

JOSÉ LUIS SERT: JE MOŽNÉ ZACHOVAŤ NAŠE MESTÁ? [CAN OUR CITIES SURVIVE?].
IN: ARCHITEKT, 1949, PP. 33 – 51, SHOWN PAGES PP. 36 – 37
REPRESENTATION OF WESTERN URBANISM IN ARCHITEKT IN 1949:
“THE MISERABLE CONSEQUENCES OF PERMITTING THE RESIDENTIAL, RETAIL AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS IN LARGE CONSTRAINED GROUPS. BLOCKS COMPETE FOR AIR, LIGHT, SUN AND VIEWS.”

JOSÉ LUIS SERT: JE MOŽNÉ ZACHOVAŤ NAŠE MESTÁ? IN: ARCHITEKT, 1949, S. 33 – 51, VYOBRAZENÉ S. 36 – 37
ZOBRAZENIE URBANIZMU NA ZÁPADE V ČASOPISE ARCHITEKT V ROKU 1949: „ZLÉ NÁSLEDKY POVOLOVÁNÍ OBYTNÍCH DOMŮ, OBCHODNÍCH BUDOV A PRŮMYSLU VE STÍSNĚNÝCH VELKÝCH SKUPINÁCH. BLOKY SI NAVZÁJEM UBÍRAJÍ VZDUCH, SVĚTLO, SLUNCE A VÝHLED.“

Osmosis or Propaganda? Western Urbanism in Czechoslovak Architectural Press (1945 – 1960)

Osmóza či propaganda? Reprezentácia západného urbanizmu v československej architektonickej tlači (1945 – 1960)

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Príspevok skúma reprezentáciu západného plánovania mesta v profesionálnej architektonickej tlači v Československu. Výskum zahŕňa časové obdobie príchodu socialistického režimu – je ohraničený koncom druhej svetovej vojny a rokom novej ústavy 1960, ktorým sa zavádzanie socializmu v Československu končí. Chápanie „Západu“ v tejto práci zodpovedá autentickému historickému vnímaniu zahraničia, ktoré bolo založené na geografickom usporiadaní. Skúma referencie o urbánnom plánovaní v krajinách západnej Európy a Severnej a Južnej Ameriky v časopisoch *Architekt* (roky 1946 – 1950), *Architektura ČSR* (roky 1945 – 1960), *Sovětská architektura* (roky 1951 – 1954), *Československý architekt* (roky 1955 – 1960) a *Projekt* (roky 1958 – 1960).

Štúdia článkov v týchto architektonických médiách hovoria o migrácii konceptov architektúry a urbanizmu v povojnovej Európe zo Západu na Východ. Spochybňuje bezvýhradný a náhly posun československého urbanizmu k sovietskym ideám a dominanciu sovietskej ideológie v mestskom plánovaní v druhej polovici 20. storočia. Mohla byť vôbec ideologická zmena po roku 1948 absolútna, prihliadnuc na československú tradíciu v modernizme, v avantgardných hnutiach a intenzívnych kontaktoch so Západom? V tomto ani v inom historickom momente by sme československé urbánne plánovanie nemali zlahčujúco popisovať len ako pod vplyvom Východu, respektíve Západu.

Medzinárodný výskum východoeurópsku scénu v druhej polovici 20. storočia často zjednodušuje použitím termínu propaganda. Do výskumu preto zavádzam pojem osmózy, prirodzeného prenikania substancie z jednej strany membrány na druhú, ktorá popri (či napriek) propagande počas socializmu existovala a umožňovala kultúrnu výmenu. Aj v architektonickej kultúre bolo prenikanie ideí z prostredia s nižšou koncentráciou kontroly do iného – s prekážkami v slobode prejavu, prirodzené a nezastaviteľné. V širšom kontexte môžeme uvažovať, že architektonický diskurz vo východnom bloku bol nielen ovplyvnený, ale aj podmienený touto medzinárodnou diskusiou, ktorú sledoval a reagoval na ňu.

Môj výskum sleduje tok informácií zo zahraničia prostredníctvom tlačných médií v českom a slovenskom jazyku. Profesionálna tlač mala v prenose ideí významnú úlohu, lebo výtlačky pokrývali značnú časť architektonickej komunity združenej v plánovacích oddeleniach. Štúdia opisuje spôsob reprezentácie urbanizmu krajín a miest spoza železnej opony v odbornej tlači, to, ako boli informácie podávané – oslavované alebo kriticky hodnotené. Počas výskumnej fázy som v časopisoch hľadala

akéhokolvek zmienky o západnom urbanizme. Z materiálu som vybrala kľúčové články, eseje, úvahy, dlhšie podrobnejšie materiály a sledovala som hodnotenia projektov, ktoré obsahovali.

Ráz verbálnej reprezentácie západného urbánneho plánovania v časopisoch sa počas sledovaného obdobia menil, zodpovedal politickej situácii a sovietskemu ponímaniu internacionalizmu. V súvislosti so zobrazovaním západných modelov v období 1945 – 1960 teda postupne sledujeme: entuziazmus, spochybňovanie, odmietanie, znovuobjavenie a prehodnotenie.

V období krátko po vojne články nadšene hľadali inšpiráciu na budovanie nového štátu v rôznych krajinách, bez ohľadu na politické zriadenie. Častým motívom v reprezentácii západného plánovania bolo upozorňovanie na dôležitosť pozície architekta pri rekonštrukcii spoločnosti a krajiny a propagácia urbánneho plánovania na verejnosti.

Po roku 1948 magazíny síce publikovali články o zahraničných projektoch, no čoraz viac sa venovali kritike sociálnych a politických pomerov. Kapitalizmus otvorene nazývali prekážkou v rozvoji miest. Formálny urbanizmus už nedostačoval, plánovanie malo byť nástrojom sociálnych zmien. Články používali komparáciu, dávali do kontrastu západné a sovietske modely. Odkaz funkcionalizmu bol zatracovaný.

Na začiatku päťdesiatych rokov 20. storočia prebiehala v médiách najvýraznejšia selekcia publikovaného materiálu. V tomto období vyšlo v médiách najmenej článkov o západnom plánovaní. Kritika západného urbanizmu sa zakladala na vlastnostiach kapitalistického zriadenia, ktoré prenikali aj do formálneho a estetického rázu urbánneho plánovania. Zahraničné projekty boli v tlači zosmiešňované, dostávali opakujúce sa prívlastky (kozmpolitný, imperialistický, úpadkový), autori používali úvodzovky, aby parodovali význam použitých slov.

Po Chruščovom prejave v roku 1954 sa príklady západného urbanizmu znova dostávali do československých architektonických časopisov, dokonca v špeciálnych rubrikách, zameraných na vizuálny materiál ako *Architektura v zahraničí* v *Architekture ČSR* alebo *Zahraničné pásmo v Projekte*. Na rozdiel od predošlých období, články neboli anonymné či dielom kolektívu, ale boli podpísané.

V druhej polovici päťdesiatych rokov sa československá architektonická tlač obsahovo oslobodila od socialistického realizmu a deklarovala schopnosť súperiť so Západom. Prispievateľia otvorene priznávajú, že predošlá kritika a odmietanie Západu nebolo rozumné. Architektúra zo zahraničia bola opäť považovaná za inšpiratívnu pre socialistickú spoločnosť. S vidinou

technologického pokroku bol západný urbanizmus študovaný a prehodnocovaný, aby ho bolo možné použiť (a vylepšiť) v komunistickom zriadení.

Ak hovoríme o zahraničnom obsahu, bolo v časopisoch viac propagandy, selektívnej metódy zobrazovania skutočnosti alebo osmózy, nekontrolovateľného prenikania? A koľko bolo kontrolovaného prenikania pripomínajúceho osmózu? Podobne ako vtedajší čitatelia vnímali texty v časopisoch, ani my dnes nemôžeme rozlíšiť medzi vykonštruovanými a pravdivými informáciami. Autocenzúra a nevedomovanie si praktík propagandy spôsobujú, že obidve kategórie sa zlievajú do jednej vrstvy, ktorú možno študovať len ako celok.

Môj výskum dokazuje, že v profesionálnej architektonickej tlači Československo nebolo od Západu izolované. Kultúrnej výmene nasvedčuje aj rýchly posun plánovačov k modernizmu po tom, ako vymizol socialistický realizmus. Aj v časoch najväčšieho obmedzovania informácií v päťdesiatych rokoch teda východný a západný blok zostávali v kontakte, no môžeme predpokladať, že existovali aj iné prostriedky ako len profesionálna tlač. Skúmanie architektonických časopisov nepokrýva iné komunikačné kanály (osobné stretnutia, prednášky, pašovaná

literatúra, súkromné fotografie a pod.), a opomína aj slovenskú scénu, lebo v analyzovanom období sa odborná diskusia odohrávala zväčša len v českých architektonických časopisoch.

Prehľad reprezentácie západného plánovania v médiách v období 1945 – 1960 ukazuje, že zahraničný obsah bol prítomný na stránkach odborných časopisov v Československu, ale bol pod rozdielne prísny dohľadom. Kvalita a kvantita informácií o západnom plánovaní, ku ktorým sa československí architekti mali možnosť dostať, zodpovedala aktuálnym vzťahom východného a západného bloku. Vzájomné povedomie bolo (osmoticky) udržiavané aj prostredníctvom médií.

Metafora osmózy, ktorú žurnalisticky použila Mária Topolčanská, bola v tejto práci odskúšaná ako koncept, ktorý nestojí proti propagande, ale pôsobí ako jej (povolený) doplnok. Napokon, propaganda sa využívala ako politický nástroj na obidvoch stranách európskej scény. Osmóza, založená na vyrovnávaní koncentrácií, môže meniť smer toku častíc, môže byť obojsmerná. V tomto príspevku som sa venovala len smeru západovo-východnému, ktorý nevyklučuje smer opačný, súbežný v čase. Ten by sa oplatilo skúmať v samostatnej práci.

The traditional view of a bipolar world divided by the Iron Curtain becomes rendered more complex when evaluating the situation from within the Eastern bloc. Real-life experience, the history of the 'everyday' and the exceptions to common practice all challenge any simplified black-white notions of Communist era. Similarly, in Czechoslovakia, it is generally believed that the Western mental model present before 1948 was suddenly replaced, at least officially, by servility to imitation of Russia. Yet could this sudden ideological turn in the discourse really be so absolute, in the case of country with a great tradition in modern architecture, avant-garde movements and vivid connections with the West? Despite the supposedly radical shifts in the prevailing cultural standards of the 20th century, Czechoslovak architectural history cannot be treated as solely East- or West-influenced in any specific moment. Even during the Communist regime, "world events were at least passively discussed in terms of creating an interpretation of those events".¹

The main assumption of this paper is that the development of architectural discourse in Soviet Union was preconditioned by international discussion – a cultural exchange performed, alongside other means,² through magazines. At the same time, the Eastern architectural scene is often overlooked or simplified in international research³ as simply the result of propaganda. Using professional journals as a research resource, my paper questions the dominant position of Soviet ideology in urban planning and the degree of isolation of Czechoslovak urbanism. Rather than accepting propaganda, I acknowledge the Soviet perception of internationalization and focus on the actual representation of Western models present in architectural magazines. I observe the access of influences through the Czechoslovak architectural press during the turbulent period of the introduction of the Communist regime in 1945 – 1960. For the period of analysis, the starting date is the end of WWII – an unsettled term followed by a sudden social and cultural reconstruction within the implementation of the Communist regime, and ends in 1960, when the construction of socialism was proclaimed finished. The perception of the "West" in this paper responds to a historically conditioned understanding of abroad, based solely on geography (Western Europe, North and South America).

The research covers the official architectural press published in Czech or Slovak in Czechoslovakia, namely the magazines *Architekt* [Architect] 1946 – 1950, *Architektura ČSR* [Architecture of Czechoslovak Republic] 1946 – 1960, *Sovětská architektura* [Soviet Architecture] 1951 – 1954, *Československý architekt* [Czechoslovak Architect] 1955 – 1960 and *Projekt* [Project] 1958 – 1960. As this survey was conducted through the perspective of the discipline of urban studies, the reviewed material relates to urban planning in terms of spatial, social or economical planning of different scales. After tracing all the texts referring to planning abroad, I selected key articles about projects

outside the Soviet Union (travelogues, as a specific and rather popular genre, were excluded) and qualitatively analyzed their representation.

Methodologically inspired by Foucault's discourse analysis, this media-centered survey gathered and examined the verbal constructs of authorial 'statements'⁴. Even though Foucault was not particularly interested in media (not considering it the real voice of institutions), he nonetheless grants media a role in "reinscription and transcription"⁵ of statements, and the way they are acknowledged as "significant or insignificant provides an insight into the dynamics of a discipline".⁶ The present research is based on a premise of discourse gradation, which is done through commentary⁷ – a procedure of re-actualizing the primary text, thus contributing to the development of the discourse. Similarly to Foucault, who studies 'what was said' with no speculation of the background of statements, my paper discusses the representation of ideas through professional journals, but deliberately omits the question of the formal results or motivations of these texts.

Following overview of the representation of Western urban design in Czechoslovak media provides a description of the turbulent period of 1945 – 1960 through statements found in magazines. The research concerns neither actual planning in the sense of creating designs, nor already planned physical space. Instead, it focuses on the rhetoric, symbolism, and verbal evaluation of urban planning in media that played a substantial role in establishing the project of modernism and is important for understanding the discursive practices of its creation.

Architectural Magazines

As suggested by Monika Mitášová in an interview⁸ with Beatriz Colomina, architecture as built/spoken, or drawn/written discourse is constructed in relation to a complex configuration of texts – through which, quoting Mary Kelly, Colomina understood "texts" both as artistic texts and as interpretations in exhibitions, catalogs or journals. "Until a critic puts architecture in the space of a magazine", Colomina answers, "it becomes architecture, because somebody recognized it as such." Colomina compares the importance of a gallery for visual arts to the significance of architectural magazines for architecture. The importance of architectural periodicals increased in the 20th century with the emergence of photography, which enabled transmission of architectural visibility to a wider audience – and, in turn, this audience became the immediate users of architecture. While new technologies of reproduction were considered by Walter Benjamin⁹ as causes of decontextualization, of aura deprivation, Beatriz Colomina describes the positive potential of reproducing architecture, identifying mass media as a precondition of modern architecture. Beyond the spreading of ideas worldwide, magazines are equally important historiographic resources that "dictate what part of architecture ... belongs to the narrative and what is left out."¹⁰

As a result, the narratives of modern architecture reflected in the historical press have been studied by almost every relevant Czech or Slovak researcher. However, less space is devoted to the architectural press as *media*. What is more, the topic of foreign influences is studied more in the 'avant-garde 1930'¹¹ or 'golden 1960s'^{12, 13, 14} than in the years of harsh indoctrination in the 1950s. Matúš Dulla has published historiographic essays on the Slovak periodicals *Slovenský staviteľ* [Slovak Builder]¹⁵ and *Projekt*¹⁶ briefly describing their development. The representation of architecture in the non-professional daily press has been observed by Rostislav Švácha.¹⁷ In terms of foreign inspiration, multiple authors,^{18, 19} have studied possible formal influences of texts, yet they treat the content quantitatively, providing results in charts. One of the first modern Slovak researchers to address media discourse in Czechoslovak architectural culture is Mária Topolčanská. In her article "Identity Game: Czech and Slovak Architecture Magazines as Travelogues"²⁰ she subverts the notion of a censored architectural press detached from the flow of other cultural influences, and uses the journalistic term 'osmosis' to describe the penetration of foreign elements to Czechoslovakia. Despite increasing censorship, the control was never absolute and the barrier dividing East and West was always, to a degree, semi-permeable.

Osmosis and Propaganda

The metaphor of osmosis offers an apt explanation of the actual character of West-East cultural exchange. As a spontaneous process of substance penetration, the physical phenomenon of osmosis is caused by the difference in concentrations in separated parts. Applied to architectural culture in Soviet times, the penetration of ideas from an environment with a lower concentration of control and propaganda into one with much greater obstacles in freedom of speech was natural,

enhanced by the soluble margins of the Soviet Bloc. Indeed, the actual “Eastern bloc” was never a homogeneous monolith. In opposition to the organic movement of osmosis, propaganda aims to persuade people, by any means, of the truth they ought to recognize as true. Within its framework, the information is communicated in a specific manner; parts are often omitted or misinterpreted. Even though Soviet administration introduced serious control over print media, following the will of technological progress, certain information from behind the Iron Curtain could penetrate even with the approval of Communist leaders. The audience of planners, regarded as a group eligible to be provided with unbiased information, was supposed to translate Western architectural forms into Communist reality and to use it for the collective Soviet progress.

Architectural Media in Czechoslovakia

Obtainable in every centralized planning office, architectural magazines assisted the regime in its fluid introduction and promotion of enthusiasm mainly by covering the whole architectural community. Notably *Architektura ČSR*, whose editor Oldřich Starý was simultaneously a leader of the Svaz socialistických architektů [The Union of Socialist Architects], Klub architektů [The Club of Architects] and Sdružení architektů [The Union of Architects], became the major platform of the Communist Party's ideals in architecture. Within the framework of a society undergoing radical re-structuring, architectural journals were expected to provide inspiration from abroad, though understandably countries with strong socialist element in planning were preferred.²¹

Similarly to *Architektura ČSR*, the more traditional magazine *Architekt* gained a pro-regime ideological content, but it suddenly vanished in 1950. A year after, the ostentatiously Soviet-praising magazine *Sovětská architektura* was established, which consisted mainly of direct translations from Russian with almost no references to projects outside the Soviet Union. During the early 1950s, the propagandistic *Sovětská architektura* and the prominent *Architektura ČSR* became the only magazines dedicated to architecture and planning. *Československý architekt*, a fortnightly by Union of Architects, replaced *Sovětská architektura* in 1955²² and contained mainly institutional information. The Slovak magazine *Projekt* emerged as a corporate periodical in 1956 and in 1959 became the only official Slovak journal.²³

In 1948, when the Communist Party apparatus started to impose political control over the press, the content in popular journals became subjected to a high level of uniformity. As observed by Halík,²⁴ the vocabulary of articles in this period followed a scheme of ‘ritual texts’ with specific terms, metaphors, symbols. This specific rhetoric of ideological statements was nicknamed “krohovina”²⁵ – after one of the most fervent proponents of official cultural policy, the former modernist Jiří Kroha. Periodicals “marked their divorce from Modernism also in their typology and layout”²⁶; political proclamations appeared on covers, graphic design applied Socialist Realist patterns and preferably red colors.

By the time the array of formal features was imposed, the content of architectural magazines came under greater influence from their chief editor²⁷ in terms of selecting topics from foreign magazines.²⁸ Some of the historical participants²⁹ do not remember any evident censorship in the daily practice. In terms of publishing information on the situation abroad, they admit, instead, a definite carelessness. Especially in the late Soviet period, the requirements for the foreign content were more formal than ideological, depending on the availability of materials or the personal interest of authors. Busy with their own architectural projects, they arguably had the time to study foreign language magazines in detail. What is more, the contributing architects were not always ideologically committed Communists. In the case of architectural journals, the dichotomy of professionalism and Communist sympathies (or their absence) was tolerated, since the Party, consisting largely of working-class members, lacked experienced architectural journalists of its own.

However, as historian Marína Zavacká advises,³⁰ the press in the 1950s has to be regarded as censored, despite the implications of oral history that would speak for the opposite. She recalls that even if journalists do not remember the actual process of censorship, the texts might have been already ‘auto-censored’ by the authors themselves, keeping in mind the most acceptable way to represent facts. Moreover, the cultural exchange perceived by writers as allowed might have been in fact directed from above.

Regarding the amount of censorship, a certain liberation from institutional control could also have emerged because of peripheral standings, especially in the case of Slovakia and other regions outside Prague. Even if “it was taken care that ... Brno and Bratislava would be listened to”,³¹ in fact,

there was only one Slovak architect out of fifteen members of the editorial board of the Prague-based *Architektura ČSR*. Prague's overlooking of marginal scenes later contributed to the development of specific 'surreptitious' artistic communities and served as a niche for smaller magazines such as *Projekt*.³²

East-West Distinction

To undermine the received idea of Communist administration as an entity living on its own, Hungarian researcher György Peteri has introduced the term of 'Nylon Curtain'.³³ Realizing a global need for constant modernization, the officials of the Eastern Bloc purposely studied and reviewed models from abroad, especially during the modernization of the regime's agency in the late fifties. Peteri discusses the Communist self-perception in relation to the outside world as "defensive isolationist" in dominant discourses (policies, institutions) and "integrationist" in cultural and academic matters. In other words, Western superiority was only to be defeated using its own agenda, particularly in cultural concerns. The Socialist regimes interacted with the outside world to learn from and catch up with them,³⁴ a process that, for instance, allowed for connections from outside the Soviet Union. A certain form of importation from the West was not regarded as opposing Socialism, on the contrary, Western "cultural products and forms of knowledge ... implicitly enabled by the socialist project itself".³⁵

As Alexei Yurchak explains, in the late Soviet period the Communist Party clearly distinguished between good and bad forms of international culture. While 'cosmopolitanism' was deplored as a product of Western imperialism striving to weaken healthy national patriotism, the quality of 'internationalism' was seen as enriching. The distinction between cosmopolitanism and internationalism, in turn, was held to be based on objective human perception. In this regard, some articles on developments from abroad were considered not as bourgeois, but instead as 'broadening the cultural horizons' of critically thinking Soviet people.

In reality, the critical view on foreign world was not granted to the people themselves, but represented through the agency of the media.³⁶ In the environment of controlled movement of population and goods, with television transmission still far from common, the most convenient way of information distribution was printed material. Due to restricted information sources, the official architectural press became one of the major³⁷ spots of cultural exchange, the locus of one aspect of osmosis between West and East.

The presumed significance of the architectural press could also be clearly manifested by the situation after 1954³⁸ when Czechoslovak architecture immediately proved its competitiveness in design with the West in the EXPO 58 world exhibition. How could designers develop an original response to Western concepts so quickly? How was this possible after several years of indoctrination regarded as a time of hermetic enclosure? Such a fast response to global trends suggests that cultural exchange persisted even during the Stalinist period. Otherwise "it would not be possible that architectural solutions corresponding with architecture of postwar Europe would emerge in such a spontaneous way".³⁹ And one place for this cultural exchange through the Iron (Nylon) Curtain happened to be the medium of professional magazines. The character of the representation of the West in the professional press in the 1945 – 1960 period is described in the following section.

Western Urbanism in Czechoslovak Architectural Press

The research divided the studied period into five stages, each characterized with a dominating link revealed in reading the set of texts. As such, the periodicization has more of an informative character, and was introduced to grasp the period and anchor the observed changes in time. As some of the articles published in a specific year could have been written (or translated) earlier, the duration of stages is approximate, and they could easily overlap chronologically. Above all, the terms should provide a coherent narrative to capture the story of Western planning depicted in Czechoslovak architectural press. Although the research initially considered every single reference on Western planning published in the studied period in professional magazines, and in the conclusion I still acknowledge them all, for the purpose of this paper, I have selected only some of the texts that most clearly represent the prevailing style of references.

“East, West, North, South” (1945 – 1948)

As a legacy of good relations with the international scene, articles from abroad were commonly published in Czechoslovak architectural magazines after WWII, though sometimes with a few years' delay. Architectural media promoted enthusiasm for postwar development through numerous projects for infrastructure, agriculture or industry. The selected articles were often published with a small 'editor's note', representing the magazine's attitude toward the published material.

The large-scale US project of the Tennessee Valley hydroelectric dam⁴⁰ was accompanied with such an explanation: “We wanted the first issue of our journal, after several years of enclosure and two years of actual closure, to introduce to the professional public the way we would like to follow ... Therefore, our guidelines for publishing could be characterized as: East, West, North, South.”

A project for the French city of Mauberge⁴¹ introduced the tendency of “close cooperation with the people”, suggesting that plans for cities should gain public approval through open public discussion. An article⁴² on the industrial town of Knutsford suggests: “... the greatest precondition of architectural redesign is a reconstruction of the fertile ground where it can develop. This fertile land is the general interest of our people.” The authors, signed as K. S. – J. H. (probably K. Souček – J. Havlíček) point out that publishing architectural works in the popular press would increase the demand for quality. Another article,⁴³ by Collin Penn, emphasizes that many copies of the new London Master Plan were printed in color and given to the general public.

Gočár, Paul and Storch report⁴⁴: “In Sweden, great concern is given to the promotion of [architectural] labor, construction and additional products of high quality.” Participating in the same trip, Ivan Šula writes⁴⁵: “Constantly informing the public, inducing its interest and explaining professional issues: these are the preconditions of Nordic architecture's success” and continues elsewhere: “Architects in Nordic countries ... have succeeded in introducing their issues into larger cultural discussion ... [their] designs did not pop up accidentally and their success has firm roots in understanding the common goal and its conscious evaluation.” Using the example of Rovaniemi,⁴⁶ Karel Storch notes: “... in Finland the job of the architect is respected and is it unquestionable to use his services – with no need for a fight, as it is happening in our country.”

“Planning is not enough” (1949 – 1951)

Information on 'good' principles in city planning based on the CIAM congresses of 1933 and 1937 were published in an article entitled “Can our cities survive?”⁴⁷ Here, a well-designed city district is said to “consist of several residential units, lie between two communications leading to industrial zones”; it has a variety of buildings and is based on the idea of a neighborhood unit. As the editorial board writes: “...planning, despite its connection with the will to utilize technology and the public realm, is not enough. ... The most significant question is the relation of modern production and living.”

A study⁴⁸ of a large-scale redevelopment by W. Gropius and M. Wagner is more severe in its judgment, and blames the capitalist establishment for causing the ‘high blood pressure’ of cities and forming “an obstacle to the successful development of residential areas.” The authors of the article proclaim that powerful state decisions are the only way to reconstruct our obsolete cities.

Miroslav Tryzna⁴⁹ builds up his critique on an attack against useless “equilibrism”. He complains: “The current architectural misery started with a wrong plan. South-American architects in conditions of surplus created kitsch” and reminds us that only correct measures “would have a healing effect in architecture”. Paradoxically, the ‘kitsch of Brasilia’ condemned by Tryzna had been featured in *Architekt* as a fourteen-page long article⁵⁰ only two years before. Tryzna uses illustrations of the ‘surplus’ of capitalist countries and calls for effectivity in building process to overcome hedonistic urban layouts.

In article⁵¹ by Jaroslav Šíma, the capitalist West is shown as an overt exemplification of all the menaces of planning: the lack of housing construction, poor hygiene, high rent. Western housing is described as “the nest of infection, the most shameful caves and holes where capitalist production encloses the workers for the night.” Despite its comparison of living conditions in capitalism and socialism, the article is accompanied only with pictures of Moscow's residential buildings.

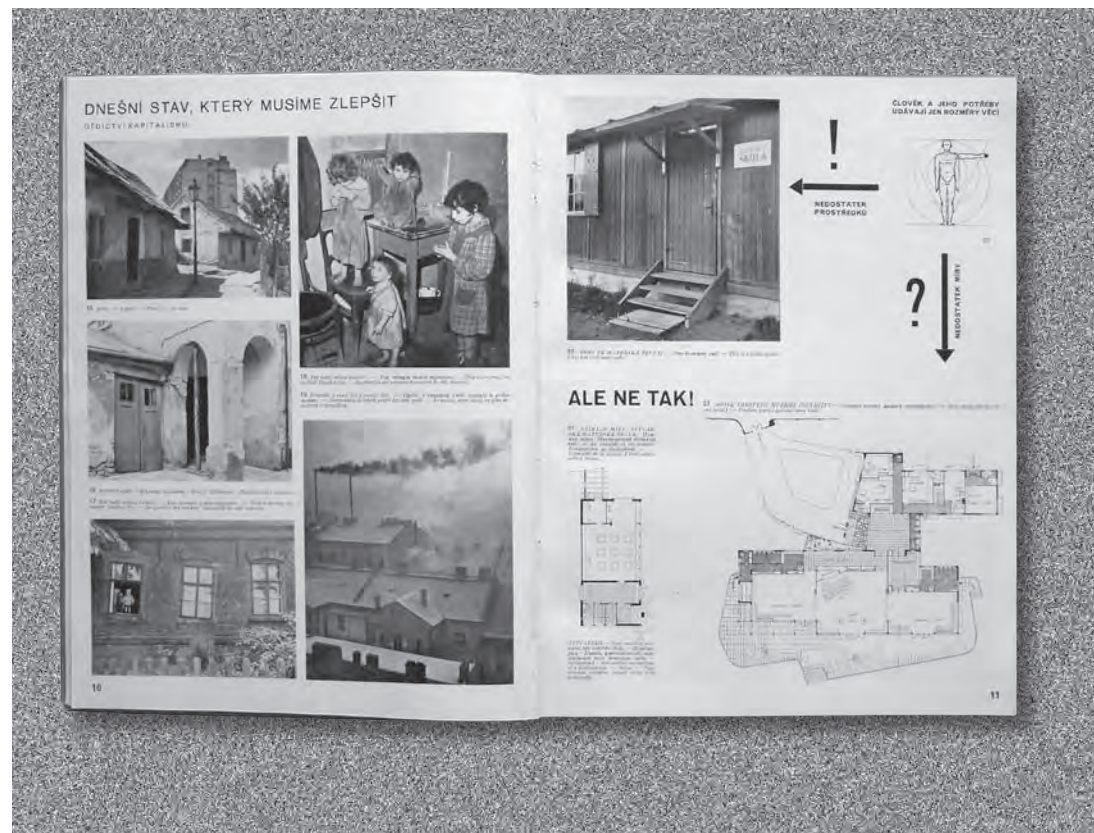
The paper “On a critique of functionalist architectural theory”⁵² by Stefan Draganov reviews “the so-called functionalist era” in Czechoslovakia, ridicules the legacy of functionalism which he sees as “a part of the bankruptcy of bourgeois ideology, even if it pretends to be revolutionary and socialist.” In any case, the functionalist era must end, because it “tries to spoil the revolutionary struggle of the working class.”

MIROSLAV TRYZNA: O MÍŘE VE STAVĚ. IN: ARCHITEKTURA ČSR 8, 1949, PP. 8 – 11

THE AUTHOR CLEARLY DEFINES THE CONDITIONS THAT NEED TO BE IMPROVED, USING TWO EXAMPLES OF NURSERIES (A HUMBLE AND A GENEROUS ONE) SPECIFYING THE LATTER: BUT NOT LIKE THIS!

MIROSLAV TRYZNA: O MÍŘE VE STAVĚ. IN: ARCHITEKTURA ČSR 8, 1949, S. 8 – 11

AUTOR V ČLÁNKU DETAILNE OPISUJE SITUÁCIU, KTORÁ SA MUSÍ ZLEPŠIŤ. POUŽÍVA PRITOM DVA PŘÍKLADY PŘEDŠKOLSKÝCH ZARIADENÍ – SKROMNÉHO A VEĽKORYSÉHO A K DRUHÉMU IHNEĎ DOĎAVA: ALE NIE TAKTO!



“Slums of Capitalism” (1952 – 1954)

Representation of ‘decadent exploitative’ Western planning was left to the resources of *Sovětská architektura* (*Architektura ČSR* from 1952 – 1953 does not include a single reference). References to Western architecture were often used in comparisons, such as in case of one critical text⁵³ that compares Le Corbusier’s projects (formalist, tendentious, deceiving, lacking the national feature), unfavorably to Russian architectural masterpieces (the Cartesian skyscraper to Moscow University). Le Corbusier failed in “improving the menaces of a capitalist society by taking rational measures without revolutionary changes.” Simply put, the ‘Architecture of Revolution’ cannot be fulfilled under capitalism.

A new interpretation of architectural history is provided by the otherwise unknown academician Louis Lacasa,⁵⁴ who sees functionalism as an American invention imported to Soviet Union. Even the famous slogan “Form Follows Function” is criticized: “[L. Sullivan] does not want to admit that for him the function is restricted to satisfaction of the owner’s needs.” Functionalism is materialized imperialism, a style which rejects the rules of beauty and cultural heritage. “One is not sure what is there in front of him – a building or a giant car radiator?” says Lacasa.

Beyond the common way of expressing contempt by quotation marks, the texts apply a repetitive vocabulary and humorous drawings to disparage the West, which is frequently identified exclusively as North America. The most peculiar argument that the study brings is that American architecture is simply ugly.

“Rediscovery” (1955 – 1957)

After 1954, magazines prudently started to rediscover the West; the content was selected to “be suggestive in a good or admonitory sense”.⁵⁵ *Architektura ČSR* introduced a regular section ‘*Architektura v zahraničí*’ [Architecture abroad] and even though there were attempts to judge projects ideologically,⁵⁶ references to Western planning tended to consist of formal design topics represented by visual reproductions.

The divorce with Socialist Realism is demonstrated in the newly established journal *Československý architekt* [Czechoslovak architect]. After the period of uniform rejection, Western plan-



UNSIGNED: LE CORBUSIER A KOSMOPOLITNÍ FORMALISMUS V ARCHITEKTUŘE. IN: ARCHITEKTURA ČSR 10, 1951, PP. 184 – 193
THE CRITIQUE OF LE CORBUSIER'S URBANIZATION OF PARIS WAS PARTICULARLY EXPLICIT: "... THE PROJECT SPEAKS ELOQUENTLY ABOUT THE CIVILIZATION OF IMPERIALISM, SPIRITUALLY SO POOR THAT IT CANNOT OVERCOME THE ARCHITECTURE OF PREVIOUS CULTURES WITH ANYTHING ELSE THAN ITS DIMENSIONS... OF A CIVILIZATION WHOSE GREATEST KNOWLEDGE IS PROFIT AND PRODUCTION FOR THE PROFIT".

NEZNÁMÝ AUTOR:
LE CORBUSIER A KOSMOPOLITNÍ FORMALISMUS V ARCHITEKTUŘE. IN: ARCHITEKTURA ČSR 10, 1951, S. 184 – 193

KRITIKA LE CORBUSIEROVHO PROJEKTU URBANIZACE PARÍŽA BOLA PREKVAPIVO OTVORENÁ: "... PROJEKT SKUTEČNE MLUVÍ O CIVILISACI IMPERIALISMU, KTERÁ JE DUCHOVNĚ TAK UBOHÁ, ŽE NEMŮŽE VYNIKNOUT NAD ARCHITEKTURAMI PŘEDEŠLÝCH KULTUR NIČÍM JINÝM NEŽ ROZMĚREM. ... CIVILISACI, JEJÍŽ NEUVYŠŠÍ MUDROSTÍ JE ZISK A PRODUKCE PRO ZISK".

ing was considered enriching; "West and East need each other", writes Gropius.⁵⁷ Karel Honzík⁵⁸ suggests that "capitalist building needs to be studied, in specific cases, and in the whole context, not to slip into 'left' or 'right' failures." Accepting a certain technical progress in capitalist countries, he still blames them for supporting unemployment.

"The nihilist approach was wrong" (1958 – 1960)

One of the projects that resonated the discussion for of its social qualities was the urban design for Maubeuge.⁵⁹ The land of this entirely bombed city was purchased by the municipality after the war ("liberation of land"), rearranged according to modern principles and offered back to the citizens.

Vladimír Matoušek reports⁶⁰ on the British new industrial town of Crawley, where the construction was commissioned by the state and performed by a development corporation. Some design principles were described as "worth trying"

A report on Stockholm⁶¹ informs that "Swedish architecture is a surprising proof how capitalism, with the help of communal forms, state interventions, can solve questions that we have considered unsolvable at such a degree of capitalism."

The virtues of planning outside the Soviet Union were acknowledged even on a theoretical level. Karel Honzík⁶² talks about the mutual curiosity of the two blocs and admits that after all, Western magazines deal with similar issues – mass production and human physiology. But what kind of human? – he asks. Rich owners, progressive intellectuals, working class aristocracy or unemployed?

In the first article⁶³ on Western planning in *Projekt*, the authors reevaluate the modernist movement and explain its premises. Modernism is blamed for neglecting social issues, which are believed to have been changed under Socialism. The authors proclaim that "a nihilist approach to foreign architectural production is ... considered wrong" and warn us of an uncritical utilization of design principles, "of copying the forms" that can result in eclectic tendencies.

Conclusion

Considering the representation of the West in the Czechoslovak architectural press, we are confronted with one basic question. Was there more propaganda, a selective method of constructing the representation, or more of an osmosis, in a sense of a institutionally uncontrolled penetration? Simulating the way how these articles were perceived by readers, the boundary between 'constructed' and 'true' information cannot be distinguished. Because of the previously discussed paradoxes of propagandistic manipulation, self-censorship of writers and the inability to perceive propaganda, both categories might have merged, creating a layer that could be studied only as a whole.

During the studied period, the amount and quality of Western content varied widely, and reflected the nuances in relation to the West during the introduction of the communist regime: enthusiasm, abandonment, rejection, resumption, reassessment.

The first period, lasting from the end of the war until 1948, when the Communist Party seized control in Czechoslovakia, could be characterized as a search for inspiration all across the world. Beyond describing possibly enriching projects, the texts on Western urban planning were aimed at canonizing the profession of architect and the promotion of planning among the broad public. Public enlightenment, in turn, was expected to induce general interest and spark in response a common enthusiasm among the broader population. The motive vanished later on, as urban planning was not discussed with urban inhabitants, but became merely an implement in the hands of the state.

In the beginning of the second period of 1949 to 1951, magazines still published foreign projects, but more than formal questions, these articles discussed the "substructure" of social and political conditions, openly defining capitalism as an obstacle in urban development. Planning was simply not enough, urban design was perceived as a tool for social reconstruction. The articles were using comparative methods, juxtaposing Soviet and Western architectural production. The legacy of modernism, the tradition of functionalism was, on a contrary, increasingly deprecated.

The third stage of the beginning of 1950s represents the harshest scrutiny and most careful selection of Western content. Magazines applied methods of propaganda: selectiveness and partiality. Foreign models published in magazines were ridiculed and given repetitive symbolic adjectives ('cosmopolitan', 'imperialist', 'decaying'...) or accompanied with well-aimed quotation marks. The critique of urbanism was based on a critique of the capitalist social arrangement, considered as permeating and contaminating the formal and aesthetic features of urban planning.

Following the 1954 shift, examples of Western architecture and urbanism were regularly featured in Czechoslovak architectural magazines, in the form of longer articles of special sections focused on visuals: '*Architektura v zahraničí*' [Architecture abroad] in *Architektura ČSR*, '*Zahraničné pásmo*' [Foreign section] in *Projekt*. In contrast to previous periods, articles were not collective works, but were assigned to a specific author.

Czechoslovakia liberated itself from Socialist realism and declared its ability to compete with the West surprisingly early, even before 1960. All the contributors openly declared that disparagement of Western urban planning was not a good approach. Instead, architecture from abroad began again to be seen as inspirational for the Socialist society which, having gained familiarity with the concepts of capitalist planning, could develop its practices into even better results.

The speed of the reaction that Czechoslovak planners underwent after the break with Socialist realism in their return to modernism at the end of the 1950s attests to the strong influence of interwar modern architecture and a constant, even if controlled, contact with Western models of urbanism. In other words, even in the times when the representation of the West was restricted, a degree of cultural exchange was performed, but probably by other means. Studying solely the professional press neglects other spots of penetration (personal encounters, lectures, smuggled literature, archival photographs etc.) and overlooks Slovak architectural scene, as in the studied period the discussion was performed mostly in Czech magazines.

The present overview of Western urban design representation in print media during the turbulent period of 1945 – 1960 reveals that the country was not isolated and that foreign content was included in architectural magazines, even if through the years it suffered various amounts of ideological oversight. The quantity and quality of Western information reflected a historical-ideological worldview and the nuances and the geopolitical shifts in the relationship between Eastern and Western bloc which, rather than being two opposing enclaves, sustained specific contacts. The process of mutual awareness, which I define as osmosis, was performed also through the media.

The metaphor of osmosis, previously used rather journalistically by Topolčanská, was tested here as a concept not regarded as opposing propaganda, but serving as its (accepted) supplement, or even as a part of it. In the end, propaganda was a tool used politically on both sides of the European scene. Based on equalizing different concentrations, the flow of particles can change the orientation depending on the condition of the environment, and similarly, the osmosis could have been two-directional. Moreover, multiple differing procedures influence the resulting informational level. In this paper I only discussed the transfer from West to East which does not contradict the opposite flow, parallel in time. The reverse movement would be worth examining in an independent research.⁶⁴

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2 Architects had a chance to experience Western architecture personally through internships, trips, exhibitions or they were sometimes given invited lectures. Acquainted with the foreign environment, architects previously involved in international projects or internships influenced young architects already in universities. Restricted to capital cities, speaking about the time scope of 1940s and 1950s, these events were, however, not so accessible for planning professionals from other regions. Excursions abroad were accessible only to the most successful students and academicians. Personal encounters with Western architecture during study trips organized by state architectural institutions were also allowed to a few chosen individuals. Some of the professionals were able to obtain smuggled magazines, or kept private photocopies of foreign books or sometimes even amateur photographs, capturing countries abroad and life in them.

3 See for instance COLOMINA, Beatriz: Clip/Stamp/Fold. The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X to 197X. Princeton N. J., Princeton University Press 2010.

4 See FOUCAULT, Michel: The Archaeology of Knowledge. London, Routledge 2002.

5 FOUCAULT, Michel: 2002, p. 103.

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9 See BENJAMIN, Walter: The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media. Cambridge, Belknap Press 2011.

10 TAMM, Marek: Monumentálne ajalugu. In: Kultuurileht 15, 2012, p. 52; In: LANKOTS, Epp: A Critical Historiography of Modern Architecture. Narratives of Estonian Architectural History in the Soviet Period. (summary of doctoral dissertation) Tallinn, Institute of Art History, Estonian Academy of Arts 2014, p. 3.

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20 TOPOLČANSKÁ, Mária: Identity Game: Czech and Slovak Architecture Magazines as Travelogues. In: Architectural Design 78, 2006, 3, pp. 26 – 33.

21 According to the observation of K. E. Zarecor, before WWII, magazines devoted more space to projects from traditional functionalist countries such as Germany, France, Switzerland and Austria. In the fascist Slovak State (1939 – 1945), importance was turned towards Italian and German architecture. From 1946, foreign projects were mostly from Scandinavia, Switzerland and Great Britain. In construction issues, France was a great example. The affection for Scandinavia resulted in intense communication between the two regions. Nordic architecture had also been visited in person by Czechoslovak architects. Reports on excursions were a popular source of inspiration of how the new socialist architecture should progress.

22 The funding for the paper and printing of Sovětská architektura was literally transferred directly to Československý architekt.

23 Despite experimental journals in arts or literature (for instance Mladá tvorba), there was no illegal or unofficial architectural journal produced in Czechoslovakia

24 HALÍK, Petr: Česká architektura padesátých let: nepřijemné vzpomínání. Prague, Central European University 1996, p. 117.

25 HALÍK, Petr: Ideologická architektura. Umění 44, 1996, 5, pp. 438 – 460; DULLA, Matúš et al.: Kapitoly z dejin bydlení. Prague, Nakladatelství ČVUT 2014, p. 221.

26 ÅMAN, Anders: Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era: An Aspect of Cold War History. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1992, p. 62.

27 See KURG, Andres: Fractured Boundaries. The representation of homes in the critical and artistic practices of the 1970s. In: Home Cultures, 9, 2012, 3, pp. 257 – 284.

28 As pointed out by Szalay (2006), not every trip abroad was captured in magazines, but selection was

performed based on their attraction. In 1961, when 42 architects travelled to Soviet countries and only twelve to capitalist states, the architectural magazine *Architektura ČSR* published significantly more reports on Western architecture than articles on the trips to the Soviet Union.

29 As discussed with Lubomír Mrňa, former editor – in – chief of *Projekt* practicing in 1980s. Notes in possession of the author.

30 Conversation with Marína Zavacká on March 29th 2016. Notes in possession of the author.

31 An interview with Marie Benešová led by Oldřich Ševčík and Petr Vorlík in ULRICH, P. – VORLÍK, P. – FILSAKOVÁ, B. – ANDRÁŠIOVÁ, K. – POPELOVÁ, L.: 2006, pp. 33 – 39.

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33 PÉTERI, György: Nylon Curtain – Transnational and Transsystematic Tendencies in a Cultural Life of State – Socialist Russia and East – Central Europe. In: *Slavonica* 10, 2004, 2, pp. 113 – 123.

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35 YURCHAK, Alexei: *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton N. J., Princeton University Press 2006, p. 160.

36 The critical stances in the media sometimes acquired a ridiculous tone. As interestingly observed by Vladimír Papernyj, in Stalinist Russia the information on Western culture was deplored for instance by the well – aimed utilization of quotation marks. As an example, he picks a title published in 1951 in *Sovremennaja arhitektura* journal: High – Rise Buildings in Moscow Arise on Opposite Principles as the “Principles” of American Skyscrapers; or an image credit from the architectural magazine *Architektura SSSR* from 1937 saying: “Green” Residential District in New York, suggesting that “the noble idea of greening could be used only ‘here’,

not in New York”: the author ridicules the concept of foreign culture which cannot achieve ‘our’ notion of green.

37 In Czechoslovakia, only 14 books on architectural theory were published during the period 1948 – 1955, but only two of them related to architecture worldwide. All the Western projects published there were historical. Referred in SZALAY, Peter: (dissertation) 2008, p. 175.

38 KHRUSHCHEV, N.: On useless things in architecture. A speech performed in 1954.

39 DULLA, Matúš – MORAVČÍKOVÁ, Henrieta: *Architektúra Slovenska v 20. storočí*. Bratislava, Slovart 2002, p. 189.

40 Unsigned: TVA aneb O údolí řeky Tennessee. In: *Architekt* 44, 1946, 1 – 2, pp. 25 – 35.

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42 YORK, F. R. S. – ROSENBERG, E. – MARDALL, C. S.: *Návrh průmyslové čtvrti pro město Knutsford*. In: *Architekt* 44, 1946, 3 – 4, pp. 37 – 42.

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47 SERT, José Luis: *Je možno zachovat naše města?* In: *Architekt* 47, 1949, 3, pp. 33 – 51

48 GROPIUS, W. – WAGNER, M.: *Program na přestavbu města*. In: *Architekt* 47, 1949, 5 – 6, pp. 98 – 103.

49 TRYZNA, Miroslav: *O míře ve stavbě*. In: *Architektura ČSR* 8, 1949, pp. 8 – 11.

50 HONZÍK, Karel: *Nová brasílská architektura*. In: *Architekt* 45, 1947, 9 – 10, pp. 133 – 147.

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52 DRAGANOV, Stefan: *Ke kritice teorie funkcionalistické architektury*. In: *Architektura ČSR* 9, 1950, pp. 160 – 162.

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56 SEMRÁD, S.: *Výstavba v NDR a plánování hlavního města Berlína*. In: *Architektura ČSR* 14, 1955, pp. 254 – 263.

57 GROPIUS, Walter: *Kompas pro architektky*. In: *Československý architekt* 26, 1956, 2, p. 4.

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59 LURČAT, André: *Organisace městského prostoru*. In: *Architektura ČSR* 16, 1957, pp. 451 – 45.

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63 KANCELSON, R. – FEDOROV, M.: *Od „racionalizmu“ k „organickéj“ architektúre*. In: *Projekt* 1, 1959, 4, pp. 30 – 37.

64 The article is based on research performed by the author for her

dissertation defended at the Estonian Academy of Arts in 2016. The author would like to thank to the reviewers of this article for their comments and to supervisors Ingrid Ruudi and Maroš Krivý. Preparation of this publication was supported by the Grant Agency of Masaryk University, Project No. MUNI/A/1114/2015 “Společnost a její proměny: kvalitativní a kvantitativní přístupy (SPOJKA)”.