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Facing Hitler's Pavilion: The Uses of Modernity in the Soviet Pavilion at the 1937 Paris International Exhibition

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Abstract
Overwhelming the Trocadéro's majestic esplanade, the Soviet and German pavilions faced each other in a commanding gesture across the central axis of the Paris 'Exposition des arts et des techniques dans la vie moderne' – the last French World's Expo in the twentieth century. More often than not, the two pavilions have been dismissed in architectural terms as having merely 'competed in archeological rhetoric'. In this article I argue, with a primary focus on the Soviet Pavilion, that far from displaying such reductive and unambiguous architectural qualities, each pavilion offered, in two very different ways, a complex response to the challenges of an exhibition dedicated to 'modern life'. The two instrumentalized for their own political purposes both modernity and historicism. From two radically different ideological starting points, the pavilions exploited some significant aspects of the defunct avant-gardes, while reaching out, in different degrees, for stabilizing references to classicism. Frank Lloyd Wright's unwavering admiration for the Soviet Pavilion, the main topic of this article, resonates with the astonishing discovery of white Suprematist 'Arkhitektoni' by Malevich's disciple, sculptor Nikolaj Suetin gracing the interior of the Soviet Pavilion. The legacy raises the question of thus far unsuspected survival of the architectural avant-garde deep into the years of Stalin's totalitarian terror.

Keywords
avant-garde, historicism, B. Iofan, modernism, modernity, A. Speer

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> What a pity that architecture in Soviet Russia is not as free as the man, so that the millennium might be born at once where the road is more open than anywhere else, instead of again wearisomely temporizing with the old time lag and back drag of human ignorance where culture is concerned.
>
> Frank Lloyd Wright[1]

Dominating the new Trocadéro's majestic esplanade, the Soviet and German pavilions faced each other in a commanding gesture across the central axis of the Paris 'International Exposition of the Arts and Technology in Modern Life'[2] – the last French World's Expo in the twentieth century. The Soviet pavilion's power came to its fullest expression when observed against the Eiffel Tower from the Trocadéro; the German pavilion was best seen in the context of the classicizing palace. Designed by Boris Iofan (1891–1976), an Odessa born architect of Jewish descent,

Figure 1. Night view of the Fair from the Trocadéro and the 'Pavillion de la Paix' along the 'Avenue de la Paix' axis. Behind the Eiffel Tower, the 'Pavillion de la Lumière' closes the axis.

1 F. Lloyd Wright 'Architecture and Life in the USSR', *Architectural Record*, 82, 4 (October 1937), 62.
2 'Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne'. According to the bylaws of the recently created Bureau international des expositions, if the host country chose a topic for the fair, the latter was classified as an 'International' rather than a 'Universal' Exposition. In that case the host country was expected to finance the larger part of the foreign pavilions' cost.

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Figure 2. View of the Fair from the Eiffel Tower. The German pavilion on the right blends with the new Trocadéro. Behind the Trocadéro the 'Colonne de la Paix' with a semi-circular 'Pavillon de la Paix' opening the axis.

the Soviet pavilion emulated the Eiffel Tower's bold vertical ascent; the German pavilion, by Albert Speer (1905–81), inscribed itself provocatively in the new, modernized classicist landscape of Paris.[3] The two designers were, respectively, Stalin and Hitler's favorite architects. Representing opposing totalitarian systems, the pavilions formed a triumphal gate framing the Eiffel Tower in compliance with the site-plan the Exhibition's chief architect Jacques Gréber (1882–1962)[4] conceived in 1934. Jacques Carlu (1890–1976), the chief architect of Paris, had suggested the profile of the 'gate' in a 1935 winning competition entry.[5] The new style of the Trocadéro (after the 1937 remodeling of Jean-Antoine-Gabriel Davioud's

3 The new style of the Trocadéro (after the 1937 remodeling of Jean-Antoine-Gabriel Davioud's 1878 palace) echoed the French 'rappel à l'ordre' of the 1930s – a stripped classicism Albert Speer likened to his own 'National Socialist architecture'.

4 Gréber worked for a number of years in the United States and Canada where he designed Ottawa's master plan. He travelled to Berlin in 1936 to give several talks as Speer's official guest. He so admired Speer's work that, after inviting himself to Nuremberg, he included the projects of Hitler's architect in the courses he offered at the Paris Institut d'Urbanisme. During the occupation, Gréber repeated this trip with a group of artists that included Maurice de Vlaminck and Jean Cocteau. The journey was organized by Woldemar Johannes Brinkmann, Speer's interior designer for the Paris Pavilion. See L. Bertrand-Dorléac, *Histoire de l'art: 1940–1944* (Paris 1987), 95.

5 Jacques Carlu (1890–1976), a 1919 Prix de Rome, was entrusted with the reconstruction of the Palace in collaboration with Boileau and Azéma, amidst new massive protests because it had not been attributed through a competition.

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1878 palace) echoed the French '*rappel à l'ordre*' of the 1930s – a stripped classicism Albert Speer likened to his own 'National Socialist architecture'.

In an accomplished 'Beaux-Arts' gesture, the fair's chief architect balanced two concavely curved pavilions – Rob Mallet-Stevens' Palais de la Lumière and Albert Laprade's Pavillion de la Paix – set at each extremity of the master axis named for the occasion 'Avenue de la Paix'. This plan thus underscored the dominant themes of the fair: light and peace. While the Trocadéro and the Eiffel Tower ('Arts and Technology') became focal points of the composition, the river Seine formed its minor transverse axis, with the German and Soviet pavilions at each end.[6]

The juxtaposition of Soviet and German pavilions has been looked at in other scholarly works, which have, at times, superficially dismissed them as having merely 'competed in archeological rhetoric'.[7] The historic circumstances of the 1937 Paris fair are well documented as well; and so is the significance of the visual confrontation between National Socialism and Stalinism.[8] The ambition of the present article is to transcend the extant scholarship by locating the aesthetic and political discourse within a more elaborate framework, with an emphasis on the survival of Constructivism, and even Suprematism deep into Stalin's cultural revolution most visible in the 1937 Paris pavilion itself. This aspect of the

6 The Exhibition papers at the Archives de France revealed no traces showing how this location was allocated to Germany and the Soviet Union. But considering that Gréber's early plans indicate explicitly such location and footprints for two future pavilions framing the main axis, and that Germany obtained this prestigious location even though it decided to participate just months prior to the inauguration of the Expo, it is likely that Gréber had the two countries in mind for that location since the early stages of the planning process. Archives de France, Exposition Internationale de 1937 à Paris, F12-12442.

7 See for example, L. Benevolo, *The History of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA 1971).

8 See among others, S. Wilson, 'The Soviet Pavilion in Paris' in C. Bown, M. and B. Taylor (eds), *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in a One-Party State, 1917–1992,* (Manchester, 1993). This is the first consideration of the pavilion since Jean-Louis Cohen's article that appeared in the 1987 catalogue on the occasion of the 50th anniversary exhibition of the Paris 1937 Fair *Ciquatenaire* (Paris musées). However, it does not add any significant new insights. Her argument is partially flawed due to misidentification. She treats the 1933 advanced revision of Iofan's Palace of the Soviets as this was his relatively modernist 1931 competition entry. Ades, D. et al., *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators 1930–45* (1995) compares the German and Soviet pavilions. K. Fiss *The Grand Illusion: The Third Reich, the Paris Exposition, and the Cultural Seduction of France* (Chicago, IL 2009), discusses the Nazi pavilion at the 1937 Fair within a broader cultural history of French/German ambiguous rapports at the eve of the Second World War; while the German pavilion is thoroughly researched, more for its political significance than its architecture, some mistakes occur in her description of the Soviet pavilion and in the comparisons she makes of the two pavilions. S. Žižek discusses through provocative paradoxes the nature of totalitarianism in the last decade, arguing for the need to differentiate Stalinism and Nazism in essential ways, too often ignored in facile comparisons. See 'The Two Totalitarianisms', in *London Review of Books*, vol. 27 No. 6, 17 March 2005. See also his recent book *In Defense of Lost Causes* (London/New York 2009; B. Groïs, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Esthetic, Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton, NJ 1992), makes a questionable attempt at reading the avant-garde in a totalitarian key. *Berlin/Moskau-Berlin/Moskva: Theater, Literatur, Musik, Film,* (Munich/New York 1995); D. Ades, et al., *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators 1930–45* (1995). S. Heller, *Iron fists: Branding the 20th-century Totalitarian State* (London/New York 2008); P. Ory, *La belle Illusion: Culture et politique sous le signe du Front populaite, 1935–38* (Paris 1995); *Exposition Internationale, Paris 1937: Cinquantenaire* (Paris 1987); R. Etlin *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich* (Chicago, IL 2002).

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architectural production has received no scholarly consideration thus far.[9] The article also looks retrospectively to earlier similar Soviet representations, while discussing simultaneously highly relevant shifts in aesthetic expressions that took place in the Soviet Union in the first decade of Stalin's established power. In so doing, the article captures the diversity of architectural and other debates of the decade, while bringing new arguments in rejecting the blanket assessments of socialist realism as a mere historicist visual expression, clearly stated in the pavilion's own contradictions.

Much observed in the press, the perceived 'confrontation' of the Russian and German pavilions embodied emblematically the European democracies' secret hopes that war with Hitler might be averted if these two totalitarian giants could be pitted against each other.[10] Given this symbiotic relationship of the two pavilions, it is not surprising that most contemporary accounts rarely spoke about one pavilion without bringing the other into focus. Each pavilion offered in its own way a complex response to the challenges of an exhibition dedicated to 'the arts and technology in *modern life'* [emphasis added]. From radically different ideological origins, they instrumentalized for their own political purposes both historicism and modernity.[11] The two pavilions exploited significant aspects of modernity, while using in different degrees stabilizing classical forms.[12]

Though both of the Paris pavilions were composed of a pedestal and a statue, each belonged to disparate architectural territories. Because of its static character, Germany's magnified the dynamic, 'futuristic' energy of the Soviet's. The intentional contrast between them appeared most vividly at night. Then, the Soviet pavilion became a sweeping, brisk horizontal, with a sudden upward surge.[13]

9 The exception is D. Udovčki-Selb, 'Between Modernism and Socialist Realism: Soviet Architectural Culture under Stalin's Revolution from Above', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 68, 4, December 2009, and *The Evolution of Soviet Architecture in the First Decade of Stalin's "Perestroika"* (Trondheim Studies on East European Cultures & Societies), 2009.

10 After 23 August 1939, when the Soviet Union concluded a 'Treaty of non-aggression' with Germany, the French communists explained the pact as a reaction to that Western 'peace strategy'.

11 The concept of Modernity of course continues to be debated, and interpreted (in architecture as well as in other fields) with respect to its relationship to history and historicism. For the purposes of this article, 'modernity' is the broad cultural term indicating a period or place having been marked by the results of 'modernization' which in turn includes the dominance of post-Cartesian and especially post-Kantian rationalism, industrialization, urbanization and an overarching presumption of progress. 'Modernity' is thus as much an ideological construct as it is a set of phenomena. 'Modernism' describes more or less organized movements within modernity related in this article primarily to the avant-garde of the 1920s in Europe and the Soviet Union.

12 For the concept combining an explicit embrace of modern technology with nostalgic appeals to idealized forms of history and tradition, as evident in the rise of National Socialism, see J. Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, (New York 1984). See also W. Curtis' characterization of the totalitarian critique of the modern movement that consisted of supplying a more familiar rhetorical device for monumentalizing architectural and urban forms in ways that made them more widely accessible to the 'masses'. See also, G. Emilio, *The Struggle for Modernity: Nationalism, Futurism and Fascism* (Santa Barbara, CA 2003).

13 As Jean-Louis Cohen noted about the pavilion's energetic profile, '*L'élan se communique au pavillon tout entier, et là est sans doute la véritable raison du succès.*.' J-L Cohen 'URSS: Boris Iofan', *Exposition de 1937: Cinquantenaire*, (Paris: IFA/Paris Musées), 1987, 30.

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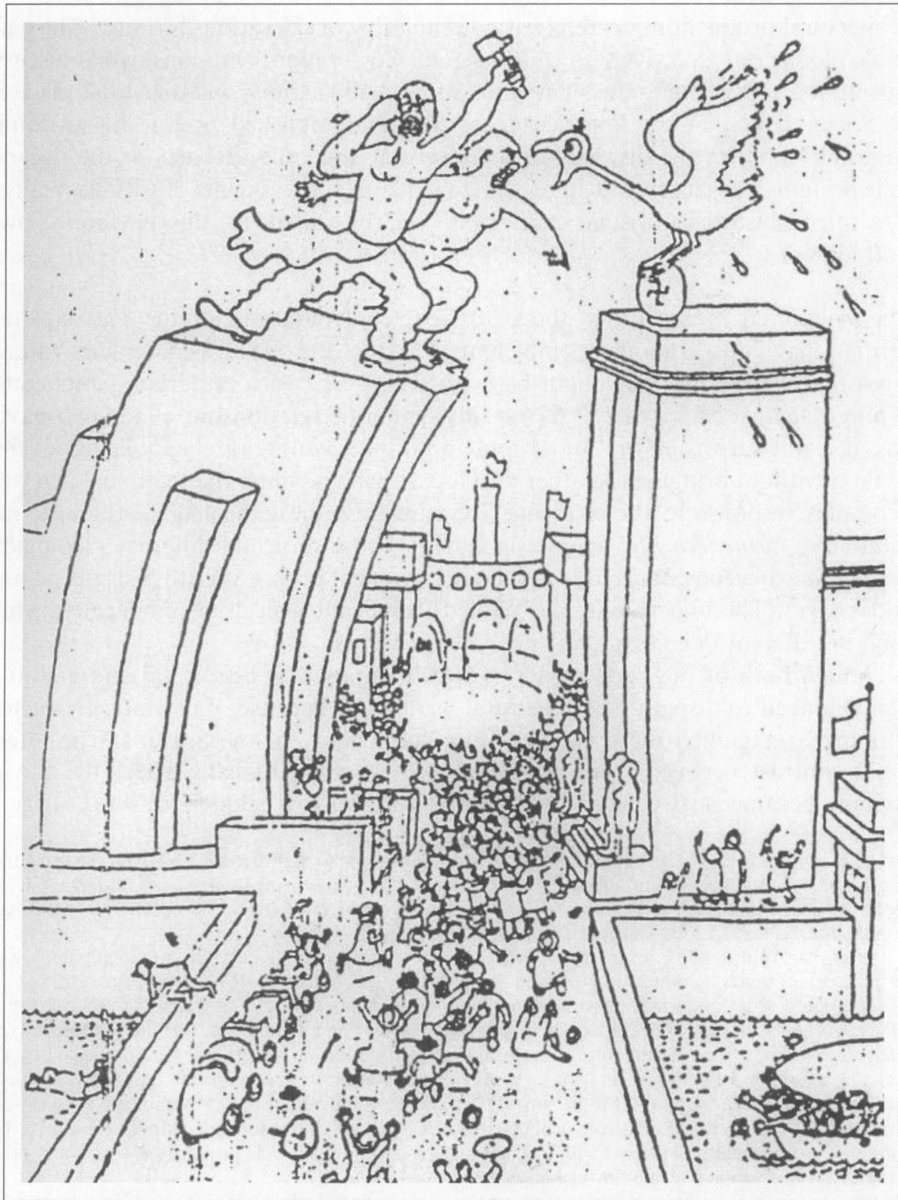

Figure 3. Cartoon from the journal *Candide*, 15 July 1937.

In contrast, the German pavilion stood as a motionless stud. Its horizontal body remaining in darkness, the pavilion's immobility was further consolidated as a deeply rooted, solitary pillar. As for its maker, Speer readily accepted Gréber's request to harmonize his pavilion with the Trocadéro's new building by reducing its

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Figure 4. Soviet and German pavilions at night.

size by one fifth. How well he succeeded is evident in the panoramic photographs of the two buildings (See Fig. 2).

Paradoxically, correspondences between the two pavilions appear inverted, when invisible structural components are considered. Like the remodeled Trocadéro, whose old, undistinguished structure was now encased in an expanded box of marble, the Soviet pavilion used marble to cover a conventional structure. Conversely, Siemens and Krupp's highly innovative steel structure of the German pavilion, as *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* reported, could be paralleled to the Eiffel Tower's engineering sophistication. The only part of the Soviet pavilion exhibiting an original technical achievement was Paris-educated Vera Muhina's monumental six-story statue.[14] Attached to an elegant system of riveted and welded 48-ton steel frame, the structural engineer P.N. L'vov devised at the Moscow Central Institute of Mechanics and Metal Works, the stainless steel shell, a major pride of the new Soviet industry, was used here for the first time in art. The envelope, weighing eight tons, was hammered to a wooden form and then secured to the main frame with an elaborate welding process. Stakhanovite ('shock') workers put the whole together

14 Vera I. Muhina (1889–1953), a former student of Antoine Bourdelle (1861–1929) at the academy of the Grande Chaumière in 1912, was a follower of the Twentieth Century Paris School.

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in only 13 days.[15] Unlike the Germans who brought their own crews, the Soviets built their Pavilion exclusively with French workers.

These significant distinctions between the two pavilions were not lost on contemporaries. Echoing a widespread view, Perret asserted that Iofan's work, 'this large pedestal which carries a giant statue, is the work of a veritable artist,' unlike the German pavilion 'which carries nothing, and whose destination is unknown'.[16] The destination was known, of course, despite German efforts to present theirs as a harbinger of peace. But Perret's remark reflected a general self-deception among the major powers of Europe, particularly of France as the host of the Fair.[17] The critic of *Arhitektura SSSR* seemed closest to the mark: he called Speer's pavilion a 'stocky pedestal for a monument to Bismarck'.[18]

While this reading of hostile pavilions facing each other across the 'Avenue de la Paix' axis became immediately a defining, iconic view of the 1937 Fair, the reception of the pavilions in their respective countries amounted to the exact opposite. In images they published of their pavilions, German and Soviet journals censored with razorblade precision the pavilion of the other, not without creating a disturbing sense of imbalance.

As the German Pavilion's designer wrote in his memoirs, he allegedly came across the Soviet project accidentally, choosing a rigid tower to counter the energy of the Soviet's frontal, sweeping 'aggression'.[19] Iofan's decision to enclose his pavilion in marble came after he learned the Germans would use expensive Bavarian granite.[20] Another contest was over whose pavilion would be taller. At one point, the Germans demanded that their pavilion be moved two meters closer to Stalin's, thus reinforcing the notorious 'clash' between the two. In response, the Soviets requested that their own Pavilion be moved forward by the same length. This near comic competition was virtually endless. Initially, the French government had offered a subsidy of 750,000 Francs for each pavilion, about 25 per cent more than that allotted other pavilions, national and foreign. As costs soared with the weight of the two enormous structures to be built over a tunnel, France agreed to increase their subsidy by 500,000 francs which was the total sum French pavilions

15 E. Labbé, *Rapport Général*, volume 10, Sections étrangères: 'Urss', 209.

16 Quoted in Jean-Louis Cohen: 'URSS: Boris Iofan' in *Exposition Internatioanale: Paris, 1937, Cinquantenaire*, (Paris: IFA/Paris Musées) 1987, p. 188.

17 Less than a year later, believing self-deceptively they would pacify Hitler, England and France signed with him the infamous 'Munich Pact', thus opening the door to Germany's occupation of Czechoslovakia and then Poland.

18 P. Balter, 'Na Meždunarodnoj Vystavke', *Arhitektura SSSR*, 11, November, 1937, 39–43.

19 Karen Fiss has rather plausibly demonstrated that Speer's claim was inaccurate. She found in Speer's personal archives at Koblenz a blueprint of the Soviet Pavilion he was not supposed to have. K. Fiss, *Grand Illusion: The Third Reich, the Paris Exposition, and the Cultural Seduction of France*, (Chicago, IL 2009), 60. My hypothesis is that Speer was probably alerted to the Soviet pavilion by Jacques Gréber who needed to show him the Soviet project in order to discuss proportional adjustments he demanded from him. That, conversely, could mean that he already had a project before seeing Iofan's work, and that his claim to have chosen a stocky, inert Pavilion in order to counter the Soviet's forward surge is just an *a posteriori* justification that could even belie a secret appreciation of his Soviet colleagues' success.

20 *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, Numéro spécial, August, 1937.

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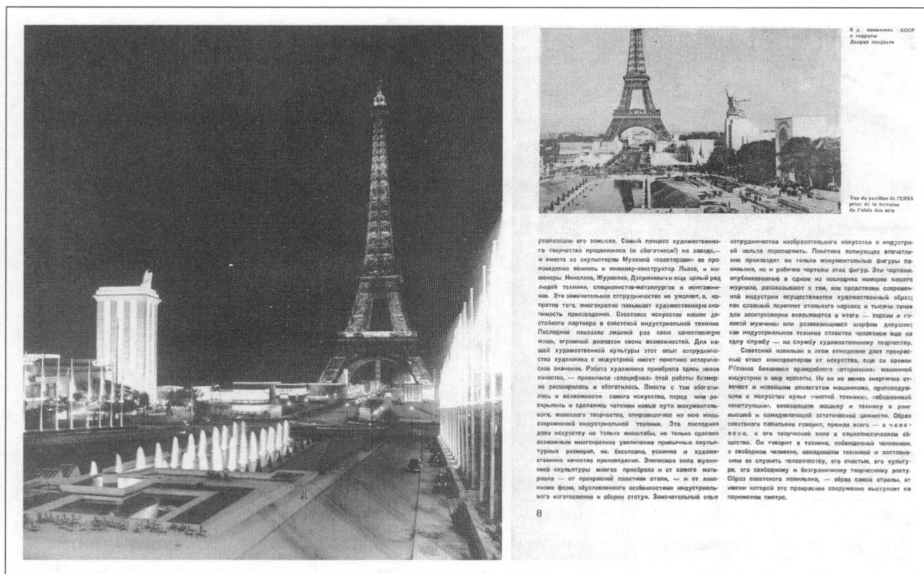

Figure 5. A view of the Fair as published in German press and view of the Fair as published in *Arhitektura SSSR*, July 1937.

such as George-Henri Pingusson's 'Union des Artistes Modernes' (UAM) or Le Corbusier's 'Temps Nouveaux,' were to receive from the Exhibition administration. Immediately, the Germans requested the same amount. As the work proceeded, however, the Soviets realized they would need yet another increase. At this point, Edmond Labbé, the Exhibition's Commissioner General, refused to comply, assuming Speer would request the same hike in this endless cycle of demands.[21] Invisible to the fair's visitors, these chess moves of two dystopias emulating each other were, ironically emblematic of the soon to start secret diplomacy, leading to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-aggression act two years later.

Lit like most official buildings and installations of the Nazi government, the German pavilion at night acquired the appearance of a giant luminescent topaz, its gilded mosaics lining the folds between pillars and reflecting concealed light sources. Echoing the new Trocadéro, the pavilion applied some of the Trocadéro's basic lighting techniques, used for the first time in a world fair. However, unlike the Trocadéro whose façades were softly illuminated by concealed light sources, the light Zeiss-Ikon designed for the Germans illuminated only the building's interstices, creating the ghostly appearance of a photo-negative. Even by day, the Trocadéro distanced itself from the blunt rigidity of the Nazi pavilion's lines by modulating its forms with a degree of baroque softness in its concave surfaces and curved masses. While the Trocadéro embraced the viewers, the German pavilion kept them at bay. In a medieval

21 Archives de France F12 12447 and F12 12442.

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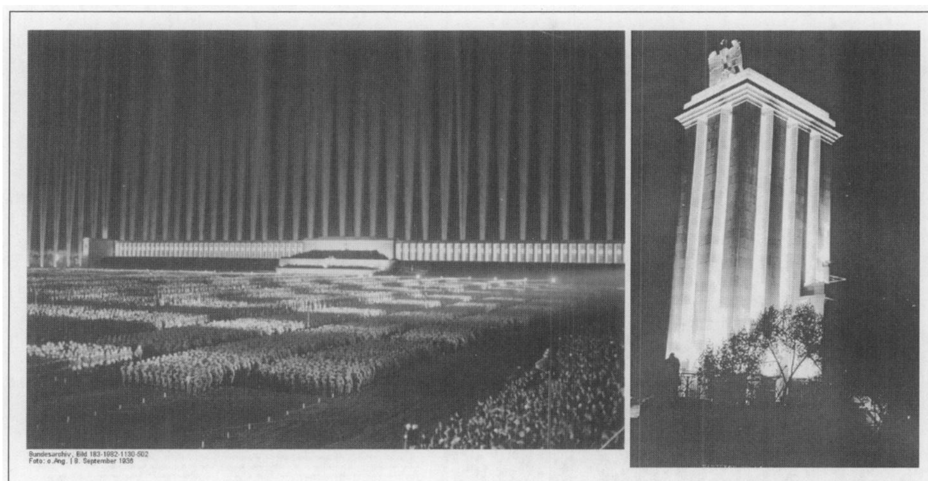

Figure 6. The German pavilion at night with its 'negative' pilasters acting as the searchlights at the Nuremberg pageantries. The German pavilion at night where indirect light illuminates only the gilded interstices between the pilasters, creating the effect of a photonegative. The 'Cathedral of Light' at Nazi Party pageantries in Nuremberg, 1937.

spirit, foreign to the Palace's classicist modernity, the use of mosaics exacerbated the pavilion's photonegative quality: reflected light transformed the swastika-patterned ceramics of the folds into the apparent sources of its light. As contemporaries noted, 'at night, bowls and sources of indirect light lit the tower so that, with its mosaics, the tower appeared to be a chiseled crystal and a source of light in its own right.'[22] Virtually dematerializing the massive building's interstices, the diffused, indirect lighting reinforced the translucency of its 'negative' pilasters, adding to the nightly electric phantasmagoria to which the entire fair was dedicated in the name of modernity, Shhmidt-Ehmen's nine-meter tall eagle and swastika on top of the 54-meter building was also gilded. With its crystalline appearance, Speer's pavilion seemed a ghostly simulation of the Bauhaus ideal: 'democratic transparency.' Think, for example, of Werkbund glass-constructions, such as Gropius' 1911 'Fagus factory' with its large expanses of glass, or the two glass towers of his 'Model Factory' at the 1914 Werkbund exhibition in Cologne, where Bruno Taut's 'Glass Pavilion' took center stage, or finally, the 1925 Bauhaus main building in Dessau.

Speer's (and Wekbund's) crystalline light-play was no accident. References to the crystal architecture found in German medieval mythology reappeared throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century: notably in Wagner's operas as a symbol of celestial Jerusalem; in the poetry of Paul Scheerbart – Bruno Taut's source of inspiration; in German cinematography preceding the Nazi takeover, like Leni Riefenstahl's 'Das Blau Licht' after a legend on Monte Cristallo; in Feininger's

22 W. Rittich, *Architektur und Bauplastik der Gegenwart* (Berlin), 1938. It is interesting to compare this effect with the Eiffel Tower's golden night illumination (dating from 1937), which turns its steel into a glass-like material.

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'Glass Cathedral of the Future,' etched on the cover of the 1919 Bauhaus Manifesto – or, for that matter, Taut's own crystal temples forming his City Crowns.

With its huge 'negative' pilasters, which recalled the vertical search lights of the Nuremberg Licht Dom (See Fig. 6); the pavilion's gloomy skylight, which evoked Speer's design for Hitler's chancellery; and with the display of unlikely glass saxophones under the room's 40 chandeliers, the pavilion brimmed with artifice. Even the enormous Zeppelin engine – a majestic specimen of industrial sophistication, raised on a pedestal under the chandeliers – gave the ambiguous appearance of a gigantic black crystal set in a quasi-Biedermeier salon, indeed 'Hitler's Salon'.[23] It seems that this alliance of retro-provincialism with state-of the-art technology formed the core of Nazi aesthetic choices or to quote Joachim Fest, the marriage of 'Biedermeier and Modernity'.[24] Even a piano, the indispensable symbol of bourgeois achievement, reigned among incongruously misplaced objects and knick-knack window casings lining the walls with boredom. The sepulchral light in the windowless pavilion only reinforced the tomb-like aspect of the exterior – an oversized sarcophagus and a tombstone.[25]

An almost complete absence of photography as an art of display struck the contemporary observer already accustomed to flashy photomontages, not alien to the Nazis. Instead, immense 'naturalistic' oil paintings matching the retro style of the chandeliers that cast their vacillating light over a futuristic Mercedes-Benz racing car, represented on the walls industrial magnates like Leuna Werke. The Mercedes was branded with a swastika. Only small photographs surrounded the car, in addition to those that illustrated the Zeiss factory. Besides sleek machinery, precision instruments, electric and industrial innovations, the pavilion housed several displays of television circuits, including a video-telephone for visitors' use. All these cutting-edge phenomena – Germany's visible 'will to modernity' – showed under dim light and stood buried in stone. Embodying paradoxes and anachronisms, the pavilion seemed suspended between conservatism and modernity, reality and its simulation.

In tune with the official German speeches at the fair, Hitler's pavilion proclaimed its dedication to peace. Yet its very foundations rested on the premise of war. Reduced in size to one-fifth of its original scale, the pavilion still concealed 3000 tons of steel behind pink granite veneer of equal weight. This steel structure was cast at the Herman Goering Werke, a military installation. The pavilion's floor was covered with a synthetic, red rubber coat, referring, I contend, to the Nazi flag. A continuous band of hardwood parquet separated the red rubber surface from the walls, reinforcing the appearance of a flag. A first version of the pavilion,

23 The name 'Hitler's Salon' was coined by Karen Fiss. See K.A. Fiss 'In Hitler's Salon: The German Pavilion at the 1937 Paris Exposition Internationale' in R.A. Etlin (ed.), *Art, Culture and Media under the Third Reich* (Chicago, IL 2002), 316ff.

24 J. Fest, *Hitler* (New York 1974).

25 Closer to fading Bauhaus memories, of course was, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's own contribution to the Paris Exhibition, the stand for the precision glass instruments company Zeiss-Ikon, which he designed with Lilly Reich for the German section of the International Pavilion. See *Lilly Reich: Designer and Architect*, exhibition catalogue (New York 1996). See also *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, 6 June 1937.

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Figure 7. Interior view of the German pavilion with oil paintings depicting large German factories.

sufficiently advanced to be sent to Paris as an official blueprint, seems to confirm my hypothesis. This design featured a pavilion split at two thirds of its length to accommodate an intermediary porch. The floor, like the Reich's flag, was branded with an enormous swastika in its center.

From the exterior to the interior, from wallpapers to mosaics, wrought iron balustrades to the Mercedes racing car, the entire pavilion was full to the top with swastika-based designs – the only, if abstracted, reference to the regime's ideology. In sharp contrast with the Soviet's ubiquitous images of Stalin, virtually no portrait of Hitler was to be found in the German pavilion, a shrewd propaganda move by omission.

Steel and rubber, symbols of modern industry, stood for two essential economic achievements of Hitler's war preparation. All the materials used in the pavilion's construction, totaling 10,000 tons, were brought from Germany. French firms built only the foundations. The Germans brought the entire crew of 1000 workers from Germany, prefiguring, as it were, the imminent German invasion. The decision to bring workers from Germany to a large extent resulted from the country's late acceptance to take part in the fair, but also to project the image of the Nazi regime's high efficiency, in contrast to the 'disorderly' appearances of a Front

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Populaire democracy gripped with social unrest.[26] They ultimately succeeded. The only three pavilions ready for the opening of the exhibition were the Fascist Italian, the Stalinist Soviet and the Nazi German.[27]

Germany had traditionally depended on Sweden and Norway for its steel, since domestic iron ore was too poor to be economically viable. In the prospect of war, Germany could no longer risk this dependence. As private industrial magnates had no interest in producing unprofitable steel, Hitler ordered Goering to create such an industry through state intervention. The same order was given for rubber, another vital war material almost absent in German manufacture. So, in the largest factory of its kind in the world, I.G. Farben, the Nazi regime started producing at greater costs a more resistant, synthetic rubber, the Buna, out of domestic coal. Eventually, the entire German war machine was fed from this plant's three franchises, one of which was moved to Oświecim, renamed Auschwitz as soon as Poland was occupied in 1939. Removed far enough eastward, Allied air forces could not reach the factory. I.G. Farben also produced a component of, and held the patent for, the pesticide 'Zyklon B' which was ultimately used in the Nazi extermination campaigns.[28]

Whereas the properties of the two materials – Buna rubber for the floor, and Goering steel for the structure – were tested on the pavilion, the pink granite and the scintillating chandeliers, which brought the pavilion a gold medal, masked them successfully. Granite and crystal blurred the origin and scope of the two materials in the same way the oil paintings on the walls, representing industrial corporations such as Krupp, gave these industries the allure of benign domesticity. Indeed, the implications of the pavilion's black steel and red rubber went unnoticed: the public perceived only the building's ' Olympian serenity'.[29] The silence of the German pavilion's classicism managed to conceal the rumbling of Germany's modern war industry.[30]

26 On November 1936, the Embassy of the Reich requested from French authorities a derogation to the recent law of the Front Populaire government reducing the working time to 40 hours per week, in order to accelerate the completion of the pavilion. The government responded negatively invoking international law and the danger of unrests that such derogation might provoke among French workers. It suggested instead that a second shift of French workers be added. The Germans refused alleging that instructions on each steel element were marked in German. Archives de France. F60-967.

27 This was a shared goal of the three main European dictatorships. It did not pass unnoticed by the public that the only pavilions completed in time for the opening of the Fair were those of Italy, the USSR and Germany.

28 Ironically, it was a Jewish chemist, Fritz Haber, the winner of a 1919 German Nobel Prize, who invented that poison gas under the name of 'Zyklon A' It was supposed to be used as a weapon in the First World War. 'I.G. Farben rattrapé par son passé' in *Le Figaro* (Paris), 26–7 Aug. 2000. The article reports on the reparation demands requested from I.G. Farben, and August 2000 rallies in Germany demanding its dismantling.

29 *L'Illustration*, Numéro Spécial, 'Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne,' n° 4917 29 May 1937.

30 The discussion of the German pavilion is primarily based on extant papers at the Archives de France in Paris. My attempts, with joint permission from Speer's son and daughter, Albert Speer Jr. and Hilde Schram, to locate the archives of the pavilion in Berlin, Munich and Koblenz, did not yield much more beyond what I had found in France. The building was brought back to Germany in its entirety by a train of some 20 coaches, but much was obviously engulfed by the war that it pretended to deny.

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Still imbued with memories of a receding avant-garde art, the Soviet leadership strove to simulate modernity as a means of ideological self-legitimating.[31] Classicizing overtones, such as rigorous axiality and bi-polar symmetry, appeared primarily as a concession to an increasingly conservative society – '... an autocratic Russian ghost[s] (..) clothed in socialist garb'.[32] In constant competition with the motionless German pavilion, the dynamic Soviet building Iofan designed in his Kremlin office prompted an analogous, yet opposing design strategy. Frank Lloyd Wright greatly admired the Soviet pavilion for its 'low, extended and suitable base for the dramatically realistic sculpture it carries.' He regarded Iofan's pavilion as '... the most dramatic and successful exhibition building at the Paris fair... Here, on the whole, is a master architect's conception that walks away with the Paris fair.'[33] Comparing the other winning entries in the Soviet competition for the pavilion, including Mel'nikov's and Moisej Ginzburg's, a quick look at the projects suffices to conclude that Iofan's pavilion was undeniably the best.[34]

Like the German pavilion, Iofan's monument used light to reinforce its own myth. While Speer erected a frozen 'Licht Dom' that referred, in an Epimethean gesture, to the depth of a mystical folklore, Iofan conjured visions of a Promethean future standing for humanity's age-long quest for redemptive self-realization.

At night, the pavilion turned into a comet dragging a tail of brilliant streaks with its glittery ribbon windows 'sliding' along multiple receding cornices (see Fig. 4). Swirling lights projected from the Eiffel Tower were reflected off its polished Samarkand marble. Formed as a giant pedestal, the pavilion carried a forward thrusting couple: a 'Male factory Worker' ('Rabotnik') and a 'Female Collective-Farm Worker' ('Kolhoznitsa'). The silhouette of the shiny steel sculpture loosely espoused in profile the form of a five-pointed star of the Third International that

31 For a discussion of the resistance and survival of modernism under Stalin, see D. Udovčki-Selb, 'Between Modernism and Socialist Realism: Soviet Architectural Culture under Stalin's Revolution from Above', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 68, 4, December 2009, and *The Evolution of Soviet Architecture in the First Decade of Stalin's "Perestroika"* (Trondheim Studies on East European Cultures & Societies), 2009.

32 S. Buck-Morss 'The Second Time as Farce... Hisorical Pragmatics and the Ultimately Present,' in C. Douzinas and S. Žižek (eds), *The Idea of Communism*, (London/New York 2010) 68. At the other end of the 'Socialist Realist' panoply of architectural retrogression was, for example, the 1937 'Frunze' Military Academy rest home in the Black Sea resort of Soči, rendered in an Italianate style. While displaying plaster-and-wire copies of ancient Greek statues, on official photographs the spa boasted a state of the art American automobile. Only three years earlier, another military rest home, 'Vorošilov', also in Soči, still displayed a frank, streamlined modern style, even though already serving exclusively the military upper echelons.

33 F. Lloyd Wright, 'Architecture and Life in the USSR', *Architectural Record*, (October 1937), 61.

34 In a conversation I had with Mel'nikov's son Viktor, who was 16 in 1925, and had gone to Paris with his father, he told me that his father was so convinced he would win the competition that he returned home after delivering his project shouting: 'Prepare the luggage! We are going to Paris'. I asked him how his father reacted to Iofan's victory. To my disbelief, his reply to a stranger was: 'You know, Jews got it all in those days', and after a brief pause, he added 'Actually it's the same today'.Visit June 2004.

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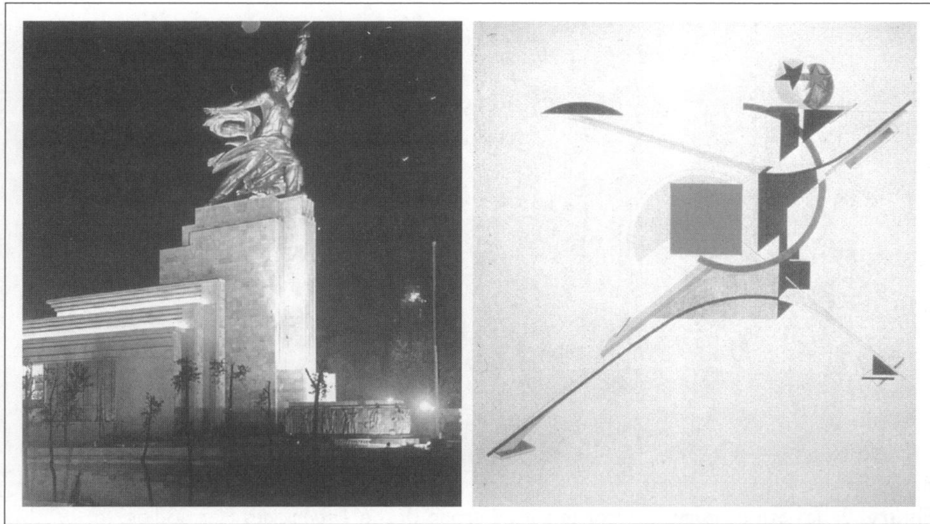

Figure 8. Muhina's statue seen in profile and El Lissitzky, detail of a new 1923 stage design for Malevich's 1913 'Victory over the Sun'. (See colour version in the plate section.)

preceded the Soviet symbol of the hammer and sickle.[35] More to the point, Muhina's sculptural composition recalled, now in a 'realistic' mode, El Lissitzky's 1920 new design for Malevich's cubo-futurist 'Victory over the Sun,' first played in 1913. Lissitzky's figure also featured a star, or rather two of them, a red and a black, apparently acknowledging the role of the Anarchists in the Russian Revolution in the ongoing Civil War.[36] The reference to Lissitzky's work of the early 1920s clearly pointed to the persistence of the avant-garde's spirit in the imaginaries of Soviet artists, even when a switch in leadership occurred from the artistic avant-garde to a 'Party vanguard'. Started in 1928 under Stalin's 'Revolution from above', the vision of a mythical working class vanguard sponsored by the party and sanctioned by the state was gradually replacing the authentic artistic avant-garde.

35 The USSR was founded as a state only in December 1922, one year after the end of the Civil War. Until then, Soviet Russia used the Third International's five-pointed star as its own symbol (Proletarian victory on five continents), while adopting the nineteenth century 'Internationale' as its hymn. The five-pointed star appeared on the Third International's publication edited by Grigorij Zinoviev. After 1922, the brochure abandoned what was until then a conventional graphic design for its cover, replacing it with a striking multicolor constructivist design with an abstracted hammer and sickle superimposed on the star with a large Roman number III.

36 Lissitzky's reference to the Anarchists, including their ultimate doom, reappears in his 1922 story, told with PROUNs, *Dva Kvadrata* (the story of Two Squares – the squares of Suprematism). The black and red squares arrive from outer space, and crash on planet earth. The Red Square survives and supersedes the Black – a possible reference to the 1921 Bolshevik repression of the Kornstadt Anarchist rebellion. The book is dedicated 'To all, to all the children' of the world, recalling the famous message launched from the battleship Aurora to the world upon the victory of the October Revolution. The telegraphed message started with the words 'To all, to all,' announcing to the nations of the world the advent of the first state lead by the Proletariat.

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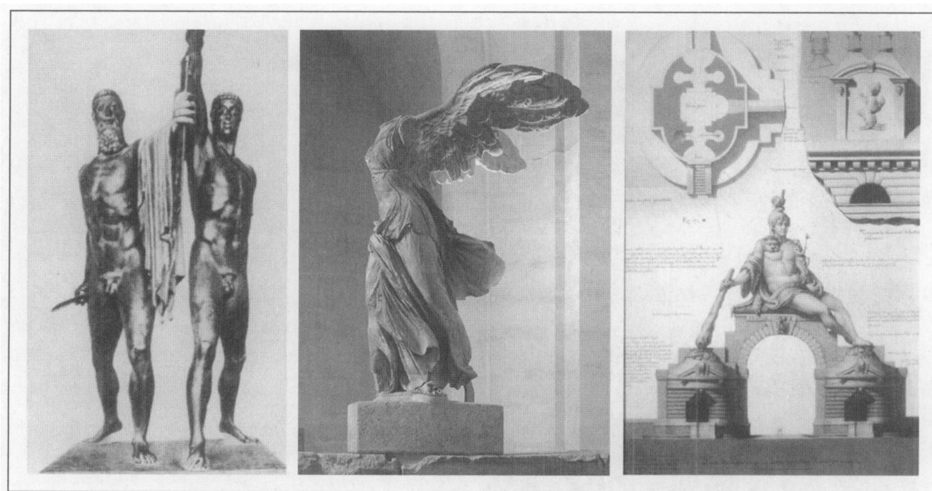

Figure 9. (a) 5th century BC bronze paired group of the *Tyrannicides* Harmodios. (b) Aristogeiton, Roman copy, Naples Museum. Second century BC 'Victory of Samothrace', at the Louvre. (c) Jean-Jacques Lequeu, ' Parisis' from his never published 'Architecture Civile.' Drawings at the Bibliothèque Nationale, circa 1793. (See colour version in the plate section.)

In keeping with the Bolshevik self-perceived roots in ancient Greek democracy[37] and the French Enlightenment, Muhina and Iofan admitted a wide span of sources: from Doric – such as the fifth-century BC, bronze paired group of the *Tyrannicides* Harmodios and Aristogeiton – to Hellenistic – such as the Louvre's second century Victory of Samothrace. Architecture topped with a giant sculpture could be found in the work of the French 'revolutionary' Neoclassicist of the late eighteenth century, Jean-Jacques Lequeu (1757–1826). The gigantism of the pavilion and of its statue evoked equally the spirit of Louis-Etienne Boullée's architecture (1728–99), another 'revolutionary' French neo-classicist of the period, also featuring the predilection of the time for an '*architecture ensevelie*'. When Wright describes the Soviet pavilion as being a 'low, extended and suitable base...' he actually perceives its 'sunken' aspect, which reinforces the image Iofan desired of a boat moving towards Communism led by its 'Victory' as were the boats in ancient Greece. Even though Boullé's projects were conceived before the French Revolution, they were routinely associated with it in Russia.[38] Immediately after 1917, refer-

37 At the end of his life in 1933, Lunacharsky explained that classicism, far from being counter-revolutionary, could effectively symbolize the aspirations of the proletariat, owing to its direct link to ancient Greece and its democratic ideals. Lunacharsky's 1933 speech to the party members of the Moscow Union of Architects. At the time, he was preparing a book on the subject. Moscow, Sojuz Sovet. Arhitektorov, Partgruppa Fond 674, Op. 2 Ed. Hr. 43.

38 See D. Arkin, *Arhitektura Epohi Velikoj Francuzkoj Revolucii*, Akademija Arhitekturi, 1–2 (Moscow) 1934, 8–18. Also by Arkin 'Gabriel' i Ledoux', *Problemy Arhitektury: Sbornik Materialolov*, 1 (Moscow) 1936, pp. 117–40.

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ences to both Boullée's '*architecture ensevelie*'[39] and themes from Claude-Nicholas Ledoux's (1736–1806), or else Lequeu's '*architecture parlante*' could be found in the work of Russian Modernists.[40]

Translating the official claims of the new vanguard, the sculpture was also meant to represent men and women's joint struggle for emancipation, with peasants added to industrial workers in contradiction to Marx's concept of a proletarian revolution. Replacing the black and red stars with a hammer and sickle, the couple was supposed to embody the promise of history as predicated by the tenets of Lenin's dialectical materialism. This Leninist theme was now interpreted in the key of Stalin's new social, political and economic order, he referred to as 'Perestroika'.

The credo Bolsheviks derived from a form of historic determinism inexistent in Marx, led ultimately (in its Stalinian version 'according to which universal reason is objectivised [sic] in the guise of inexorable laws of historical progress...' [41]) to a metaphysical notion of the party as the 'vanguard of the proletariat' – a vanguard historically destined to open the road for the final and irrevocable liberation of humanity, to which Muhina's sculpture pointed with passion.

It is, therefore, no accident that at night, the visual means Iofan and Muhina chose to represent such promise evoked strikingly well the messianic call of the allegorical shooting star that led the Kings to the Savior's cradle. Having gained control over history, Muhina's 'star' pointed to the path humanity was called to take. As a whole, the Soviet pavilion reverted to the representation of an eschatological drive to salvation ingrained in the Communist project. In more than one way, indeed, the monument resonated with the tradition of Russian icons as 'images of holy figures seen in the light of heaven in which the people believed so as to make the visible world around them credible'.[42] Firmly set on its sweeping, futuristic 'iconostasis,' Muhina's idealized couple – the metaphor of a modern idea transplanted into a pre-modern condition – echoed Dostoyevsky's claim that ' God took seeds from other worlds and sowed them on this world' to clarify its higher, prophetic meaning. Newly established icons, which obliterated alienation 'through the contact with other mysterious worlds', mediated the discrepancy between reality and ideal.[43] The mystery of these abstract worlds provided crude reality with means of redemption.

39 When Wright describes the Soviet pavilion as being a 'low, extended and suitable base...' he actually perceives the 'sunken' quality of it, which reinforces the image Iofa desired of a boat moving towards Communism lead by its 'Victory' akin to those of ancient Greece.

40 The best example of this was the work of Ilija Golosov. His 1919 competition entry for a crematorium with its 'sunken' Doric columns was a case in point. Identical buried pillars reappeared more fittingly in his competition entry for a Moscow underground subway station (Fig. 36). His most daring modernist work, the Moscow 1928 Zuev Worker's Club (Fig. 37a/b) showed clear signs of classicist resonances, as it evoked both topological features of the Palazzo Venezia in Rome with its corner tower and, most of all, mannerist references to Jacopo Sansovino's Venetian Zecca and Ledoux's derivative orders of the House of the Director at Chaux.

41 S. Žižek, 'The Two Totalitarianisms' in *London Review of Books*, vol. 27 No. 6, 17 March 2005.

42 J. Berger, *Art and Revolution: Ernst Neizvestny and the Role of the Artist in the USSR* (New York) 1969, 21.

43 Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Bothers Karamazov: a Novel in Four Parts with an Epilogue* (San Francisco) 1990.

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Amidst a prolonged global economic crises and increasing threats of war as Mussolini's Blue Division fought side by side with Franco's rebels, and Hitler bombed Guernica, the promise placed in the hands of Muhina's sculpture did not escape the public's attention. Sensing its mythical power, even the critic of the conservative art magazine *Beaux-Arts* saw in the couple 'an answer to the many painful questions that assail, at this hour, all those who live and suffer.'[44] Finally, like the allegorical couple, the authors of the pavilion themselves were a man and a woman advocating equality of the two in Soviet society and beyond.

When Stalin secured his position as the absolute leader and interpreter of the Revolution, Marxism and history alike, this former seminarian translated Marxian thought into catechism-like precepts. These included his *Digest Marxism in Six Points*, imbued with scholastic nominalism, or *The Short Course of the History of the All-Union 'Communist Party (of the Bolsheviks)'*, which turned history into a canonical breviary[45]

Stalin's grip on power was strengthened, if not completely assured, at the Sixteenth Party Congress in 1930. By 1931, the most powerful Politburo member after Stalin, Lazar Kaganovič, was organizing the direct involvement of the party in artistic and intellectual activities. His preference for historicism contradicted Stalin's interest in American mainstream modernism so visible in the Soviet pavilion. The triangulation: Stalin, Kaganovič and the Constructivists, resulted in a virtual tug of war about the future of architecture that lasted to the end of the decade. The Soviet pavilion in Paris expressed all three.[46]

Soon after the revolution, in 1919 Vladimir Tatlin designed his tower for the 'Third International' , with its energetic asymmetry and its implied state-of-the-art engineering, to embody the 'free ascension of humanity.' By 1937, strict axial balance consistent with the new Party Line replaced that vision. Clad in expensive porphyry, not the wood and glass Mel'nikov employed in his materially modest but formally complex 1925 Paris Pavilion, Iofan's project represented a world-view that left little room for choice and doubt. Iofan replaced with linear certainty

44 *Beaux-Arts*, Paris, July 16, 1937.

45 In *The First Circle*, Solzhenitsin recalls Stalin's emotional speech over the radio after Nazi Germany attacked the USSR in June 1941. Instead of addressing his countrymen as 'Citizens' or 'Comrades', Stalin called them 'Brothers and Sisters' using an expression saturated with Christian references. He allegedly also called on the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church to bless the departing troops. In response, the Church also financed a number of tanks to help the defense of Moscow, some of which are still exhibited in a monastery of the Russian capital.

46 In a secret 1934 meeting with the party members of the Union of Archiects, Kaganovič admonished the party members of the Union not to attack the Constructivists too harshly in public because they were still building all over the country. Moscow, RGALI, SSA, Fond 674 op.-4, ed. hr. This plurality of approaches to architectural modernity allowed the Constructivists to hold their ground throughout the decade, and even openly defend their movement at the 1937 first congress of the Union of Architects founded in 1932 with the intention of silencing them. See also Danilo Udovicki 'Les Constructivistes face à Staline: Sanatoriums méconnus des Annèes Trente de Moscou au Caucase' in *Les Hôpitaux Modernes: survie et restauration* (Paris 2008).

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Tatlin's 'suspended,' incomplete tower spiraling towards a redemptive future[47]. The explosion of the new world arising out of a shattered past, implied in Mel'nikov's work, was also gone. Both Tatlin and Mel'nikov used Lyssitzky's notion of the diagonal as a legitimate means of energizing form. In 1937, the underlying formal premise of Tatlin' and Mel'nikov's structures was redirected into a theatrical posture.

Tatlin's Tower was about technical virtuosity; Mel'nikov's tectonically innovative pavilion worked from a strict economy of means. Both rested on a radical formal breakthrough. The material and technical difference between Iofan's and Mel'nikov's pavilions reflected the transformation of the Soviet regime within the 12 years that separated them. In Mel'nikov's words, quoted in the official brochure, his pavilion featured 'no elegant furniture or luxury fabrics. Visitors [could] find neither furs nor diamonds, but those able to sense the forward surge of the creative classes [were] able to appreciate the studied simplicity and the austere style of the worker's club [Rodčenko] and the rural reading room [*izba-čital'nja*]. Here everything is new, everything reflects the burgeoning civilization of the two classes now leading Russia toward the reign of labor and liberty.' [48] By contrast, the 'skin' of Iofan's building, the rare Samarkand marble and Black Sea porphyry, enveloped a structure of no technical distinction. While the Moscow competition program stipulated that '. . .the architecture of the pavilion [should] express the conquests of the most advanced building techniques,' [49] Iofan's project, which, like the German pavilion, received a gold medal, expressed none. The Soviet pavilion was not rooted in the aesthetic of neoclassicism, as the German pavilion was. But, unlike the German's, the Soviet pavilion failed to engage 'technical modernity' as the competition program stipulated. The luster of the marble was to make up for the banality of structure. Red, volcanic porphyry at the pavilion's entrance with allegorical figures on its propylea by the former cubo-futurist Iosif Čajkov (1888–1979), celebrated the Stalinist 'triumph of Socialism'.[50]

Stalin proclaimed his strikingly democratic Constitution at the very peak of his 'Moscow trials' that followed the catastrophic famine provoked by forced collectivization. The Constitution's passages quoted on the pavilion's walls were surrounded by 10,000 gems inlaid on a 20m^2 ceramic map of the Soviet Union[51] – an excess that recalled the gilded mosaics of the German pavilion. The Constitution bore little resemblance to the reality of labor camps that were the instruments of simulated economic success. If in 1937 the Soviet pavilion evoked any reality, it was

47 Besides the numerous interpretations of the spiral, the spiral movement of our galaxy towards the star Vega, as theorized at the time, might have referred to a deeper sense of Tatlin's monument.

48 Quoted in P. Kogan, *Iz Istorii Sovetskogo Iskustva*, (Moscow 1974) 53.

49 *Program* for the project of the Soviet Pavilion, Moscow, quoted by I. Rjazancev, *Isskustvo sovetskogo vystavočnogo ansamnblja, 1917–1970*, (Moscow 1976) 99–100.

50 Čajkov's bas-reliefs were recently retrieved in Paris. I did not yet have the opportunity to consult them. My research in the Shchusev Museum of Architecture (MuAr) yielded only Iofan's early sketches for his propylea.

51 *Livre d'or*, special official edition of the exhibition's commissariat, Paris 1938, 37.

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the reality of a once spontaneous social movement diverted in favor of a petrified establishment – indeed the incarnation of 'a thwarted attempt at liberation.'[52]

Nevertheless, there was more to Iofan's work than compliance. Beyond its theatrical posture, Iofan's pavilion harbored a radical departure from conventional Socialist Realism as it has come to be known. The competition program required that the pavilion be 'an exhibition object in itself, and an expression of the thriving of socialist art and culture, of the technique and creativity of the masses, freed by the socialist system. The Pavilion must show, through a clear and joyful architecture, the system's creativity, and its capacity to mediate an unprecedented development of mass culture, as well as of all the creative potential of Man.'[53] Iofan claimed that he solved the architectural problem as he 'first, [gave] the Pavilion as sober form as possible; and second, avoided any commercial aspect that usually pervades exhibition stands'. Addressing one of the fair's preferred themes, the so called 'union of the arts', in vogue in the 1930s both in France and the USSR, Iofan attempted to develop 'a composition based on a synthesis of architecture and sculpture'. Ribbon windows under flexible cornices and the assemblage of volumes engaged in a dynamic tension of multiple, sliding and overlapping prismatic masses recalled Wright's early style. Loosely resembling a hand carrying a flaming torch, Iofan's structure struck the viewer as a skillful compression of multiple architectural experiments – Futurism and Cubism, Neoplasticism and, most surprisingly, Malevich's Suprematism itself. What is more, Iofan's structure possessed intriguing analogies with Rationalist architecture, detectable, for example, in Ladovskij's 1925 competition entry for Paris, second prize in the Moscow competition. As an example of '*architecture parlante*', Iofan's work reflected in a 'realistic' rendition, the psychological principles of Soviet Rationalist architectural experiments.[54] As the official program required, Iofan aimed at '[giving] the Soviet Pavilion an especially solemn and commemorative character, speaking to the immense achievements of the Soviet regime'.

The comparison of Mel'nikov's dynamic staircase travelling obliquely through his 1925 pavilion, with Iofan's monumental stairs splitting his pavilion rigidly in two symmetrical halves, is revealing of the stylistic and ideological realignment that had taken place. And yet, not only did the exterior of Iofan's design encompass some modernist quests – albeit set in an axial framework of symmetrically composed marble slabs – but the interior too was decorated with Nikolaj Suetin's abstract Suprematist sculptures – Suprematism, belonging to one of the most radical avant-garde movements, harked back to Kazimir Mal'evich's *Arhitektony* of the early 1920s. These precast forms, that went unnoticed thus far, mirrored each other along an ascending axis, clearly indicating the place Suprematism still held in the work of Soviet artists. In other words, if some forms of modernism were still

52 Žižek, 'The Two Totalitarianisms'.
53 *Program*, 99.
54 Soviet Rationalists advocated a form of psychophysical aesthetic (experimental psychology; psychophysiology) to explain the mechanisms of perception of architectural space and form.

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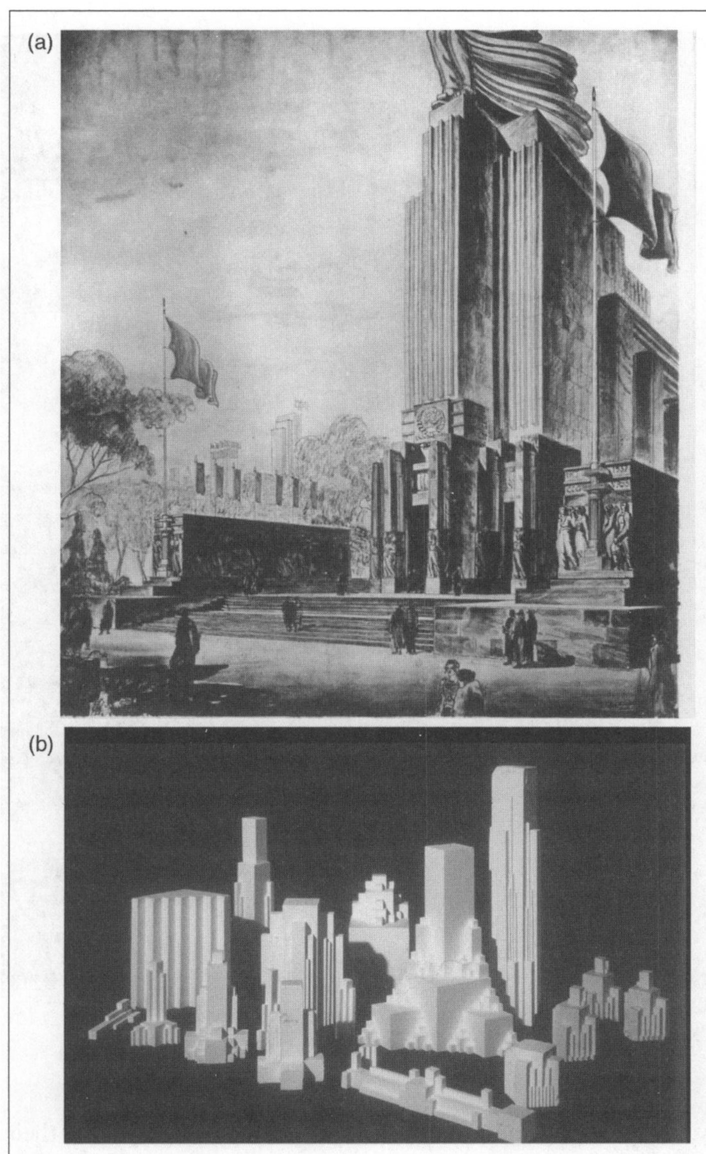

Figure 10. (a) Boris Iofan. Early sketches for the Soviet Pavilion in Paris. (b) Kazimir Mal'evich: 'Arhitektoni', early 1920s.

alive in the architecture of the 1930s, Suetin's Suprematist sculptures indicate that this was true to a certain degree for avant-garde art as well. The monument left no one indifferent, not even Flank Lloyd Wright.

Wright's testimony about his conversations with Iofan and other Soviet architects whom he called 'the liberated ones' confirms this limited awareness, and, more

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Figure 11. Konstantin Mel'nikov: Soviet pavilion in Paris, 1925.

importantly, a degree of genuine enthusiasm and faith still pervading their activity.[55] Paradoxically, belief in modernism and belief in the party still overlapped. Iofan, one of the first prize winners (ex equo with an American project) in 1931 of the Palace of the Soviets international competition, was most likely sincere when he assured Wright that modern architecture would return to the Soviet Union in some 10 years, once the masses were ready to embrace it. Wright's very presence in Moscow in 1937, not to mention Kaganovič's thus far unknown efforts to bring the Modern Movement's

55 We should not overlook, of course, a significant degree of simulated enthusiasm (especially in front of foreigners) that Nadežda Madelštam refers to in her memoirs which unlike André Gide, Wright was not able to detect.

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Figure 12. The GAZ, central monumental stairs, framed by Nikolaj Suetin's Suprematist sculptures.

CIAM leaders to meet in the Soviet capital,[56] and Iofan's personal invitation during a Paris visit exended to Le Corbusier to join the Moscow 1937 Congress, were there to prove it.[57] Upon his return from Moscow, Wright wrote:

> The attitude of the Russian architects is sincere and, I am sure, far in advance of the social consciousness of our own American architects. I do not know one architect among us who looks so far in the future, able to smile indulgently at his own present effort, perspective given by a fine sense of humor in his idealism.' [58]

Wright registered in particular Karo Alabjan's humorous, self-deprecating remarks regarding his Red Army Theater designed under the sponsorship of the first ranking Politburo member Kaganovič. Showing the theater to Wright, Alabjan pointed out its continuous peristyle of some 40 pseudo classical columns.

56 Behind closed doors, he exhorted the members of the architectural union's communist cell to bring the Congrès Internationaux d'architecture Moderne (CIAM) to Moscow as late as 1935. RGALI, All-Union of Soviet Architects files; correspondence between Kaganovič and Alabjan, the party secretary of the All-Union Association of Soviet Architects RGALI, Fond 674, Sekretariat Orgomiteta SSA and Partgruppa Op. 1 : 1917-1937 and FLC, H2-5-266, 270.

57 FLC H2-9-373, 3–4.

58 F. Lloyd Wright 'Architecture and Life in the USSR' in *Architectural Record*, Oct. 1937, 60.

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'I thought I would put all the columns I would have to use the rest of my life into this building, and be done with it,' he chuckled.[59]

A direct reference to the machine aesthetics that some early Russian modernists shared with Stalin's concept of modernity, was a magnificent black, sinuous Ford limousine, branded as GAZ, and produced under license since 1927 in the city of Nižnij Novgorod[60] (See Fig. 12). A similar modern automobile was strategically photographed in front of avant-garde and Stalinist architectural works considered important. Another graced the Italianate 'Socialist Realist' Frunze Military Academy rest home, opened the same year.

Placed on a monumental pedestal, a landing halfway up the ceremonial stairs, the GAZ reflected the Soviet eagerness to catch up with America's technology, and in particular to conquer the redemptive mythology of the assembly line that created the legend of the United States industry. The Ford also referred indirectly to Lenin's fascination with Taylorism, associated to the allegory of the 'Electric Man' that Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893–1930) celebrated in his poems and Gustav Klucis (1895–1938) represented in his posters as a Lenin carrying high-tension posts in a drive to electrify the country. Ford's success with his Model 'T' produced on an assembly line and the broad possibilities it represented for the advancement of the 'masses' resonated deeply within the Leninist movement. Diego Rivera's depiction of Henry Ford's automobile production in a mural at the Detroit Museum of the Fine Arts speaks of the fascination with Ford that was characteristic of communists worldwide. In the Soviet Union, taking center stage on the mural, Ford and his Model 'T' were regarded as testaments to the promises of democratization through industrial production and the emancipation from rural backwardness.

The concept of the 'Electric Man,' with harmonious, rational and efficient movements – the ultimate urbanized human being – also informed El Lyssitzky's 'New Man' featured in the 1921 version of the 'Victory over the Sun.' The Italian Futurists shared the theme of the 'Electric Man.' Both Russians and Italians celebrated being liberated from historically and biologically imposed constraints, and therefore in command of a substantial amount of liberated leisure time for human edification. The theme was also underlying Dziga

59 At the VHUTEMAS, Alabjan was a student of Ladovskij. Upon graduation in 1929, he produced modernist work in Armenia. In 1937, at the time of Wright's visit, he was chief editor of the four year old Stalinist *Arhitektura SSSR*, and was elected the previous year to the Supreme Soviet, along with Viktor Vesnin. He was also the *éminence grise* of the official All-Union of Soviet Architects.

60 Gosudarstvennij Avtozavod (GAZ). I am grateful to Professor Lewis H. Siegelbaum for this information. During the First Five-Year Plan (1928–32) the Soviets greatly expanded their endeavor to build American cars. Albert Kahn, Ford's principal architect, was commissioned to design and build numerous automobile factories and related manufacturing plants throughout the Soviet Union, constructing some 535 facilities before closing down his Moscow office in 1932. It is significant that the car branded as GAZ was not a Packard Stalin himself used – the famous ZIS (Zavody Imeni Stalina – Stalin Factories), even though by 1939 he had ordered automobile factories to produce imitations of Packards, i.e., Soviet made chassis and Packard copies for the shell. Conversation with the curator of the ZIL Museum of the Automobile, Moscow, Summer 1998.

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Vertov's films, in particular his *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929).[61] Lenin's claim that 'Communism is the power of the Soviets plus electrification,' with the 'soviets' representing direct democracy and 'electricity' a society of abundance, was the bedrock of abiding Soviet aspirations in the first decade after the October revolution.

Since the end of the eighteenth century, the mystique of electricity held a central place in the collective consciousness of the public in industrializing societies. It was expressed in the wake of the Enlightenment in the works of architects such as in Louis-Etienne Boullée's (1728–99) architecture. At the Paris Fair, where light played a central role, electricity was celebrated as 'La Fée Electricité' in the monumental murals of Raoul Dufy (1877–1953) painted for Rob Mallet-Stevens's (1886–1945) 'Electricity Pavilion' that closed the Fair's grand axis.[62] Laprade's 'Peace Column', erected on the plaza behind the Trocadéro and with the Eiffel Tower across from it at the opposite end of the Fair's Avenue de la Paix, coupled industrial progress and peace. In his ten-volume *Rapport*, the exhibition's *Comissaire Général* Edmond Labbé, a former government inspector of technical education, still called electricity a 'supra natural force.' Electricity was equally part of Giuseppe Terragni's 'Realismo Magico' as translated into his 'Casa Elettrica,' or even better, in his pervasively 'electrified' *Casa del Fascio* in Como.

The allegory of the Electric Man was closely related to the mystique of the automobile. The GAZ, placed as an art object halfway up the pavilion's monumental staircase, basked in a surrealist glow. Granted that all kinds of incongruous objects are inevitably the lot of world's exposition pavilions, an automobile pedestalled on a high stairwell landing, only underscored, by contrast, that in the Soviet Union hardly anyone owned a car. Acting more as an art piece than an object of use, the Ford, framed by Suprematist *Arhitektony*, had the unintended effect of 'distanciation' or ' *en*strangement' that in the early 1920s the Russian Formalists used to explain the essence of art. In the panoply of avant-garde artwork, such as Tatlin's Corner Sculptures, everyday objects and materials 'covered by the dross' of banal use were mutually confronted to reveal their unsuspected connections to the sublime;[63] in 1937 the opposite became true: mythical objects masked the dreary reality of everyday life – *'an ideological simulation of reality'*.[64] Placed on such unlikely pedestal, the car could also be 'read' as a Marcel Duchamp found object, removed from its customary context, placement and use. Like the liberal 'Stalinian Constitution' exhibited in the pavilion, this 'Stalinian car' was suspended

61 About the allegory of the electric man in Mayakovski, Vertov and the Italian Futurists, see among others, S. Feldman 'Peace between Man and the Machine: Dziga Vertov's The Man with a Movie Camera' in B.K. Grant and J. Sloniowski (eds), *Close Reading of Documentary Film and Video: Documenting the Documentary* (Detroit, MI), 40–53.

62 The mural is today part of the Paris Modern Art Museum built for the 1937 Fair.

63 See in particular Viktor Šklovskij's writings on the concept of 'excess of meaning' revealed in the assembly of seemingly incongrous everyday materials or objects.

64 J. Hoberman 'America Comes to the USSR' (review of Francis Spufford, *Red Plenty: Inside the 1950s' Soviet Dream*), in *London Review of Books*, January 6, 2011, 25ff.

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in a sphere of its own, as relevant to everyday life as a museum object.[65] In the early 1920s, the avant-garde indulged in innovative re-assemblages of common materials and objects in search for life's unsuspected dimensions. By the end of the 1930s, the reverse was becoming true: extraordinary objects served as means to cloak reality. If untruthful representations, exacerbated by nationalist competitiveness, were often difficult to avoid in World Expos, both the pavilion and its displays were set to replace reality with illusion and everyday life with myth. Were the references to a modernist formal vocabulary themselves part of a conscious delusion? Kaganovič's double standards might point in that direction.

In this Stalinist world of deceit that André Gide, a French communist party ally, so poignantly described in his 1936 *Retour de l'URRS*, Wright's reaction to his Moscow experience was one of disarming candor: 'Who can help loving such liberal, great-hearted fellows?' he exclaimed, referring to the enthusiasm he sensed even as late as 1937 among the architects he met. Comparing the situation to the one in the United States 'past long ago,' Wright effectively underwrote the attitude the party leadership entertained towards the 'masses' as he stated, 'Nothing pleases them [the masses] so much as the gleam of marble columns under high ceilings, glittering chandeliers, unmistakable luxury.' Agreeing with Stalin, Wright warned that, 'just now is no time to offer the liberated ones the higher simplicity which repudiates the falsity of that sort of luxury. This is no time to insist upon something they could not understand.'

Charles Pomaret, the 1937 Exhibition's special envoy to the USSR, did not miss the trend. Upon his return from Moscow in January 1936, he remarked that the architectural achievements the Russians intended to exhibit in Paris were 'of no distinction whatsoever'. In the Soviet Union, he said, 'a taste for the New York skyscraper [was] becoming increasingly popular.'A number of critics of the most recent Soviet architectural developments held this view.[66] The fascination with 'America', the beacon of modernity, had always loomed large behind the Leninist doctrine. Pomaret was alluding to a growing number of designs for high-rises, among which Iofan's 1934 and 1936 versions of the Place of the Soviets were prominent. Compelled to relinquish modernism but not modernization (Stalin's first Five-Year-Plan for a fast industrial modernization was, after all, in full swing), Soviet architects were gradually adopting an American mainstream architectural simile known as 'American corporate architecture.' In 1937, the keynote speaker at the First Congress of Soviet architects, the Tsarist architectural chameleon A. V. Ščusev, author of the Lenin Mausoleum, was quite explicit when

65 Another car, a copy of a Packard (Stalin used an authentic one), was displayed in the entrance hall on the pavilion's ground floor. The effect was radically different, as it simply appeared as a car displayed in an automobile show or at a car dealership.

66 '... ne represented aucun intérêt particulier. Le goût du building New Yorkais se développe de plus en plus' in *Communication de M. Ch. Pomaret sur ses entretiens à Moscou avec M. Meljaouk* [sic], 8 January 1936. Archives de France F12-124477.

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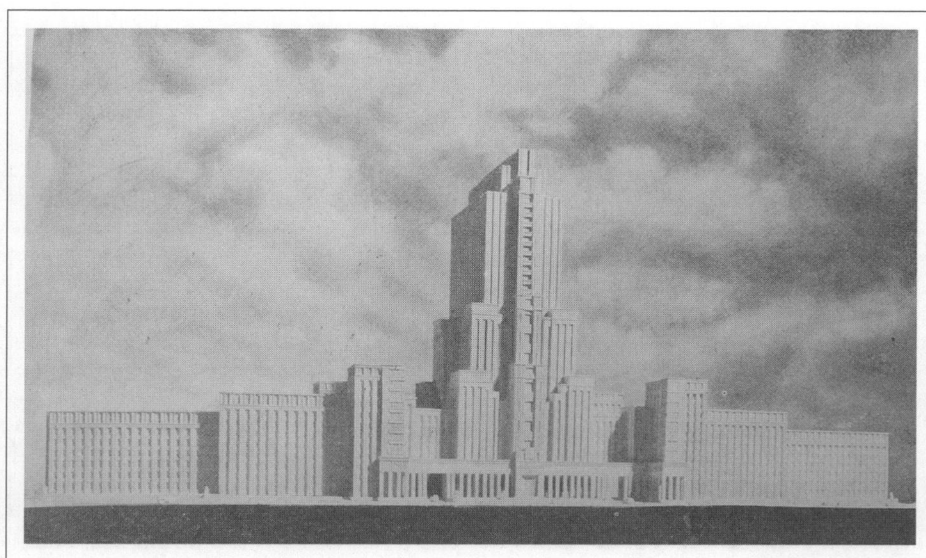

Figure 13. Boris Iofan's competition entry for the Commissariat of Heavy Industry.

he insisted that the Soviet Union should look increasingly to the West, and in particular to America for inspiration.[67]

Iofan's pavilion, indeed, reveals significant references to Raymond Hood's (1881–1934) recently completed Rockefeller Center, which he visited in New York and which was widely publicized in the Soviet architectural press.

The early sketches of the pavilion stored in the Moscow Museum of Architecture showed formal concerns comparable with two of Iofan's previous projects: the 1934 version of his Palace of the Soviets and his competition entry for the Ministry of Heavy Industry. The 'Rockefeller skyscrapers' assembled in the 1936 model of the palace were replicas of the Soviet pavilion in Paris, which had been in the works since the end of 1935 when the Soviet Union accepted an invitation to participate in the Fair. It is telling that the photograph of the pavilion published in *Arhitektura SSSR* cropped out the statue, obviously to emphasize the structure's affinities with its American model. With the Rockefeller Center detectable in all three projects, Iofan created an American trinity celebrating Stalin's power.

This complex architectural fusion in which political power controlled contradictory, if not outright incompatible architectural programs, was part of the strategy of the new Stalinist leadership to consolidate its position on the international scene

67 Moscow, RGALI Archives, First Congress of Soviet Architects, Sezd' Arhitekorov, Fond 674 op. 2 ed. hr. 4-3 Stenogramma Ščuseva 'Ozadač' Sov. Arh. St. 62. On the aspiration of the Bolsheviks to American Modernity, see J.L. Cohen, 'America: A Soviet Ideal', *AA Files* 5 (Jan. 1984). For the Soviet Architects' fascination specifically with the American skyscraper.

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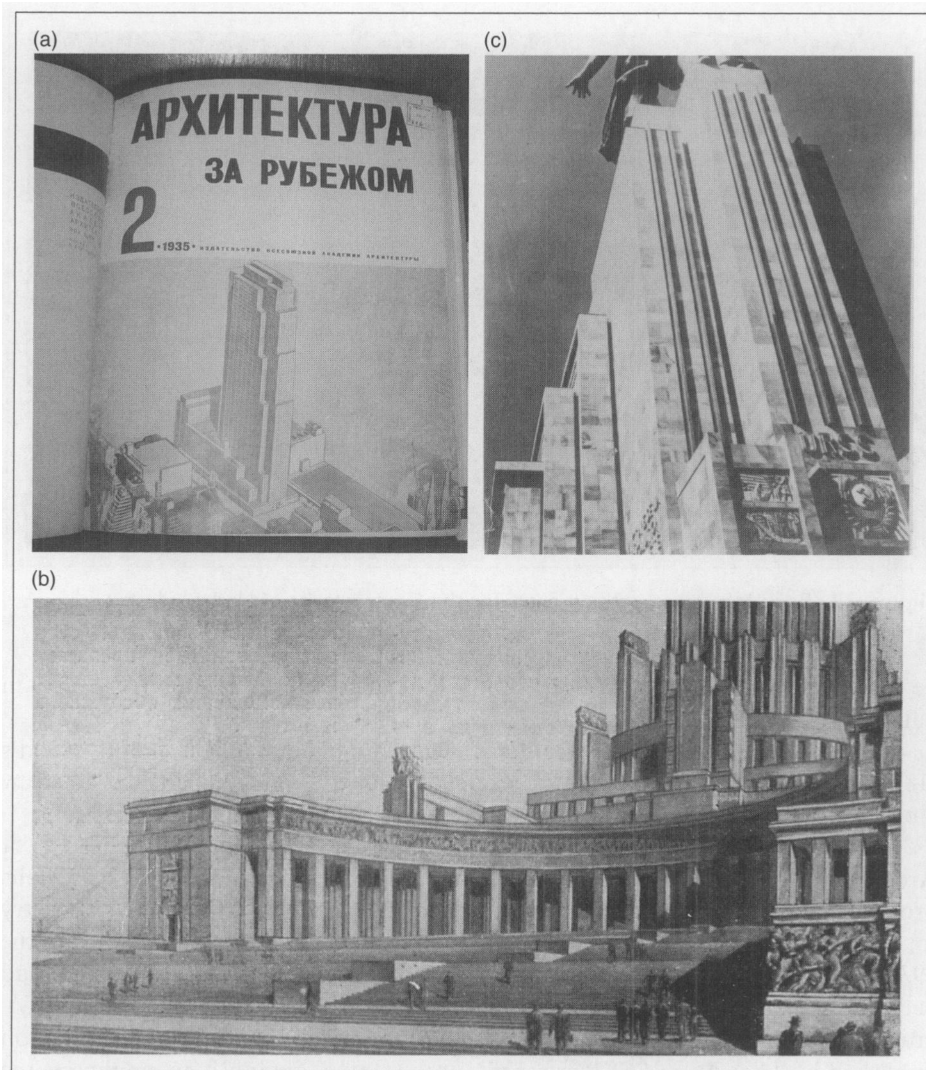

Figure 14. (a) Cover of *Arhitektura za Rubezom* 1935 2, (Architecture Abroad) a publication of the Soviet Academy of Architecture. (b) Detail of the Palace of the Soviets by Boris Iofan, 1936 version. Note the vertical slab assembly referring both to the Rockefeller Center and the Soviet pavilion in Paris by the same architect. (c) The Soviet pavilion published in *Arhitektura SSSR* without the statue.

and simultaneously legitimize its image with the leftist movements that had sided or sympathized with the Bolshevik Revolution. As the Soviets considered it important to cultivate a progressive stance abroad, they generally instructed foreign communist parties, notably the French, not to adopt Socialist Realism. The explanation

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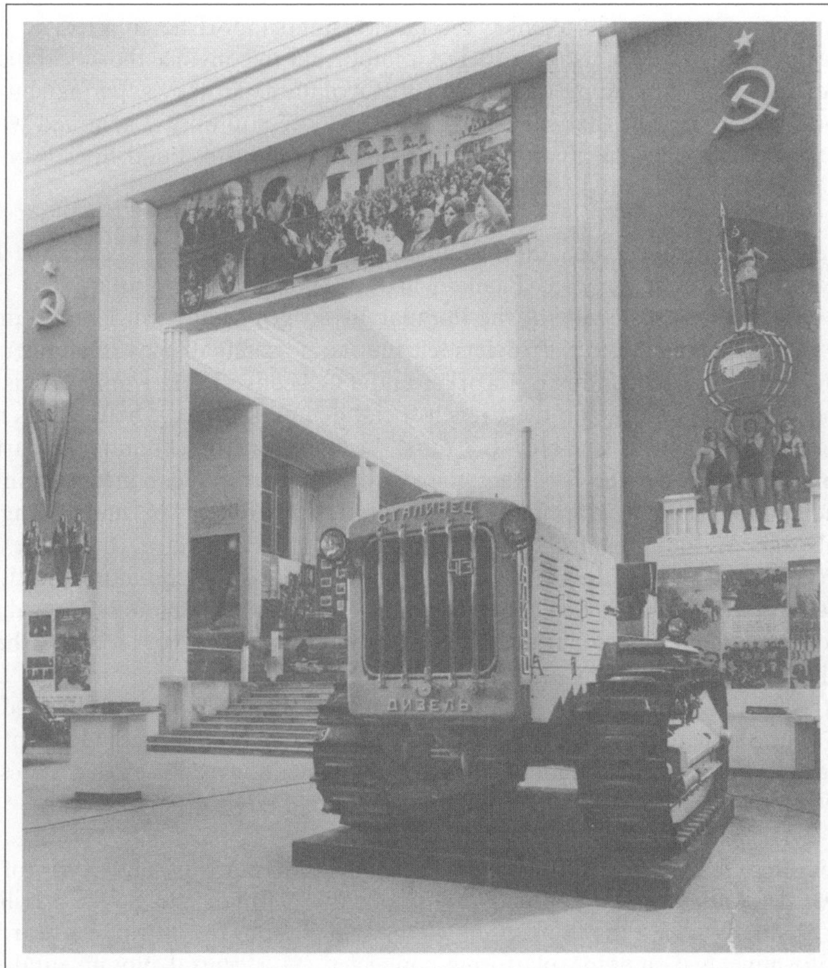

Figure 15. Entrance foyer of the Soviet pavilion with Gustav Klucis' photomontage.

was that capitalist countries had not yet reached the revolutionary conditions that made Soviet realism possible – a bizarre inversion of the Soviet architects' claim that modernism would come back when the 'masses' were ready for it. The two stances were the opposite ends of the same myth.[68] Aware that pressing his own

68 The issue was central to the famous 'Débat du Réalisme' the French communist party organized in 1934 at the Maison de la Culture. The entire artistic, literary and architectural left – with figures as prominent as Le Corbusier and André Malraux – contributed to the debate. The issue is also found in the texts of the communist AEAR (Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Révolutionaires), and in the communist literary journal *Commune*, published by Aragon. This point was articulated explicitly in the famous 'Querelle du Réalisme' that the French communist literary journal *Commune*, edited by Louis Aragon, organized in 1934 in the wake of the Moscow congress of writers.

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brand of official art would alienate the unwavering support he counted on amid progressive artists, Stalin also considered it important to convince the world that he had no designs for spreading the Bolshevik Revolution. Trotsky's 'permanent revolution' or Marx's view that socialism could be successful only if achieved worldwide, were abandoned in favor of Stalin's determination to 'build Socialism in a single country' – the stated goal of his Perestroika.[69]

An example of the official effort to project a non-threatening face abroad – one that renounced revolutionary expansionism – was the difference between the 1937 Pavilion in Paris and the 1939 Pavilion in New York, both by Iofan. The Paris Expo coincided with the rule of the Popular Front government in France, dominated by the socialists, and the Soviets felt they could safely display a hammer and sickle carried by a male industrial worker and a Collective Farm woman. This was a response to the split within the French social democratic party between its right and left wing at the 1921 Congress in Tours; the latter formed a communist party in support of the young Soviet Republic, while the former remained within the Second (socialist) International. Fifteen years later, France was undergoing the travails of a severe capitalist depression; while Russia projected the image of a country successfully building a new world that validated the communist option.

The message of the 1939 Soviet New York Pavilion was much more restrained. The pavilion exhibited only a diminutive five-pointed red star, a male worker brandished as a torch, lit by night like red stars on the Kremlin towers, in obvious reference to 'Lady Liberty's' own. Communism was presented arguably as one of two paths that led to a single goal – human progress. In New York Stalin sought international acceptance through competition rather than confrontation, a stance toward the United States and the 'West' that the USSR would maintain to its final dissolution.[70]

Responding ingeniously to the technical difficulties a rising underpass of the Avenue de Tokyo[71] presented, running under the German and Soviet pavilions, Iofan gradually raised the floor of his own pavilion from the entrance toward the back, forming five stepping platforms connected by a central monumental stair system. He used each level to express a higher stage of the presumed revolutionary development of the country, starting with the central foyer after the entrance, brightly lit by two lateral floor-to-ceiling glass bays, a signature of modernity. The space displayed theoretical works of Marxism's forefathers, framed left and right respectively by a 'Stalin' tractor ('Stalinec') and a 'Stalin' car, the ZIS

69 See Stalin's account on the conversation he had in 1929 with an American businessman known only as Mr. Campbell, a semi-official envoy of the US government, 'Zapis besedy s g-nom Kembellom, 28 Janvarja 1929g', I. Stalin, *Sočinena* (Moscow 1930), 13, 146–57.

70 In the early 1960s, city buses in the US featured a sentence uttered by Nikita Khrushchev that 'Communism will bury capitalism' (witnessed by this article's author in July 1961). Presented as Cold War scare tactics, the actual meaning of a tendentiously translated sentence in Russian was simply that Soviet communism, as a historical shortcut to progress, would outlive capitalism. For more about Stalin's directives against the support of a 'proletarian revolution' during the Civil War, with the usual argument that the society '[was] not ready for it,' see *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov: 1933-1949* (New Haven, CT 2003) 60.

71 After the war, It was renamed 'Avenue de New York'.

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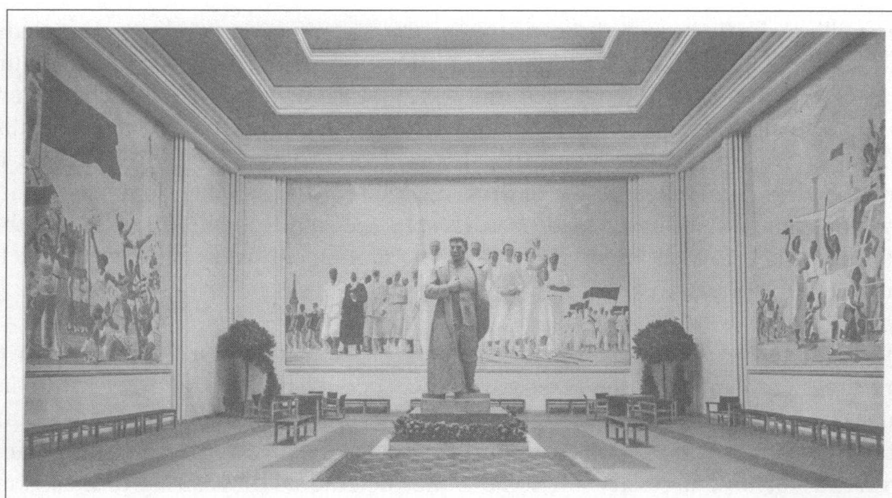

Figure 16. Last room of the pavilion with murals by Aleksandr Dejneka and Stalin's statue by Sergej Merkurov.

(Packard)[72] that the 'Father of the Peoples' used for his daily needs. Such representation of the country's would-be-tractors and cars appeared as a reversed Leninist concept of 'base and superstructure,' where the base seemed to be Marxism and the tractor and car its superstructure. In the foyer, Klucis' large-scale photomontage adorned the frieze of the gate opening onto the monumental staircase. The work depicted the proclamation of the new constitution with a giant Stalin towering over a diminutive crowd of party delegates.[73]

As the ascension ended, past the car blocking the landing and three successive rooms, the visitor reached Sergej Merkurov's statue of Lenin sitting in a Rodin-like 'Thinker' position. Beyond a large, five meter high gypsum model of Iofan's Palace of the Soviets one finally arrived, having climbed a few more steps to the last room tucked into the windowless cloak of the building. Natural zenithal light and side ribbon windows lit the entire length of the pavilion. The last room, however, had no source of natural light of its own. It was lit only by the indirect light from the adjacent space, strongly suggesting confinement, a sudden 'entrapment', contrasted with the brightly lit, sunny entrance hall. The artificiality of 'open air' athletics A. Samohvalov depicted in arrested movements on the lateral walls reinforced the effect of entrapment. Having reached its apotheoses, the pavilion's last space boasted in its center a larger than life statue of a standing Stalin in a Napoleonic posture – like an oversized exclamation mark. His numerous portraits throughout

72 Zavody Imeni Stalina (ZIS), Stalin factories.

73 This was the Klucis' last work. As one of the few avant-garde artists who took part in the Revolution and the Civil War, he was arrested upon his return to Moscow, and executed three weeks later with 100 other Latvian Communists. I owe to Jean-Louis Cohen the information that Klucis was executed with other Latvian communists.

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the pavilion hardly prepared the visitor for this solemn coda, a religious epiphany akin to the cella of an ancient temple.[74] The setting, with this god-like figure sculpted by Merkurov, reinforced the sense of being caught in an imaginary world. The bottom wall of this cloak, a mural by celebrated Socialist Realist Aleksandr Dejneka, showed an airy, almost floating group of people dressed in white (in those years, a widespread dressing code for the summer), smiling as they advanced behind their leader in bronze. Despite the architect and the artist's doubtless sincerity, the ostentatious rhetoric of the monument as a whole was there to mask the discrepancy between ideals and reality.[75]

Trying to present the German pavilion as an instrument of peace, Albert Speer (a high ranking member of the Nazi government) could not but be privy to the lie, which used artifice to cover a fundamental evil in the making. Conversely, Boris Iofan and Vera Muhina were privy to their hope. Regardless and despite Stalin's terror – a ' historic necessity' for some – and the gradual downsizing of the avant-garde's achievements, the present was still but the token of the 'Lendemains qui Chantent'. [76] The enormous energy the Russian Revolution had unleashed was still far from being spent. For most architects, and not only the architects, the only choice was either to be part of history in the making or to be condemned by it.[77] Whether they agreed with Stalin's 'revolutionary' methods or not (and many did), a much grander goal was at sake. This may well have been the most essential underlying difference between the German and the Soviet pavilions as the incarnation of two singularly different historic conditions: Epimetheus versus Prometheus.

In contrast with Mel'nikov's 1925 pavilion, which revolutionized its own medium before consecrating a revolution, the 1937 Soviet pavilion was intended in the first place for the international promotion of an established order. It presented three supreme icons of industrial modernity: the automobile, the skyscraper and the Revolution. By realigning the original forms of the Russian avant-garde, now conjured to glorify an ideology of progress increasingly gutted out of its essence, the Soviet pavilion at the 1937 Paris Fair emerged as a successful harbinger of a party-sanctioned vanguard, an offshoot of Stalin's 'Revolution from above'.

74 The idea was clearly present in an earlier version of the pavilion where the space featured a peristyle.

75 Expression taken from the title of the book by Svetozar Stojanović, *Between Ideals and Reality: A Critique of Socialism and its Future* (Oxford 1973).

76 Title of the posthumous autobiography of Gabriel Péri, former French Communist deputy, shot by the Nazis in 1941. In his celebrated last letter, at the eve of his execution, he wrote 'Je crois toujours, cette nuit, que mon cher Paul Vaillant-Couturier avait raison de dire que le communisme est la jeunesse du monde et qu'il prépare des lendemains qui chantent'. The title of his posthumous book was taken from this phrase. [I still believe, tonight, that my dear Paul Vaillant-Couturier was right in saying that communism is the youth of the world, and that it prepares tomorrows that sing.] Communists whom Stalin was to execute and those who, after decades in Soviet prisons and camps were readmitted into the ranks of the Soviet Communist Party following Stalin's death, often expressed similar testimonies.

77 This can largely explain why for so many communists who had spent years in the GULAG, the day of their 'rehabilitation' and return into the folds of the party could be the 'happiest day of their lives'.

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The supposed leadership of the proletariat's vanguard, the Bolshevik Party, was sanctified in Iofan's and Muhina's rendition of the pavilion.

The survival of a significant residue among artists of a genuine devotion to the enduring myths of the Revolution, and a pervasive belief that they still could share a common ideal of revolutionary transcendence with a metaphysically conceived party[78] is too often overlooked in the assessments of the period.[79] It is precisely the survival of such faith, so palpable in the Soviet pavilion, which accounted for much of the acclaim the pavilion received abroad, even as a hybrid between vanguard and reaction, cynicism and candor.

Still striving to partake in the modernist quest, albeit transfigured by an increasingly reactionary cultural environment, the new architectural trend reflected the enduring fascination with its American models. Prophesying that it would catch up with this major leader of modernity, the specific models sought after were primarily those in which the increasingly self-confident Soviet state recognized the reassuring image of its newly established social order. At the same time, the progressive architects' surviving devotion to the Revolution – a belief so evident in the pavilion's contradictions as a modernist interpretation of a rigid totalitarian regime – was still powerful enough to elicit admiration even from such staunched modernists as Frank Lloyd Wright. Although Soviet architects were clear that Socialist Realism was antithetical to their artistic ideals now sacrificed to the 'masses', the transcendental essence attributed to the party seemed to reconcile the chasm.

Informed by opposed ideologies – one grounded in the belief of a universal reason concretized in inexorable laws of historical progress,[80] the other simply grounded in radical evil – both the Soviet and the German pavilions were committed to specific political agendas. Competing for attention, both strove to overwhelm their Parisian context with the manifest intention to surpass and outdo it. The height and golden shine of the German pavilion was meant to overcome the Trocadéro's laconic classicism; the 'prophetic realism' of the Soviet was intended to infuse the Eiffel Tower, built on the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution, with new purpose. What both pavilions had in common was the promotion of modernity – ambiguously in the case of the German, self-deceptively in the case of the Russian. Hitler's tower restrained the aggressive thrust of German war industry behind a form of Epimethean nostalgia. Stalin's monument attempted to project a Promethean image of a univocal and irreversible progress. The German pavilion *concealed* reality behind a classical façade; the

78 On this point, see D. Udovički-Selb, 'The Last Public Debate in Defense of Modernism: The VHUTEIN, and the 1928 Lenin Library Competition', in conference proceedings; *Space VKHUTEMAS: Ninetieth Anniversary*, the essay discusses the call the architectural avant-garde addressed to the party to join in the defense of post revolutionary Modern Architecture (Moscow 2010). The call was echoed by the entire mainstream press, from professional journals to *Pravda* and *Izvestija*.

79 The epitome of a significant misunderstanding of the psychological and ethical state of mind of most Communists (in particular among the Bolshevik leadership but also among 'non-party' members) is the interpretation of Buharin's last letter to Stalin, prior to his execution in J. Arch Getty and Oleg Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*, (New Haven, CT and London 1999).

80 It was a common saying of the Communists worldwide that 'history was on their side'.

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Soviet pavilion *substituted* reality with fiction. Ultimately, they shared a common ground: forming together the most memorable image of the Paris Exhibition, they merged effortlessly their own representations of modernity into an unworldly mirage.

Post-scriptum

Oriented opposite to the river's current the Soviet pavilion appeared from the left bank of the Seine, as if actually floating. Engaged both in the parochial and the universal, with its statue placed as an enduring Victory at the prow of an ancient boat, resisting the winds and the river's flow, the monument managed to transcend the limits of its own attempted communist prophecy, inscribing itself into the historical landscape of the French capital whose emblem is: *Fluctuat nec mergitur* – it floats but does not sink.[81]

Note on Transliteration

This article employs an increasingly accepted system, which is closest to Slavic languages that use both the Latin and Cyrillic alphabet. To avoid ambiguity, an exception is made for well-known names that have established English spellings, such as Malevich rather than Malevič, or Khrushchev rather than Hruščëv. All translations are the author's, unless otherwise specified.

Acknowledgements

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Biographical Note

Danilo Udovički-Selb is an Associate Professor at the University of Texas at Austin. He specializes in the architectural history of the 1930s in the Soviet Union and France. His most recent publications include 'The 1928 Lenin Library Competition and the VHUTEMAS: The Last Public Debate in Defense of Modernism' in Conference proceedings on the 90th anniversary of the foundation of the VHUTEMAS: *Prostranstvo VHUTEMAS: Tradicii, Nasledie, Novacii*). (Moscow: MARHI and MuAr) 2010; *The Evolution of Soviet Architectural Culture in the First Decade of Stalin's 'Perestroika'* (Norwegian University of Arts and Sciences: Trondheim Studies on East European Cultures and Societies),

81 Far from forgotten, the statue was recently the object of an exhibition at the Ščusev Museum of Architecture in Moscow. Despite all the turmoil of the past seventy years, it is in a way still 'floating'.

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2009 and 'Between Modernism and Socialist Realism: Soviet Architectural Culture under Stalin's Revolution from Above: 1928–1938' in *Journal of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 68, No. 4, December 2009. He also published 'Les engagements de Charlotte Perriand pour l'Exposition de 1937 à Paris: Le Corbusier, Les Jeunes 1937 et le Front Populaire' exhibition catalogue, *Charlotte Perriand* (Paris: Centre Pompidou), 2005; '"C'était dans l'air du temps": Charlotte Perriand and the Popular Front' in *Charlotte Perriand: An Art of Living* (New York: Abrams), 2004.

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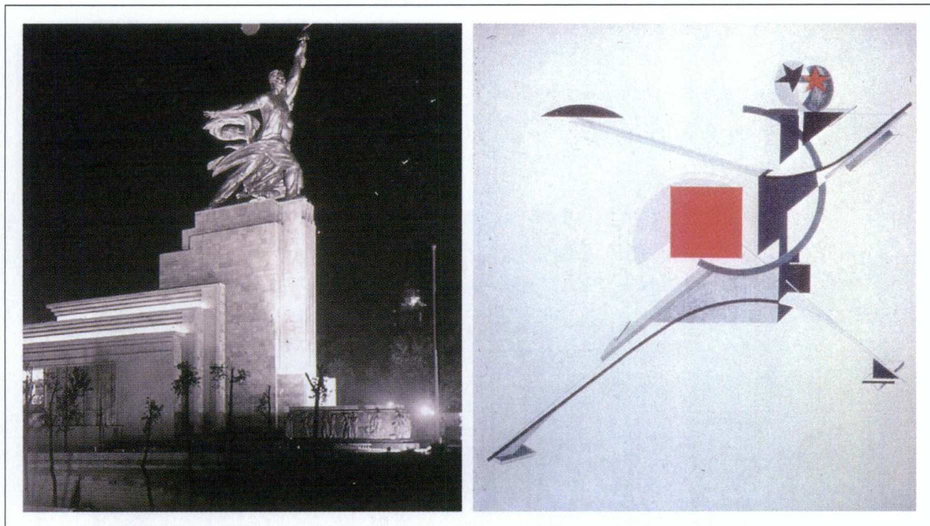
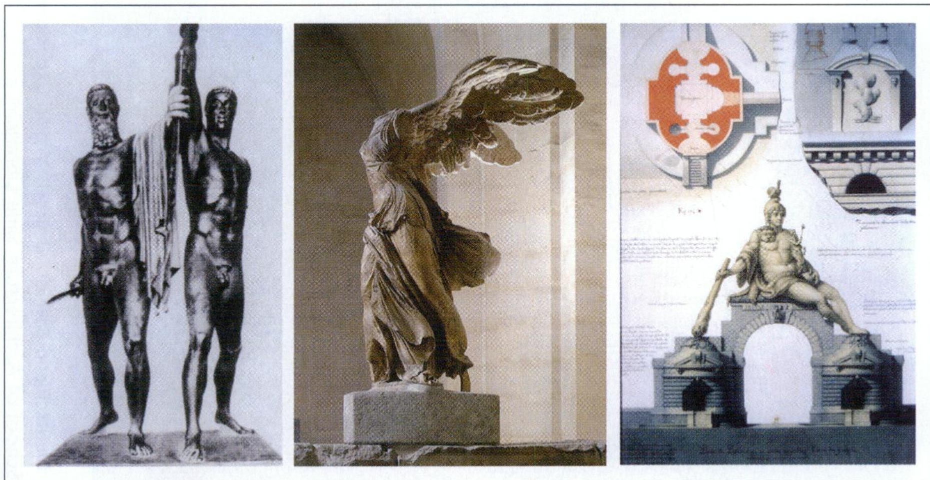


Udovički-Selb Figure 8. Muhina's statue seen in profile and El Lissitzky, detail of a new 1923 stage design for Malevich's 1913 'Victory over the Sun'.



Udovički-Selb Figure 9. (a) 5th century BC bronze paired group of the *Tyrannicides* Harmodios. (b) Aristogeiton, Roman copy, Naples Museum. Second century BC 'Victory of Samothrace', at the Louvre. (c) Jean-Jacques Lequeu, ' Parisis' from his never published 'Architecture Civile.' Drawings at the Bibliothèque Nationale, circa 1793.

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