

LOCATING THE STRUCTURE-AGENCY DICHOTOMY IN
ARCHITECTURE:
WORKERS' CLUB AS A TYPE OF SOCIAL CONDENSER
IN THE SOVIETS 1917-32

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Hasan İsbek Önen

ABSTRACT

LOCATING THE STRUCTURE-AGENCY DICHOTOMY IN
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This thesis focuses on the Soviets after the October Revolution, between 1917 and 1932, in which architecture was seen as the crucial apparatus to transform the society. Within this framework it approaches to social condensers which were perceived as architectural foresights and buildings that aims to transform the society and promote a new, collective way of life and relocates the (social) structure and agency dichotomy in architecture. Furthermore the effort of the creative individual (agent) to preserve his inner-domain is searched through the workers' club designs of two important architects Konstantin Melnikov and Ivan Leonidov and furthermore trying to understand on which principles they established their architecture. Whereas the conclusion includes a critical evaluation on "halkevleri" (people's houses) as having similar social premises within the scope of the general framework of the study.

Keywords: Soviet architecture, Constructivism, social condenser, workers' clubs, the (social) structure-agency dichotomy, creative individual, Konstantin Melnikov, Ivan Leonidov.

ÖZ

SOSYAL YAPI - AKTÖR ÇATIŞMASINI MİMARLIK ÜZERİNDEN
YENİDEN DEĞERLENDİRMEK:
SOVYETLER'DE TOPLUMSAL YOĞUNLAŞTIRICI OLARAK
İŞÇİ KULÜPLERİ 1917-32

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Bu tez Ekim Devrimi sonrası 1917-32 yılları arasında mimarlığın toplumu dönüştürme araçlarının en önemlisi olarak görüldüğü Sovyetler Birliği'ne odaklanıyor. Bu çerçevede en etkin değişimin üzerinden planlandığı, yeni ve kolektif bir yaşam tarzının mimari öngörüsü olan ve “toplumsal yoğunlaştırıcı” (social condenser) olarak adlandırılan yapılar üzerinden sosyal aktör (agent) ve sosyal yapı (structure) tartışması yeniden konumlandırılıyor. Toplu olarak hareket etmenin, üretmenin ve yaşamının yüceltildiği, mimarlığın bir propaganda ve dönüştürme aracı olarak görüldüğü bir dönemde yaratıcı bireyin (sosyal aktör) kendi iç dünyasındaki kavramlara ve doğrulara sahip çıkma çabası dönemin iki önemli mimarı Konstantin Melnikov ve Ivan Leonidov'un tasarladıkları işçi kulüpleri üzerinden irdeleniyor. Sonuç bölümünde ise bu tartışmanın ışığında Türkiye'de cumhuriyet ile kurulmaya başlanan ve bir tür “toplumsal dönüştürücü” olarak görülebilecek olan Halkevleri'nin eleştirel bir genel değerlendirmesi yapılıyor.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sovyet mimarlığı, Rus Konstrüktivistleri, toplumsal yoğunlaştırıcı, işçi kulüpleri, sosyal yapı-aktör çatışması, yaratıcı birey, Konstantin Melnikov, Ivan Leonidov.

To the memory of Gizem Soğuksu
and
Kamuran Gündemir

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

To live is to leave traces.

Walter Benjamin

In the whole Greek thought, in almost all medieval and modern thought, there beats this assertion that to be a man is to be an intellectual.

Jose Ortega y Gasset

This inquiry started with a simple discomfort that can be set as a result of suspicion and curiosity. Having Kant, Marx, Foucault, Gasset and many other grandiose theorists that have contributed to human existential debates in mind, two consecutive questions arose. The first was related to the position of an individual to a previously produced bulk of notions, perceptions, values, institutions etc. After realizing that there can be several possible positions, the second became clear: how can the simultaneous existence of the concordant and the discordant individual within the same social structure (constituted by notions, values etc.) and the same time span explained?

Before starting to present a general perspective of the research, it is important to define the structure. Because it is this structure, the conceptual frame-work, which makes each research unique. There can be several inquiries proposing the same question. However the individual and social background of the researcher - the location of the individual, how the researcher has produced his "reason" and how this "reason" is utilized in defining a research is critical.

This work begins with a basic notion which can definitely be traced in every research concerning the human condition or its civilization regardless of scale, focusing on the individual or society; regardless of the research field, in biology, sociology, political-economy or in architecture which is duality. The term duality can be defined and structured in numerous ways; however in this study it will be utilized to unfold and set forth the relation between the individual and society. Production is the common concept between the relation of man to his products both mental and material which together form a second nature. In the first case production – as the realization of previously thought – can be set as the basis for man to locate himself as an advanced being and nature. In the second case production is a dual action which both constructs a second-nature (cognitive and material artifacts) and the conscious man. Beyond this point we can specify man as a social actor in a constructed nature and a social structure that is in continuous progress. Thus the architect as a social actor is structured by two strata: societal and individual. Derived from this point the role of the architect which in other words is how he transforms cognition to product can be unfolded through two rear-domains: the individual rear-domain (which mainly a question of

psychology, philosophy and epistemology) and the social rear-domain.¹ (Table 1.1) This structure will form the basis to understand the relation of the latter domain with architectural production, whereas the former will not within the main interest area for this inquiry.

Kenneth Frampton, throughout his seminal book “Modern Architecture - A Critical History”, analyzes architectural production not solely within its own realm, but as a multi-layered complex open-structure including its undeniable interaction with cultural, political and technological domains. It is very clear that this approach is a very critical put forward as a method in the introduction part but set forth in detail through the first part (Cultural Developments and the Predisposing Techniques: 1750-1939) where the pre-conditions of “Modern Architecture” are unfolded through cultural, technical and urban developments. The following quote from part one chapter is important to underline the similar view point of this study while approaching architectural domain:

The architecture of Neo-Classicism seems to have emerged out of two different but related developments which radically transformed the relationship between man and nature. The first was sudden increase in man’s capacity to exercise control over nature, which by the mid-17th century had begun to advance beyond the technical frontiers of the Renaissance. The second was a fundamental shift in the nature of human consciousness, in response to major changes taking place in society, which gave birth to a new cultural formation that was equally appropriate to the life styles of the declining aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie.²

Similarly but in another field, Preserved Smith in his book³ studies the hidden layers within a specific time span in western history. Smith examines a vast number of inputs such as the great changes in population, traditions, institutions, philosophical thought, art and religious doctrines to put forward a general view and unfold the background of the Renaissance. These two works by Frampton and Smith are important to realize the holistic structure of development,

¹ The term rear-domain can be generalized as bulk or sum of the products of mental action in total (both individual and societal) which have been accumulated and will be accumulating through time.

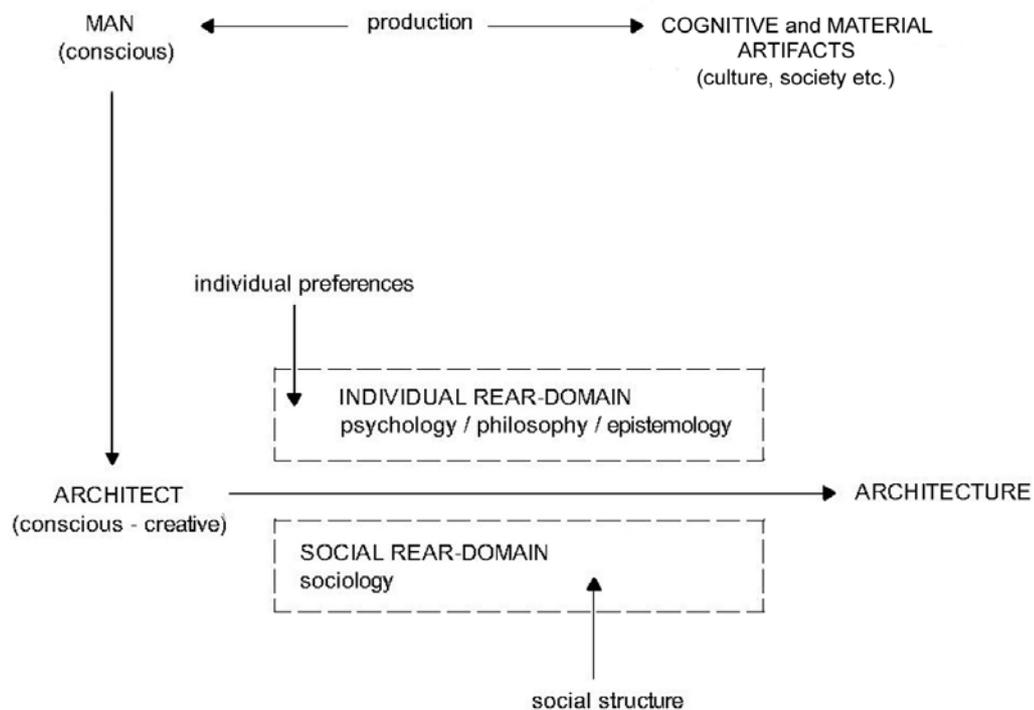
² Kenneth Frampton. *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1980, p.12.

³ Preserved Smith, *The Social Background of the Reformation*, Collier Books, 1967. Translated into Turkish as *Rönesans ve Reform Çağı: Bir Sosyal Arkaplan Çalışması* by Serpil Çağlayan. İş Bankası Yayınları, 2001.

transformation, rupture and accumulation of the human heritage, which is in a way a deciphering action to merge several synchronous layers.

There is no doubt that every discipline has its own unique and independent flow of syntax, an autonomous domain that has been accumulated within its discourse. Yet what arouses excitement is to trace the overlapping layers, the elements that define a progressive and accumulating rear-domain. This accumulation generates a complex structure both for the individual and ex-individual domain.

Table 1.1 Diagram representing the general framework of research.



The complexity of man within itself as a being, in his relation with the constructed and finally in relation with the society, prevents the intricate dichotomy from being resolved. On the other hand it is also important to comprehend the interactive relation between the individual and society; focusing on the architect as a producing actor in society. Thus the transitional step will be to understand the multi-layered structure of architectural production and the effect of a societal rear-

domain on this process. Understanding production not only of commodities and tools but also of consciousness and reason can be accepted as the beginning of a dichotomy as well as a departure to begin a correlation, this time between man and the produced (second) nature.

In this his work man perceives and becomes conscious of his own self. If what he makes comes from him, he in turn comes from what he makes; it is made by him, but it is in these works and by these works that he has made himself.⁴

The first reason to build was to form a shelter, a very naïve and instinctive production, but once a thought has commenced there is no end to it. Henceforth Çatalhöyük, Pyramids of Giza, Parthenon, Chartres Cathedral, Unité d'Habitation, Bilbao Guggenheim was erected. Thus the thought behind the object, the reason of the designer has become more complicated through time; it has been a tool to concretize diversities as just a need for shelter, prestige; capital, social, religious and political power but on the other hand the rear-domain of the designer. Similarly the structure of the society has also developed into a more complicated one because of increasing layers: actors, institutions, relations and paradigms. On the other hand like any member of a society, the architect has an introverted structure which is related to the construction of the self. However different from other agents this inner-structure has a very complicated constitution; the architect as a creative actor and an artist has to be rendered intricately.

Now as the conceptual framework and methods of approach are defined this research will focus on a significant time span and geography in the twentieth century to understand how the social rear-domain of the architect was constructed and how the architect as a social and individual actor transformed theoretical in to practical. As mentioned previously the architect stands at a very critical position as a producing member of a society; a production that can be labeled as a macro-level tool. After the October Revolution in 1917, the transformation of a society required concise but effective tools such as painting, drama, sculpture and architecture. As Frampton puts forward "...Bogdanov's [Alexander Malinowsky] radical assertion that there were three independent

⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, translated by John Moore. Verso. 1992.

roads to socialism – the economic, the political and the cultural”⁵, and regarding architecture as having its foundations settled on *economic, political and cultural grounds*; which can be considered as a tripartite generator of both the individual and the society. Thus the study will first thoroughly search for an answer to the question how Soviet architects as social and individual actors in a period defined by a revolution, transformed theoretical to practical. However on the other hand the fundamental question regarding this inquiry is to structure a critical approach seeking the possibility of an architect as a creative agent that can manage to produce both to fulfill external i.e. societal demands strata but at the same time preserving his preferences. This study locates these preferences that can be rendered by personality, geographical and temporal factors⁶ etc. within the inner-domain or the inner world of the architect.

Several milestones can be brought forward regarding the Soviets in an era of transformation: - referring to Frampton, Bogdanov’s founding of the Organization for Proletarian Culture (Proletkult) which “...dedicated itself to the regeneration of culture through a new unity of science, industry and art” also taking major role in designing for the agitprop propaganda trains (Fig. 1.1; 1.2) and boats. The establishment of INKhuK (Institute of Artistic Culture) and VKhuTEMAS (Higher Artistic and Technical Studios) where “Both these institutions were to serve as arenas for public debate, wherein mystical idealists such as Malevich, Kandinsky and...brothers Pevsner found themselves equally opposed by the so-called Productivists: Vladimir Tatlin, Alexander Rodchenko and Alexei Gan.”⁷ Looking from a distant time, it looks as if it would not be wrong to label such a period as a movement of enlightenment of a society guided by pioneer producing social actors. Yet this enlightenment was based upon a very intensive interaction between producing individuals and society. The formation of OSA (Association of Contemporary Architects), their publication SA (Contemporary Architecture) and several other groups also played a critical role of in architectural cognition and production. Furthermore the importance of OSA was both their provocative and productive actions regarding housing units – independent experimental

⁵ K. Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*. Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1980, p. 170.

⁶ Catherine Cooke states the importance of having peasantry origins and being brought up in rural geographies regarding both K. Melnikov and I. Leonidov.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

researches and programmed thorough studies carried out in collaboration with governmental institutions – and workers' clubs as significant architectural types of social condensers. Several architects produced projects including Melnikov, Golosov, Ginzburg and Leonidov; each having a different point of view. In order to carry out a concise research, the discussion will be defined by the projects produced as social condensers and significantly workers' clubs. On the other hand certain aspects will be discussed stressing housing units and how their perception evolved as the revolution aged; and furthermore how they aimed to transform certain notions i.e. the family inherited from the pre-revolutionary structure.

The key-role in the process from the cognitive to the substantial belongs to the individual. As set previously the individual rear-domain of a creative social actor is nourished by the social rear-domain; thus they are complementary. There are certain periods when these two rear-domains catalyze each other and as a result we encounter a compression of intellectual and productive activity in a very short time span. The post-revolutionary era between 1917 and 1932 in the Soviet Union is a similar case that the question "how?" should be asked. It is aimed to understand the era first of all defining and unfolding the social strata through The second chapter starts by rendering the historical conditions in the Soviets, putting both pre-revolutionary social and architectural characteristics and how they were transformed within the ideals of the 1917 October Revolution and realized in combination with new perspectives up to 1932. It is then focused on the leading role of architecture considering the transformation of a society majorly through social condensers. Finally through the workers' club designs by Melnikov and Leonidov the solitude of the architect as a creative agent is discussed with in the scope of the mutual relation of the structure and agent. The third chapter, a brief outline of the structure-agency dichotomy is presented. The dual approach can also be traced there in which opposing perceptions and theories are rendered. Several points are referred from the materialist point of view to the idealist and semantic approaches, through the changing emphasis on the position of the agent and structure and their formations. Marx, Weber and Giddens' theories are briefly projected within a comparative layout. Whereas the conclusion further that projecting the goals of the research, sets a new question regarding peoples' houses (halkevleri) as an architectural type designed for similar purposes i.e.

transforming the society, redefining the individual within the post-revolutionary era in Turkey through the guidance of republican ideals.

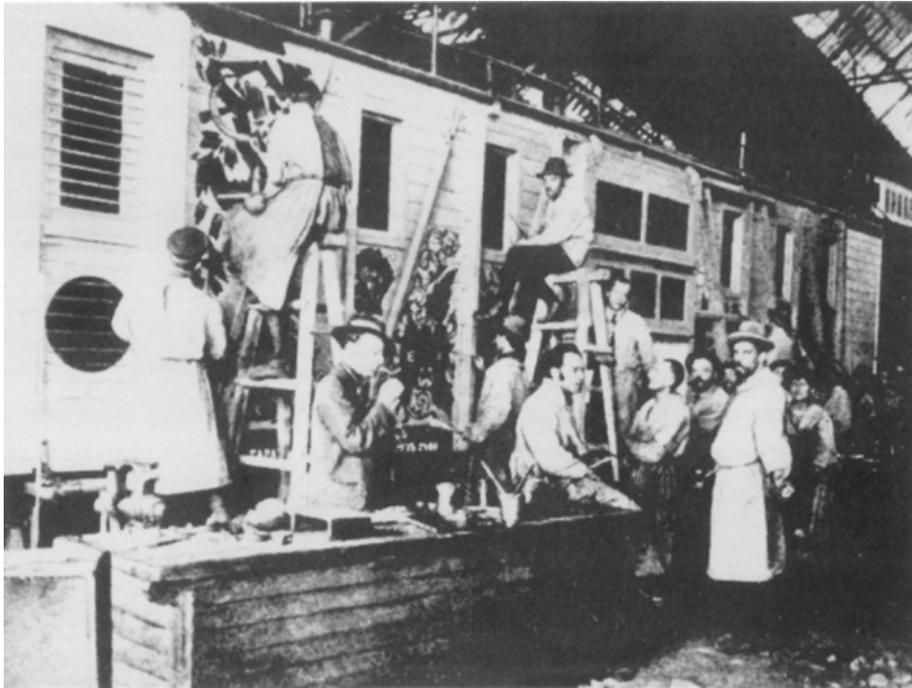


Fig. 1.1 Artists at the Moscow station painting an agitprop train, circa 1920s.

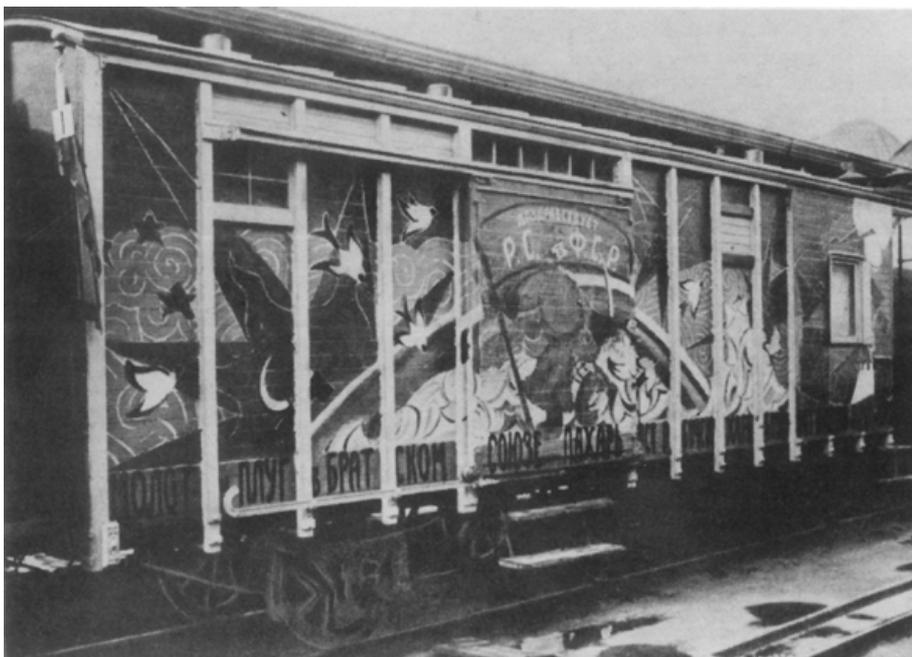


Fig. 1.2 An agitprop train, circa 1920s.

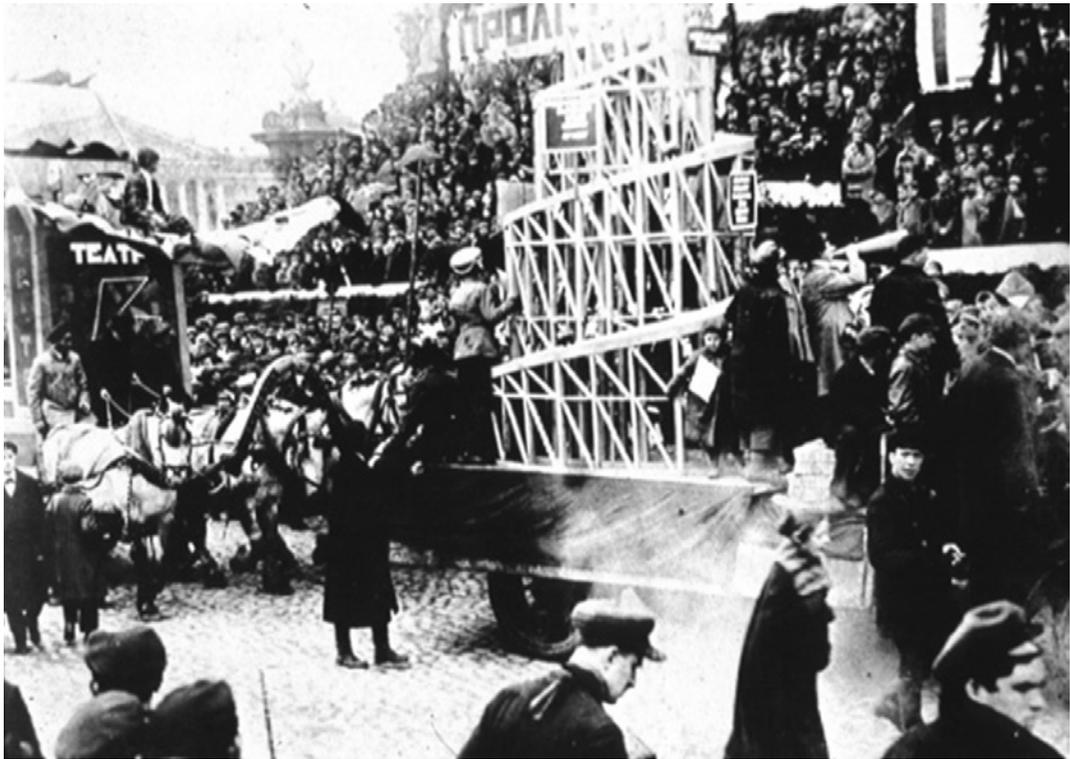


Fig. 2 Vladimir Tatlin. Wooden model of the Monument for the Third International, 1920.

CHAPTER 2

ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTION AND COGNITION OF SOCIAL CONDENSERS IN THE SOVIETS AFTER THE 1917 REVOLUTION

A social movement is at once a social conflict and a cultural project.

Alain Touraine. *Critique of Modernity*

A new style does not emerge all at once. It begins in various facets of human life, which frequently are totally unrelated to one another. The old is regenerated gradually; frequently one can observe how elements of the new world, which overwhelm us with their barbaric freshness and the absolute independence of their unexpected appearance. However, the new elements manage, on the strength of their vitality and purely organic legitimacy, gradually to entice more and more facets of the old world until, finally, nothing can stem the tide.

Moisei Ginzburg. *Style and Epoch*

2.1. THE SOCIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FRAMEWORK OF AN ERA

The time span between 1917 and 1932 marks a critical period in both social and artistic life of the Soviets. Before October 1917 there was another revolution in February¹ which ended the Tsarist regime, and another twelve years ago in 1905 which formed a base for the former. On the other hand, Ionov and Tsamutali stresses that nineteenth century developments in Russia “was a result of large-scale reforms in the spheres of government, social life, economy and culture, initiated by Tsar Peter I as the turn of the seventeenth century.”²

In all three the proletariat was the main actor; it was the peasants in October and soldiers in February that enabled the revolutionary action to settle on a wider base. The interval between the two consequent 1917 revolutions was an era of high chaos and conflict. In fact the October revolution can be interpreted as a reversed earthquake experience having the after-shocks before the main source of rupture. With a parallel viewpoint, looking from present time, the continuity of historical events can be traced. Thus Marx’s view at this point on the historical domination of the structure of human action is highly important; which in fact was briefly mentioned in the structure and agency discussion:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please, under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under conditions immediately encountered, given and transmitted from the past.³

Although that there was a conflict amongst Russian Marxists (Anarchists, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks) on the point that before a proletariat revolution, there should be a bourgeois revolution similar to the one in France in 1789⁴, Dunn puts forward the critical point that:

¹ The Gregorian calendar equivalent for October was November and February was March.

² Igor N. Ionov, Alexei N. Tsamutali, *Russia, History of Humanity, Scientific and Cultural Development*, Volume VI (The Nineteenth Century), edited by P. Mathias and N. Todorov, Routledge and UNESCO, 1994, pp. 328.

³ Quoted in John Dunn, *Modern Revolutions: An Introduction to the Analysis of a Political Phenomenon*, Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 10, from K. Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

⁴ Emmanuel de Waresquiel, P. Gavi, B. Laudier, *İsyankar Yüzyıl*, translated from French by İsmail Yerguz, Sel Yayıncılık, 2004, pp. 213-15.

“Marxian historical materialism is above all else a theory of revolution, a theory of the creative intervention of human action within the opportunities afforded by the historical evolution of human societies...Marxism is a theory of how to make a better sort of history, a theory of the conditions of revolutionary possibility.”⁵

Revolution, as defined by Gasset, is not only an uprising against a pre-existing order, rather the setting-up of a new order contradictory to the traditional one.⁶ Gasset’s usage of “setting-up” draws a similarity with Touraine’s “project” which can be interpreted through a tripartite unfolding. First they imply a human involvement which also generates a frame work within both the individual and the masses can be present. Secondly they stress an activist position which mental and physical labor is involved leading to the notion of praxis strictly relating it with production. Third importance is that they refer to an optimistic and constructive point of view. This constructive and productive interpretation is again put by Gasset when he labels the uprising of masses as a cause for the increasing of possibilities.⁷ These increased possibilities set the infrastructure for a complex structure within the realm of the society and the individual, which nourishes divergent paths of thought to arise and exist simultaneously. This aspect will be discussed while understanding the first years of the October Revolution where the galloping styles; Futurism, Cubism, Suprematism and Constructivism were on the agenda.

For Brovkin, the 1920s was an era of contradictions in many ways: “...creativity in artistic expression combining with the tightening of ideological controls; a period of New Economical Policy-that is individual family farming for market in agriculture combined with the rise of centralized planned economy in economy.”⁸ On the other hand Cooke constructs a fairly different and negative approach to this situation, pointing that this was rather diversity than pluralism. Buchli renders the political side of this pluralism regarding “political and revolutionary action” within the “Leninist principle of ‘democratic centralism’” which “defines a dominant

⁵ J. Dunn, *ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁶ Ortega y Gasset (1930), *The Revolt of the Masses*, authorized anonymous translation, W. W. Norton & Company, 1993.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Vladimir N. Brovkin, *Russia After Lenin: Politics, Culture and Society 1921-1929*, Routledge, 1998, p. 2.

axis” or a “general line” that “encourages plurality of opinions and approaches.”⁹ This renders the nature of a revolution; when a tumbling starts at such a scale, it is obvious that settling will take time. Furthermore the conditions after the settlement may not resemble the ones designated, because a revolution has its own micro and macro, subjective and objective dynamics. Thus every revolution has its own evolution oriented by historical, geographical, sociological etc. variables.

Trotsky’s point can be put to emphasize historical –a specific time inseparable from its predecessor era, a consciousness that is aware that the present circumstances are traceable consequences– and sociological –:”The fundamental premise of a Revolution is that the existing social structure has become incapable of solving the urgent problems of development of the nation.”¹⁰ A similar view that attributes a natural consequence of human action in history is set by Henri Laborit that revolution “is the demolition of a system that has lost its capability of evolving.”¹¹

The idea of revolution thus is related to somehow both to the new and its predecessor. The Russian case in terms of architectural heritage, as Voyce marks, the decades before the revolution was defined by two conflicting notions, the nationalistic (Slavophil) and the cosmopolitan (European).¹² A situation that can be projected as the dichotomy between the “universal” and the “local” in an upper scale which is not so unfamiliar regarding nearly all countries studied within their own history.

There are two important points that should be projected from the chapter in which Voyce discusses the pre-revolutionary era of Russian architecture. The primary is the stress on constant foreign interference in Russian totality, which enriched the core (genuine) cultural milieu showing the potentiality and desire to amalgamate what so ever is new instead of mere copying. In fact this was not the

⁹ Victor Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism*, Berg (Oxford International) Publishers, 1999, pp. 63-64.

¹⁰ Leon Trotsky, *History of Russian Revolution*, part 3 ch.6, Bloomsbery Thematic Dictionary of Quotations.

¹¹ Henri Laborit, *Yaratıcı İnsan*, translated from French by Bertan Onaran, Payel Yayinevi, 1996, p.45. (Excerpt translated by author.)

¹² Arthur Voyce, *Russian Architecture: Trends in Nationalism and Modernism*, GreenWood Publishers, 1969, p.19.

consequence of solely desire and potentiality; it was also the "...isolation from Europe and its artistic influences" that gave dominance and ability to authentic language to shape in this or that portion the newly coming.¹³ Cooke similarly singles out a *fin de siècle* architect Fedor Shekhtel's residences (custom-made family mansions) as "innovative as spatial and social building types, and as aesthetically shocking to the establishment of their day as were early modernist exercises erected by the avant-garde." What relates Cooke's view with Voyce's can be explained by her stress that Shekhtel managed to design a typical function related to the Western architectural in a very unique but at the same time domestic manner.¹⁴ (Fig. 2.1; 2.2; 2.3)

The second is the notion of totality in human existence; that of every core has a defining outer shell, which also is a consequence of another. This point can be derived from two different sub-points. First he emphasizes that after the transition from the semi-feudal structure to industrialism and capitalism, end of the nineteenth century, enforced the vitality of Russian middle classes (bourgeoisie). Supported by individual and social liberation, the tendency of the bourgeoisie was to abandon on all traditional, religious superstitions and created a nationalistic conception generated by contemporary vogue styles like "Art Nouveau" and "Viennese Secession". This also meant the rejection of rational approaches which led to the rise of the national.¹⁵ The second sub-point can be set as follows:

Just as the old religious fervor and aspirations of Medievalism has created the great cathedrals, in a style expressive of the ideals of that time; just as the Renaissance, following the disintegration of Medievalism, had created a style perfectly suited to the new individualism of that epoch, so must,...Collectivism and Communism,...create a new expression of the esthetic, a new style suitable to the needs and psychology of the new collectivity; a style that would reflect the democratic ideals of the new-born state.¹⁶

¹³ Ibid., pp. 5, 21.

¹⁴ Catherine Cooke, *Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde*, Museum of Modern Art New York, 1990, p. 11.

There is also an important point Cooke emphasizes, that is important to stress in order to project a social view of the *fin de siècle* Russia; as the architectural function, "the rich commercially based middle-class client" was also a new concept.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 129.



Fig. 2.1 Fedor Shekhtel. Derozhinskaia mansion, Moscow, 1902. Detail from the stair tower.

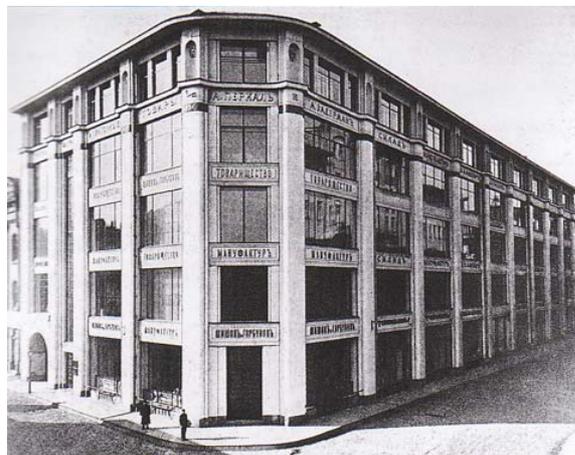


Fig. 2.2 F. Schektel. Riabushinsky House, Moscow, 1902.

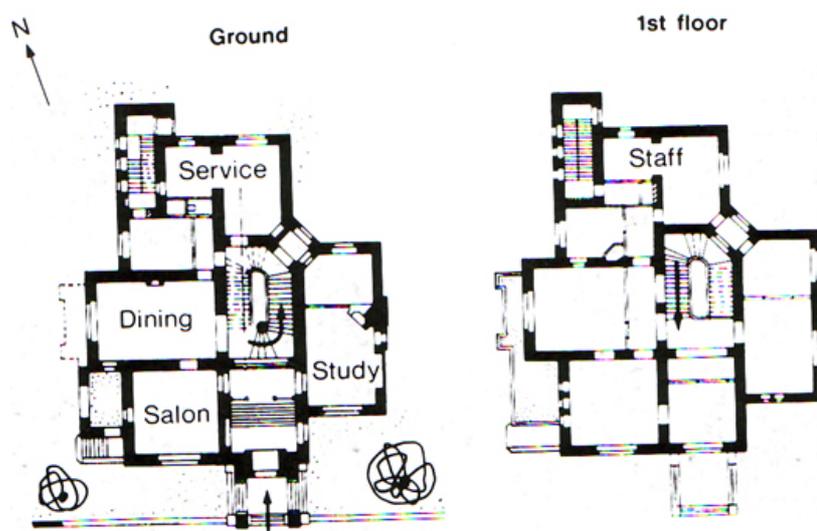


Fig. 3.3 F. Shekhtel. Office building for the Moscow Trade Society, Moscow, 1909, floor plans.

These points can be interpreted in a parallel manner with the notion of the dynamic inner structure of *productive nodes*.¹⁷ This understanding of the integrity of human production is a vital starting point while studying the architecture after the October Revolution. Projecting a similar point of view Moisei (Iakovlevich) Ginzburg mentions that:

An examination of the most varied products of human activity in any epoch, particularly any forms of artistic endeavor, reveals that despite the diversity brought about by organic and individual causes, they all have something in common, some indication that, in its collective social origins, gives rise to the concept of style. The same social and cultural conditions, methods and means of production, climate, the same outlook and psychology all leave a common mark on most diverse formations.¹⁸

There is no doubt that architecture has been used as an instrument of hegemony resulting in both constructive and corruptive consequences. This duality can only be valid regarding the part which is dominated or in other words one that power is applied – the masses or society, since it was always the former from the point of the applier. In the Soviet case after the 1917 Revolution it was probably the strongest tool for constructing a new society that was aimed to fit perfectly to the pre-determined aims. As claimed in the first issue of SA¹⁹, the aim of contemporary architecture was to crystallize the new socialist way of life.²⁰ Cooke expresses that although that was a consensus on the “social priorities of post-revolutionary years” the main problem arose concerning the debate of using the most suitable style.²¹

In order to understand the cognitive and productive setting of the era, the structuring of the exhibition in Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum sets an unexpectedly concise layout;

¹⁷ The term productive nodes will be discussed within the following chapter.

¹⁸ Moisei Ginzburg (1924), *Style and Epoch: Problems of Modern Architecture*, translated by Anatole Senkevitch Jr., The MIT Press, 1982, p. 41.

¹⁹ *Sovremennaja Arkhitektura* (Contemporary Architecture). An architectural review published by OSA (The Union of Contemporary Architects) between 1926 and 1930 with a Constructivist point of view.

²⁰ Anatole Kopp, *Constructivist Architecture in the USSR*, Academy Editions, 1985, p. 22.

²¹ C. Cooke, *Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde*, Museum of Modern Art New York, 1990, p. 12.

First, the hegemony established by avant-garde artists committed to Suprematism and to Tatlin's culture of materials before the 1917 October Revolution, and the impact of their theories in defining cultural policies after the Revolution. Second, the development in the 1920's of work by artists who sought to project principles of construction and design into rationalized aesthetic systems through pedagogical programs at Moscow's Vkhutemas/Vkhutein and group shows such as the Obmokhu exhibitions and the First Discussional Exhibition of Associations of Active Revolutionary Art, Moscow, 1924. Third, the pluralism of the 1920s – the emergence of new debates over figuration in the media of photography, photomontage, and painting – and the impact of Constructivist theory.²²

Following this structure, another important approach to undermine the era is made by Cooke, in which she emphasizes the notion of age distribution within practicing architects in the era.²³ This is parallel to the importance of generations, which is thoroughly discussed by Gasset in *Man and Crisis*²⁴, in the formation of the dominant system of thought in significant time intervals. Whereas EL Lissitzky's emphasis on the role of generations can be set forth through "Every generation puts a different meaning into the same ideas."²⁵ On the other hand Cooke defines three concise stimuli that caused the production of a wide range of architecture: the studios i.e. VKhuTEMAS and architectural competitions that caused new individuals to uprise; the different personal backgrounds of

²² T. Krens, M. Gouen, preface to *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde 1915-1932*, Guggenheim Museum New York Press, 1992, p. X.

²³ C. Cooke, *ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

Cooke puts forward four age groups. Quoting freely; first group was the oldest, middle-aged architects that were practicing before the revolution and positively adopted the post-revolutionary situation without changing their aesthetic positions. They were fond of Classicism, eclecticism and Russian art-nouveau. (I. Zholtovsky, I. Fomin, A. Shchusev) Second were those under forty, experienced architects of the pre-revolutionary era but young enough to embody the conditions of the new society. They became leaders of the main trends of the avant-garde. (Vesnin brothers -Constructivism-, N. Ladovsky -Rationalism-, V. Tatlin) Third group was formed of architects at their mid 20's, those who graduated just before the revolution. They did not have much building experience but were the young leaders. (M. Ginzburg, El Lissitzky, K. Melnikov, I. Golosov) The fourth group was the first student generation after the Revolution, thought in the "Free Studios such as the VKhuTEMAS" of the twenties. (I. Leonidov, M. Barshch, A. Burov that joined the Constructivists; M. Turkus, G. Krutikov that joined the Rationalists; G. Golts that joined the first group pre-revolutionary architects)

²⁴ Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Idea of the Generation, The Method of the Generations in History and Again the Concept of the Generation, Man and Crisis*, translated by Mildred Adams, W. W. Norton & Company, 1963, pp. 30-85.

²⁵ El Lissitzky, *Architecture in the USSR, El Lissitzky: Life, Letters, Texts*, edited by Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, New York Graphic Society Ltd., p. 367.

individuals and the “work of the artistic avant-garde before 1917” as the “crucial medium of liberation”.²⁶

Constructivism, as Senkevitch puts, “...is the demystification of the creative process.” In other words it is bringing down the creative process from the artist’s idealistic inner-world to the proletariats everyday materialistic world where the artist is a laborer like the worker. According to theoreticians such as Bogdanov, the artist must be inspired by the worker.²⁷ Similarly Ginzburg locates the architect: “Thus the architect must take yet another step from his dizzying isolation down to actual reality; he must also learn from the constructor...”²⁸ There is also another point that will be discussed within the following pages; he will try to convince the architect not to be afraid to lose his creativity which in fact focuses to the very point of the aim of the study. Can this lead to a discussion of the creative agent and the autonomous inner-domain facing the social structure? An answer will be sought later; but it seems that in spite of a Socialist realm setting the collective existence and social structure, the emphasis set on the individual (especially the artist, or in the terminology of this work the creative agent) is never abandoned. This seems to be one of the main reasons that encouraged the artist to produce without withdrawing his inner-domain, personality, personal preferences but also paying respect to the demands of the social structure of the era. Thus being also one of the reasons causing the plurality of the post-Revolutionary period mentioned previously.

Yet at the same time, such restrictions of the architect’s creative efforts must yield other results as well. In dealing with the prosaic aspects of life, in drawing closer to the master craftsman and the constructor, the architect must unavoidably become infected by their method of work. He, like they, will set his goal not to the unrestrained fantasy of a detached scheme, but the clear solution of a problem into which are factored certain givens and certain unknowns.²⁹ 113

This claim brings Ginzburg to the attribution of a new position to the architect, from being a *decorator of life* to the *organizer of life*.³⁰ It does not only define how

²⁶ C. Cooke, *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

²⁷ M. Ginzburg, *ibid.*, A. Senkevitch’s introduction to the English translation, pp. 29-30.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

²⁹ M. Ginzburg (1924), *Style and Epoch: Problems of Modern Architecture*, translated by Anatole Senkevitch Jr., The MIT Press, 1982, p. 113.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

the architect should approach his work, furthermore it also aims to define a new style and physicality of architecture. An architecture that is emancipated from ornament and everyday materialistic notions set to its core. He continues in a manner to encourage architects having dilemmas whether this attitude will blunt their creativity.

Creative fantasy, the liberated energy of the spirit, will not abandon his creativity, but will only be channeled in another direction. Fantasy will turn into inventiveness...We are well aware of the apprehensions that are common in such instances among those who overrate the "mysteriousness" of the creativity it self...As no manifestation of genius in formal expression can ever be fully explained, and as we know of no conclusive answer to these questions, there exists a certain degree of insolubility about the creative process, which guarantees us both variety in individuality and the importance of our own perceptions.³¹

Ginzburg finds the solution in resembling the architect and inventor, thus pointing another critical notion of the Constructivists that threads through nets between engineering (in more general terminology: scientific approach) and architecture. As the for the inventor, the architect must not be afraid that he "will lose something of his creativity as a result of knowing what he wants, what he is striving for, and what gives meaning to his work." He claims that in order to "economize the architect's creative energy" and to transfer "its liberated surplus the inventiveness and power of the creative impulse", the "...subconscious and impulsive creativity will have to be replaced by a *clear and distinct organizational method*..."³²

Alexei Gan, sets forth the three aspects of Constructivist architecture as tectonics (tektonika), facture (factura) and construction (konstruktsia). As defining the standpoint of architecture through terms that can be mentioned in every epoch, this time dealing it with a tripartite structure: social, political and economic.³³ *Constructivism* published in 1922, was the first Constructivist doctrine and the "first theoretical text of the Soviet era to link the problems of artistic creation with the problems posed by the building of a socialist society."³⁴

³¹ Ibid., p. 114.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

³⁴ A. Kopp, *Constructivist Architecture in the USSR*, Academy Editions, 1985, p. 22.

The complex structure of the dynamic artistic productions in the era becomes even more sophisticated when several actors appear under several titles. This is partly because of the heated atmosphere of the discussions after the revolution and partly because there are institutions related to certain movements and groups, as in the case of VKhuTEMAS and InKhuk which masters of the era thought in studios. (Table 3.1)³⁵ Thus they were both Constructivists and members of VKhuTEMAS or InKhuk. As Cooke mentions, it is important to single out some figures of the era, i.e. Melnikov, Leonidov and Chernikov as all having Constructivist roots they were able to maintain original approaches to the architectural domain.

There are two points that should be mentioned in order to understand the roots of the “constructivism-generated” post-revolutionary era; which means understanding the apparently confusing and chaotic projection that may result from table 2.1. The first point can be based on the juxtaposition of a declaration one year earlier than Gan’s *Constructivism*, The Program of the Productivist Group declares that “the correct relation of form and content” depended on three points: tektonika, factura, (the art of) construction. The second; as Frampton sets forth: “...artists and architects largely avoided themselves as Constructivists. They chose instead to call themselves Realists, Suprematists, Productivists...”³⁶ which leads to the point that they all are in this way or that related to each other.

³⁵ The table includes retrieved information from the listed sites below, on 28 November 2005. In addition to electronic data, Cooke and Kopp also refer to the several elements of the table in their work, previously cited.

http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/finding_aids/lissitzk_m5.html

<http://home.iae.nl/users/wie/melnikov/verhaale>

<http://savitskymuseum.freenet.uz/images/collection/glossary.htm>

http://www.russianavantgard.com/master_pages/Master%2005%20-%20unovis.html,

<http://www.discovery.mala.bc.ca/web/chockza/05.html>

<http://www.discovery.mala.bc.ca/web/chockza/10.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VKhUTEMAS>

<http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/poetpage/mayakovsky.html>

http://www.caad.ed.ac.uk/courses/history/handouts/AH1_handout52.html

³⁶ Kenneth Frampton, *Constructivism: The Pursuit of an Elusive Sensibility*, *Labour, Work and Architecture: Collected Essays on Architecture and Design*, Phaidon, 2002, p.151.

Frampton’s locating of the term Constructivism is a very descriptive one: “The importance of the term...seems to have lain not in itself, but rather in the extremely volatile and elusive sensibility it came to evoke.”

Table 2.1 Major active groups, institutions and actors of the era.³⁷

| GROUP/ INSTITUTE | DATE | MEMBERS/ SUPPORTERS | PUBLICATION | ADDITIONAL INFORMATION |
|---|-----------|---|-------------|---|
| <p><i>Moscow Faculty of VKhuTEMAS</i></p> <p><i>The Higher Artistic-Technical Workshops</i></p> | 1919-1930 | <p>W. Kandinsky El Lissitzky K. Melnikov V. Tatlin M. Ginzburg G. Klutsis</p> | - | <p>Amalgamation of Moscow Collage and Strogonov School</p> <p>After 1926, transformed to VKhuTEIN</p> |
| <p>INKhuK</p> <p><i>Institute of Artistic Culture in Moscow</i></p> | 1920-1927 | <p>W. Kandinsky A. Rodchenko V. Stepanova A. Gan K. Malevich</p> | - | <p>Fore-comer of the group Zhivskulptarkh <i>Paintsculptarch</i></p> <p>A gathering that generated Constructivism</p> <p>Gan's <i>Constructivism</i> (1922) was the first doctrine of the movement</p> <p>Was a model for the Bauhaus</p> |

³⁷ Apart from these major individual, collective actors and institutions there were nearly a dozen more including OBMOKhu (Society of Young Artists), The IZO (Network of Arts Administration) which was set by Narcompros (People's Commissariat of Enlightenment/Public Education) under the directed by A. Lunacharsky, GAKhN (State Academy of Artistic Sciences), Four Arts, Makovets, World of Art and others. Furthermore there were also very important collective action in the pre-revolutionary era including the Union of Youth in 1910s which Rodchenko and Tatlin were young members, the Jack of Diamonds which is projected as the "first Modernist show in Russia" and the Organization for Proletarian Culture (Proletcult) founded by Bogdanov (A. Malinovsky) in 1906. Unfortunately, quoting freely from the article retrieved from the site <http://www.discovery.mala.bc.ca>, in 1932, Stalin's "Central Committee of the Party created a single official 'Union' for artists and writers." It was the end of the heyday of revolutionary and avant-garde movements in art. It declared that "art was supposed to be socialist in content and realist in execution; in architecture, public buildings were supposed to be monumental in character and draw upon appropriate styles, incorporating mural paintings and sculptures on revolutionary themes. Basically, avant-garde art became a crime against the state..." Several artists fled during the early 1920's: Chagall, Kandinsky, Pevsner; whereas Tatlin and Malevich adopted a realist approach, and Rodchenko abandoned surrealist perspectives from his photographs.

Table 2.1 Continued.

| GROUP/ INSTITUTE | DATE | MEMBERS/ SUPPORTERS | PUBLICATION | ADDITIONAL INFORMATION |
|--|-----------|---|-------------------------|---|
| VOPRA <i>Society of Proletarian Architects</i> | 1929-1932 | K. Alabian M. Mazmanian | - | Proletarian modernists, denying the necessity of Russian cultural roots, from the Republics, i.e. Armenia, Ukraine |
| LEF <i>Left Front of Art</i> | 1923-1929 | V. Mayakovsky O. Brik | LEF | Dadaistic Literary and artistic journal After 1927, Novyi(New) LEF, directed by A. Rodchenko |
| OBMAS <i>United Architectural Studios</i> | 1923 | N. Ladovsky | - | A rationalism based on the psychology of the individual |
| UNOVIS <i>Affirmers of New Art</i> | 1919-1921 | K. Malevich El Lissitzky | - | Influenced by A. Pevsner and N.Gabo Suprematists |
| ASNOVA <i>Association of New Architects</i> | 1923-1930 | Ladovsky El Lissitzky K. Melnikov V. Krinsky | ASNOVA Bulletin/News | Rationalists The unity of painting, architecture and sculpture |
| AKhRR <i>Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia</i> | 1922-1932 | I. Brodski | - | - |

2.2. THE SOCIAL CONDENSER

The 1920's in Soviet Russia was a unique moment in history when art making and life-making intersected, and the country turned into a creative laboratory of various conflicting utopian projects. Revolutionary architects dreamed of turning architecture into an art and more into a material embodiment of the Revolutionary superstructure, which would impose order on a chaotic world.³⁸

Everybody's lives are closely examined by the others. Everyone lives in a communal apartment as if they were under a magnifying glass. There are no secrets. Everyone knows what someone has brought with them, what is cooking, what you wore yesterday, what you are wearing today. But however strange that may be, that does not exclude the fact that some of the inhabitants of the communal apartment lead a mysterious, even secretive existence. They are treated with suspicion, myths grow up around them, often totally untrue and inaccurate. Thus many people are certain that in the second room from door lives a legendary wealthy millionaire and in the second from the kitchen – a German spy; beside him a terrible bandit and so on.³⁹

After defining the actors of the era and locating architecture within the realm of the revolution, it will be crucial to set forth “how” the conception of transition was practiced and exercised through concrete, glass, brick, wood etc. and space, undoubtedly the most important dominator. To certain extents, as it will be put forward later in detail, for the Russian architecture of the post-revolutionary era space was strictly linked to function, i.e. how different functions in a building should be organized. This organization of functions is critical in means of realizing as key notion: collectivity. It will not be wrong to state that the path connecting architecture and the October revolution can be defined by this “prerequisite” which also formed the basis for “a new way of life”. El Lissitzky also mentions this point: “We are striving in our architecture as in our whole life to create a social order...This architecture will actively raise the general standard of living”⁴⁰ and also in “Architects are convinced that through the new design and

³⁸ Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*, Harvard University Press, 1994, p. 126.

³⁹ Victor Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism*, Berg (Oxford International) Publishers, 1999, p. 99.

⁴⁰ El Lissitzky, *Ideological Superstructure*, *El Lissitzky: Life, Letters, Texts*, edited by Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1968, p. 372.

planning of the house they are actively participating in the organizing of a new consciousness."⁴¹

Although social condensers were part of the post-revolutionary era, Cooke points out that premises are traceable before 1917:

In pre-revolutionary Russia, social change of a different kind has been so rapid that this was a skill in constant use within the architectural profession as a whole. The middle-class apartment block, the office building and commercial headquarters, the philanthropic or cooperatively funded communal-housing block for urban industrial worker, the people's house (precursor of the workers' club of the twenties), the big urban secondary school for the higher education of workers: all were socially innovative buildings, within the Russian context, of the two decades preceding the 1917 revolution.⁴²

The term "social condenser" was used to determine architectural or urban structures of any scale that are estimated to play great importance in the transition of the society⁴³, it will not be wrong to claim them as tools for constructing or designing a new social-structure, a structure designated by the Bolshevik Soviet Government after the 1917 Revolution. Kopp refers to Ginzburg's claim in which he connects the term social condenser to the aims of Constructivist architecture.

Our work should essentially be based on a scrupulous and detailed study of the brief in the light of our political and social circumstances. Its essential aim should be the creation of SOCIAL CONDENSERS for our times. This is the essential objective of Constructivism in architecture.⁴⁴

Kopp continues stressing that for Constructivists "a social condenser was a building, complex, district, or even a whole city" that had basically three aims. The first is to function properly as a house which is inevitable, thus fulfilling architectonic but at the same time humane necessities. The second is to

⁴¹ Ibid., 'Americanism' in *European Architecture*, p. 371.

⁴² C. Cooke, *Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde*, Museum of Modern Art New York, 1990, p. 11.

⁴³ In the architectural domain within the first years of the revolution, housing units as social condensers were "a building/house of a transitional type" (doma perekhodnogo tipa) that were perceived as a preparation to familiarize the society for a new way of living and presumably ending at the communal house (dom-kommuna).

⁴⁴ A. Kopp, *Constructivist Architecture in the USSR*, Academy Editions, 1985, p. 70.

accustom people to the new way of living by “foreshadow the architecture and town planning of the future”; and the third like the second is related to the goals of social change: “influence users through its use of space so as to introduce a new way of life into their social habits.” It was both an “image of the future” and a “mould for it” to generate from.⁴⁵

The transitional housing aiming the change of habits, production of a new individual and the transformation of society, as Kopp puts, was a product of the 1927-28 thorough Constructivist study, including the OSA competition and the Stroikom⁴⁶ research led to the realization of six projects between 1930 and 1932.⁴⁷ Both Kopp and Boyn refer to the utopian socialists, i.e. Fourier, Owen, More and Campanella; and for example their “Cities of Sun and Ikarias” as the foundations that constituted how the socialist way should be. Boyn connects this to the point that Marx and Engels “did not develop a specific blueprint of communist life.”⁴⁸

In order to understand what the transitional housing complex is and how a social condenser is perceived, and also how the architectural idea found existence through the era, one of the most significant buildings will be examined in detail. It is the first experimental housing project, a transitional building in which some aspects of collective life i.e. cooking, is not obligatory in order to maintain a soft transition to a new social structure. The Narkomfin housing complex was designed by M. Ginzburg and I. Milinis, collaboration with engineer S. Prokhorov in Moscow or the employees of People’s Commissariat of Finance (Narkomfin) in 1928-30. (Fig. 2.4; 2.5; 2.6) The importance should not be confined only by being the first of its type defining a guideline. The Narkomfin Housing Unit and the site on which it is built seem peculiarly to have its own life-time witnessing post-revolutionary social strata and the intricate Stalinist era with all its material reality. Furthermore not only the changes in the social domain are experienced but also the alteration in the architectural domain.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Stroikom RSFSR: Construction Committee of the Russian Republic.

⁴⁷ Kopp mentions that majority of these buildings were addressed the RZhSKT (Workers’ Housebuilding Cooperative Association)

⁴⁸ S. Boym, *ibid.*, p. 126.A. Kopp, *ibid.*, p. 82.

It is necessary to understand the building architectonically before unfolding the sociological aspects. Kopp describes the building in a very concise manner, but also mentions the aims of the transitional type:

This building combined units of the F-type developed by the Stroikom, which were intended for small families or childless couples, with units of the K-type consisting of three rooms on two levels. The F-type unit has only a kitchenette in an alcove, but the K-type unit had a kitchen of about four square meters. Since this transitional type of housing was designed as an instrument to educate and prepare people for collective life..., there was no obligation to use the communal facilities provided in these buildings...Although in the later communal houses these were to disappear completely. In order to encourage a collective way of life, buildings of the Narkomfin type put many collective facilities at the inhabitants' disposal, amongst them communal kitchens and dining-rooms, laundries, cleaning services, kindergartens, gymnasiums, libraries and rooms for "intellectual work", and summer dining-rooms on the roof...All the communal facilities were in another building linked to the first by a covered gallery on the second floor.⁴⁹

Kopp sets the link between Constructivists and Modernism not only by formal resemblance but also through the way they approached to human necessities:

Architecturally speaking, the Narkomfin building was a good example of the Constructivists' functional method. All the usual elements of Modern architecture were also present: ribbon windows, free-standing columns, roof terraces, etc. It provided its inhabitants with what Constructivists, like all Modern architects in the West, considered the indispensable human environment: air, sun, and greenery.⁵⁰

The relation of the Narkomfin communal house to the project of Modernity is mentioned by Buchli: "This was the foundational project of the Soviet state and the most complete realisation of European modernity."⁵¹ Returning back to Kopp, as he continues to set forth definitions of the term through his work, he points to another notion that is aimed to be transformed: domesticity. The foundations of this change were set at the redefinition of actor in its existential and simplest natural – not self-oriented signifier: gender.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ V. Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism*, Berg (Oxford International) Publishers, 1999, p. 2.

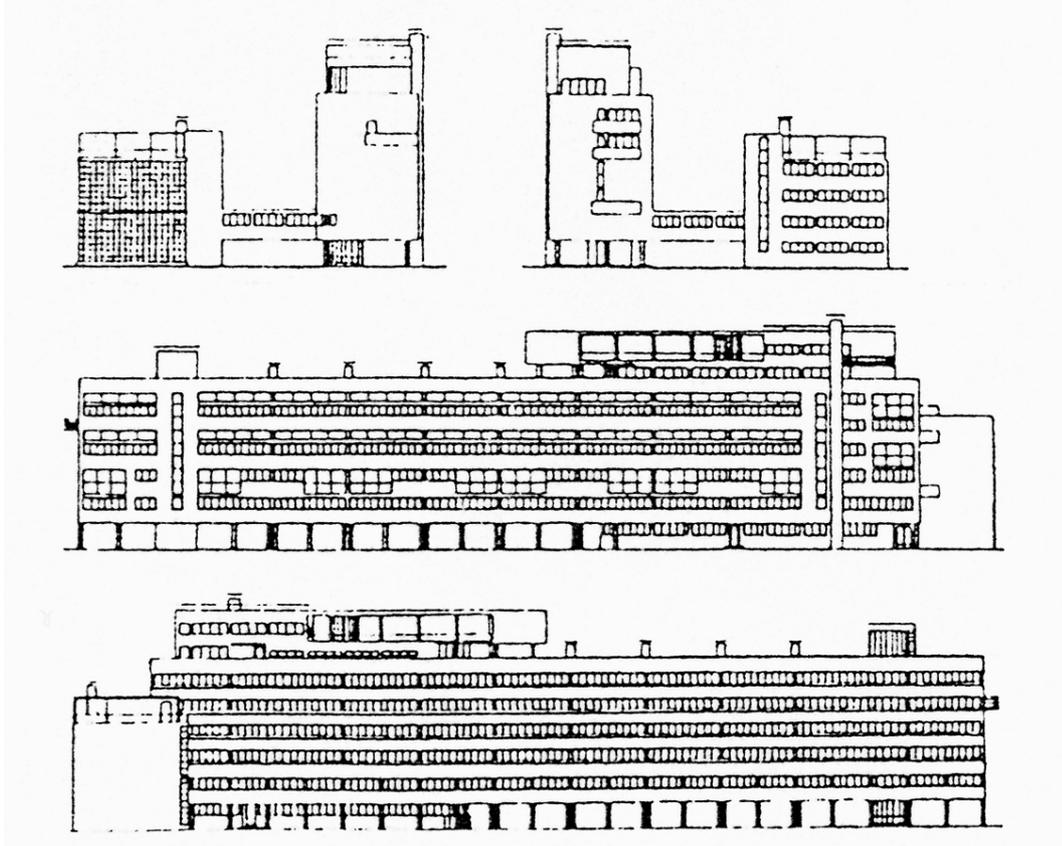


Fig. 2.4 M. Ginzburg and I. Milinis. Elevations of the Narkomfin Communal House, Moscow, 1930.

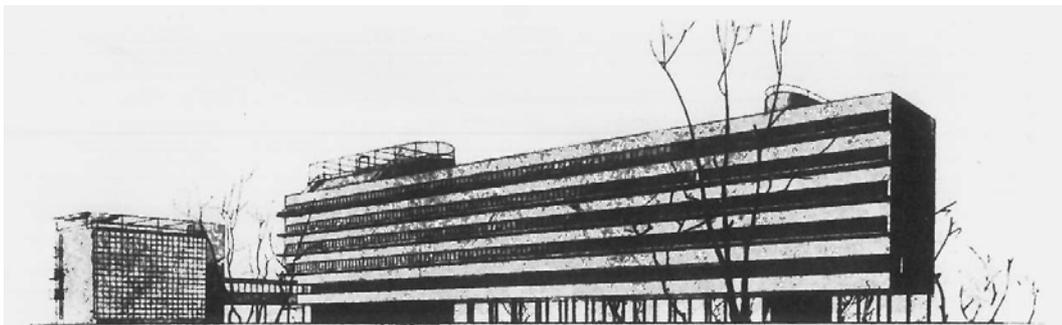


Fig. 2.5 Perspective drawing of the Narkomfin.

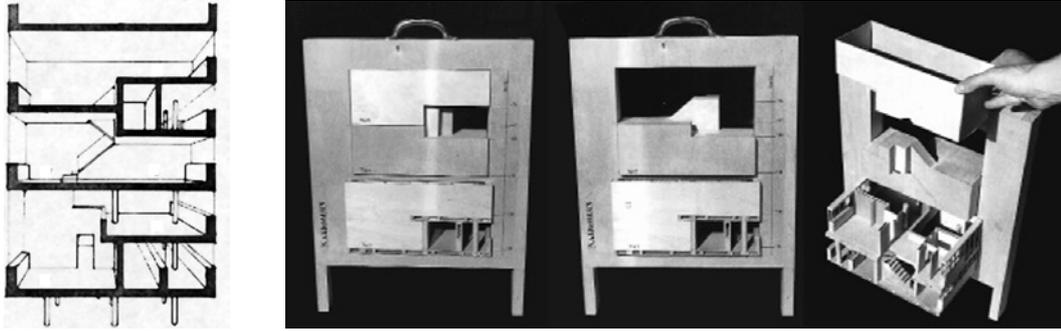


Fig. 2.6 Section and model of the Narkomfin Communal House showing relations between units.

Emancipating women from domestic chores and leading them to the realms of useful labor, similarly to that of men.⁵² These two points, domesticity and gender, are not defined within the main objectives of this study whilst they are mentioned to point how the change in social domain is to include even perceptions of the smallest scale notions. There is evidence, that Kopp mentions, in 1928 an official document – by the “unit responsible for building side of the housing”: Tsentrozhlstroj⁵³ – announcing regulations concerning the prerequisites for the habitants that want to live in the communal house. Furthermore although it is proposed that ninety percent of the inhabitants should be from the working class⁵⁴, this will be neglected arbitrarily in the Stalinist era due to habitants accommodated by the state to spy on the society.

Communal houses have been organized with the aim of collectivizing the workers’ way of life...the housing units should be designed for one or two people at most. There should be a place for sleeping, and for some leisure activities and intellectual work...The premises reserved for children should be have room for all of them to stay there permanently.

They [ones moving to the communal house] will not bring with them any elements that do not correspond to the living conditions (individual kitchen utensils, unhygienic objects, etc.).

Members...living in a communal house...also act as agitators and spread propaganda for collectivization of neighboring buildings at their workshops, factories and other places of work.⁵⁵

⁵² A. Kopp, *Constructivist Architecture in the USSR*, Academy Editions, 1985, pp. 70-71.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 80. It also controlled the RZhSKT (Workers’ Housebulding Cooperatives).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

After reading the quotation relating Constructivists to Modernism regarding the humanist aims cited earlier from Kopp, one may seem to have no reason to think of a deviation from foresights or failure of such a “humane” transformation project. However time has shown that let alone transforming the old individual life style into a collectivized and humanized way of life, it has impoverished the life of the society in a way that, Socialism had proposed. There is an important point that has to be made, that Boym brings forth: “Whereas the house-commune had been a microcosm of the ideal revolutionary universe, the communal apartment was an actual Soviet microcosm, a nonidealized image of Soviet society in miniature.”⁵⁶

As within the later examples, in which a collective life was compulsory children were perceived as property of the society. The “social-objectness” of children will find its expression as separate dwelling units in the architectural domain. Similarly Boym, through relating domesticity and kitchen space to the conception of the nucleus family, sets that the collective kitchen – under the exciting phrase it was the demolition of the “family” as a societal unit. Kopp citing from architect V. Kuzmin’s address in the SA gives signals to the extreme attitude that is to ascend within the following years: “The proletariat should proceed immediately to the destruction of family, which is an instrument of oppression and exploitation. In the communal house I consider the family to be...a physiological necessity which is historically inevitable between a man-worker and a women-worker.”⁵⁷ This marks the Stalinization of architecture and society rather than realizing a revolution with socialist guidelines regarding humane qualities that Kopp sets forth while relating Constructivism and Modernism. In means of agency, the architect was defined as a creative-agent within the previous chapter. The structure of the post-revolutionary era enables the culturally establishment of an architect of that suites the attribution. The architect is in way respected and trusted as a producing member of a society who has the intellect and capacity to transform the rest of the society through his work. Thus architecture is set as a discipline capable of providing the sustainability of the revolution; an economic, cultural, psychological,

⁵⁶ Svetlana Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*, Harvard University Press, 1994, p. 130.

Boym’s view is important other than being an observer and interpreter. She had been brought up in a communal apartment in Leningrad.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

environmental, social, technological guide. The autonomy of the architect's inner-world can be discussed, of course under certain conditions in this era. On the other hand the architect of the Stalinist era was defined, like the structure of the first years of the post-revolutionary era, but this time on opposite themed structure. This can be labeled as a centralist and "uniformist" structure that aimed exerting the maximum amount of control and thus homogenizing the agent into a single obedient actor whose framework of agency was predefined. This position of the agent resembled the "social-objectness" of the child, brought up under control within a notion of collective parenthood. Since it did not allow for even a semi-autonomous agent, the search for the creative agent will be an aimless one of fantasy. Thus the Stalinization of a society was the demolition of the creative-agent.

Another communal house that can be mentioned is the one designed by M. Barshch and V. Vladimirov in 1929 but was not built. (Fig. 3.7) Apart from housing complexes, Kopp also refers to other building functions under the title social-condensers. These can be listed as the factory-kitchens which are related to the aim to shift domesticity from its bourgeois-conceived way. (Fig. 3.8) However as Kopp strictly points, the economic aspect is very deterministic for these units regarding the first Five-year Plan in 1929. Strictly related to these are establishments of "experimental kindergartens, day nurseries" that "combined new educational principles with psychoanalysis."⁵⁸ Another aspect that aimed to emancipate women from chore housework was public laundries. The factory is another important case where the worker not just produced but was educated and thus collective (class) consciousness was founded. Lissitzky's definition sets a clear perception of the factory after the revolution: "in our country the factory ceased to exist as a place of exploitation and as a hayed institution... [it] has become the real place of education: the university for the new socialist man."⁵⁹ There is the hostel for students and apprentices of the Moscow Textile Institute designed by Ivan Nikolaev that resembles a house commune with its scale and complex functional schema. (Fig.2.9)

⁵⁸ A. Kopp, *ibid.*, p. 87.

⁵⁹ Paul Wood, *The Politics of the Avant-Garde, The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde 1915-1932*, Guggenheim Museum New York Press, 1992.

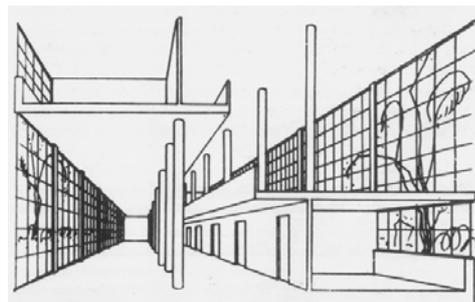
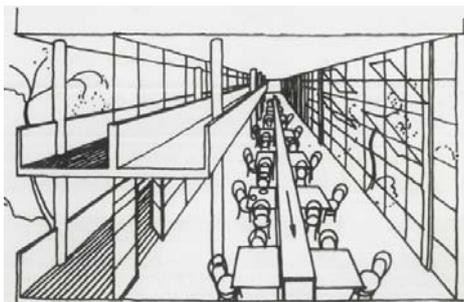
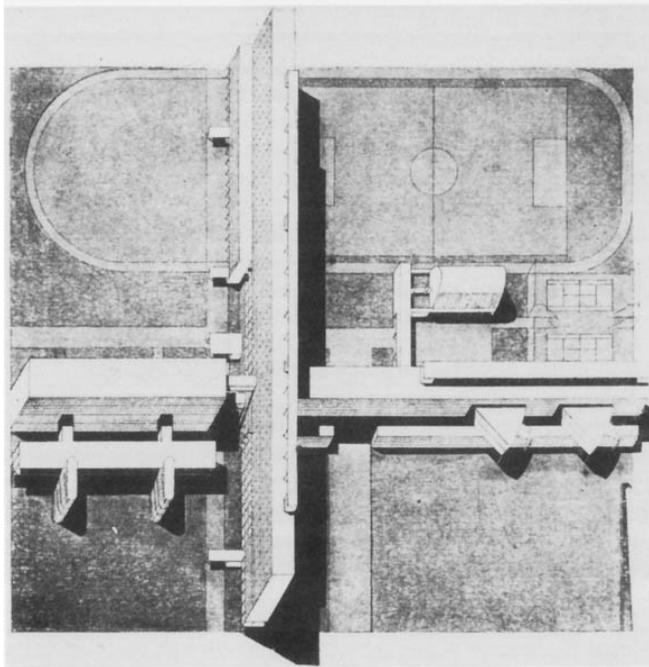


Fig. 2.7 M. Barshch and V. Vladimiro. Design for a communal house, 1929. Axonometric view and perspectives from the communal dining and leisure rooms.

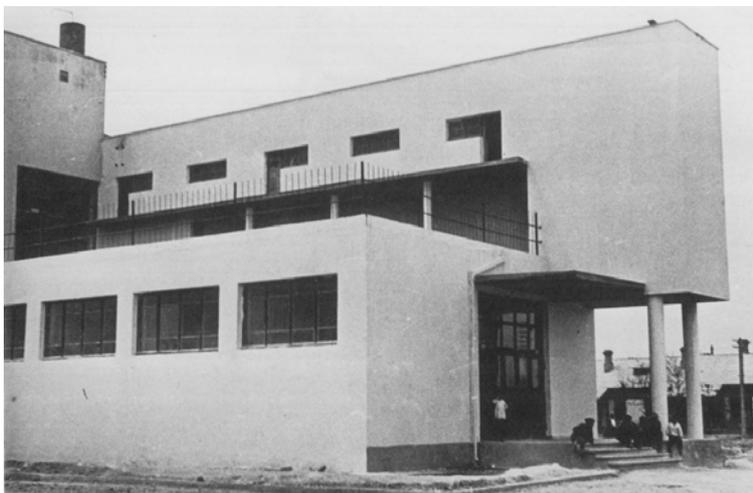


Fig. 2.8 Zheinov-Dagashev, a factory kitchen, Baku, 1920s.

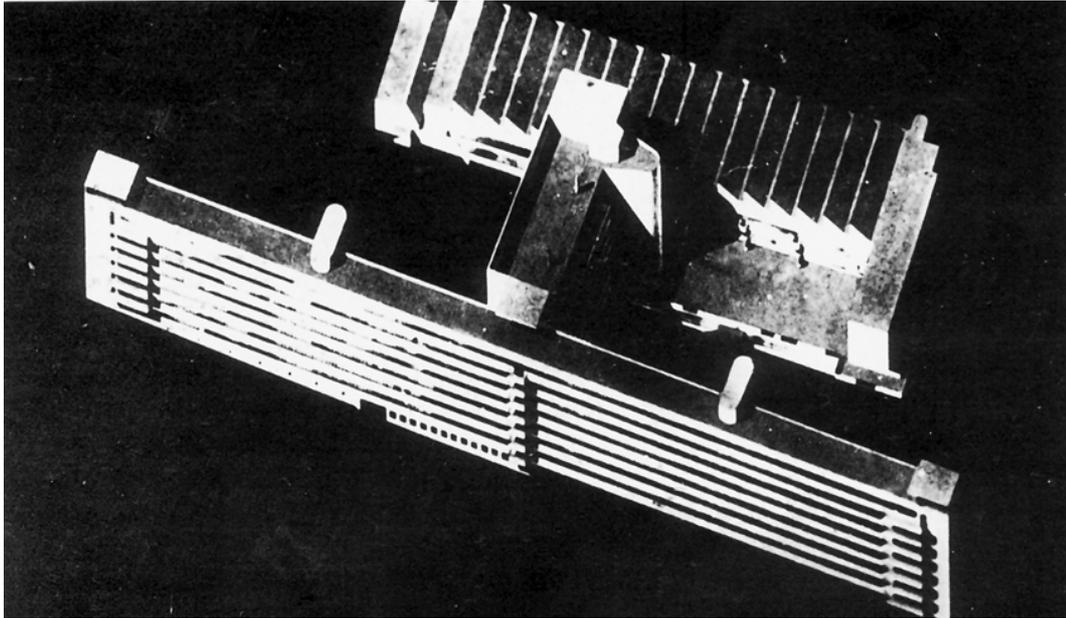


Fig.2.9 Ivan Nikolaev. Hostel for students and apprentices of the Moscow Textile Institute Photo factory-kitchen student hostel communal house, Moscow, 1930.

Probably one of the most extremist and most impressive example that can be labeled as social condenser is Melnikov's SONnaia SONata – Sonata of Sleep⁶⁰ which was the central hotel or as Starr labels it the "Laboratory of Sleep" (Fig. 3.10) which was placed at the center in the 1929 design of Green City submitted to the competition.⁶¹ An unusual hotel through which probably the final uncontrolled and un-collectivized human activity was aimed to be conquered "channeled and directed".⁶² Taken for granted the importance of the project as an extreme or maybe for some an irrelevant, unrealistic and even an absurd example of the collectivization process of human life and a tool for transforming man and his habits, Melnikov's design strategy and the dose of creativity and inventiveness in his approach forces the observer to focus on this point: that it is a design by Melnikov. Starr describes the project in a very detailed manner:

Two large wings radiated from a central corpus, in which were housed rooms for washing, undressing, and preparing oneself for the cure provided in the thin wards at either side...all beds here were to be built-in, like laboratory tables; to obviate the need for pillows, the floors sloped gently to the ends of the structure. [In addition to this point, not mentioned by Starr is that the oblique - or convex section of

⁶⁰ S. Frederick Starr, Melnikov: Solo Architect in Mass Society, Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 179. "Son" is the Russian word for sleep.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

the floor slabs] The walls are broken with great sheets of glass, for sleep would be encouraged at all times of day and would under some circumstances require sunlight as well as darkness.

At either end of the buildings were to be situated control booths, where technicians would command instruments to regulate the temperature, humidity, and air pressure, as well as to waft salubrious scents and “rarefied condensed air” through the halls...Specialists working “according to scientific facts” would transmit from the control center a range of sounds gauged to intensify the process of slumber...Step by step the worker would relax and his psyche would be rehabilitated by the combined forces of art and technology.⁶³

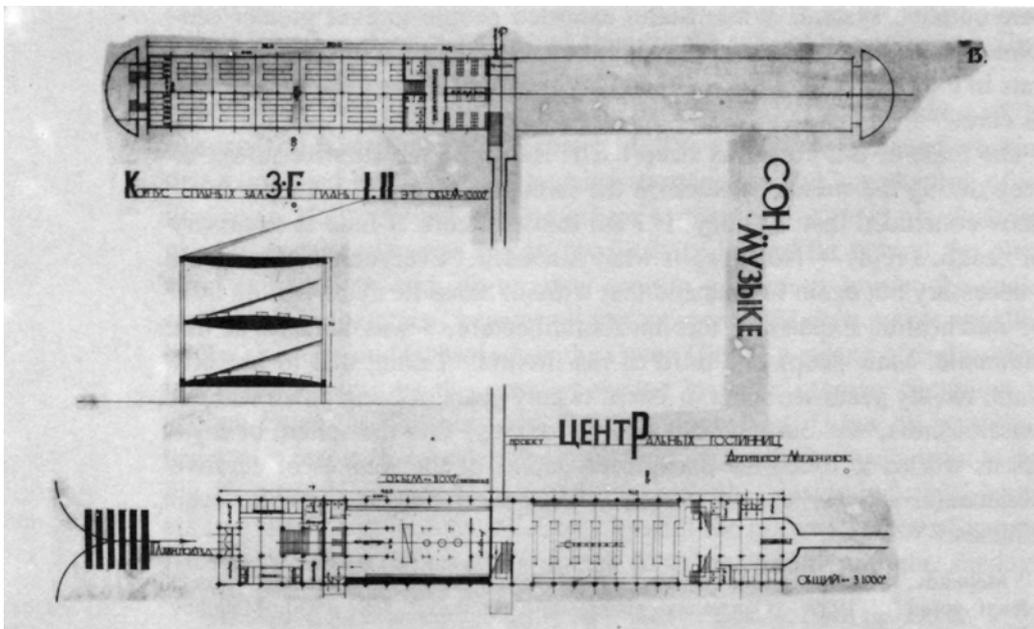
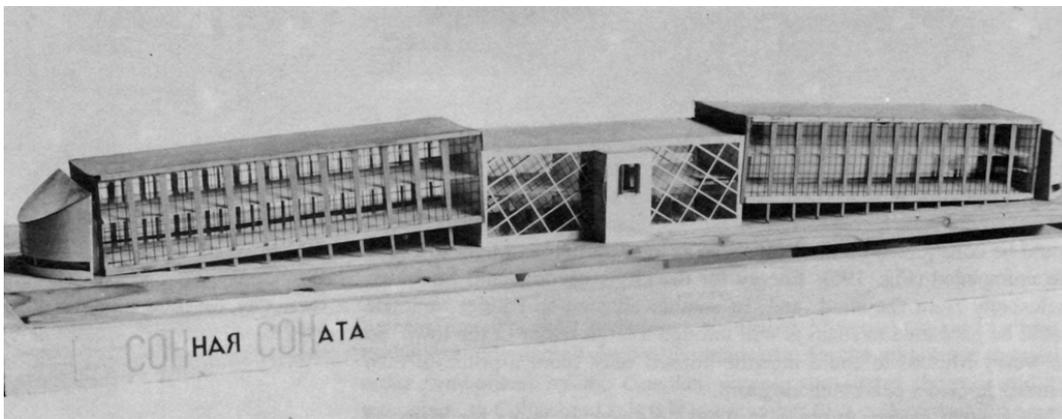


Fig. 2.10 K. Melnikov. Design of the SONnaia SONata or Sonata of Sleep, 1929, model and floor plans with a section showing the sections of the concrete slabs.

⁶³ Ibid.

The project was detested in general and was accused of being “naïve” and “anti-socialist”. As mentioned above this project was an original approach, apart from being an example of the collectivization process. It rendered the significant personality of an architect who, as will be mentioned later, was capable of constituting a self-generated inner-domain that as expected was disavowed by the institutions and groups that defined the mainstream paradigm.

2.2.1. Locating the Structure-Agency Debate

The social condensers were the apparatus for the inclusive transformation of the society, both structure and agency. Thus it meant changing social institutions, notions, values, preferences, actors and actions leading to an inclusive shift from old bourgeois notions to a new socialist perception of the society and individual.

El Lissitzky sets forth a point that the structure-agency debate can be based: ideological super-structure protects and safeguards the work. As sub-structure for the renaissance we have to undertake in architecture, we named at the outset social-economic reconstruction.”⁶⁴ This is the point where structure can be located as a generator of variables that pre-define paths in a manner that their consequences will strengthen the structure itself. Thus under what conditions the structure is defined gains importance. There can be two possibilities, under evolutionary conditions which can be solidified through the structure and architecture in the pre-revolutionary era. Thus with Western influence, traditional interpretations and circumstances that do not project a large-scale change or anything that will result in a rupture. Structure in these time intervals can be perceived as having a transparent character, applying the optimum amount of pressure.

On the other hand, there is the structure of the revolutionary consequences which has to apply pressure at its maximum level and contrary to the primary it has a dominant and expressive character that has to exist even at the very bits and pieces of life. Thus the post-revolutionary structure after October 1917 had to create its own infrastructure, its own way of life, and this was possible through

⁶⁴ El Lissitzky, ‘Americanism’ in *European Architecture*, *El Lissitzky: Life, Letters, Texts*, edited by Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, New York Graphic Society Ltd., p. 372.

generating an architecture of its own. However if this is the case, how can the plurality of the era of artistic milieu be explained under such a dominant structure? As mentioned earlier there can be several proposals; the primary case is that they were in fact settled on either the exact foundations and used different outlines as Frampton puts, or the essential core was identical. In fact it was this essence which included the fundamental codes of the structure. In the Soviet it was the represented by the motto: juxtaposing art and everyday life.

Lissitzky continues by defining the “dialectic process in the development” of the era’s contemporary architect; which is in a way defining the role of the social-agent, the architect, through architecture.⁶⁵ The first point states the “abolition of the traditional” followed by “A work which is to be adequate to the present time must include an invention. Our times demand shapes which arise out of elementary forms (geometry).” This first point is then summarized as the “Repudiation of art as a mere emotional, individual, romantically-isolated matter.”⁶⁶ Although these lines may seem as a definition of expectations from an architectural product, they also define the architect and set forth how the design process should be perceived. The architect as a social-agent should follow the demands of the structure and must not be confused by individual preferences. This point has significance and has been stated by several other actors of the era. After defining the agent, second and third points project the notion of agency or how architectural action should be perceived. It can be said that the second starting with “Beginning of construction...” still deals with the notion of agent and agency within a total view point. Lissitzky states that young generations do not have the sufficient architectural experience and this led them to the “primarily utilitarian, to the plainly expedient” and “whether by the engineer or by the architect, the result should be produced automatically. It is considered necessary merely to introduce new building-methods and materials and expect the work to come from those as an automatic consequence.” Thus it does not matter how the architect as social agent is, unless he take part in the production of the “proper” building.⁶⁷ This notion sets forth the conceptual framework of a “structurally predefined agency”.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 372.

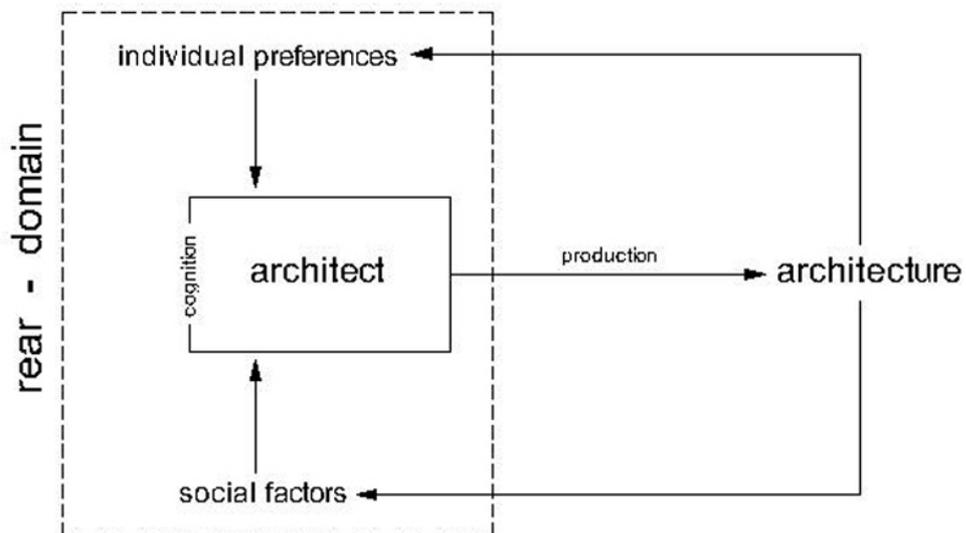
⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 373.

⁶⁷ Other from the comparison (or relation) of the architect and the engineer, Lissitzky marks another distinction: the “art of architecture” and the “art of building” or the “builders”

Finally the third point, similar to the second has a twofold layout; as well including how the structure should be designated, where the focal point should be placed and how this locating will affect the architect and architecture. It deals with the “first construction period” and Lissitzky proposes that this period “requires the concentration of forces away from the sphere of social-economic revolution on to a preoccupation with the cultural revolution.”

This assertion undoubtedly defines a Marxist structure-agency relationship, which will be mentioned in detail through the following chapter that locates the agent as a product of the structure who cannot have an autonomous individual inner-structure; thus is not capable of autonomous action. On the other hand, sets social-structure as a dominant generator of variables that also enable it to mould the agent.

Table 2.2 Diagram showing the mutual relation between social factors – defined by the structure and individual preferences.



and “artist-architects”. He criticizes the latter: “Let the builders design and construct the living frame of a factory or a community centre, and then the artist-architects will come along with their powder and paint...and start sticking bits on and putting a stylish make-up on the unartistic work of the builder.”(Ibid., p. 367) This is strictly related with the abandoning “mystic” layers of the design process, bringing “art into life” and another indicator of a dominant social-structure.

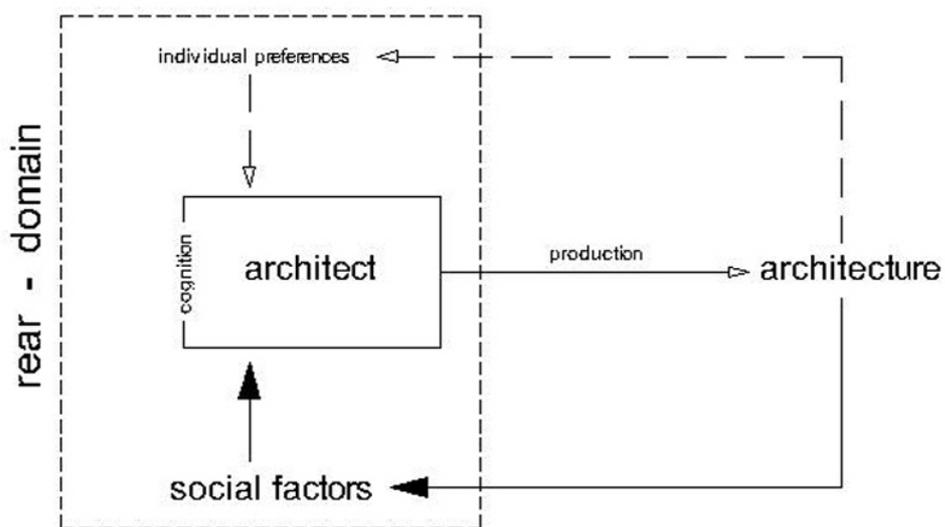
The discussion, on the dichotomy between structure and agency, can be related to architecture by presenting it as a diagram and its derivative. The first diagram sets forth a mutual relation, resembling Giddens' point of view. The architect as a social agent has the capability of contributing to the formation of the structure via his actions and production; through producing architecture. (Table 2.2) Thus his cognition has a dual formation: individual preferences and social factors (produced by the structure). The dominance of the former one will lead to an agency determined production whereas dominance of the latter will lead to the dominance of structure. Under rational circumstances, prohibition of any of the two strata seems impossible. However, the scale of the structure and its capability to practice organized power may lead to the misjudgment that the agent is weak and therefore cannot have the adequate counter-power to resist. At this very point attributing the rear-domain as being a domain of an upper-scale related to history of human existence should be asserted. Thus there is always the possibility of the agent to utilize his own cognition, his own set of theory, through concepts and elements that are not exercised by that structure in that specific era. Consequently the actions of the agent may lead to a vanguard formation. However this cannot be rendered as an effort to abandon the structure, on the contrary it again underlines the mutual relationship that both the structure and the agent spontaneously cause the formation of the other. The structure cannot be perceived as an autonomous, abstract entity apart from individuals, thus from agency. Furthermore it should not be perceived as an entity of such since this will lead to the notion of an abstract, "liquidated" human agent. It is equally dynamic and is at the same position with the agent regarding the notion of production; i.e. producing and being produced.

The second diagram, on the other hand, projects the individual domain which is dominated by social strata. (Table 2.3) The structure exerts power and forms a cognitive milieu that condemns and diminishes individual preferences, and promotes the vitality of social factors. This leads to the production of an architecture that directly reflects the structure; transforming both the architect and architecture to a mere tool. This is will be vital for both constructing spaces that generate "the way of life" for the present and the secured future as seen in the Narkomfin Housing Unit. The post-revolutionary era resembles this second diagram, and in the Stalinist era on the other hand there should not be the upper

line leading to individual preferences. It is this difference that can be said to be one of the factors that enabled the existence to preserve the effort to preserve humane qualities and establish an ethical guide for existence. In every society ruled under oppression the same schema can be traced, even the formal properties of the architecture resemble. Structures of such eras generate neo-classical forms since a search for the “new” always includes the probability of disorder. Furthermore the search for new possibilities is through the realm of the individual action, thus autonomous agency.

Buchli sets a tripartite discussion while setting the foundations to scrutinize the Soviet material culture through the Narkomfin building. First he asserts Marx and Engels’ points mentioning how they interpreted L. W. Morgan’s “correspondence between the material base – or material culture of society, and its systems of kinship and degree of social complexity.”⁶⁸ Their stress was that consciousness was also “predicated” by this material base. Buchli continues by linking the effort of Russian architects that while creating the space and environment to realize

Table 2.3 Diagram projecting the post-revolutionary era derived from the previous diagram, in which structure is the dominant entity. Thus the role of individual preferences in production is minimized and the role of social factors maximized.



⁶⁸ Victor Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism*, Berg (Oxford International) Publishers, 1999, p. 7.

socialism materially had these ideas in mind. Thus the second diagram is valid, with the lower loop functioning. He locates this “Morganian/Marxian understanding” as a tradition of “Platonic foundationalist” legacy of the Western tradition that “dominated social thought of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.”⁶⁹ The second point designates the critique set by post-structuralists in which “challenge....to fix meaning and control its superfluity.”⁷⁰ The core term to be captured is this “fixity”, which includes the one “that cannot be predetermined” and thus the declaration of the undeterminable and identical – structurally generated individuals and products: “material artefacts were not denotative or inherently homologous within systems of meaning.”⁷¹

Finally the third point which discusses the possibility of an enriched Marxist point of view that builds a constructive approach that rationally approaches the critique. Buchli sets forth two theorists and two concepts: Bourdieu and his notion “habitus”, Giddens and his “structuration principle” that aimed to overcome the perception of the agent as a mechanically responding individual and attempted to define a “structuring principle, open to the individual for creative and differentially competent manipulation through the course of that individual’s negotiation of various social situations.”⁷² Thus the criticism asserted is to the passive agent that is incapable of transforming the structure through action:

...the individual had no active role. Cultural formations and structural prerogatives were ‘out there’ exerting an irresistible influence on an individual’s actions. The obvious problem...was that cultural change became difficult to understand if the only obvious agents of such change – individual human beings themselves seemed only to be responding mechanistically to some reified structuring prerogative outside the realm of the individual.⁷³

While defining the methods of how architecture was utilized to transform individuals, Buchli again refers to Giddens’ – and Bourdieu’s critique on the pacified agent that cannot “resist to the transformative powers of material culture”: (1)...through the modulation of architectural volumes, (2) through the use of light and colour, and (3) through the programmatic use of space. All

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 8.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

these architectonic elements were marshaled to induce individuals to move away from bourgeois forms of social organisation toward socialist ones.⁷⁴

Table 2.4 An outline of architectural sins and merits of the era

| IDEALISM | MATERIALISM |
|---|---|
| abstract | concrete |
| creative intuition as the dominant factor of the design process | demystification of the design process |
| individuality and specifically the individuality of the design process | collectivity and the design as a collective process |
| the “meaning” of space and/or building | “functionality” of space and/or building |
| appraisal of space | appraisal of form/function/mass |
| dominancy of utilizing glass space that enables a fluidity | dominancy of brick and/or masonry |
| an extended and inclusive perception of rationality – comprising feelings, emotions and sensibility | a restricted rendering of rationality |
| possibility of the psychological effect of space | a sociological approach |
| bourgeoisie | proletariat |
| alienated and fallen into an enemy position | concordant to the revolutionary ideals |
| eclectic | innovative |
| utopianist | realist |

Within the architectural debates of the era, despite the changing of issues there is always the antagonism of the abstract – standing for idealism and the concrete – standing for materialism. The table above (Table 2.4) is a pragmatic effort to render this dichotomy. It is important to state that in order an architect to be

⁷⁴ Ibid.

criticized he did not have to all of the specifications on the right column; different architects were accused of promoting different ones i.e. Leonidov was accused of being an utopist and individualist and Melnikov believed that a building can have a meaning and defended that the design process should be individualistic. Although significant points will be mentioned in the following pages at this points it can be stated that the critiques on Leonidov's architecture were generally accusing him of being an idealist. Critiques regarding Melnikov on the other hand were both accusing him of being idealist in some cases and being a corrupted materialist in other.

2.3. WORKERS' CLUBS

Being a part of a project to utilize architecture as an active tool to re-define a society inclusively, including its perception of the structure and agent, communal housing units and worker's clubs had the most significant role. With the perception of this importance, great amount of effort was made to both lead research on how these institutions should be designed and how they should be realized. This intellectual and concrete labor was both architecturally, sociologically, culturally and inevitably politically manipulated. Both the communal house and the club – joined with the factory are directly related to the principle agents that both formed the main actors of the revolution and in a reflexive way its post-revolutionary tool. In other words carrying importance in a dual manner: as a causal and consequential element defining a sociological layer that is fundamental concerning the past, present and future. Thus having a role of this vitality the proletariat and its life style in every means had to be dealt with great attention.

Clubs as places for both recreation and education for the worker were also dictations for the evaluation of spare time. B. A. Ruble sets that in the 1920's workers' clubs together with department stores were seen as the realization of the Marxist revolutionary new culture – that aimed to transform the individual through scientific principles embodied in dialectical materialism and emphasized

innovative technologies – with their concrete and glass structures.⁷⁵ El Lissitzky declared them as being “workshops for the transformation of man”⁷⁶, similarly Kopp asserts as centers that are concordant with “proletkul’t theses” that will lead to the production of “the new proletarian culture” by the people themselves” through a wide range of “literary and artistic creation.”⁷⁷ Whereas via communal houses, as mentioned earlier, new habits, a new life style and notion of domesticity is defined. A holistic definition of how a member of society should work, live and recreate. There is another point regarding the social project that can be seen between the lines: defining every moment of the individual and minimizing the time that he can be alone; the individual, so called “bourgeois” time. Khan-Magomedov refers to a point stressed by The Twelfth Party Congress that “clubs must become centres for mass propaganda and the development of creativity among working class.”⁷⁸ Kopp indicates Lissitzky’s straight forward declaration of what a workers’ club stands for:

Inside workers of all aged should find rest and repose after the day’s work and should receive there a new charge of energy. Away from the family, children or adolescents, adults and the old should feel that they belong to a community. Here their interests should feel that they belong to a community. Here, their interests should be broadened. The role of the club is to liberate men by eliminating the old oppressions of the church and State.⁷⁹

The importance that workers’ clubs, apart from their dominant position within the conception of social condensers, regarding this study is two-fold. The first point is its relation to the structure-agency debate. Which will approach the case with a parallel view point with Giddens and Bourdieu, asserting that albeit the existence of a powerful set of predefinitions for architecture and an ideologically oriented architecture, the architect – some of them at least managed to preserve their position as an individual creative agent that is aware of his “inner-domain”. This leads to a mutual relationship between the social agent (architect) and structure. Thus enables the upper part of the loop in the second diagram (Table 2.3)

⁷⁵ Blair A. Ruble, *Moscow’s Revolutionary Architecture and Its Aftermath: A Critical Guide, Reshaping Russian Architecture: Western Technology, Utopian Dreams*, edited by William C. Brumfield, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 124.

⁷⁶ A. Kopp, *Constructivist Architecture in the USSR*, Academy Editions, 1985, p. 112.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Selim O. Khan-Magomedov, *Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920’s and 1930’s*, Thames and Hudson, 1987, p. 434.

⁷⁹ A. Kopp, *ibid.*

functioning. The second has a more architectonic standpoint which is a result of the societal and architectural function of the club that defines a hard challenge for the architect. A challenge between the two sub-domains of the agent: individual and social. Neglecting the former will be a solution, which in fact seems to be impossible for an artist and a creative agent. On the other hand neglecting the second will be irrelevant since this was what rendered architects' connection to the revolution, and architecture was there for establishing the social structure for the post-revolutionary society and the new individual; and perhaps the strongest tool. This sets the framework of the architect's struggle as a creative agent, to bear the endless haunting of his individual preferences and on the other hand the pressure asserted by social factors that are continuously regenerated by the structure.

First clubs were spontaneously formed through transforming spaces that are not suitable for a new style of living as "churches, private houses and those old abandoned buildings such as old theatres etc."⁸⁰ However after architecture was set to its position as an revolutionary apparatus, from that time like every social institution clubs were designed by architects with complex functional programmes. In fact as mentioned before clubs were one of the two most significant transformative elements so they cannot be established within existing buildings that did not have the adequate space but further they are to be representatives of a new social structure. They had to be designed by architects of a new era, with new visions and a proper contemporary style in order to weigh anchor from everything that belonged to the "bourgeois" society. Generally a workers' club usually has at least one auditorium either for cultural or political activities, a gymnasium or/and outdoor sports facilities; spaces for several indoor artistic and educational purposes: reading rooms, library, classes (the Workers' Palace in Petrograd which was realized in 1919 had an art and a music school) and lecture rooms. Some complex ones like the Petrograd example had also a had three halls (a large one for meetings and theatrical performances for about 3000-4000 people; a small hall for 300, and another hall for the People's University courses with a capacity of 1200), a separate hall for chamber music and amateur dramatics and a self-service restaurant in addition.⁸¹ On the other

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ S. O. Khan-Magomedov, *ibid.*, p. 434.

hand smaller scale clubs situated in urban context usually had a variety of indoor facilities.

Kahn-Magomedov brings forth that the functional-program of a club, has been one of the core discussions in the second half and significantly by the end of the 1920s.⁸² This is in fact due to societal demands which can be asserted as a trace for the normalization of the life of the society. However this must not imply that everything was on the tracks, since it points to the first years of the Stalinist era; but neither the post-revolutionary dynamism that can be related to Lenin has faded nor the centralist one-man administration of the Stalinist era has fundamentally established. It can be said that it points to a time span that the natural intricacy of the revolution has been replaced by a more systematized and social structure with settled institutions. The problems that defined the framework of the debate that set serious contradictions for the architect to face between “the demands put to the architect and the actual, rapidly changing living conditions” can be listed as:

The workers’ developing intellectual needs and the ever-growing complexity of urban life outside working hours required a diversification of club functions.

A radical change in the nature of social demand...; the unsolved problems of socialist settlement and a new way of life; the conflict between various theoretical conceptions – and attendant models of spatial organization – of urban life in the future.⁸³

Clubs as classified by Kahn-Magomedov, from the very beginning of their establishments, can be separated into four groups according to the “kind of community” it tended to serve: “domestic ones, linked with Housing Communes; industrial ones, attached to production plants; vocational ones, which were offshoots of trade unions, and territorial clubs, run by district or city councils.”⁸⁴

It was mentioned within the earlier section that due to several consequences, there were different approaches regarding the basic principles of how an appropriate architecture should be. This naturally, as Khan-Magomedov projects,

⁸² Ibid., p. 436.

⁸³ Ibid, pp. 436, 457.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 435.

is also in question for the design of workers' clubs. At this point though, the discussion must not be limited to revolutionary demands and the accordance or discordance architecture to those. The very point that must not be neglected is the architectonic domain since none of the architects reject the point that architecture must produce space to build a new human environment. "Suprematist Constructivists approached the mage for a workers' club quite differently. They constructed complex compositions consisting of rectangular – usually flattened – volumes scored by horizontal runs of windows, often contrasted with the vertical rectangular mass of the theatre."⁸⁵ (Fig. 2.11) "Functionalist Constructivists preferred to use a pavilion lay-out in their designs for clubs, with no special emphasis on any particular component."⁸⁶ (Fig. 2.12) Whereas the OSA members, as core Constructivists Ginzburg and Vesnin brothers: "The functional organization of the interior space is even more emphatically reflected in the exterior composition...Vesnins, unlike Melnikov, made no attempt to impart a well-defined and memorial image to club exteriors"⁸⁷ (Fig. 2.13). On the other hand there was also a minority neo-classical trend that inherited the pre-revolutionary vision. (Fig. 2.14)

Iliia Golosov⁸⁸, as a Rationalist, "believed that form must have 'meaning'" and "that basic process of design consisting in transforming 'mass', which is semantically inarticulate, into 'form, which is responsible to the meaning that has brought it into existence...". In his Zuev Club, Cooke points that there are formal clichés – like the cylindrical glass form placed at the corner of the building – that there is only one view point like Melnikov's which "encapsulates an image of the building..."⁸⁹ – and that other viewpoints are fairly less satisfactory, thus indicate that have been less considered. (Fig. 2.15) As it will be discussed later in detail Melnikov "treated the club building as a large volume with a striking, usually symmetrical shape."⁹⁰ On the other hand Leonidov had based his unique and refined club designs on Suprematist subtlety as a proposal within the discussions that carried out on how the workers' club of the future should be. For Leonidov

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.436.

⁸⁸ Iliia Golosov and Melnikov founded their own studio in VKhuTEMAS which they called the "New Academy".

⁸⁹ C. Cooke, *Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde*, Museum of Modern Art New York, 1990, p. 32.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

“designing for the future...was not merely a matter of boldly tackling functional and technical problems but, first and foremost, of providing for changing human needs.”⁹¹ These two latter architects will serve as a standpoint not only due to their contrasting architectures and personalities but furthermore to the main discussion that despite the collective cognition and production of architecture there exists the realm of the individual domain. In a way who believed that there was more than one way for the revolution to succeed, but all had to include humane values. It will not be wrong to claim that they followed their own way, thus they were alone and both were criticized of being self-oriented, of not being in perfect accordance with the collectivity that the revolution aimed.

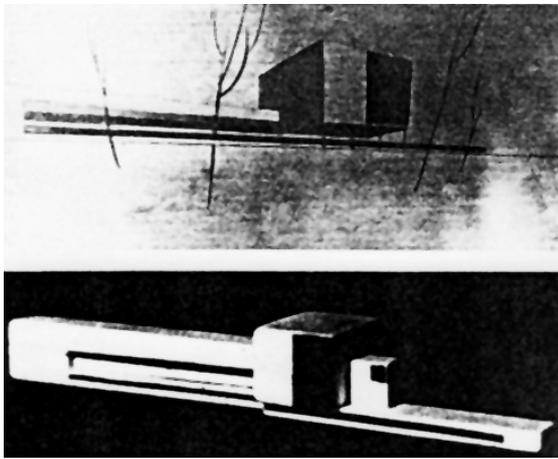


Fig. 2.11 Khidekel. Perspective and model of the design for the Dubrovsk Power Station Club, 1931.

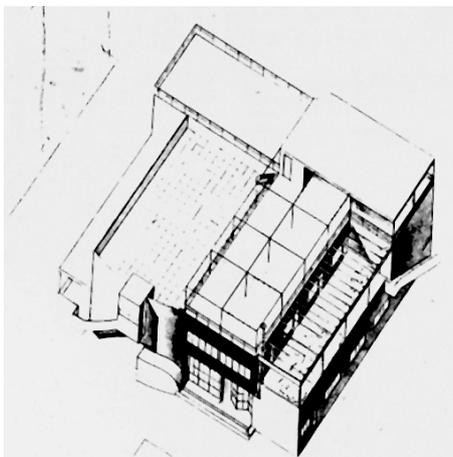


Fig. 2.12 A. Burov. Standard Workers' Club for 300 people, 1927.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 457.

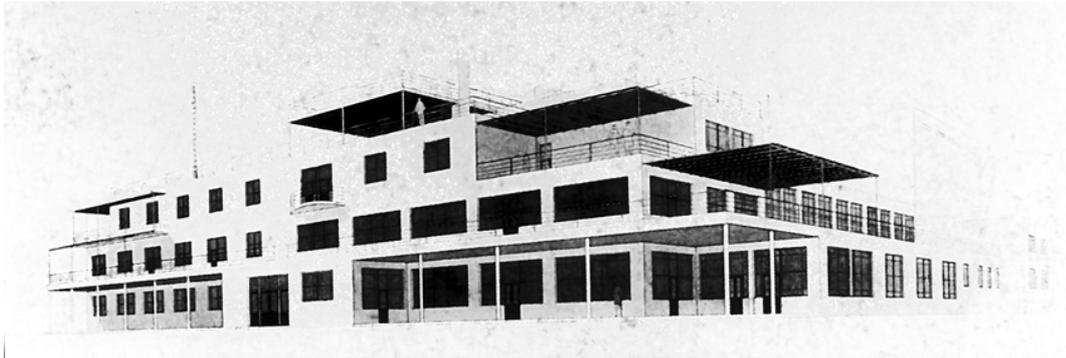


Fig. 2.13 Vesnin brothers, design for the Bailov Workers' Club, Baku, 1928.

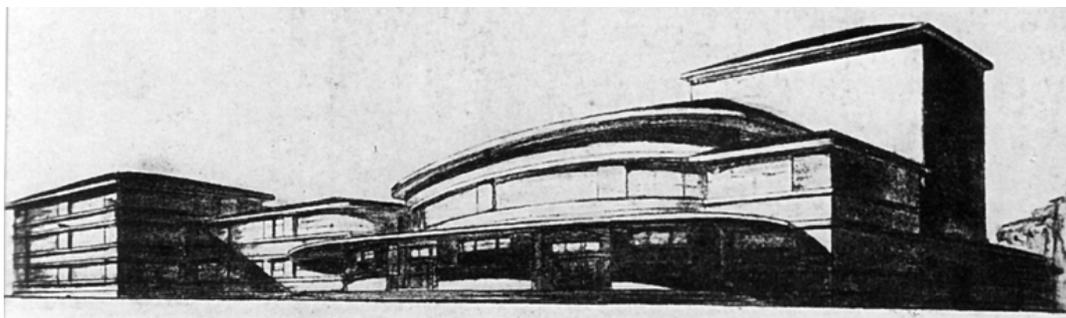


Fig. 2.14 Vladimir Shchuko and V. Gelfreikh, perspective drawing of the Textile Workers' Club, Moscow, 1927.

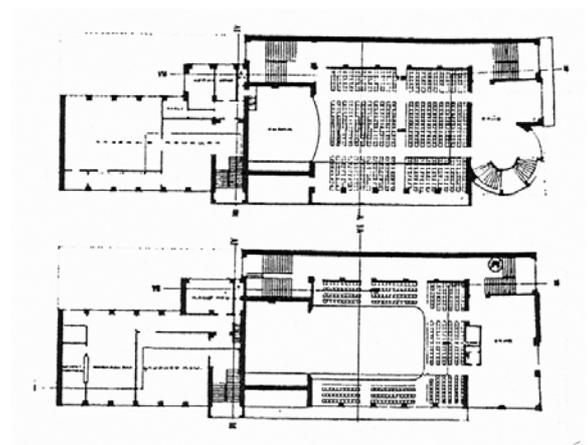


Fig. 2.15 I. Golosov, The Zuev Workers' Club for the Moscow Communal Economy, Moscow, 1929. Photo from the "significant viewpoint"; ground and first floor plan.

As the inquiries on the Soviet case after October Revolution has a tradition of an ideological approach, if it has to be appropriated regarding ideology; the position of this study regarding the individual domain as an effort to answer the question: whose ideology: the architect or state; in other words the social agent or the structure? Thus the final two sections of this chapter will focus on two architects of the era, Konstantin Melnikov and Ivan Leonidov and their Workers' Club designs significantly to unfold the possibility of individualistic existence counter the societal existence that renders the individual as a mould.

The different scales of the individual's breakthrough of his commitments or of emancipation from being a "cultural dope" using Giddens' terminology can be unfolded through a dual case; on the one hand there is the materialistic case: antagonism between individuality and collectivity – ranging from professional groups as in the case of architecture of the era to the state institutions and to society as a whole. On the other hand the idealistic case: individual inner-domain and the dominant domain of thoughts, values, norms, and acceptances etc. that are rendered by the structure. These can also be technical or economical inputs that are ex-structural and ex-individual variables that rely upon historical – i.e. the time interval – and geographical – i.e. natural resources – determiners. Ginzburg points the economic and technical handicaps that restricted the creative process of the architect, but also the difficulties of production. (Fig.2.16)

Thus, the economic characteristics of our transitional period are narrowing and focusing the architect's attention, first of all, on *using and organizing everyday utilitarian material* with the most concise expressiveness with the least expenditure of human energy.⁹²



Fig. 2.16 Photos of seasonal peasant workers arriving and at the worksite.

⁹² M. Ginzburg (1924), *Style and Epoch: Problems of Modern Architecture*, translated by Anatole Senkevitch Jr., The MIT Press, 1982, p. 113.

Cooke also emphasizes the importance of personal backgrounds, i.e. conditions how and where individuals were brought up, that was readable through their designs.⁹³

...innocent of most urban aesthetics, whose basic aesthetic structures were formed in rural, peasant milieus. Thus the two greatest formal innovators of the architectural avant-garde, Ivan Leonidov and Iakov Chernikov, [and later adding Melnikov] brought their primal, almost carnal sense of form from childhoods spent under the tough tutorship of peasant life, in constant battle with rude nature, innocent of the intellectual constructs of urbanity...⁹⁴

The point that Cooke stresses is the importance of the places where individuals spent their formative years; in rural or urban geographies and how this was reflected their designs. As a result of a profound observation Cook sets forth that all three architects that had were singled out with in the collective stand of architecture carried traces of their natal milieus. Continuing by pointing that Chernikov, Melnikov and Leonidov were difficult colleagues to work with, which was both the consequence and the cause that they were approached critically and with precaution.

2.3.1. Konstantin Melnikov and Workers' Clubs

The basis of Melnikov's own approach was the pursuit of a single, relatively simple generating idea for each building through exercise of the "creative imagination." For the Palace of Labor project, for example, it was the principle that "every person in an audience of 8000 can hear a natural voice"; in the Rusakov Club, the transformability of the auditoriums for different-sized audiences; in the echelon planning of his Sukharkev market or the little commercial pavilions in Paris, the idea that "every kiosk" has "a corner site".⁹⁵

If this quotation sets one of the most descriptive that tend to draw a concise picture of how Melnikov approached to architecture and how he handled the process of separate design processes as packages, then the title "Solo Architect in Mass Society" Starr gave to his study on Melnikov is a straight forward

⁹³ C. Cooke, *Russian Avant-garde: Theories of Art, Architecture and the City*, Academy Editions, 1995, p. 26 and Catherine Cooke, *Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde*, Museum of Modern Art New York, 1990, p. 14

⁹⁴ C. Cooke, *Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde*, Museum of Modern Art New York, 1990, pp. 14-15.

⁹⁵ C. Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 31.

description of Konstantin Melnikov's architectural adventure in the post-revolutionary era of the Soviets. The shifting focal point of architectural cognition and furthermore the autonomy that he attributed to the primal thought that was worked out through a specific design process acts as an important reason for him not being able to "fitted" in certain group. Starr points to certain rejections that Melnikov made either verbally or literally; only through his built work since he seldom talked or wrote on his architecture. To project his general attitude of fixation of any approach probably cannot be explained better than his own words: "I consider any dogma to be the enemy of my work."⁹⁶ The first is of functionalism which he rejected through answering the question "who decides on the function of a cello?" and that can be concluded by a last sentence: "No, function cannot provide all the answers."⁹⁷ The second point is his denial of the deterministic role of building "material and technology" on the architect's design, declaring that: "The only materials needed for the construction of my architectural works are light, air, and water."⁹⁸ Thus points Starr may had led him to an "environmental determinism", however rejected this as being a very loose ground to stable his architecture. After rejecting these two architectonic variables and the determinism of a natural surrounding, the third can be stated "social and economic circumstances" that can only "set forth broad programs broad programs that are subject to infinite numbers of interpretation in practice."⁹⁹

At this point of search for a new domain to establish the foundations of his architecture Starr claims that there were two possibilities: turning back to the tradition of his education as a beaux-arts student at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture – the Romantic-Classical tradition; or turning "inward to his own self". In fact these two possibilities are strictly related as the first is one of the determiners of the latter; they both render the inner-domain of the creative individual, the artist. Melnikov, as Starr sets forth neither neglects the primary possibility, on the contrary utilizes it in an innovative force to structure is authenticity, nor the latter which would be within the limits of absurdity when an artist is the case. The formal innovativeness and sculpture-

⁹⁶ S. Frederick Starr, *Melnikov: Solo Architect in a Mass Society*, Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 240.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 242

likeness is also pointed by Cooke which she links the former to the “characteristic formal sensibility, rooted in the broad, open tedium of the Russian landscape where three dimensional form makes a powerful statement of ‘presence’”. For the latter point Cooke puts a more fundamental assertion referring to the contribution Melnikov made to Western Modernist perception of the building site:

The answer Melnikov gave to the question on his design process by the journal “Architecture of the USSR” can be set within the scope of the study as the most direct; and furthermore which sets his counter position regarding the mainstream, praised architecture of collectivity:

“At the first stage of work on a project there is no a priori law governing the creative process to which one is subject. A great deal depends on intuition and on what is commonly called “creative impulse”. Architecture is the undetermined product of subjective perceptions, rather than the inevitable end-product of the interaction of objective forces. It is for society, but not by society. And since the “creative impulse” of individuals is central to its existence, architecture is inescapably an art in the fullest sense of the word.

Melnikov had no doubt that the intuitions from which design emerges have their source in the subjective world of feeling. The main aim of my book is to present Architecture, but not some Architecture that is made up from well-known recipes and illusions that cannot be realized, but rather an architecture [that embodies] those rare intimations of the unseen but real world of our own feelings.¹⁰⁰

Similarly Cooke points to Melnikov’s counter position regarding the collective design process: “detested the teamwork that was fundamental to the Constructivist approach” and quoting from him: “Creativity is when you say that is mine.”¹⁰¹ This can be set as the declaration of his belief in individuality in the creation process and thus the mutual relation of the dual structure that constitutes the cognition of the architect. Cook also mentions another point which separates Melnikov from the Constructivists while setting: “‘creative intuition’ as the architect’s main design tool” since the main stream effort – in accordance with the materialistic culture – was to demystify the creative process. This in fact is a parallel critique with those concerning Leonidov’s designs which will be discussed in the following pages. Leonidov like Melnikov draws attention to the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 242-43.

¹⁰¹ C. Cooke, *ibid.*

creativity of the architect, as a point that must not be sacrificed. In the article titled *The Palette of the Architect*, published in *Architecture USSR* in 1934, he sets forth his discontent and doubts on mass production's constraining on the creative thinking of the architect and thus the architect will turn into a mechanical agent that will realize "what the marketplace offers in the way of 'styles'".¹⁰²

Starr points to another similarity between Melnikov and Leonidov which is their distant position from pure reality which in fact is distance of different direction:

There were limits to Melnikov's flight from reality. He could not favor the sleigh-of-hand whereby Ivan Leonidov would destroy reality by drawing his buildings on black paper with white ink. If for Leonidov this flight to Suprematism meant liberation from the NEP era's earnest functionalism, for Melnikov is meant insecurity. Under the pressure of the heightened tempo of life, he sought not some interplanetary void but a new connection with real objects...Melnikov expanded his earlier *architecture parlante* by blowing up ordinary objects into whole buildings that could serve as hyper-realistic talismans of the Cultural Revolution.

On the other hand as one observes the work by these two architects albeit the similarities of a larger scale regarding the stress on human qualities, the humane essence, and their formal and spatial perceptions project the differences of their architecture. Starr's point must be handled with great attention, because it might lead to the misunderstanding of Leonidov's position and accuse him of being abstract in the negative sense regarding the era.

As mentioned at the beginning quote of this section, Melnikov's "unsystematic" and individual approach can be rendered through his workers' club designs that were made in a very short time span from 1927 to 1929. This divergent attitude is mentioned both by Cooke and Starr; however there is a point that has to be made clear. This unsystematic character must not constitute a thought of contradiction which promotes the inconsistency of his architecture. It is directly related to his personality, a very rich inner-domain that was nourished with diverse entities of the pre and post revolutionary conditions: where and how he was brought up and educated, how he perceived change both individually and

¹⁰² Andrei Gozak, Andrei Leonidov, *Ivan Leonidov: The Complete Works*, edited by C. Cooke, Academy Editions, 1988, p.103.

socially etc. His skeptical and oppositional standpoint was spontaneous and not in favor of being different for the sake of being different.

Before continuing with his clubs it is very important to solidify a counter view asserted by Cooke. Her point is that Melnikov and his work have been exaggerated and he was approached as if he was the ultimate hero of post-Revolutionary Soviet Architecture. Cooke asserts that this over estimation was in fact put back to its ordinary status by Manfredo Tafuri and Franseco dal Co in their *Theories and History of Architecture*. As they put Melnikov as “the undoubtedly the best qualified personality in Soviet Constructivism”, on the other hand mention that: “[his work is] derived from the Cubo-Futurist...provocative use of form and from the Formalist method of semantic distortion” and that “Melnikov was the most coherent analyst of the architectural syntax of the twenties and thirties in Russia..., that form should be independent of all other aspects...having nothing to do with any revolutionary or propagandist aims.”¹⁰³

Melnikov’s clubs can be briefly listed as: 1927 Rusakov Factory Workers’ Club, Moscow; Kauchuk Factory Workers’ Club; Zuev Factory Workers’ Club (not built); Frunze Workers’ Club, Moscow; 1928 Svoboda (Gorkii) Factory Workers’ Club; Pravda Factory Workers’ Club, Dulevo and 1929 Burevestnik Factory Workers’ Club. Starr points to Magomedov’s discussion on Melnikov’s clubs: “[he] wanted the clubs to represent one’s community, one’s point of contact with higher cultural values, and the avenue to one’s further advancement in society.”¹⁰⁴ Starr continues with the role of the expressionist view of the clubs that aims to locate the building “against the city” and “not in the city”; quoted from Melnikov’s own words:” as individualist against the general backdrop of the urban building.”¹⁰⁵ The individual and society duality seems to appear in every context and every scale of Melnikov’s architecture; Starr points his approach to the interior space organization aimed to prevent people from turning into a “faceless mass” but rather designed space again in his own words to promote: “close intercourse among people, but in the context of their diverse strivings with respect to one another.”¹⁰⁶ Starr also points to the similarities between the Romantic Classicist

¹⁰³ C. Cooke, *ibid.*, p.148.

¹⁰⁴ S. F. Starr, *ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

attitude of utilizing primary geometric forms and Melnikov's use of geometry in his club designs.¹⁰⁷

The Rusakov Club of 1927, built for the Union of Municipal Workers, is probably one of Melnikov's best known buildings, as it was published in several contemporary periodicals on architectural and that it had a very dominant image with its cantilevered auditoriums; that generates a good example of his attitude toward a building previously mentioned (Fig. 2.17; 2.18; 2.19). It also renders another rather peculiar point regarding the scales Melnikov's disapproval that it was both accused of being an evidence of "left-wing deviation" by the Stalinists and as a example of "right-wing formalism" by the Constructivists.¹⁰⁸ The basic triangular form of the plan had acoustic reasons, and another central idea is transformability of the main auditorium into four smaller halls.¹⁰⁹ The geometry of the ground level defined by a semi circle and a triangle and the circular staircase placed at the front façade are the dominant characteristics of the Kauchuk Factory Workers' Club that both for Ruble and Starr also define the building's link to Classical architecture (Fig. 2.20; 2.21). Similarly the two other clubs built in Moscow may be mentioned within this Classicist approach and both have a "rectilinear ground plan"¹¹⁰: Frunze Factory Club (Fig. 2.22; 2.23) and the Svovoda (Gorkii) Factory Club (Fig. 2.24; 2.25; 2.26). The Burevestnik Factory Workers' Club has also a rectangular plan combined with a tower formed by five semi-cylinders sustaining his rational approach (Fig. 2.27; 2.28). On the other hand the un-built Zuev Factory Workers' Club has a significant point, apart from its spatiality defined by five cylindrical volumes, that Cooke mentions: which is its approach to the city that with its: "freestanding from the party walls along the city fabric" liberating the building from its acquainted image concordant with its site, which is highly innovative regarding Golosov's winning project. (Fig. 2.29)

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.141.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.135.

¹⁰⁹ Blair A. Ruble, *Moscow's Revolutionary Architecture and Its Aftermath: A Critical Guide, Reshaping Russian Architecture: Western Technology, Utopian Dreams*, edited by William C. Brumfield, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 119.

¹¹⁰ S.F. Starr, Ibid., p. 141.



Fig. 2.17 K. Melnikov. The Rusakov Club, built for the Union of Municipal Workers, 1927, photo of the entrance façade.



Fig. 2.18 The Rusakov Club, photo of the rear-façade and another showing present condition of the entrance façade.

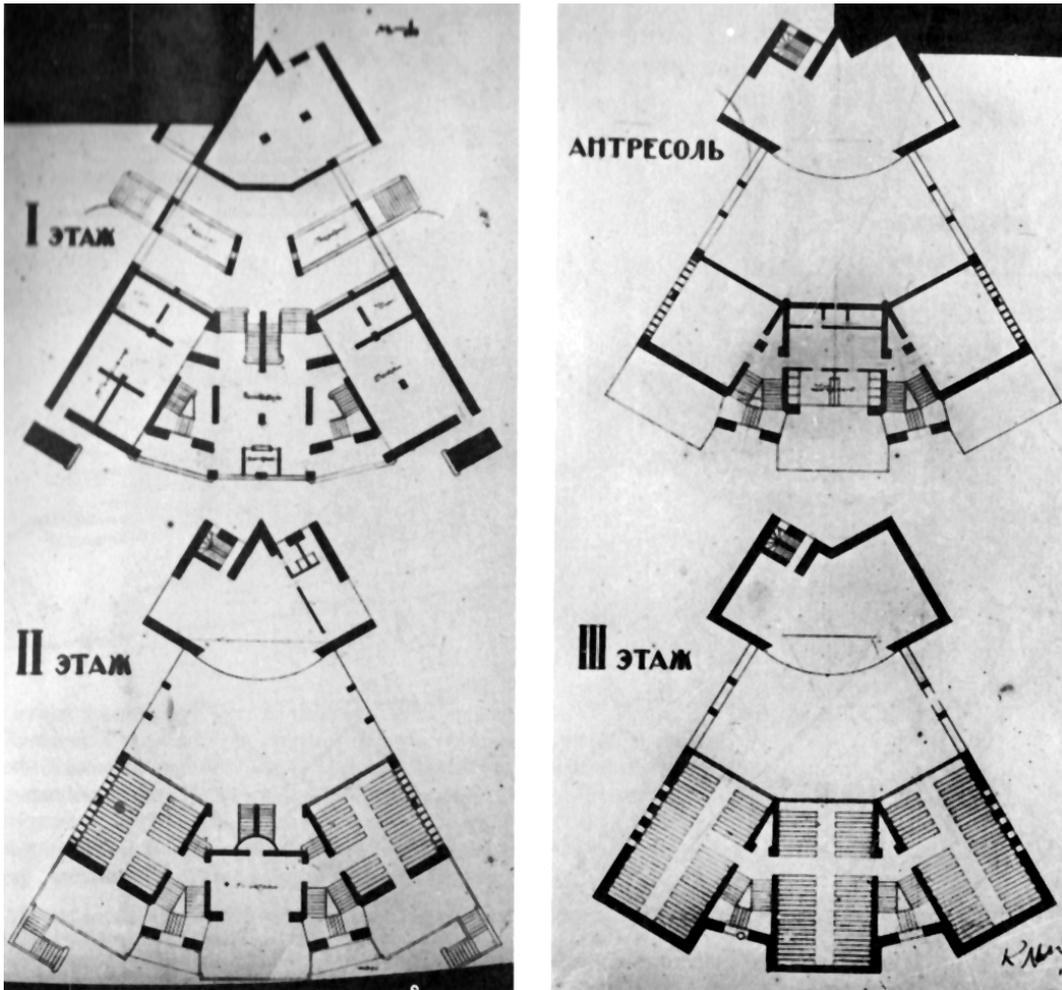


Fig. 2.19 The Rusakov Club, floor plans.

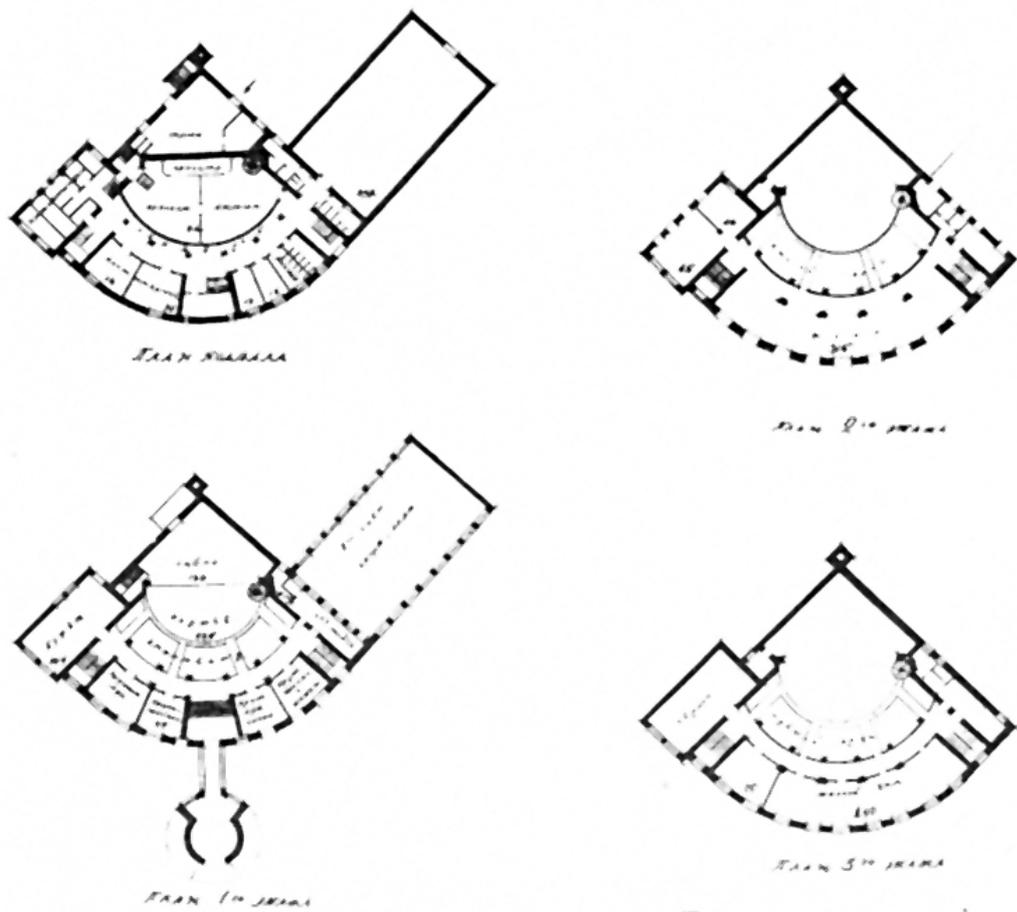


Fig. 2.20 K. Melnikov. The Kauchuk Factory Club, built for the workers of the Kauchuk Factory, 1927, floor plans.



Fig. 2.21 The entrance façade of the Kauchuk Club, photo of the front façade.

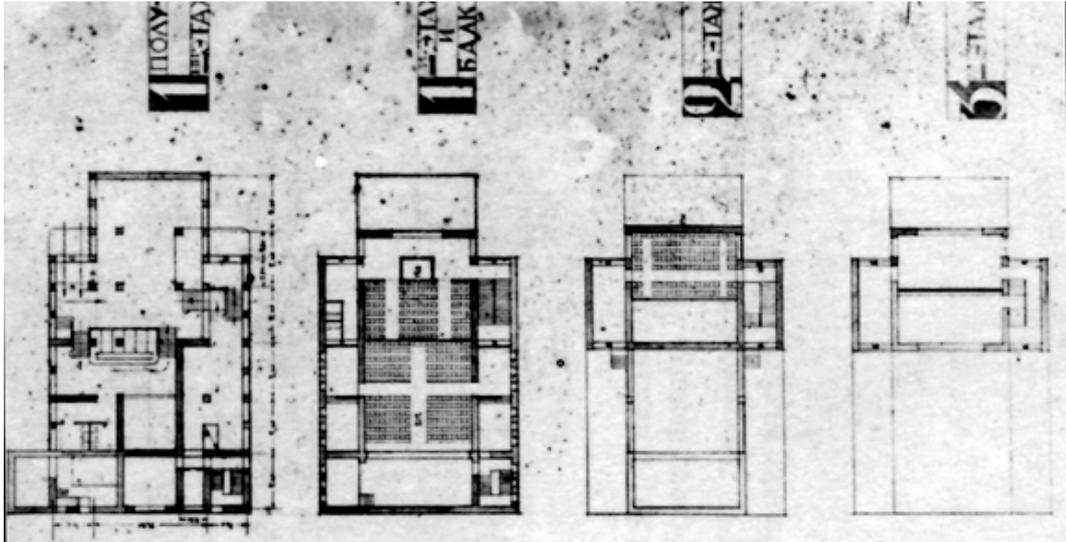


Fig. 2.22 K. Melnikov. The Frunze Factory Club, Moscow, 1927, floor plans.



Fig. 2.23 The Frunze Factory Club, Moscow, photo of the front façade.

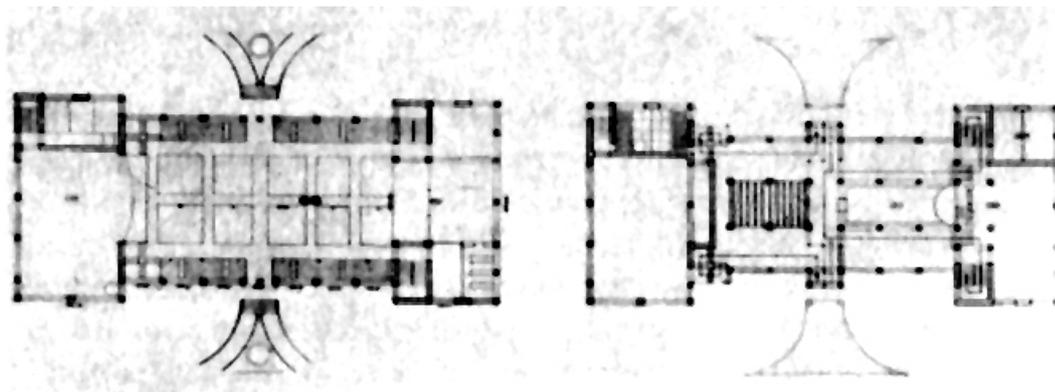


Fig. 2.24 K. Melnikov. The Svoboda (Gorkii) Factory Club, Moscow, 1928, floor plans.



Fig. 2.25 The Svoboda (Gorkii) Factory Club, section from the hall.



Fig. 2.26 The Svoboda (Gorkii) Factory Club, Moscow photo of the main façade.

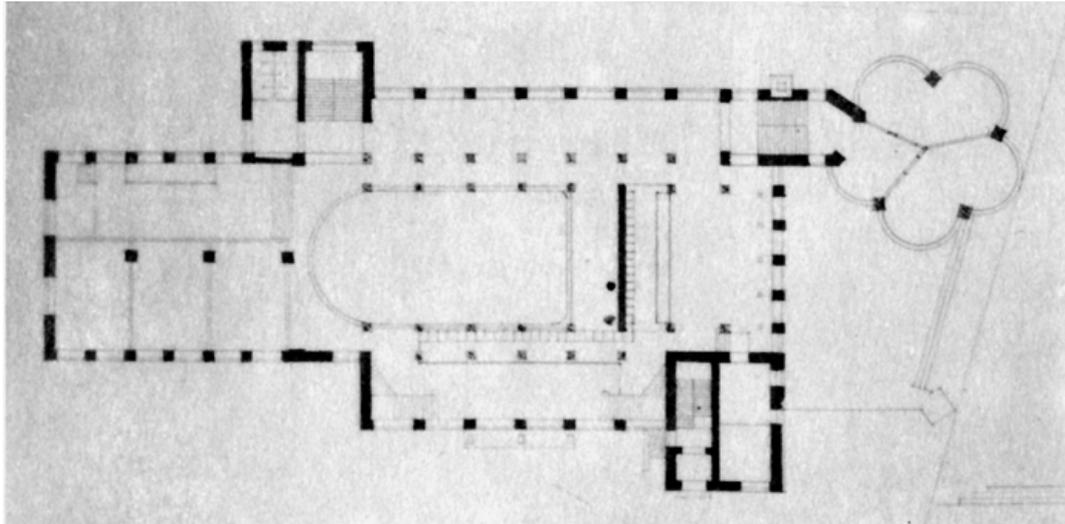


Fig. 2.27 K. Melnikov. The Burevestnik Factory Club, Moscow, 1929, ground floor plan.

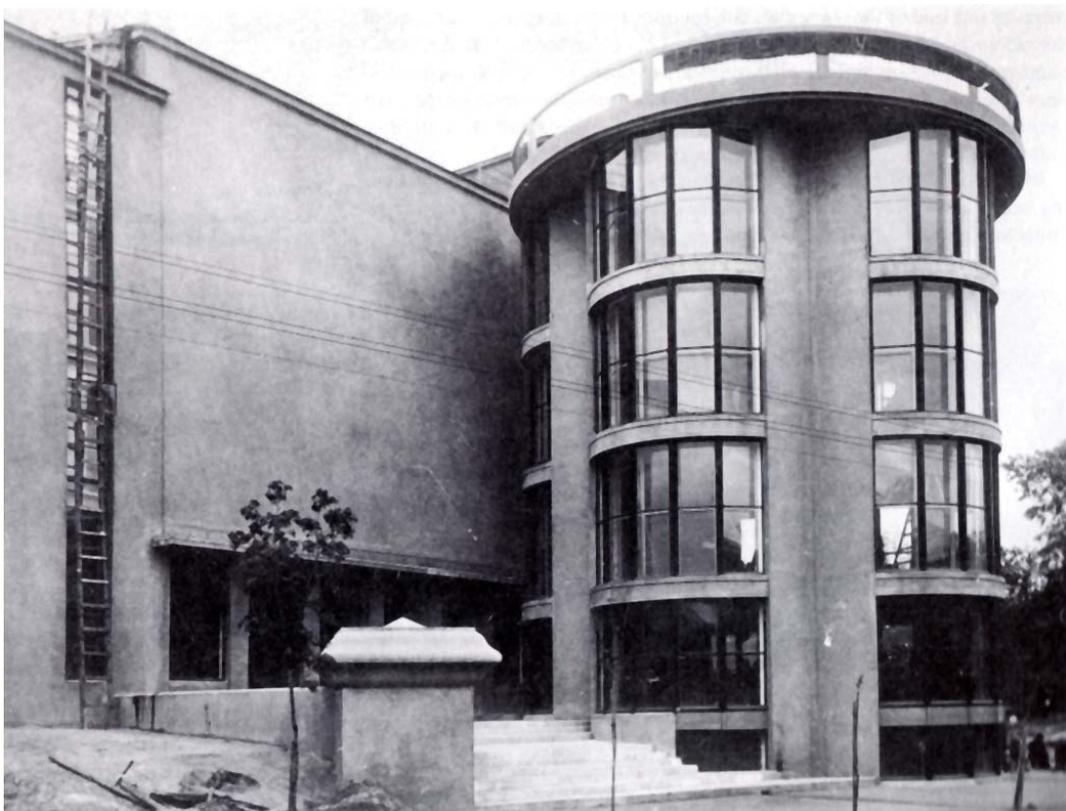


Fig. 2.28 The Burevestnik Factory Club, photo of the entrance façade.

The Pravda Club in Dulevo, built in 1928 had an “anthropomorphic structure” where certain functions of the building were placed in a concordant manner to human body functions. (Fig. 2.30; 2.31) The stage was in the place of the mouth “as if to stress that from here would flow the club’s message to the workers”, the place of the brain was occupied by the back-stage, whereas the auditorium located in the place of the chest cavity would host the workers that suggested their “proximity to the heart”.¹¹¹ This analogy set forth by Starr had also societal basis: the transformation of the placing the church¹¹² as an old community center with the modern workers’ club.

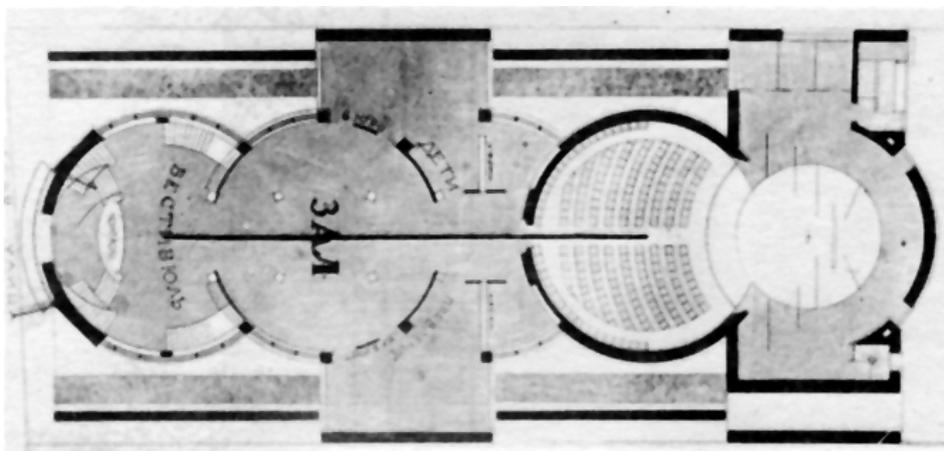


Fig. 2.29 K. Melnikov. Design for the Zuev Factory Club, Moscow, 1927, ground floor plan.

As a final point some similarities can be put regarding Melnikov’s club designs which seem to be designed with diverse first thoughts as mentioned earlier without any *a priori* stimuli and having generated by a “creative intuition”. The architectonic similarities can be listed as: being built around a single large auditorium that can be divided into sub-halls, having thought in means of economies of construction and labor-power, being economic regarding management issues.¹¹³ Although Starr solidifies the last point by the exteriorized circulation means, this cannot be asserted in such a simple way and also has to be connected to the dynamic “image” of the club Melnikov was after. Another

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp.163, 251.

¹¹² Starr mentions the analogy of the church and what its relation of the human body and as Melnikov had undergone the usual theological education in Russia he knew this very well and intended to utilize this in his design. Furthermore it is stated that the site is deliberately located close to the church since there was a broad empty land within the neighborhood.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 145.

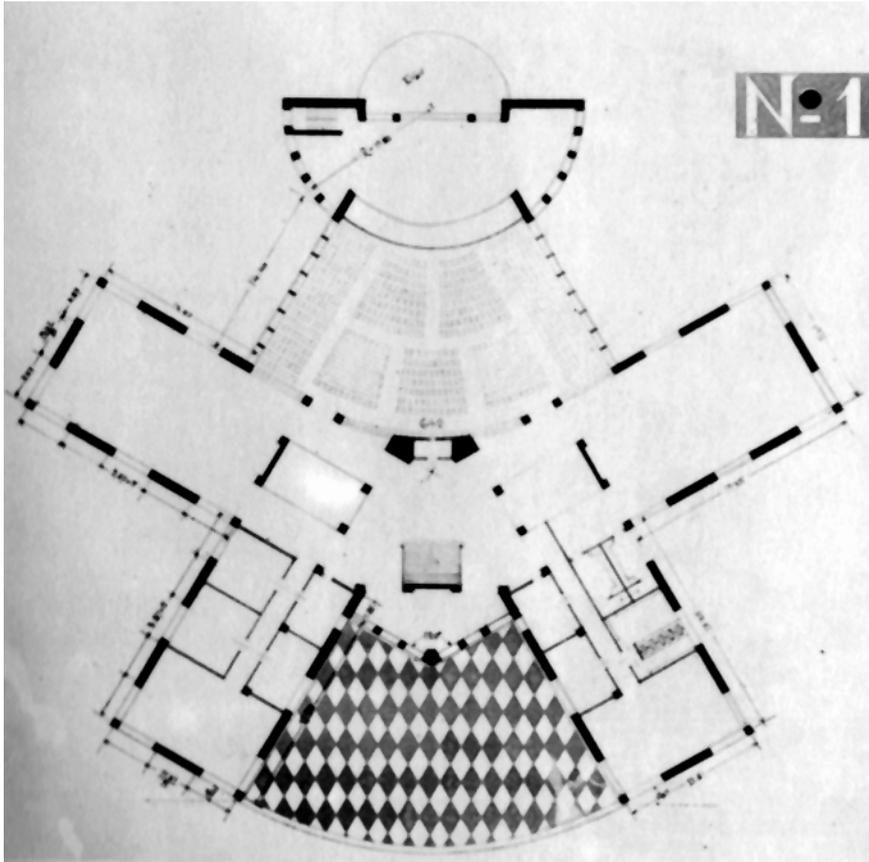


Fig. 2.30 K. Melnikov. The Pravda Factory Club, Dulevo near Moscow, 1928, ground floor plan.



Fig. 2.31 The Pravda Factory Club, photo of the entrance façade.

point is the “rational” attitude he both utilizes regarding formal and functional aspects of the buildings.

2.3.2. Ivan Leonidov and Workers’ Clubs

Leonidov treated a club complex as a kind of social cultural centre, with as winter garden, a general-purpose hall for lectures, cinema, demonstrations, meetings, use as a planetarium etc; a laboratory; an open ground for glider competitions, motor racing, war games, tourism etc; a sports hall; a playroom with playpens and a pool; and a park. In architectural terms, the ‘Club of a New Social Type’ represented a broadly conceived and loosely organized park-like composition with, as its centerpiece the great hall roofed by a parabolic vault-like covering.¹¹⁴

Being from the fourth generation group of the Russian avant-garde – the youngest group that were educated in the “free studios” mostly by the older third group the diploma project by Leonidov, The Lenin Institute of Librarianship, submitted to the VKhuTEMAS studio under guidance of L. Vesnin and A. Vesnin can be considered as a forerunner of his upcoming solo career or his loneliness. Cooke points to Leonidov’s juxtaposition of the “Suprematist formal system” and Constructivism¹¹⁵, which can be seen when Malevich’s Circle, Lissitzky’s Proun RVN 2 and his diploma project are viewed consecutively. (Fig. 2.32) Cooke once more refers to the “rural Russian sensibility” and Leonidov’s “peasant origins and also his ascetic philosophy and personal belief in a certain purposeful discomfort, even mortification of flesh, as part of the tempering of ‘a true man’”.¹¹⁶

Gozak in a similar manner expresses Leonidov’s totalitarian formation and his approach to life and architecture within his mentality of ethics, aesthetics and in general his philosophy of life and art as a whole.¹¹⁷ The thing that can be added after mentioning the wholeness of the creative individual is the wholeness of the creative act itself.

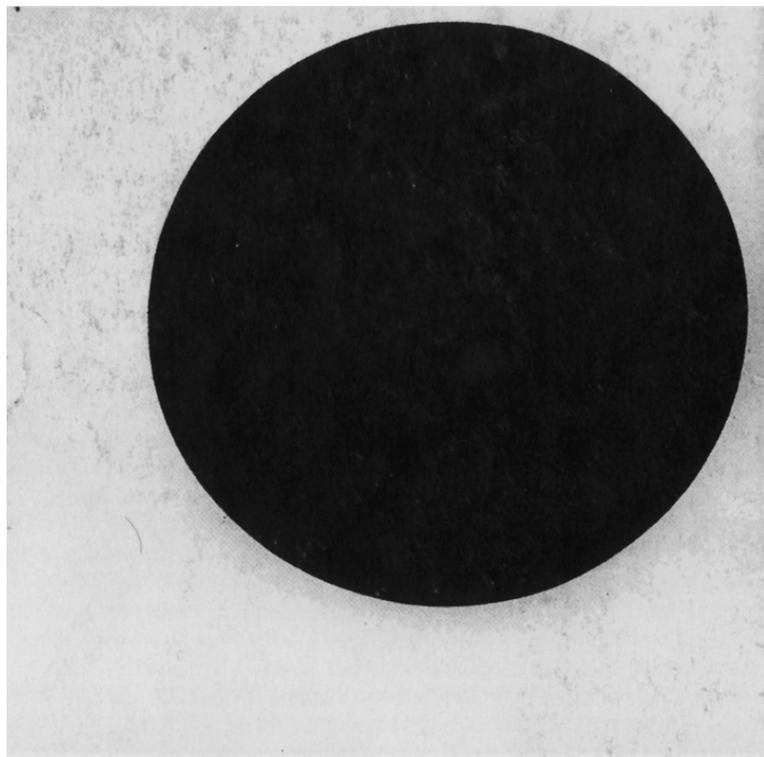
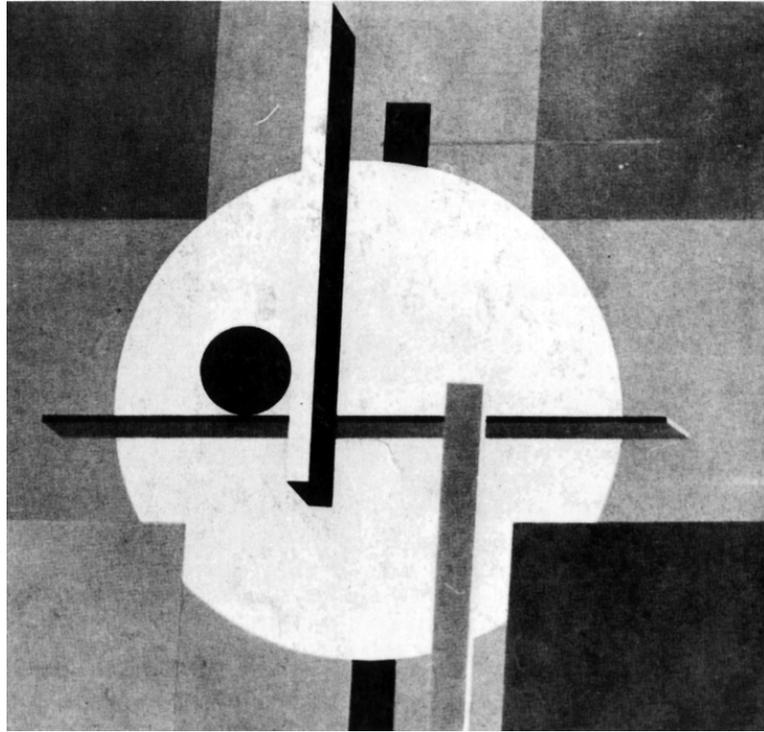
¹¹⁴ Selim O. Khan-Magomedov, *Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920's and 1930's*, Thames and Hudson, 1987, p. 457.

¹¹⁵ C. Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 35. Cooke mentions that this has not been mentioned neither by Leonidov nor Ginzburg in his critique.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹¹⁷ A. Gozak, *Ivan Il'ich Leonidov: Artist, Dreamer and Poet*, A. Gozak, Andrei Leonidov, *ibid.*, p.17.

Fig. 2.32



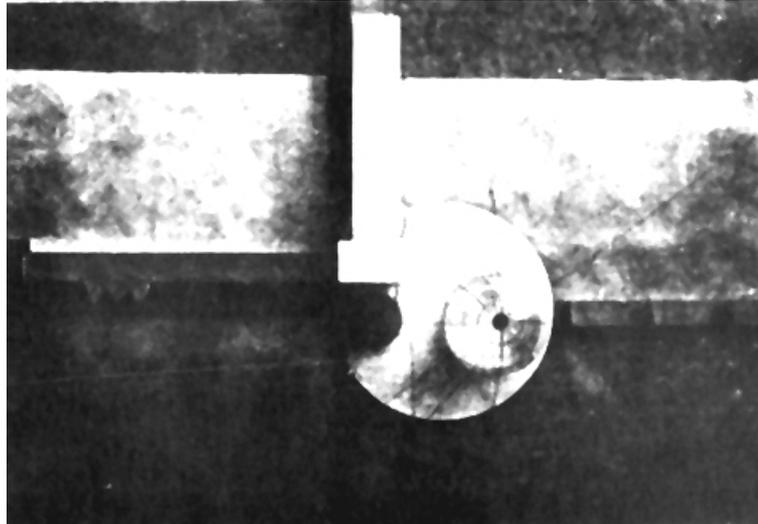


Fig. 2.32 Consecutively Malevich's Circle, 1920; El Lissitzky's Proun RVN 2, 1923 and site plan of Leonidov's diploma project for the Lenin Institute, 1927.

In fact the resemblance between Suprematists and the architecture of Leonidov was not only related to the “formal” but also to the spatial. The lightness and abstractness of the Suprematists in their “painterly space” was resonated within Leonidov's architectural designs: the dispersed volumes in broad landscapes, the tensioned cables running through the site from one side to the other, the glass balloon-like sphere of the auditorium made the observer think as if the whole site would be airborne. Thinking from this point the point that separated Leonidov from the Constructivist point of view was that the cognitive and physical structure of his construction is tangible – but not weak – just as the tensioned cables; counter the former view point that structure should be robust like the construction. However the important point that must not be neglected is none of Leonidov's large scale designs were constructed, thus it may only be theoretically right to assert the latter point. As one of the last responses in an interview, Leonidov renders himself as a constructivist and as an answer to the question on formalist aesthetics:

Such a question is appropriate where one is concerned with idealistic architecture ‘as art’, while we are concerned with form as a product of the organisation and functional interdependence of workers’ activities and structural factors. It is not the form one should consider and criticize, but the methods of cultural organisation.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

Leonidov's diploma project will also mark the beginning point of his acquaintance to critiques; being the criticized architect that in a way appreciated but always singled-out and attributed as the "enfant terrible" of Soviet architecture by R. Khiger.¹¹⁹

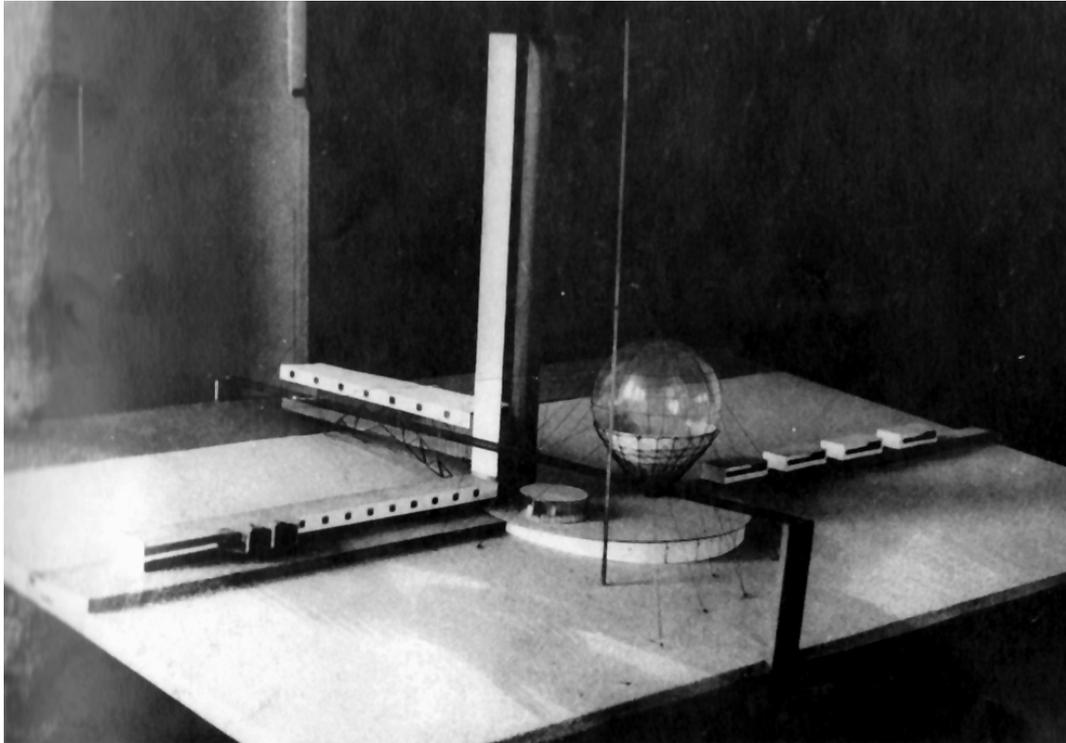


Fig. 2.33 I. Leonidov. Diploma project, The Lenin Institute of Librarianship, 1927, model.

The critiques regarding Leonidov can be classified into two groups. In first group it is the ones from fellow comrades the Constructivists – or the OSA group that point both positive and negative aspect of his architecture. The first one is also historically the first; Ginzburg's critical essay, Achievements and Prospects, was published in SA in 1927. Ginzburg praises the innovative and creative handling of the design and points that "the work is valuable...as a categorical break with that whole system of techniques, schemas and elements which have inevitably become common and habitual with us..." and also giving credit to its formal and spatial organization. Within the "praise" and the "buts" there is a transitive paragraph that between the lines one can sense a incompatibleness: "Remaining in principle a work of our philosophy, Leonidov's 'Library' at the same time results

¹¹⁹ Andrei Gozak, Andrei Leonidov, *Ivan Leonidov: The Complete Works*, edited by C. Cooke, from R. Khiger, Masters of the Young Architecture, Academy Editions, 1988, p.104.

in a purely space-oriented architectural treatment which leads away from the traditional conception of building...”¹²⁰ This is one of the points that can be pinned as a good example for the generators of future debate on Leonidov, and in fact this critique defined the “position zero” for many critiques as being chronologically first. Ginzburg continues with counter points in which he accuses Leonidov with being irresponsible for the realistic strata and Constructivist point of view, neglecting everyday conditions and sacrificing both “today” and “future”, “falling into” the position of “utopianism”.¹²¹ It is not hard to think what Leonidov thought when he read this article. Another article was published by the SASS in 1931 – Architects of Socialist Construction (OSA renamed itself in 1930) asserting that like every architect Leonidov also has “positive” as well as “negative sides”: the “critical attitude towards architectural tasks, a sparkling inventiveness, agitation for a high level of scientific and technical culture, an active approach to social change, inexhaustible seek for new paths and new approaches to architectural work”; on the other hand “incompleteness of projects, inadequate precision about economic aspects of the project, incomprehensible methods of representation pursuing graphic effects to the detriment of readability”.

Not much distinct from the 1927 article this is an indicator that throughout the four year period nothing has changed and no effort was made to locate Leonidov within a proper position; in fact what changed was the increasing negativity on his architecture. This renders that it is not just the produced that is pre-projected but the framework of how the “new” “can be” or “should be” is also defined. The search for the perfect-fit is always sought and hardly found. Ones that tend to be new seem to be exposed to harsher criticism than those that remain only as an alternative within the domain of the mainstream. It seems not to be important to mention solely positive critiques since they overlap with the ones of first group.

The critiques that will be mentioned within the second group also mention a “so called” Leonidovism apart from opposing Leonidov the architect. The common points of these were that Leonidov had an individualistic, futurist, formalist, an

¹²⁰ Quoted from Moisei Ginzburg’s *Achievements and Prospects* published in SA, 1927 in A. Gozak, Andrei Leonidov, *Ivan Leonidov: The Complete Works*, edited by C. Cooke, Academy Editions, 1988, p.42.

¹²¹ Ibid.

utopian and bourgeois perception of architecture and was neglecting ideals of the proletarian and materialistic aspects. Cooke's view is fairly direct enough to what Leonidov resembled for the opposition side: "Constructivists' Achilles heel."¹²² VOPRA as representing the orthodox proletarian ideals attacked "Leonidovism" by "embodying all that is negative in constructivism and formalism."¹²³ 1930 Dated A. Mordvinov's Leonidovism and the Harm It Does, with a subtitle Struggling With an Alien Ideology, attacked in a disrespectful manner asserting that he was "a petite-bourgeois individual" that was "only a revolutionary in words"¹²⁴, which was accusing of not being ethical in his architecture. He claims that "Leonidovism is a blow struck on functionalism" and that after the demolition of it "there must be and ideological demolition job on functionalism."¹²⁵ Probably the final critique projected by the IZO section of the Institute of the Communist Academy in 1931 was the most concise one. Apart from the petite-bourgeois and individualist attributions, they clearly set war by provoking that "Leonidovism contradicts dialectic materialism...grows out of a metaphysical and idealistic world-view". It locates Leonidov as an enemy "who fall from the position of fellow-traveler into the hostile camp."¹²⁶ It continued by stating that Leonidovism was completely separate from everyday problems and adopts a self-related architectural approach that was way from reality and the problems of the society. That also Leonidov and Leonidovism should be removed from the architectural institutions that take the responsibility to raise new generations – that were concordant with the proletarian class ideals.¹²⁷

The approach to the design process that embodies the "poetic" and esteems a traceable abstractness in an era that was the heyday of the concrete and the realist – which perhaps was inevitable regarding materialistic thought – renders its own weak point. Regarding this traceable and conscious abstractness, in certain aspects some of Leonidov's design sketches resemble Alvar Aalto's declaration of the method he used to struggle where his design process and creativity was blocked: by drawing in an abstract manner of landscapes and etc.

¹²² C. Cooke, C. Cooke, *Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde*, Museum of Modern Art New York, 1990, p. 36.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Andrei Gozak, Andrei Leonidov, *Ivan Leonidov: The Complete Works*, edited by C. Cooke, Academy Editions, 1988, p.96.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 95.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

It is not the method that is in common, but also the expectation for it or how it was utilized. Similarly with Aalto's intentions to regard these drawings as a tool to nourish his creativity, as mentioned by Gozak, the point Leonidov "valued in painting was therefore not its decorative potential but its creative power."¹²⁸

But also similarly how Louis I. Kahn compares a scientist and a poet; where his (an architect's) conceiving of the design process, between the lines, and concerning his buildings is similar to the poet's.¹²⁹ These two examples are important to project that this in a way tradition of the mutual relation of the abstract and concrete, and the respect to poetic domain that can be traced through the milestones of architectural products of Modernism i.e. in designs by Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. A. Gozak's observation on Leonidov's "love of poetry"¹³⁰ and A. Leonidov's (his son) point that "sublimity" for him "was the highest criterion"¹³¹ must not be passed over. The point that Leonidov makes while giving an answer to the question how he organized an individual's emotions, is an important one in order to understand his un-bounding perception of rationality that enables him to succeed in his effort to praise space instead of form.

Emotions and feelings are by no means abstractions that are beyond scientific analysis, and the organisation of emotions and feelings is primarily the organisation of your consciousness.¹³²

There was only one workers' club complex which had a derivate (variant B): 1928 design of Club of a New Social Type, variant A and variant B. However as Palace of Cultures were perceived as larger scale clubs, he also designed two Palace of Cultures: The Palace of Culture for the Proletarskii District of Moscow (1930) which had two variants as presented to the first and second rounds of the competition; the second was the Palace of Culture for a Collective Farm (1935) which is labeled in Gozak's and A. Leonidov's study as an "experimental design".

¹²⁸ A. Gozak, *Ivan Il'ich Leonidov: Artist, Dreamer and Poet*, *Ivan Leonidov: The Complete Works*, *ibid.*, p. 17.

¹²⁹ *Between Silence and Light: Spirit in the Architecture of Louis I. Kahn*, edited by John Lobell, Shambhala Publications, 1985, p. 14.

¹³⁰ A. Gozak, *ibid.*, p. 19.

¹³¹ A. Leonidov, *Reminiscences of My Father*, *ibid.*, p. 23.

¹³² *ibid.*, p. 66.



Fig. 3.34 I. Leonidov, sketch for a city plan.



Fig. 2.35 Alvar Aalto. Imaginary landscape, 1929.

As mentioned previously if his diploma project was also a beginning for his acquaintance of criticism that was to last until his career, The Club of a New Social Type (Fig. 2.36; 2.37; 2.38; 2.39) was the project that consolidated his position as a privileged architect and as members of the IZO section of the Institute of the Communist Academy singled him out as a fellow comrade that has “fallen into the hostile camp”. This project was published in the 1929 issue of SA (Sovremennaiia Arkhitektura).¹³³ As the project was proposed within an era of debates – as mentioned earlier, on the future of the workers’ club; how the club of the future be, what its functions should be regarding a rapidly changing society with changing demands of the proletariat for his leisure activities – one of Leonidov’s main task was to solidify his thoughts on the future and as previously stated “designing for the future” not solely stand for as an act of solving “technical or functional problems” but furthermore designing suitable spaces for the changing strata of “human needs”.¹³⁴ Cooke states it was his Suprematist perception of space that led to the generation of the “spatial organization of cultural services” which is “far beyond the distribution of volumes on a typical club site.”¹³⁵

The variety of functions project how Leonidov thinks the worker of the future will be a complicated one. His intellectual approach and a broad view point generate not only a “new type of social club” but an innovative, sublime and humane architecture. Another importance about the clubs Leonidov designed is that the political and thus the propagandist strata is not treated as the dominant factor but having equal importance with other inputs i.e. cultural, sociological. With in the 1929 issue of the SA Leonidov describes his design thoroughly.¹³⁶ To start with the distinct functions it includes a (1) botanical garden of glass that consists of a section for zoological and botanical exhibitions, sports facilities varying from tennis to chess, a swimming pool, a place for children; places to listen to the radio and watch films, areas for political work and gatherings, parades; (2) a meeting hall for various purposes i.e. lectures, films, planetarium demonstrations; (3) Library and reading room; (4) laboratories; (5) a large spectrum of outdoor

¹³³ Contemporary Architecture

¹³⁴ S. O. Kahn-Magomedov, *Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920's and 1930's*, Thames and Hudson, 1987, p. 457.

¹³⁵ C. Cooke, C. Cooke, *Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde*, Museum of Modern Art New York, 1990, p. 36.

¹³⁶ Andrei Gozak, Andrei Leonidov, *ibid.*, p. 60.

activities: gliding, flying, motor-sports, military games etc.; (6) an additional sports hall; and (7) children's pavilion.¹³⁷ He also points to the innovative use of technology through the material selection and their reasons; defining main materials as glass and reinforced concrete. He asserts the importance of his utilization of glass wall as "...but a wall of transparent glass, to involve the individual and his life in the widest possible way in the dynamics of the worlds around him."¹³⁸ This extroverted character in his designs is also mentioned by Gozak:

Very conscious that the natural world was the only receptacle for human life, Leonidov looked to it as the unique source of life-giving and life-creating energy. He believed in the possibility of creating an architecture which would be filled with sunlight, fresh air and the scents of greenery and flowers."¹³⁹

Leonidov's 1930 design for the competition of The Palace of Culture for the Proletarsky [Proletarskii] District of Moscow can be defined through Cooke's words which set forth the rationalizing effort of the architect of the site through defining a geometric grid (Fig. 2.40):

His...entry...treated the site as a line of four square territories, each organized by a planning grid of 4 by 4 squares. The physical education center was one of these territories, others being designated for open-air public meetings and festivals, a great multi-purpose circular theater for mass assemblies, political meetings, and performances, and a scientific and historical sector with libraries and resource centers.¹⁴⁰

The project was attacked with similar points as other work by Leonidov; of being abstract, supposedly "constructivist and functionalist" and a significant critique that underlines the antagonism of the agent and structure is set by A. Karra, a contemporary of Leonidov from VKhuTEMAS: "The workers consistently demand a high emotional content in buildings" and that "they require the materialized expression of the power of their class."¹⁴¹ Karra's critique sets the point of the solely structurally predefined agent and the self-oriented, conscious creative

¹³⁷ Ibid., from I. Leonidov's description of the project as published in 1929 issue no.3 SA.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.,

¹⁴⁰ A. Gozak, *Ivan Il'ich Leonidov: Artist, Dreamer and Poet*, *Ivan Leonidov: The Complete Works* *ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

agent who is aware of his individual preferences and the autonomous position of agency that does have the power to lead a structure that is not static and mechanized. On the other hand it points to a contradictory position of the “emotions” with in the materialistic apprehension which can be both used to attack certain individuals to accuse them as fantasy-oriented and metaphysical but at the same time utilized to express the profound proletariat affection.

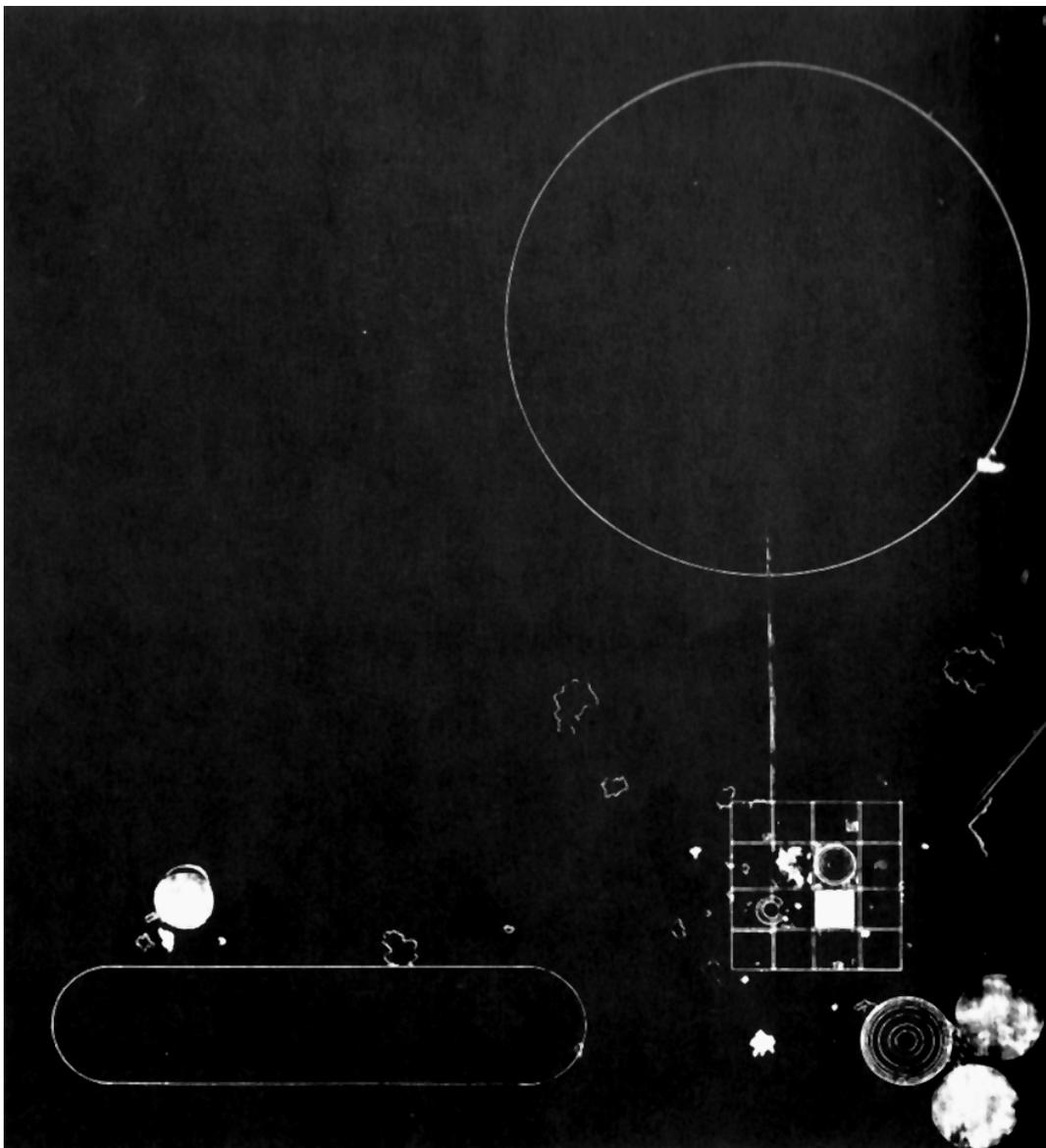


Fig. 2.36 I. Leonidov, The Club of a New Social Type Variant A, 1928, site plan.



Fig. 2.37 The Club of a New Social Type Variant A, elevation.

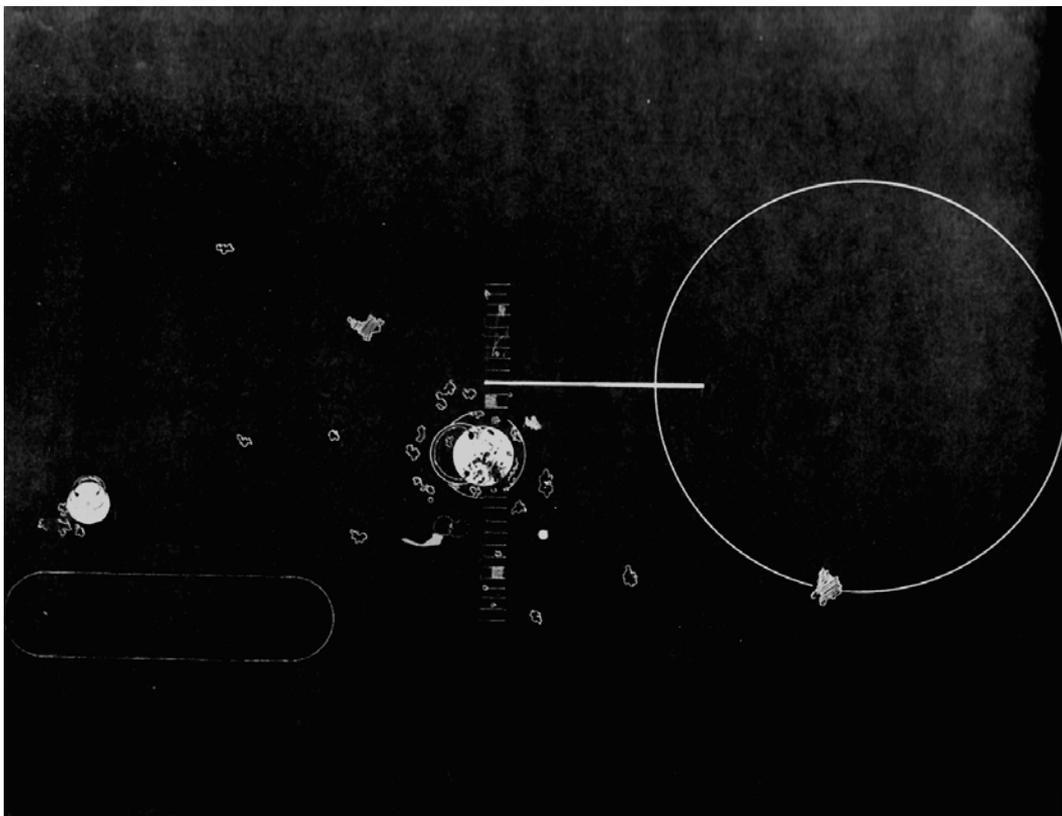


Fig. 2.38 I. Leonidov, The Club of a New Social Type Variant B, 1928, site plan.

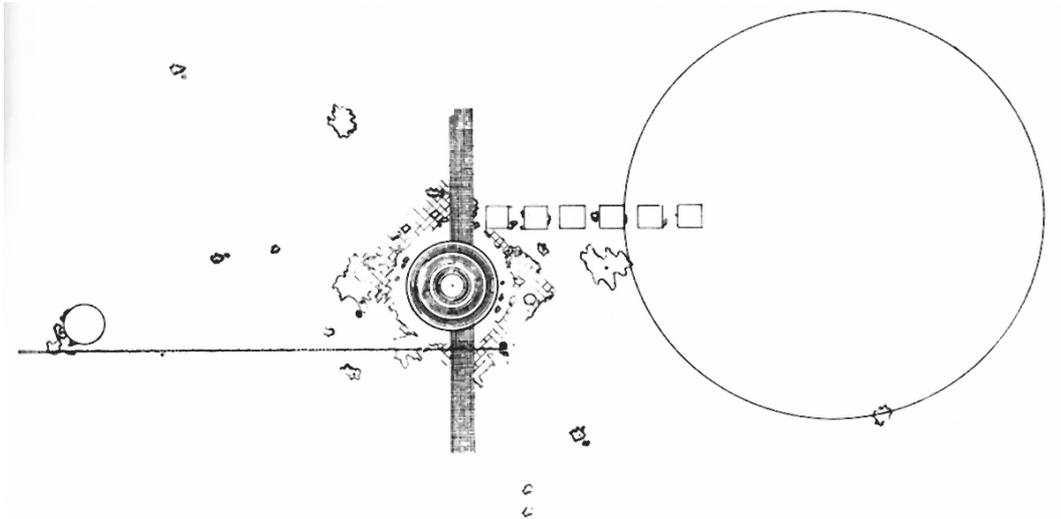


Fig. 2.39 The Club of a New Social Type Variant B, 1928, ground level plan.

Although Leonidov and Melnikov were singled out architects of the era, their positions regarding themselves were also apart. They tried to approach architecture with a genuine viewpoint that can be settled to their inner-domains and in fact the genuine way they perceived life and how their personalities were constituted. First of all their apprehension of formality and spatiality were completely on separate ends: (1) Melnikov was after sculptural forms that was project-oriented and varied within a wide scope and a spatiality that was of rigidity, resembling the Constructivists; Leonidov on the other hand adopted platonic sublime geometric forms that led to stress space rather than form, and a spatiality that was fluid resembling the Suprematist approach to space. (2) Melnikov somehow always traced the local sensibilities in a genuine rational manner not only architectural and artisan qualities but of geographical and natural. Regarding architecture this can be traced in many points: form, space, material etc, and can be connected to him to be placed in the third group generation of architects that graduated just before the revolution – unlike Leonidov who was the member of the youngest fourth generation that was educated in the architectural studios of the revolution.

Thus Leonidov was a pure revolutionary individual in every aspect that believed that any thing related to tradition should be abandoned; in fact his tradition starts with October 1917. Their architectural representations were also way apart, Melnikov adopted a more conventional way for drawings and models that could

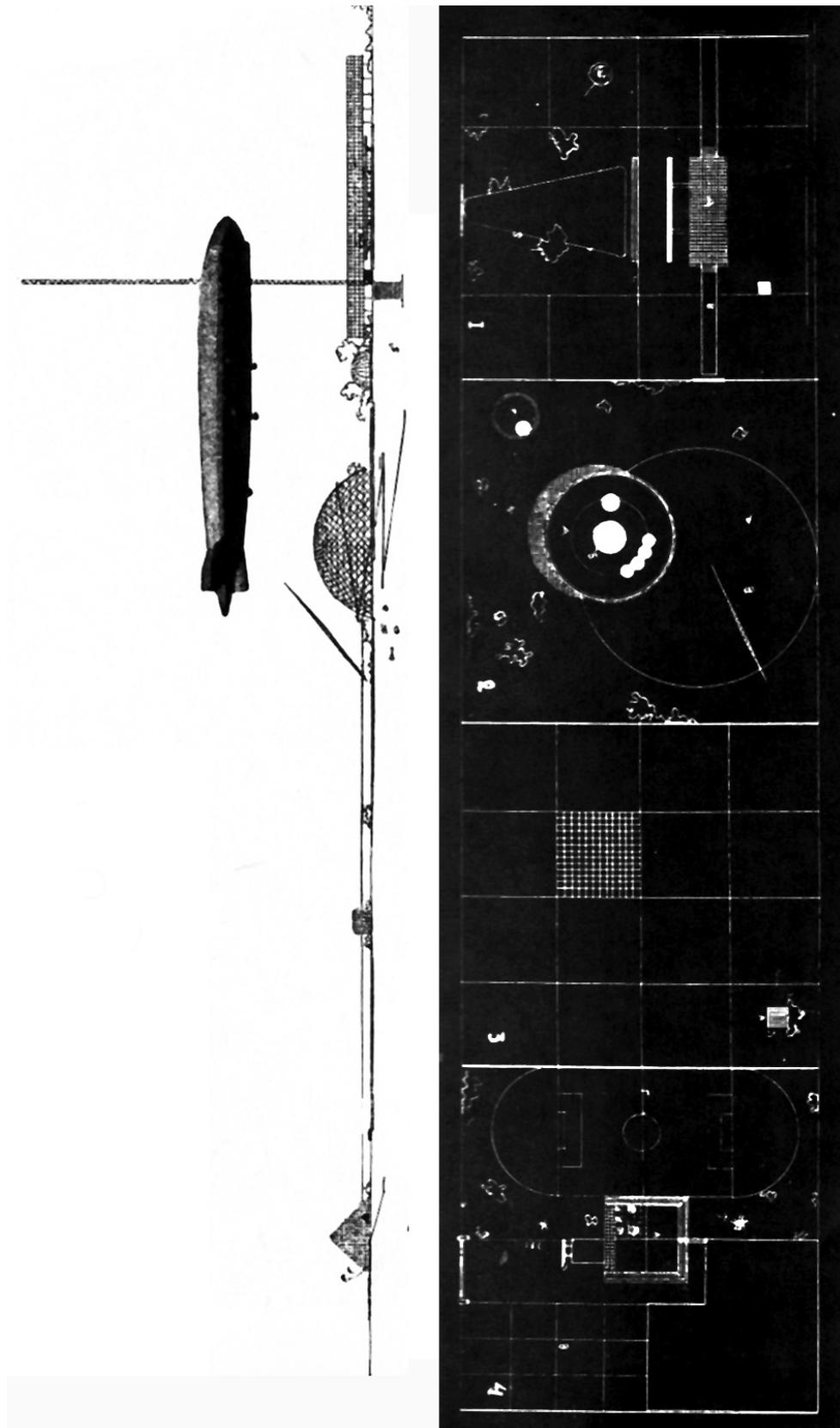


Fig. 2.40 I. Leonidov. Design for the Palace of Culture, Proletarskii district Moscow, 1930. Site elevation and ground level plans of different units.

be located as concrete rather than an abstract approach. Leonidov, as his traceable connections to Suprematism, made drawings that resembled an abstract painting for the observer; which some, as mentioned earlier, were of white ink on black paper or of abstract landscapes. However as a paradox regarding these points one can think that it should be Melnikov that made declarations parallel to the Constructivist thought, but it was him that set forth points that rendered his counter position.

Both Melnikov and Leonidov like many other individuals, or creative agents, were forced to utilize their inner-domains with destructive suspicion as if they were on the other side of the front. Melnikov was expelled by the Union of Soviets Architects in 1937 and Leonidov adopted a more “expectable” concrete design approach, however amazingly both, in a small or large proportion managed to keep their inner-domains active that are traceable through their later designs. In fact their adventure defines the ethical and existential struggle of the creative (social) agent despite the dominance of the architectural medium that was socially rendered, and in certain ways repressed.

Referring to Tanali’s words on the relation of “genuineness” and the “essence”: “I do not think that the concept of ‘genuineness’...is identical of having not been acquainted with before.” As having defined essences as “the things that do not change within the continuously changing” he sets forth genuineness is “the success of transforming this essence to the object, the objectification of it in a subjective manner.”¹⁴² This has to be stressed regarding Leonidov as well as Melnikov; and perhaps they should be respected because of their effort to practice what they believed in.

¹⁴² A. Zeynep Onur, *Ziya Tanali*, unpublished book.

CHAPTER 3

THE STRUCTURE AND AGENT

3.1. The Structure-Agency Debate

Being one of the core dichotomies of sociological field, the structure-agency debate can basically be stated as a consequence of confrontation between an individual and a group of individuals which solely does not represent a mathematical entity but a dynamic collectivity of human activity. It is this existential collectivity that adds numerous differentials that has to be dealt with; anthropology, philosophy, psychology, economy etc. Regarding these numerous differentials, building a theory concerning the “structure-agency dichotomy” inevitably becomes similar to the unified field theory in physics in means of complexity. This complexity stems from the very basic notion of it being a consequence of human action comprising mental and physical labor. The complexity of the structure and the agent (individual) spontaneously increases as it is expected but neither under the absolute control of the former nor the latter. It may be stated that every consequence – any economic, philosophical, religious, political, sociological etc. system of thought – has a productive property. Thus they resemble nodes that possess inner dynamics to activate numerous other “productive nodes” hence each is a complex cognitive structure. In order to avoid misinterpretations; it should be pointed that these nodes produced through mental action do not only have an idealistic existence, but they are stemmed in everyday material life and have consequences in everyday life.

To understand the term “productive node”, unfolding capitalism will be pragmatic in means of its consequential relation to the Soviets. The proposal is that both the process of the evolution of a structure (consisting of productive nodes) can not be attributed as fully controllable and predictable. The relation of capitalism with the Soviet case marks this unpredictability: whilst socialist ideals were an opposition to the capitalistic structure, they aimed the maximum profit from fabrication of building materials and industrialization which were fundamental tools of capitalism.¹ Thus the unpredictability is two folded; unpredictability of the utilization of structural elements and unpredictability of consequences.

¹ Furthermore D. F. Walsh states that capitalism survived by changing its status from a mode for production to a mode of consumption, which can be set forth as the unpredictability through structural evolution. (*Idealism/Materialism, Core Sociological Dichotomies*, ed. by Chris Jenks, SAGE Publications, 1998, p. 198.)

Weber's study on the relation of protestant ethic and capitalism in which he puts forward a religious system of thought as one of the productive nodes that played role in the development of a political and economic system² is an example that solidifies this view point.³

It is not possible to think of society as simply an aggregate or collection of individuals *per se* because society consists of the ways in which they are collected together into a community of people. But it is at this point that the nature of what comprises social structure comes to constitute a problem for sociology and the issue of structure versus agency emerges as a central topic for the investigation of social life. Is the community which is society a collection of individuals who, as individuals, actively forge their relationships with one another and create society in the process of doing so? Or do the social relationships which make up society achieve an autonomous identity that establishes them as external conditions which determine the activities of the members of society as they enter into them? In both cases, society is seen to consist of relationships between its members which are structured, or organized, in particular ways and so has an objective existence. However, the first argument treats society and its structures as composed out of the actions of its individual members who are agents of their own actions and produce their relationships with one another in terms of this agency; whilst the second argument treats society and its structures as a system of relationships that determines the activities of the member of society through the ways in which it works as a system that conditions how people are able to behave within it. This is our dichotomy.⁴

As Walsh deals in a concise manner, the discussion is defined through the position which the agent or the structure takes. In other words which one plays the definitive role to enable the other to exist or which one is derived from the other? Walsh in another article bases this duality within a very basic existential dichotomy between idealism and materialism:

...sociology has to a great extent been divided between a theoretical stance deriving from idealism, which emphasizes the subjective character of society and the social relationships of which it is composed, and a theoretical stance deriving from positivism and materialism, which emphasizes the objective nature of society as a

² Max Weber, (1904) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Routledge, 2001.

³The work ethic of ascetic Protestantism that was induced by the religious directives of a calling and predestination which created a disciplined way of life amongst Protestants, and that helped to create a basis for the rational organization of the capitalist economy... (David F. Walsh, *Structure/Agency, Core Sociological Dichotomies*, ed. by Chris Jenks, SAGE Publications, 1998, p. 22.) As Walsh sets forth, this also indicates the unpredictable consequence of a purposeful action.

⁴ D. F. Walsh, *ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

structurally and institutionally based organization of social relationships.⁵

Shifting paradigms generate separate view points or in other words different paths of thinking which are definitely concordant within the cognitive system they are produced. The term shifting paradigm should not be understood as pure ruptures and the belief in which there can not be an isolated *sui generis* totality should be maintained. As Marx argues that capitalism is a precursor of socialism, precipitation is inevitable through history; history as a product of human action. Unfolding the debate through the guidance of capitalism will be useful regarding the Soviet case. As a mode of production capitalism has its own sub-structures that inevitably led it to become a mode of thinking, which in fact was crucial in order for it to survive. Thus it generated its philosophy, sociology, philosophy, art, technology etc. and via these it nourished and transformed.⁶

From this point on it would be useful to understand the major approaches on the structure-agency debate;

(1) Some branches of sociology (such as structuralism, functionalism and Marxism) assert that social life is largely determined by social structure, and that individual activities can be explained mostly as an outcome of structure.

(2) Other branches (for instance, phenomenological sociology, ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism) reverse this emphasis, stressing the ability of individuals to construct and reconstruct and give meaning to their world. Proponents of this view emphasize the need to provide explanations for social phenomena which reflect the views of the individuals they study.

(3) Other approaches stress the complementarity of structure and agency. Social structure influences human actions, but individual activities can similarly influence social structure.⁷

⁵ D. F. Walsh, *ibid.*, *Subject/Object*, SAGE Publications, 1998, p. 275.

⁶ Marx scrutinized capitalism within its origins, at a time when it could be labeled as a system of early maturity. The formula human existence + time = complexity, can be set as a key for all human action -mental and physical- and their historical course. The inevitably, remaining the foundations in being a mode of production, new variables had to be affixed: *gender*, *ethnicity*, new meanings were dedicated to the core terminology labor, base and super-structure and new terminology had to be derived to explain consequences i.e. *cultural capital*. (Bourdieu)

⁷ Structure-Agency Debate, *Bloomsbury Guide to Human Thought* (1993). Retrieved 12 October 2005, from xreferplus. <http://www.xreferplus.com/entry/344815>.

Derived from this quote, the dichotomy between the agent and structure can be studied through two different view points. The first one is the changing position of one against other. This view can be generated through a power-resistance dual relation together with a rather dialectical approach. The latter can be traced within the historical development of the debate that can be pointed in every aspect concerning human cognition. The opposition between the first group and the second group can be set as *thesis* and *antithesis* respectively in order. Whereas the third group; where we can locate Giddens, Archer, Bourdieu and Habermas is in the effort to construct a system that can be labeled as an *synthesis* aiming not only to stress the complementarity of the two but also underlining that the debate should be rendered through many other variables.⁸

The second point is the contributions that enlarge the scope of the debate through both seeking new variables and unfolding overlapping layers. Marx's view formulates the dichotomy derived from the materialistic foundations based on the notions of production, labor and class antagonism; whereas for Archer, culture enters the scene as one of the key factors regarding agency and structure.⁹ Bourdieu places the psychological factor and the cognitive background of the agent: "[he] described the relationship between agency and structure in terms of subjective mental structures (*habitus*) and objective social phenomena (*field*)...The field can be construed as structure, and the habitus is the mental framework through which individuals exercise agency. Habermas on the other hand laying the foundations of his view on materialism puts forward the importance of the role of communication and interaction between agents.¹⁰ Several others can be set forth: i.e. biology, environment, psychology, meaning and language. Walsh puts that, together with the development of the post-structuralist view in sociology a critical displacement of the debate from its grounds occurred, parallel to the change in object-subject dichotomy. Furthermore the debate dissolved and new variables were set forth: construction, signification and discourse etc. Continuing with Walsh's sentences:

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Margaret Archer (1988), *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*, revised edition, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

M. Archer, *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

¹⁰ Structure-Agency Debate, *Bloomsbury Guide to Human Thought* (1993). Retrieved 12 October 2005, from xreferplus. <http://www.xreferplus.com/entry/344815>.

Instead, then, of the empirical certainties of the scientific and institutional structural analysis of society which sociology has traditionally set out to generate – which takes identity as a unified and conscious self, society as an orderly totality, and history as a progressive and determined path of change and development – postmodernism offers a thoroughly historicized view of society .¹¹

After giving a general outline of the debate and how it transformed and changed as the dominant productive node transformed and changed, it will be useful to focus on the discussions on the perceptions of the structure and the agent separately.

3.2. STRUCTURE

Structure or social structure can be resembled as a juxtaposed bulk of a cognitive domain – that serves as a frame work that defines how to put what together with another. For example notions, values, concepts, acceptances, postulates and all other inputs related to a certain system of thought – and a set of institutions that serve as tools to exercise the elements of the cognitive domain such as *schools, religious organizations, and mass media* etc.¹² The dual structure within social structure leads to an interdependency.

Marx's view on the constitution of societies is founded on production based antagonisms; the duality finds expression in Marxist terminology as “base” and “superstructure”. The base is “the basic way a society organizes the production of goods.”, thus the mode of production is settled in the foundations of a societal structure representing the core. On the other hand, the superstructure consists of the institutions mentioned above that play crucial role in shaping the consciousness of the members through generating *beliefs, norms, values and attitudes* etc.¹³ This structural diversity is also the setting for a class antagonism since, as Marx puts it; the dominating class has the power to legitimize its own

¹¹ D. F. Walsh, *Subject/Object, Core Sociological Dichotomies*, ed. by Chris Jenks, SAGE Publications, 1998, pp. 294-5.

¹² Base and Superstructure, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology* (2000). Retrieved 11 November 2005, from xreferplus.<http://www.xreferplus.com/entry/723467>

¹³ *Ibid.*

system of beliefs, thought, norms, values etc. Thus structuring its own institutions to keep its hegemony secure and the system functioning.

The following quotes points are important regarding the structure-agency debate first of all because that it may be accepted as a concise summary of Giddens' "Theory of Structuration". The second one which can also be set forth as the explanation of the first is the emphasis of an effort that tries to reconcile the agent and the structure by giving them equal chance to design or *structure* the complementary defining a mutuality. The third point is the one related to the scope of the study: the emerging agent as an individual to explore and express the *inner-domain* located in a society of change, furthermore a society with dominating goals set to be accomplished. Furthermore the latter point can be utilized to bring forward the discussion on the position of Melnikov and Leonidov as (creative) agents in the Soviets whose carriers were defined by solitude. It can be re-emphasized that this solitude was in fact the result of their genuineness, their effort to individualize – or personalize the creative process. Leading to the complementarity of the structure and agency, and thus to a mutual relation.

The production of society is a skilled performance, sustained and "made to happen" by human beings. It is indeed only made possible because every (competent) member of society is a practical social theorist.¹⁴

Structures must not be conceptualized as simply placing constraint upon human agency, but as enabling. This is what I call the duality of structure. Structures can always be examined in terms of their structuration as a series of reproduced practices. To enquire into the structuration of social practices is to seek to explain how it comes about that structures are constituted through action, and reciprocally how action is constituted structurally.¹⁵

3.3. SOCIAL AGENT

The social agent, from whom action and production is requested in order first to conceptualize and finally concretize demands, is an active member of a social structure. From Weber's point social action can be explained under four subtitles;

¹⁴ Anthony Giddens. *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*, Hutchinson of London, 1977, p. 102.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

- 1 *instrumentally* rational, that is, determined by expectations as to the behavior of objects in the environment and of other human beings...;
- 2 *value-rational*, that is, determined by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behavior, independently of its prospects of success;
- 3 *affectual* (especially emotional), that is, determined by the actor's specific affects and feeling states;
- 4 *traditional*, that is, determined by ingrained habit.¹⁶

The position of the social agent regarding what the product of his action is becomes important. This separation can be put forward by the notion of “creative act” and thus the “creative agent”. The majority of agents are only commodity producing individuals; workers, farmers, engineers etc. Social agents that are involved within the creative act, architects, poets, sculptors etc., deserve critical importance regarding the “agency-structure debate”, furthermore architecture as the crucial instrument that is capable of pre-determining how and in what conditions an individual or the society should inhabit. After defining such a specialization, there is the necessity to search for the existence of additional variables that can be utilized. These can be put by cross-interpreting notions of two opposing theories mentioned earlier. Locating creative agents in semi-autonomous position, both the structuralist view focusing on material dominators as production, class, labor etc.; and the post-structuralist view focusing on intentions, meanings, discourse etc. should be understood. In fact this is one of the reasons that cause the complexity that has been mentioned.

It is important to state that no matter how the architect is defined: as a social agent or a producing actor in society, it is a personal struggle in which the inner world always tries to have the dominant role. However, as the product belongs to the outer world, fulfillment of its demands can never be neglected. Thus the relationship of the architect and the society can be defined by this dual structure. It can also be stated that it is the society, the structure of the society or in other words how the society is composed in a certain era that defines the dose of dominance of the individual. This definitive role is not solely related to hegemony, but also to historical variables and social prerequisites. Agency and structure is dynamically defined and re-defined through historical consequences.

¹⁶ M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (2 vol.), edited by G. Roth and C. Wittich, University of California Press, 1978.

Another important thing to mention will be, as Giddens strictly puts forward, agency can not be solely related to and discussed through *meaning*, it must be questioned through *praxis*.¹⁷ Here praxis should be set forth as the keyword that constructs the relation of the debate to everyday life, the material world of actions and their consequences.

3.4. LOCATING THE ARCHITECT

Locating the architect, leaving the structure-agency debate aside, has always been in focus of questioning; whether the architect is an artist or not, is the architect autonomous or not...etc.? The debate of the first question and its historical evolution will not be the primary objective of this work. Henceforth architecture will be considered as being in the realm of artistic production. Even if it seems that this proposal can be opposed by putting forward the relation of technology and architecture this leads to a counter opposition: every art work is a production and it consists of both mental and physical labor that proposes a *contact humain* that at the very basis is the transition from *man of nature* to *man of man*.¹⁸ Technology is an inseparable element of this production process, as in all artistic productions but carrying a relatively varying position that can be referred to as a *worldly* production.

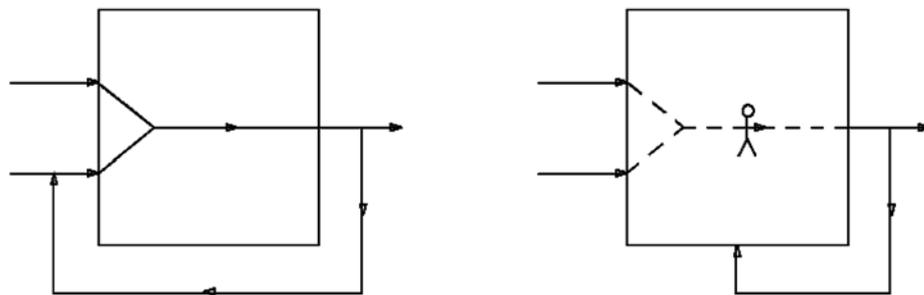
The debate on the architect's autonomy is a more central discussion for this inquiry. The architectural and sociological view point concerning the agent's autonomy can be projected by the duality of, using Hollis' terminology, the autonomous man – the individual that is able to perform action with free will and generated by personal (subjective) factors – and the plastic man – as an outcome of various structural (objective) aspects. Not only setting forth this duality, Hollis points to the essentiality of the structure's need for both to exist simultaneously. He defines the plastic man as a “programmed feedback system”, a “passive” and “natural creature”; and the autonomous man as a “rational creature” in a natural

¹⁷ Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Social Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*, Hutchinson of London, 1977, p. 53.

¹⁸ Italics by Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, translated by John Moore, Verso, 1992.

world having an active existence.¹⁹ (Fig. 3.1) Hollis' study is critical since it juxtaposes philosophical and sociological strata. The philosophical view point should not be neglected in the case of the architect. The area bounded by the square is the inner-subjective domain of the agent; this domain forms the ontological core of the philosophical side of the debate.

Table 3.1 Graphic representation of the plastic man (left) and the autonomous man.



(M. Hollis, *Models of Man: Philosophical Thoughts on Social Action*, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 5.)

Similarly Ziya Tanalı discusses the critical position of the individual as a creator through the inner-world (the blank-square for Hollis) of the individual through “essentia” and “substantia”:

...in every art there exists a space in which essence endures. This void is a multi-layered abstract domain which enables us to fiddle around in; it is there and through that space we re-define the essence through adding certain things; which we utilize to express ourselves. Every creator re-defines and makes the essence visible and perceivable within that domain regarding his truths. This is the inner-world of the artist... It is this domain in which formal qualities and quantities that constitutes the creation is unified. Creation is made there first. Everything is created there, and when time comes you bring it out to sunlight.²⁰

¹⁹ Martin Hollis, *Models of Man: Philosophical Thoughts on Social Action*, Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 10-13.

²⁰ A. Zeynep Onur, *Ziya Tanalı*, unpublished book.

Different from Hollis' view point, Tanalı's approach enables to deal with the point of the artist which will be an important stand point while discussing the position of the artist in the Soviets after the 1917 Revolution, but also while focusing on the works of Melnikov and Leonidov and setting forth their in managing to be *solo architects in a mass society*.²¹ Another point to be stated can be, as Tanalı mentions, waiting for the temporal appropriateness. This time for existence has a dual oriented structure; the juxtaposition of exterior and interior causes or prerequisites. Thus the overlapping of social and individual consequences; in other words, the (social) structure and the agency are interdependent.

Marx's point can be projected to emphasize the relation of the individual and his/her production: "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce."²² Giddens expresses that "production" has to be taken in a very broad sense, thus it can also be implied to artistic production without a misinterpretation.

Every phenomenon as a consequence of mental (cognitive) and material (physical) production by man possesses a dynamic, autonomous structure which enables the capability of a *sui generis* evolution process. This autonomic evolution also prevents the possibility of the predefinability -or predictability of consequences regarding temporality. Through defining such a structure it can be stated that there is a dual structure within the domain defined by human production. The first is an upper-scale domain constituted by universal principles²³ related to the human essence that is inherited through history and exists independent from temporality. Besides this periphery, it can also be set forth that there also exists a smaller scale domain that generates its own mediums, tools, ways of thinking and in general a "structure" that will single-out and reinforce the production of a certain mainstream. It seems that this

²¹ Derived from book title, *Melnikov: Solo Architect in a Mass Society* by S. Frederick Starr.(1978)

²² Quoted in A. Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*, Hutchinson of London, 1977, p. 102

²³ It was very difficult to determine the proper term at this point. By "principle" it is accepted that the humanly produced domain of universal comprises both concepts related to cognition and those related to objects. This is in fact the praise of the integrity of man as a resultant of his physical and meta-physical existence.

awareness definitely can not be as clear to actors living through that certain period as it is for ones observing from a future time.

Looking from such an ocular, every sub-domain resembles a bundle. For example capitalism, as mentioned earlier, renders its own structure to preserve sustainability. Nourished by temporal conditions and the juxtaposition of several variables it was able to establish its foundations on the consequences of the industrial revolution, which also meant to define its tools of production. Through revolutionary and rebellion actions not only in social life but also in art and science the condemnation of the past, the “traditional” and “conventional” was achieved and man was located on new grounds, his perception, cognition and relation to everything was re-defined. Approaching with the view point that the produced domain, the individual and the society constitute a holistic structure, and that each element has a mutual relation with others it seems groundless to point that realization of a revolution can be fulfilled only through art – as with any other single element. On the other hand it can be one of the utilized mediums within a certain period of change or crisis. This process of change can be rendered partly through the semi-autonomous inner-domains of active individuals and partly through the designation of an extensive formation which is the social structure.²⁴ Whereas the position of the creative individual (agent) is far more critical since the creative agent is like an equation of many unknowns and has to be evaluated via utilizing more variables. The intricacy of the situation causes the previously mentioned notion of unpredictability. In addition the inner-domain of agents undergo creative act is very complicated and furthermore it is in resistance against the suppressions of the social structure. This resistance gains success and causes deviations in the situations of the predeterminations by the structure if it can be organized. Furthermore if it can be systematized under the right historical conditions it has the possibility to add a new layer to the upper-scale domain of universal phenomena. If neither can be managed it is label as a style that completes its lifetime in a certain period.

²⁴ The mutual relationship between the structure and individuals has to be well established because the structure requires agents to perform action and produce the material and cognitive culture. Thus the structure has to be definitely related to hegemony. Agents on the other hand play an important role since they are the actual actors that define and redefine the structure.

As discussed thoroughly through the previous chapter circumstances in the Soviets was highly complicated not only culturally and socially, but also referring the position of the architect as a creative agent confronting the social structure. Within the first years of the revolution there was a bulk of theoretical and practical production. However as the intricacy settled within the following years the fluidity was replaced by a more rigid and predefined medium. As it has been stated this led to the Stalinist era. It is interesting to see that this change also marks a transition from the highly conscious agent to the unconscious one. Furthermore although there was a very contemporary, genuine production within the first years of the revolution, it can be observed that this also fades through time. These render the changes regarding the creativity of the creative agent and evaluating and classifying each action, notion, value etc. in accordance with the fundamental principle of collectivity. The priorities of the social structure can be traced within its institutions and instrumental mediums as in architecture through architects. This approach that is in the tendency to transform everything into apparatuses led to the exaggeration of the social structure and the underestimation of the agency and caused, regarding architecture, the formation of a mainstream architect. However on the other hand it inevitably defined the so called *enfant terrible* group which can be seen as the ones that never quitted questioning. This is the group in which Melnikov and Leonidov can be located as it was set forth through the cited attacks and critiques of the era.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The thing that made man exceptional was perhaps the overflowing abundance of imagination and dreams that constituted an “inner-world” to him.

Jose Ortega y Gasset. *Man and People*

Despite deterministic conditions of the societal – the ex-individual domain – and the ideals of a collective action and production program, as it has been discussed through two architects Melnikov and Leonidov of such an era, there are always gaps which for using the terminology of their counterparts *enfant terrible* to be located. It is however crucial to locate the existence of these gaps properly: they should not be approached as defects or weak points that can be used to demolish the structure, but as a natural state and an acceptable consequence of individuals and the constituted whole by them. Every individual is a member of a group of individuals, an entity of a larger scale and as the gestalt theory asserts: a whole represents an entity that can not be attributed only as the sum of its elements. The reflection of this proposal to sociological strata renders a totality, a structure that cannot be fully controllable by its members. The society thus cannot be understood by evaluating the qualities of its individuals one by one and listing the output to obtain a mathematical summary that is equivalent to the characteristics of the society.

On the other hand the social structure as the structural body of a society was rendered by continuous dichotomies. As set forth throughout the study, these dichotomies were established by the very fundamental and undoubtedly historical conflict: man and his environment. This, as dealt within the discussion of the rear-domain, can also be scaled to another sub-point which is the *discomfort of reason* and thus the irresistible *stimulation to produce*. Preventing the discussion to diminish in the realms anthropological discussion, the production has to be dealt with a dual approach that both comprise a societal and an individual scale. In order to narrow the scope of this debate it can be said that: the individual as a social agent strives to produce in a self-oriented, purposeful and “rationally intended” manner though his actions, which is agency. Whereas the society, oriented by the structure which is predefined by the collectivity of hegemonic actors through dominant ideology. This defines the situation as an antagonism of the structure aiming to define both its concordant actors and institutions that will provide sustainability. The collectivized reason opposed by the autonomous individual reason. At this point the different position of the creative individual or as with the terminology of this study the creative -social- agent that produces something more than commodities and the individual solely does that by becoming an apparatus of material production. The creative agent is the

individual that experiences artistic creation in any scale and medium. It is under this framework that the architect should be located. However crucially noting, and as it has been mentioned and visualized through two consecutive charts in chapter three, the “inner-world”, inner-domain or the rear-domain of any agent is structured by the contribution of two sets: the individual and the social. This dual formation is exactly in the same mutual manner of the relation between structure and agency in Giddens’ structuration theory.

The social and architectural domain in the Soviets after the October revolution was defined by a revolution and its ideals to transform society. As mentioned several times throughout the study the post-revolutionary period laid the foundations of certain shifts. The shift of the position of the architect as a social agent constituted a crucial one considering architectural production; whereas the shift in the perception of social institutions generated new functions for the built environment. It has been discussed by questioning different approaches to the structure-agency debate which can be summarized under three sets; generating a dialectic manner of thesis anti-thesis and synthesis. The first deals with a more dominant notion of structure that has an autonomous self-oriented or using Durkheim’s terminology a *sui generis* formation. Thus the agent is a consequence of the structure, and can not transform the structures via his actions. Within Giddens’ terminology the agent in a way has been formed as a “cultural dope” that acts as a living institution of the structure that asserts its own cognition, material and idealistic preferences.¹ On the other hand there is the autonomous agent that is self-oriented by individual preferences, perceptions that is capable of free act, and therefore can interfere in structural formations. This implies a more abstract comprehension of structure which is formed by general common acceptances i.e. meanings, intentions etc. The third point marks the synthesis that has been thoroughly dealt by Giddens’ Structuration theory that asserts the mutual relationship between the structure and agency and sets the “conscious” and “knowledgeable” agent that can act with “conscious intentionality”, “but in context of structure as medium and outcome of agency and

¹Agents that act as the “supports of structure” as mentioned under the title “structuration theory” in Collins Dictionary of Sociology, 2000.

interaction”.² At this point the term revolution and its consequences have to be mentioned once more.

Revolution, besides causing a shift in structure-agency relationship also results in an era of uncertainties shadowed by the heroic discourse. Gasset, as mentioned earlier, points to an important characteristic of revolutionary action: its nourishing effect on the rise of new possibilities. Gasset’s point on the slippery grounds of the consequences and formation of a revolution and, seems to be valid while regarding the Soviet case which generates a different stand point as setting the class-oriented view as a consequence:

When rationality is transformed into the general working principle of souls, the revolutionary process starts spontaneously. That is to say it does not arise from the suppression of the lower class by the upper, from the arising sensibility for a higher justice or the capability of new classes to seize hegemony from traditional powers...In fact incidences that can be observed through the revolutionary soul is of this kind, however apart from playing a causal role they are the consequences of it.

It is true: every revolution, more or less is in a manner that aims to succeed a perfect utopia which in fact is impossible. Defeat causes the formation of the twin and contrary concept of revolution: the counter-revolution.³

Three points on the Soviet case have to be mentioned regarding the consequences of the revolution. The first is the plurality of ways of thinking and producing within the era which is mostly valid through different mediums of artistic production and that observably faded as time passed and reached its highest level of suppression with the rise of Stalinism. The second point is rooted within societal characteristics and the general historical cultural, industrial etc. conditions rendered by Modernism. The third is a characteristic property of the Russian

² Ibid.

³ Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Devrimlerin Günbatımı* [El Ocaso de las Revoluciones-1923], *Tarihsel Bunalım ve İnsan*, translated from Spanish by Neyire Gül Işık, Metis Yayınları, 1998, pp. 80-81. (English translation by author)

Gasset also unfolds the consequences of historical crisis and how an individual can be located within such a period, which in fact may be regarded as a more fundamental and upper scale revolution that effects a larger human population, in his essay *Change and Crisis* [Man and Crisis-1958]: “It is a change which begins by being negative and critical. One does not know what new thing to think –one only knows, that the traditional norms and ideas are false and inadmissible. One feels a profound disdain for everything...which was believed yesterday; but the truth is that there are no new positive beliefs with which to replace the traditional ones.”

society mentioned earlier by Voyce and Cooke in the third chapter: capability of amalgamating a wide range of cultural inheritance with new confrontations, the cognitive and intuitive effort to preserve genuineness. This also helps the creator to be located at a point where he knows to trace the essence, the very thing that can be utilized as an origin point for innumerable attempts within the process of production.

As Buchli stresses “architecture is probably the most durable, long lasting and easily retrievable” when “all material cultures produced by societies are considered.”⁴ Furthermore he points that “architecture is also the material cultural matrix which most other artefacts of material culture are associated with or related to” and continues to render architecture as a layer to look through while structuring a sociological approach: the perception of architecture as an “ocular” that is concentrated to understand societies.⁵ As it has been projected throughout the production process of architecture the individual and the societal predefinitions and demand have mutual importance. The individual, and specifically the architect as a creative social agent, is in counter action to protect his inner-domain defined majorly by individual preferences which in fact may be set as within the nature of creative act. On the other hand the structure as also a dynamic entity restructures the social factors that in a way project the main structure – defining a framework that aims to render predefined paths to arrive predefined consequences.

As a future orientation it is assumed that this study can lead to two separate questionings which can be located under two different domains. These studies in fact also render the dual approach of the current one. First of these can be unfolded through the aspect of “creative act” which within this study was utilized to question the inner-domain or the inner-world of the architect; and specifically through an era of collectivized creative process. A study dealing with the nature of creativity will definitely have to place a psychology, philosophy and epistemology in the center of the debate and define the cognitive peripheries through ethics and aesthetics. However it should not be neglected to constitute a perception that allows a mutual relation between the individual – psychological,

⁴ Victor Buchli, *An Archaeology of Socialism*, Berg (Oxford International) Publishers, 1999, p. 1.

⁵ Ibid.

philosophical etc. – and external – societal, cultural, geographical and historical etc. – conditions.

The second study that can utilize this study as a pre-phase or a preparatory questioning is related to a more familiar geography and culture. Furthermore which the researcher will be able to find first-hand documents, experience the architecture; analyze a wide range of literary and built resources which as a whole will enable the study to be more complex and humane. As this study focuses on the post-revolutionary era in the Soviets similarly a following research can focus on the first years of the Turkish Republic, questioning the relationship between the architect as a creative agent and the social structure. Although every revolution has its own inner and exterior factors, causes and consequences several similarities can be pointed between these two periods. The first and probably the most distinguishable is the temporal, which they both were at their summit in the 1920s and that both were followed by periods of *décadence* which in fact is mentioned as a natural evolution of a revolution by Gasset.⁶ Carrying the historical similarities to a further point, it can be noted that the pre-revolutionary periods seem to be parallel: in the Soviets it was the Romantic attitude that generated both traditional and art-nouveau architecture; in the Turkish case it was the eclectic approach of the “first nationalist period” that embodied a traditional and historical point of view. Following a tripartite chronological layout throughout the era of both revolutions architecture, contrasting the pre-revolutionary periods are firmly and decisively established within Modernism. Third, as mentioned is the similar period of *décadence* which caused the rise of an eclectic attitude both in architecture and social life. (Fig.4.1; 4.2) Examples can be increased in quantity, however these two are very specific since the story can be traced within the same examples, the second block of the Narkomfin Housing Complex was designed by Ginzburg and Milinis however it was built with a more “usual” way in a neo-classical manner. The Exhibition Hall, on the other hand, that was built by Şevki Balmumcu in 1934 –first prize in the international competition – with a modernist-purist manner was “transformed”

⁶ In the Soviet case this beginning of *décadence* can be distinguished with the thirties, whereas in Turkey this can be pointed with the forties.



Fig.4.1 First photo showing the Narkomfin House by Ginzburg and Milinis in 1930. The second showing the second block on the same site, which was built completely discordant regarding the architects designs in 1950s.



Fig.4.2 First photo showing the Exhibition Hall designed by Şevki Balmumcu in 1934 and the second showing its “transformed” new state by Paul Bonatz in the 1940s.

functionally into an opera house with a so-called nationalist approach in the forties.⁷

As the two periods stand for diverse ideals regarding the position of the individual and the society, they were organized collective actions aiming emancipation from what has been brought till that time that blocked the way for enlightenment and progress. They both constituted their own institutions to broaden the base effected by the revolutionary idea(l)s and educated their own actors through whom the struggle will be humanized and thus the revolution will survive and evolve via establishing its foundations on firm grounds. The institutions in the Soviet case were architectural types generally named as “social condensers” and were seen as the most powerful tools to transform society and reach predefined goals. These were tools to render a new individual and collective way of living amongst individuals by redefining cultural and recreational perceptions but also political, economical, sociological and philosophical preferences and backgrounds. It seems that the importance of architecture for transforming a society was adopted sincerely within both cases, however it should be stated that in the Soviet case a more rationalized programmatic cognition was applied, as mentioned a detailed coordination was made between the OSA group and Stroikom RSFSR (Construction Committee of the Russian Republic) to develop the Stroikom dwelling units that were used as guides by architects who designed communal houses. It can be said that the Soviet approach seems more efficient and also a more intellectual one. In the Turkish case there is also a single-party hegemony, and it manages to obtain people’s houses through competitions, governmental units (Ministry of Public Works) or mayors of the city that the building will be constructed can be responsible.⁸ On the other hand the party (People’s Republic Party-CHP) had established an architectural and consultancy bureau, Ahmet Sabri Oran was assigned as the head architect, which was the

⁷ Tanalı points to the mutual relation between the intricacy of an era and what is produced during such an era: “Within our own example, a proposal like “nationalism” can arise in which repeating by attributing the old and quoting from it is accepted as a virtue. These sorts of things exist in periods of confusion.” (A. Zeynep Onur, unpublished book).

⁸ Neşe G. Yeşilkaya, *Halkevleri: İdeoloji ve Mimarlık* [People’s Houses: Ideology and Architecture], İletişim Yayınları, 1999, pp. 133-34.

organization responsible to design people's houses. The design principles were designated by the parties "Declaration of People's Houses" announced in 1938.⁹

It has been put forward that apart from the communal house one of the most important architectural types for transition was the workers' club which aimed to fulfill the collectivization goal by collectivizing what was left apart from labor which was designated by factories, domesticity and living through housing units: leisure time and recreation. On the Turkish part new functions can be signified as museums, exhibition halls, theatres, libraries, administrative buildings, "railway buildings, 'Gazi' schools... village institutes, people's houses" ¹⁰ etc. The latter two types, village institutes and people's houses, enable the rendering of a very important similarity with the workers' clubs both functional and their meaning for societal aims in the transitive period. As mentioned in the third chapter workers' clubs were located both in urban geography and rural settlements within same societal aims not only to collectivize recreational activities but also to educate and enlighten the individual and create the "ideal individual". People's houses and village institutes can be approached with a similar view; where both aimed the enlightenment of individuals; they constituted the core of the cultural change of a revolutionary modernization process since they seem to be the closest and most humane contact that the structure established with individuals. Orhan Alsaç's and A. Sabri Oran's statements concisely stress this point:

It is the duty of these buildings to meet the scientific and cultural demands of the people, to impose collectivity and nationality, to increase confidence and devotion to the country and nation, to reinforce tranquility and security through simplicity and beauty, and to enhance moral values.¹¹

They [people's houses] will fulfill all cultural requirements and will educate people and youth through introducing them the essence and principles of our revolution.¹²

Furthermore they were places for that enabled the encounter with future artists, politicians, philosophers etc.; a chance for the hegemony to realize the quality of raw social material. As Yeşilkaya states, a great emphasis is made on people's

⁹ Ibid., pp. 133-36.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 111,131.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 138.

¹² Ibid., p. 139.

houses and they are accepted as crucial units for the milieu as “a power plant, park, barracks or a temple”.¹³ Similarly the architect as a revolutionary actor is accepted to convey the ideals of the revolution through these buildings within a contemporary attitude:

Our architects are focused on issues to fulfill the requirements of our revolution and demands of our changing life-style. Amongst them people’s houses have a leading role.¹⁴

Most of the architects, who won the architectural competitions of our modern and beautiful buildings, transmit the new architectural taste to the public through people’s houses.¹⁵

Another point that can be pointed is the functional similarities or in other words similarities in the architectural programs of the workers’ clubs and people’s houses. The core function was, as Melnikov with his analogical approach placed it in concordance with human anatomy in the place of the chest cavity and near to the heart, the auditorium where through divergent programmes the ideals of the revolution will be emitted. Within the same attitude, as Yeşilkaya sets forth through declarations of the CHP and statements of the chief architect of the party A. S. Oran that: “the hall was accepted as the principle element within all the projects.”¹⁶ Different from the halls in the Soviets it is mentioned that these halls were not only for artistic activities but were also intended to be used for weddings, balls etc.¹⁷ Another significant element is the library, similar to the Russian case it is intended and declared that every house should have a library in which at least fifty people can work simultaneously.¹⁸ The third important element that can be designated is the space for sports facilities i.e. gyms and it is declared that chess halls and places for billiards will be organized to attract the youth.¹⁹ Apart from these one-to-one functional correspondences, a general lay out of how the spaces were organized and the rational and functionalist approach is clearly visible through the plan schema of the buildings. (Fig. 4.3; 4.4)

¹³ Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁴ Quoted from O. Alsaç, *ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁵ Quoted from the 1935 declaration by CHP, *ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

Yeşilkaya's study is very detailed and impressive, however it will be impossible to define a detailed framework regarding the comparison between the Soviet and Turkish cases, in fact it is not aimed to fulfill such a premise, within the scope of this research. On the other hand it is interesting to scrutinize and unfold similarities and diversities through this final concluding chapter and to roughly trace a new path for a future study.

Finally referring to the structure-agency dichotomy, it can be stated the dominance of the producing actors in the architectural medium of the Soviets regarding the transformation of the society is far beyond their Turkish counterparts. The individualistic and autonomous character of the creative agent's (architect) inner domain seems to be more traceable amazingly in the Soviets. Amazingly since the era was always an example for the social suppression of the individual and a heyday for collectivity. On the contrary with the ideals of a democratic state the creative agents of the Turkish post-revolutionary period seem to be more suppressed and diffused by the hegemony of a single party. At this point a question must be asked, was it really the inner domain that was suppressed or the whole idea of the individualistic existence was not matured? Can this be pointed as a consequence of inheriting the characteristics of an oriental society where the art object itself always shadows its creator? In fact is this the preference of the artist: anonymity of the art work. Perhaps this can designate another path for a new study. It is obvious that the case of the post-revolutionary Turkish architect should be scrutinized through several view points comprising the societal conditions but at the same time stressing individual preferences. Since for an architect who is determined to design a building of any scale have to perceive that this is can not be a *sui generis* process and that every sub-structure i.e. the domain of architecture, science etc. has to be perceived as a dynamic whole that is in mutual relation with other sub-structures i.e. philosophy, sociology etc. and an upper-scale strata constituted through history of human cognitive and everyday action.

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APPENDIX A

MOISEI GINZBURG'S DIAGRAM SHOWING THE "NEW METHOD OF ARCHITECTURAL THOUGHT"ⁱ

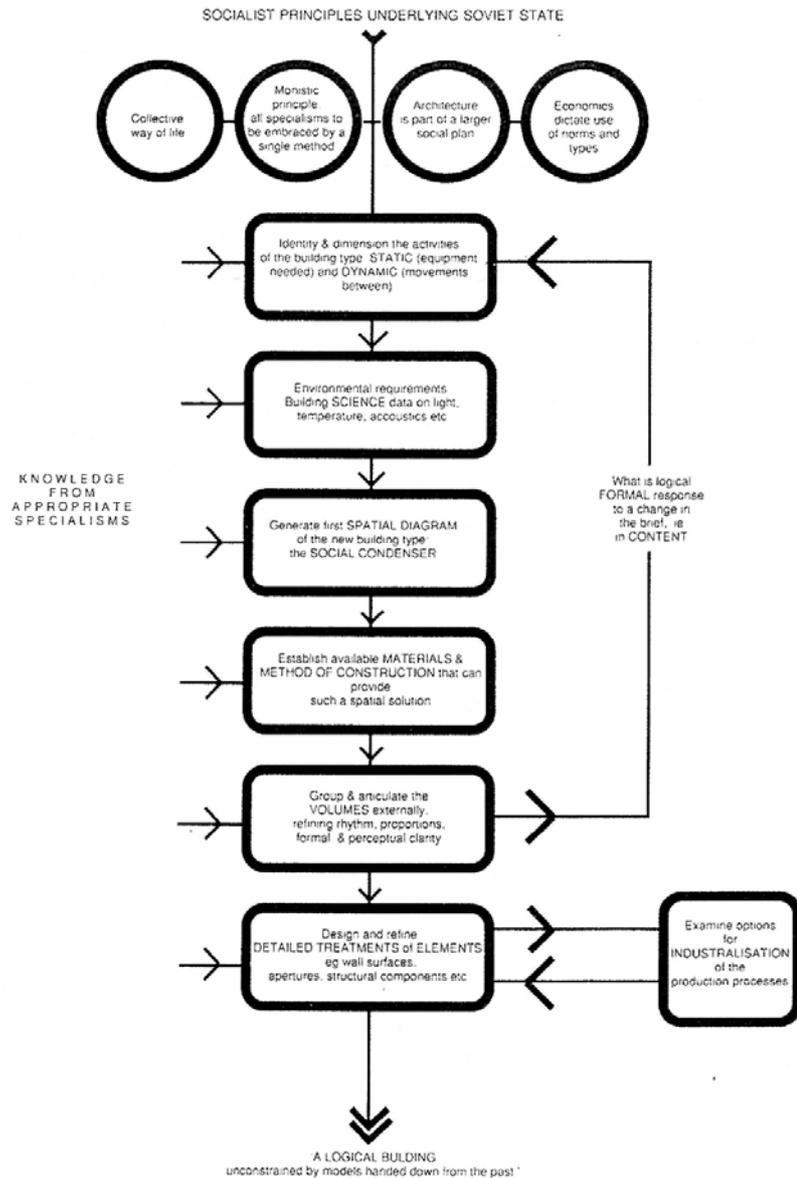


Fig. A.1

ⁱ (Published in SA 1926 No.1. From Catherine Cooke's The Machine as a Model: The Russian Constructivists' Conception of the Design Process. Art and Design (1989, Vol. 59, No.7/8): X-XV.)

APPENDIX B

PETER ENGELMEIER'S MODEL OF DESIGN - 1912ⁱⁱ

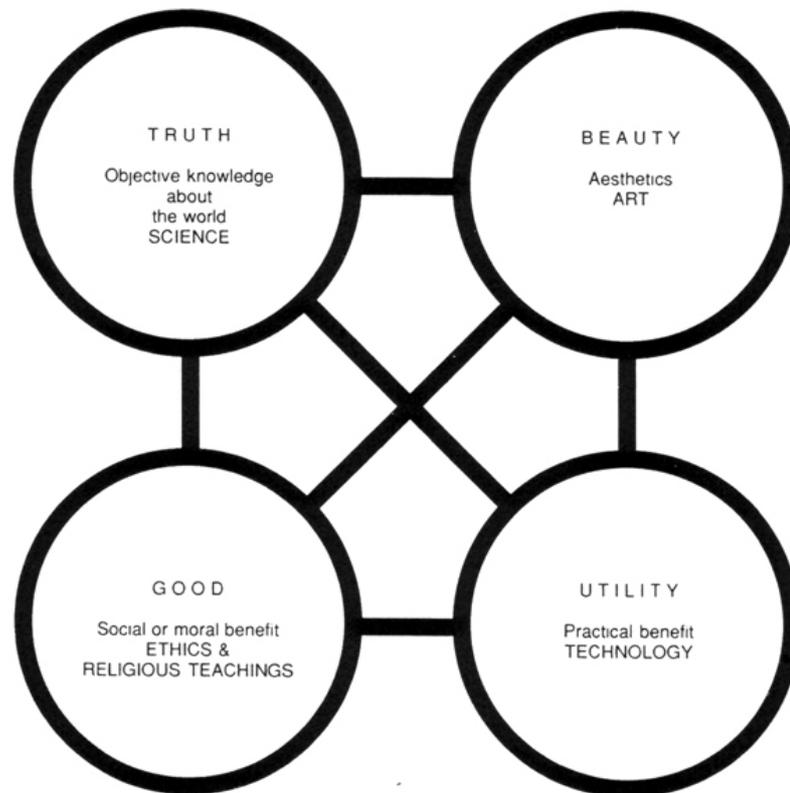


Fig. B.1

ⁱⁱ Engelmeier's, a Moscow Scientist, model of design or the "technological act" sets an analogy with an organic chemistry formula $C_mH_nO_pN_q$. His is $I = TmBnGpUq$; where T is for Truth, B is for Beauty, G is for Good and U is for Utility. Cooke points to the relation between Gan's trilogy of "Faktura, Tektonika and Konstruktsiia". From C. Cooke's The Machine as a Model: The Russian Constructivists' Conception of the Design Process. Art and Design (1989, Vol. 59, No.7/8): X-XV.)

APPENDIX D

THE NARKOMFIN HOUSING UNIT – 1930 PHOTO FROM THE
NARKOMFIN PARK AND PHOTO FROM THE INTERIOR
CORRIDOR



Fig. D.1