Contribute to the next journal

Journal 60 is scheduled for March 2019. Authors who would like to contribute to this issue are kindly invited to contact docomomo@tecnico.ulisboa.pt.

Guideline to contributors

• A copy on cd or an e-mail version of the text. The cd should be clearly labeled with the author(s) name(s), the title, and the names of the files containing the text and illustrations. The name and version of the word-processing software used to prepare the text should also be given.

• A hard copy on paper by postal mail. The title and author’s name should be clearly mentioned on each page of the manuscript and the name, title, postal address and e-mail address should also be given at the end of each contribution.

Form

• All texts must be in English; if translated, the text in the original language must be enclosed as well.

• Manuscripts should be written with double spacing and liberal margins with all pages numbered in sequence.

• A short resume of the author(s), in connection with the contribution, must be included.

• Illustrations referred to in the text should be mentioned and abbreviated as follows: (figure 1).

• Articles must include a short bibliography of about 5 to 10 reference books or articles.

• Footnotes should be numbered and should follow the following style:


Illustrations

We accept 3 to 6 illustrations for short contributions (about 600 words) and up to 10 illustrations for full-length articles (about 1500 words). It is essential that authors provide good quality illustrations either printed on paper or as digital data on disk or CD (size of images: 300 dpi for an A4 format).

For figure captions, the order of information is: designer, name of building or object, location, date, description, source. If a building has been destroyed, include that information.
EDITORIAL

02 Towards a fresh reading of MoMo historiography
BY ANA TOSTÓES

INTRODUCTION

04 Is there something behind the Iron Curtain? Documentation and conservation of Modernism in former Eastern Europe
BY HENRIETA MORAVCÍKOVÁ

ESSAYS

06 Historiography of post-war modern architecture in Hungary. Evaluation — research — preservation
BY MARIANN SIMON

12 Revisiting interbellum architecture of Hungary
BY ANDRÁS FERKAI

18 Communicating “space and form”: The history and impact of the journal Tér és Forma as the Hungarian pipeline of Modernism
BY PÁL RITOÓK AND ÁGNÉS ANNA SEBESTYÉN

26 Ignoring and erasing: collective housing in 20th century Czechoslovakia
BY HUBERT GUZIK

32 Czech hotels in the late-modernist style set against the landscape
BY PETR VORLÍK

38 Friedrich Weinwurm: Slovakia’s nearly forgotten contribution to the European architectural avant-garde
BY HENRIETA MORAVCÍKOVÁ

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

54 Edvard Ravnikar and The Heart of the City. The genesis of cultural centers in Slovenia and in ex-Yugoslavia
BY NATAŠA KOSELJ

60 Slovenian industrial heritage — complexity of meanings, their preservation and regeneration
BY SONJA IFKO

68 New Belgrade: past-present-future, and the future that never came
BY JELICA JOVANOVIC

74 On the wings of modernity: WWII memorials in Yugoslavia
BY VLADANA PUTNIK PRICA AND NENAD LAJBENŠPERGER

DOCUMENTATION ISSUE

79 The New Synagogue in Žilina, Slovakia: participation as a method of heritage renewal
BY KATARÍNA HABERLANDOVÁ

84 NEWS

90 BOOK REVIEWS

96 APPENDIX
EDITORIAL

ANA TOSTÕES
Chair of docomomo International

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 work. 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 Celik 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.”

Given the scope of the 15th International docomomo Conference — “Metamorphosis. The Continuity of Change”, which took place at Cankarjev Dom (by Edvard Ravnikar, 1965–1982), 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 Meuser 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* and Akos Moravanszky’s (ed.) monograph trilogy *East West Central: Re-building Europe*, 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 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 habitat, 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 *Term*.

Finally, there is place for discussion about architects and their masterworks, as the Slovak architect Friedrich Weiwrum and the Slovenian architect Edvard Ravnikar. These examples of the Eastern European architectural avant-garde, often forgotten outside of the region for which were original 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


INTRODUCTION

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 historiography. 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. Lets mention some monothematic issues of international peer reviewed journals such as the British *The Journal of Architecture*, the Slovakian Architectúra & Urbanizmus or the Polish journal Herito. One of the very first initiatives came from the side of the journal Architectúra & Urbanizmus in 2003. 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 Bloc. Only one year later the issue of the journal Architectúra & 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 countries. 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. Lets 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”.

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 presentiations 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 Vorlik.

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 under-estimation 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 Vlada Putnik Prica and Nenad Lajbenšperger posit 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 (Vladimir Deděček, 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 understand 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


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.
ESSAYS

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 1991.

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.

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 evaluation.

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

© Bujnovszky 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 limelight 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 stock, 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 modernism. 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 conservativism 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* 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 them. While the typical dwelling was the two-room-and-half 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” 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.
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 Építőművész [Hungarian architecture] (1927–1943) and Építő Ipar — Építő Művész [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 (1920–?) 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.
Průrez činžovního domu v 11 hodin dopoledne. Tento obraz života ve dvacátém století, znášený desetitisíckrát, stastisíckrát a ještě vícekrát, je příznačný pro současné „národní hospodářství“ svojí znamenitou „ekonomií“

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, hundred thousand times, and even more on top of that, is characteristic of today’s “national economy” by its excellent “thriftiness”. 1933, cartoon. Reproduction: Magazín DP, vol. 1, Praha, Družstevní práce, 1933–1934.

V. patro (nástavba): pí. Plejtensteingelová, manželka cestujícího ve vysavačích prachu, přepravující svoje robátko. Pomocnice v domácnosti, stojí u šporku, připravuje oběd pro dve osoby. Ráno byla pí. Plejtensteingelová nakoupit dnes a denně odbývá se v této části rodiné přírody.

IV. patro (nástavba): pí. zvěrolékatař, stojí u šporku, připravuje oběd pro sebe a svého manžela (Dr. Otakar Audolenský). Ráno byla pí. Audolenská nakoupit. Ve volné chvíli chystá průděl pro pradluh a výbavu pro budoucí robátko (pí. zvěrolékatař v sérkoč).


I. patro: pí. nadstrážník, stojí u kamen, připravuje chutný oběd pro svého manžela (Faktor Jan nadstrážník), sebe a svoji dceru, kteráho slečnu, sedí u okna, stíhává hledí na ulici a čte krásky román ve hřízně. Ráno byla pí. nadstrážník nakoupit, v pole, večer a večer skočí řečená paní pro pivo přes ulici. Minulý týden již na levé straně bude u Faktoru příroda.

Příznačně: pí. správcová domu, stojí u kamen, připravuje chutný oběd pro svého syna (p. Dynysyl Alfon, úředník), svého dce ruňa (slečna má vážnou závaznost s panem v zahrádkářském postavení) a pro sebe (pí. Dynysyl Alfon je vdova). Ráno byla pí. správcová nakoupit, v pole a večer skočí pro pivo přes ulici. Minulý týden bylo u paní správcové příroda.

Suterén: každá partaj má sklep a nechybí.
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 Záviš 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...
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
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 primarily 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 & Töry 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.
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 Bratislava 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]”.

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 1967.

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 enlargement. 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
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 stage 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 Žagojše, 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 achieved 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 Marshal 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 Yugoslav 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 22-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.
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”.

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

BY JELICA JOVANOVIC

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 bands 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 river.

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

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”. 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 Zemun and Belgrade; the industrial zone was built from the 1920s onwards in the lower area of Zemun — most notable being the Rogožarski and Ikarus airplane factories; the new airport 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 Dobrovic. 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
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

1 National Liberation Fight
2 Communist Party of Yugoslavia
The New Synagogue in Žilina, Slovakia: participation as a method of heritage renewal

BY KATARíNA HABERLANDOVÁ

The New Synagogue [Nový] 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 work 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 Europe.

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 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 in Slovakia. 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 it. 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 function. 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 “hooting” — 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 hooting 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
Architect Vladimir Dedeček belongs to the first generation of Slovak architects trained at the Slovak University of Technology after the WW11 that extensively shaped the postwar built environment in the former Czechoslovakia. Vladimir Dedeček became famous and, at the same time, a controversial figure of Slovak architecture of the second half of the 20th century because his monumental expressive architecture was sometimes confronting and radical in their older urban settings.

The two books, Monika Mitášová (ed.), *Vladimír Dedeček: Stávanie sa architektom*, Bratislava, SNG, 2017, and Monika Mitášová (ed.), *Vladimír Dedeček: Interpretácie architektonického diela*, Bratislava, SNG, 2017 (published now in English as Monika Mitášová (ed.), *Vladimír Dedeček: 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 Mitášová 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 Vladimir Dedeček 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 Vladimir Dedeček form an integral part of the book.

The second book was prepared by Monika Mitášová in collaboration with the architecture theoretician Marián Zervan, the photographer Hertha Hurnaus and the architects Benjamin Brádiánský and Vit Halada. It includes textual, architectural and photographic interpretations of four of the most famous and most discussed architectural works by Vladimir Dedeček: 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 Vladimir Dedeček in the years 1962 to 1992. 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 Vladimir Dedeček and architecture in general. The book deliberately takes the form of “workbooks” 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: 978-973-0-3553-9
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 to details and have been divided according to Moldovan cities. The captured pictures vary graphs taken in different Romanian and journey through a series of colored photographs.

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 WW II 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 1992. 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 Moravánsky’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 (1952-1975, 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.
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. Development of cities. Suddenly, it was possible to regulate the extreme urbanization and infrastructures were the new daring answers to urban 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 topic and shows it is most desirable to interpret history conceptually.

Michal Janík
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 us 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 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, even though they all have in common, 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 value 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 subsidises 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 conscience through cultural values.

Pavel Paňák

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 202 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: Uniting and Nova Dobá (housing estates)”, “To reshape the City”, “A Representative Villa, or the Discrete Characters of the Pressburg Bourgeoisie”, “Architect or Engineer?”, “The Partnership of Weinwurm and Vecsei, 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 Lukeát 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 Städtebaus-Architektur, simple, clean, social and harmonious. However, on page 125 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 národní síly [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

The architect Danilo Fürst (1922–2005) 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 WW II when he was the town architect in Bled. Among his most important works are Stražičče Kranji Primary School, terraced houses in Peričeva Street in Ljubljana, and the Forest Authorities building in Bled. With Edvard Ravnikar and France Ivaniček, 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.

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, to produce a comprehensive area inventory of mass housing in book form, in their new, 


“Tower Block uk”, which makes Tower Block and its gazetteers available as an electronic resource (see https://www.towerblock.ee.ac.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


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: 978-3110992536

Year: 2010 [2009]

Edvard Ravnikar (1907–1993) is considered the central figure in Slovenia’s post-WWII architecture. He was Joze Plečnik’s most famous student. Plečnik studied under Otto Wagner. Ravnikar worked for Le Corbusier in Paris as of 1939 after completing his studies in 1935. His thorough planning reflects Plečnik’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.
**docomomo** International is a non-profit organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the Modern Movement. It aims at:

- Bringing the significance of the architecture of the Modern Movement to the attention of the public, the public authorities, the professionals and the educational community.
- Identifying and promoting the surveying of the Modern Movement’s works.
- Fostering and disseminating the development of appropriate techniques and methods of conservation.
- Opposing destruction and disfigurement of significant works.
- Gathering funds for documentation and conservation.
- Exploring and developing knowledge of the Modern Movement.

**docomomo** International wishes to extend its field of actions to new territories, establish new partnerships with institutions, organizations and NGOs active in the area of modern architecture, develop and publish the international register, and enlarge the scope of its activities in the realm of research, documentation and education.