Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazines as an example of Russian constructivism idea of household (byt).

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to investigate OSA’s (Organization of Contemporary Architects) constructivist concept of the household and its development. To do so OSA’s Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazines (1926 – 1930) were translated and analyzed. The focus of the study is the constructivist view on the household and the solution to the housing problems, presented in the Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazines.

The paper consists of presentation of the selected articles and their textual theoretical analysis followed by discussion conducted from the constructivist and feminist points of view. The paper also includes background presentation of the post-revolutionary Russia and the problems it faced at the time of the publication of the Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazines.

The discussion scrutinizes the importance of functionalism and rational organization in the creation of the architectural forms of constructivism. The constructivists faced an outspoken need to use limited resources, which guided many solutions.

Care for the person is fundamental in the constructivist’s ideas. It is evident through the thorough planning of the individual's life and implementation of the collectivization. While emphasizing the idea of freeing the person, constructivists would often put the individual in a limited position of choices, deciding its specific way of being.
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Introduction

1920th in Russia was a time of scarce resources. After the Revolution, Russia was creating new nation and establishing rules to create a new type of a citizen. “Nowhere did the urge to sweep away an old world and construct a new one have greater influence on everyday life than among the architects.”¹

Russian constructivism was emerging, and the constructivist architects were creating not only the new type of architecture, they were trying to organize people’s life and the ways of being through developing well-calculated, rationalized ideas of household. They were planning collectivization, rationalization of functions and maximizing functionality in every aspect of life. The constructivist ideas on the household and everyday life are at the center of this paper. To investigate the constructivist ideas regarding household, articles from the Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazine are put in the analytical focus.

Aim and questions

The aim of this paper is to examine Russian Constructivists views on the life of the individual, the household (byt) and the community through Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazines published between 1926 and 1930. ²

The purpose of this paper is also to investigate how deep into a person's life constructivists ideas, concepts and plans extended. What is the concept forming the constructivist approach to the byt? Was it just ignorant and controlling - the life of a man should serve needs of the nation, or was it caring for the individual needs of man?

Did the communist ideas manifest in every architectural moment? Was there any distinction between work and home? How important was collectivization, collective and society in comparison to the individual?

This paper also aims to investigate whether Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazines as the Organization of Contemporary Architects (OSA) group’s architectural concept was aiming to

2 The Russian concept of Byt will be used instead of household in this paper.
divide or unite the people and if they cared of the family. What should the family be according to 
the OSA? What was the place of man, woman and child according to OSA constructivists?

In addition, there is an analysis of what is architect's task according to constructivists ideas. Who 
was in charge and what was at the core of the economical solution of the housing problem, - of the 
dom-kommuna?

**Material and Method**

The material which forms the basis of this paper is a collection of *Sovremennaya Arkhitektura* – 
Modern Architecture (further SA) magazines published between 1926 and 1930.³

Together with SA articles, the secondary literature and related research is presented in this paper 
in order to understand that period in Russia, and the formation of the OSA group and SA magazine.

The method is close reading and investigation of the *Sovremennaya Arkhitektura* magazines. 
Through the readings there have been singled out several specific articles concerning the housing 
question and the constructivist ideas. They form the main core of the study. All translations used 
in the paper are done by the author. The process of translation also put the need of close reading 
at the front, thus forming a specific and important methodological instrument in the paper.

**Theory**

The focus of this paper is constructivism. Understanding its idea of *byt* implies understanding of 
its theory. However, feminist theory is also used as an important analytical tool to understand and 
study the material and the constructivist ideas.

There is a focus on constructivist thought and on its views the individual, women and questions 
concerning the interaction of people and classes of society.

After the Revolution women got the right to vote and hold political office, and the view on their 
place in society has been shifting. Hence, it is interesting to reveal the internal logic of the 

Accessed 01.12.2019
constructivist ideas in order to understand what their view on women’s place in the new world was.

A great inspiration and theoretical base of the feminist reading is Linda Nochlin’s essay *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?*\(^4\)

**Limitations**

Ideally, should the whole of the *Sovremennaya Arkhitektura* magazines be translated. Each of the published texts, plans, projects deserve attention. However, as there are altogether 27 published issues of circa 40 pages such translation is a project of its own. The selection of articles for this paper has been chosen to portray focus on *byt* - household, house life, the way of living and study constructivist idea of it in SA magazines.

It is important to note that this paper cites only a selection from *Sovremennaya Arkhitektura* magazines as an example of constructivist thinking. Authors of the articles might have published other theoretical works as well. However, both the topic of *byt* and the examples of Organization of Contemporary Architects constructivism are present in the analyzed articles. They could of course be examined, studied and discussed further, but due to the limitations of the academic form, they only form a backdrop to presented cases.

Most of the original research articles and books as well as the *Sovremennaya Arkhitektura* magazines are written in Russian. The analysis aims to investigate the constructivist thought and concept of *byt* and the suggested organization of living, which can possibly make this paper appear descriptive and lacking the criticism at times.

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Relevant research of SA and OSA

There is no abundance of the research of SA and OSA. The amount of relevant research of 1920th, Russian Constructivists, OSA and SA written in Russian exceeds the amount of the same relevant research done in English.

There is research on specific constructivist projects or buildings - Narkomfin by Viktor Buchli and The Architecture of Constructivism by Piskunova, Starostova and Pankov. Research on single architects and theorists – for example Alexey Gan.

Victor Buchli in Moisei Ginzburg’s Narkomfin Communal House in Moscow writes about Narkomfin as the most sophisticated example of dom-kommuna. He also writes about byt, OSA (SA) constructivists and their place in the society and their relation to the political regime.

Larisa Piskunova, Ludmila Starostova and Igor Pankov in The Architecture of Constructivism: The creative transformation of aesthetic codes and narratives write about constructivism of Yekaterinburg in modern narrative practices and discuss the history of the city – more than 400 constructivist buildings were built in Yekaterinburg.

Kenneth Frampton writes about Russia after liberation of the serfs, about the Revolution and about the direction the art and architecture took after the Revolution.

Anna Bokov in her Workers’ clubs: lessons from the social condensers uses the plans and projects from SA, but her aim is to explain something different and not the architecture or SA magazines. M.J. Thomas writes City Planning in Soviet Russia (1917-1932) and discusses OSA and ASNOVA ideas. OSA and the peoples dream by Hugh D. Hudson from Blueprints and Blood: The Stalinization of Soviet Architecture, 1917-1937 is good presentation of the subject.

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6 L. Piskunova et al., The architecture of constructivism: the creative transformation of aesthetic codes and narratives, 2018 Creativity Studies, Vilnius, vol. 11 issue 1, pp 56-69
7 K. Frampton, Modern Architecture, a critical history, 1980 Thames and Hudson Ltd. London, pp 167
The Housing Revolution in Petrograd 1917-1920 by Hubertus F. Jahn, and Housing in the Soviet Union by Henry W. Morton allows to genuinely understand the housing problem.\textsuperscript{10, 11}

Richard Anderson writes about dom-kommuna, and of the architecture from 1861 to present day discussing Russia and its architecture.\textsuperscript{12} Its chapter Laboratories of Soviet Architecture been especially giving to this paper.\textsuperscript{13}

Vladimir Paperny’s Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two examines the evolution of architecture in Russia during the Stalinist period, is valuable for understanding the constructivism and 1920\textsuperscript{th} in Russia.\textsuperscript{14}

There are several important works on the period by Selim Omarovich Khan-Magogedov: Constructivism – conception of creation of form (Конструктивизм - концепция формообразования), Architecture of Soviet Avangard, Pioneers of Soviet architecture.\textsuperscript{15}

Geoffrey Hosking’s book, Russia and the Russians has been great for understanding Russian culture and its importance for the people, and the many struggles of the country, the people.\textsuperscript{16}

There are series of remarkable lectures (in Russian) by Candidate of Science in architecture Alexandra Selivanova, curator of the Center for the avant-garde and the Gallery on Shabolovka that scrutinize (Russia) Russian architecture of that time. The series are: Avangard on Shabolovka – architecture guide, and the lectures referred to in this paper - Architecture and power in the 1920–1930s.\textsuperscript{17, 18}

\textsuperscript{10} Hubertus F. Jahn, The Housing Revolution in Petrograd 1917-1920, Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, Neue Folge, Bd. 38, H. 2 (1990), pp. 212-227
\textsuperscript{12} R. Anderson, Russia: modern architectures in history, 2015, Reaktion Books Ltd, pp 78
\textsuperscript{13} ibid. Laboratories of Soviet Architecture 1917-1923, pp 75-107, Socialist Construction pp 107-147
\textsuperscript{14} V. Paperny, Architecture in the age of Stalin: Culture" Two", accessed in Russian В.Паперный, Культура Два, Новое литературное обозрение, Москва 2016
\textsuperscript{15} С. О., Хан-Магомедов, Конструктивизм: концепция формообразования, Москва, Стройиздат, 2003.
С. О., Хан-Магомедов, Архитектура советского Авангарда, в 2-х книгах, Москва, Стройиздат 1996
С. О., Хан-Магомедов, Пионеры советского дизайна, Москва, Галарт 1995
\textsuperscript{17} https://electro.nekrasovka.ru/courses/60?fbclid=IwAR2Ul39fFjWT6HwMwMdxRQQs1rr5vALfnEm8yiQu8w_igmWAZhObepAIwpl accessed 11.12.2019
\textsuperscript{18} https://postnauka.ru/author/selivanova
Background

The constructivist architects did not want to decorate the space, they wanted to organize it. That is enlightened already in Moisei Ginzburg's book *Style and Epoch* 1924, seminal to Constructivist aims and ideas.\(^{19}\)

OSA – Organization of Contemporary Architects was an architectural association formed by constructivist architects. They published the magazine *Sovremennaya Arhitektura*. The magazine consisted of plans, projects, and discussions by Russian architects as well as from foreign architects as for example Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus architects. The magazine was one of the vital scenes for constructivist thought of the time.\(^{20}\)

A central idea to OSA was the *dom-kommuna*, a communal apartment block, where all the household duties – cooking, laundry and repair work would be handled centrally, collectively or by the professional workers, so “...*that much inefficient drudgery, especially that performed by women, would be eliminated.*"\(^{21}\) Children would have professional supervision so that their parents would not have such concern.

The constructivists desire to create new type of housing and a man had many obstacles on the way. The resources were scarce and most of them went into industrialization of the Soviet Union. The existent housing could not meet the flood of people into the cities. The enormous pace of urbanization did not have room for a utopian architecture. To solve the housing crisis large bourgeoisie apartments were given to families to share. One family for a room, sometimes several families were sharing one room.\(^{22}\) People were also living in basements and attics.\(^{23}\) SA’s projects were usually cutback due to the lack of sources which often resulted in a vague resemblance of what been planned due to the economic situation. Discussions about the difficult situation and promotion of a new utopian housing scheme are recurrent in the SA.

Constructivists believed that new, modern architecture must crystallize and create new forms of *byt*. In the second half of 1920\(^{th}\), their ideas came into conflict with Anatoly Lunacharsky, USSR’s

\(^{19}\) M. Ginzburg, *Style and Epoch*, 1924, GIZ RSFSR
\(^{21}\) Hosking, 2011 pp 477
\(^{22}\) G. Hosking, 2011 pp 477
\(^{23}\) H. F. Jahn, *The Housing Revolution in Petrograd*, pp 214
first Commissar of Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{24} He insisted that art is to serve the authority and to form as to decorate, communist parties’ ideas. He saw a direct threat precisely in the theorists of the new art (Lefovites, Gakhnovtsy), the attack and war began on the theoretical field. It began with creation of the University of Literature, Art and Language, centralized educational platform where the ideas and theories were the direct reflection of the communist party views. The attack on constructivism was also practical, most intense in 1929 – 1931, where new “right politically” artists, professionals and architects replaced the old avant-garde school. Hence new groups, unions and organizations formed, as WOPRA that replaced OSA. \textsuperscript{25}

Analysis

Literature of the early constructivism

The key theorist behind the constructivist movement, Alexy Gan, announced in his work from 1922 \textit{Constructivism} the death of art in its traditional form and proclaimed the triumph of constructivism - the brainchild of industrial culture:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Constructivism is a phenomenon of our days. It arose in 1920 among left-wing painters and ideologists of “mass action”}.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{This issue is a propaganda book, which constructivists open the struggle with supporters of traditional art.}
\end{quote}

\textit{Moscow 1922}\textsuperscript{26}

He also declared death of art and the start of new chronology (of the new art, possibly life) \textsuperscript{27}:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} \url{https://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/27/arts/the-new-minister-of-soviet-culture-takes-truth-as-task.html} accessed 05.02.2020
\item \textsuperscript{25} \url{https://postnauka.ru/video/71192} accessed 13.12.2019
\item \textsuperscript{26} Конструктивизм явление наших дней. Возник он в 1920 году в среде левых живописцев и идеологов „массового действия“. Данный выпуск является агитационной книгой, которой конструктивисты открывают борьбу со сторонниками традиционного искусства.

Москва 1922 год. A. Gan, 1922 Constructivism, Tver, front page accessed on \url{http://tehne.com/event/arhivsyachina/aleksey-gan-konstruktivizm-1922} 01.12.2019 Translated by Lidia Smirnova
\item \textsuperscript{27} A. Gan, 1922 Constructivism, Tver, pp 19 accessed on \url{http://tehne.com/event/arhivsyachina/aleksey-gan-konstruktivizm-1922} 01.12.2019
\end{itemize}
Moisei Ginzburg published *Rhythm in architecture* in 1923, *Style and Epoch* in 1924, these works have largely contributed to the creation of theoretical basis of constructivism. In 1925 Ginzburg became one of the founders of OSA together with Vesnin A.A., Vesnin V.A.

*Style and Epoch* sometimes is compared to Le Corbusier's *Une Architecture* and mutual influences can be traced in them. Le Corbusier is also referred to in various issues of SA (1926 onwards) and listed as a member of Editorial Board in 1928 issue 6, 1929 issue 1. He also in 1928-1929 designed Centrosojuz and had corresponded with Ginzburg in the 1930/1-2nd issue of SA.

Ginzburg’s *Style and Epoch* is a proclamation of Constructivist thought with the aims and ideals of the architecture. In the English translation there are two introductions, one is by Anatole Senkevitch and the other is by Kenneth Frampton, both are valuable in the understanding of the movement. In the book Ginzburg puts forward the central thesis, to understand constructivist...
thought. There is idea of rejecting traditional form and creating something new and different. That idea did not only contribute to the creation of new forms within contemporary architecture but, became inspirational to both modernism and deconstructivism.

**SA Magazine**

Современная Архитектура, Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazine existed for five years, 1926 to 1930 and in 1931 Sovetskaya Arkhitektura took its place. 31

Современная Архитектура was an illustrated magazine given out by «Государственное издательство» (GIZ RSFSR) 6 times a year. Altogether 27 issues of SA were released, including the doubled ones, year 1926 issue 5-6, year 1927 issue 4-5 and year 1930 issue 1-2. 32

Each issue of the SA magazine displays functional thinking with equations, graphs and calculations on each aspect of life, - the ventilation or the amount of air and sunlight in the room, the thickness of walls and placement of the windows, the number and the way people to move around, in and out of the buildings. The magazine reinforces that each form emerges out of function.

OSA constructivists agitated for change, for new materials and forms, emphasizing how old and out fashioned the old ways are.

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31 (magazines would be referred to as: SA year/issue pages)

32 tehne.com accessed on 01.12.2019
According to the constructivist thought in the magazine, everything should be done with thorough calculations - to make construction and it’s results as efficient as possible. That is applied to the public places, houses and any buildings where people to live or work, - altogether these spaces were to be rationalized. The planning of the inner climate was calculated, the proper amount of air was to circulate in the buildings, the proper amount of light was also calculated - all for the care of people, their well-being and the highest efficiency. The strive of the constructivists, as seen in the magazines was to create the best conditions for persons at work as at home. For example, the Moscow Telegraph house building was planned so that all 2200 workers could get to their working places in less than 15 minutes.34

33 Picture 3 SA 1926/3 pp83 (translated by L. Smirnova)
34 SA 1926/2 pp 52
Constructivism

“Architects! Do NOT imitate forms of technics, - learn constructivist method”³⁵

For us, the forced division of the architect and engineer fundamentally not applicable – for our “architecture” always contains the prerequisites of the production order - since this architecture is for workers, and our “engineering” always contains the prerequisites of a domestic nature, since the conditions and environment in which are the people operating machines - for us a complex and important question. ³⁶

³⁵ Picture 4 SA 1926/3 pp 63 translated by L. Smirnova

³⁶ Picture 5: SA 1927/1 pp2 translated by L. Smirnova
Constructivism first arose in the RSFSR and transferred to Germany in 1922
(from a note on constructivism in journal “G” 1924, Richter) 37

To the left of the page is a part of the article Our reference, where Alexey Gan writes that Constructivists set the task for themselves to destroy abstract forms and old forms of art and to rationalize artwork.38

There is also a definition of constructivism, stating that:

Constructivism is an artistic direction whose representatives strive to create a synthesis of technology and all kinds of visual arts in a single form of “constructivist art”, which is built according to the principles of mechanical, geometric and aesthetic relationships of the material of construction (paint, canvas, iron, glass, etc.) and its forms. Constructivism should create practical and beautiful (i.e., useful and good) things or their designs. Western constructivism developed in Germany and the Netherlands under the influence of Russian constructivism in 1921-1922. 39
Architect’s task

SA 1926/2 page 44

Technical architects’ task – construct rationally on the base of latest technological advances.

Social architects’ task – create and form new types of architecture on the base of new production (industrial) – household relations. ⁴⁰

SA 1927/1 pages 4-10

In the article Target setting in modern architecture Moisei Ginzburg states that the target in a modern architecture is regulated and set by the general household and the economic conditions in the country. The target is the most important task of the rational organization of production and domestic processes and pushes the architect to break the traditional atavistic settings of production and ossified (outdated) forms of public life. He also writes that functional architecture is impossible without precisely and newly delineated concrete utilitarian goal.

By these ossified forms of public life, he implies not only household, but also the meaning of society and the individual. He urges for the shift in the old ways of being where the new byt will change the life of men and of women. Ginzburg underlines that building of socialism means building of a new material and cultural base of a person, creating new and perfect household processes and social household relations. He means that there is a need in reorganization of byt, forming it anew.

⁴⁰ Picture 7 SA 1926/2 pp 44 translated by L. Smirnova
Ginzburg continues stating that target, or what is to be build is usually defined by one word only - factory, клуб, residence but should instead be analyzed by the architect, concretized and split into production-household processes. While production processes are usually associated with factories, and household - with living and housing, Ginzburg writes that there is no difference between these two. He accentuates that every production process is accompanied by the typical, everyday hygienic movement: washing hands, eating, changing, etc. Hence, the main motion diagram is accompanied by the everyday movements. That makes it clear to Ginzburg that the production process in the factories are the production-household process.

To explain the production-household process, movement diagram and equipment scheme, he refers to production process in a factory. Movement diagram is the path of object from the beginning to the end of its production. Equipment scheme is a system of machines and other equipment elements from the different stages of production. The method of placing equipment is dictated by the motion diagram and crucially, by the principle of saving manpower. While describing functionality of latter Ginzburg suggests using the same approach to the construction of not only factories, but any buildings, residences and even the way of living. Ginzburg is willing to construct the new reality and the new understanding of architecture and its needs.

The modern architects of Soviet Russia have a difficult and yet unsolved problem: the creation of a new type of housing for workers, a new communal house instead of a tenement house, barracks or a hotel, which have replaced this still unresolved, new architectural organism.

Only with the help of functional method can this problem be solved. It is necessary to inventively find out the production and everyday (household) processes of workers, to find and distinguish all their functions, to draw clear and precise movement diagram and equipment diagrams above all. This task is beyond the power of one architect or even a team. The entire asset of the Soviet public should be called upon to solve this problem.

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41 клуб as public organization of cultural, educational, political, sports or other nature.
42 Перед современными архитекторами Советской России стоит труднейшая и еще пока не разрешенная задача: создание нового типа жилья трудящихся, нового коммунального дома вместо доходного дома, казармы или гостиницы, подменявших до сих пор этот не разрешенный еще, новый архитектурный организм.

Только при помощи функционального метода может быть решен этот вопрос. Нужно по-изобретательски подойти к выяснению производственно-бытовых процессов трудящихся, отыскать и различить все их функции, начертить четкие и точные графики движений и схемы оборудования прежде всего. Одному архитектору или даже коллективу их эта задача не по силам. Весь актив советской общественно должен быть призван к решению этой задачи. Ibid, translated by L. Smirnova
He further explains that by establishing the absence of a fundamental difference between production and domestic (household) processes, functional method establishes the absence of any fundamental difference between these two branches of architecture. Ginzburg underlines the necessity of functional approach to public and residential architecture. However, additional diagrams of household processes should be outlined with the greatest possible clarity and the same principle of saving manpower should be put in their construction.

Ginzburg applies production-household (byt) processes to residential building. He writes that the motion diagram in a residential building is the trajectory of one’s movement, this trajectory should be studied, and the functional method of the economy of manpower and space should be applied. Ginzburg continues, that equipment scheme of residential house consists of different items of equipment: beds, tables, oven, etc. These items are combined into a clear interconnection system and according to it the person moves around the house - motion diagram. He states that without these diagrams functional solution to the housing is impossible. For examples Ginzburg refers to kitchen plan of the restaurant car, to the diagram of improved movements by Bruno Taut, to Frank Lloyd Wright's plans of American residential buildings where, each segment of the house are groups of the rooms united by a motion diagram. He does not, however, mention the Frankfurt Kitchen project by Margarete Schutte-Lihotzky.

Ginzburg also highlights the importance of folding furniture to the economy of space and the saving of manpower. He stresses that the functional method requires the architect to apply these principles of economy reasonably to the residential building. Residences should not become an airplane cabin, although careful consideration of production-household processes of an apartment house should be done. Economy of space and movement in one type of function (private sector) leads to more space and freedom in other functions (common). He states that the principle of economy should especially be applied in a working-class living space, where maximum cost savings are needed to satisfy the largest number of workers and it is necessary to achieve maximum conditions for hygiene of human movements. Ginzburg underlines that functional method sees the residential building, as any other building, through the principle of saving manpower and the economy of space. Motion diagram and equipment scheme are exhaustive data for deciding of production-household processes of the house and the architectural solution.
Ginzburg states that the functional method was already, though partially used for a couple of decades in the industrial and engineering architecture of Western Europe and America and have created significant examples of itself, but the residential and public architecture are behind.

To stress the importance of *strictly scientific* development Ginzburg refers to Henry Ford’s automobile production and his book *My Life and Work*. To stress the importance of saving of manpower Ginzburg refers to Henry Ford’s hospital suited for saving steps of nurses. Ginzburg writes that when solving any public architectural construction, without considering the steps and movements of a person, modern architects are no different from the industrialist of the old time who was approaching his task of constructing only approximately. Here, one can question the action of men observing women and their activities – ultimately it is the prerogative of men to design the hospitals, which means a certain control of women’s behavior and labor.

Ginzburg proposes that further development of the functional method in housing construction suggests using all the internal divisions of housing as items of equipment. Here Ginzburg refers to the plans of Wright’s residential homes where large space is divided into different functional parts by the furniture. He continues by stating that Le Corbusier has developed this principle further by making the cabinet system to serve as a wall, dividing room into parts. He also refers Rietveld (Utrecht) plan printed in SA and to Jansen (The Hague).

**Housing problems**

Housing problem in USSR was extremely vast. Larger apartments where only one bourgeoisie family used to live were split between families to share - usually one family per room, often more. This disturbing reality did not leave any personal space and resulted in alarming lack of hygiene. At the same time, it was thought that everyone was to strive for the better future.

**SA 1927/4-5 pages 125 - 145**

Article by A.L. Pasternak called *New forms of contemporary architecture* opens about 20 pages of shorter articles and plan drawings from the participants of the First Exhibition of Modern

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43 SA 1927/1 pp10
44 Hosking, 2011 pp 477
Architecture. The theme of the exhibition (friendly competition), where new-contemporary housing projects were presented was announced and held by SA. Informative articles for the plans are published by the competitors. Some articles are theoretical, some explanatory.

Pasternak writes that “workers houses” of bourgeois culture are the defect of the epoch. That one of the many reasons of their origin was the desire to soften the severity of class enmity. He also writes that “what they call in the West “living machine” is most suitable form of living even for our lives, but only as a starting point”. Meaning that there is much of improvement, customization to do.

Further, Pasternak criticizes the type of buildings constructed. He also talks about labeling and concerned about the negative label of a third-rate product that dom-kommuna got. He continues that dom-kommuna is the solution to the liberation from the household burden, to the education, caring system, better and cheaper housing, approximation to the clubs (as public organization of cultural, educational, political, sport or other nature), catering and more.

This can be recognized as an attempt to move the traditionally female part of private life into the public sphere, giving women a chance to take on industrial jobs and rely on the public support in the household work.

Pasternak questions how the new byt, being formed by new life and new country would look like. He writes that though the answer is yet unknown, but (our) modern architects understand its course and are moving towards it, though not faulty free.

And it is strange that the Moscow Council, by the tenth of October, cannot boast of a demonstration (because it has nothing to cover the issue) of a real, modern house that meets this decade – DOM-KOMMUNA. Then the friendly competition, which gave at least an incomplete answer, will fill this gap in construction and will be our present for the anniversary. 47

45 негатив эпохи SA 1927/4-5 pp 125
46 То, что на западе называется “жилой машиной” - наиболее подходящая и для нашей жизни форма жилья: как отправная точка только, не более. SA 1927/ 4-5 pp 125 translated by L. Smirnova
47 И странно, что Московский Совет, к десятилетию Октября, не может похвастать демонстрацией (ибо у него нет ничего в таком освещении вопроса) настоящего, современного, отвечающего этому десятилетию дома, - ДОМА-КОМУННЫ. Тогда товарищеское соревнование, давшее хоть не полный ответ, восполнит этот пробел в строительстве и явится нашим подарком к юбилею. SA 1927/4-5 pp 126 translated by L. Smirnova
He underlines that competition asked for a new, modern type of housing, thought *never mentioning* "dom-kommuna"; however, all eight projects represent the type of housing combining both collective as an individual family. It is debatable if the constructivist idea of this specific type of housing was commonly shared by all architects, or only by those related to SA.

Pasternak continues that although the projects displayed on the exhibition are different, they have several things in common: the residential part is designed with the greatest efficiency (economy), which allows to make the premises of a public nature transforming an ordinary residential organism into a *dom-kommuna*, without lowering the overall profitability ratios so to say ability to live in this type of housing.

The projects are of three types. Few arrange apartments along the horizontal highway using a common connecting corridor for this – by M. Y. Ginzburg, I. N. Sobolev, Nina Vorotyntseva and R. A. Polyak, A. A. Olya; or string apartments along the vertical of the stairs - G. G. Vegman, Vyacheslav Vladimirov, A. S. Nikolsky; the third technique combines both solutions, converting the vertical to the horizontal and vice versa - A. L. Pasternak. Results of participants from Moscow or St. Petersburg did not differ.

...To abandon an individual only, self-contained apartment, to abandon a hotel - alike, barracks-alike type of residences - this is one goal set for itself. The other is to change the internal content of the cell/apartment, developing it in two directions - saving size (material side) and *saving labor strength* and time spent on *servicing* yourself as a resident. This double saving is possible only when the principle of "dom-kommuna" is introduced; however, only the presence of the former allows the implementation of this principle.⁴⁸

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⁴⁸ … Отрешиться от индивидуальной только, замкнутой в себе, квартиры, отрешиться от гостиничного, казарменного типа общежитий — вот одна поставленная себе цель. Другая - изменить внутреннее наполнение ячейки, разрабатывая ее в двух направлениях - экономия размеров (сторона материальная) и экономия траты рабочей силы и времени на обслуживание себя жильцом ячейки. Эта двойная экономия возможна лишь когда вносится принцип "дома-коммуны"; вместе с тем только наличие первых допускает осуществление этого принципа. SA 1927/4-5 pp 127 translated by L. Smirnova
The example representing the constructivist thinking about residential building and the crucial problems thereof can be seen in the article *Workers building in Moscow* by G.G. Vegman.

Vegman writes that while getting started with the mass housing construction starting from 1924 Mossovet (Moscow Soviet of People’s Deputies), had preparatory material on this issue collected by the results of the large All Union competition held in Moscow in the winter of 1922. He states that, however, for some reason all this preparatory material has been forgotten:
And the work of Mossovet was immediately directed not towards the path of further searches and conquests in the field of housing construction, but towards the construction of the “good old time”. The results of this wrong approach are already coming to light. 49

Vegman writes that only one type of housing was designed and implemented – individual apartments for families - 2-3 rooms with a kitchen. Hence, solitary workers and bachelors were forgotten. He continues, that the socioeconomic approach to the question of housing construction was pushed into the background. That all healthy, rational approaches to new forms of life, that gave new types of houses, the communal ones (dom-kommuna) been crossed out completely.

Vegman’s criticism is a sign for the equality, but one might want to ask if the solitary workers and bachelors included women. What of the elderly, or the youth? Does it mean that the dom-kommuna is the solution for every person? Both the housing constructed, as Vegman’s criticism put the person and ones needs in the box, not leaving much space for any oddity.

He writes that such gives an awkward impression of some kind of Mossovet’s panic before the rising housing hunger, justifying that with numbers of area-built versus money spent, stating:

The houses built in 1925 and partially those in 1924 lack the basic hygiene requirement of through ventilation and have weak isolation of two adjacent apartments. The consequence of such layout will almost always be bad orientation of half of the apartments to the cardinal points. In the planning and sizes of the rooms there is no logical connection with working environment, no attempt to bring these living boxes closer to modern living conditions 50

Vegman criticizes it further by stating that the quadrature, size of these apartments is not equal to the whole number of living standards, which is especially negative as he doubts there will be one family only living in the apartment. He continues:

Due to the unsuccessful planning of the apartments, the rooms turn out to be excessively large, and by their random quadrature they are not multiple of the whole number of living standards, and this is important, because, due to purely economic considerations, it is

49 Но почему-то все это было забыто, и работы Моссовета были сразу же направлены не на путь дальнейших исканий и завоеваний в области жилищного строительства, а на путь строительства “доброго старого времени”. Результаты такого неправильного подхода к делу выявились уже теперь. SA 1926/1 pp 9 translated by L. Smirnova

50 Получается неловкое впечатление какой-то паники Моссовета перед возрастающим жилищным голодом... В домах, выстроенных в 1925 году и частично в 1924, отсутствует элементарное санитарно-гигиеническое требование сквозного проветривания при слабой изоляции друг от друга двух смежных квартир. Следствием такой планировки будет почти всегда скверная ориентировка одной половины квартир по отношению к сторонам света. В планировке и размерах комнат нет логической связи с рабочей обстановкой, не чувствуется никакой попытки приблизить эти жилищные ящики к современным условиям жизни. Ibid translated by L. Smirnova
unlikely that the apartment will be occupied by only one family. The depth of the rooms in relation to the height of the premises is unacceptable even by official government standards. Dark toilet and the washroom (latter absent in 1925 constructions) do not bother the builders (absent), to not to mention the front room. The only amenity at first provided for the public – the garbage chute – is nowhere to be seen. Gas – justified by life and mistakenly considered to be a luxury is not provided to the residents.\footnote{Ibid translated by L. Smirnova}

Vegman argues for the basic things, necessities that should be provided to the people. Throughout his article one can see his endeavor for the better for the people, which is done through calculation. There is even care for the depth of the rooms and the amount of air and light that would reach those rooms.

With the arithmetic comparison and calculations, numbers and tables of which type of construction is cheaper, better, Vegman concludes that Mossovet’s urge to try to reduce the costs of apartments with only one planned solution does not lead to the desired results as too little attention is paid to the building material and the building structure. He criticizes their planning and the costs that person would have to pay for that apartment, also underlines that Mossvet’s housing construction in 1926 repeats all of the previous mistakes.

SA 1927/1 pages 12 - 20

This is another article by G.G. (Georgii Gustavovich) Vegman - Enlarged housing.

In the first part of it – Housing need he writes:

A desperate need of housing that fell upon us in 1921, sharply and progressively developed until 1924, and now has its own “crisis”, being a national disaster, an ulcer that corrodes not only the human body, but the whole country as a whole. This catastrophe creates desperate living conditions for a person, lowers his ability for work and activities, disrupts
Vegman is further underlying on that catastrophe with presentation of the mortality rates in bourgeoisie and worker areas quartiles in the before war Odessa. He continues with the example of metallurgical center city of Northern Ural - Nadezhdinsk, where two thirds of workers are coming to the city but must leave due to the lack of housing, which leads to decline in the production productivity.

Vegman criticizes building construction for not keeping up with the population growth. He illustrates that by numbers of people lacking housing. He also presents calculations of different living norms (spaces) and the amount of money needed to solve the problem versus the lower amount spent.

The second part, *New housing* starts with Vegman pinpointing the negative attitude towards new housing and household building. He explains that propaganda for the creation of large residential units is an act of correct, reasonable and logical human tactics in the struggle for one’s existence. That the persons strive for collective living is not forced by the revolution but arises from the strive for the most elementary and natural economic premises of being.

Vegman writes that new housing shall free the person from household burden, from the loss of time. That mismatch between housework and individual’s abilities should be eliminated. That the individual upbringing of children, separate housekeeping and other deeds can be if not eliminated but eased by the challenging of the old ways of life and approaching the maximum collectivization of work, leisure and cultural development. Hence, the ingrowth of such forms of social life as workshops, schools, nurseries, canteens, hospitals and more is irresistible.

Vegman also writes that the different elements of life, - rooms should be perceived as, and made into one whole (housing complex) organism where all the different functions are emerged into the clear structure and active units serve both the economic and cultural needs of people. Here one can see argumentation for the *dom-kommuna*. One can see similarities with *Target setting in modern*
architecture by Ginzburg. Having in mind the economic problems of the state and the lack of the housing the article is somehow an argumentation of such solution. The solution is represented and solved in a strictly functional way.

Vegman writes that the housing organism shall be complex machine, practical and clear in action, perfect in design and mechanism, simple and delicate in calculation. Also, that suggestion by OSA at the September International Congress in Vienna about maximum socialization and enlargement of housing construction is the base of the struggle in elimination of housing needs.

He also stresses that the cost of the building is calculated not only from the construction of it, but also from its exploitation. Collective using makes housing units publicly available where all amenities should be included into the cost. That the false view on housing amenities - shower, hot water, garbage chute, gas, etc., as luxury goods shall be destroyed – as these are necessities.

The presence of non-residential, premises of public importance such as nursery, meeting room, children’s room with outdoor areas etc. in a building puts person closer with public education. Living conditions in such organism would, according to Vegman bring the one closer to life, discipline, make one a social, decent (общественным) easily, freely and correctly developing person.

Here, one can see not only strive for the most economical solution of the housing problem, but also a care for a person, in a thought through commanding way. Vegman’s article represents constructivists, SA view on the byt. Slightly utopian but caring for each citizen, wishing for one to become a better person. Displaying strong care for collectivization and socialization of people. Though caring this attitude leaves no space for oddity.

In the third part called The reality, Vegman gives example of Moscow’s housing building whilst criticizing it. He insists that there is no need to make city into a beautiful sculpture and the only right and rational way to make enough housing is to build higher, not wider. Leaving out larger green areas, which is possible only when building higher would not only be economic - no need to clear out, prepare more space for the buildings but also will be sanitary-hygienic.

In next subsection Levels Vegman continues discussion of the number of floors. He writes that it is necessary to rebel against the Architects Congress in Dresden opinion, as it “more and more
begin to penetrate our reality”, of building multi-story buildings as economically untenable. He explains that with presentation of facts and numbers.\textsuperscript{54}

In the Internal planning he writes about Mossovet competition of 1926 that resulted in faulty criticism towards dom-kommuna and building of Mossovet’s own communal housing project. Mossovet communal housing plan according to Vegman is not good, as it creates individual apartments and strings them horizontally on the corridor (in contrast to previous vertical distribution along the stairwell) and leaves apartments with 3 large dark rooms, instead of 5 smaller separate ones, as well without slightest amendment on collectivism of use. He states that expanding buildings in the transverse direction (to 15-16 m) to reduce the total cubic capacity of the house and the perimeter of the outer walls has made apartments deeper, and that due to the housing hunger a whole family will be settled into one room. He attaches a table of child mortality with families having 1 room, 2, 3, 4 where the mortality of those having just one room is highest and as number of rooms increases mortality is decreasing.

Vegman writes rather critical about the actions of power, something that most likely would not have been possible in the years to come, as well something that might contributed to seeing constructivist ideas as threatening to the communist party’s ideas and ideals. His text shows care for the people. Vegman also writes, that the Moscow planning shows no signs of improving byt. He agitates not only architects, engineers but every person to:

\begin{quote}
At the same time, it is necessary to zealously protect the principles of building a new life and its design from those associated perversions and misunderstandings that begin to aggressively invade our reality, thereby undermining the healthy and strong roots of the new life.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

In the part Equipment, Vegman states:

\begin{quote}
The question of internal equipment of the premises should be posed with all breadth and seriousness. The saving (economical) mode should not adversely affect the internal comfort of buildings. This basic requirement of the modern working man must be realized at all costs
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{54}...всё сильнее и сильнее начинают проникать в нашу действительность. SA 1927/1 pp16 translated by L.Smirkova

\textsuperscript{55}В то же время необходимо ревностно оберегать принципы построения нового быта и его оформления от тех попутных извращений и непониманий, которые начинают настойчиво вторгаться в нашу действительность, подтачивая тем самым здоровые и сильные корни новой жизни. \emph{Ibid} translated by L. Smirkova
and carried out now as the real achievement of the revolution. A person’s life and his time should be regarded higher than is now being done, hence, our provisions expressed during the organization of the “new residential building” should be carried out at the most energetic pace, especially since all our construction is too capital in nature.  

That means supply of thermal energy and its maintenance of residential buildings and neighborhoods. Gas stove system instead of boiler rooms and use of wood. Not only in personal apartments as such, but the whole city should be improved. This is another example of the care for the one’s life. The article is finished with the discussion of Building Processes and Materials.

SA 1929/4 pages 121-123
This issue starts with announcement of Socialist competition OSA for housing – to make a project that would respond to all socially-political and economic proletariat demands and would not exceed feasibility of today (left side).

The thesis on housing adopted at the 1st Congress of the OSA is printed to the right. Thesis is about the pre-evolutionary housing as a tool for maximum workers exploitation and tool for class fight of bourgeoisie with proletariat.

It is followed by the analysis of bourgeoisie apartment where apartment is presented as a material form of petty bourgeois ideology, and analysis of housing existent in USSR: the falsity of the mechanical transfer of the bourgeois apartment scheme to the new structure of society.

The part depicting the problem of a new social type of housing starts with dom-kommuna and Lenin’s quote “Class setting - collectivization of life, i.e. “The mass struggle against the household, or rather, the mass restructuring into a large socialist economy”” 57

Social composition of communal house. Housing cannot be solved without considering the goals and objectives that the working class faces in building a socialist way of life. Clear differentiation of domestic and production processes and their maximum collectivization.

1) rest, sleep, recovery of strength
2) feeding
3) sex life
4) education/raising children
5) sanitary-hygienical course
6) medical supervision and control

Only the scientific organization of industrial-domestic (production-household) processes and the real accounting of the country’s economy are the only correct prerequisites for a constructivist architect in solving dom-kommuna 58

57 Классовая установка - коллективизация быта, т.е. "классовая борьба против домашнего хозяйства или, вернее, массовая перестройка в крупное социалистическое хозяйство" 1929/4 pp122. Translated by L.Smirnova
58 Социальный состав дома-коммуны.

Жилье не может быть решено без учета тех целей и задач, которые становятся перед рабочим классом в построении социалистического уклада жизни.

Четкое дифференцирование бытовых и производственных процессов и максимальная их коллективизация.

1) отдых, сон, восстановление сил
2) питание
3) половая жизнь
4) воспитание детей
5) культурное развитие

26
The above is written in cut out to the right. The cited are the problems of new social type of housing, which are to be solved and on which the housing solution should focus. These things are what constructivists see as necessary, somehow basic for the new person and society.

SA 1929/4 pages 122 - 123

The above is followed by Dom-Kommuna by V. Vielman.

He writes:

*The types of housing that are currently existent in both bourgeois countries and in our country, all without exception (not counting individual dormitories) are types of individual, enclosed apartments, adapted for housing one family, as an independent economic unit.*

Vielman states that such housing has fulfilled the previous needs but is suited and thought to serve one family only. This type of housing, according to Vielman is designed for someone, a woman, housewife, maiden to serve the house at all time, which is not functional and doesn’t fit the nowadays reality where both the husband and the wife work and have no time and sources for household work.

Here the notion of functionality conflicts with the idea of maiden, or of housewife. As Vielman argues that there are no resources for such planning he is in a way speaking of equality, where women as men are to give their strength for something else than household duties. His criticism also implies a certain standard, a norm of family and the household and organizes it strictly.

Liberating women from the household work in this way made it later possible to create a myth of the Soviet country – a myth where the political leader would be the Father, the country itself would me a Mother, men would become its sons and soldiers, whose task is to protect their Mother, and women would be left with the task of supporting the sons in their duty.

6) санитарно-гигиеническое отправление, обслуживание
7) медицинский надзор и контроль SA 1929/4 pp 122 translated by L. Smirnova

59 Типы жилья, распространенные в настоящее время как в буржуазных странах, так и у нас, все без исключения (не считая отдельных общежитий) являются типами индивидуальной более ли менее замкнутой квартиры, приспособленной для жилья одной семьи, как самостоятельной хозяйственной единицы SA 1929/4 pp 122 translated by L. Smirnova

60 SA 1929/4 pp 122
61 L. Vasiljeva, Political myths of totalitarian society, Russia and ATR, 2009, pp 149-158
Vielman continues that at the time of grandiose socialistic building the above described type of housing is no longer of any use – as one person possibly a woman must “serve” the house. He notices that such is especially true when larger flats are split into communal housing. He advocates for dom-kommuna, however, stating that existing examples of dom-kommuna are not complete yet and don’t yet resemble the future type of housing.

Vielman underlines that the new type of living, the dom-kommuna, shall be created to free women from household's hard work, which is important as woman works and participates in the cultural life and does not need such burden. Furthermore, he writes that different rooms in dom-kommuna are to be suited for differently aged people, each person ought to have own personal space and that space shall be well communicated or attached to the common spaces. Common spaces should include reading rooms, clubs, laundries, cafeterias, kindergartens etc.

In that part of the article that thought of freeing is especially tangible. The sense of equality, where the female burden is considered. The care for the person. This is another example of presumed gender equality, where the common good leaves no room for different. Further article continues with a detailed plan of dom-kommuna (by Barcsh and Vladimirov).

This article is a good example of ongoing discussion in SA of the new ways of living. It is revolutionary and at the same time post-revolutionary. The year is 1929, one can think of what Zeynep Celik (Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism) or Luis E. Carranza (Le Corbusier and the Problems of Representation) write of Le Corbusier and his view on women as inferior.62 Le Corbusier, whom the constructivists knew, and to who’s five rules of architecture related. Different kind of thought is displayed here. It is example of a bit of Utopian view, where all are equal in their way for better future and the need to throw away old ways of being.

There is significant number of articles that are left out in this section but could have been included. SA 1929/1 of rationalization of kitchens pp 24- 25, that includes examples of the West and goes into the discussion of depth of the flats. SA 1929/1 pp 31-33, with project of dom-kommuna, and SA 1929/2 pp 41-43, by M.O Barsch, V. Vladimirov, pp 46,48-50 by S. Nikolaev, pp 51-55.

Byt in other places than home

SA 1926/1 page 35

On these pages is an example of constructivist idea of byt covering more than just household. Here constructivist architects want to not only organize person’s private life and house in the means of better functionality for and of the person, they also want to organize one’s surroundings. They are willing to create new world, interests and meanings. In the strive for the better future and better person some of the old realities and beliefs are being actively replaced, and that replacement according to constructivists should also be functional.

There is an illustration project layout of a kiosk by Constructivist Aleksey Gan and an article written by Andrej Novikov. Novikov writes that sovetization of a countryside goes by different ways. Tractors and electrification, cooperation of rural population, new methods of cultural cultivating the land, political enlightenment work, and much more — all in general — constitute the colossal socio-cultural activity that the Soviet government, the party, and the proletarian community are developing in the countryside.

However, he is concerned:

\[\text{The peasants involved in the construction of new social and economic forms, due to lack of funds, continue to live in the old conditions of the household of the hut, and even their public centers, which are already becoming an integral part of the Soviet village (reading huts, clubs, etc.) remain architecturally unformed.}\]

\[\text{In villages, as before, only the church is, so to speak, an architectural place. She has no rival building in the village, which would agitate for the new life of the village with her stay in the architectural environment of rural buildings.}\]

\[\text{Given our economic situation and realizing that at this time it is difficult to approach the practical implementation of the construction of new buildings even for the public needs of the village, it is desired to approach this task out of turn at least on a modest scale.}\]

\[63 \text{ Вовлеченные в строительство новых общественных и хозяйственных форм крестьяне — в силу недостатка средств — продолжают пребывать в старых условиях домашнего быта двора-избы, и даже их общественные}\]
These public needs include reading huts, and social clubs and created not only by constructivists on the paper but can be also dictated by situation in the country, party. There is a view of what person is to be, and what the person it to do.

Facade planes are cut so that the flow of water and the sliding of snow occurs in three directions, and not in six. This made possible to expand the cubature of the second tier and use it under the premises for goods.

Material design - wood, sheet metal and glass.

Ibid translated by L. Smirnova
Novikov presents the solution to the problem of absence of a decent architectural place in the rural space by Alexey Gan. It is a kiosk where two forms of activity should be united: commercial - sale of the literature, stationery materials and supplies and public - serving the local population with the cultural connection of the village with the city, through mail, radio and a movie screen. In addition, kiosk should become the central place for the public.

The shape of the kiosk, the triangle plan, is also explained by the fact that the streets of the village are not organized for the most part and kiosk installation should not count on special terrain planning and at the same time should be visible from all points of view fully and equally.

This article stands for care and organization of life not only of city resident, but the countryside resident, too. As religion is not thought to play any important part in the one’s life anymore, constructivists come up with an architectural solution for the place of new awe, that would also be functional, space that meant to educate and cultivate the person.

SA 1926/2 pages 52 - 55

Example of the idea of controlled, diagramed movement – The Telegraph project.

Competitive design of a central telegraph and a radio node building. Both the plan and the article are by L. and A. Vesnin. The building is a reinforced concrete frame system. On the streets of Tverskaya, Ogarev and Belinsky - 4 floors, not including the ground floor and basement, in the part of the building that faces the newly designed passage-square - 5 floors.

Inside the building on the ground level floor different vestibules are designed for employees of the Central Telegraph (Ogarev St.), MTS (passage square) and RU (Tverskaya St.). All the premises of the Central Telegraph office: (cash desks, dispatch assembly, sorting, control, equipment rooms etc. ) are located for the purpose of making the shortest routes of the telegrams from senders to devices passing through the necessary points, from devices to the expedition.

For that purpose, short transitions that connect the stairwells to each other have been introduced. These transitions create the shortest connection between all rooms with the lobby, the dining room and the bedrooms(!). For the same purpose of shortest routes of the telegrams, efficiency and functionality, there are three different vestibules for these three companies. Thanks to the covered
walkways the distance from the lobby to the employee's place of work is relatively insignificant and the movement of employees past the apparatus is minimized.
In order to not hamper the production process by stairwells, elevators and toilets are taken out in the courtyard. In case of expansion of the 4th floor and the V superstructure - both floors will represent large halls without incoming partitions and stairs. Connections between the lobby to the workplace of employees are made by elevators, stairs and covered walkways. The number of elevators and their sizes are determined from the calculation so that 2200 simultaneously working employees shall be delivered to the place of work in no more than 15 minutes.65

First the planning of the building is described and then the construction form. Construction form includes explanation of facades task - expressing the production nature of the building, watches on the Tverskaya St., and drop – down setting for light messages.

The heating of the building is central. Ventilation with heated air taken from above. The facades show ventilation chambers with intake pipes and exhaust pipes. The overlap is flat. Above the fourth floor, an indoor insulated room was designed to accommodate the central heating distribution pipes and ventilation channels. This article is an example of functional constructivist thinking, where all the details presented with a great care and thorough calculations. Rationalization of space as a tool for economy and maximum efficiency. The architecture is no more about the beauty only, it is about functionality.

The other relevant articles to the byt in other places than home could include inter alia Workers club by A.M. Rodchenko SA 1926/1 pp 36, SA 1929/3 pp 89 - 94 Library by Vesnin brothers – thorough plan of the library itself together with diagram of movement of the readers and the books.

Discussion

My thesis has shown that constructivist architects deeply relied on the strictly scientific method in the architectural solution of any spaces. The core ideas within constructivism are functionalism or the functional method, rationalization, organization. Constructivist concept went beyond the architecture and engineering into the construction of a society, even the life of individual. Constructivist architects had a vision of how household should function and be constructed. The

65 SA 1926/2 pp 55 translated by L. Smirnova
goal in the residential architecture besides organization, mechanization and highest efficiency was to ease and to better one’s life.

**Functional method**

**Organization and Rationalization**

The concept forming the constructivist approach to the byt focused on the functionality and rationalization of resources, spaces and the ways of living. At times the approach seems ignorant to an individual. However, *Sovremennaya Arkhitektura* magazine also shows great care of the individuals’ well-being, hygiene, education in the constructivist thinking. The recurring ideas within that care are timesaving, saving of the manpower and elimination of household burden. This care about the well-being of the individual can be seen as a part of constructivists’ rational organization of the society. When the transformation of the society is seen as a national project comprising everyone in it, the well-being of the individual becomes an integral part of the society’s ability to complete the transformation. One’s well-being is thus being placed in the functional structure where it contributes towards the increased individual work capacity, which was demanded and stimulated by different means (propaganda, collectivization of labor etc.) during 1920\(^{th}\) and 1930\(^{th}\).

Functionality is one of the core principles of the constructivist thought. Every object must be functional, and the more functions an object can have, the better. Examples of this attitude are seen in the multifunctional furniture described in different household objects, for example in *SA 1926/2* 2\(^{nd}\) cover page and *SA 1929/3* pp 120. These objects include folding chair-kiosk for the sale of stationary items, folding table designed for drawing work, which can be transformed into the dining table, and innovative projects of folding metal bed and folding bookshelf. The idea of using every object in the most functional way is fundamental in constructivism thinking. Another great example of this thinking are the windows as not only source of light, but the sufficient ventilation system – The Telegraph building in *SA 1926/2*.

Efficiency as the part of economical solution and functionality is also described by Pasternak in *New forms of contemporary architecture SA 1927/2-5*. The demand of functionality is explained by Ginzburg in *Target setting in modern architecture SA 1927/1*, where he also includes economic reasoning into his analysis. Functionality of building higher and leaving out larger scale green
territories, not only for economic reasons, but for the reasons of well-being and hygiene is described by Vegman in *Enlarged housing* SA 1927/1.

The principle of saving the manpower in order to stimulate its productivity, as a functional and rationalized care for the individual also lies as the theoretical basis of *dom-kommuna*. It is seen in Buchli’s *Narkomfin*, or in Narkomfin building description in the SA. This project by Ginzburg was thought as exemplary, transitional to more accomplished stage of *dom-kommuna*. An absence of kitchen in the plan, common balcony, roof, laundry, kindergarten and cafeteria under the same roof as the house are all done according to the plan of increased functionality and collectivization.

**Mechanization and Collectivisation**

Constructivists distinguished between work and home marginally - the functions of different spaces are different, but the idea of solving the space is the same. They wanted to rationalize architecture and everyday life by mechanizing it and separating different aspects of processes of one’s everyday activity. Ginzburg’s *Target setting in modern architecture* SA 1927/1 is an example of that idea of rational organization. In the article Ginzburg argues for solving the household and its organization, care of the person in the means of saving the manpower and coordination of movements. What Ginzburg writes about is the principle of mechanization as of improvement of household, *byt* and everyday life. He states, “Establishing the absence of a fundamental difference between production and domestic processes, the functional method thereby clearly establishes the absence of any fundamental difference between these two branches of architecture”. The architect’s task is not only to build, but to organize life, to come up with the best solutions to it, *Kiosk* in SA 1926/1 pp 35. Socialization and collectivization were the key to success of the new utopian society, and mechanization was an enabling power behind these societal changes.

Constructivist architects came up with a new, obvious to them solution to the housing crisis. The solution implied saving of manpower, saving of sources, mechanization of everyday life, high functionality and been summoned up in many ways in the *dom-kommuna*. That can be seen in *New forms of contemporary architecture* 1927/4-5 by Pasternak. Vielman advocates for *Dom-Kommuna* in SA 1929/4.
Presumably, the idea of collectivization has its roots the acute housing crisis. There are several articles in SA that stress the urgency of that crisis, and the negative impact of it to one’s life. It is a national disaster according to Vegman in *Enlarged housing* **SA1927/1**, where he states that the lack of housing includes lack of the possibility of one’s well-being, personal space, and hygiene. There he also argues for dom-kommuna. In *Workers building in Moscow* **SA 1926/1** Vegman criticizes bad solutions to the crisis calling different amenities necessities and not luxury. In the same article he calls dom-kommuna a “healthy, rational approach to new forms of life” and criticizes building constructions where bachelors are forgotten. However, his article leaves the space for the question of who these bachelors are.

**Individual and gender equality**

Care for the individual is tangible on the pages of *Sovremennaya Arkhitektura*.

List of seven production-household processes that are to be collectivized and hence accessible for everyone is states in **SA 1929/4 pp 122**. That list includes medical supervision and control, education of children, rest, hygienical course, - things that are seen as basic needs by the constructivists.

Another example is *Workers building* **SA 1926/1** where Vegman agitates for the basic amenities to be provided to the masses. He also criticizes current housing solution pointing out the its inequality and stating that current solution is suitable only for families.

However, no matter of the care for individual, from what is seen in SA, constructivists ideas did not suppose the abundance of personal space or the personal objects in their architecture. Most of the economic cuts were made in that area, sources and space been saved on its construction, thus allowing to spend more on the common spaces. This idea can be seen in **SA 1927/4-5 New forms of contemporary architecture** by Pasternak. Dom-kommuna or collective using, is called the solution to the housing problem by Vegman in *Enlarged housing* **1927/1**. There Vegman also states that communal living is better to the one’s well-being, latter can eventually be argued with, but it is not in SA.

The constructivist concept of care for one’s well-being often implies strict organization according to the architectural plans. The organizational care also includes construction of social places
outside of the city – SA 1926/1 pp 35. The care for the well-being can also be seen in the search for the most efficiency - Telegraph SA 1926/2 pp 52-55. Constructivists architects are discussing the best ways of economy of manpower in the strive for the better society and better person. They discuss how person ought to feel in order to work. For constructivist architects it is important to solve the question of one’s well-being and to do so in most efficient ways. The solution must be highly rational and functional, easily applicable, it should organize and mechanize person’s everyday life. In that rationalization of byt lies the solution for that better society and the person. This argumentation is seen in Target setting in modern architecture SA 1927/1 by Ginzburg.

Gender equality seems to be an important part of constructivist idea of household, but in its own peculiar way. The household itself was meant to become a collective aspect of life, rather than divided in small family units, what we now call the nuclear family. Due to the collectivization women were supposed to be freed and to get an opportunity to fully participate in all elements of social life. This element of collectivization, unifying the community was many times described in the SA magazines, however, never with a focus on women, in way that one would expect.

Various SA articles suggest the strive for gender equality. The place of the man and of the woman appear to be the same – at work, education, at the collectives. There appears to be no difference of women and men to the constructivist architects, thought women are to be especially freed from the household burden. The household as a woman’s burden was to be eliminated.

Constructivists cared about family in their distinct way. They understood the importance of it but at the same time they were willing to shape it differently, so that everyone could work, educate, participate in cultural life. To do so, the professionals were to take care of the children, meals were to be eaten at the cafeterias (where food is also prepared by professionals). By professionalizing everyday household work, the constructivists wanted to diminish the importance of the near family and strengthen the importance of society.

The will of freeing from household burden is described in the articles: Architects Task SA 1927/1 by Ginzburg, Housing problems SA 1927/1 by Vegman, New forms of contemporary architecture SA 1927/4-5 by Pasternak, Dom-Kommuna 1929/4 by Vielman. The articles depict awareness of how much of mostly woman’s effort is wasted in the housework and the vision of such as unnecessary.
The Sovremennaya Arkhitektura articles are mainly written by men, which puts women of the time in a controlled position. However, in *New forms of contemporary architecture* by Pasternak there are eight different projects for the new *dom-kommuna* and female participants are present. There are no female members of SA board, but female engineers and architects are showcased in SA - Beteleva 1927/1 p 27, Nina Worotynzewa and Raissa Pollak SA 1927/4-5 p 136-137, Tatiana Tschijikowa SA 1927/6 p 186, Gretchina SA 1927/6 p 188, more. One can suggest that if the person was to be completely freed from many everyday duties, as constructivists wished, there would have been more women specialists, in every field.

**Constructivism and the communist utopia**

The communist ideas are seen in the constructivists’ will of collectivization, references to Lenin in the magazine (SA 1929/4 pp122), and in the manifestation of the will and strive for the better future. However, Constructivist movement, as the Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazine have been eliminated in 1930th as a movement diverging from with party ideas.

Communist ideas can be seen in some of the SA articles. These articles are about collectivization, the communist future, equality of gender, classes and of importance of community – *Enlarged housing* by Vegman SA 1927/1. He especially notes that economical mode should not adversely affect the internal comfort of buildings. Altogether constructivist strive for collectivization and for the new ways of being seems to emphasize personal amenity. Buchli in *Narkomfin* writes of importance of communist theories to Ginzburg.

Pasternak in *Housing problems*, SA 1927/4-5 writes that there ought to be no class differences in the new housing and criticizes the difference created by the old housing. He also criticizes the wrong type of housing currently being built and states that the solution to housing is *dom-kommuna*. There is a strive for good, decent housing for every person, single as family coming from any class. In SA 1929/4 pp 121-122 pre-evolutionary housing called tool for the maximum workers exploitation, and a tool of class fight of bourgeois with proletariat. That kind of criticism can speak for the negative view on the class difference.
Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazine, as a printed work of OSA is representative of their ideas and the image of the (better) world they were aiming to create. It is important to note, that the language in the SA magazine shapes the meaning immensely. The shape of the language is difficult to show in the translation, but it is worth mentioning that the language used in articles is inspiring, at times agitational or ideological when the constructivists explain the new means and functions for the better future, and the rational solutions to the problems they discuss. Dom-kommuna is the greatest housing solution, collectivization is good and needed, functional method is the right tool for architectural solutions, mechanization, and rationalization – is the right way. The language is also strongly critical where the criticism takes place.

Constructivists’ ideas of minimalistic functionality spread widely and remain actual. Today, the Narkomfin building is under renovation with its flats put up for sale with the slogan of “House as machine for living”\(^6\). The will to cut loose from previous forms and look for the new once has influenced modern art and theoretical thinking massively.

**Summary**

The aim of the paper was to investigate the constructivist idea of the household portrayed in the Sovremennaya Arkhitektura magazines. The paper consists of the articles published in the Sovremennaya Arkhitektura (1926-1930) selected as representative of constructivist ideas of byt, household.

The articles have been translated, cited or referred to and scrutinized to explain the subject of the paper. The analysis is followed by the discussion where the constructivist view on the household, byt is further examined.

The constructivist concept of byt represents the will of organization, rationalization and efficiency. Realizing and underlining importance of the economy and highest efficiency, authors of the articles in the Sovremennaya Arkhitektura show the peculiar care of one’s well-being. At times the care means strict organization or implying radical and new ways of living, such as dom-kommuna.

There is great space for the new research to be done, constructivist ideas and architecture to be analyzed and investigated.

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