

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE ARCHITECT-DEVELOPER RELATIONSHIP IN THE USSR (1918-1989) ¹

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1. This article was originally published in the Russian language (Architecture of the USSR Journal (3) 1989). The intention in the English version is to introduce the subject to the foreign reader. For this reason, the original sources and references to Party Regulations etc. have been omitted. Thus the article has been transformed into an essay.

One of the most important factors that necessitated the *perestroika* of the Soviet economy was the national architectural-development complex consuming up to 20 percent of the national income. The total number of employees engaged in the complex, amounts to approximately 15 000 000 including 11 000 000 builders, 800 000 planners, 60 000 architects and town planners and 15 000 researchers.

The process of architectural-and-design complex formation reflects the main stages and contradictions in developing the monopolistic political structure and management mechanism of the national economy based on the state property ownership in land and means of production. The process of developing administrative structures, technology of planning and capital construction revealed undesirable conflicts that occurred as a result of the disintegrated operation of the main links (design, research and development).

For 70 years the government has enacted about ten important regulations aimed at the development of architecture and improvement of design and construction in the USSR. Analysis of the above acts makes it possible to single out the following four main stages.

THE FIRST STAGE (1918-1930)

Until 1928 the Soviets were the centres of administration and the administrative-command system of government was still in its incipency. After the Civil war, when the national economy was under rehabilitation, architectural and design practice was very much ahead of the potentials of building technology. Architecture took the leading place at the international scale in the synthesis of arts in a broad sense and in setting objectives for the integrated transformation of material and spatial environment. Design block put forward the long-term goals before the national building industry; new types of facilities were designed, new settlement concepts were formulated. This was a period for the flourishing of constructivism.

The committee on State facilities was formed at this stage. Its aim was to organise planned capital build-up at the national level and to concentrate labour resources on large-scale developments.

After the break-up of the war, when a new economic policy (NEP) was initiated, there was a short period when contract cooperatives operating on a profitable basis were rehabilitated.

In the 1920's when the Soviets still reserved for themselves the real power, and municipal property was not eliminated, complex design workshops were formed. In towns, a new system of a single-customer, single-planner, single-developer was taking shape. This gave more space for comprehensive implementation of the architect's idea which expressed the interests of all residents within a given area.

Experience gained by the Western European countries was used as a basis to draw up regional plans and master-plans of industrial towns based on new principles. Emergence of many associations of architects gave rise to the development of creative and stylistic trends on a competitive basis. Shortly after NEP was abandoned, the monopolisation of construction began and the activity of private building cooperatives was restricted. This period is still characterised by a comprehensive approach to the implementation of the most important all-union development of the oil-bearing regions of Azerbaijan, comprehensive regulation of New Zaporozhje (Ukraine) and integrated development of its social, transportation and engineering infrastructure. A similar approach was used to design and partially implement the complexes attached to the motor works in the city of Gorky, and tractor and other works in Volgograd, Kharkov, Chelyabinsk, Sverdlovsk. These projects were realised with the assistance of experts from the USA and Germany. By the late 1920's qualified specialists in the field of municipal self-government and economy were removed and later many of them were repressed.

THE SECOND STAGE (1931-1961)

This stage is characterised by the loosening of the Soviet power and strengthening of the branch system of administration. Forced collectivisation resulted in an enormous influx of rural population into the towns, desolation of villages, construction of dozens of new towns on the basis of extractive and processing industries.

At this period the first architectural decisions were taken. In the process of developing the governmental-administrative-command system, architectural and building activity gradually assumed an all-national character. In 1932 different creative associations of architects were replaced by the USSR Union of Architects. As a result, the creative work of architects was little by little growing poorer while bureaucratism in this sphere was getting stronger. Academy of Architecture was established that functioned as a higher educational institution and a research agency. Thus, concern was focused not so much on the material and technical base of architecture, but architecture as a sphere of ideology. Relations with foreign architects were interrupted for 20-25 years. The year of 1935 was the beginning of mass repressions when many architects and builders were lost.

During this period, the management system of architectural and building activity went through gradual changes. Municipal property was eliminated; the design institutes were frequently formed under ministries; hence, the leading role of

architecture and the conceptual basis for creative work diminished dramatically. Architects more often represented bureaucratic rather than public interests. Thus, architects became the state officials and advocates of the party ideology based on socialistic realism. Consequently, constructivism was replaced by archaic styles.

In 1943, the Committee on Architecture was established; it was responsible for architecture and town planning, acting beyond departmental subordination. The Committee coordinated the activity of all departments engaged in urban planning, architectural design, approval of master-plans of towns, rehabilitation of architectural and historic monuments. Its task was to provide official guidance for architectural and planning works on rehabilitation of towns and settlements destroyed during the 1941-1945 War.

Departments of architecture were formed under the Soviets of People's Commissars in republics and in the cities of Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. Posts of chief architects of towns were initiated under the authority of the local bodies responsible for architecture. Later the Academy of Architecture was also transferred to the authority of the Committee.

In union republics, territories and regions as well as in 100 cities the system of architectural authorities was formed. The Committee dealt with design and building of multi-storey structures in the capital which provoked a rise in the culture of building. Architecture of this period is characterised by a triumphal style. However, mass public housing was nearly neglected and individual construction was restricted in every possible way.

Over the following years architect-developer relationship went through many changes. Thus, new construction ministries came into existence every 2-3 years and management functions were duplicated. Committee on Architecture was abolished and its functions were taken over by the a newly formed Ministry of Urban Construction of the USSR.

The State Committee on Construction was initiated. Its principal task was to consider the projects and estimates on enterprises, buildings, facilities and construction submitted by the ministries to the USSR Council of Ministries for approval. In a sense, it officially approved planning documents and supervised implementation of governmental decisions on design and construction of unique representative objects. Shortly the Academy was re-organised for the fourth time and placed under the authority of the USSR Gosstroy.

Most of the facilities were still designed and built with regard to local conditions, national and historic traditions. The standard architecture of new towns which demonstrated neglect of the interests of ordinary urban residents gave rise to anxiety. The Union of Architects did not necessarily defend the interests of its members and in fact became an advocate of narrow departmental goals and merged with bureaucracy. Significance of a highly-qualified architect was more and more underestimated.

After the war the key problem was to satisfy housing requirements and to accelerate mass housing construction. The mechanism for architecture and development was again subject to radical changes. It was the executor who gave instructions to the creator which resulted in stagnation of the building art. All this produced a heavy impact on the professional creative work as well as on design and research practice under conditions of unprecedented growth of standard industrialised housing. For a short time, the USSR became one of the world's leaders in the rate of small apartment production.

In this period, the fundamental principles regarding the architectural and development complex as an integral whole were broken. Priority was given to a narrow interpretation of architecture with the effect that it became fully dependent on construction. Soon it was officially fixed and architectural bodies were placed under the authority of Gosstroy of the USSR. Simultaneously, the Ministry of urban and rural construction of the USSR was established at the level of the union republic. Its objectives included design and construction of residential buildings, schools, cultural, service and public facilities, utility networks, state farms, repair shops, rural electric power stations, etc. Three years later the Ministry was abolished. The system of planning and construction was to a considerable extent disorganised.

In 1955 the first national Gosstroys were formed. Their decisions on urban planning and development became obligatory for all agencies carrying out construction works within the union republic. Special construction and architectural departments were put into operation, whereas all earlier existing architectural and town planning departments and divisions were abolished. However, the Soviets did not exercise real power any longer and the efficiency of new divisions was not high. Therefore construction activity was under the guidance of ministries acting on instructions of the Party.

The early 1950's saw the emergence of a new Academy of Construction and Architecture of the USSR that was the main research centre of the architecture and development complex. During a short period architects and builders achieved good harmony in their joint efforts. It contributed to the better interaction of customers and efforts in basic and applied research, and made it possible to formulate a new strategy for developing the architect-developer relationship. Planners promoted the introduction of scientific and technological progress into the building practice which gave rise to a rapid growth of industrialised housing. Design practice within the country was decentralised which made it possible to consider more fully the local, national, cultural and historic conditions. However, on the whole, scientists and planners fell under the ever-growing influence of contractors.

THE THIRD STAGE (1962-1984)

The early 1980's (when the Party programme aimed at the construction of communism in the USSR was approved), are characterised by the orientation towards socio-economic efficiency of construction regarded in its narrow sense. Direct influence of contractors upon planners was observed as well as an extensive development of science by the efforts of rather incompetent specialists. Gradually basic research was abandoned and strict and detailed standards were predominantly introduced. Academy of Construction and Architecture of the USSR was abolished and research activity was subdivided into narrow typological branches being fully dependent on applied construction problems and the current needs of the building developers. Implementation of a unified urban development policy was strongly hindered by the fact that industrial institutes were under the authority of the USSR Gosstroy, while housing and civic construction institutes were subordinated to the Architectural Committee. All this impeded comprehensive urban development. Hundreds of featureless, standard towns devoid of a national individuality were built. It was a period of flourishing functionalism close to asceticism.

Design institutes were subdivided by a typological principle. Specialised typological research and design institutes were formed which reflected rather a branch than a territorial system of administration. There were signs that a single

architecture was subdivided into 'a number of architectures' from industrial to residential and the general theory of architecture was also subdivided into several typological trends.

Production of standard designs not intended for a concrete user, but realised by a central institute, and their subsequent adaptation to republic and local conditions resulted in the disintegration of the whole design process. It excluded the use of integral qualities of the system and had a negative social and economic effect.

Personal participation of architects and their responsibilities at the local level were reduced. This was especially true for the larger republics, Russia in the first place. As a result, professional skill was fully lost. Besides, nobody wanted standard anonymous designs and advice.

Thus architecture of the late 1970's lost its programme orientation and integrity, architectural solutions became more anonymous. Excessive unification of architecture was a vivid evidence of social stagnation, suppression of creative work by architects and omnipotence of the administrative machinery. One of the impacts of stagnation was an imbalance in the allocation of industrial complexes and housing estates. Disproportion between the number of jobs and housing volumes resulted in a great number of industrial units being put into operation without the provision of the necessary labour resources.

Within a time span of 15 years, employment in the national economy increased by 22 percent (and the number of jobs even more) while the number of dwellings put into service increased only by 9.5 as compared to the previous stage. Thus, every fourth enterprise put into operation was not provided with a qualified staff because of a lack of housing. Annual losses in industrial production, only for this reason amounts to dozens of billions of roubles. At the same time construction of expensive Lenin's memorial centres, and closed rest houses for the privileged was going on, on a large scale.

The residual principle of solving social problems, dictates of branches, domination of gross indices altogether brought about a rapid growth of resource-consuming developments. The state, in the name of ministries took over the functions of a customer. The role of contract terms was diminished and the users, i.e. all citizens of the country were deprived of the right to choose. This gave rise to a parasitical psychology and irresponsibility of all parties in the investment process for the ultimate results. Excessive centralisation, obvious priority of the state construction, and restriction of private initiative resulted in a drop of construction financed with private capital from 60 to 10 percent. This led to undermining of the housing problem and the utmost unification of urban and rural development and economic decay.

Alongside with immobilisation of huge capital investments (300- 350 milliard roubles) the total floor area (in square meters) of dwellings put into service increased, whereas the number of apartments decreased which represented a paradox of the building complex. Within the last two decades capital investments in housing increased by 2.4, population grew only by 19 percent and the number of flats put into service per 10 000 residents decreased. In the 1960's approximately 100 apartments per 10 000 residents were annually built whereas at present this figure has dropped to nearly 70.

The average size of new flats was sufficiently increased. The overestimation of labor productivity growth and the reduction in cost price of construction-and-assembly works with the provision of artificial indices, favoured the builders. It was also profitable for the planning bodies to allow for lower cost per square

meter in a large flat. Orientation to large apartments facilitated implementation of plans in 'gross' indices but it was also associated with higher accommodation costs per household, especially for those with few children. In the end, the waiting list for housing became longer despite the fact that birth-rates were lowered. Nowadays 25 percent of the population is not provided with adequate dwellings.

THE CURRENT STAGE (1985-)

At the present stage of the architect-developer relationship (since 1985) an attempt has been made to re-structure the management system of the national economy, to strengthen the social orientation of the economy, and to rehabilitate the role of the Soviets.

The fundamental criterion for determining the efficiency of the architect-developer relationship must be its positive impact on the overall development. This is the basis for creating prerequisites for the intensified public sector production and accelerated growth of labour productivity.

At the beginning of *perestroika*, Gosstroy of the USSR was transformed for the ninth time. Its activity was to be oriented to the users' interests rather than to the inter-branch optimum criterion. However, there is no rise in the efficiency of construction as yet, and the Housing-2000 programme is not implemented.

Success of a single technical policy for the architectural-development complex is largely dependent on a scientifically based strategy related to the social goals and economic potentials of society. It is necessary to form an alternative independent system of architecture and urban design, allowing for the competition between the state agencies, private firms and cooperatives. Nowadays 95 percent of architects still work in the governmental departments.

However, the key problems are not solved yet and what is more, they are not formulated. The tasks of architecture continue to be dependent on contractor's interests and are not closely related to the system of planning and finance. Industrial, housing and civil construction are disintegrated. As before, the user has no opportunity to influence the design and construction process.

The following six national programmes:

1. technical rearmament of industry
2. food supply
3. goods and services production
4. energy supply
5. solution of ecological problems and finally,
6. 'Housing-2000'

require a new general strategy.

This is conditioned by a sharp rise in the number of projects that are being built and redeveloped simultaneously which poses difficult socio-economic problems. Transfer to a 'current price' system does not exclude overestimation of contract prices by builders and can be regarded as an alternative for the competition under conditions of monopoly of certain producers and poorly-developed cooperation. Under bureaucratic and territorial anarchy in planning and capital construction which results in irregular material and technical supply, builders still retain their unlimited powers both to choose profitable projects and to put into operation unfinished objects, etc.

Therefore, there is a great need for changes in the existing situation and in urban legislation in the USSR. Evaluation of resources should be an important component process of the architectural-development complex. Architecture should reflect the national specific features of regions.

A proposed act on local self-government and local economy can play a decisive role in the architect-developer relationship. Transformation in cities and regions as well as the introduction of a new system of local authorities to be formed hopefully after the elections to the Supreme Soviets of national republics in spring 1990, and land legislation and codes of multiple property types, presuppose the denationalisation of many types of production.

We face a twofold and democratic problem: at the upper level to develop a general strategy, to activate thousands of planners and builders, and to use as much as possible the creative potential of an individual. Creation of a new alternative architecture becomes a political problem. And from this follows the principal task, i.e. to use the whole variety of conditions and opportunities of this multi-national country that is still rich in resources. It is necessary to create a mechanism for introducing innovations and variety, and to resist the monopoly of the party and all types of bureaucracy. We need assurances that non-standard artistic and technical ideas will be implemented. Hitherto this has been hindered by the monopolistic organisational structures.

SOVYETLER BİRLİĞİNDE MİMARİ VE YAPIM İŞLERİNİN ÖRGÜTSEL EVRİMİ (1918-1989)

ÖZET

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Ulusal gelirin %20'sini oluşturan yapım kesimi, *Perestroika* politikasının önemli gerekçelerinden biridir. Taşınmaz ve üretim araçlarında Devlet mülkiyetinin, politikada ise tekeli örgütlenmenin egemen olduğu bir ortamdaki yapım kesiminde, yatırım sermayesi oluşturma, yönetim mekanizmaları kurma, planlama ve tasarım teknikleri geliştirme konuları çelişkili bir evrim göstermiştir. Bu gelişme dört aşamada tanımlanabilir.

Tasarım pratiğinin yapım teknolojisinden daha ileri olduğu ilk dönemde (1918-1930) konstruktivizm, mimarlığı ve sanatları sentezleyen öncü bir role sahipti. Bu dönemde kurulan 'Devlet Yapılar Kurulu'nun amacı, yapım alanında işgücünü ulusal ölçekte örgütlemektir. 'Yeni Ekonomik Politika' ile, kısa bir süre için kar kıstasına ve sözleşmelere dayalı olarak çalışan kooperatifler kuruldu. 1920'lerde kullanıcı-mimar-yapımcı ilişkileri, belde mülkiyeti altındaki taşınmazlar bağımsızca kurulabilmekteydi. Bu, özgür bir tasarım sürecine olanak tanıyan bir ortamdı. Bu dönemde, yeni sanayi kentleri kurulmasında ve bölge planlarının hazırlanmasında Avrupa ve Amerika deneyiminden uzmanlar aracılığıyla yararlanılabilmekteydi. 1920'li son yıllarda ise, yapım kesiminde devlet tekeli genişletilerek özel kooperatiflerin etkinlikleri azaltıldı; yerel yönetimde uzmanlaşmış kadroların tasfiyesine gidildi.

İkinci dönemin (1931-1961) temel özelliği, yerel Sovyet yönetimleri yerine hiyerarşik ulusal yönetim biçiminin güçlendirilmesidir. Tarımda kolektifleştirme, kırsal alanlardan kentlere büyük bir göçe neden olurken düzinelerle yeni sanayi kenti oluşturuldu. 1932'de çeşitli örgütler birleştirilerek Sovyet Mimarlar Birliği ile araştırma ve yüksek eğitim kurulu olarak işlev gören Mimarlık Akademisi kuruldu. Tasarım işleri bakanlıklar bünyesinde yürütül-

mekteydi. Mimarlar parti ideolojisini savunan memurlara indirgenmiş, kullanıcıyı ya da mimarlığın teknik ve nesnel özünü gözetmek yerine bürokrasinin gösterdiği ideolojinin geliştirilmesine uğraş veren kadrolara dönüştürülmüşlerdi. Yabancı mimarlık ve mimarlarla ilişkiler 20-25 yıl süre ile bütünüyle kesildi.

1943'te tüm mimarlık ve şehir planlama işlerinden sorumlu Mimarlık Komisyonu işe başladı. Komisyon, savaş yıkımının giderilmesi yanısıra, farklı birimlerde yürütülen işleri koordine etmekle görevliydi. Akademi de bu Komisyon'a bağlandı. Sovyetlerde ise parti komiserliklerine bağlı mimarlık birimleri kuruldu; şehirlerde iş başına getirilen başmimarlar bu birimlere sorumlu idi. Bağımsız yapılaşma kısıtlanırken, toplu konut da gözardı edilmişti. Buna karşılık çok katlı yapılaşma ve utkucu (*triumphal*) bir mimari üslup güncellik kazanmıştı. Bundan sonra her 2-3 yılda bir yeni düzenlemeler yapılan çelişkili bir dönem yaşandı. Yetki ve denetim alanları çakışan bakanlıklar kuruldu. Mimarlık Komisyonu kaldırılarak yetki ve işlevleri Yapım Bakanlığı'na devredildi. Bakanlıkların önerdiği tesis, yapı ve projelerin değerlendirmesini yapan Devlet Yapı Komisyonu işe başladı. Akademi dördüncü kez kurularak SSCB Gosstroy'luğuna bağlandı. Sanayileştirilmiş konut üretimi büyük bir artış göstermekle birlikte, yapı sanatı geliştirilemedi; mimarlık bütünüyle yapım işlerinin bir aracı niteliğine indirgenmişti. Yeni yerleşmelerdeki sıradan mimarinin olumsuz etkileri endişe verici boyutlara erişti.

1955'te her sovyette kurulan Gosstroy'lar, tüm yapım birimleri için uyulması gereken kuralları belirlemekteydi. Tasarım işleri böylece bir ölçüde desantralize edildi. Ancak mimar ve araştırmacılar, yüklenici-yapımcı kesimin artan etki ve baskısından kurtarılamadılar.

Üçüncü bir aşamanın (1962-1984) başlıca özellikleri: ayrıntılı standartların geliştirilerek proje ve uygulamada bunlara uyum disiplininin sağlanması; temel araştırmalardan vazgeçilmesi; merkezde hazırlanan tip projelerin cumhuriyetlerdeki yerel koşullara uyarlanması çabaları ile tasarım sürecinin çözülmesi oldu. Sanayi kentlerinin planlama işlerinin Gosstroy'a, diğer yapım işlerinin Mimarlık Komisyonu'na bağımlı olması nedeniyle tutarlı bir politika yürütülememekteydi.

Böylece mimarlık, 1970'li yıllarda hedeflerini yitirmiş, kimliksizleştirilmiş, yönetim mekanizmasının baskın gücü altında yaratıcı çalışmaların filizlenemediği bir toplumsal durağanlık döneminin göstergesi olmuştu. Onbeş yıl içinde ekonomide %22 oranında bir büyüme sağlanırken, konut yapımı yalnızca %9.5 artış gösterdi. Merkezci politika, devlet yapılarına öncelik verilmesine ve özel sermayenin yapım kesimine katkısının %60'lardan %10'a kadar inmesine neden oldu. 1960'larda onbin kişiye 100 daire üretilirken bu 70'e düştü. Nüfusun %25'inin yetersiz konutlarda oturduğu günümüzde (1985-) ise, ekonomiyi yeniden yapılandırma, yerel sovyet yönetimlerini güçlendirme ve toplumsal hedefleri yeniden tanımlama girişimleri sür dürülmekte. Ancak mimarların %95'i henüz Devlet organlarında çalışmaktalar; kullanıcıların ise tasarım ve yapım süreçlerinde etkinlik kazanmalarına henüz fırsat tanınmış değil.

Mülkiyet biçimlerinin çeşitlendiği, yerel ekonomi ve yönetim biçimlerinin güçlendirildiği, piyasa fiyatlarının olduğu bir ortamda mimar-yapımcı ilişkileri de yepyeni özellikler kazanacaktır. Sovyet Rusya'da bugün binlerce mimar ve yapımcıdan oluşan bir işgücünü harekete geçirecek bir genel strateji ve şehir planlaması için yeni yasal düzenlemeler yanısıra, bireysel yaratıcılığa olanak tanıyan bir sistem geliştirmek gerekiyor.