting visual form of the synagogue, which should be decisive and should be thoroughly reflected in the restoration, was in fact the period when the synagogue served as the seat of the University of Transport Engineering. As the only higher-educational institution of its type in the former Czechoslovakia, the university gradually became a key symbol of identity for Žilina and its wider region. As we can see, this situation, as the result of the given historic conditions in which the building was created and then continued to exist under both Nazi and communist rule, paradoxically condition the perception of certain of its values. This is not a unique situation, yet in the case of



03 Peter Behrens, the New Synagogue, Žilina, Slovakia, 1931. View of the exterior. © HÚ SAV Bratislava.

the Žilina synagogue it is indeed striking. However, we nonetheless need to recall that even such an intellectual standpoint could hardly be used to argue against removing the hooding from the interior. To do so would be to deny one of the most essential motivations for the synagogue's restoration, i.e. allowing us to sense once more the original architectonic conception of space as created by a major modern architect.

Assembling the narrative of the synagogue

We have already outlined the story of the architectural-historical investigation from 2011, required both by the Heritage Office and by the project's investor. This investigation was intended to provide new knowledge of the building, since Behrens's original

plans disappeared from Žilina sometime after the war. As mentioned previously, the author of the investigation was Magdaléna Kvasnicová, though parallel investigations were also carried out by Peter Szalay, restorer Ján Hromada and architect Gabriel Hartl. Together, these investigations brought forth many previously unknown facts concerning the original competition for the synagogue's design from 1928.

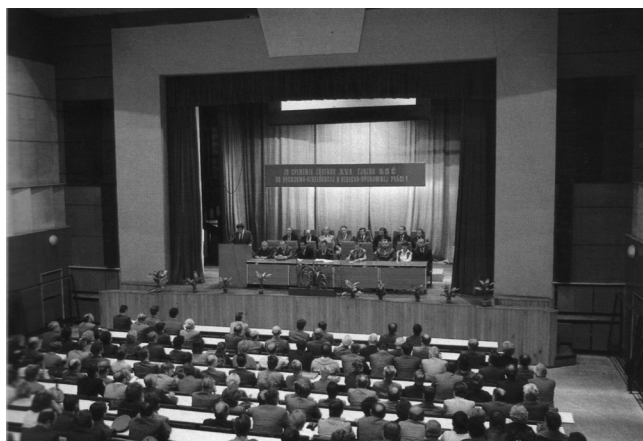
Even before the start of research, it was known that participants in the competition included Josef Hoffmann, the founder of Viennese Secessionism and Lipót Baumhorn, one of the most prolific synagogue designers in Central Europe. Alongside the young Slovak-based architects Michal Maximilián Scheer and Josef Zweigenthal, these participants submitted a greatly contrasting

spectrum of designs reflecting the variety of the era's views on architectural work, from highly traditional forms to the most daringly modern concepts. However, the Jewish community of Žilina had, in fact, opened the competition precisely because it wished to replace the original historicist architecture of the earlier synagogue from 1861 with a new – progressive – design. As such, Behrens's design was the clear favorite. Indeed, it speaks eloquently of the wider cultural atmosphere in interwar Žilina that, even though we could not necessarily regard the town as a center of modern architecture and art in a European or even a broader regional context, it was one of the few localities in Slovakia where the economic prosperity of the first Czechoslovak Republic was reflected in the era's cultural life: both the decision of the Jewish community to hold a competition for a new synagogue and the competition's final result are clear proof.

Still, all of the reflections on the possibilities of approaching the restoration of the synagogue developed, in the light of newly uncovered information of the building's history, with great caution. As well, there was also the factor of our knowledge of the building's connection to the tragic fates of Žilina's Jewish citizens under Nazi rule, as well as the no less dramatic changes of the Stalinist 1950s. The assumption that after the removal of the hooding there would be still further discoveries that would reveal more about the structure and historical trajectory of the synagogue was confirmed. Further, and highly essential information was provided with the discovery of the building's original plans⁶.

Initiating the revitalization of the synagogue

In 2010, when the cinema operating inside the synagogue closed, representatives of the Jewish community addressed the civic association Truc Sphérique and Marek Adamov, who along with Fedor Blaščák served as chief initiator of the New Synagogue project. Previously, his association had created the Stanica cultural center, a successful transformation of a disused rail station in a former industrial suburb of Žilina. Almost immediately, the plan emerged to transform the synagogue into a "Kunsthalle". Confirmation was shown by the strong desire to bring the synagogue more prominently into the cultural life of the town and further stimulate it, since, after all, the building is situated in an ideal location for such a purpose. As Matúš Dulla noted in 2004, the site where the synagogue stands is directly within the section at the terrace-break in the town center, close to the former fortifications, which essentially



04 Peter Behrens, the New Synagogue, Žilina, Slovakia, 1931. The interior after conversion into the lecture hall of the Technical Institute of Transportation and Communications. © *Vysoká škola dopravy a spojov v Žiline, výsledky výskumnovo-výšľavacej a vedecko-výskumnej činnosti*, Osveta, Bratislava, 1988, 39.



05 Peter Behrens, the New Synagogue, Žilina, Slovakia, 1931. Reconstruction of the interior by Half-white method. © Dalibor Adamus.

created Žilina's own "Ringstrasse" and, at the time when the New Synagogue was completed, could boast a series of important buildings, even notably modern ones⁷. The one disadvantage of the site was its irregular outline, yet Peter Behrens was able to handle this problem with sovereign mastery.

Initially, two main traditional methods of restoring the synagogue offered themselves: the "academic" restoration of the original form, or the deliberate intervention into the space using contemporary architecture. As it happened, both of these variants turned out to prove unworkable, even though it would have in fact been simpler to choose only one of them. To start, there was the fact that the space had not served its original purpose for several decades, and secondarily beforehand something had been "inserted", inspired the eventual choice of the second alternative. Architect Martin Jančok created the first study for this in 2011. On one hand, the space was cleansed of its interior cladding, thus exposing the cupola as the decisive emotive element of the main space, yet on the other it received inserted communication ramps running along the perimeter. The architect presented his plans in spring 2012 during one seminar in the series (Re)Thinking Architecture: The Modern and the Totalitarian in Žilina's 20th-Century Architecture, organized by the Department of Architecture at the Institute of Construction and Architecture of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, which also forms the core of the Slovak working group for **docomomo**. Participants included a number of experts who, from this point, expressed their views on the entire restoration process up until its completion in 2017.

To ensure the continuation of regular meetings between experts – theorists, heritage officials and the restoration's authors – an "Expert Committee for the restoration of the Behrens Synagogue" was created.

Questions and themes for discussion were more than ample, as the preliminary restoration investigation began to add further perspective to the findings of the architectural-historical investigation. Exchanging opinions, experience and knowledge among the various professions gradually broke down the conviction that it would be justified to bring something new into Behrens's architecture. Martin Jančok himself eventually admitted that "all the essential architecture is there already"⁸. As the views on the restoration began to move in a different direction, the idea of a traditional restoration of the synagogue into the form of a museum-monument nonetheless was never voiced by any of the authors.

Adaptability, as the basic feature of modernist architecture, remained the greatest priority even in the formulation of the restoration philosophy that the architects aimed to create. The cleansed main space with its now-exposed cupola was divided horizontally on a principle known under the working title *half-white*: essentially, the upper section of the space was restored to its original coloring, while the ground level was covered in plain white paint to create a neutral background for exhibitions. However, the restoration of the original plastering in the upper section of the main space became, alongside the discussion on the reconstruction of the space's original orientation or the return of the Star of David to the roof, one of the most controversial and widely discussed stages of the work. The entire span of cleaning the stucco from the overpainting dating from the socialist realist era, and then the late 1960s and early 1970s, took place much more authentic traces of the synagogue's former decoration, as well as appearing less aggressive. quickly than had been assumed. In July 2013, an international workshop was held, during which Polish and Slovak

restorers, guided by Ivan Pilný, removed the secondary paint payers. Laboratory analyses for the restoration research were undertaken by Daniela Cebecauerová. It was discovered that the Star of David adorning the cupola was originally realized using the technique of metal gilding on a base of ochre paint. Reconstructed on the basis of one surviving photograph, it was retouched using partially transparent ochre paint. Also restored were the bands of color along the walls below the cupola: here, the depth of color was muted after completion, so that the bands of paint would give the impression of forming authentic traces of the synagogue's former decoration, as well as appearing less aggressive.

People and financing

The contribution of volunteers to the restoration was strongly evident for the entire process, and not only in the introductory stage during the "denuding" of the interior space of its hooding. Though volunteer work in heritage restoration is not a new phenomenon for Slovakia – in previous years it has occurred primarily in cleaning and preserving less-accessible castle ruins – it had never occurred on such a scale for a modern landmark of the significance of Peter Behrens's synagogue. For this reason, the coordination of volunteer labor was, at the beginning, the most demanding organizational task of restoration, and its rules and guidelines were created only as it proceeded.

A second vital aspect of restoration was its financing from a wide range of sources. When, at first, the organizers failed to ensure a sufficient quantity of funds from the available grant programs, they announced a public funding drive. In parallel, additional resources were offered by smaller grants or sponsorship donations. Within time, a grant was offered from the Norwegian Funds,



06 Peter Behrens, the New Synagogue, Žilina, Slovakia, 1931. Synagogue today. © Daniela Dostálková.

which secured the completion of architectural restoration in its fullest extent, including the synagogue's exterior surroundings with their public gathering space and the landscaping of the plot. Indeed, the greatest single source of financing was in fact the Norwegian Funds. In total over one million Euro were invested in the restoration. And, regardless of the amount contributed, all donors had their names commemorated in the New Synagogue in a highly original way: composer Marek Piaček created a musical work mentioning the names of over 2800 donors, which is played on speakers within the building's walls. A visitor can hear it by placing an ear to the wall surface, or by purchasing a vinyl disc as a souvenir. In addition, Piaček's composition was performed in an open concert in May of 2017.

The system of combining multi-source financing and volunteer labor created a kind of community of "synagogue-rescuers" of almost three thousand members. As such, it raised awareness in the public about the importance of the building's restoration, and its recalling one of the major historic eras in the 20th century, not only for Žilina, but indeed all of Slovakia. Starting in the spring of 2012, this effort was aided by the first public opening of the synagogue, displaying two site-specific installations by the young artists András Cséfalvay and Jakub Pišek⁹. There then followed an entire series of brief openings for various concerts, workshops, children's events or even a Christmas market. Behind all of these short-term openings was the desire to maintain regular contact of the public with the synagogue during the restoration process, allowing them to experience how – literally in front of their eyes – the original form of the synagogue interior was gradually starting to re-emerge. Moreover, the

short-term openings also served as preliminary tests of the space for various uses and the differing demands that they proposed.

The finale

The approach, organization, expert guidance and actual restoration, along of course with the development presented by the central architectural idea of chief architect Martin Jančok, all attracted great public attention for several years. And in the end, the restoration of the New Synagogue won an impressive series of awards: the Bauwelt architectural prize in Germany, the Orange Foundation prize for community development, and the special Patron of Architecture award of the Slovak architectural prize CE.ZA.AR. In 2018, the New Synagogue was included in the selection of works published in the *Architecture Yearbook 2016/2017*, reflecting the most worthwhile architectural achievements of the given year in Slovakia, including heritage restorations¹⁰.

Since May 2017, the New Synagogue has been open and is fully involved in presenting its new program. Officially, the restoration is complete, yet the adaptability of the synagogue, creating its ever-changing visual environment and inviting creative work with its space, will certainly keep surprising us again and again in the future.

Acknowledgement

The text was made possible also through the financial support of the Slovak scientific agency (project no. VEGA-2/0074/17) and the Slovak Research and Development Agency (project no. APVV-16-0584).

Notes

- 1 Peter Szalay, "New Practice? On the Process of Preservation of Peter Behrens's synagogue in Žilina", in Ana Tostões, Zara Ferreira (ed.), *Adaptive Reuse. The Modern Movement towards the*

Future, Lisboa, Docomomo International/Casa da Arquitectura, 2016, 871.

- 2 Henrieta Moravčíková used in connection with this type of renovation the phrase *opera aperta*: restoration as open work. Henrieta Moravčíková, "Reuse as Activism: Towards Hybrid Strategies of Curating and Preservation of Modern Architectural Heritage", in Ana Tostões, Zara Ferreira (ed.), *op. cit.*, 868-870.
- 3 The partially destroyed landmark was an interwar building designed by the Czech architects Alois Balán and Jiří Grossmann: The Health Insurance Office and medical clinic in Bezručova Ulica in Bratislava. For unknown reasons, the Bratislava heritage office approved the demolition of this structure as a legitimate method of restoration, even though the building was otherwise in good physical condition.
- 4 For more detail about the circumstances of the change in the orientation of the space see Magdaléna Kvasnicová, *Synagoga, Hurbanova 11, Žilina – architektonicko – historický výskum*, Bratislava, 2011.
- 5 Pavel Gregor, "Pamiatkové hodnoty modernej architektúry v štruktúre bodnôt architektonického dedičstva", *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, n. 3-4, 2010, 221.
- 6 The original plans were found in the archive of architect Lubomír Šlapeta, the author of the plan for reconstructing the synagogue as a concert hall and are part of the architectural collection of the Museum of Art in Olomouc. For more about the find, see Peter Szalay, "Behrens pod povrchom – reštaurátorský výskum Neologické synagógy v Žiline", *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, n. 1-2, 2013, 84-105.
- 7 Matúš Dulla, "Posledná synagoga: vznik a podoba synagógy neológov v Žiline od Petra Behrensa", *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, n. 3-4, ÚSTARCH SAV, Bratislava, 2004, 205.
- 8 <http://www.novasynagoga.sk/rekonstrukcia>, accessed on 24-05-2018.
- 9 Peter Szalay, "Behrens pod povrchom – reštaurátorský výskum Neologické synagógy v Žiline", *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, n. 1-2, 2013, 98.
- 10 Katarína Haberlandová, "Nová synagoga/The New Synagogue", in Henrieta Moravčíková, Peter Szalay, Katarína Haberlandová, Laura Pastoreková, Martin Zaiček, *Ročenka slovenskej architektúry 2016/2017 – Slovak Architecture Yearbook 2016/2017*, Bratislava, Slovart, 2018, 52-57.

Katarína Haberlandová

(b. Bratislava, 1973). A graduate of the Department of Art History and Theory at the Faculty of Arts in Olomouc. She is now a researcher at the Department of Architecture in the History Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. She is the co-author of a wide range of publications in the field of 20th century architectural history in Slovakia, as well as heritage protection for modernist and industrial structures: *Bratislava- Atlas of Housing Estates* (Slovart, 2012), *Modern and/or Totalitarian in the Architecture of the 20th Century in Slovakia* (Slovart, 2013), *Moderná Bratislava* (PT Marenčin, 2014), *Industrial Heritage in the Eyes of Professionals/Participants: Theory and Methodology for Protection of Industrial Heritage in the Context of Bratislava* (STU, 2016). At present, she is involved in projects investigating the development of urban planning in Bratislava over the course of the 20th century.

Residence: Prefab Estate; Plans, Realization, Housing 1945-1989

Exhibition at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague
Prague, Czech Republic, 24 January – 20 May 2018

In his book *The Magic of Thinking Big* (1959), David Schwartz argues that for successful implementation of ideas it is important “to see what can be, not just what already is”. It was precisely this attitude that could be distinguished behind the original idea of mass housing and the idealistic view of completely changed living conditions of the people and of a new society encouraged the immense amount of mass housing on Europe. It was again thinking big that motivated the initiators of the extensive research project *Prefabricated Housing Estates in the Czech Republic as Part of the Urban Environment: An Evaluation and Presentation of Their Housing and Living Potential*. The project was implemented by the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague in the years 2013–2017 and its participants included three dozen historians of architecture and arts, urbanists and architects, journalists, photographers, a culture theorist, a social geographer, an anthropologist and a demographer. The research resulted in three extensive books, a website with an archive, a map capturing selected residential complexes in the form of a digital atlas, and an exhibition that was held from January 24 till May 20, 2018 at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague.

In the past decade, the heritage of European mass housing has become the subject of architectonic and historical research and a theme of a whole range of conferences, journal articles and book titles. It is a phenomenon that remarkably interconnects the European continent, even crossing the former Iron Curtain. It is the European dimension of the reflection on mass housing and the fact that it was conducted in the united European cultural space that enables identifying the common starting points of mass housing development, comparing its development trajectories in the former Western and Eastern Blocs, and revealing the universal spatial or operational models of housing estates as well as the differences in construction technology and the social context of the estates. All contemporary researchers agree that the ideas of the interwar European architectonic *avant-garde*

were the decisive impulse for postwar industrialized housing development. However, the researchers also wanted to identify the local impulses and specifics of this phenomenon.

This effort was pioneered by **docomomo** International, especially its committee on urbanism and landscape, which initiated the first *Trash or Treasure* conference addressing the theme of mass housing development as a potential monument. In 2008, a thematic issue of the **docomomo** Journal with the title *Mass Housing East and West* was published. In September 2011, the *Postwar Mass Housing International Conference* was held at the University of Edinburgh, followed by the monothematic issue of the magazine *Architektúra & Urbanizmus* 3–4/2012, which introduced multiple European research initiatives. Finally, two more thematic issues of the **docomomo** Journal – 2/2014 and 1/2016 presented the latest research on mass housing in a worldwide context.

However, there were even earlier publications with the ambition of mapping the development of postwar mass housing. The majority of them were in the form of guides

or atlases. The very first publication of this kind was probably *The Amsterdam Social Housing Atlas* (Architecture & Natura Press, 1992). Two years later, Stefan Muthesius and Miles Glendinning published a similar title including 400,000 realizations of postwar social housing development in the UK (*Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*, Yale University Press, 1994). The history of the French grand estates was presented by Frédéric Dufaux, Annie Fourcaut and Rémi Skoutelsky's book *Faire l'histoire des grands ensembles. Bibliographie 1950–1980* (ENS Éditions, 2003). This approach was taken up in mapping mass housing developments in Slovakia's capital Bratislava: *Atlas of Mass Housing* (Slovart, 2011), which was the very first publication of this kind in Eastern Europe. However, the immediate predecessor of the recently concluded Czech project was Kimberly Zarecor's research, which resulted in the book *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1960* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011).

The big exhibition

Residence: Prefab Estate; Plans, Realization, Housing 1945–1989 was an extensive and thematically exhaustive exhibition. The main line provided a chronological record of the development of ideas concerning the construction of large residential structures. It started with the ideological prehistory in the form of the renowned analysis of the housing situation in the first Czechoslovak Republic by Jiří Kroha and ended with a critical reflection on prefab estates and an attempt at their humanization in the form of the architectonic exhibition *Urbanita* organized



01 The first room of the exhibition was devoted to the starting points of the prefabricated mass housing in Czechoslovakia. The very famous sociological analysis of the housing conditions by Jiří Kroha was included in the form of the original collages. © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, Photo: Ondřej Kocourek.



02 Each period of the history of Czech mass housing was illustrated not only by the original drawings, models and photographs but also by the elements of the interior design of the time. © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, Photo: Ondřej Kocourek.



03 Most fascinating was the part devoted to the prefabricated estates built in 1960s and 1970s, so call "beautiful estates" representing the qualitative peak in the development of mass housing in post-war Czechoslovakia. © Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, Photo: Ondřej Kocourek.

by the journal *Technický Magazín* [Technical Magazine] in the late 1980s. The individual chapters of the exhibition followed the periodization of the construction of housing estates, which was identified and described in the accompanying monograph by the project investigators. The periodization was accurately explained by the brief introductory characteristics accompanied by a time axis, which enabled situating each housing development within a broader social context. This axis constituted a backbone of the exhibition's dramaturgy and held the exposition together. The individual, more or less specific

folds of interpretation developed from this backbone in form of digressions. The main line of the exhibition was physically illustrated by the main exposition material, period photographs, architectonic models, archive documents in the form of architectonic designs and publications of that time. The digressions were filled with historical artefacts from the field of visual arts, housing culture and design.

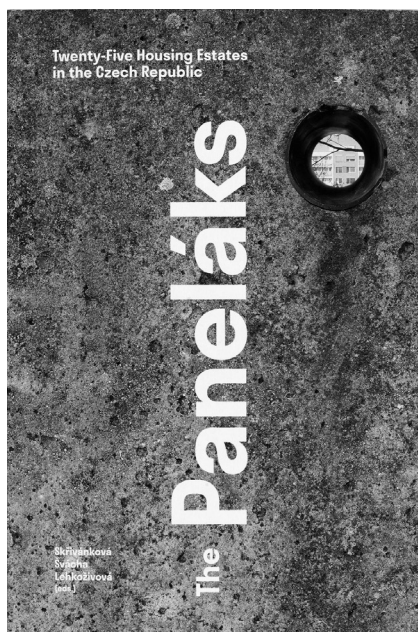
The authors of the exhibition managed to collect a great amount of material. The most remarkable items doubtlessly included the original models of the housing estates and period photographs. The added value of these two media lay in their ability to show both, how the town planning concepts changed and how the illustration tools and the architectonic craft evolved. However, the quantity of the physical and ideological digressions and layers of the exhibits tended to turn the exhibition into a hardly decipherable collection of curiosities. The great variety and multi-layered character of the exhibition is a logical result of the research, which immediately preceded the exhibition and resulted in three huge books as well. The authors' effort to show the phenomenon of prefab estates in all its complexity undoubtedly played a role, too. The exhibition could, therefore, be perceived as a dense hybrid architectonic-town planning-ethnographic reminder of a half-century of mass housing development in socialist Bohemia that enabled each visitor to select their own way of dating.

The three big publications

The exhibition was accompanied by two huge books titled *Paneláci* ("Paneláky" is the popular Czech name for the prefabricated housing structures). The first one, *Paneláci*

1. *Padesát sídlišť v českých zemích* [Prefabs 1. Twenty-Five Housing Estates in the Czech Republic] (Lucie Skřivánková, Rostislav Švácha, Eva Novotná, Karolina Jirkalová, Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze, 2018) is an atlas in which on its 463 pages, 50 selected examples of prefabricated housing estates are presented by text analyses, original plans and photographs; in some cases, even by analyses of social conditions. The second book, *Paneláci 2. Historie sídlišť v českých zemích 1945-1989* [Prefabs 2. History of the Housing Estates in Czech Republic 1945-1989] (Lucie Skřivánková, Rostislav Švácha, Martina Koukalová, Eva Novotná, Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze, 2017) is a regular architecture historiography of "only" 350 pages that introduces general history, periodization and characteristic features of the postwar mass housing in Czech part of the former Czechoslovakia. A selection of the first book was published also in English under the title *The Paneláks. Twenty-Five Housing Estates in the Czech Republic* (Lucie Skřivánková, Rostislav Švácha, Irena Lehkoživová, The Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, 2017). It focuses on the most characteristic and outstanding examples of prefab estates in Bohemia and could serve as a personal guide for anyone interested in this particular part of architectural heritage. The book series, together with the exhibition, should be understood as an unbiased and comprehensive scientific statement of work on this part of Czech architectural history and definitely as a perfect basis for the further aim of protecting some of the estates as monuments. In that sense I am quite sure that the authors of this great project will remain thinking big.

Henrieta Moravčíková



04 Lucie Skřivánková, Rostislav Švácha, Irena Lehkoživová (ed.), *The Paneláks. Twenty-Five Housing Estates in the Czech Republic*, Prague, The Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, 2017. Book cover.

Architect Friedrich Weinwurm: New Path

Exhibition at the Slovak National Gallery
Bratislava, Slovakia, 25 January – 20 May 2018

The 20th century created space for extensive development in Slovakia in both cultural and social aspects, a phenomenon visible even today in its built material legacy. Connected to the growth in Slovakia in the 20th century are many personalities as practitioners of those professions that have made a significant imprint on the identity of the nation. Today, for instance, the names of the architects Dušan Samuel Jurkovič or Emil Belluš are known to the wider public as “the” Slovak architects who founded Slovakia’s autonomous architectural tradition. As such, they are regarded as founding fathers, as personalities standing on the same level as the nation’s key individuals. Their importance has, for several decades, been confirmed by a lasting interest from architectural historians and theorists, resulting in an extensive publication legacy. Since 2010, a series of extensive book-length monographs have successively appeared to present the general public with these oeuvres: starting with Dušan S. Jurkovič, and one year later presenting the work of Emil Belluš. And yet, when in 2014 the next publication appeared in this exclusive series, dedicated to the architect Friedrich Weinwurm, it represented instead the repayment of a long-overdue debt to the historic and architectural significance of this individual, long consigned to the margins of Slovak architectural history. It was thanks to author Henrieta Moravčíková that this pioneering work was undertaken.

The Slovak National Gallery (SNG) in Bratislava, as the nation’s most important art-historical institution, eventually turned its attention to Weinwurm, this unique representative of the architecture of the “New Objectivity” [*Neue Sachlichkeit*] and interwar functionalism, with a definite time-lag. Its recently ended exhibition of Friedrich Weinwurm’s work bore the title *Nová Cesta* [new path]. And this wording is significant, considering how much any evaluation of this recent exhibition program needs to take into consideration the long path that our knowledge of this major architect’s oeuvre had to traverse before finding its way into the confines of the SNG.

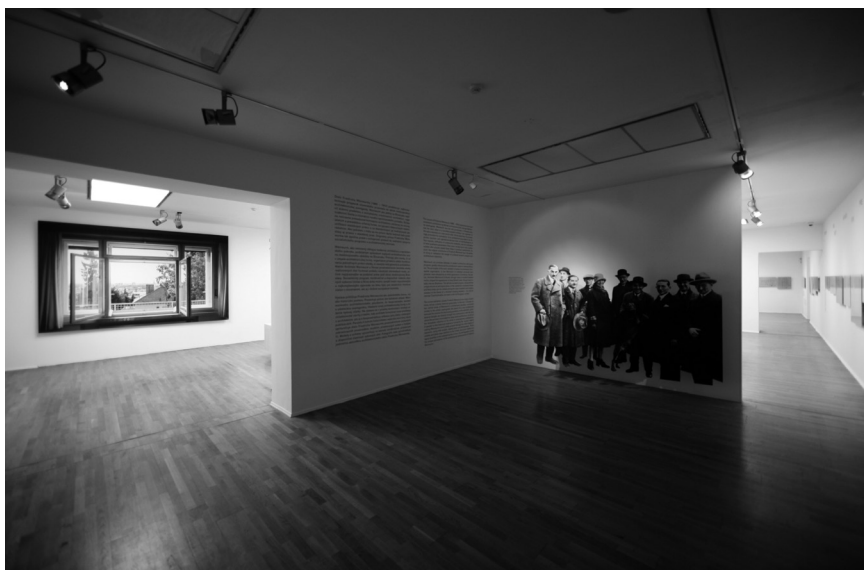
In his architecture, Weinwurm did not have the status of a creator and representative of the architectural lineage regarded as the basis of modern Slovak architectural traditions. Unlike his previously mentioned colleagues Emil Belluš and Dušan Samuel Jurkovič, Weinwurm – a German-speaking Jew who perished in the Holocaust – never in the post-war years became the subject of popular myth. Conversely, it was Weinwurm himself who bears the greatest responsibility for breaking the path for a new architecture in Slovakia. For the development of Slovak modernist architecture, he has the importance of such a figure as Adolf Loos or Hannes Meyer on a worldwide scale. For this reason, the current exhibition takes as its goal primarily the long-needed exposure of the forgotten, the presentation of an exceptional yet still insufficiently appreciated architect represented by dozens of realized structures created in his shared atelier with Ignác Vécsei.

Interpreting this exhibition (and the life of Weinwurm himself) through this sub-title has indeed set us off on new paths. It has helped us to realize that architecture is not only a game of forms, the language of the physical

arrangement of the space around us: it has shifted us away from the path of reading buildings as an *a priori* aesthetic discipline and shown us the content that lies behind the form of its representation. Such a path “beyond form” is shown in the part of the exhibition devoted to Weinwurm’s political struggle for a new architecture intended for all levels of society. The realized projects of a socially committed architecture in Bratislava’s modernist proto-estates of *Unitas* and *Nová Doba* confirm that the architect’s work at the start of the 1930s significantly determined the direction of urban planning for many decades to follow. This architecture is functionalism in its most essential presentation – form follows housing.

Of course, form also follows function: this slogan of Modernism is evident even in the actual realization of this exhibition at the SNG. The exhibition was the work of a sizeable authorial team under the supervision of Henrieta Moravčíková. Her husband Peter Moravčík was in charge of the exhibit’s architectural design and met this requirement of his senior colleagues perfectly. The minimal entrance, in the form of wooden platforms, met simultaneously the functions of a display case for publications and pedestals for architectural models. Though a highly traditional exhibition form, it did not appear banal, but indeed elevated the very content of the displays, acting on several levels or through several instruments for reaching its primary (educational) aims.

For understanding individual architectural works by Weinwurm and Vécsei, the exhibition used wall-projections of axonometric plans. These, in turn, communicated with the cardboard models of selected buildings



01 At the entrance of the exhibition Friedrich Weinwurm and members of his architecture studio welcomed the visitors on the only historical photograph of the whole exposition taken in the year 1926. Photo: Peter Moravčík.

- 02** The exhibition introduced the work of the architect Friedrich Weinwurm with reduced means and minimalistic aesthetics: original drawings, contemporary photographs taken by the well-known photographer Olja Triaška Stefanović, axonometric schemes of the main exhibited works and models created by the students of the Faculty of Architecture in Bratislava. © Slovak National Gallery. Photo: Peter Gall.



- 04** The large-scale photographs enabled the visitors to experience the unique atmosphere of the architecture of New Objectivity after nearly 100 years of its existence. However, the message of the photographs was somehow ambiguous expressing in the same time nostalgia and post-apocalyptic atmosphere of ruined modernism. © Slovak National Gallery. Photo: Peter Gall.



- 03** The three main parts of the exhibition "A building art to match its age", "The objectivity that we followed in the present day" and "A roof for everyone" were accompanied by soundtracks presenting the three architecture manifestos of Friedrich Weinwurm. Most appealing was the last one titled "Where does the new path lead?" from 1931 connected with the projects of social housing. © Slovak National Gallery. Photo: Peter Gall.

prepared over several semesters with the assistance of architecture students from the Bratislava Technical University. Original blueprints displayed on the walls did not, themselves, serve as explications of the architecture but more as artefacts recalling Weinwurm himself within the exhibition space. And it was not only his drawings but also his words that filled the exhibition rooms. For the exhibition, the first Slovak translations were prepared of Weinwurm's German texts published between 1924 and 1931 in the journals *Moderne Welt*, *Sborník Modernej Tvorby* and *Nová Bratislava*. The photographer Olja Triaška Stefanović, whose engagement dates back to the start of the previously mentioned monograph publication from 2014, contributed photographs of buildings by Weinwurm and Vécsei,

captivating in the melancholic enchantment only fitting for long-forgotten cultural heritage. Her photographs, in both small and monumental format, document the current state of Weinwurm's built oeuvre. A sense of the actual scale of the depicted scenes brings the viewer directly into the image – i.e. the fragment of Weinwurm's architecture, captured through the technically exacting photographic narrative using the single-axis perspective matching the spirit of the Düsseldorf School.

For many years, the SNG has worked on bringing the field of architecture into its collections. Indeed, Slovakia lacks any independent cultural-historical institution that would focus exclusively on architecture and built heritage. After literature, folk culture, visual arts and design, architecture remains

the last unoccupied area of art demanding a targeted shaping of collections and systematic institutional scholarly reflection. From this standpoint, the exhibition program of the SNG creates a valuable space for reflecting on this long-underrated and overlooked area of Slovakia's artistic legacy. In one sense, it is a valuable task, yet on the other, bearing in mind the primary focus of the SNG, it will always remain merely a marginal genre. Hence it is no surprise that the realized exhibition *Friedrich Weinwurm: New Path* is the very first independent monographic exhibition for a Slovak architect held in the spaces of the SNG since Slovakia gained its independence in 1993 (!). The catalog for the exhibition directly reveals the formation of its own new paths to the presentation and exhibition of architecture: the exhibition as planned by Henrieta Moravčíková and her team has found its new path, and the public have found it to their liking, as confirmed by the attendance figures. Yet for the professional community in Slovakia, the path is not only new but long if we are to reach a broad public appreciation for the heritage of Slovakia's modern architecture.

The exhibition in the premises of the SNG in Bratislava was open from 25.01.2018 to 20.05.2018.

Martin Zaiček

Exhibition conception: Henrieta Moravčíková
Exhibition curators: Henrieta Moravčíková, Denis Haberland
Photography: Olja Triaška Stefanović
Architectural design: Peter Moravčík
Axonometric diagrams: Laura Pastoreková
Graphic design: Ľubica Segečová

Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980

Exhibition at MoMA

New York, US, 10 July 2018 – 13 January 2019

Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980 opened on July 10 at MoMA to the sound of old Yugoslavian songs, revolutionary and popular, spreading surreally from the museum's courtyard. For the next six months MoMA's third floor galleries will be inhabited by over 400 items, exhibited neatly, salon-style, on walls and pedestals, and organized in four major themes that traverse the period of architectural production covered in the exhibition: Modernization, Global Networks, Everyday Life, and Identities. Though this survey exhibition, curated by the Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design, Martino Stierli, and the visiting curator Vladimir Kulić, Associate Professor at the Florida Atlantic University, with curatorial assistant Anna Kats, offers different and perhaps contradictory things to different audiences, in the history of MoMA's institutional stewardship and codification of Modernism, it delivers a form of revision, and a significant geo-political expansion of the narratives the institution has undersigned so far. The exhibition's artifacts range from precious archival sketches, historical photographs, photographic reproductions of drawings, original models, and exquisite model reproductions (the labor of architecture students at The Cooper Union and the Florida Atlantic University), to commissioned video presentations by Mila Turajlić and photographs by Valentin Jekc. All of these represent and invoke the making of some of the most important architectural and design objects, almost evenly spread, over the territory of the former Yugoslavia. In its selection of work, the exhibition, perhaps self-consciously so, re-enacts in curatorial terms the balancing of national representation constitutive of Yugoslavia's political and social project, which was in some measure indeed materialized by its architecture.

Yugoslavia's specific federalist form emerged from WWII with six, mostly rural republics, major damage to its key urban centers, vast human casualties, war-exacerbated ethnic conflicts, and a war-time revolution. This was followed by a definitive break with the Soviet Union in 1948 which

was decisive both for the country and for its modern architecture. Yugoslavia's architects did not have to contend with socialist realism for very long, nor with the anxieties of interpretation that in most other Eastern European countries followed Khrushchev's official 1954 pronouncements against the socialist realist dictum. The break with Stalin prompted the party leadership to look for its own political path — which led to its experiment in self-management, and later to combinations of a state and market economy. It also prefigured Yugoslavia's eventual leadership in the Non-Aligned movement (with its alternative global market for architecture). Modernism in this context, as the curators and the researchers they assembled suggest, was the architectural language that supported the country's federalist, non-aligned, and self-managed socialism.

Toward a Concrete Utopia's survey of a 32 year period of architectural and urban thought of Yugoslavian architects avoids comprehensiveness and chronology, for a set of architectural objects and examples of more sustained urban efforts and practices, which refract the four categories announced in the opening text, into a number of (only slightly) smaller themes: Urbanization, Technological Modernization, The Architecture of the "Social Standard", Tourist Infrastructures, Design, Housing, Exporting Architecture, Regional Idioms, and Monuments. There are three large urban developments that get special recognition in terms of the gallery square-footage: local and international efforts towards the reconstruction of Skopje in the wake of its devastating 1963 earthquake, development of Split 3 Housing, and the postwar reconstruction of the coastal city of Zadar. The show is also punctuated by four immersive spaces dedicated to architects Vjenceslav Richter, Edvard Ravnikar, Juraj Neidhart and Bogdan Bogdanović. While the work of a number of other architects is presented as well, these figures serve to drill deeper into their own production, and through their biographies and bodies of work, into the historical moments and institutional and discursive networks they inhabited. As Kulić suggests, their function is in part also to transmit the message about the

possibility and value of individual creativity in the context of Yugoslavia's postwar architecture.

For the once Yugoslav architects (and in some measure for their colleagues across the equally former WWII) *Toward a Concrete Utopia* is a triumph. It is an important validation of these architects' efforts, of architecture once produced for the collective good — "generous" architecture, as Rem Koolhaas has often characterized examples of socialist architecture, because it was explicitly not aimed at the bottom line, and often quite literally dimensioned for a collective subject¹. This architectural heritage has been under great pressure in the region for a while already. Even as the show opened at MoMA, some of the buildings presented in its galleries lay in disrepair, ironically mired in property issues and for others, like the never finished Dom Revolucije in Nikšić, Montenegro, developers just had or are having their final word, "transitioning" them into the flow of global capital. The imperative of the price per square meter is literally paving over the architecture once dedicated to public good and aimed at contributing to the quality of collective life, and thus transforming the figure of the architect in this context into a tool for private profit². Disrepair, and disrespect for the architecture produced under socialism, is common across the Second World³. But perhaps this MoMA show can serve to turn the tide or, at the very least, turn the fates of some of this architectural heritage in the region.

One of this exhibition's greatest accomplishments thus registers in the realm of preservation. Though it exposed a pervasive lack of archival care across the territory of the former Yugoslavia, the whole effort resulted in salvaging and organizing material by a group of dedicated researchers⁴. Since many of the major architectural enterprises that built Yugoslavia have been privatized, have gone bankrupt, or otherwise crumbled, what would have been important archival material suffered similar fates. *Toward a Concrete Utopia* prompted the research team to locate and digitize at least some of the items constituting Yugoslavia's socialist architecture heritage. There were also important individual acts of preservation that made parts of the exhibition possible. To highlight just a couple of these, in a conversation following the opening at MoMA held at the Center for Architecture in New York, Juraj Neidhart's daughter, Tatjana, described the dramatic events during the long (1992–1996) and devastating siege of Sarajevo by the army of Republika Srpska, and her rescuing of her father's papers related to the book he co-authored with Dušan Grabrijan



01 At the entry of the exhibition one encounters a three-channel video installation by Mila Turajlić, *Mi gradimo zemlju – zemlja gradi nas* [We built the country – the country builds us] –, and produced out of newsreel footage of the construction of New Belgrade. Installation view of *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, July 15, 2018–January 13, 2019. © 2018 The Museum of Modern Art. Photo: Martin Seck.



02 Reconstruction of Skopje is dedicated a vast space in which Yugoslavian architects and their work come along with the urban plans produced by, and the images of, Kenzō Tange's team. This space includes another of Mila Turajlić's commissioned videos, large photographs by Valentin Jekic. Installation view of *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, July 15, 2018–January 13, 2019. © 2018 The Museum of Modern Art. Photo: Martin Seck.

Architecture of Bosnia and the Way to Modernity (1957)⁵. In Belgrade, the main protagonist in the Exporting Architecture narrative, Energoprojekt, whose architecture section was led by Milica Šterić, had an unusually well-organized archive held in a prefab house near its famous office building in New Belgrade. The archive was first damaged when the nearby Chinese Embassy was bombed by NATO in 1999. More recently, in preparation for the show members of MoMA's exhibition team rushed to rescue archival material from its possible destruction in a "hostile takeover" of the company by the new private majority shares holder. Though not readily available for the general MoMA visitor consumption, but circulating as legends among the curatorial team, these stories of preservation are an important register of the historical events, complexities and contradictions otherwise not palpable in the exhibition⁶. Concretely in these two above cases: a devastating ethnic conflict, the NATO solution to it, and the advances of the wildest kind of neo-liberal capitalism. Though I absolutely recommend the exhibition's catalog as required reading for the exhibition visitors (and especially reviewers), deeper and more complicated histories than even the ones the catalog manages are necessary to deliver on the earnest curatorial promise of the wall text—for this material to become actually useful for our own (dark) times⁷. Despite the fact that the material in the exhibition was submitted to MoMA's institutional habits of seeing in terms of styles, objects and authors, which of course transforms it in important ways, it is thanks to MoMA and its curatorial and research teams, that *Toward a Concrete Utopia* is an important record now that may slow down the quiet entropic disappearance of the historical traces of an era. It has prepared the ground for more research on why and how we might learn

from the examples it includes. I prefer to see it, therefore, as an invitation to research the architecture of the socialist era which, though it was many things in Yugoslavia, was also optimistic about the prospects of a diverse, multi-ethnic, equitable, self-managed and self-conscious collective.

Ana Miljački

Notes

- 1 Most recently Rem Koolhaas made such pronouncements on socialist modern architecture generally in a public interview conducted by the Russian American journalist, Vladimir Pozner at the Garage in Moscow as part of the *Moscow Urban Forum* 2018. See <https://strelkamag.com/en/article/rem-koolhaas-vladimir-pozner>.
- 2 Because I find these ideals most clearly embedded in the architecture that supported civic and everyday life, I found the show's section on the Social Standard most exciting. It includes projects such as the Kosovo University and Public Library in Priština (designed by Andrija Mutnjaković), as well as the recently (and beautifully) renovated Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade (designed by Ivanka Raspopović and Ivan Antić).
- 3 In my own research of Czech architecture, I found the destruction of the department store Ještěd in Liberec a particularly sad, though not the sole, example of this. In the show at MoMA, the disrepair of some of the famous tourist structures like the Haludovo hotel (designed by Boris Magaš), or the memorial on Petrova Gora (designed by Vojin Bakić, Berislav Šerbetić, and Zoran Bakić) quite literally represents the general attitude towards this architectural heritage. The contemporary politicians operating in the territory of ex-Yugoslavia have nothing to gain from identifying themselves with the old ideals of "brotherhood and unity", or the once

regulated development of the Adriatic coast; and the memorials of the anti-fascist struggle that most of them had to visit regularly as part of their early education, might have the capacity to dangerously expose the contradictions now deeply embedded in their own, often fascist, politics.

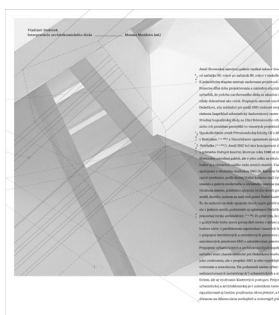
- 4 The names of the members of this collective are impossible to find on the exhibition walls, but they are thankfully included (on page 179) in the catalog. I will relist here the curatorial advisory board, because without their research and understanding of the importance of preserving and organizing the material, we would all be poorer: Tamara Bjažić Klarin, Matevž Čelik, Vladimir Deskov, Ana Ivanovska Deskov, Sanja Horvatinčić, Jovan Ivanovski, Jelica Jovanović, Matrina Malešić, Maroje Mrduljaš, Bekim Ramku, Arber Sadiki, Dubravka Sekulić, Irena Šentevska, Luka Skansi, Lukasz Stanek, Marta Vukotić Lazar and Mejrema Zatrić.
- 5 Juraj Neidhart's room is dedicated to this research on Bosnian architecture's premodernism.
- 6 The first small event to mark the opening of *Towards Concrete Utopia* in Belgrade, included Vlada Kulić, and two members of the curatorial advisory board: Jelica Jovanović and Dubravka Sekulić, and took place at the mobbed REX cultural center on July 26, 2018.
- 7 I use here Hannah Arendt's term "dark times", which she, in turn, borrowed from Bertolt Brecht for her collection of essays *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1970), precisely because she believed that the men and women she wrote about in that collection responded to the "dark times" in a way that produced hopeful forms of "illumination". It is a term that thus contains, through its layered historical references, both a description befitting our own historical moment and possible antidotes to it.

BOOK REVIEWS



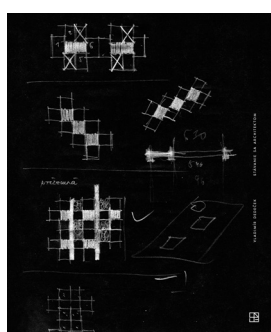
Vladimír Deděček.
Interpretation of his Architecture

Editor: Monika Mitašová
Publisher: Birkhäuser
Language: English
ISBN: 978-3035615982
Year: 2018



Vladimír Deděček.
Interpretácie architektonického diela

Editor: Monika Mitašová
Publisher: SNG
Language: Slovak
ISBN: 978-80-8059-198-4
Year: 2017



Vladimír Deděček.
Stávanie sa architektom

Editor: Monika Mitašová
Publisher: SNG
Language: Slovak
ISBN: 978-80-8059-200-4
Year: 2017

Architect Vladimír Deděček belongs to the first generation of Slovak architects trained

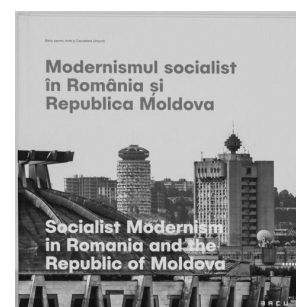
at the Slovak University of Technology after the WWII that extensively shaped the postwar built environment in the former Czechoslovakia. Vladimír Deděček became famous and, at the same time, a controversial figure of Slovak architecture of the second half the 20th century because his monumental expressive architecture was sometimes confronting and radical in their older urban settings.

The two books, Monika Mitašová (ed.), *Vladimír Deděček. Stávanie sa architektom*, Bratislava, SNG, 2017, and Monika Mitašová (ed.), *Vladimír Deděček: Interpretácie architektonického diela*, Bratislava, SNG, 2017 (published now in English as Monika Mitašová (ed.), *Vladimír Deděček: Interpretation of His Architecture*, Birkhäuser, 2018) are part of a major project, which the Slovak National Gallery dedicated to the author of the new gallery building constructed in the late 1970s. The basis of the project is the extensive research by Slovak architecture theoretician Monika Mitašová and the photographic work of the Austrian photographer Hertha Hurnaus. The first book presents a private and broader social context of the academic and non-academic community of artists, sociologists and architects that inspired Vladimír Deděček in his decision to become an architect. Equally, his first sketches are reflected as an individual and creative way of becoming an architect. Three of the very first sketchbooks of Vladimír Deděček form an integral part of the book.

The second book was prepared by Monika Mitašová in collaboration with the architecture theoretician Marián Zervan, the photographer Hertha Hurnaus and the architects Benjamín Brádnanský and Vít Halada. It includes textual, architectural and photographic interpretations of four of the most famous and most discussed architectural works by Vladimír Deděček; the reconstruction and additions to the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava, the Slovak National Archive, the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic and the Regional Political school in Modra. At the same time, it creates a source of the methodological approach that is tested in the process of interpretation of a further thirteen key works by Vladimír Deděček in the years 1960 to 1990. An important layer of the second book is represented by photographs and graphic diagrams. The author of the photographs is one of the best contemporary photographers of architecture in the European context. The graphical diagrams are, in turn, a picture of precise single analyses prepared by two pedagogues of the

Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava. The 841-page monograph is an original approach to the interpretation of architecture. It tests new methods of formal, historical and social interpretation of the architecture work, confronts the different views on the selected works and creates a basis for an unbiased discussion on the architecture of Vladimír Deděček and architecture in general. The book deliberately takes the form of “work-books” with the intention of giving readers not only a didactic but, above all, open, comprehensive approach to the architectural thinking of an important Slovak architect of the second half of the 20th century.

Henrieta Moravčíková



Socialist Modernism in Romania and the Republic of Moldova

Editor: Dumitru Rusu
Publisher: BACU Association
ISBN: 978-973-0-25553-9
Language: Romanian and English
Year: 2017

Socialist Modernism in Romania and the Republic of Moldova is a photo album developed by the Bureau for Urban Art and Research (BACU), an organization focused on the conservation and rehabilitation of built heritage and art from the Socialist period in Central and Eastern Europe.

In 2013, BACU launched a research project called *Socialist Modernism* which aims to document architecture and art dating from 1955-1991 – the Socialist modern period. The publication of *Socialist Modernism in Romania and the Republic of Moldova* is one of the outcomes of the work BACU has been developing for these last 5 years, combining field research with archive and library investigation.

This publication is organized into six sections. The first section provides the reader with an insight of the emergence of socialist Modernism in the 1950s and the technical features that came to characterize it throughout the following decades.

The successive five sections offer a visual journey through a series of colored photographs taken in different Romanian and Moldovan cities. The captured pictures vary from public spaces to interiors, from façades to details and have been divided according to the buildings' functional purposes - science, education, culture and sports facilities; housing units; administrative and transportation buildings; hotels, leisure and treatment facilities; industrial facilities.

This publication intends to raise awareness to unprotected socialist modern buildings, their meaning and value for architecture history and their current neglected state.

Beatriz Agostinho



East West Central: Re-Building Europe 1950–1990, Vol. 1: Re-Humanizing Architecture, New Forms of Community, 1950–1970

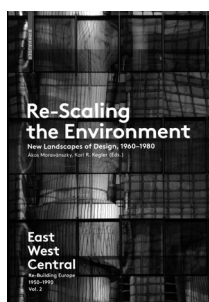
Editors: Ákos Moravánszky, Judith Hopfengärtner

Publisher: Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH

Language: English

ISBN: 978-3-0356-1015-4

Year: 2017



East West Central: Re-Building Europe 1950–1990, Vol. 2: Re-Scaling the Environment, New Landscapes of Design, 1960–1980

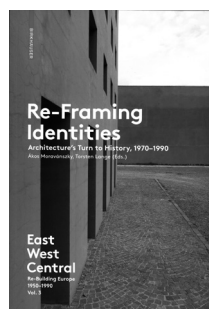
Editors: Ákos Moravánszky, Torsten Lange

Publisher: Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH

ISBN: 978-3-0356-1015-1

Language: English

Year: 2017



East West Central: Re-Building Europe 1950–1990, Vol. 3: Re-Framing Identities, Architecture's Turn to History, 1970–1990

Editors: Ákos Moravánszky, Torsten Lange

Publisher: Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH

ISBN: 978-3-0356-1015-8

Language: English

Year: 2017

The trilogy of collections of essays and texts under the name *East West Central: Re-Building Europe 1950–1990* has a goal offering an original view on the evolution of architecture in Europe after WWII even though the era has been covered multiple times by researchers. The project was conducted by the lead professor of architectural theory and history at ETH Zürich, Ákos Moravánszky. It maps the evolution of architecture through the prism of dominating themes from the 1950s to 1990s. Books follow the series of conferences that laid the groundwork for the publication.

The project is ambitious in several aspects. As the name implies, similar to Moravánszky's previous research, the central theme corrects the West-centric view of architectural discourse of second half of 20th century. The project is, therefore, focused on questions, which were discussed simultaneously in both the Eastern and Western Blocs, finding similarities rather than searching for idiosyncrasies. The hermetically sealed Iron Curtain is regarded to be a myth. Moravánszky, as an editor, presents publications that narrow the focus down to common ground, overlapping tendencies, concurrent development and West-East cultural exchange. He offers us a view on the architectural project of Europe, emerging from the need for reconstruction of the demolished cities and an ideology of critical positivism, that could have been universal for the whole continent.

The decision to cover the forty years of divided Europe in three separate volumes is interesting. Each one applies its own viewpoint and covers a twenty-year period (1950s–1970s, 1960s–1980s and 1970s–1990s). Overlapping avoids flattening of history into a restricted linear narrative. It is clear, that the ambition here is not a holistic inclusion of everything, but rather a specific thematic

interpretation. Such a concept is clear and avoids inter-disciplinarity. The subject of research is the built environment in the rather traditional understanding as architectural production. However, it is also clear that there is a need to understand the underlying forces of politics and cultural development that shaped that production.

The core theme of the first book, architectural production after the war, is re-humanization of settlements. The 1960s and 1970s are characterized by the unprecedented scale of urbanization made available by implementing new technologies in city planning. Reflecting the universalist positivism and critical reevaluation of identity is the theme of the third collection. Each volume is introduced by the editor's essay, while the individual texts were chosen in accordance with the theme.

Re-Humanizing Architecture

The first volume, named *Re-Humanizing Architecture*, covers the time after WWII (1950–1970). It frames the reconstruction of Europe (mostly the West) as the triumph of humanism, not only as the common ground for the ideologies of dominant political forces (Christian democracy and social democracy), but possibly an ideology overarching the capitalist and socialist regimes. Despite the drastic differences in civic rights and freedoms, both the welfare state and the communist dictatorships were declaring the prime interest in the “little man”. Humanism also brought the critical approach to architectural modernity. The development of the cities dictated by the *Athens Charter* doctrine is confronted with the question of collectivity and human scale. How could urban planning work better for the individual, the family and the community? Team 10 attacked the functional segregation of the cities. These planners favored a more complex organization of the city as a fractal structure with multiple independent cores. In other words, connection instead of distribution.

Structuring the texts in chapters helps keeping up with the concept of the volumes even if the form is a collection. The editors are able to navigate the reader in different interpretations of the theme. Texts therefore could cover a rather broad formal range. If some comparatively analyze the construction of housing estates, such as Marijke Martin, Cor Wagenaar: The Netherlands and Czechoslovakia, others offer a more intimate view via the figures leading the discourse of the time, such as Luca Molinari: Rehumanization of the after war Italian architecture: Ernesto Nathan Rogers and Giancarlo De Carlo.

It is apparent, that the ideological frame of humanism is not seen as a background for

the architectural discourse, a mere context, but rather as an integral theme of the era. The book, therefore, does not regress into superficial categorization according to formal architectural style (socialistic realism, Modernism) for it is more important to find common features.

Re-Scaling the Environment

After the 1950s, both sides of Europe witnessed urban expansion fueled by economic growth. The landscape was being reconfigured dramatically. The agrarian economies were heavily industrialized and the metropolis had become a center of a new kind of economy of services. Developing cybernetics and data analysis directly influenced geography and urban planning. Both the socialist state and welfare state allowed for central planning at an unprecedented scale. Political détente contributed to increased exchange of information through the Iron Curtain.

Architects and urban planners used new technologies in a technocratic data-based approach to the development of the landscape. Utopian mega structures and infrastructures were the new daring answers to regulate the extreme urbanization and growth of cities. Suddenly, it was possible to manage the organization of the whole landscape. However, such an unprecedented scale of planning was also the beginning of the collapse of this positivistic project — Modernism. Economic recession in the 1970s, ideological fatigue in the East and growing concerns about the natural environment were reflected in a general disillusionment for such projects and planning as such.

The second volume offers a view on the scene that embraced new tools for the new scale of development. The city is no longer a theme for the planners, the landscape is. The complex structures of habitats provided a possibility of a new kind of urbanization, that rejected the dichotomy of the urban core and rural periphery. Machines allowed planetary-scale planning.

The book presents these concepts as the late phase of Modernism. Hashim Sarkis writes about the genesis of territorial aesthetics in relation to Le Corbusier's "Geo-Architecture". The projects for the Mississippi basin in the 1930s are stated as amongst the first examples of planning at such a scale. Several texts focus on the bureaucratic apparatus of states as the new centers for this kind of progressive planning. The construction of housing estates and the total occupation of the landscape is dealt with in others. Daniela Spiegel writes about recreation resorts in the former DDR. However, the inclusion of SIAL, the Czech

hi-tech collective, is inconsistent as it operated independently from the bureaucratic planning apparatus that produced the kind of environment the volume addresses.

Re-Framing Identities

Critical reflection on Modernism and the post-war development of cities is the theme of the third volume. The period of 1970-1990 is defined, unsurprisingly, as that when the project of universal modernity is confronted with a wide-ranging critique. As the themes of individuality, language and identity were more articulated in the cultural discourse, technocratic rational solutions to the city as a mechanism were challenged among urban theorists.

Postmodernity is defined rather typically as the semiotic interpretation of architecture as a language. The study of the city has become the study of history, references, local traditions and symbolism. The rediscovered fascination with continuity resulted in an increased concern with heritage and the historical city centers. The book argues that, because of this concern with continuity, the relatively new cultural division between the West and the East was becoming undermined. Both sides were revisiting their common history, such as in the concept of Mitteleuropa.

However, this common history was not restricted to local identity. Cultural exchanges throughout the past have become a matter for discussion. The rediscovery of Russian constructivism in Western discourse is described in the essay from Ally Vronsky.

The last volume is coherent. Nevertheless, it lacks the thematic originality of the previous ones. The problem is reduced to the concept of identity and neglects the political and economic conditions of postmodern society, such as the commodification of space and consumption.

The occasional inconsistency in the selection of texts is a weakness of the collection. Some are apparently only abstracts of broader research, lacking the quality of an autonomous piece and serve rather as references. Seeing scientific abstracts and essays in one place, one has to think if a form of a journal would not be more appropriate for the collection, allowing for a both deeper and broader insight.

Despite these reservations, the collection accomplishes its set ambitions; framing post-war development in themes is original, but not purposeless. The relation of architecture, planning, politics and culture offers a more complex view on architectural production in the era. The collection is one of the most interesting works dealing with the period and shows it is most desirable to interpret history conceptually.

Michal Janák



Off Season

Editors: Andrea Kalinová, Martin Zaiček,
Petra Hlaváčková
Publisher: Archimera
ISBN: 978-80-972341-3-3
Language: Slovak, Czech, English
Year: 2017

"...everything, where has it gone? It makes me feel sick, my ladies. And have you been to the spa management and have you told them anything? So tell them that one doctor was crying when she saw what it looked like now".

These are Mrs Marcela Blašková's laments over the condition of the Machnác sanatorium as she recalls the building when she was its former chief physician of medical rehabilitation, naively referring to the spa management for a solution. The Machnác is now managed by a different institution: the capitalist market. And its rules and competences are different and merciless.

The texts, photographs and attached pictures by several authors in the *Off Season* publication present a selection of aspects of the Sanatorium for the Health Insurance Company for Private Clerks and Attendants (the original name for the Machnác), which was built by the architect Jaromír Krejcar in Trenčianske Teplice in 1929-1932. This building is one of the most valuable architectural works in Slovakia. It is a prime work of inter-war Modernism and its current condition is a scandalous illustration of the government's incompetence to look after the country's endangered cultural assets. The publication is also one of the products of the activities of the artistic group, Abandoned (Re)Creation, which studies, among other things, various aspects of this architectural work's ruinous condition.

The contents of the individual texts can be compiled into two blocks according to the topic. The first and more extensive one is the topic of the building and its author. The other one is Martin Zaiček's survey on the organization and development of balneology in the inter-war period, the after-war decades up to present. The author focuses primarily on Trenčianske Teplice and their intended and only fragmentarily implemented urban

transformations. This block also includes the personal memories of doctor Blašková quoted earlier in this article. She worked in Machnáč for years and her story, put into context with the other expert texts, inspires the reader to discover a new dimension of sympathy for this building, which served for decades.

The third block comprises of a set of photographs representing Machnáč, mainly in fragments of its present condition. There is no melancholy or poetic illusion, which gets so often evoked by ruined architecture. In addition, the third block includes a set of records of various performances, interventions and other events, which were inspired by this architectural work, its condition and atmosphere, and carried out by committed and sensitive participants. Although being an autonomous expression not necessarily connected with the architecture, the chronicles build up another temporary layer of the architecture's story. These photographs, despite the current condition of Machnáč, do not seem to be depressing as I can see them as a different way of presentation of the building's potential. Considering the other graphic attachments, I was particularly captivated by the final architect's report from the time when the building was finished. It is in the form of a paperback publication and it forms an entire part of an almanac. I find it interesting because I can identify myself with some of its formulations, as for the way of reasoning, some architectural decisions were considered correct and substantiated, even though only time and the building's function can prove them right.

In the first block, Klaus Spechtenhauser introduces Jaromír Krejcar, his activities and work in the broader context of mainly leftist creations in architecture and art in the 1920s and 1930s. It was a time of slowly fading optimism anticipating another global conflict, and also a time of socially radical views hardly realized when confronted with faced with wealthy contractors. Quite rightly, Machnáč is presented here together with the Czechoslovak pavilion at the world exposition in Paris in 1937 as a leading work by Krejcar. It ranks among the most significant architectural works of inter-war Modernism in the European context.

The interview with the architect Tenzer, one of the closest colleagues to J. Krejcar, and the text by Andrea Kalinová, are similar in their method. They both intimately explore two aspects of Krejcar's existence; the first text depicts the system and circumstances of his work as an architect, the other one illustrates the turbulence, peaks and tragic troughs of his private life.

The text by Peter Szalay is a survey of the materiality of Machnáč, its original and

current condition. Such focus on surfaces and materials is obviously meaningful in the case of this architectural creation, because this building ranks among the best works of its time, concerning not only its form, compositional characteristics, proportion of parts with one another and also within the building as a whole, but also the work's use of materials, surfaces and colors. The author is accurate with his analysis of the motivation and physical expression, which has caused today's decay in the fabric of Machnáč. This demolition by neglect is a well-established strategy by the owner, to force the Monuments Board into freeing up the conditions for the restoration and reconstruction of the building. This approach is a means to create favorable conditions for an implementation of a promising model for development, to the detriment of many aspects of the building's authenticity. Using a metaphorical link between Krejcar's inter-war period and the present, it seems as if this early-capitalist mechanism, which exposes this architectural work to destruction, was punishing its architect for his past avant-garde leftist orientation.

The book does deliberately does not include the most important issue, which is a speculation on various possible strategies to grant Machnáč its life and future again which could be a different future from the one mentioned by Jan Tabor in the introduction. There are several other possibilities. What they all have in common, is that they are a theoretical construction between an ideal, today only an elusive reconstruction, on one side, and its degenerated variations, originating from the motif of profit, on the other side. The existential character of Tabor's version of letting the building succumb to its gradual decay and its transformation into a tragic architectural narrative, is enchanting in our helplessness against severe reality.

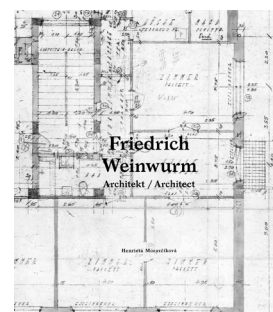
This skepticism is well-founded. The private ownership model means profitability. This comes from the ratio between reasonably high incomes for accommodation services on one hand and the reconstruction and operating costs on the other. The initial circumstances are extremely unfavorable. The potential Slovak clientele now expects a different accommodation standard than Machnáč could offer without a significant change in its layout. It is a conflict between the profitable ownership model and the essential authentic values of the building. There is virtually no clientele in Slovakia which would prefer such values to their own comfort, and the number of foreign clients is negligible. Without reconstruction, which would raise the accommodation standard of Machnáč, it is not capable of functioning

without a financial loss. No private investor in Slovakia will commit to such an endeavor.

The other hypothetically possible scenario is a curatorship by the state. Machnáč is too large for an institute, a museum or retention as an exposition object in its own right, which it might be able to be changed into as a result of a careful reconstruction. However, the state owns and runs numerous institutions and facilities, also those offering accommodation, principally at a financial loss, or it subsidizes them. I believe that this is the only scheme that might reverse the current decline and help recovery and operation not dependent on profit.

Off Season means with no reason when speaking about this architectural work and its current situation, because hazarding with our cultural heritage is unreasonable, in terms of the higher principle of self-preservation of the community's consistence through cultural values.

Pavol Paňák



Friedrich Weinwurm Architekt / Architect

Author: Henrieta Moravčíková

Publisher: Slovart

Language: Slovak, English

ISBN: 978-80-556-1158-7

Year: 2014

The richly illustrated, 26 by 29 centimeters large, 375 pages long, hard cover book is the first comprehensive work on the life and work of architect Friedrich Weinwurm (1885–1942), one of the most prominent figures of the New Objectivity in what was Czechoslovakia. He was called by three given names, Frigyes, Friedrich, Bedřich, which highlight his multi-faceted identity: Jewish, Hungarian, German and Slovak (Czechoslovak), characteristic also for the city of Bratislava (Pozsony, Pressburg) in the interwar period. The author terms this multi-ethnic milieu as Central European, which is in Anglo-Saxon bibliography often termed as East Central European or simply East European, following the Cold War division of Europe. Still, Central European is

the proper term, as culturally this territory has more in common with the Austro-German *Kulturraum* including its Slavonic constituents, based on Western Christianity (Catholicism and Protestantism) than with the Orthodox Christian, Eastern Europe in the context of Russian *Kulturkreis*. Indeed, Friedrich Weinwurm was educated in Bratislava, then called Pozsony or Pressburg (Slovakia), Cluj-Napoca, then called Kolozsvár (Romania) and in Germany by prominent architects such as Peter Behrens, Bruno Taut, Hannes Meyer and, most importantly, Heinrich Tessenow. He earned his diploma at the Technical University in Dresden in 1911 and he became employed in the office of architects Pogány and Töry in Budapest, two prominent figures of Hungarian Proto-Modernism.

The book contains two parts, a main one with ten chapters, and a catalog with a rich survey of works and writings by Weinwurm, a biography, bibliography and index. The chapters of the 200 page long main part are as follows: “An Architect of the Central European Territory”, “Objectivity”, “Outside of the Centre”, “A Unique Aesthetic of Jewish Architects?”, “Politically Engaged Architecture: *Unitas* and *Nová Doba* (housing estates)”, “To reshape the City”, “A Representative Villa, or the Discrete Charms of the Pressburg Bourgeoisie”, “Architect or Engineer?”, “The Partnership of Weinwurm and Vécsei, From Architect to Refugee”.

Friedrich Weinwurm turned to Modernism in 1924 in the new Republic of Czechoslovakia, established on the ashes of the Habsburg Empire. Despite the early Pan-Slavonic agenda of this country — highlighted by Czech cubism and rondo-cubism in the early 1920s — its architecture was predominantly modern, neatly fitting into the culture of the Central European, Austro-German and West-Slavonic *Kulturraum*. Zdeněk Lukeš of Prague calls Friedrich Weinwurm the Slovak Loos, based on his refusal of decoration and his slight touch of neo-classicism. Henrieta Moravčíková links these characteristics to Weinwurm's teacher, Heinrich Tessenow's opus. While both observations are correct, the link with Loos refers more to his use of materials and composition of masses, treatment of the façade, whereas Loos' *Raumplan*, its labyrinthine character, based on Albert Einstein's *Raum-Zeit* (space-time) and indirectly to Jewish mysticism, is largely absent. It is curious that Einstein impacted more the Christian Loos than the Jewish Weinwurm who, as Moravčíková explains, was more pragmatic than theoretical, also avoiding some schematism of functionalism. Still, Weinwurm's architectural

language was far from being compact and exclusive — different modernist idioms ran parallel: restrained Modernism characterizes Villa Sonnenfeld in Bratislava (1928), while Dr. Klaubert House resembles the Dutch *avant-garde*. Even on one single building one encounters different architectural languages, as with the Grand Sanatorium, which on the street front shows decorativism similar to that of architect Lajos Kozma in Budapest, while on the courtyard façade one encounters some elements of Alvar Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium.

In the sub-chapter titled “Germans, Jews or Free-Masons: a Unique Aesthetics” the author sheds light on the social milieu of Weinwurm. Here the reader finds information on Jewish clients of Bratislava, Piešťany, who provided the architect with commissions for erecting villas, beer factory for the families Heller, Stein and Graber. He also designed the mortuary for the Orthodox Jewish Cemetery in Bratislava.

In the chapter titled “Politically Engaged Architecture” one can read about Weinwurm's interwar period housing estates that followed the philosophy and forms of the German *Siedlungs-Architektur*, simple, clean, social and harmonious. However, on page 103 a photograph shows the irony of history: on the streets of the housing estate *Nova Dobá* [new times], created by social democracy, Nazis are marching under the banner *Defilé národnej sily* [the parade of people's power] in 1944. However, by then, Friedrich Weinwurm was no longer alive. Hiding from Slovak and Hungarian authorities in order to avoid deportation to Auschwitz, he wrote his last letter home to his family in 1942. It is not known which Nazi collaborators murdered him, whether the Hungarian or the Slovak. With him and his fellow Jews, Central Europe was annihilated too under the boots of Nazis and later the Soviets.

Henrieta Moravčíková's book is not only exceptional regarding the presentation and analyses of the architecture, including its *Zeitgeist*, but also in terms of design: the typography, the slightly yellowish paper that recalls the interwar period and, most poignantly, regarding color photographs: in the era of eye-catchy, garish, over-photo-shopped digital images shot with dramatic wide-angle lenses printed on shiny paper, this book presents restrained, film-like colors, shot with moderately wide lenses on matt paper, in tune with the drab, slight decay of interwar period villas — a real *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Rudolf Klein



Arhitekt Danilo Fürst/ The Architect Danilo Fürst

Author: Nataša Koselj

Publisher: Celjska Mohorjeva Družba

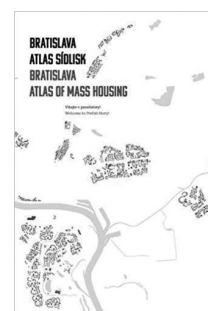
ISBN: 978-961-278-082-1

Languages: Slovenian and English

Year: 2013

The architect Danilo Fürst (1912–2005) was a pioneer of prefabricated housing in Slovenia. As a student of Plečnik, he was also a master of architectural detail, which was mainly shaped before WWI when he was the town architect in Bled. Among his most important works are Stražišče Kranji Primary School, terraced houses in Peričeva Street in Ljubljana, and the Forest Authorities building in Bled. With Edvard Ravnikar and France Ivanšek, he was on the founding committee of the *Arhitekt* magazine. He was also the president of the Slovenian and Yugoslavian architects' associations, and the organizer of many actions and events that crucially marked the development of Slovenian architecture in the second half of the 20th century.

From the Publisher.



Bratislava Atlas Sídliisk / Bratislava Atlas of Mass Housing

Authors: Henrieta Moravčíková, Mária Topolčanská, Peter Szalay, Matúš Dulla, Soňa Ščepánová, Slávka Toscherová, Katerína Haberlandová

Publisher: Slovart Publications

Language: English, Slovak

ISBN: 978 80556 04787

Year: 2012

The mass housing developments that loomed so large in the built output of the

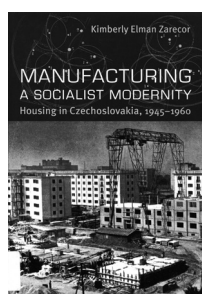
postwar decades have never fitted easily within the mainstream of modern heritage, which emphasizes the individualism of “master” designers and designs. If we wish to properly convey the character of these housing complexes, a much wider approach is required, inventorising entire districts and grounded in collective statistics rather than glamorous individual imagery. Here, however, we run up against the sheer scale of the subject-matter itself, which hugely challenges any published inventory project. Thus, there have been only isolated efforts to inventorise entire mass housing “stocks”: for example, the (un-illustrated) “gazetteer” section of the 1994 volume, *Tower Block*, co-authored by this reviewer with Stefan Muthesius. The comprehensive housing inventory of the city of Amsterdam published in 1992, with its color-coded maps and statistics on every single social housing project, required a book of such massive dimensions (A3) that it can only realistically be accessed in an archive or library.

In a bold attempt to break out of this impasse, Henrieta Moravčíková and colleagues have made the most ambitious attempt yet to produce a comprehensive area inventory of mass housing in book form, in their new, fully-bilingual *Bratislava Atlas of Mass Housing*. This atlas is both a thematic monograph and an area-based gazetteer. Its first part contains essays on the historical and cultural context of postwar housing in socialist Czechoslovakia, highlighting the prominence of standardization and industrial prefabrication within post-Khrushchev Soviet-bloc housing discourses. The main “atlas” itself fills 206 of the book’s 343 pages, comprising a chronological inventory of all 21 housing schemes built in Bratislava between 1955–1995, complete with maps, statistics and historic photos and text summaries. The relatively small number and large size of postwar developments in Bratislava emphasizes the concentrated, coordinated character of Eastern Bloc housing production. The final section, with its type-plans of standard housing blocks and institutions, and its photographs of public art projects, accentuates the socialist countries’ focus on extreme type-plan standardization, and their vastly spacious, usually semi-completed landscaping and social provisions.

Overall, *Bratislava Atlas* Sidlisk provides the most comprehensive single-city mass housing book-form coverage yet achieved, with very few identifiable gaps: an overall map of the city would have been helpful, as would clearer captioning of the layouts of individual housing schemes. To some extent, it runs counter to today’s electronic orthodoxy of GIS-type databases, “tagging” and so forth, but perhaps an ideal formula would combine the two, as in the recent Heritage Lottery-funded project,

“Tower Block UK”, which makes *Tower Block* and its gazetteers available as an electronic resource (see <https://www.towerblock.eca.ed.ac.uk>). The **docomomo** International Specialist Committee on Urbanism and Landscape (of which Henrieta Moravčíková is an active member) is currently pursuing the potential of on-line databases, one experimental project being the **docomomo** International Mass Housing Archive (<https://datashare.is.ed.ac.uk/handle/10283/2927>). Maybe Bratislava’s publication of the most comprehensive published inventory to date could become the foundation for a Slovak database initiative of equivalent international exemplary status?

Miles Glendinning



**Manufacturing Socialist Modernity:
Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1960**

Author: Kimberly Elman Zarecor
Publisher: University of Pittsburgh Press
Language: English
ISBN: 978-0822944041
Year: 2011

Eastern European prefabricated housing blocks are often vilified as the visible manifestations of everything that was wrong with state socialism. For many inside and outside the region, the uniformity of these buildings became symbols of the dullness and drudgery of everyday life. *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity* complicates this common perception. Analyzing the cultural, intellectual, and professional debates surrounding the construction of mass housing in early postwar Czechoslovakia, Zarecor shows that these housing blocks served an essential function in the planned economy and reflected an interwar aesthetic, derived from constructivism and functionalism, that carried forward into the 1950s.

With a focus on prefabricated and standardized housing built from 1945 to 1960, Zarecor offers broad and innovative insights into the country’s transition from capitalism to state socialism. She demonstrates that during this shift, architects and engineers consistently strove to meet the needs of Czechs and Slovaks despite challenging economic conditions, a lack of material resources, and

manufacturing and technological limitations. In the process, architects were asked to put aside their individual creative aspirations and transform themselves into technicians and industrial producers.

Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity is the first comprehensive history of architectural practice and the emergence of prefabricated housing in the Eastern Bloc. Through discussions of individual architects and projects, as well as building typologies, professional associations, and institutional organization, it opens a rare window into the cultural and economic life of Eastern Europe during the early postwar period.

From the Publisher.



Edvard Ravnikar: Architect and Teacher

Editors: Ales Vodopivec, Rok Znidarsic
Publisher: Springer
Language: English
ISBN: 978-3211992036
Year: 2010 [2009]

Edvard Ravnikar (1907–1993) is considered the central figure in Slovenia’s post-WWII architecture. He was Joze Plecnik’s most famous student. Plecnik studied under Otto Wagner. Ravnikar worked for Le Corbusier in Paris as of 1939 after completing his studies in 1935. His thorough planning reflects Plecnik’s poetic architecture, while his formal work was in line with Le Corbusier’s vision of urban planning and modern architecture. Ravnikar was his own man artistically, and wasn’t only successful as an architect. How work also made him an important personage in the development of the architecture department. He was a critic and essayist for the Slovenian and international media. All of this influenced generations of Slovenian architects and explains why Ravnikar can be felt in almost all major Slovenian buildings and monuments. This monograph can be viewed as the result of an examination of Ravnikar’s oeuvre. It contains documentation on his buildings and written work, as well as contributions by Friedrich Achleitner, William J.R. Curtis, Friedrich Kurrent, Boris Podrecca and many others.

From the Publisher.