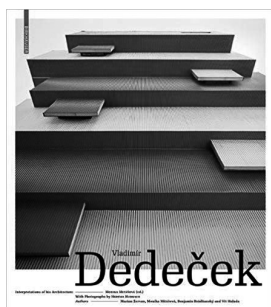
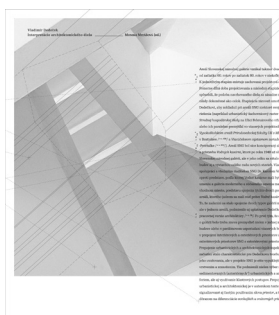


BOOK REVIEWS



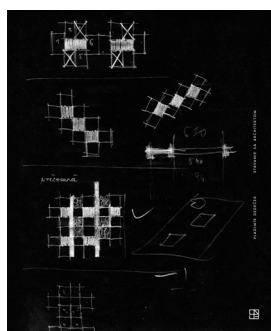
Vladimír Deděček.
Interpretation of his Architecture

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



Vladimír Deděček.
Interpretácie architektonického diela

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



Vladimír Deděček.
Stávanie sa architektom

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

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

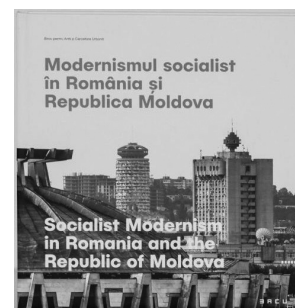
at the Slovak University of Technology after the WWII that extensively shaped the postwar built environment in the former Czechoslovakia. Vladimír Deděček became famous and, at the same time, a controversial figure of Slovak architecture of the second half the 20th century because his monumental expressive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

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

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

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

Henrieta Moravčíková



Socialist Modernism in Romania and the Republic of Moldova

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

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

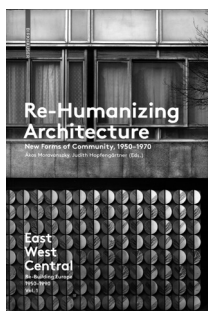
In 2013, BACU launched a research project called *Socialist Modernism* which aims to document architecture and art dating from 1955-1991 – the Socialist modern period. The publication of *Socialist Modernism in Romania and the Republic of Moldova* is one of the outcomes of the work BACU has been developing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

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

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

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

Beatriz Agostinho



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

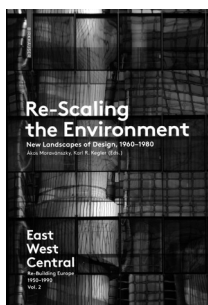
Editors: Ákos Moravánszky, Judith Hopfengärtner

Publisher: Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH

Language: English

ISBN: 978-3-0356-1015-4

Year: 2017



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

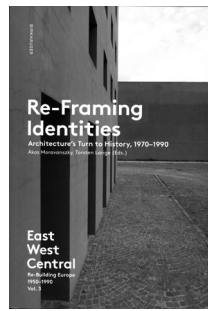
Editors: Ákos Moravánszky, Torsten Lange

Publisher: Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH

ISBN: 978-3-0356-1015-1

Language: English

Year: 2017



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

Editors: Ákos Moravánszky, Torsten Lange

Publisher: Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH

ISBN: 978-3-0356-1015-8

Language: English

Year: 2017

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

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

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

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

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

Re-Humanizing Architecture

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

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

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

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

Re-Scaling the Environment

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

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

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

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

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

Re-Framing Identities

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

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

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

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

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

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

Michal Janák



Off Season

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pavol Paňák



Friedrich Weinwurm Architekt / Architect

Author: Henrieta Moravčíková

Publisher: Slovart

Language: Slovak, English

ISBN: 978-80-556-1158-7

Year: 2014

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

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

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

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

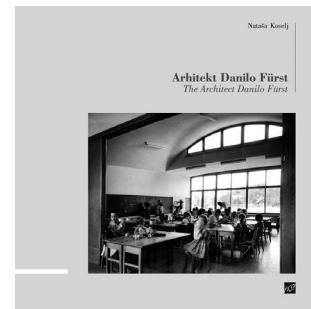
language was far from being compact and exclusive — different modernist idioms ran parallel: restrained Modernism characterizes Villa Sonnenfeld in Bratislava (1928), while Dr. Klaubert House resembles the Dutch *avant-garde*. Even on one single building one encounters different architectural languages,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

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

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

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

Rudolf Klein

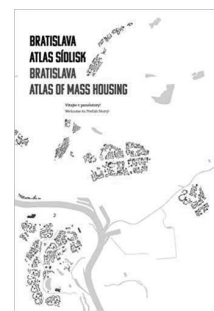


**Arhitekt Danilo Fürst/
The Architect Danilo Fürst**

Author: Nataša Koselj
 Publisher: Celjska Mohorjeva Družba
 ISBN: 978-961-278-082-1
 Languages: Slovenian and English
 Year: 2013

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

From the Publisher.



**Bratislava Atlas Sídlišk /
Bratislava Atlas of Mass Housing**

Authors: Henrieta Moravčíková, Mária Topolčanská, Peter Szalay, Matúš Dulla, Soňa Ščepánová, Slávka Toscherová, Katerína Haberlandová
 Publisher: Slovart Publications
 Language: English, Slovak
 ISBN: 978 80556 04787
 Year: 2012

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

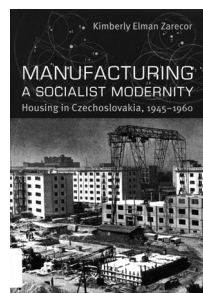
postwar decades have never fitted easily within the mainstream of modern heritage, which emphasizes the individualism of “master” designers and designs. If we wish to properly convey the character of these housing complexes, a much wider approach is required, inventorising entire districts and grounded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

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

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

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

Miles Glendinning



Manufacturing Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960

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

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

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

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

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

From the Publisher.



Edvard Ravnikar: Architect and Teacher

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

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

From the Publisher.