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ARCHITECTURE IN THE AGE OF STALIN CULTURE TWO

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in collaboration with the author



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ONE

Melting–Hardening

ONE. BEGINNING–ENDING

Culture One is oriented toward the future. “There is no return to the past” were the words with which People’s Commissar for Enlightenment Anatolii Lunacharskii ended his first address to the public in 1917.¹ Culture One broke off its ties to the past and denied the legacy of that past; this was already evident in the liquidation of the practice of legal inheritance.² Culture One generated itself anew, as if in a vacuum. Everything that existed before its arbitrary starting point had to be thrown, together with Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy, from the “steamship of modernity,” as the authors of the 1913 futurist almanac *Poshchina obshchestvennomu vkusu* (A Slap in the Face of Public Taste) proclaimed.³ The story of that word, “throw,” is itself characteristic. The contributors to the almanac, among them Mayakovsky, Khlebnikov, Kandinsky, and Burliuk, discussed several possible versions, including *brosit’* (throw) and *sbrosit’* (dump), but Mayakovsky said, “*Dump* implies that they had been aboard; no, we must *throw* them from the steamship.”⁴ Mayakovsky was not particularly worried by the fact that in order to throw Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy from the steamship of modernity one would first have had to drag them on board. This brief and violent dragging on and subsequent throwing off, from his point of view, was less dangerous than the supposition that the classics had sneaked aboard on their own.

Whatever has been thrown overboard sinks to the bottom and turns into lost (and, perhaps, mourned) treasure. It is a heroic, superhuman, Nietzschean act. “We are splendid,” declares the short-lived newspaper *Iskusstvo kommuny* (Art of the Commune), “in our steadfast betrayal of the past.”⁵ “We leave the past behind like carrion,” insisted the “Realistic Manifesto” of N. Gabo and A. Pevsner.⁶ “Old – to be killed,” insisted Mayakovsky, “skulls – into ashtrays.”⁷ Everything done by Culture One is “done for the crematorium,” and its principle is “to build creativity, burning your path behind you.”⁸

The crematorium and burning were favorite themes of Culture One. The journal *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* (Construction of Moscow) ran an article in 1925 entitled “Burning Human Corpses,” profusely illustrated and beginning with this energetic announcement: “Burning Human Corpses is winning over more and more adherents.”⁹ Next to it was another article: “Burning Refuse in Cities of Western Europe.” Another journal, *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'* (Construction Industry), published in 1927 the article “Corpse Burning and Cremation.” Its beginning was no less optimistic: “The coming opening of the Moscow Crematorium is naturally creating a heightened interest in cremation both among the populace and among specialists.”¹⁰ The next article in that issue was “Composting Starter for Manure and Other Organic Waste.”

The crematorium in Culture One was constantly juxtaposed with the cemetery. “Cemetery” has mostly negative connotations, as, for instance, in “Moscow is not a cemetery of a past civilization.”¹¹ Kazimir Malevich even tried to instill a certain logic in this juxtaposition. “Having burned a corpse,” he reasoned in a businesslike manner, “we obtain 1 gram of powder; therefore we can fit thousands of cemeteries on a single apothecary shelf.”¹²

Malevich's prophetic words on burning, spoken in Petrograd in February 1919, were realized horribly that same winter. The city was plunged into total darkness at night; the streets were not lit. The entire heating system was out of order, and homemade stoves called *burzhuiki* (bourgeois), *pcholki* (bees), and *liliputki* (lilliputians) sprang up in houses. The stoves needed fuel, and absolutely everything was used. “I burned all my furniture,” Viktor Shklovskii recalled, “my sculpture bench, my bookshelves, and books, books without number or measure. If I had had wooden arms and legs, I would have burned them and ended up without extremities by spring.”¹³

In Moscow, the situation was no better. In July 1919 the Moscow City Council passed a resolution permitting wooden buildings to be used as fuel. Actually, they had been dismantled before the resolution was passed. Between 1918 and 1920 close to five thousand buildings were torn apart for firewood. Some houses burned in the stoves of other houses, but those other houses burned too. Houses left by the fleeing aristocracy were now occupied by workers and peasants. New residents, not knowing that ventilation ducts were often insulated on the inside with felt, vented their *pcholki* and *liliputki* into them. The buildings, as Mikhail Bulgakov described vividly in his story *House no. 13*,¹⁴ caught fire and burned down, turning into those “grams of powder” that could fit on an apothecary shelf, had those apothecary shelves not been burned in the *burzhuiki* by that time. In the winter of 1919–20 alone, 750 buildings burned down in this manner in Moscow.¹⁵

The culture's striving to break its ties to the past, to throw off its burden, was apparently so contagious that even people for whom it would seem contraindicated gave in to it. “What joy it would be to dive into the Lethe,” wrote the literary historian Mikhail Gershenzon in 1921, “so that memory of all religions

and philosophical systems, of all sciences, arts, and poetry would be washed away without a trace, and to come up on shore naked, remembering only one thing from the past – how heavy and constricting these garments were and how light it is without them.”¹⁶ But the lightness that came with discarding old garments occasionally would turn into the cold of the grave. On 31 August 1926, the newsletter of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) announced with melancholy: “The housing section of the Central Commission on Improving Living Conditions for Scholars is familiar with several grave incidents when the anxiety, suffering, and ordeal brought on by housing problems led to the untimely death of scholars – [e.g.] the famous professor and writer Gershenzon.”¹⁷ The waters of the “revolutionary residential redistribution” became for Gershenzon the River Lethe in which he sought oblivion, for which he was prepared to cast off the garments of memory.

The enthusiasm for fire captured another great representative of the old culture, Aleksandr Blok:

To the grief of all the bourgeois
We'll blow up a worldwide fire,
A worldwide fire in blood –
Lord, bless us.¹⁸

But when this fire burned down his estate in Shakhmatovo, and his books, and his manuscripts, and his diaries – all the words that had been at Blok's disposal seemed to burn with them, and only a cry remained: “I dreamed about Shakhmatovo – aaaargh. . . .”¹⁹

There was only one way to keep the worldwide fire burning: by throwing in your arms and legs, as Shklovskii had put it. You could fly on the Firebird only if, as in Russian fairy tales, you fed it in flight with flesh cut from your thighs; and the more closely you look at the beak of the magical Firebird, the more it resembled a pig's snout. The words Blok uttered two months before his death in a sense refer to all of Culture One: “That nasty, snuffling, beloved mother Russia went and gobbled me up like a sow her piglet!”²⁰

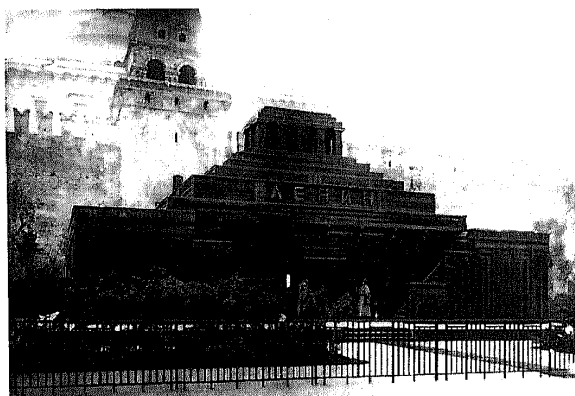
Thus, Culture One wanted to burn its limbs, wash memory from its soul, kill its old, and eat its children – all this as an attempt to free itself from the ballast that was interfering with its surge into the future.

In Culture Two, the future was postponed indefinitely. The future became even more beautiful and desirable, and the movement forward was even more joyous, but there did not seem to be an end in sight to that movement – the movement had become an end in itself. The state prosecutor Andrei Vyshinskii ended his speech in one of the infamous show trials of the 1930s with the following words:

Time will pass . . . and above us, above our happy land, our sun will shine as brightly and as happily as before, with its rays of light. We, our people,



14. A. V. Shchusev, first, wooden Lenin's mausoleum, 1924. MA, coll. 11, 32763.



15. A. V. Shchusev, second, wooden Lenin's mausoleum, 1924. MA, coll. 11, 2326.

will still be striding along a road, cleansed of the last traces of filth and vile-ness of the past, following our beloved leader and teacher – the great Stalin – forward, ever forward towards Communism.²¹

This kind of movement “forward, ever forward” changed nothing: The sun went on shining as before; the goal was still the same; therefore, there was no way to determine whether this was movement or rest – there was nothing to re-late to it. Movement in Culture Two became tantamount to immobility, and the future to eternity. This eternal future now appeared thus:



16. A. V. Shchusev, third, stone Lenin's mausoleum, 1929–30. Photo: Vladimir Paperny, 1979.

People will be born – generation after generation – live a happy life, age gradually, but the Palace of the Soviets, familiar to them from their dear childhood books, will stand exactly the same as you and I will see it in the next few years. Centuries will not leave their mark on it; we will build it so that it will stand without aging, forever.²²

The idea of an eternal structure put engineers in a rather difficult position. “Engineers are not accustomed to building such structures,” said G. Krasin, deputy chairman of the Palace of the Soviets building team, at the First Con-gress of Soviet Architects in 1937. “The structure must not only be durable for a certain period of time, but must last forever, as the whole idea of our society is eternal.”²³

The history of the building of the Lenin Mausoleum is a good example of how culture's idea of the longevity of an architectural structure changed. In Cul-ture One, the idea of a mausoleum evoked a temporary structure, one that was needed “in order to grant all those who wish to, and who cannot come to Mos-cow for the day of the funeral, a chance to bid farewell to their beloved leader.”²⁴ Culture Two had no intention of bidding farewell to the beloved leader. The temporary wooden mausoleum erected in 1924 [Fig. 14] was replaced first by a more solid wooden structure [Fig. 15], and then, in 1930, by one of stone built to last [Fig. 16].

Another example of the reorientation for eternity is the story of the design and construction of the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition (VSKhV). In 1937 the exhibition was meant to be open for one hundred days. During construction, the idea changed radically. The period the pavilions were to remain open was extended first to five years, and finally the exhibition became permanent. (A more detailed history of the exhibition is recounted in section 8, "Good-Evil.")

The future, having become eternity, was so homogeneous and unchanging that it was pointless even to look there – there was nothing to be seen. The culture's gaze gradually turned back, as if making a 180° turn. The present turned out to be not the first moment in history, but rather the last. The culture started to take interest in the path by which it arrived at the present – it began to be interested in history.

Nothing done by this culture was burned or left behind "like carrion"; rather, its products were immediately turned into historic monuments. The official opening of the first subway line in Moscow occurred on 14 May 1935. Five weeks later, there was already a lavishly printed, leather-bound volume with a gold-stamped title on the cover, *Kak my stroili metro* (How We Built the Metro).²⁵ The title page indicated that this was the *second* volume in the series *Istoriia metro* (History of the Metro). Thus, the history of the metro was being written simultaneously with its construction.

There were numerous books published in the 1930s with titles starting with the word *kak* (how) – for example, *Kak my spasali Cheliuskintsev* (How We Saved the Cheliuskin Expedition). The welcoming ceremony for the surviving participants of this ill-fated arctic expedition and their rescuers took place on 23 May 1934, in Moscow, but as early as April there had already been a government decree "On Erecting a Monument for the Cheliuskin Arctic Expedition."²⁶ The book – over five hundred pages long and containing numerous color and black-and-white photos, memoirs of the participants, their childhood stories, stories of the expedition itself, and the courageous arctic flights of the rescue mission – could not have been written and printed in less than three months, considering the state of the printing industry in Russia in the 1930s; yet it came out on 13 August 1934. Apparently, the history of the expedition was written simultaneously with the expedition itself.

The crystallization of current events into historical monuments is not irreversible in Culture Two. The monuments kept evolving and reflecting changes in the present, as if time in Culture Two flowed backward. Some events in the present caused changes in the past. For example, the names of the architects expelled from the Union of Soviet Architects (SSA) later were erased from archival stenograms.

The primary subject matter of Culture Two became its own history; subsequently, history became the primary genre of Culture Two. The basic, canonical document of the epoch is *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*

(Bolsheviks): *Short Course* – an "encyclopedia of basic knowledge in the sphere of Marxism-Leninism," as it was called in a resolution of the Central Committee [Fig. 17].²⁷ The majority of publications put out by the Academy of Architecture, created in 1933,²⁸ were related to the *history* of architecture. All the treatises of classical architecture, beginning with Vitruvius and ending with Viollet-le-Duc, were translated and lavishly printed precisely at this time. The main task of architecture became the assimilation and mastery of its heritage. Naturally, the judicial procedure for inheritance had, by this time, already been reinstated.²⁹

The mastery of that heritage began with the triad Greece-Rome-Renaissance, that which had been most decisively thrown away by the preceding culture. "The circle of the Greek-Italian, and in a sense, of the European system of thought," wrote Moisei Ginzburg in 1924, "seems to be complete, and the path of a genuine contemporary architecture will without doubt lie ahead of it. . . . [T]he circles of history are closed, the old cycles are completed, we are starting to plow a new art field. . . ."³⁰ (Ginzburg's metaphor was literalized by Vladimir Tatlin when he, in the hungry 1920s, broke the asphalt in the courtyard of the Leningrad Academy of Arts with a crowbar and pick to plant potatoes in this art field.)³¹

Culture Two perceived this circle *not* as closed, but that the job of closing it was to fall to the culture itself. Thus began the process of carefully sorting and selecting different styles and artistic schools to see whether or not they would fit to close the circle. The circle itself, at times, was reduced to one point (Rome), then widened endlessly, claiming all the cultures of humanity. Let us follow the dynamics of the changes in this circle of inheritance.

By the time the need for mastery of architectural heritage was established, there already existed a theory that, in principle, could have been used. This was Ivan Fomin's theory of a *proletarian* (or simplified) classicism:

It is clear to everyone that it is not the Gothic, the Roman, or the Byzantine styles that are recommended to the attention of architects, any more than some Indian, Arab, or Russian styles that forever remain narrowly national, but namely the classical, of all periods, beginning with Greece and Rome and ending with the Russian Empire. . . . We just have to reject the proportions of the classical, the unnecessary details, that is, the capital and base of



17. *History of VKP(b)*, sculpture at VSKhV, 1937. MA, no reference number.

the column, an unnecessary skinniness of the column and an excessive indulgence in details, that is, we have to reject the lintels and jambs of the windows and doors, the cornices over doors and windows, and in general, all means of overloaded and tawdry ornamentation.³²

Initially, this theory would have found supporters. Lunacharskii, for example, was attracted to the classical architecture of Greece. "With the new construction," he wrote with regard to the Palace of the Soviets, "to a large degree one must lean on classical architecture rather than bourgeois, or, more precisely, on the achievements of Greek architecture."³³ Moisei Ginzburg, who was trying to adapt himself to the new conditions, echoed him in 1939: "In the first place, we have to mention Hellenic art, the fifty-year peak of the art of Phidias, Ictinus, and Callicrates."³⁴

The "Red Count" Aleksei Tolstoy preferred Rome: "Classical architecture (Rome) seems closest of all to us because many of its elements coincide with our needs. Its openness, its purpose – for the masses, an impulse of grandiosity; not threatening, not crushing – but as an expression of a universal world quality, all of this cannot but be used by our builders."³⁵ Later, at the First Congress of Soviet Architects, Aleksei Shchusev also spoke about the necessity for carrying on the tradition of Rome: "The public and utilitarian constructions of ancient Rome in their scale and artistic quality are unique examples of their kind in the entire history of world architecture. In this realm we are the only direct successors of Rome; only in socialist society and with socialist technology is the construction of even greater dimensions and greater artistic perfection possible."³⁶

Sometimes the emphasis was placed on the third member of the triad, on the Renaissance. "Some of the features of the Renaissance," wrote Boris Mikhailov, "the joy of life, the spontaneous development of forms, the classical clarity of the spirit resounding in the harmonic layer of the proportions – all these answer to the strivings of our epoch."³⁷ One should bear in mind that when Soviet art critics spoke of the Renaissance they meant once again Rome, but of a different epoch.

However, gradually there emerged the conviction that the triad of Greece–Rome–Renaissance (even enriched by the Russian Empire style, as was done in the simplified classicism of Fomin) was too limiting. Nikolai Miliutin had already spoken of this in his polemic with Lunacharskii (who insisted on the Greek paradigm): "We cannot underestimate the achievements of Rome, the Renaissance, the Gothic, Baroque and Art-Nouveau styles, formalism-rationalism, constructivism, functionalism, and so on."³⁸

Later, rationalism and functionalism were either included in this circle or excluded from it, and this depended primarily on the behavior, at that moment, of some particular rationalists and functionalists. Miliutin himself, although he included them, nevertheless advised not forgetting the "Trotskyist essence" of

rationalism and the "mechanical essence" of functionalism. The harshness of his evaluation was probably because in May 1932, when Miliutin's article came out – that is, a month before the resolution of the Central Committee "On the Restructuring of Literary-Artistic Organizations"³⁹ – the rationalists and functionalists occupied, perhaps, the strongest positions among all the groups. Both rationalism and functionalism instantly fell out of favor as soon as Viktor Vesnin, at the First Congress of Soviet Architects, having dropped all the preliminarily approved theses, spoke strongly in defense of constructivism. In the journal *Arkhitectura SSSR* there immediately appeared the following lines: "Nothing but social deafness can explain the attempts (they took place at the recent Congress of Soviet Architects) to present the antisocialist tendencies of constructivism, functionalism, and formalism as unavoidable and necessary for our architecture."⁴⁰

Meanwhile, the circle continued to widen. It assimilated the baroque⁴¹ and the gothic;⁴² with some reservations at the First Congress, the architect E. Levinson also included in this circle art nouveau;⁴³ then the architecture of the East⁴⁴ and folk art⁴⁵ were assimilated as well. Another artistic style included in the list of what Soviet architecture had to master was contemporary, often American, technique. A formula, crystallized by the beginning of World War II, was expressed as follows by Aleksandr Vesnin (who had already learned to speak the language of the new culture):

The mastery of the architectural legacy cannot be restricted to the assimilation of the architecture of any one particular epoch, for example, that of Greece, Rome, or the Italian Renaissance (as many architects do); we have to grasp all architecture as a whole, in its historical development, from its beginning to the progressive architecture of the contemporary West and America. Along with this mastery of the architecture of the ruling classes, it is necessary to study folk architecture (for example, the architecture of small Italian cities, our Russian North, the people's architecture of Caucasia, the East, etc., often of excellent architectural quality).⁴⁶

By the beginning of World War II, Culture Two already saw itself as the inheritor of all the traditions of all humankind. Ivan Fomin's simplified classicism was ultimately rejected both because it was only classicism, and because it was simplified; the culture wanted to possess *everything*, and of uncompromising quality. Its chief monument, work on which was conducted from the very beginning to the end of the existence of the culture – the Palace of the Soviets – Culture Two saw in 1940 in this way:

All of the many centuries of the culture of human art will enter into this people's building. From the golden, glazed tiles of Moorish Spain to the architecture of American glass. From Byzantine mosaics to contemporary plastics. The old art of the tapestry, carving in black oak, the revival of the fresco, the

lighting engineering achievements of photo-illuminations, the folk craft of Palekh – it is impossible to enumerate the entire wealth of artistic decoration. Amid porphyry, marble, crystal, and jasper, the high technology of comfort of the twentieth century will function imperceptibly.⁴⁷

The circle Culture Two was called on to complete and enclose attained its maximum circumference by the beginning of the war, and then gradually began to change its outlines and to narrow. The center of this circle at first relocated from Greece to Rome; for a time it remained in Rome (ancient Rome, the Italian Renaissance), and then, having moved eastward, it more and more closed in on Moscow. The path to the completion of history now seemed to lie through the Russian past.

In Culture One the word *Rus* was the symbol of a barbarous way of life, wilderness, and dirt. In the words of the futurist-poet David Burliuk:

“Rus” is one huge nest of bedbugs. . . .
Armies of lice crawl through every corner of it.⁴⁸

Lenin, despite his distaste for futurism, was seemingly in complete agreement with these words dictated to Ia. A. Iakovlev: “In our genuinely ‘barbarian’ country,” he asked polemically, “should we make our heads safe from lice and our beds from bedbugs?”⁴⁹ Lenin was horrified by the onslaught of the “true Russian person, the Great Russian chauvinist, in essence a scoundrel and rapist” and at the approaching “sea of chauvinistic Russian trash.”⁵⁰

The architects of Culture One – with certain reservations and exceptions – are generally inclined to share this attitude about Russia. Thus, for example, the deputy chairman of the Petrograd Society of Architects-Artists, G. Kosmachevskii, wrote in 1917: “We, as pupils of Europe, essentially have an advantage . . . our contemporary city in most cases does not have those historical values that . . . play the role of respected and inviolable relics. . . . This issue is now intensely discussed in all the other, more civilized countries.”⁵¹ Echoes of this world view are traceable for a long time, at least until 1934 when, in the very first issue of *Arkhitekturnaia gazeta* (Architectural Gazette) L. Perchik writes: “The old noble-mercantile Moscow was the symbol of Russian backwardness, barbarism, and mercantile debauchery.”⁵²

Such historical relics of the city, the inviolability of which Kosmachevskii disputed, Culture Two treated in a not completely usual way: Their real physical existence did not seem to be inviolable – the culture demolished them without hesitation. In contrast, their role as bearers of tradition became increasingly inviolable to the culture; and the culture most insistently moved the center of the circle of the legacy to the side of Russian art in all its presumed diversity.

In 1937, St. Petersburg’s Anichkov Palace, where Pushkin’s wife Natalia Goncharova used to dance with Czar Nicholas I a century earlier, was turned

into the Leningrad Palace of Young Pioneers. In the reconstruction of the building – which had originated with Rastrelli and Quarenghi – included together with the architects A. Gegello and D. Krichevskii were the folk painters of Palekh. The union of Russian folk painting on subjects of Russian fairy tales (intended, by the way, for small lacquered boxes) with the dimensions of the classicism of Quarenghi seemed fully natural and harmonious to the culture’s art critics.⁵³

In 1938 the interiors of the State Historical Museum were redesigned. This is the very same Historical Museum that Le Corbusier dreamed of demolishing. It had been constructed by V. Sherwood and A. Semenov in the style that Culture One called “pseudo-Russian” but to which Culture Two preferred not to give any type of name. The museum housed quasi-historical patriotic paintings by V. Vasnetsov and G. Semiradskii, such as the latter’s *Pokhorony rusa v Bulgarii* (*Rus Burial in Bulgaria*) – pictures preserved, by the way, up to the present day. With the act of redesigning the interiors, Culture Two seemed to endorse the efforts of the epoch of Alexander III, trying to find (or rather reinvent) its roots. The renovations were done by the architect Andrei Burov, “a tall blond man, speaking fluent French” – that was how he was seen in 1935 in Athens,⁵⁴ where he had stopped off upon returning from an architectural congress in Rome – a decade after his construction of the model constructivist dairy farm for Eisenstein’s film *Generalnaia linia* (*The General Line*) [a.k.a. *Staroe i novoe* (*The Old and the New*)]. Here in the Historical Museum design he made a 180° turn from the design philosophy of his former friend Le Corbusier. The interiors created by Burov, in the words of one scholar of art, “express profound principles, inherent in ancient Russian architecture, particularly in the ‘classical’ models of the architecture of Kiev, Vladimir, and Moscow, and which are undoubtedly related to the traditions of antique, primarily Greek, art.” In Burov’s design, continues the scholar, Russian art ceases to be “an exotic, provincial curiosity” and becomes “the original force with which the folk genius creates, on the basis of antique tradition, a new architecture, unsevered from and connected to, but in no way ceding to, the architecture of the Byzantine era, the proto-Renaissance or the Renaissance.”⁵⁵

With these words, it is as though Russia entered into an argument with Byzantium and the Renaissance for the right to the legacy of the antique tradition. Already the path to Athens lay not only through Rome but also through Kiev, Vladimir, and Moscow. Gradually, however, both Athens and Rome somehow disappeared from the field of vision (although they remained in an implied circle of associations), and Moscow, from being a point of transit on the road of tradition, increasingly turned into its beginning and its ending. By 1944, when the problem of the restoration of cities destroyed in war assumed large dimensions, the culture already possessed a prescription for how these cities had to be restored and rebuilt: “The great traditions of Russian urban planning, and the

great values of classical architecture and of the folk architecture of our country make up an unshakeable foundation on which something new in the architecture of our times must be created."⁵⁶ These traditions of Russian urban planning are entirely the invention of the 1940s. Even the nationalistic epoch of Alexander III did not have the slightest idea of them. It has always been assumed by Russian art historians that Russian cities – with the exception, of course, of St. Petersburg – developed sporadically and spontaneously, and that that was the source of their charm.

The last phrase in the quotation, perhaps, could be understood differently: What is this "classical architecture" that has been placed between "Russian urban planning" and "the folk architecture of our country" – is it *our* classical or *their* classical? Culture Two does not see any dualism here. The classical at this time could only be one – *our* classical – and if by chance a large part of this classical existed *there*, then all the same it was *our* classical. Approximately in this way, Culture Two came to terms with the philosophy of Marx: It was *our* philosophy, and not German, and similarly, *ours* became the classical philosophy of Hegel (whom Stalin once mixed up with Gogol' – the famous slip of Stalin's, "Our great Russian writer Hegel," *Gegel* in Russian) and even that of Kant – which became even more justifiable when Kant's birthplace, Königsberg, was added in 1945 to the territory of the Soviet Union.

Thus, the circle that Moisei Ginzburg had seen as "completed" already in 1924 was in reality closed only after World War II.

A new wave of strenuous movement toward the future and of ruptures with the past began in Soviet culture only at the end of the 1950s. This spurt into the future was manifested with particular clarity in Nikita Khrushchev's promise, "The present generation of Soviet people will live under communism." After this pronouncement, all Soviet radio stations began playing a solemn hymn performed by a powerful mixed choir – "We Will Live under Communism."

The futurism of the 1910s–20s at this time turned into the futurological design of the Moscow architectural group NER (New Element in Population Distribution), some other groups, and individual authors.⁵⁷

There is a curious peculiarity of the futurological wave of the 1960s: It perceived itself to be precisely the second wave. It did not strive to cremate all of the past, but only that which was burned by the 1920s; thus, the 1920s themselves become for the new wave the starting point of the future. Moreover, this new wave was most aggressive toward the epoch that divided it from the 1920s, that is, toward Culture Two. In the realm of politics this was expressed in the idea of a "return to the norms of Lenin"; in the sphere of spatial thought, in the new interest given to the avant-garde of the 1920s.

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Here it is appropriate to interrupt our narrative and to examine Culture Two through a much wider lens. Such an outlook reveals that the world view with which Culture One began – the sensation of the completion of one epoch (czardom) and of the beginning of a new epoch; a world view in which were paired a rupture with the past and a suicidal striving toward the future – had already existed several times in the history of Russian culture. One of its earliest examples is the epoch of religious schism.

By 1669, the Old Believers were awaiting the second coming of Christ. Here is a description of peasant behavior from the outskirts of Nizhni Novgorod:

Since the fall of 1668 they have neglected the fields, they have not plowed, they have not sowed; with the arrival of the fateful year 1669 they also quit their huts. . . . According to an old legend, the end of the world would arrive at night, at midnight, and here with the arrival of night the supporters of the old piety, dressed in old shirts and shrouds, lay down in coffins gouged from whole trees and awaited the trumpet call.⁵⁸

Formally, the Old Believers appealed to the past, but in their behavior there clearly was present something from Mayakovsky's formula, "the future-today." They were not simply waiting for the end of the world but were actively striving to meet it. The Old Believers came out for the old faith, but all their behavior carried a completely innovative, even avant-garde, character. "The Schism," as the Russian historian N. I. Kostomarov asserted, "is the appearance of something new, something foreign to old Russia."⁵⁹ The idealization of the past did not prevent them, almost like Kazimir Malevich, from burning their path behind them.

An enormous wave of burning rolled across Russia at the end of the seventeenth century. No fewer than twenty thousand people perished in this wave.⁶⁰ "I would take the fire myself," says one of the enthusiasts of burning in the 1680s, "and kindle the whole city. What a joy would it be if it burned from end to end with the old and the young."⁶¹

There could be several explanations for this insistent repetition in Russian culture of a desire for burning. Maybe it was the tradition of burning off new agricultural land, or the Russian custom of throwing everything away and starting anew. Perhaps this desire has some connection to the pagan cult of Svarozhich, the god of underground fire.⁶² It has also been suggested by Aider Kurkchi that it is connected to Irano-Arian elements of Russian culture.

One way or another, it seems to me, with all the dissimilarity in the utterances of Viktor Shklovskii ("If I had had wooden arms and legs, I would have burned them") and the unknown seventeenth-century ideologue of burning ("What a joy would it be if the city burned from end to end"), with all the dissimilarity of the situations, there is something common in them: namely, a world view in which there is a peculiar mixture of tragic self-destruction and the

strange excitement it arouses. The elements of this world view are also present, I believe, in the burning of Moscow by its residents in 1812 that shocked Napoleon, and in the reaction of the poet Aleksandr Blok to the burning of his estate of Shakhmatovo by rioting peasants in 1918.

The epoch of Peter the Great also began with a clear expression of a break with the past. As in the Lenin epoch, it introduced a new calendar,⁶³ a new capital, a new grammar, and a new style of clothing and behavior. In its later years, however, attention gradually turned from the future to the past. During the late Petrine years the past was not thrown away like "carriage"; this past was instantly congealed, molded into monuments of history. At the ceremony of decorating the bombardiers of Peter's second Azov campaign, the history of this campaign (which had been already written) was read to the decorated bombardiers. The history of the Swedish War (like the history of the metro) was written parallel to the progress of the war itself.⁶⁴ The history of St. Petersburg began to be written just twenty years after the founding of the city. By the end of his life, Peter had issued a law to collect and print all the sermons pronounced in honor of the taking of foreign cities.⁶⁵

Time in the era of Peter also sometimes flowed in reverse. It sufficed, for example, to read three edicts in succession: a Certificate of Merit given to Vasilii Golitsyn for the Crimean campaign; an edict forbidding the use of Princess Sophia's name in all documents; and an edict about the removal of Vasilii Golitsyn's title of boyar for two crimes – for mentioning Sophia's name and for the "useless" Crimean campaign.⁶⁶ An event in the present (violating the law against referring to Sophia) leads to changes in the past (a useful campaign is turned into a useless one) – this is approximately the same as the crossing out in old stenograms of the names of newly excluded members of the Union of Soviet Architects.

The epoch of Peter also seized on the idea of eternity – this could be seen in Peter's obsession with the perpetual-motion machine of Orffyreus (Johann Bessler). Essentially, Peter dreamed of arranging the whole state in some form of perpetual motion: You wind it up once, and then it goes forever.⁶⁷ In the realm of architecture, the reorientation toward eternity began to turn up in a series of pronouncements about the necessity of building in stone and not wood.⁶⁸ Previously constructed wooden buildings were often demolished and in their place stone buildings were erected (as was done with Lenin's mausoleum). We can find numerous examples of the replacement of temporary wooden structures with durable stone ones in the second half of the eighteenth century (this is also a phase of solidification): In 1753 Prince Dmitrii Ukhtomskii began to erect stone Red Gates in Moscow in place of wooden ones built in 1748 for the celebratory entrance into Moscow of Czaritza Elizabeth Petrovna.⁶⁹ The Culture Two of the 1930s, with its innate striving to destroy the familiar, demolished the Red Gates;

but on the level of theory, the architecture of Ukhtomskii was declared one of the main models for imitation.

The era of Peter contained elements of both Culture One and Culture Two: Of the former there were more in the beginning, whereas there were more of the latter at the end. This does not, however, mean that it is easy to draw a temporal line between them. In Soviet time, chronological divisions between the two cultures can be ascertained with an exactness of up to several years; in Peter's time this boundary erodes over a decade. This, I think, accounts for the diametrically opposed assessments made by Russian historians of Peter and his epoch.

The enthusiasm for burning was not simply foreign to Culture Two; it was an enemy. This can be seen in the epoch of Peter in the edict against arsonists,⁷⁰ which proposed sentencing them to death.⁷¹ It is also worth mentioning that among the humorous titles that Peter the Great created for himself was that of fireman.

In the age of Elizabeth the pathos for the struggle with fire was manifested in the organization of a state firefighting service. In the 1940s–50s it was expressed in the battle with "warmonger-arsonists." "We are strong! Beware, you warmonger-arsonists," wrote the official poet of the epoch E. A. Dolmatovskii in a popular song of the late 1940s.⁷² I am convinced that the "arsonists" of the seventeenth century and the "warmonger-arsonists" of the twentieth belong to the same culture, to the same anti-incendiary tradition, from Czar Aleksei Mikhailovich Romanov to the member of the Union of Soviet Writers, Evgenii Aronovich Dolmatovskii.

The Petrine era in essence was called on to stop this burst into the future, which was completed by the epoch of the Schism, to revive a cremated and discarded tradition. The idea of the Third Rome, expressed by the monk Philotheus to Vasily III, was reborn in the epoch of Peter. As the historian Sergei Solov'ev observed, a mysterious voice was whispering the words "Rome, Rome!" in the ears of Peter.⁷³ However, as in the Soviet era, Rome gradually became more and more contaminated by Russia's own traditions. Welcoming Peter to Kiev in 1706, Feofan Prokopovich already was comparing him to the Russian rulers of the eleventh to twelfth centuries Vladimir, Iaroslav, Sviatoslav, and Vsevolod,⁷⁴ and when in 1710 Peter founded a monastery named after Prince Alexander Nevsky, the turn to the national tradition acquired a spatial embodiment. "It is as if the founding of a monastery," writes Igor' Grabar', "would sanctify and give a heavenly benediction to Peter's endeavors, which seemed to him to be the direct continuation, development, and completion of the holy work of the pious prince, who now became the patron of the new capital."⁷⁵

Peter turned to Alexander Nevsky during the time of the Northern war. It is interesting that during World War II the necessity for such a turn arose again. "Let the courageous model of our great ancestors inspire us in this war," said



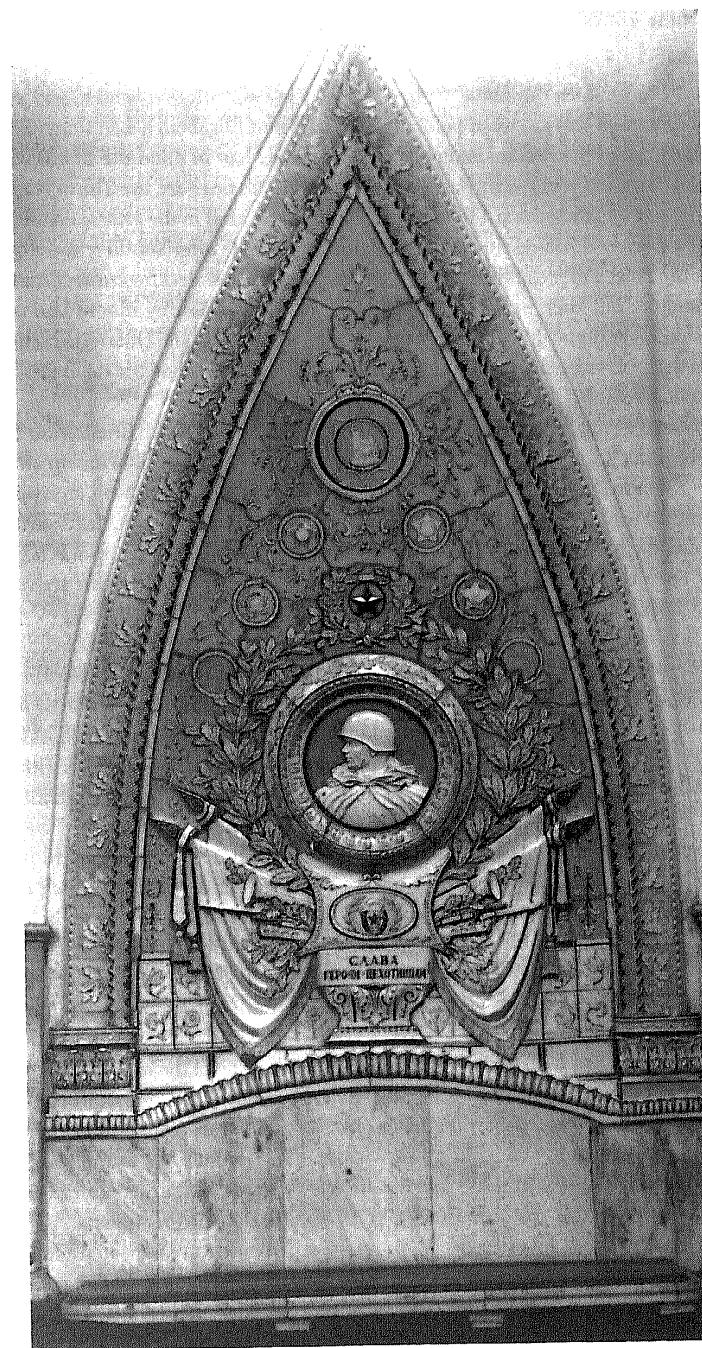
18. P. D. Korin, mosaic mural on the ceiling of Komsomol'skaia metro station (Ring Line), 1951. Photo: Vladimir Paperny, 1980.

Stalin on 7 November 1941;⁷⁶ and of course, the first in the list of great ancestors to be named in this speech was once again Alexander Nevsky [Figs. 18, 19].

The idea of Rome, merged with the idea of holy Russia, arose in Russian culture more than once. In 1756, when Bartolomeo Rastrelli completed the reconstruction of the Catherine Palace in Tsarskoe Selo, Lomonosov praised this event in these lines addressed to Elizabeth:

... In Russia you build Rome.
Your royal house example is; that all who see are wonder struck;
Saying: soon Rome will feel ashamed before us.⁷⁷

19. (facing) Architects K. Ryzhkov and A. Medvedev, sculptor P. Kozhin, ceramic mural glorifying the Soviet army at Taganskaia metro station, 1951. In the top circle one can see the figures of Minin and Pozharskii who led the patriotic war against Polish invaders in the seventeenth century. Photo: Vladimir Paperny, 1980.



In these lines the name "Rome" is used in two different senses, and one Rome should feel ashamed before the other. When Elizabeth asked Rastrelli to build "not in the Roman manner," she, of course, had in mind the first Rome. Rome, as it was realized by Rastrelli, was the other (to be exact, the Third) Rome.

A reorientation toward Rome clearly manifested itself in the artistic creations of Catherine II. Going through one architectural style after another, searching for the most antique of them, she at first chose as her architect Scotsman Charles Cameron; but later, in 1779 she wrote to Jacob Grimm asking him to find her architects in Rome. It was in this way that the Roman Giacomo Quarenghi found himself in Russia. He was the one who was destined to embody the main artistic ambitions of the empress.

Once again, an orientation toward Rome coincided with an orientation toward history, tradition, and eternity. Vasilii Bazhenov's idea of blowing up all of the Kremlin and constructing in its place a new grandiose palace with an equivalent value of 30 million rubles at first attracted Catherine. In 1769, the destruction of the Kremlin was begun. In 1773, the laying of the palace stones was started; but after a year all work was halted, and six years later Quarenghi arrived, and Bazhenov fell into disgrace.

I think that elements of similar world views are present in the wishes of Catherine to tear down the walls of the Kremlin, in Nikita Khrushchev's decision to build in 1961 the Palace of Congresses in the Kremlin (for which some of the oldest churches were demolished), and in the words of the hero of Vasilii Akse- nov's 1961 novel *Zvezdnyi bilet*,⁷⁸ who dreamt of crushing the old wall with a crowbar. All of these wishes coincide on the phase of spreading and mobility.

This mobility, present at the very beginning of the nineteenth century, coincided with the reorientation from Rome to ancient Greece. "In addition to this leaning away from Rome and over towards Greece," writes Grabar', "in all the searches and efforts of the new generation, another feature is unswervingly felt, a feature unknown to the preceding generation – a passion for novelty, a thirst for the undiscovered."⁷⁹ This particular feature is obvious in the generation of the avant-garde architects who belonged to the phase of the horizontal movement of culture in the 1920s.

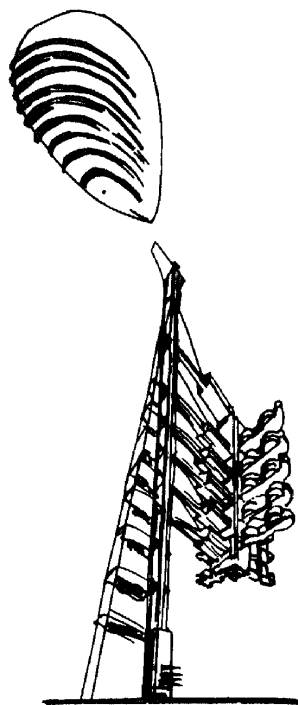
A reverse turn from Greece to Rome in the beginning of the nineteenth century was to be accomplished by another Italian, Carlo (who became Karl Ivanovich in Russia) Rossi. Regarding his project for uniting the Palace and Galley embankments in St. Petersburg, Rossi wrote: "The dimensions of the project suggested by me exceed those that the Romans regarded as sufficient for their monuments. Can we really be afraid to compete with them in greatness? . . . This monument should be eternal."⁸⁰ The last words (which are repeated almost verbatim in Nikolai Atarov's book about the Palace of the Soviets) indicate that the idea of Rome often arises in Russian culture simultaneously with the idea of eternity. The Third Rome is always thought of as the last.

I believe that when Aleksei Tolstoy said, "Rome is closest of all to us," that when Aleksei Shchusev declared, "we are the only direct successors of Rome," when the Soviet government commissioned the novel *Rome* from Aleksei Tolstoy, and when, finally, in 1935, after ten years of nonparticipation in international architectural congresses, the Union of Soviet Architects accepted the invitation of the National Fascist Union of Architects of Italy and sent a delegation to Rome – that behind all this, consciously or unconsciously, emerging or receding, there was a tradition going back to the words of the theologian, monk, and patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheus: "Two Romes have fallen, the third stands, and a fourth there shall not be."⁸¹

Culture One and Culture Two exist in opposition: One reaches for the future and "burns its own path behind itself"; the other transforms the future into eternity while turning its gaze back to the past. There is something common to both in this, and it is a particular understanding of history. Culture One, whenever it emerges, declares itself to be the beginning of history. Culture Two in each of its manifestations declares itself as the end of history. In one case it is a point from which everything else must arise; in the other, it is the point at which everything concludes. History, consisting of alternating beginnings and endings, is not history in the Western European sense. This cyclical history, if one tries to find an analogy for it, resembles the antique understanding of history. "Man and his history," wrote Russian philosopher Aleksei Losev about the world view of the ancient Greeks, "were always treated as being in motion, but this motion always returned to its originating point."⁸² The reproach Plato addressed to the Greeks could have been readdressed to their successors in Russia: "you have to begin all over again like children, and know nothing of what happened in ancient times, either among us or among yourselves."⁸³

In this sense there is a basis for agreeing with Pavel Miliukov, who asserted that in Russia there is no cultural tradition,⁸⁴ as well as with Pavel Florenskii in his insistence that Russia is the only lawful inheritor of Greek antiquity.⁸⁵ One has to remember, though, that Miliukov used the words "cultural tradition" in the Western European sense; that he examined Russia in the context of European thought; and in this sense, one can agree that there is no such tradition in Russia. Florenskii wrote about something else: "about the very soul of culture, about the breeze of its music, which can be likened to the genetic similarity of members of a clan."

If the alternation of Culture One and Culture Two exhausted all the content of Russian culture, then we would have to admit that there is no concept of history in it. However, this is not the case. In Russian culture there have always existed elements that did not fit within the conditional parameters of the two cultures – elements for which there existed an understanding of history and of cultural tradition, and many other things still to be discussed. These elements have their own tradition (to which belong, obviously, Florenskii and Miliukov),



20. I. Iusefovich, flying city, 1927-8. M. Barkhin, *Arkhitektura i gorod* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 38.

The ideal toward which the culture strove was that "relocations by individual citizens, the inhabitants of the city, present no difficulties, complications or inconvenience (just a suitcase in hand)."⁷ A man with a suitcase, a woman with a bag – these were the typical character types of this culture as commonly depicted in film.

Not just people but buildings as well were torn from the earth. "Cabins of a steamship, of an airplane, or of a sleeping car on a train" become prototypes for dwelling units.⁸ In Velimir Khlebnikov's early prose, buildings were turned into "boxes made out of bent glass or mobile staterooms outfitted with doors with rings, on wheels, with their own inhabitants within," and these staterooms could be set up "on a train (special tracks, platforms with places) or a steamship; inside each one inhabitants could take a trip without going outside."⁹

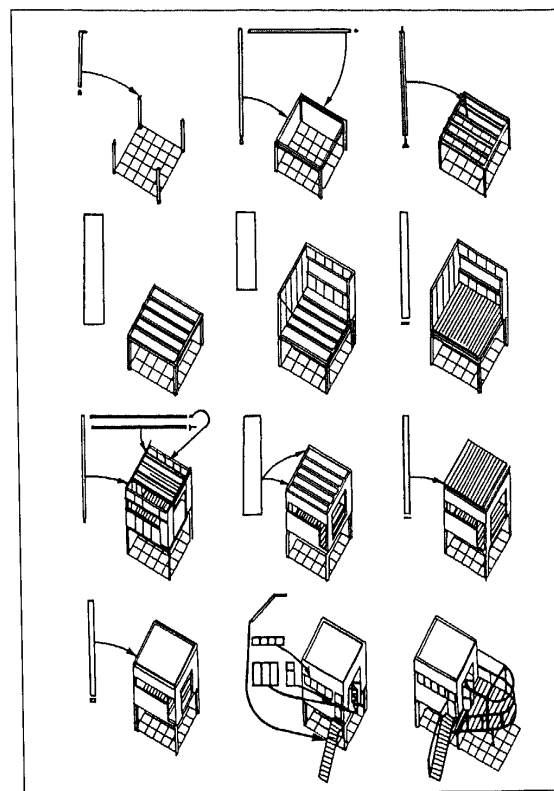
Indeed, in such conditions no permanent residence is necessary: Mayakovsky's poem "Letaiushchii Proletarii" (Flying Proletarian), for example, just had

but examination of this tradition already lies outside the framework of the present work – if only because this work itself would seem to belong to that same tradition.

TWO. MOVEMENT-IMMOBILITY

"I," proclaimed filmmaker Dziga Vertov in 1923, "am liberating myself from now on and forever from human immobility; I am in constant movement."¹ This was a culture of dislocation, changing conditions, unsteadiness and instability. It was an "eternal battle" (Blok), a "permanent revolution" (Trotsky), the "earth in turmoil" (Meyerhold). Here, as in Vladimir Tatlin's *Monument to the Third International*, you "should not stand and sit; you must be carried up and down mechanically, drawn against your will."² Your eyes "must be forcibly focused on those consequential details that must be seen."³ This was "the instant of a creative race, a rapid shift in forms, there is no stagnation – only stormy movement."⁴

Architectural constructions in this culture had to be mobile, if only because "the very idea of movement presents great interest for development."⁵ Buildings should "turn to the sun, be collapsible, combinable and mobile . . . with variable arrangements of rooms and furniture [Figs. 20, 21]."⁶



21. M. Ia. Ginzburg and M. A. Okhitovich, collapsible, transportable dwelling unit, 1929. V. Paperny (coauthored with A. Riabushin and E. Bogdanov), *Zhilaia sreda kak ob'ekt prognozirovaniia* (Moscow: VNIITE, 1972), 16.

to "mount the building's wings and wheels and take off."¹⁰ The space itself, in which the proletarian could move, was expanded almost to infinity:

I'm off!
 Immediately!
 In five minutes
 I'll leap the
 length of the sky.
 The going is good
 in this weather.
 Wait for me
 at the cloud
 under the Big Dipper.¹¹

The people of this culture are

Conquerors of the space of the seas, the oceans, and the continents . . .
Their own Deity, Judge, and Law.¹²

Some mysterious power seized people, houses, animals, and possessions,
mixed everything up, and impetuously spilled it all out on the surface of the
earth:

Everything that can move,
and everything that doesn't move,
everything that barely moved,
crawling,
creeping,
swimming -
everything is like lava,
like lava!¹³

People were suddenly tearing themselves away from their places, abandon-
ing almost all their belongings, and like some strange rolling stones took off into
the endless expanses of the former Russian Empire. As if a trumpet call had rung
out across the ravaged fields:

Hey!
Provinces,
Anchors aweigh!
After Tula province comes Astrakhan'.
One colossus one after another,
Having stood still
ever since Adam,
Took off,
shoving one another,
thundering their cities.¹⁴

Great alarm can be heard in a government appeal addressed to the peas-
antry and signed by Lenin: "It has come to our attention that in some provinces
an increased desire on the part of the working peasants toward resettlement
has been observed. . . . Sowers and distributors of discord, pushing the peas-
ants to unauthorized relocation, will be subject to severe punishment."¹⁵ It was
naïve, of course, to think that this process of diffusion and expansion could be
stopped with threats of punishment to the sowers of discord. They were not the
problem.

The government twice tried to cope with the dispersal of the population. The
first time was between 1918 and 1920. At that time, for example, any unauthor-
ized change of employment was forbidden;¹⁶ but exactly three years later, this
restriction was abolished.¹⁷

Similarly, in 1923 the Moscow City Council used the threat of a fine to de-
mand that visitors to the city register within twenty-four hours;¹⁸ but in the same
year the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) and the Council
of People's Commissars (SNK) issued a decree that made it illegal "to demand
from a citizen of the RSFSR the obligatory presentation of a passport and other
forms establishing residency, which would restrict the citizen's right to move and
settle on the territory of the RSFSR."¹⁹

During this period, official efforts to tie people down were in clear contradic-
tion to the diffusion of the culture; therefore these resolutions were short-lived.
The majority of the decrees of the 1920s were specifically designed to promote
expansion. As a result, almost everything in Culture One was unstable. The cal-
endar was changed,²⁰ the orthography of written Russian was changed,²¹ and
time was constantly changing.

A decree from 14 February 1919 introduced the international system of time
zones; and between 1919 and 1930, daylight saving time changes were in ef-
fect. On 16 June 1930, time, as usual, was moved forward by one hour;²² then
daylight saving time was extended "indefinitely until a special resolution of the
Council of People's Commissars of the USSR"²³ and, finally, "indefinitely until
abolition."²⁴ This abolition never followed; time lost its plasticity and became
set, having outrun the international system by one hour.

The second attempt by government to cope with the dispersal of population
coincided with the natural extinction of this process in the culture and was
therefore realized with an unprecedented completeness. The system of methods
for tying people down gradually became more and more sophisticated. In 1926
measures for "the conversion of nomadic gypsies to a laboring and settled life-
style" were passed.²⁵ In this same year a struggle for labor discipline began,²⁶
and labor dossiers were introduced in places of employment.²⁷

In the archives of the Union of Soviet Architects there is an extensive body
of correspondence with various institutions regarding the transmission of labor
dossiers to follow employees changing jobs; however, in 1933 this decree, clearly,
was not observed very rigidly - the Institute of Health Resort Specialists, for ex-
ample, simply answered that they had no such labor dossiers.²⁸

In 1928, engineers, technicians, and agronomists were entered into a special
registry.²⁹ In 1930, measures relating to "the struggle with the manpower drain"
were adopted. Among them there were penalties for "the enticement of workers
and administrative-technical personnel."³⁰ On 23 June 1931, Stalin introduced
his "six conditions," one of which again demanded an end to the manpower
drain.³¹ In 1932 a resolution was adopted about dismissal from work for absences
without acceptable reasons.³² In the same year, in the name of the struggle with
job-skipping "fliers" (which sounds almost like an unintentional parody of Ma-
yakovsky's "Flying Proletarian"), the decision was made to take ration cards for
food products and other manufactured goods away from dismissed workers and

to deprive them of the right to an apartment.³³ Also in this year the mandatory registration of all voluntary organizations was introduced.³⁴ Beginning in 1932, an internal passport system was gradually put in place.³⁵

On the day of Sergei Kirov's murder, 1 December 1934, the Union of Soviet Architects decided to demand from all its local organizations "lists of architects who are members of the Union and architects who are not members, in order to compile a register of all architects throughout the Union."³⁶ It would, of course, be absurd to assert that the model for this decision was the recently passed decree demanding the weekly registration of "fertilized" and "unfertilized" mares, cows, and sows,³⁷ but in tone and wording they are remarkably similar. In 1937, on pain of exclusion, it was suggested that every member of the union complete in triplicate a questionnaire consisting of twenty-nine points and attach four photographs of themselves.³⁸ Also in this year, photographs were made a part of all internal passports.³⁹

In 1935 a personal file was compiled on every student,⁴⁰ and in 1938, a "special registration card" was issued to every specialist in higher education.⁴¹ In this year employment-history books, of a kind that still exist, were introduced;⁴² also, the "expulsion" of collective farm workers from collective farms was forbidden,⁴³ which in effect meant the reestablishment of serfdom. In 1940, "the unauthorized departure of laborers and white-collar workers from business establishments and institutions" was outlawed.⁴⁴ Then, on 18 January 1941 a law was passed making being twenty minutes late for work a matter for the courts.⁴⁵

However skeptical historians may be regarding the state's preparedness for war in 1941 (e.g., Aleksandr Nekrich),⁴⁶ the culture was ready for it right on time.

Khlebnikov's boxes of bent glass, in which inhabitants would knock about the world, were obviously highly inappropriate in this new culture. It is not by chance that they were so utterly forgotten by Culture Two. The idea was revived only in the 1960s when Selim Khan-Magomedov pointed out the similarity of the projects of the English group Archigram (1961-74) to Khlebnikov's ideas, which had been expressed more than half a century earlier.⁴⁷

Thus, the person in Culture Two lost his or her rootlessness. As a unique form of compensation, though, the culture singled out special people to assume the burden of unhindered movement, thus relieving everyone else of it. All the well-publicized expeditions of the 1930s – the rescue of the *Cheliuskin* arctic expedition, the I. D. Papanin expedition rescue, V. P. Chkalov's flights over the North Pole, and flights into the stratosphere – were described as something extremely dangerous and tortuous (as they surely must have been in reality) but also joyous. Identifying with the superheroes who freely (though agonizingly) soared over the net of parallels and meridians, ordinary people felt they were also soaring, experiencing all the trials and tribulations of the superheroes, completely forgetting their own immobility. A unique substitution occurred: Instead of experiencing the actual woes of being tied down, people experienced the ordeals attendant to the mastery of space.

However, it was not only the vision of a person torn from the earth that disturbed the culture. The same disturbed feeling was aroused by the vision of buildings ripped from the earth. A structure, from the perspective of Culture Two, grows naturally out of the ground. Of all the architectural ideas and constructions, Culture Two most harshly rejected the mobile habitation cells of Mikhail Okhitovich and Le Corbusier's Narkomlegprom Building on Miasnitskaia Street [Fig. 22].

The transition of Stroikom (the Construction Committee), the group led by Moisei Ginzburg, from urbanism to de-urbanism occurred in the space of an hour and a half, according to some reminiscences. In 1929 a man in a derby hat and plaid jacket – who, according to Ginzburg's associates, looked like a cross between a cowboy and a dandy – showed up at the Stroikom studio while Ginzburg was away. He walked around the renderings of house-communes and then disappeared. It was sociologist Mikhail Okhitovich, then 33 years old. The next day he came again, and after he and Ginzburg spent an hour and a half locked in Ginzburg's office, they walked out and Ginzburg merrily announced: "We will be de-urbanists."⁴⁸

The instantaneousness of this transition, for which Ginzburg was reproached for many years, can be explained only one way: Between the urbanism of Ginzburg and the de-urbanism of Okhitovich there are considerably more similarities than differences. The essence of Okhitovich's theory is contained in the following: "The city must perish. . . . The revolution in transportation and the spread of the automobile will overturn common assumptions about the density and accumulation of buildings and apartments."⁴⁹ In place of the city, Okhitovich proposed individual, collapsible living cells that could be loaded onto individual automobiles and transported along a newly developed network of highways and then set up at any point in space [see Fig. 21].

This idea – which clearly, although perhaps unconsciously, echoed Khlebnikov's bent glass houses – was joyously received by Bruno Taut,⁵⁰ and aroused the uneasiness of Le Corbusier: "the mind develops only in clustered settings of people," he wrote to Ginzburg. Ginzburg adamantly replied to this: "We are making a diagnosis of the contemporary city. We say: yes, it is sick, terminally ill. We do not want to cure it."⁵¹

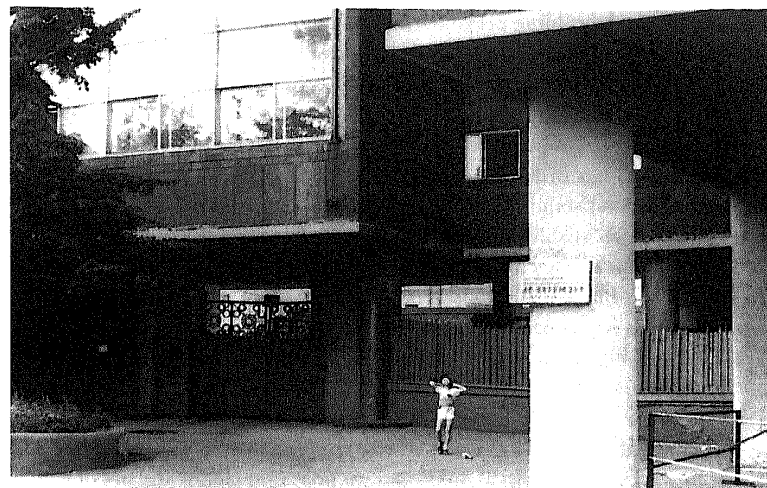
What was truly new in Okhitovich's theses compared with the position already taken by Ginzburg? Only nonattachment to the earth: Dwelling places merely needed to be torn from the earth and freely distributed in space and connected by lines of communications. Everything else – the communal rearing of children, communal meal preparation, that is, the virtual destruction of the family – had long since become axiomatic in Culture One. Attachment to the land was not actually something of principal importance to Ginzburg; it was only the inertia of thought, and as soon as he realized this inertia – which only took an hour and a half – the transition to de-urbanism was accomplished.

Culture One began with the glass boxes of Khlebnikov and concluded with



22. Le Corbusier, Tsentrosoiuz (later Narkomlegprom, later TSU) Building on Miasnitskaia (later Pervomaiskaia, later Kirovskaia) Street, 1934. MA, coll. 5, 2835.

the mobile cells of Okhitovich-Ginzburg. It is not surprising that even in 1933 it seemed to Le Corbusier that “in Russia everyone is crazy about the idea of de-urbanization.”⁵² He was wrong. By this time the journal *Sovremenniaia Arkhitektura* (Contemporary Architecture), which published Okhitovich’s articles and Ginzburg’s renderings, no longer existed; neither did the creative associations, urbanism, de-urbanism, or Stroikom. “Anti-Leninist methodological positions” had been discovered in Okhitovich’s theories.⁵³ Almost all architects



23. Fenced-off space under Le Corbusier’s building. Photo: Vladimir Paperny, 1979.

were already working in the Moscow City Council studios and were involved in the replanning of Moscow under the leadership of Lazar’ Kaganovich. They were busy with precisely that which, according to Ginzburg, they did not want to be doing: “curing the contemporary city.” Mikhail Okhitovich in 1934 was expelled from the party but not yet arrested. He started working on the problem of the “ethnic forms of socialist architecture.”

Le Corbusier reacted negatively to the idea of de-urbanization, but this did not improve Culture Two’s relationship to his ideas and constructions. His building on Miasnitskaia Street [see Fig. 22] was rejected by the culture as if it were alien tissue. For Culture Two, it is an “alien building”⁵⁴ and “a cultural anachronism.”⁵⁵ What frightens the culture most is the fact that the building does not seem to have grown out of the place allotted to it; instead it seems to have come from afar on its own, strange legs. This building is “gloomy and alienated from its surroundings, set upon concrete pipes, so that with all its weight the building hangs over a person, presses down on him, does not let vision soar, but with heavy barbells drags it to the earth” – whereas, in contrast, the Soviet Pavilion in Paris represents a “powerful striving upward . . . a surging toward a joyous future.”⁵⁶

The movement upward is now possible only if it grows out of the earth, and separation from the earth creates the heaviness of barbells. This weight is so disturbing that the first floor of the building, intended as a garage for automobiles, was eventually enclosed by fences [Fig. 23]. In this way, the building was not quite so terrifying to the culture.

Le Corbusier's building provoked almost the same reaction as did the metal beds on tubular legs when they were introduced to Russian villages in the nineteenth century. Peasants sheathed them with *podzory* (dust ruffles), which hid the entire lower part of the bed and created the sensation of a heavy monolith. The covering of the empty space below a bench was a consistent characteristic of peasant dwellings in Russia at least since the sixteenth century.⁵⁷

A structure that stands on legs is not simply something that has come from far away; it is also hostile. Architects saw in Le Corbusier's building "a hut on fowls' legs."⁵⁸ The foreign masterpiece was understood through associations with the well-known Russian fairy tale about the peasant dwelling of the witch Baba Yaga, a hut that was capable of turning its back to the forest and its front to the hero. Le Corbusier's house, as though out of spite or malice, stood with its main façade turned to Novo-Kirovskii Avenue, unfinished at that time, with its back to the spectator.

The final judgment against this building came from a seemingly unexpected source. In the poetry of Osip Mandelstam – a poet who clearly did not fit within the framework of Cultures One and Two – we find these lines:

Into crystal palaces on chicken legs,
I will not enter even as a slight shadow.⁵⁹

Living in Moscow at that time (1931), Mandelstam most likely had in mind the only crystal palace in Moscow – the still unfinished Narkomlegprom Building on Miasnitskaia Street.

Three years would pass, and Mandelstam would write the words that essentially cost him his life:

We live without feeling the country beneath us,
Our speech goes unheard at ten paces away.⁶⁰

It is enough to compare these lines with those written by Khlebnikov in 1921

We are free people on a free earth
We create our laws ourselves, no need to fear the laws,
And we mold the clay of actions,⁶¹

to realize to what extent the *clay of actions* had hardened in Culture Two.

The next wave of population outflow swelled up after 1954, when a resolution was published about the opening up of virgin territories.⁶² In the late 1950s there emerged an entire subculture of nomadism and outdoor camping, with its own style of behavior and dress and its own songs, which sang of wandering:

I don't know where you and I
Will meet again.
The globe can whirl and spin
Like a blue balloon,

Flashing by are cities and countries,
Parallels and meridians,
But the paths haven't been laid yet
Along which we will wander around the world.⁶³

In the 1960s, the idea of Khlebnikov's mobile cells was reborn in the architectural projects of Andrei Ikonnikov's group.⁶⁴ Another architectural group, NER (New Element in Population Distribution), did not see the city as nomadic but, nevertheless, did see it as constantly changing: "Shelters easily change their dimensions, form, silhouette. They can quickly react to the wind, rain, the mood of inhabitants and the time of day."⁶⁵

In the 1970s the nomadic subculture of the 1950s turned into mass emigration. Many of the prominent figures of the 1960s left for Israel in the 1970s in order to create there, perhaps, the very *Russian Israel* that the Old Believers had dreamed about. The architectural end of the Culture One of the 1960s–70s may be considered the international competition for a theater of the future (1977). The first five prizes were awarded to Soviet students for projects for transformable theaters, and three of the winners almost immediately emigrated to the West.

☆ ☆ ☆

The era of Peter the Great was in a sense a reaction to the dispersal of the population during the time of the Great Schism. (According to Aider Kurkchi, between 1640 and 1690 one of the most significant movements of the population across the country in Russian history took place.) By the 1650s the government was already taking measures to restrain this process, in particular an edict of Aleksei Mikhailovich from 1655: "If Boyars' serfs run away, and if twenty or thirty Boyar serfs from one household are caught, then six or five or four of those serfs should be hanged and the rest should be whipped and given back to the Boyars to whom they belong."⁶⁶ Tangentially relevant are the edicts aimed at (speaking in contemporary language) shoring up labor discipline, for example, the edict of 1658: "Departmental people, scribes and clerks in departments, must be at work, day and night, for 12 hours."⁶⁷

The next wave of edicts directed at restraining movement began under Peter the Great. In 1695 edicts appeared establishing a guard service in Moscow and banning the hiring of "vagrants without identification."⁶⁸ Next, we can cite a whole series of Petrine edicts directed at the registration of vagrants, loiterers, beggars, and monks.⁶⁹ Curiously, when in the 1930s the secret-police chief G. Iagoda appeared at the Bolshevo labor camp of the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs; forerunner of the KGB), he spoke about the radiant future where there also would not be beggars, loiterers, slackers, and freaks.⁷⁰

Iagoda did not name monks, but it is clear that there would also be no place for monks in the future. As far as freaks are concerned, Peter and Iagoda seemed to be in full agreement: Peter had ordered all people born with deformities, on pain of a fine, to be surrendered to provincial governors and placed on display among the other curiosities in his *Kunstkamera*.⁷¹

Indeed, the era of Peter the Great began with a clearly expressed enthusiasm for movement, but, as in the early 1930s, it was a kind of agonizing movement before a full stop. Peter twice traveled to Europe, continuously traveled around the country, sent people abroad, and summoned foreigners from abroad; but Peter himself, and his court, were precisely the supermen through whom the general population had to experience such movements. New cities were built – Azov, Taganrog, and St. Petersburg – people were settled there; this, naturally, was movement, but they were settled by force, and after the resettlement people were attached to these new cities forever. To accomplish this, Peter needed architecture.

The very word “architecture” could be found in Petrine edicts even before this; for example, the official letters of 1700 to the Dutch businessman Tessing list what he was supposed to bring from Amsterdam: “Land and sea maps, drawings, plates, portraits, mathematical, architectural and various military books.”⁷² Here we see that architecture was understood in the context of military engineering. Architecture took on a certain artistic significance precisely at the time when it became an active means of securing the population in space. During his second trip to Europe, for example, Peter had already observed with dissatisfaction that in France, “there is no decoration in architecture and they do not love it and only build smoothly, simply, and very very thickly.”⁷³

A similar change in the relationship to the artistic quality of architecture also occurred in the twentieth century. In the 1920s, government decrees and resolutions never used the word “architecture.” The first time it appears in a resolution of the Central Executive Committee (TsIK) and the Council of People’s Commissars (SNK) is 1933: “Planning solutions for urban centers must contain indications regarding the architectural-artistic design for the settlement as a whole as well as in its individual parts (apartments, streets, squares, and so on).”⁷⁴ The interest of authorities in artistic qualities in both instances coincides with the intensification of efforts to restrict movement.

What type of artistic quality in architecture did Peter need? Peter’s decrees concerning the construction of St. Petersburg began in 1709 with the demand to assemble and send there twenty thousand serf builders.⁷⁵ An edict of 1713 required that “courtiers and other ranks of people” start building their homes there in advance, threatening them: “And when they are commanded to live in St. Petersburg, so that it will be possible to arrive there without anyone pleading ignorance.”⁷⁶ This decree brings to mind the Soviet joke from the 1930s

about a party emissary delegated to organize a collective farm in a remote village, who sends the following telegram back to Moscow: “Mission accomplished. Stop. Collective farm organized. Stop. Send collective farmers.” Exactly the same thing happened in St. Petersburg. The serf builders had built a landing and several government establishments; the only thing missing from the new capital was residents.

Finally, in a 1714 edict the name of the Italian architect Domenico Trezzini appears: “to determine in what manner to build houses, drawings must be received from the architect Trezin).”⁷⁷ In 1715 a decree required that “no one build anywhere without an architectural drawing.”⁷⁸ A year later, to the inquiry “regarding the homes built and being built, should it be ordered to correct them according to Architecture, as far as possible in the windows, doors, and other small mistakes?” Peter laconically replies: “Command to build anew according to Architecture.”⁷⁹ This meant that anything built not according to the architecture of Domenico Trezzini must immediately be razed. In 1721 Peter expressed dissatisfaction: “When their houses are torn down, they say spiteful things and make useless complaints.”⁸⁰

Peter wanted all buildings to be built according to the projects of a single architect and to appear the same; he even demands that the inhabitants decorate the entrances of their homes with mass-produced cast-iron balusters.⁸¹ In the 1930s, requirements for architecture, in terms of uniformity, were different. Moscow chief Nikolai Bulganin, appearing at the First Congress of Soviet Architects, spoke thus: “Some people try to argue that it is wrong to assign construction on one street to different architects, and they recommend assigning the whole street to a single architect or a single collective; there is a danger in this, that with such methods the result will be complete monotony and uniformity. (*Applause.*)”⁸²

The czar demanded uniformity. The chairman of the Moscow City Council demanded variety. There is, however, something in common here: Architecture is directed from above, it is given to inhabitants or even to owners of buildings predesigned, as something that must attach the resident to a place. The artistic qualities of architecture came out in a private game played by the Architect and the Authorities. They created this artistic quality perhaps in the name of humanity, but in no way for a specific, particular inhabitant.

The irritable Marquis de Custine, who traveled through Russia in 1839, captured this feature with stunning precision: “In art there is no term with which the architecture of the Kremlin can be characterized. The style of its palaces, prisons and cathedrals is not Moorish, not Gothic, not Roman and even not purely Byzantine. The Kremlin does not have a prototype; it is not like anything in the world. It bears the imprint of what we may call the architecture of the Tsar style.”⁸³

THREE. HORIZONTAL-VERTICAL

In 1932, when the German architect Bruno Taut arrived in Moscow for the third time, what struck him, in his words, was the “unbelievable, insurmountable discrepancy between the views of current leading Soviet architects and following them state officials, on the one hand, and, to use an immodest expression, of international architectural quality on the other hand.”¹ In this statement, two points should be noted. In the first place, it seemed to Taut that the state officials followed the architects, and not the other way around. In the second place, the expression “international architectural quality” implies the presence of a certain uniform architectural substance that stretches across national boundaries and is distinguishable from that which, at the moment in question, was occurring within the bounds of one of these national boundaries.

The concept of the existence of such a substance is highly characteristic of the consciousness of Culture One. We will call this phenomenon the *horizontal-ity* of Culture One.

When, in 1932, the film *Counterplan* appeared, Viktor Shklovskii tried to assess it according to what he called the “Hamburg scale.” What is the Hamburg scale? Professional wrestlers, explained Shklovskii, who always fight for show and not seriously in order to make money, nonetheless gather in Hamburg once a year, where, without spectators, they wrestle in earnest in order to clarify who among them is in fact worth something. Shklovskii suggested a similar kind of reckoning in art.² Such a thought (sharply criticized by Culture Two) again suggests the existence of a certain unitary value system; this once again testifies to the horizontality of Culture One – it perceived its self-identity in the horizontal direction, whereas any vertical movement collided with barriers.

“Workers of the world unite!” – this Marxist slogan, written in Culture One on the covers of nearly all architectural publications (and totally absent from that venue in Culture Two), indicates that the idea of the international unity of a single class clearly dominated in Culture One over the concepts of either national or state unity. This is the reason why the organization Proletkul’t, for example, so carefully looked after “the purity of the membership in studios. Only those who, by the nature of their activities, are genuine members of the proletariat, those with a proletarian background, can join studios.” Proletkul’t leaders considered the intelligentsia “a voluntary and highly skilled conductor of bourgeois art,” and therefore, “they can, if necessary, think with us or even for us, but they cannot feel for us.”³

Lenin never supported Proletkul’t, but his own thinking revealed no lesser degree of horizontality. One of the decrees he signed suggested “establishing relations with foreign Marxists to commission them to write a number of textbooks.”⁴ The same world view that prompted Lenin to invite foreign Marxists forced Vasily III to invite Maksim the Greek to Moscow in 1518 to correct the

prayer books (an act repeated in the seventeenth century by Patriarch Nikon). Later, the same world view (now, though, in the phase of hardening) that caused the Muscovite authorities to exile Maksim the Greek in 1525 to the Volokolamskii Monastery, motivated Soviet authorities to send the foreign Marxists to labor camps in the 1930s.

The word “foreign” in Culture One almost always had positive overtones; what happened beyond the border was often a paradigm to follow. Thus, for example, the decree introducing the international time zone system in Russia mentioned “unification with all the *civilized world* in the accounting of time.”⁵ The decree “On the Improvement of the Life of Scientists” suggested the freedom to go abroad and to receive literature from abroad.⁶ “Overseas,” writes an architectural journal, “in the North American United States, the radio-telephone and radio-telegraph are available to almost all citizens.”⁷ That means our citizens must have this too.

An architectural design became valuable if it resembled a foreign prototype. In the summer of 1924, when a new public park was being planned on Teatral’naia Square, the author of a journal review praised it in this way: “In this park they are arranging fountains, flower gardens, portraits of leaders executed in beds of variegated flowers. The park has a European look.”⁸ These words should not necessarily be taken to mean that the author had seen somewhere in Europe portraits of leaders in flowers and is glad that this invention has finally been assimilated; he most likely had never seen anything like that, but the words “European look” simply existed in Culture One as an idiom signifying the highest quality. It is interesting that in the next issue of this journal there is an advertisement for the electric lamp “ETTsR,” which, in the words of the manufacturer, “is equal to the best foreign models.”⁹

This view of the word “foreign” continued until 1930 – in Lenin’s letters to relatives published that year, the reader discovered that “foreign cities . . . are better cared for in the summer than ours, that is they water the streets more often, etc., so that summers are more pleasant than in Russian cities.”¹⁰

The architecture of Culture One perceived itself as already equal to foreign architecture; therefore, no boundaries of any sort, from its point of view, existed. In 1926, the first issue of the journal *Sovremennaia Arkhitektura* (Contemporary Architecture) came out. The first editorial solemnly declared that the pages of the magazine are open to “all like-minded colleagues not only in the USSR but in the whole world.” In the second issue, the idea of a horizontal “international front of contemporary architecture” was formulated still more distinctly: “Despite all the differences and particularities of different countries and peoples, this front actually exists. The results of a revolutionary search by the avant-garde of the contemporary architecture of all countries are closely interwoven. They are hammering out a new international language of architecture, accessible and understandable, in spite of boundary posts and borders.”¹¹

The degree of horizontality of various architectural directions did, of course, vary. The polemics between, for instance, F. Shalavin and I. Lamtsov of ASNOVA (Association of New Architects) and R. Khiger of OSA (Society of Contemporary Architects), revolved around the problem of borders. Writes R. Khiger,

[F. Shalavin and I. Lamtsov] consider, apparently, that the borders of the Soviet Union must be surrounded with a Chinese wall; they vigilantly protect them from the invasion of any foreign culture. Everything that “reaches out to us from abroad” is, you see, “not motivated by the social conditions of Soviet society,” and consequently, in their opinion, is “ideologically alien” to us. What a strange mixture of Sovietism with a jingoistic, Mother-Russian, hurrah-patriotism this is, even for our authors!¹²

We can see that OSA was considerably more horizontal than ASNOVA. Another example of a less than complete horizontality can be seen in the theses of Mikhail Okhitovich in 1934:

After the full victory of socialism all over the world, when the nations have blended into one communist people, there is no basis to think that even then architecture will be unified and homogenous in all instances. . . . The common man easily accepts a unified metric system, since it does not matter to him whether he called the bread he has eaten a pound or 400 grams. But it does matter to him whether he is given a French roll or an English muffin, pita bread or polenta, a millet cake or black rye bread.¹³

However, the verticality of the “Mother-Russian hurrah-patriotism” of ASNOVA and the verticality of Okhitovich’s idea of a national and unique form, when compared to the true verticality of Culture Two, seem so insignificant as to be slight aberrations of horizontal movement.

In the case of OSA and ASNOVA this is supported by another statement by Okhitovich. “The architecture of Constructivism and Formalism,” he writes in his thesis statements, “in no way differs from the nonnationalistic postwar architecture of the West.”¹⁴ In the case of Okhitovich himself, this was proved by the fate of his theses: Together with the protocols of the session of the party group of the Union of Soviet Architects (SSA), these theses were forwarded to the NKVD.¹⁵ On 31 March 1935, Okhitovich was expelled from the SSA;¹⁶ soon after this he was arrested and never seen again.

Was Soviet architecture of the 1920s actually horizontal, that is, was it the same as that in the West? Apparently not. Horizontality was its intention, but the very “international architectural quality” that fully supported the intention did not always agree with the results. Again the testimony of Bruno Taut:

By architecture in the Soviet Union they understand dividing the walls with lines, surfaces, and profiles, either with ornaments or without such (which is not important). . . . Architecture, in this way, has become *theatrical dec-*

orations. . . . In 1926 I was invited to a meeting in the Soviet Union. That was the time when there was not enough iron, concrete, and other materials for the construction of housing and other buildings. . . . However, in the USSR, in spite of the need for materials, they continued to draw such projects, as if iron and cement were in abundance. The architects, like “artists,” sat before their drafting tables and, as I observed with astonishment in 1932, very often did not visit the construction site; they even did not know whether the construction had begun or not and what stage it was in.¹⁷

These quotations, to which we shall return, clearly show that in the 1920s a gap existed between the understanding of the very essence of architectural activity in the USSR and in the West. This, in turn, points to a gap between the horizontal intentions of Soviet architecture of the 1920s – its striving to blend into the “international architecture” – and its apparent inability to do so.

This horizontal intention, however, by the late 1920s had begun a metamorphosis. Horizontal movement in various cultural spheres more and more often began colliding with suddenly emerging barriers and obstacles. In 1926, “for Soviet citizens who have completed a foreign higher education and have returned to work in the RSFSR,” special tests in social science would be arranged.¹⁸ A 1927 decree made for “a sharp reduction in foreign business trips.”¹⁹ In 1928, the committee for the arrangement of exhibitions of foreign technology was abolished.²⁰ In the same year, a special commission was created to deal with the “regulation of the hiring of art workers from abroad for work in the Soviet Union and art workers in the Soviet Union for work abroad.”²¹ In 1929, in addition to the curtailment of foreign business trips, a resolution was issued stating that “business travelers are not permitted to change their approved itinerary at their own discretion.”²² In 1931, all citizens were forbidden to keep the products of trade with foreigners in the territory of the USSR without prior special permission.²³ In 1935, *Torgsin* (*torgovlia s inostrantsami*, the Department for Trade with Foreigners) was liquidated.²⁴

The final replacement of the horizontal strivings of the culture by verticality was manifested in a resolution of the Presidium of TsIK (the Central Executive Committee) in 1929:

The refusal of a citizen of the Soviet Union working in the capacity of a functionary in a state institution or establishment of the USSR acting abroad to return to the USSR upon the suggestion of an organ of state authority will be considered desertion to the camp of enemies of the working class and will qualify as a treason.²⁵

In a resolution of 1934, this is stated still more definitively: “Fleeing or flying abroad will be punished by the highest measures of criminal punishment – execution by shooting with confiscation of all possessions.”²⁶ Fleeing abroad in the 1930s was equated with counterrevolutionary activity, in approximately the same

way that, in 1704, fleeing abroad was equated with mutiny.²⁷ Punishment in both cases was the same: “death by execution.”

The expression “flying abroad” did not show up in the resolution of 1934 by chance: The precedent for such flight already had a place in 1927 when pilot Kazimir Klim and motorman Timoshchuk flew a military plane to Warsaw, after which they were declared to be “enemies of the workers and traitors to the worker-peasant state.”²⁸ Timoshchuk, however, repented, came to the Soviet Consulate in Warsaw, and was forgiven. The resolution about his pardon names three (mutually exclusive, to some degree) reasons for leniency: (a) he repented; (b) he did not know anything about the criminal intentions of the pilot Klim; (c) he had no way of preventing Klim’s criminal intentions. Nevertheless, Timoshchuk was forgiven, and this means that he was allowed to return to the USSR and come before a judge.²⁹ The subsequent fate of both is unknown.

We see how the border gradually acquired the meaning of a boundary between good and evil. Good in the new culture, as in the previous one, is still defined as the proletarian or worker-peasant, while evil is the bourgeois; however, the proletarian–bourgeois axis took a sharp turn, as a result of which the border was situated in geographical, rather than social, space. The ultimate completion of this process took place in 1937 with the resolution of the Presidium of TsIK about the cessation of criminal cases based on “the social origin” of the accused;³⁰ this meant that, unlike in the 1920s, the children of landowners, priests, or czarist military officers were no longer considered criminals just because of their social origin. It is curious that when, two decades later, the verticality of the culture started to crumble, one of the first symptoms of this was a decree of the Supreme Soviet about amnesty for those who collaborated with the occupying German army.³¹ A change in perspective, as we see, was immediately manifested in a change in the direction of criminal codes.

In the 1930s, the border guard became the new hero. Sculptures representing border guards with German shepherds sprang up everywhere [Figs. 24, 25]. “Protecting the border” metaphors could be found even in such unlikely places as sports songs, such as this popular song of the 1930s:

Hey, goalkeeper, prepare for the fight,
You are the border guard of the goal.
Imagine that right behind you
Are the borders of your country.

Hurrah-hurrah, be prepared,
When it’s time to smash the enemies,
Fight them on every front,
Left field, right field, stay awake!

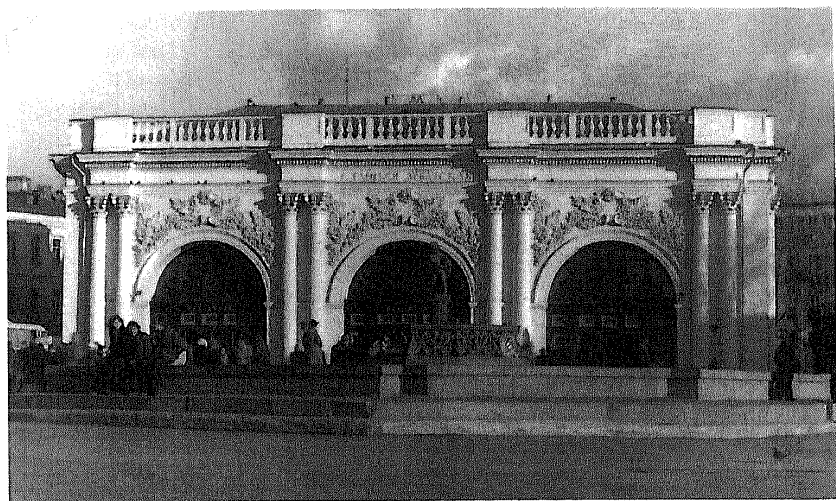
It is surprising how precisely architects formulated, in their own spatial language, these barriers and borders that suddenly grew up everywhere. Zholtovskii’s building on Mokhovaia Street seemed, to Viktor Vesnin, to be isolated by



24. (left) Balandin, border-guard sculpture next to the Far East Pavilion at VSKhV. MA, coll. 11, 11790.

25. (above) M. G. Manizer, border-guard sculpture at Ploshchad’ Revoliutsii metro station, 1938. Photo: Vladimir Paperny, 1979.

“a wall from the whole world,” along which it seemed “a patrolman walks.”³² V. Balikhin, a representative of rationalism and hostile to Vesnin’s constructivism, after having seen the designs for the construction of the Moscow embankments, experienced approximately the same feeling: “A stone front, enormous volume, the river is fenced off from the city.”³³ The writer Marietta Shaginian (having already written her novel *Gidrotsentral’* [Hydro-Electric Plant] and thus having made the transition, as the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* asserts, from symbolism to socialist realism) also felt a similar reaction upon seeing projects for new apartments. This indicates that her transition to socialist realism was still incomplete. The projects frightened her because these apartments, it seemed to her, were “hermetically partitioned off from the life of the rest of the country.”³⁴



26. L. M. Poliakov, the entrance pavilion to Arbatskaia metro station, 1949. Photo: Vladimir Paperny, 1979.



27. L. M. Poliakov, sculptor G. I. Motovilov, interior of the entrance pavilion to Kaluzhskaia (later Oktiabr'skaia) metro station, 1949. Photo: Vladimir Paperny, 1979.

In connection with the particular importance of borders, the points where these borders must intersect – in particular, entrances to architectural constructions – became important as well. In architectural projects and constructions of the 1920s, the entrances (with very rare exceptions) are not especially singled out. In Zholtovskii's building on Mokhovaia Street, though, there is already a



28. N. A. Ladovskii, the entrance pavilion to Krasnye Vorota metro station, front, 1935. MA, coll. 8, 16300.



29. N. A. Ladovskii, the entrance pavilion to Krasnye Vorota metro station, side, 1935. MA, coll. 5, 6212.

two-story-high arch. Subsequently, such arches, leading into the courtyard of apartment buildings, reached the height of seven stories. It is, in particular, this special relationship to the point of intersection of borders that explains the extraordinary carefulness of the culture in its design of the entrances to metro stations. The boundary between earthly and subterranean worlds cannot, in Culture Two, simply be a dark hole in the earth (which is the approach to the entrances of metro stations in the 1960s). It is also not by chance that many above-ground pavilions for the metro were designed in Culture Two in the form of a gate or triumphal arch [Figs. 26, 27]. Each metro entrance, from the point of view of Culture Two, always represented crossing a boundary. The pavilions for metro stations Krasnye Vorota (Red Gates) [Figs. 28, 29] and Dzerzhinskaia (now

Lubianka) bear traces of Culture One and occupy a special category. On the one hand, the idea of the entrance is emphasized in them, but it is emphasized precisely as a hole in a wall or the earth. In these stations there is comparatively little of the mysticism of the crossing of boundaries.

Thus, in those places where there were no boundaries, they arose anyway; but those borders that did exist – state borders, for example – acquired the significance of a Main Border, a Final Border. As a result of all this, architects found themselves in completely new, unfamiliar relationships with their foreign colleagues.

On 4 July 1932, at the “Meeting of the leaders and activists of architectural organizations,” Karo Alabian solemnly declared: “We know that among the foreign specialists [then working in the USSR – V. P.], a large number are dedicated, honest people who, if comradely attention is directed at them from our side, will absolutely and with great effect be able to work under our conditions.”³⁵ At first glance these words would seem to be totally horizontal. Let’s look at the logical structure of this expression: Among some amount *A*, there is a large number *B* of honest people. We know nothing about those people in *A* who do not belong to *B*, whether they are honest or not and how many of them there are – but here the potential assertion is already present that will be expressed by Alabian only five years later: There are saboteurs among them, and their number is even larger. The next part of the sentence is that there are honest people *B* who will be able to work with us, under a certain condition, which Alabian calls “comradely attention.” Only five years later the true meaning of this attention will be defined by a different name: vigilance.

Watchful attention paid to foreign countries demanded that everything coming in from abroad be examined critically, regardless of subject matter. Therefore, the Secretariat of the Organizational Committee of the Union of Soviet Architects made a decision in 1936 “to expose to criticism, on the pages of the newspaper [*Arkhitekturaia gazeta* – V. P.], the statements made in foreign publications about issues of architecture.”³⁶ Criticism, we must keep in mind, had acquired by this time the meaning of “exposing” or “outing.”

In 1925 VOKS was created – the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. In the 1930s this organization assumed the function of a kind of filter through which all international connections had to pass. During the creation of the Union of Soviet Architects (1932–7), all architectural correspondence with foreign countries, including sometimes personal letters, had to pass through VOKS.

VOKS, in forwarding to the SSA its foreign correspondence, sometimes retold the contents, sometimes forwarded translations made by VOKS of writings and articles, and only in special cases sent the original. Here is something from a typical letter of VOKS to the union: “1933, 2 June. To the Union of Soviet Architects. In reference to your correspondence of 19 March 1933, we directed you

publications to the institutions for whom they were intended. . . . We received a reply . . . and they, with gratification, confirm receipt of the parcel.”³⁷ The intonation and word choice of the VOKS letters recalls the speech of a lackey turning away the importune visitor from his lady’s door: “Milady asked me to convey to you that she is ill and cannot accept visitors.” The role of the person making the request by turns seems to be first one party and then the other, but the lady remains unattainable for both.

Here is an example of a letter from the Union of Soviet Architects back to VOKS: “1936, 19 July. To VOKS. . . . Sent to Alabian through VOKS, ‘The works of the Research Institute of Construction,’ with the personal letter of Maigrot received six months after sending from Paris – the same as for Maigrot’s letter! This record breaks the previous one (two months). Yours, Arkin.”³⁸

This was not the record, though. In the same year Le Corbusier wrote to Aleksandr Vesnin: “Lipshitz conveyed to me your desire to receive my works that were executed since 1927. Alas! I sent them to you at the time of their appearance. . . .”³⁹ The truth of the matter is that VOKS became more and more an actively working filter; it already did not simply sift out excessive information but sometimes independently generated communication. From this particular letter of Le Corbusier we learn that the copy of *Radiant City* that he sent to Moscow was returned to him with the message, “This does not hold interest for us.”

If information somehow got into the hands of architects, bypassing VOKS, then they themselves had to take on the role of the filter (or generator). By the time of the appearance of the first issue of *Arkhitekturaia gazeta*, many foreign architects had been sent telegrams requesting them to send a few “friendly words.” Before their publication, they underwent some editing. Thus, a pessimistic letter by J. J. Oud was not printed at all, whereas in the telegram of Frank Lloyd Wright, the words, “I hope to see an organic architecture created by the Russians for Russia,”⁴⁰ were translated in the newspaper as, “I express the hope that Soviet architects will create for their country a genuinely organic architecture.”⁴¹ The change, although perhaps insignificant, is telling: In 1934, the words “Russia” and “Russians” still kept some negative overtones of Culture One. Ten years later a correction would have been directed in the opposite direction; in this case we are interested in the very fact of editing, rather than in its direction.

Wright underwent an analogous editing at the First Congress of Soviet Architects. Words cited in the Introduction about the “falsity” of American skyscrapers inherent to the Palace of the Soviets, and a comparison with Saint George, were found only in the English version of the speech; in the Russian translation, which was read aloud, Saint George disappeared completely, and the word “falsity” was translated as “reflection.”⁴²

The words of the Danish architect Harald Hals underwent a similar correction at the congress. “I have heard,” he said, “that you have here a saying about Moscow – in the Soviet Union there are three classes of people: (1) those who

are living in Moscow; (2) those on the road to Moscow; (3) and those hoping to end up in Moscow.” The editing of this fragment took the following form: In the first place, the word “classes” was crossed out and above it was written “groups.” Then everything was struck out and written instead as: “All citizens in the USSR strive to come to Moscow.”⁴³ The suggestion, even in jest, about the possibility of the existence of classes in the USSR (except for the two officially recognized ones) was frightening because it contradicted the already formulated idea of vertical unity.

A list of foreign architects invited to the congress had begun being drawn up and edited in 1935. With regard to each architect, a corresponding Soviet representative living abroad was questioned, evaluations were sent to the Central Committee, the lists were covered with various marks and crosses, and some names were crossed out or even erased.⁴⁴ The date of the opening of the congress, postponed from 1936 at least six times, was, finally, approved by all authorities: 16 June 1937. Unfortunately, this date conflicted with the proximate opening of the Fifth Congress of CIAM (Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne) – 28 June. Was this near-overlap the result of chance, or was it carefully found through the formula of “comradely attention”? In any case, of the nine invited French architects, only three were able to attend, and neither Le Corbusier nor Auguste Perret was in their number.

All the same, the measures taken turned out to be insufficient. The commission for the reception of foreign guests (comprising former Italian Communist Party member Boris Iofan, former Le Corbusier coauthor Nikolai Kolli, Mayakovsky's former *LEF* coworker D. E. Arkin, and someone named Protsenko) in its written account sadly concluded that “there were moments that seriously called for watchfulness.” Most provocative, in the opinion of the commission, was the behavior of Belgian architect Vervaeck, who had asserted that “he was being followed by so-called sleuths.” The commission reached this conclusion: “Apparently, our agencies abroad did not take such a guest seriously enough.”⁴⁵ In short: In order for Vervaeck not to get the impression that he was being followed by so-called sleuths, the so-called sleuths need to have followed him much more attentively.

The change, so to speak, in the *slant of awareness*, the replacement of a horizontal unity by a vertical one, these were curiously manifested in the sphere of language – in the relationship to Latin script. Captions in Latin script were almost always obligatory attributes in project graphics in the work of the Vesnin brothers, Ginzburg, K. Mel'nikov, the Golosov brothers, and El Lissitzky, as well as in the set designs of Lyubov' Popova; Latin script appeared on many covers, such as those of the journal *Kino i kul'tura* (Cinema and Culture) or *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'* (Construction Industry) on which the name was written in parallel lines in two languages, Russian and German, whereas *Sovremennaiia arkhitektura* (Contemporary Architecture) gave the title in Russian, German, and

French. Foreign texts in architectural journals were not always accompanied by translations, as, for example, the title for the lead article “Wie baut America” in the journal *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'*.⁴⁶ It is as if Culture One presupposed that its readers had the ability to read European languages freely – despite the obvious fact that more than half of the country could still not read Russian.

In 1929, when the Central Asian republics were making the transition from the Arabic alphabet to the Latin, it was acknowledged that this alphabet held “special cultural-economic significance.”⁴⁷ However, the mastery of Latin alphabet by the end of the 1920s gradually declined: In the German name for the journal *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'* – *Die Bauindustrie* – instead of the Latin letter “U,” the Russian “И” was mistakenly selected.

The new journal of the Union of Soviet Architects that came out in 1933, *Arkhitectura SSSR*, at first had a Latin inscription on the cover, much smaller than the Cyrillic but in three languages beginning with French. In 1936 these disappeared. French captions remained under photographs until 1941. (It is noteworthy that in the epoch of Peter the Great an analogous reorientation occurred: An interest in France replaced an interest in Holland and Germany.)

The Central Asian republics, having changed to the Latin alphabet in 1929, ten years later switched to the Cyrillic.⁴⁸ Now, the culture not only no longer acknowledged the “cultural-economic significance” of Latin script; rather, it saw in Latin script, and even in oral foreign speech, something potentially dangerous. According to the reminiscences of some foreigners, in public places in Moscow they could not bring themselves to speak in their native languages, even if it was not German but English; moreover, they had a basis for this inhibition. One of the reasons for the arrest of the main architect of the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition (VSKhV), V. Oltarzhevskii (who had spent twelve years in America), was that he spoke English with his secretary.⁴⁹

Culture Two, it seems, resurrected that traditional Russian fear of Latin, a fear, for example, that in 1691 forced the torture and execution of Sylvester Medvedev, the talented pupil of Simeon Polotskii.⁵⁰ This is the same xenophobia that compelled Russian czars to wash their hands after they touched foreign ambassadors and caused the simple people, upon seeing these ambassadors, to make the sign of the cross and hide in their huts.⁵¹

Out of all the architectural manifestations of verticalization, we shall examine only one: the unique relationship between *plan* and *façade*.

Culture One was oriented on the plan; the word “façade” was used most often in a negative sense. We shall not forget, of course, that this was only an intention – and it is precisely the “façadeness” of Soviet architecture that disturbed Bruno Taut – but on the level of intention, there was an obvious effort to direct project planning in a horizontal plane. “The plan,” wrote professor G. Dubelir in 1918, “ceases to be a simple sketch of the disposition of streets and squares. . . . [T]he plan is a program for the organization of city life and a tool for social

creation.”⁵² This special relationship to the plan, with these and other stipulations, was preserved in Culture One; and at the end of the 1920s, it appeared to take off again when each of the architectural schools became seriously preoccupied with urban planning. The independent planning group ARU (Association of Architects-Urbanists), headed by Nikolai Ladovskii, separated itself from ASNOVA (Association of New Architects). Ladovskii explained this as follows: “ARU did not appear in the world by chance, but due to the unavoidable necessity of putting the question of the plan at the forefront in architecture.”⁵³ Even Ladovskii’s pupil, V. Balikhin, who remained in ASNOVA, in 1933 still continued to assert that “horizontal coordinates in architecture are acquiring a dominant meaning.”⁵⁴

In the 1930s, practically the entire battle between creative architectural organizations moved to the sphere of planning – each had its own particular version of a new plan for Moscow. In 1935, though, as soon as the Central Committee (TsK VKP(b)) and the Council of People’s Commissars (SNK) officially signed the “General Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow,” there was nothing left for architects to plan. They were advised to busy themselves with the “architectural decoration of the already planned and approved squares, highways, river embankments, and parks.”⁵⁵

Even before the signing of the plan, a striving to move away from a purely horizontal plane had awakened in architects. In the 1920s, in the words of N. Nesis, “every architect burned with the desire to find a level place”; but now, in 1933, asserts Nesis, “we are beginning to search for relief; we seek a valley where it will be possible to lay out a park of culture; we seek that point from which it will be possible to open a window onto an entire, large ensemble.”⁵⁶ Essentially, this pull upward turned out to be fully consonant with what was wanted at that moment by the people writing the orders for architecture. The official resolution about the Palace of the Soviets demanded that the *squatness* common in many projects be overcome by replacing it with a daring, tall composition.⁵⁷ Finally, the selected project by Iofan-Shchuko-Gel’freikh(–Stalin) should not simply be a tall building (such as Tatlin’s *Monument to the Third International* and Ivan Leonidov’s *Lenin Institute*), but the tallest in the world – eight meters taller than the recently completed Empire State Building.

In 1934, Moisei Ginzburg, with his astute perceptiveness, suddenly realized that “today it is impossible to speak about the plan of a building, it’s like mentioning rope in the house of a hanged man.”⁵⁸ In Culture Two the word “plan” acquired a negative meaning. One could assume that “façade” acquired a positive meaning, but this did not happen. “Façadeness” is apparently Nikolai Bulgagin’s biggest peeve with architects at the First Congress. This, however, was only an intention. As the battle with “façadeness” became more intense (reaching its peak in the postwar years), a real gap between the luxuriousness of the façades facing onto the main street and the paltry quality of their inner court-

yards became increasingly apparent. It is as though the culture distinguished the idea of “façadeness,” which it rejected insofar as this is a clear, logically formulated idea supported by real people, from the façade itself, which frequently pleased the people who felt it was the essence of architecture. Bulgagin said nearly as much at the congress. “The façade, I should say,” he said, addressing Burov and referring to the latter’s building on Corky Street, “is not poor; personally, it pleases me, but, comrade Burov, I have selected you here for a critique of this issue. . . .”⁵⁹ By “this issue” he means “façadeness.”

Thus, Culture Two contrasted the plan and planning not with the façade but with the high and comprehensive Art of Architecture, although in practice it often led only to the façade. “For us,” wrote L. Perchik in 1934, “planning is also architecture, only on a large scale,”⁶⁰ and this means that planning now is modeled out of volumes, rather than drawn in planes. In graphics, only drawing can convey this modeling; therefore the expression appears: “the city is well (or poorly) drawn.” The architect A. Mostakov, a former colleague of Ernst May, described a planning project in expressions such as this: “The squares, junctions, and parks are drawn strongly, sharply. One feels that the young architect is skilled in drawing.”⁶¹ It is not surprising that Culture Two dedicated exhibitions and publications to the architectural drawing; even in the besieged Leningrad of 1942 an exhibition of architectural drawings was arranged.⁶²

“The city is not only a flat image – it is volumetric,” Mostakov writes. “The tendency, established in the West and introduced into Soviet practice, to give an exclusively planar, horizontal expression of the form of the city is not right in essence, even more – it is impossible.”⁶³ Note that here the horizontal is firmly associated with the West: Everything horizontal and planar is introduced to us from *there*, and therefore should not be admitted.

The idea, by the way, that Soviet architecture of the 1920s was borrowed from the West fully belongs to Culture Two. Its hostility toward that which took shape outside of its geographical borders merged with its hostility towards Culture One; the two enemies always seem to be in a secret alliance; therefore, from Culture Two’s point of view, the West and Culture One are identical.

In fact, the architecture of the 1920s did reach out to the West; that is, it was oriented toward “international architectural quality” but was, nevertheless, not architecture in the Western sense of the word. Western architectural forms were borrowed, but, falling into a different context, they became painting, sculpture, or theatrical decorations. If we recall that art in Russia, according to Pavel Miliukov, was always only “a decoration for the nobleman’s life,”⁶⁴ and that the nobleman’s life was only an element of the decoration of the czar’s life, then Bruno Taut’s reaction starts to make sense. Taut wrote: “Tsarist Russia . . . did not create an architecture that could destroy the isolation of the concept of *façade*. . . . [A]rchitecture, therefore, became the art of theatrical decorations.”⁶⁵ Metaphorically speaking, the architecture of the 1920s was the set for an ama-

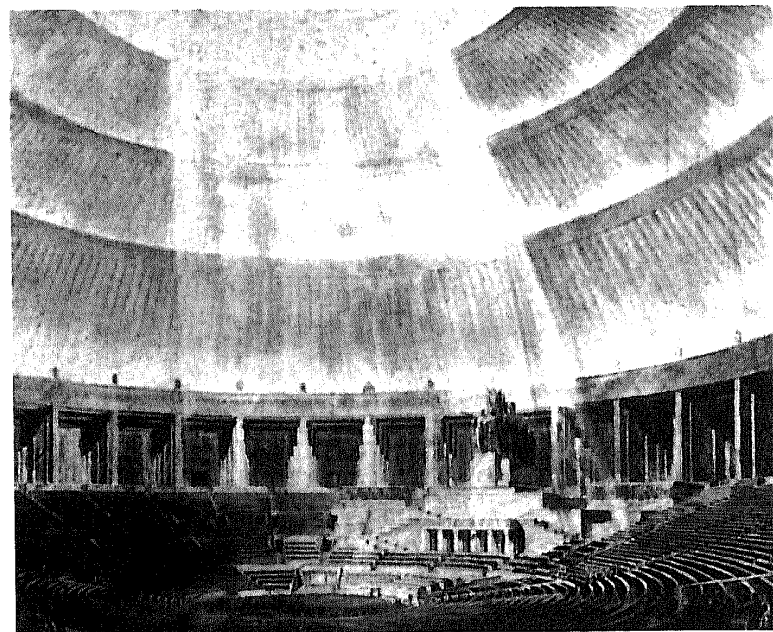
teur production played out in a horizontal plane for the West under the name of “we can do it too.” Architecture of the 1930s to the 1950s is a vertical decoration for a state play put on for the authorities and called “nowhere in the world is like us.” By the way, the production of the 1920s was performed by brilliant artists.

In Culture Two, two different images gradually merged: paper (or visionary) architecture and planar (or flat) planning. Culture Two always applied the expression *paper architecture* to the unrealized projects of the 1920s and used it in an extremely negative sense: “There is nothing more harmful in the work of the architect than a paper project. . . .”⁶⁶ The unrealized works of the 1920s were not limited to planning, but these planning projects did remain on paper, and a flat sheet of paper seemed very close to planar planning; therefore both acquired a negative meaning. They became interchangeable: “The habits of paper architecture forced the architect to think in two dimensions, on a level plane. Meanwhile, it is elementary that the relief of a city is one of the most important moments of its planned structure.”⁶⁷

Recognition of the horizontal nature of a sheet of paper also explains Culture Two’s guarded view of paper and documents in general. Paper is planar and therefore horizontal; consequently, it is foreign and therefore hostile. This helps to explain Stalin’s letter to the journal *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia* (Proletarian Revolution): “What documents does he need?” Stalin writes apropos of an article by A. G. Slutskii. “Who besides hopeless bureaucrats depends only on paper documents?”⁶⁸

There is one more piece of indirect evidence of the verticality of Culture Two, one that resulted in a belief in the greater value of volumetric planning compared to planar planning: In promoting architects to the rank of deputies in 1934, the culture saw to it that the leaders of *design* studios were predominantly made members of the Moscow City Council, whereas the leaders of the *planning* studios were made only members of district councils.⁶⁹ Against common sense, on the citywide level, principles of volumetric projecting became most important: The city was to be administered as if one were drawing it. On the district level a certain amount of planar projection was permissible.

Horizontality in Culture One should not be understood too literally, as something existing only in two dimensions, as the complete impossibility of vertical movement. In contrast, horizontal space in Culture One does possess height, but this height is almost completely lacking in hierarchy. Heaven in the space of this culture can be higher but not better than earth. The possibility for movement in a vertical direction did exist, but this movement was most likely to be from “heaven to earth”⁷⁰ and “down to reality.”⁷¹ Heaven in this culture seems to be too close and too accessible for one to ascend to it. This heaven is deprived of God. “We looked at heaven from without and within,” reported the “Flying Proletarian” matter-of-factly. “There are no gods, no angels, nothing is found.”⁷² “We will not be straining to get to those pathetic heights that are called heaven,”



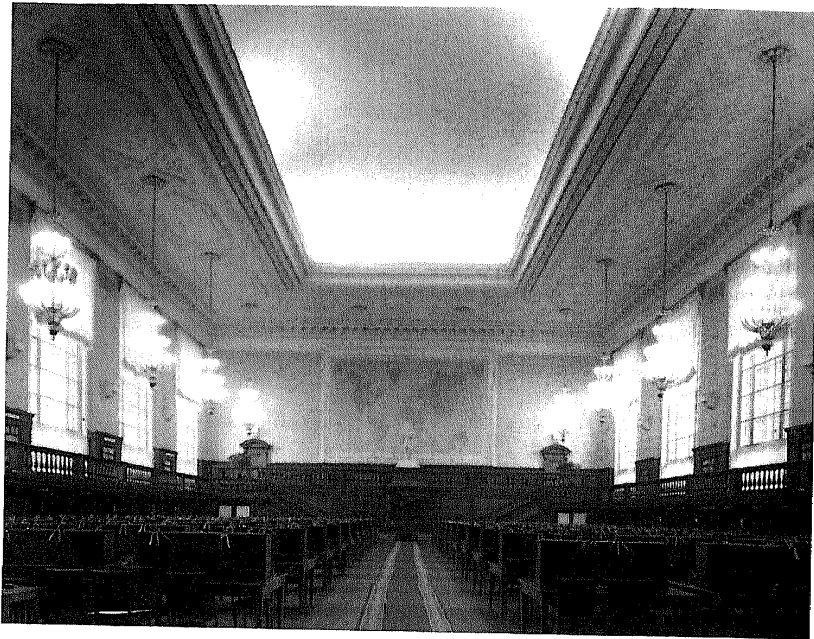
30. The motif of sky and light in the ceiling of the Grand Hall in the Palace of the Soviets by B. M. Iofan, V. A. Shchuko, and V. G. Gel'freikh, 1937. MA, coll. 8, 25697.

writes the proletarian poet A. Gastev. “Heaven is the creation of idle, reclining, lazy, and timid people. Let us dash downward.”⁷³

This glance downward created the problem, suddenly having taken on an ideological acuteness in Culture One, of *flat roofs*,⁷⁴ that is, a façade oriented on the view from above. This view from above is deprived of any mystique; it is not the glance of an *all-seeing eye*, but an ordinary and real human glance, for the space of heaven and earth form one whole, and every inhabitant of the city can potentially appear in any point of this space.

A gradual change in consciousness resulted in the cultural glance being directed higher and higher, until, finally, the whole field of vision was occupied by heaven; but this heaven was finally separated from the earth by infinity (approximately in the same way that the future is separated from the present by eternity). This heaven was impossible to attain. One could only gaze at it. Then this gaze began seeing light – for heaven in Culture Two was the symbol of an absolutely even, absolutely white, absolutely unattainable light of the highest perfection.

Project planners of the Grand Hall of the Palace of the Soviets consciously addressed the theme of heaven: “The cupola is divided by horizontal light-reflecting bands – the impression of an open, sunny sky arises” [Fig. 30].⁷⁵ A

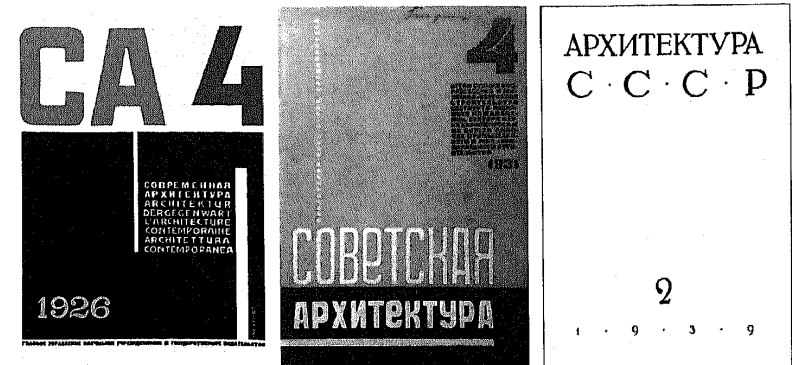


31. The motif of sky and light in the ceiling of the Lenin Library by V. A. Shchuko and V. G. Gel'freikh, 1938. MA, coll. 11, 21392.

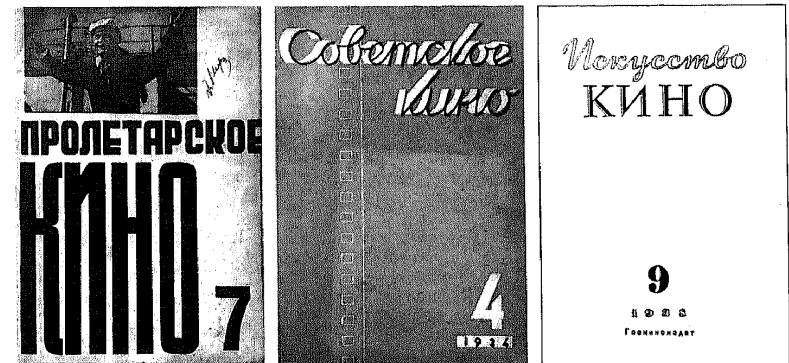
blue sky was portrayed on the ceiling of the hall of the Lenin Library [Fig. 31],⁷⁶ as well as in the numerous openings in the ceiling in the Moscow metro with frescoes by E. A. Lansere, and mosaics by A. A. Deineka, P. D. Korin, and others, that represented heaven.

The theme of heaven turns up as well in a seemingly unexpected sphere – journal cover design. The journal *Proletarskoe kino* (Proletarian Cinema) in 1931 turned into *Sovetskoe kino* (Soviet Cinema), and then, in 1936, into *Iskusstvo kino* (Art of Cinema). The journal *Sovremennaiia arkhitektura* was changed in 1931 to *Sovetskaia arkhitektura*, which, in its turn, was displaced by a journal that originally was to be called *Arkhitectura* (a name that resonated with the title *Iskusstvo kino*, for architecture is now a high art), but then the decision was made to add a geographic restriction to the name: *Arkhitectura SSSR*.⁷⁷

Let us look at these two sets of covers [Figs. 32, 33]. As the culture lifts its gaze ever higher (as in Gogol's "Vii"), the magazine name becomes increasingly verticalized (not the international *Sovremennaiia arkhitektura* but the architecture of a defined geographical space – *Arkhitectura SSSR*), while light starts to force its way into the cover design. The first covers don't have any background;



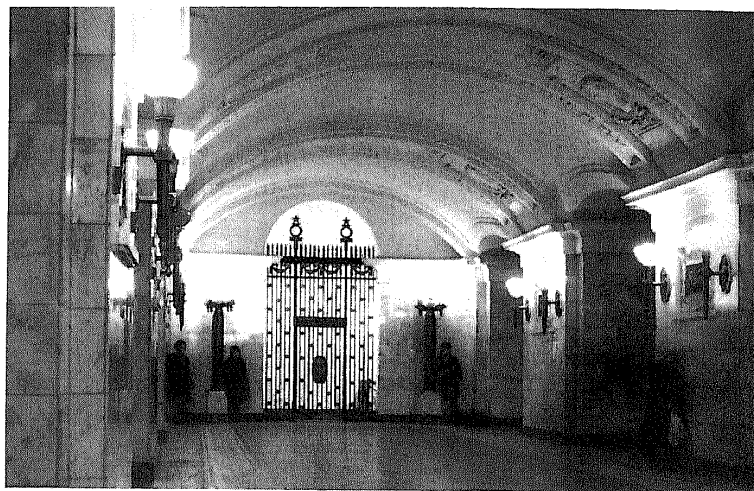
32. Architectural magazines covers, 1926–39.



33. Film magazine covers, 1926–38.

the whole field is filled with graphic elements; whereas in the later ones an even gray tone appears, and finally, in the last ones, fine lines for the letters dissolve into the absolute white of a skylike background.

Two different understandings of vertical movement become visible if we compare the metro stations created by the two cultures. The above-ground pavilion for the Krasnye Vorota (Red Gates) station was given to Nikolai Ladovskii after I. A. Fomin "wasn't up to the task." Created in 1934, Ladovskii's pavilion (actually his last work) is a precise expression of descending movement. The "funnel" leads below, under the earth, and this movement below is completely real; the inclined tunnel unites two homogeneous spaces, the earthly and the subterranean [see Fig. 29]. This path can be completed by anyone.



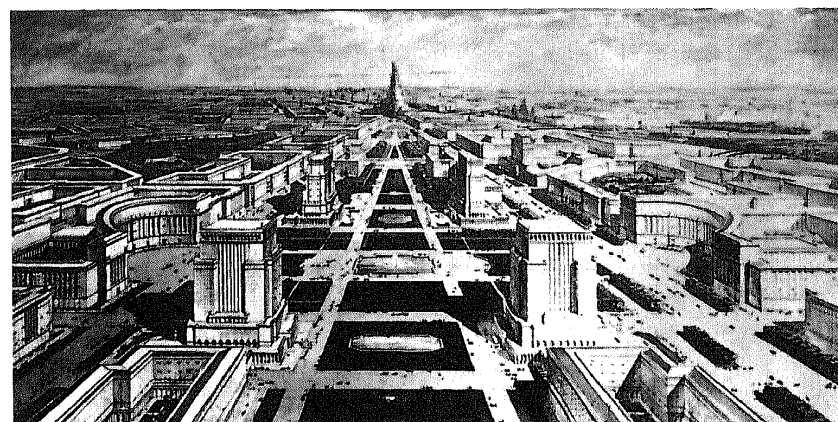
34. L. M. Poliakov, the underground hall of Kaluzhskaya (later Otkriabr'skaya) metro station, 1949. Photo: Vladimir Paperny, 1979.

In the station Kaluzhskaya (later Otkriabr'skaya) by the architect L. Poliakov, built in 1949, at the end of the subterranean vestibule there is a magical representation of a blue sky. In this way, movement from the subterranean depths upward is stated. However, the path upward is endless, and a real, earthly person has no chance of completing this journey. It is not even worth trying – therefore, the path to heaven is barred by wrought-iron gates that are always locked [Fig. 34].

Flat roofs, which Culture One defended so passionately, were turned by Culture Two simply into flat roofs, that is, one more type of covering, technically justified in some events. Culture Two accepted all the arguments of Culture One about the technical efficacy of flat roofs and began building them but removed all of their ideological content. *Arkhitektura SSSR* placed drawings of flat roofs in a section entitled “The Project Planner’s Reference Book” on its last pages,⁷⁸ and not in a discussion-oriented section as previously. How the roof appears from above became all the same to the culture – the view from above, to which it was oriented, implied a completely different scale, in the presence of which variations of roof construction – flat or gabled – were indistinguishable.

The two parallel rays of the Avenue of the Palace of the Soviets, divided by a distance of half a mile, were designed for this new scale and this new view [Fig. 35]. The same holds true for all the remaining projects created by Culture Two for the reconstruction of streets and squares.

Although flights over Moscow were forbidden in those years, only fliers would have been able to see these planning solutions. We should not forget,



35. The Second Architectural Planning Studio, Avenue of the Palace of the Soviets, 1936. MA, coll. 11, 1596.

however, that the *Letatins* and the “Flying Proletarian”’s of Culture One were differentiated from the fliers of Culture Two to the same degree that the grass snake differs from the falcon in Maksim Gorky’s “Song about the Falcon.”⁷⁹ These lone aviators were the very supermen who assumed the tortuous burden of movement and thereby freeing others of the responsibility. It is they who were represented in the majority of the architectural renderings of Culture Two in the form of small planes in the sky. Practically all the films and songs of the 1930s were dedicated to them, and one of the most popular lyrics of those years was from their point of view: “I can see everything from above, keep that in mind!”

In the 1950s, the verticality of the culture began to disintegrate. The most significant horizontal event of that era was the Moscow Festival of Youth and Students (1957). Strictly speaking, an enthusiasm for a youthful horizontality had arisen somewhat earlier. In 1951, the “Hymn of the Democratic Youth of the World,” with lyrics by L. Oshanin, began being played on the radio:

In different lands and countries,
And on the ocean-seas,
Everyone who’s young,
Give us your hands.⁸⁰

With the festival in 1957, however, the possibility suddenly arose to see in person and even to touch visitors who had arrived from beyond the ocean or seas. I even think that the emergence, immediately after the festival, of *fartsovshchiks* (illegal traders with foreigners) was a phenomenon not so much eco-

nomic as cultural: They were motivated less by the desire to get rich through the exchange of foreign goods than by the desire to handle them.

The very idea of a youth-oriented event could not have existed in Culture Two. This culture would rather emphasize the absence of age. In 1941, a special issue of *Arkhitektura SSSR* dedicated to young architects opened by asserting that there were no differences between youth and the elderly: "Where are those elderly, who from time immemorial, clutching at life, prevented the young, progressive generation from taking their place? Where is that eternal rotation at which these very young people, with the advance of age, hindered the movement of the next generation? Soviet reality destroyed that seemingly inevitable order. The ideals of all ages are the same. Everyone has the same goal."⁸¹ If Culture Two did single out some ages, then it was most likely the elder and the infant. Think of the numerous pictures and photographs portraying Stalin holding a baby girl. A cult of wise old men and infants (together with the simultaneous assertion of identical ideals at all ages) was perhaps borrowed by Culture Two from the Christian tradition.⁸²

Culture One, on the other hand, asserted a cult of youth. As David Burliuk wrote in 1918:

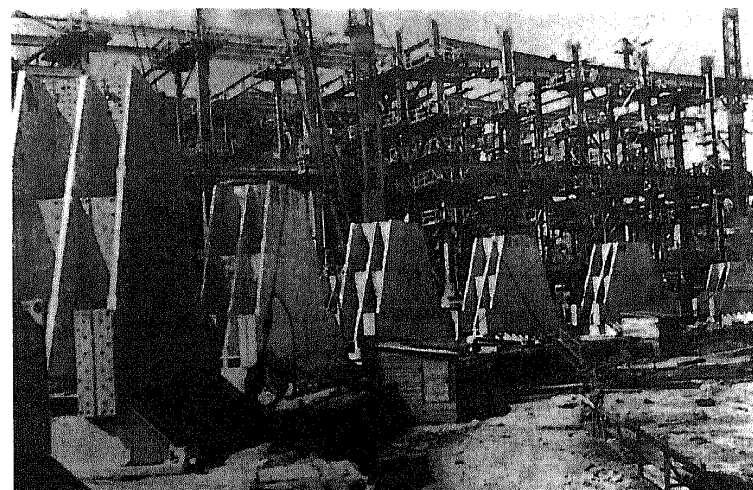
Everyone's young, young, young,
A devilish hunger in the stomach.⁸³

Therefore, the Moscow festival in 1957 was an event resounding not only with Culture One's enthusiasm for horizontality but also with an enthusiasm for youth. In those years, in literature the problem of "fathers and sons," vehemently discussed in the 1860s, became relevant again. On Gorky Street the café Youth opened. Barbers mastered a haircut called *molodezhnaia* (youthful). In the Union of Soviet Artists a Youth Division was created.

"Youthfulness" in the 1960s in a certain sense assumed the function of the "proletarian" in the 1920s. The horizontality of the formula "everyone who is young, give us your hands" is reasonably close to the horizontality of the formula "workers of the world unite" (although this last one was still around in the 1960s).

The fullest embodiment of the verticality of Culture Two was the Palace of the Soviets building which, although it was not built before the culture had run its course (and, as we shall see later, it could not have been built before the end), nevertheless was continuously being designed and constructed [Fig. 36]. The disintegration of verticality can be seen in the way that the tallest building in the world, the highest point of the highest perfection, in the 1960s was turned into a pit of the swimming pool [Fig. 37].

☆ ☆ ☆



36. The Palace of the Soviets under construction, 1939. N. Atarov, *Dvoretz sovetov* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1940), 80-1.

The roots of this dialectic of the horizontal-vertical penetrate the depths of Russian culture. The verticality or the horizontality of thought must not be associated with one or another prevailing ideology – paganism, Christianity, or Marxism. The thought of any of these can be (in different periods) vertical or horizontal. Clear signs of verticality, for example, are manifested in the idea of a national church as it appeared at the end of the sixteenth century. At this time there was a final blending of church and state ideologies and of the idea of a singular, genuinely orthodox church and the Third Rome: "At the same time, the Russian church proclaimed its right to independence from the Constantinople patriarchy, and the Russian Tsar took the place, in terms of the church, of the Byzantine emperor, having become its representative and head."⁸⁴

A negative relationship to Catholicism (to *Latinism*) sharply intensified in Russian history during the phases of the crystallization of culture and especially because of the horizontal nature of Catholicism – that is, its disregard for state boundaries. When the papal representative tried to convince Ivan the Terrible to follow the Byzantine example and accept the Uniate Church, the czar answered that there were no foreign phenomena that could serve as examples for Russia, but rather the opposite:

Why are you talking about the Greeks? The Greeks for us are not the Gospel; we do not believe in the Greeks but in Christ; we received the Christian faith with the beginnings of the Christian church, when Andrew, the brother of

the apostle Peter, arrived in this country in order to travel to Rome. Therefore, we in Moscow accepted the Christian faith at the same time as you in Italy, and from that time on we have kept it inviolably.⁸⁵

The era of Peter the Great, from the perspective of the *angle of awareness*, seems rather ambivalent. The beginning of the epoch bore clearly horizontal lines. For example, Peter responded patiently to the request of French theologians to accept the Uniate Church: He asked them to compose a note about this, and he himself carried it to Moscow. Peter apparently was not responsible for the negative answer to the note.⁸⁶ In 1721, however, verticality was already dominating. The *Reglament Dukhovnoi kollegii* (Regulation of the Spiritual Collegium) essentially established the unity of church and state with an ultimate goal of controlling the population: "When the people see," said Peter in the *Reglament*, "that a church government has been established by a monarchical edict and a senate verdict, then they will become meek and will cease to hope for the aid of the clergy in mutinies."⁸⁷ Now, the population could no longer count either on the help of the clergy or even on the preservation of the secret of confession: A 1722 edict required every priest to swear to an oath that he would inform on every person who acknowledged in confession that he had thought something against the czar.⁸⁸

The first consequence of verticalization almost always is the sanctification of the state's boundaries. During the Petrine epoch, this sanctification began almost from the very start of the czar's rule: For every cosmopolitan political step of Peter we can easily find a counterbalancing event marked by severe xenophobia. In 1702, foreigners were invited to Russia and promised the freedom of religious confession;⁸⁹ but in Germany in 1704, one of these foreigners published a brochure that addressed, in particular, the torture of two Germans whose guilt consisted of having sent letters from Russia through the Polish and Danish embassies.⁹⁰ It is true that some Russians were forcibly sent abroad to study; at the same time active measures were taken against those who ran "furtively abroad."⁹¹ In 1723, foreigners were still being urged to come to Russia; but at the same time, a decree was issued not allowing into Russia clergy from Greece "who do not have charters," insofar as "among them are a great number of unbelievers."⁹²

The 1927 story by Andrei Platonov, "Epifanskii Sluices," told of an Englishman, Bertrand Perry, who had responded to the call of 1702, came to Russia, and was later executed by the czar. If Platonov had written his story three years later, he would not have needed to dip into history: This plot was repeated with the builder of Magnitogorsk, Ernst May – although the ending was a bit more fortunate in the latter case.

As the 1920s moved into the 1930s, a harsh and clear change in the angle of awareness occurred, one so harsh and so clear that it was even manifested



37. In the 1960s, the Palace of the Soviets, "the tallest structure in the world," has been replaced by a swimming pool as if turning inside out. MA, coll. 11, 25176.

in architecture. During the Petrine epoch, a battle between horizontal and vertical compositions lasted a rather long time, until, by the end of the czar's reign, the vertical had finally prevailed. Traces of this battle, a certain indefiniteness, can be traced in Petrine architecture.

The horizontal impulse forced Peter to relocate the capital from the center of the country to the northwest. If, at that time in Russia, there had existed professional architectural activity, the architecture of St. Petersburg in 1700 would have been horizontal. However, such activity did not exist then. Trezzini arrived in Russia in 1703, but in fact he wasn't really needed until after 1713. Leblond, who would later become the new capital's architect-general, arrived only in 1716. Horizontality in architecture appeared only at the end of the decade of the teens, when verticalism was already in full bloom. It is only in our time that the speed of construction is such that buildings newly erected express the ideology inherent to their culture. In the 1930s, the lag in construction constituted several years; the last constructivist buildings were completed in 1936 (e.g., the theater in Rostov-on-the-Don of V. A. Shchuko and V. G. Gel'freikh). In Peter's time, this lag sometimes amounted to a decade.

The vertical impulse of the 1710s appeared only in the demand for *artistic quality* in construction. The architecture itself remained horizontal. The city that was born out of the horizontal impulse preserved some inertia of horizontality. A spatial division of horizontal and vertical dimensions occurred – the vertical was bequeathed to Moscow, the horizontal to St. Petersburg. “From this point on,” writes Igor’ Grabar’, “all subsequent architecture was destined to develop along two parallel streams – the Moscow stream and the Petersburg stream.”⁹³

The St. Petersburg-Leningrad tradition has always been more horizontal. It is not by chance that in 1935, at the height of the struggle with horizontality, the architectural tradition of St. Petersburg became for Moscow a serious obstacle. The protocols of the meetings of the Presidium of the Organizational Committee of the Union of Soviet Architects spoke of this: “Nowhere is there such a narrow-minded grouping as in Leningrad,” said K. Alabian. “It must be destroyed.”⁹⁴ And finally, a resolution of 7 February called for suggesting to “the Leningrad branch in the near future that they attain a real and judicial liquidation of the Society of Architects-Artists.”⁹⁵ A year later, Boris Iofan spoke about the inadmissibility of transferring “Leningrad methods” into Moscow.⁹⁶

The horizontality of St. Petersburg's architecture is obvious. Its constructions have complex plans and similar, repetitive façades. The belated (from the perspective of the general cultural ideology) horizontal constructive impulse compelled Peter, in 1721, to issue a decree in which he demanded that everyone building a house should leave one side in brick, so that someone planning a neighboring house would be able to attach it to the preceding one. Instead of two walls between them, there would be only one, a common wall. This idea was motivated by thoughts of economy (just as in the decrees of the 1930s and 1940s about the standardization and industrialization of construction), “for profit in the materials,”⁹⁷ but in order to have the idea of joining different houses into a single, unending horizontal construction, the idea of “profit in materials” is insufficient; it is necessary as well to have a defined horizontality of thinking.

In the projects and constructions of Domenico Trezzini, made with the participation of Peter, there were verticals, to be precise – it suffices to recall the bell tower of the Petropavlovskii (Peter-and-Paul) Cathedral – but genuine movement upward (as we shall see in the next section) should be represented in Culture Two not simply as a vertical line but as a stepped ascent in which every step contains something absent from all of the preceding ones. This hierarchical approach is practically nonexistent in Trezzini's bell tower. The main (middle) volume of the bell tower is divided into tiers, but these are approximately equal in height and area. (Some sensation of a gradation of tiers is created by scrolls, but they seem to be attached to the volume from without, and those on the third tier were in fact added on in 1770.)⁹⁸ The vertical line, deprived of a rising stepped movement, as in the bell tower of Trezzini, exists as well in Ivan Leonidov's projects for the Lenin Institute and Narkomtiazhprom Building, and in the Ostankino Television Tower (partially burned in August 2000). These are projects of singular vertical lines, existing in a horizontally oriented design consciousness. It suffices to compare the bell tower of Trezzini with one built a bit earlier, but in Moscow – the Men'shikov Tower (Church of Saint Gabriel the Archangel) – in order to see an essentially different degree of verticality.

The enthusiasm for the horizontal was not completely absent in Moscow architecture in the beginning of the seventeenth century: It appeared in the Men'shikov (Lefortovskii) Palace (1707–8); in the Kremlin Arsenal (1702–36), where the doubled windows were born, apparently, of the very same impulse that compelled Peter to call for the splicing together of Petersburg houses; and even in the Sukharevskaiia Tower (1692–5), another vertical that is deprived of hierarchy.

All the same, stepped verticality triumphed in Moscow even during Peter's lifetime – for instance, the constructions attributed to Ivan Zarudnyi: the Church of Ivan Voin (1709–13), the Tikhvinskaia Church of the Donskoi Monastery (1713–14), or the aforementioned Men'shikov Tower (1704–7). In these buildings the vertical movement, or as Grabar' said, “the pull toward a vertical definition of space,”⁹⁹ attained almost the same force as in the Pokrov (Veil) Church in Fili (1693) and other structures of the Naryshkin baroque.

The next flight of vertical steps belongs to a different phase of hardening, to the joint creative work of Rastrelli and Czaritsa Elizabeth Petrovna – above all, the church of the Great Peterhof Palace, where the idea of five cupolas belongs, presumably, to Elizabeth, while everything else belongs to Rastrelli. Although this construction is in Petrodvorets, not Moscow, it nevertheless can be considered, as Grabar' writes, “the final chord of that rapturous song of five cupolas that was sung in Moscow for two centuries.” “Its solution,” he continues, “does not wholly repeat anything of Moscow; its five cupolas sound new, but the general spirit of it, the sacred meaning of the idea, is wholly Muscovian – a unity,

an organic merging and blending of all five cupolas rising to heaven like a single body.”¹⁰⁰

These words of the great art historian are fully applicable to the buildings of the Moscow State University on Lenin Hills. “The rapturous song of five cupolas” (four on the corners and one in the middle) also sounds new while still remaining faithful to the overall spirit.