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Soviet housing: Culture and architecture

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SOVIET HOUSING: CULTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

by

ROBERT SCOTT KAGLER

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

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January, 1992
ABSTRACT

SOVIET HOUSING: CULTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

BY

Robert Scott Kagler

The creation of architecture is a process of solving problems. Architecture is complete if and only if it satisfies the competing human needs for liberty and security. Soviet Housing satisfies the need for security in architecture because it is considered as one part of a series of guarantees. By integrating a degree of choice into this existing set of basic guarantees, the need for liberty in architecture can be satisfied as well.
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10 January 1992 - R.S.K. - Houston, Texas
SOVIET HOUSING: CULTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

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PREFACE:

Initial Intentions

"a tale of one culture"
"a tale of one country"
"a tale of one city"
"a tale of one people"
"a tale of two houses"

"House" represents a range of solutions to the problem of providing shelter for living beings. For the fox, house is hole. For the beaver, house is dam. All living beings have their forms of houses.

Humans, like other living beings, either turn to nature, in the case of cave and tree, or make their own house, as with tent and shed. Today, many variations exist in the creation of the human house. Each varies in form, with location, and by creator. The vast number of existing and possible solutions to the human house is exceeded only by the great number of factors influencing those solutions.

The most common - and presumably the most easily recognizable - solutions to the human house are those that maximize and minimize the wants and the needs of the prospective inhabitant. These solutions are, of course, the extremes: the most and the least. While opposing extremes obviously work against each other, they work together as well to help to answer two equally important questions: (1) What is the house for which people strive? and (2) What is the house which people accept?

One of the factors in the creation of the human house is culture. Culture is an ambiguous and multi-faceted term that constitutes nearly all aspects of a people, a place, and a time.

My task is to find the extreme solutions for the human house within a culture or cultures. The time is now. The place is Moscow. The people are Russian.

At first, I will examine Moscow as the center of Russian urban life. Using analytical diagrams, I will propose the next step for the growth and development of Moscow: A New Master Plan.

Then, I will examine past and present solutions to the human house for Russians in Moscow. From this I will prioritize the issues of the human house for that culture. Using these issues as guidelines, I will design two houses, each addressing one of the two extremes for the human house in that culture, and each answering one of the questions posed above.

1 July 1991 - R.S.K. - Houston, Texas
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PREFACE (cont'd):

Personal Perceptions

Architecture, while primarily serving to transform the thoughts and ideas of the architect into tangible reality, also acts as an expression of culture.

Culture is composed of a series of institutions, concepts, and values - taken or adopted by certain persons, in a certain place, and during a certain time - which are common to and become synonymous with those persons, that place, and that time.

The new architecture that I will create, as well as the existing architecture that I will affect, must respect and reflect the culture (or cultures) it is to serve, because in addition to perceiving architecture, people must essentially live with (both within and without) architecture. Certainly those whose lives and cultures that architecture affects must contribute both to its form and to its function.

Housing - the very concept of a house - has both cultural and architectural aspects. The house is an architectural type, building type, and suggests numerous visual images. The house - or housing - is also suggestive of a solution, or set of solutions, to the basic problem of providing shelter for living beings. It is through the house that I shall explore the relationship between culture and architecture.

The city is a house for life, just as a cemetery is a house for death. It functions on many levels. It restrains and limits. It serves and enables. Cities, as houses, are planned, or not planned. This planning addresses needs and desires of the inhabitant or the planner.


I want to learn. I want to learn about that which intrigues me, that from which I am isolated, that of which I am ignorant. My subject is Moscow: the city, its housing, and its people.

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PREFACE (cont'd):

Contextual Conclusions

I design with emphasis on moderation and attention to context. I tend to search for that which is useful and good in something, and then see how I can built upon it. I see the world not as a clean slate, a fresh start, or a blank canvas. I see it as a well-etched surface, an ongoing relay race, or an unfinished painting. I can join in the process, or I can not join in the process. My choice is to join in the process. My choice is to take part. My choice is to work.

The context of this project is many things. It is person - Russian. It is place - Moscow. It is thing - house.

The context of this project is intrigue. Russians are intrigued with the uncertainty of their future. The world is intrigued with the daily events inside Russia. People, when presented with the facts and statistics related to this project, are generally intrigued. Eyebrows are raised. Jaws drop. People are shocked.

The context of this project is isolation. Intrigue is only possible when preceded by isolation. Throughout history, the context in which this project is rooted has been separate from the context of the rest of the world. This isolation and separation has been both consistent and persistent - many times forced, other times voluntary.

The context of this project is ignorance. The intrigue and isolation that characterize the context of this project are reinforced by the absolute and total ignorance within Western cultures of Russian and Soviet architecture as a topic of study, as an evolutionary process, and even as a valid part of history.

We simply do not know. We simply do not understand. We simply have not cared.

I have spent seven years of my life thinking about the context of this project. I have spent seven years of my life examining the context of this project. I have spent seven years of my life developing my ability to know, to understand, and to care about the context of this project. The context of this project has been, is now, and will continue to be for me a very real concern. To those people who do not know me, this project is simply that - a project, a paper, a design scheme, or a thesis. My Thesis Committee, undergraduate advisors, Soviet colleagues, friends, and family all know better, because they know me. For this is to me very truly much more than a project, paper, design scheme, or a thesis. It is in fact a portrait of all that I have chosen to know, understand, and care for. It is indeed my life.

28 October 1991 - R.S.K. - Houston, Texas
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PREFACE (cont'd):

Real Reactions

My final defense of this project fostered informative discussion between members of my Thesis Committee. Each member spoke about a different aspect of the project in particular, and about the scope of the project in general.

In general, I have learned much about Soviet housing. Such issues as social rights and guarantees, architectural education and practice, and economic and political conditions are all parts of this complicated topic.

In particular, members identified strong and weak points in my arguments, conclusions, and proposals.

With regard to strong points, members agreed that my proposal is possible, buildable, and livable. It accomplishes the set goal to create a different way to house people in an established housing system. On the levels of housing unit, housing region, and master plan, it conveyed my intentions effectively.

With regard to weak points, the limitation of the nature of the project sometimes prevent me from asking important questions. As a result, my arguments, conclusions, and proposals are sometimes quite abstract. The emphasis of the proposal is clarity of diagram.

The future holds many interesting possibilities. With regard to the Soviet Union, there are many questions to answer, decisions to make, and opportunities to take. Architects can help and contribute. Using partnership and cooperation not only among architects, but also between architects, economists, politicians, workers, peasants, and volunteers, success is not possible, but inevitable. As a result, the only limitation will be in the doubting eyes of idle skeptics.

10 January 1992 - R.S.K. - Houston, Texas
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1 Architecture

Earth, Wood, and Stone. Europe and America. Revolutionary Designs. Peace, Land, and State. New Economic Policy. Culture of the Proletariat. Socialist Realism. Openness and Reconstruction. Architecture in the Soviet Union has been a subject to which outsiders have rarely been exposed. There have not existed many detailed and informative books on the subject. There has not been - and today still is not - a healthy exchange of information between and among Soviet and non-Soviet researchers. Furthermore, isolation of information has over time led to a perceived lack of interest in that information, both inside and outside the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union of today, history seems to be confusing, as it is rewritten daily, with new declarations, rules, laws, and discoveries. The history of the region over the past several centuries, however, is unchanging and constant. The world nevertheless is confused about that as well. It is a case of confusion due to lack of information versus confusion resulting from ignorance. Architecture in the Soviet Union is there before the eye, and it is waiting to be understood.
1.1 Earth, Wood, and Stone

Architecture in the Soviet Union is as much a product of its materials as it is a result of any artistic or architectural style at any point in time.

The Soviet Union is a huge country, covering a significant portion of the land on this planet. Earth, as a result, is an important material for the architecture and people in the Soviet Union. It is on the earth that they lead their existence. It is from the earth that they get their sustenance. It is in the earth that they seek protection. People in the Soviet Union do not take their earth for granted. They appreciate its purpose, and they understand its vastness.

Wood is another crucial material in the evolution of architecture in the Soviet Union. First, the earliest and still extant examples of Russian architecture are the churches and the huts. The churches were built out of wood to show off structural knowledge and technical skill and to glorify the authoritative God of the Russian Orthodox Church. The huts, however, were built out of wood to shelter peasants and to protect them from the harsh elements of northern winters. Second, as related by one author,¹

"...Russians love and understand wood, since nature has endowed their country with so many forests and so few stones. So few in fact that when, in the past, a peasant found some in the fields, he made the sign of the cross of the gratitude."

¹ Bortoli. [The author of this book, a Westerner, gives a response and relates experiences that I view as typical among visitors to the Soviet Union. The author states, "For the USSR is not a country for passive tourists. You go to find out. To form your own opinion of the mystery, mythology, and propaganda. To make your own judgment among so many contradictory statements and so many confusing sentiments, to see for yourself the impact of the October revolution on old Russia."]
Stone came into use in the areas of what is today the Soviet Union for two reasons. First, architects were able to expand upon the knowledge and technology used in their wooden structures. Second, communities - and large cities in particular - were faced with the increased danger from massive fires, and stone was a virtually fireproof building material. In Moscow, for example, the Great Fires of 1547, 1626, 1701, and 1812 correspond to and were followed by increased proliferation of stone construction in the city.²

1.2 Europe and America

Throughout history, the Russian people seem to have accorded what Western observers might characterize as insufficient credit and respect to the nations and peoples of Europe. This perception pertains not only to art and architecture, but to other subjects as well. Consistently tragic experiences, at first with France in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and subsequently with Germany in the twentieth century, appear to have left in the minds of many a Russian a certain bitterness and resentment toward - if not a hatred of - certain European nations and peoples.

There exists a definite reluctance on the part of Russians to acknowledge the very validity and reality of Europe. This pertains to Europe both as the source of many artistic and architectural movements, theories, and achievements, and as a valid and credible source of power and influence over world events throughout history.

² Khromov. [This book was published during the Brezhnev era and contains familiar propaganda - some subtle and some overt - characteristic of official Soviet literature of that time. Brezhnev is quoted many times throughout the book, and the Soviet Union and Moscow are referred to in this book as the model society and city, respectively.]
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As a result, at least for the past two centuries Russians and others in what is today the Soviet Union have looked beyond Europe, to America, for that which they see as real and valid. Whether it was considered to be the pillar of progress or the chasm of capitalism, America - and not Europe - has grown steadily and inescapably into a focal point of Russian existence. In one author's words,³

"In the now dim days before the Communist revolution America represented to Russians more than to any other people a promised land. Particularly to Russian liberals, and also to most Russian radicals, the United States symbolized human dignity, the pioneer virtues, and dazzling material progress."

Even after the Great October Revolution, superlatives regarding America - and particular Americans such as Henry Ford - continued to be expressed, and not just from ordinary citizens, but also from Stalin himself:⁴

"The Soviet Union is forever indebted to Mr. [Henry] Ford. He helped build our tractor and automobile industries."

1.3 Revolutionary Decisions

In the year 1917, the entire world was in a state of turmoil from several years of war in Europe. The devastation affected not only the collective psyche of the human race, but also the land and societies where people lived at the time. Frustration and anger had built up in the minds of many, causing reactions which, while varying significantly in their nature, were consistently common in their extremity and aggression. Together the events at the

³ Barghoon. [This source, although biased toward the West, provides interesting insights and quotes to its readers.]
⁴ ibid.
close of and following World War I amounted to a backlash against the very human faults and imperfections that brought about and contributed to the war in the first place.

In nearly all societies - as well as in most or all institutions within each of those societies - a new creativity was born, and with it a new disapproving interpretation of history. All over the world, many of the protagonists of this creativity heaped blame for bringing about World War I upon everything and everyone associated with the pre-war community that allowed such a war to occur. As mentioned above, the actions of these protagonists were typically extreme and radical, varying as much in actuality as did the labels that define the plethora of movements at that time. This newfound sense of rebellious invention, therefore, by its very nature shunned the traditional, historical, and often limiting aspects of any discipline with which it was associated. The aspects of society affected by this wide-ranging post-war activism included - but most assuredly were not limited to - political, economic, scientific, and literary institutions, as well as those institutions associated with art and architecture.

Before 1917, Russian architecture of the twentieth century appeared fairly consistent with Russian architecture of the nineteenth century. Native tradition and neoclassical style were more prevalent in Russia than the bold gestures of the European avant garde of the early twentieth century. Early twentieth century Russian architecture was about continuity and conformity, and about respect and glory of history and culture. Unlike early twentieth century Russian art, which was affected dramatically by its European counterparts, Russian architecture changed little. It was not until 1917 that the Russian - and then Soviet - avant garde - came to be recognized in the area of architecture.
In world history, the year 1917 possessed additional significance in that it was also the year of the Great October Revolution, which began the transformation of Imperial Russia into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Similar in origin but much more grand in scale than the majority of political and artistic movements that followed World War I, the Great October Revolution in Russia resulted in the establishment of a society that was almost completely isolated from the rest of the world, and whose primary purpose was to annihilate all that had preceded it, as well as all that attempted to coexist with it. While theorists in the Western world struggled with how to integrate pure ideas into their existing, impure societies, there began to grow in the Soviet Union a real society based strictly upon applied theory. With all of its own unique faults, flaws, and imperfections, the early USSR of the 1920's stood as a supreme example of a controlled environment. While far from creating an ideal atmosphere for its inhabitants, this society lent itself to the practical application of new and, more often than not, radical ideas.

1.4 Peace, Land, and State

On 7 November 1917, Vladimir Ilych Lenin set forth three decrees aimed at completing the transformation of Imperial Russia into a pure proletarian state. These decrees, relating to peace, land, and state, served as the newly formed country's most immediate goals and priorities, as well as its means of providing bread for all equally. With regard to peace, Lenin called for an armistice between the Soviet Union and other countries, as well as among the many battling factions within the Soviet Union itself. As for land, he abolished without compensation all forms of landlord ownership. Finally, his decree on state power
officially formed the first Soviet government, known as the Council of People's Commissars.\(^5\)

In architecture, as in nearly every other aspect of Soviet culture, the events of the Revolution and the ensuing Civil War between the rival "Red" and "White" Revolutionary factions, together with the already established anti-war sentiment still lingering from World War I, facilitated a unique and paradoxical environment for design. The whole of pre-revolutionary architecture, with its rich cultural variety of images and forms, was rejected by the Soviets and replaced by a new architectural type under the new name of "proletarian architecture".

Ironically, this revolt against the "bourgeois" style of pre-revolutionary Russian architecture created in the early years of the Soviet Union a period of virtual architectural paranoia. Immediately following the tumultuous course of events in 1917, every architect at first worked at a feverish pace in complete isolation, striving to produce designs that above all else distanced themselves from "old forms" and could not be perceived as embodying, employing, or embracing any of the qualities or characteristics of the condemned architecture of Imperial Russia, or the rest of contemporary world for that matter.

From 1917 until the conclusion of the battles for power between the Bolsheviks ("Red's") and Mensheviks ("White's"), the Soviet government concentrated on recovering from its war wounds and attempting to rescue its people from their prolonged poverty.

\(^5\) Leyda. [While this source concerns itself primarily with the film industry, it provides a valuable chronology of Soviet history - and how it affected and was affected by all the arts including architecture - in the period immediately following the revolution.]
Consequently, all of the country’s limited natural resources and materials were earmarked for public work projects, such as factories, power plants used for the implementation of national electrification, the massive series of interconnected hydroelectric dams and irrigation projects, and the newly organized collective farming system. Large-scale enterprises, such as those just mentioned, were selected for construction as much because of their symbolic value as proof of governmental achievement as they were for serving the collective public good. Such projects, therefore, took precedence over projects less grand and impressive, no matter what the practical purpose or societal contribution of the less majestic might have been.

Soviet architects in the early 1920’s, with little say in the political events of the time, found themselves literally without work, resulting from a lack - or rather a complete absence - of projects. Their only remaining tools were pencil, paper, and voice. Any completed design was destined to advance no further than the stage of an unexecuted project. In a few years, artists and architects alike eventually began to seize upon unrealizable and impractical theories and ideas. They struggled to define and refine their reborn country’s art and architecture, which had not yet been examined, discovered, or utilized by the government as a means for manipulating the masses.

1.5 New Economic Policy

Embattled in a civil war, opposed and blockaded by other nations, and besieged by the Great Famine of 1921, Lenin on 9 August 1921, in an effort to expedite the thwarted national recovery process, initiated the New Economic Policy, which was known by the
people simply as NEP.\textsuperscript{6} Regardless of its goals or theoretical motivation, NEP in actuality amounted to an ideological retreat from the first four years since 1917, which had been characterized by isolation from the rest of the world. Lenin had trouble convincing some of his followers that a state of near "free trade" was necessary to facilitate economic relations with the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{7} In the end, however, thanks to Lenin and to his New Economic Policy which he personally engineered, those employed in all creative areas of society including art and architecture enjoyed a brief hiatus from the professionally stagnant years they suffered through in the first few years of the 1920's.

1.6 Culture of the Proletariat

Concurrent with the establishment of NEP was Lenin's realization and discovery of the potential political and ideological uses for art in every form, including architecture, sculpture, painting, and especially film, the youngest member of the family of artistic mediums. This is important in reaching an understanding of Soviet history at that time, as it marked the starting point for, as well as probably the source of, the familiar genre of Soviet propaganda - in its wide array of forms - as we know it today. The challenge to all Soviet artists at that time was to create a totally new art ... art directed in its form and content at its unique new audience: the proletariat. This necessitated a drastic change in artistic focus, a move away from the traditional eclectic minority of patrons of art that had existed simultaneously in Western capitalistic societies, as well as in Imperial Russia before the Revolution.

\textsuperscript{6} ibid.
\textsuperscript{7} ibid.
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Lenin sought to establish a new culture in his country ... a culture of the proletariat known by the name "Proletcult". It was this mandatory function of benefitting, inspiring, and agitating the proletariat that served as a broad guideline for the appropriateness of all art and architecture in the Soviet Union of the 1920's. Without the intercession of NEP, it might have taken another ten to twenty years for the architectural profession to reestablish itself in the U.S.S.R.

Lenin's death in January 1924 was a significant event for many reasons. Many historians have considered what might have happened, had he lived past his 50's. The fact that his death did occur at that point in time, however, set into motion a series of events that changed the history of his country, and without a doubt the history of the world.

Lenin's death meant the end for the New Economic Policy. NEP was Lenin's personal crusade. Despite brutal techniques of crushing his adversaries, Lenin seemed somewhat sensitive and aware of the wants and needs of the Russian workers and peasants. He believed in incentive for work, and he believed in rewarding meritorious performance. Without Lenin to champion the cause, however, NEP was quickly abandoned and replaced with land collectivization and an end to all private enterprise.

Second, Lenin's passing contributed to the building of the Soviet state. In the eyes of the people, although he died of medical causes, Lenin died for the cause of Communism. He was seen as a martyr. The government sensed this fact and built a temporary wooden structure in Red Square for people to view Lenin's body. Attendance was so strong and so continuous, that the wooden structure was eventually replaced with a stone version years later. To see Lenin's tomb became an important pilgrimage for people not only in the
Soviet Union, but also in Communist societies worldwide. Even today, while the system he initiated is quickly falling apart, great care and thought are going into answering the question of what to do with Lenin's body. For, as people still revered the tsars of Russia after the Great October Revolution, so shall people continue to respect Lenin after all that he inspired has withered away.

Third, Lenin's death led to the rise of Stalin. Stalin portrayed himself as a trusted follower, apprentice, and friend of Lenin. In the religion of Stalin's mind, Lenin was God the Father of Communism, and Stalin himself was Jesus Christ the Savior of Communism. Russians were familiar and receptive to this form of self-deification, as it had been practiced and institutionalized by the tsars. Take, for example, the word "Saint" in Saint Petersburg. The city was named not for Saint Peter, but rather for a Russian tsar, Peter I. Stalin, therefore, had many role models, even some of Imperial stature.

1.7 Socialist Realism

The 1930's saw more construction in the Soviet Union. In fact, compared with the 1920's, the 1930's generally meant more of many things for the Soviet Union. More was better. Bigger was better. Grander was better. In addition, in the Soviet Union of the 1930's available funding and the always-important official blessing became easier to obtain than they had been throughout the 1920's. Without question, the pace of creating new Soviet architecture increased considerably, emphasizing quantity over all other factors. On the other hand, the quality of that quantity is an entirely different subject, which is well worth discussing.
This great building boom, however, did not occur without bringing about concurrent and sometimes conflicting developments in the sphere of Soviet architectural associations as well. In 1931, ironically, the potential for new architectural commissions in and around the large cities including Moscow and Leningrad was crushed when the "Decree of the Party" temporarily suspended all new construction in those cities and others.⁸

Finally, in 1932 another decree, entitled "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Art Organizations", officially disbanded and dissolved all types of artistic organizations.⁹ In place of the disorganized plethora of architectural associations that existed before the 1932 decree, the government created the Union of Soviet Architects, known as SSA.¹⁰

The SSA, as a result of its purely official origin, received complete power over all aspects of the architectural profession. It supervised educational activities, and it served as sponsor and censor for all exchanges of ideas and proposals about architecture. Finally, SSA interpreted, publicized, and enforced the official "Party line" in architecture by holding the works of all architects before the collective critical eye and evaluating them in terms of their adherence to and glorification of the Soviet ideology of the day.¹¹

The SSA marked both beginning and end. On the one hand it marked the beginning of the Stalinist years of Socialist Realism in Soviet architecture. On the other hand, however, it represented the end of an era in which experimentation, theoretical utopianism, and both

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⁸ Auty and Obolensky.
⁹ ibid.
¹⁰ Shvidkovsky.
¹¹ Voyce. [This book chronicles the development, not only of Russian culture in general, but also of the Russian family in particular. Excerpts from the "Domostroi", the Russian code of law within the family household, provide a vivid and shocking picture of life in old Russia.]
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professional and political innocence prevailed in the architecture of the Soviet Union. The 1920's in the Soviet Union functioned as an "age of innocence" in the artistic and professional worlds. The existence of so many organizations and associations with such a wide range of views showed that although the voices of the government always spoke in unison, the voices of the artistic and professional worlds often spoke in discord.

1.8 Openness and Reconstruction

The years of stagnation under Brezhnev, followed by the years of reform under Gorbachev, and the failed coup attempt of 19 August 1991, have all shown that the Soviet Union is at a very important crossroad in its history. While the critics and experts in the West argue about who gets credit for the fall of Communism, the people of the Soviet Union and its former satellite countries have something much more urgent to consider. What will they do next? I have found that people in the Soviet Union are neither stupid nor blind in this respect.

The people know that their government has failed them. They know that their form of government has been discredited. They know that their leaders - former and probably current as well - are corrupt and dishonest. They know that they have been swindled, lied to, and deceived. They are not stupid. They will not turn back.

The people know that the "alternative" forms of government being thrust upon them are neither ideal nor perfect. They know that politics is politics. They know that corruption is corruption. They know that both go hand in hand, regardless of place, time, and system of government. These people have been subjected to propaganda for seventy years, and they
are habitually suspicious of anything that any source of power - person or institution - regards as great. They are not blind. They will not go forward without awareness and understanding of all possible consequences of their choices.

The people of the Soviet Union now exercise their rights to think and to doubt quite often and rather forcefully. This extends into the architectural profession, as well as into the realm of architectural theory. Architects and theorists alike now find an environment in which they can express themselves in ways they never thought possible before. One such proposal I came across managed to put forth a set of "Minimal Demands" for housing, covering areas including structure, space, utilities, materials, and general quality of life.\textsuperscript{12}

Throughout the Soviet period, Russians and others within the Soviet Union have benefited from certain guarantees. In particular they have been guaranteed living space in definite quantitative terms. People speak of their apartments always first in terms of quantity of space. They may follow by citing either balcony, bay window, or other elements, but they always begin with space. It is a definite result of the Gorbachev era that people have now begun to discuss and ask questions about housing in other than quantitative terms. While people do not want to give up that which they have been guaranteed in the past, they are no longer satisfied without being guaranteed more in the future.

\textsuperscript{12} Merzhanov. [This proposal, put together by its author with other specialists both inside and outside the Soviet Union, is a first step, albeit theoretical at this point, toward further development and improvement in the area of Soviet housing.]
2 Culture

Russia. Old Rus. The Russian Empire. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. All of these are names that have been used to describe a part of the world that is potentially more important for the things it symbolizes than for the great mass of land to which the names refer. Things like people, family, tradition, faith, diversity, fear, and pride. Ruled by barbarians and authoritarians, the Russian people have exhibited a strength and resistance worthy of merit. Through terrible hardship, cruel oppression, and extreme deprivation, the Russian people have preserved and developed that which they have valued most - their culture.
2.1 Old Rus

The great plain that stretches from Europe on the west to the Ural Mountains on the east began to be settled with greater frequency beginning in the second half of the ninth century. Swedes, Norsemen, and other Northerners began to migrate eastward in the year 862. These were led by the legendary Rurik, who became the first sole ruler of Old Rus, which at the time seemed truly limitless in its size. The name "Rus" - or in some sources, "Ros" - was first used by the Finns. In using that name, the Finns were referring to the Swedish coastal port of Roslagen, from which came many of the invaders, such as Rurik himself.

Following Rurik came rulers named Oleg and Igor, the latter of whom was Rurik's son. Oleg served to enlarge the growing area under his rule by conquering the city of Kiev in 882. Igor followed with the signing of a treaty with the Byzantine Emperor in 945, and with the establishment of Christianity in Kiev in that same year. Further rulers of Old Rus included Olga (widow of Igor), Vladimir the Apostle, and Yaroslav the Wise. Yaroslav was the first ruler of Old Rus to forge closer relations with the powerful European monarchies to the west. Three of Yaroslav's daughters, for example, married Harold, Henry I, and Andreas I, the Kings of Norway, France, and Hungary, respectively.

13 Baedeker. [This source was, at the time it was published in 1914, the leading and most respected guide for prospective visitors to the then Russian Empire. More than the typical guidebook as we know it today, this source also provides an extensive history of the country, as well as detailed descriptions of living conditions for tourists and native inhabitants at the time. The book also holds up well over time, without going out of date as many guidebooks do. The author of another of my sources, Lydia Kirk, refers as late as 1951 to her copy of "Baedeker" as a valuable resource during her stay in the USSR.]
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
addition, one of Yaroslav's immediate successors married the daughter of King Harold II of England.

In 1224, Genghis Khan and the Tartars invaded Old Rus and began a period of occupation that lasted more than a century. The Russians freed themselves of the Tartar yoke in 1380, when Dimitrius of the Don defeated the Tartars on Kulikovo Field. At this same time, the capital of Old Rus, which had until that time been located in the thriving city of Vladimir, was moved to the young and growing village community of Moscow.17

2.2 Russian Empire

In the early 1500's Vasily III managed to unite the expanding number of independent principalities in Old Rus under his control in Moscow. This served as the formal establishment of the Russian Empire. In 1547, Ivan the Terrible, who had ruled since 1533, created and assumed the title of "Tsar of all the Russias".18 Late in the sixteenth century, still under Ivan the Terrible, the Russian Law Code was formulated, and the printing process was first introduced in Russia, first in Moscow and then elsewhere.

Following the death in 1598 of Theodor I, the last sovereign from the line of Rurik, an ally of Theodor, Mikhail Romanov, was elected Tsar in 1613. Descendants of Mikhail, all members of the Romanov family, ruled the Russian Empire for over three centuries, until the 1917 October Revolution.19

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17 ibid.
18 ibid.
19 ibid.
SOVIET HOUSING: CULTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

Peter I, who today is better known to non-Russians as Peter the Great, came to power in 1689, at the age of 17.20 Peter brought about more ties with Western Europe by importing its talent and culture to enliven the Russian Empire, which now stretched all the way from the Baltic Sea on the north to the Black and Caspian Seas on the South. After gaining Russian superiority in the Baltic Sea, Peter proceeded to found Petersburg on its shores in 1709. With Petersburg, Peter intended to create - from the ground up - a city that reflected and represented the growing greatness of the Russian Empire itself. To do this Peter imported countless architects and others, literally from all over the world, but primarily from Western Europe. Soon after the founding of Petersburg, Peter relocated the capital of the Russian Empire to it from Moscow, from which tsars had ruled for centuries. Petersburg - later as Petrograd, its Russified twentieth-century name - would remain the capital of the Russian Empire up until the 1917 Great October Revolution, when the Bolsheviks moved the capital back to Moscow.

Peter was followed by his widow, Catherine I, and then his daughter, Elizabeth I. Tsarina Elizabeth continued the tradition of inter-kingdom marriages by marrying a German, of Holstein-Gottorp. During Elizabeth’s reign, the Russian Empire continued to grow both in strength and size, with the acquisition of Finland in 1743, and military and territorial victories over France, Spain, and Prussia between 1746 and 1756. At this same time, higher education was established within the boundaries of the Russian Empire, with the founding of Moscow State University in 1755 and the Petersburg Academy of Arts in 1757.21

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20 ibid.
21 ibid.
A marriage was soon arranged between Elizabeth's husband's nephew, Karl Peter Ulrich - also of Holstein-Gottorp and known in history books as Peter III - and Elizabeth's own niece, Catherine. Following Elizabeth's death in 1761, Peter III became Tsar.\(^{22}\) He was to die just six months after his accession, leaving young Catherine alone to rule the now great power that the Russian Empire was becoming. Ironically, the young widow - referred to officially as Catherine II - would become known to historians, as well as to all Russians, as Catherine the Great, as much because of her own strength as a ruler as because of the growing strength of the Russian Empire that occurred during her rule. Further territorial gains - including three partitions of Poland throughout her reign - served to secure the Russian Empire's foothold on power and land.

Catherine II was followed shortly by her son, Paul I, and then by her grandsons, Alexander I and Nicholas I, who ruled through the first half of the nineteenth century. Alexander I led the Russian Empire through wars with France, Austria, Sweden, and Turkey. He also directed the annihilation of Napoleon's Grande Armee in 1812, not long after it invaded the Russian Empire. Nicholas I completed the Russian Code of Laws in 1830, and in 1851 he presided over the opening of the railway connecting Petersburg with Moscow.\(^{23}\)

Following the death of Nicholas I, his son, Alexander II came to power. Alexander II brought about significant developments in the legal system within the Russian Empire, including formal establishment of Russian Judicial Procedure and Russian Municipal Law,

\(^{22}\) ibid.
\(^{23}\) ibid.
as well as the creation of guidelines concerning compulsory military service within the Russian Empire.\textsuperscript{24}

Alexander II was succeeded by his son, Alexander III, who during his late nineteenth-century reign directed further conquests in Central Asia by the Russian Empire, and brought about the beginning of construction for the Trans-Siberian Railway. In 1894, Alexander III's death meant the accession of his son, Nicholas II, who would be the final ruler of the Russian Empire. During his reign of nearly two decades Nicholas II saw through to completion the Trans-Siberian Railway, and he presided over the opening of the first Russian Parliament, called the "Duma" in 1905.\textsuperscript{25}

2.3 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Russia that has existed since the 1917 October Revolution is something of which we - as non-Russian outsiders - have not even yet truly begun to become aware. For reference, we have only conflicting and confusing products of propaganda that are biased, distorted, and only questionably credible. Research in an academic sense is acknowledged as veritably impossible. Political trust between East and West has recently begun to exist in the world. Trust of a literary, artistic, academic, or professional nature, however, has not yet occurred. Such trust is much more than trust of a purely political nature, and it may take a long time to establish.

\textsuperscript{24} ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} ibid.
The world possesses - both by choice and because of the practices of the Soviet State - an understanding of present-day Russia that is both minute and trivial, and broad and sparse. Only through time will the world - and even Russians themselves - begin to be examine in an honest, impartial, and objective manner just what has happened in Russia for the past three quarters of a century. Further, a true and comprehensive understanding of Russia itself can and will only occur when analysts can explore without State supervision both Imperial Russia and Soviet Russia, not to mention what may or may not come next. This broader approach to history and events, which has up to this point been discouraged, thwarted, and even prohibited by the Soviet State, seems to be the apparent missing piece needed to solve the great puzzle that is Russia.
3 City


All these names could be used to describe the paradoxically confusing yet controlled urban laboratory that is Moscow. The doors to this laboratory have only just recently cracked open to the public - Russian and non-Russian alike. Visas are getting easier to obtain. Libraries are becoming simpler to utilize. People are becoming more receptive to questions and more open about answers. Only careful and objective investigation over time will reveal just what has gone on there, as well as what can be learned from it.
3.1 Riverside Country Homesite

The angled piece of land at the junction of the Moscow and Neglinnaya Rivers, later to become the center of the city of Moscow, was first mentioned in the year 1147. At that point, according to the chronicler of the tale, a small country house existed on the banks of the Moscow River. This is considered the beginning of the history of Moscow, and Muscovites celebrated the city's 800th anniversary in 1947.

3.2 Small Wooden Fortress

Soon after the official founding of the town of Moscow, which occurred in 1156, nine years after it was first mentioned, a prince from Suzdal named Yury Dolgorukiy transformed the house into a small 2.5 acre fortress through the construction of a wall around it. The siting of Moscow was at the midpoint of a major maritime traffic route, along the Moscow River, between the Caspian Sea and the Baltic Sea. The wall, therefore, was constructed for security reasons, so as to ward off attacks from approaching enemy forces, whether by land or water.

3.3 Provincial Border Town

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the walls of the small fortress were expanded and strengthened. The town of Moscow had now spread outside the walls to include several settlements near and around the fortress. These settlements included small centers

26 Verlag.
27 ibid.
28 ibid.
of commerce, where merchants and artisans both lived and worked. Moscow at that time lay on the outskirts of a larger principality centered in the cities of Vladimir and Suzdal. Although Moscow was in a period of growth, there were no expectations of the tremendous expansion Moscow underwent shortly thereafter.

3.4 Regional Power Center

In the beginning of the fourteenth century Moscow’s tremendous growth and importance was finally acknowledged and made official. Ivan Kalita made Moscow the capital of the Russian state, then still Old Rus, and still under the Tartar yoke. It is no coincidence that this first point at which Moscow gained regional importance occurred simultaneously with the first sign of Russian unity. The histories of Russia and of Moscow are inescapably linked. They are linked physically. They are linked chronologically. They are linked culturally. They are linked symbolically.

3.5 Imperial Capital

With the lifting of the Tartar yoke at the end of the fourteenth century, in Moscow is said to have appeared "...a joyful current full of vitality". This positive outlook on the future grew not only from the newfound Russian independence, but also from the rapid growth of the city of Moscow.

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29 ibid.
30 ibid.
31 ibid.
During the fifteenth century, during the reign of Ivan III, Moscow - then called Muscovy or Moscovy - was first called the "Third Rome". At this time, the Turks were on the move in Europe, dealing significant blows to Christianity everywhere. In 1453, the Turks conquered Constantinople, the heart of the Orthodox faith. One Russian monk at the time wrote that two Romes (Rome and Constantinople) had fallen, but that the third one (Moscow) had still survived. When one mentions the idea of a "new Rome" today, one is more likely to think of Hitler's Berlin of the 1930's - with negative connotations all its own - than to think of Ivan III's Moscow of the 1450's. Nevertheless, it is important to note that such claims were made, and to be aware of the reasons that they were made.

Because of Ivan III's fortuitous defeat of the Turks, Moscow assumed the role of a primary Orthodox stronghold. Moscow - and hence Russia - gained a new aspect of power aside from its military and territorial importance. It had proceeded to establish a nation, and now it also served to defend a religion. It is appropriate, then, that many of Moscow's most significant examples of ecclesiastical architecture were built during this period.

3.6 Second City

It is not that Peter the Great found Moscow to be an unsuitable seat from which to rule an empire. He was simply intrigued and fascinated by Europe. He was eager for the Russian Empire to be welcomed into and considered part of the European "royal fold". He set out to "Europeanize" the Russian Empire. Shipbuilding was emphasized, as maritime travel to the rest of Europe would take less time than land travel across the East European plain.33

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32 ibid.
33 ibid.
The Baltic Sea, as much under Russian control as the plain itself, was seen as the main link between the Russian Empire and the rest of Europe. Peter the Great, therefore, chose to establish a city there, at the point where the Neva River flows into the Baltic Sea. Ostensibly a series of islands ridden with swamps and connected by bridges, the city became known as Petersburg, and Peter hastily relocated the capital of the Russian Empire there.

Moscow, then, became the "second city" of the Russian Empire. Sources claim, however, that it retained and preserved its leadership role in defining Russian taste, promoting Russian spirit, and developing Russian culture. Much later, in the nineteenth century, the famed Russian poet Pushkin wrote of Peter the Great's Europeanization and capital relocation program, "...And Moscow bowed to the new capital, as the Queen Dowager bows to the young Queen".\textsuperscript{34}

Moscow is the most Russian of all cities, with its central square, radiating streets, and ring roads. Moscow's streets, however, radiate out in a crooked manner, unlike the axis-oriented urban projects of the Baroque era. The streets of Moscow are simply that - streets, made for circulation, transportation, and congregation. This contrasts with the grand and ordered streets of Petersburg (and then Petrograd, and then Leningrad, and now Petersburg again). Petersburg streets, like the grand boulevards of Paris, are more visual than functional. In Moscow, on the other hand, function reigns supreme. Moscow streets take you from place to place, plain and simple.

\textsuperscript{34} ibid.
Petersburg is pleasing to the eye. Moscow is warming to the heart. People like to look at the monuments in Petersburg. People feel something about the monuments in Moscow. Petersburg is a city begun by decree and created by foreigners. Moscow is a city begun by chance and created by Russians.

To me, an American half a world away with a tendency toward metaphors and analogies, Petersburg is Washington, and Moscow is Boston. One is imported. The other is native. Petersburg and Moscow are music as well. One is a rhythmic and metered sonnet. The other is free verse. Petersburg and Moscow are dances on the stage. One is classical ballet, with lovely costumes and delicate movements. The other is pure folk dancing, complete with high-level kicks and high-pitched yells. Both are undeniably "city". The origin of each city, however, is what distinguishes each from the other.

3.7 Revolutionary Capital

Twelve short years after Nicholas II's Duma became the Russian Empire's first and only trace of constitutional representation, the Great October Revolution occurred. The Revolution and the sequence of events that followed it resulted in the ousting of the Tsar, the execution of many members of the Romanov Family, and the banishment from Russia of those few remaining members of the Royal Family, whose lives had been spared. The Great October Revolution took place in Petrograd - as Petersburg was called at that time - with the storming of the Winter Palace. Petrograd, therefore, became known as the "Cradle of the Revolution", and was soon after renamed Leningrad, for the architect of that Revolution, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Ironically - yet not surprisingly - the capital of the nation that succeeded the Russian Empire was relocated from Petrograd to Moscow. This
was done for the dual reasons of Moscow's support for the Revolution and Petrograd's symbolic status - as well as the very reason for its creation and existence - as a showcase of Imperial power, values, and accomplishments.

I tend to take the "Cradle" metaphor several steps further, in order to express more truthfully the nature of and sources behind the Revolution itself. Petrograd was indeed the Revolution's "Cradle". It was where the birth of the Revolution took place. It was where it had to take place. It was the physical location of the power base of the Russian Empire. Despite Petrograd's contribution, however, Moscow played a role as well. If Petrograd was the Revolution's Cradle, Moscow was its Womb. Moscow was where the idea of the Revolution grew and gained momentum. Moscow was the location of the Revolution before it ever became a Revolution. In addition to serving as Womb, Moscow served as Nursery, Proud Parent, Teacher, Mentor, and Companion. In recent years, however, Moscow has managed to benefit even from the apparent failure of Communism, and hence the failure of the Revolution itself. Moscow has added more theatrical credits to its metaphorical resume, serving now as Priest performing last rights over the Revolution's death bed, Pallbearer at the Revolution's funeral, and Executor of the Revolution's squandered Estate. The death of the Revolution was not expected, as the Revolution itself was believed to be immortal, thus immune to death. No death was anticipated, so no Last Will and Testament was prepared. This is precisely why nobody in the world - not Bush, not Gorbachev, not anybody - can logically predict what will come next for Russia and for Moscow. The answer, however, will without question originate in and emanate from the same place in and from which every previous event of Russian and Muscovite significance has originated and emanated. Whether successful or catastrophic, whether bold or timid,
whether wise or dumb, and whether subtle or harsh, the answer lies behind - or maybe within - the walls of the Kremlin itself.
4 House

House. Housing in the Russian Empire. Housing in the RSFSR under Lenin. Housing in the USSR under Stalin. Housing in the USSR under Brezhnev. Housing in the USSR under Gorbachev. House as Problem Solved. The house is a basic necessity of life, regardless of country, culture, or people. The house has always been a critical topic in the rules and laws affecting the people of the Russian Empire, and subsequently the people of the Soviet Union. While it is only recently - that is, within the last few months - that talk of "constitutional law" has been highly prevalent in the Soviet Union, it has in fact existed there for over a century. Law, however, requires enforcement and consensus to remain effective. Law in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union with respect to housing, lacks both of those qualities, and it is, therefore, no more than words on paper. Housing laws as stated by each successive Russian and Soviet constitution have been used and abused for the purpose of personal gain. Seeing these laws as a series, however, provides a sense of the progression of political and urban thought within the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.
4.1 Housing in the Russian Empire

In 1906, after several hundred years of Imperial rule, the Russian Empire instituted its first official constitution, or "fundamental law". This was brought on to a large extent by the events of 1905. Radicals attempted to overthrow the tsar. Although the would-be revolution was unsuccessful, its occurrence was a catalyst for a series of steps toward establishing and expanding human rights for the majority peasant and poor classes in the Russian Empire. While this constitution clarified the absolute and supreme power of the tsar within the Russian Empire, it also began to highlight the rights of the ordinary citizen. Three of these pertain to housing and property, as follows:35

"Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Russian Empire...

**Article 33.** The domicile of everyone is inviolable. Searches or sequestrations in a domicile without the consent of the owner shall take place only in the cases and in the manner provided by law...

**Article 34.** Every Russian Subject shall have the right to select his place of abode and his occupation, to buy and sell property, and to depart from the territory of the Empire without molestation; limitations upon these rights are established by law...

**Article 35.** Property is inviolable. The forced taking of real property, when such is necessary for governmental or public interests, shall take place only for an equitable and adequate compensation...

6 May 1906
*Russian Imperial Duma..."

It is important to note that even under the tsar, the Russian citizen enjoyed private ownership of both personal property and place of abode. In addition, the Russian citizen could choose not only the abode itself, but also the place - city, region, area - of residence

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35 Dodd. [This English-language source includes full translations of the constitutions of most major countries in the world, at the time it was published in 1908.]
as well. This is a direct result of free travel within, as well as into and out of, the confines of the Russian Empire.

In actuality, however, a significant number of ordinary Russians at this time led a life that Westerners would consider less than desirable. Peasants were often crowded into small rooms in boarding houses, or else grouped by the hundreds into huge worker barracks. The living conditions for many Russians consisted of insufficient ventilation, too little space, poor sanitary conditions, and increased incidence of disease and other health problems.

4.2 Housing in the RSFSR under Lenin

The Great October Revolution of 1917 brought many things to the poor and peasant classes of the former Russian Empire. That same event, however, also took away much of what all Russians cherished as some of their only possessions under the laws of the Russian Empire. Private ownership of land, domicile, and all sorts of personal property was seen as contrary to the establishment of a "people's state", as follows:36

"Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR)...

Article 2a. For the purpose of attaining the socialization of land, all private property in land is abolished, and the entire land is declared to be national property and is to be apportioned among agriculturists without compensation to the former owners, in the measure of each one's ability to till it...

Article 2b. All forests, treasures of the earth, and waters of general public utility, all equipment, whether animate or inanimate, model farms and agricultural enterprises, are declared to be national property...

36 Wolf-Phillips.
Article 15. For the purpose of enabling workers to hold free meetings, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic offers to the working class and to the poorest peasantry furnished halls, and takes care of their heating and lighting appliances...

10 July 1918
All-Russian Congress of Soviets...

The statement that the government of the RSFSR would provide meeting places for peasants and workers both precedes and establishes the "worker club" building type in the Soviet Union. Such a statement also sounds similar to the words of those who plotted the failed coup in the summer of 1991. It is simply, in the eyes of this author, a case of providing food and housing to keep people happy ... and quiet.

Perhaps a socialist writer of the 1930's relayed the paradoxical situation of grand worker clubs and deplorable housing conditions in the Soviet Union best:37

"The citizen of Moscow spends a great part of his time in public. He loves the life of the streets and likes to stay in the rooms of his club or meeting-house. He is a passionate debater, and would rather discuss anything than meditate on it in silence. The pleasant rooms of his club make his own unlovely home more bearable. But, above all, he is compensated for his dwelling by the promise that Moscow shall become beautiful."

This is a typical rationalization used in the Soviet Union for decades. It is not until recently that Soviet citizens have begun to speak up about the undesirable conditions of their living environment.

4.3 Housing in the USSR under Stalin

The 1918 constitution was updated and slightly changed shortly after Lenin's death in 1924. It was Stalin, however, who directed the writing of an entirely new constitution in

37 Feuchtwanger.
ensuing years. This was a long and arduous process and was completed in 1936. In this new document, which was much longer than its predecessors, Stalin had its writers include an entire chapter entitled the "Declaration of the Rights of the Working Man". This section includes many of the rights - including employment, health care, child care, elderly care, and leisure - that have come to be associated with the Soviet Union and its Communist system. Three of these articles deal, as in earlier constitutions, with the concepts of land, house, and personal property. In addition, concepts of socialization and collectivization are dealt with in greater detail, as follows:38

"Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)...

**Article 5.** Socialist property in the USSR bears either the form of state property (property of the whole people) or the form of cooperative and collective farm property (property of individual collective farms and property of cooperative associations)...

**Article 7.** The common enterprises in collective farms and cooperative organizations with their livestock and implements, the products of the collective farms and cooperative organizations, as well as their common buildings, constitute the social, socialist property of collective farms and cooperative organizations.

Every collective farm household, in addition to its basic income from the common collective farm economy, has the personal use of a small garden plot of land, and the personal ownership of the subsidiary household on the garden plot, a dwelling, livestock, and minor agricultural implements, in accordance with the statute of the agricultural artel...

**Article 10.** The rights of personal property of citizens in their income from work and in their savings, in their dwelling houses and auxiliary household economy, their domestic furniture and utensils and objects of personal use and comfort, as well as the right of inheritance of personal property of citizens, are protected by law...

5 December 1936
3rd Session of the USSR Supreme Soviet..."

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38 Wolf-Phillips.
As with the earlier Soviet and Imperial constitutions, these words were most simply just that - words. In many cases, especially during the purges of the late 1930's and early 1940's, the rights to household, personal property, and inheritance were ignored by authorities in search of subversive persons. It is interesting to note, however, that this example shows that - as early as the 1930's - the basic desire for a person to have a small plot of land to manage for himself was acknowledged even by the government, and even in the collective farm system.

4.4 Housing in the USSR under Brezhnev

Under Krushchev in the 1960's, a commission was set up to update and amend the 1936 constitution to reflect the changes in Soviet society up to that time. This effort was completed under Brezhnev in the 1970's and was completed in time for the sixtieth anniversary of the Great October Revolution in 1977. Once again, the rights of the working man were made clear in bold print, and only subtle - yet important - changes were made in much of the text of the 1936 document, as follows:39

"Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)...

Article 10. The foundation of the economic system of the USSR is socialist ownership of the means of production in the form of state (all people's) and collective farm/cooperative ownership. Property of trade unions and other social organizations, necessary for the realization of their statutory functions, is also socialist property.

The state protects socialist ownership and creates conditions for its increase.

No one has the right to use socialist property for purposes of personal gain and other selfish purposes...

39 Feldebrugge.
Article 13. Earned income constitutes the basis of personal property of citizens of the USSR. Articles of everyday use, of personal consumption and comfort, and of the subsidiary household, a dwelling, and savings from labor may be held in personal ownership. Personal ownership of citizens and the right to its inheritance is protected by the state.

Citizens may have the use of plots of land, made available in the manner provided by law, in order to run a subsidiary household (including the keeping of livestock and fowl), to engage in fruit and vegetable gardening, and also for individual housing construction. Citizens are bound to utilize rationally the plots of land made available to them. The State and the collective farm render aid to citizens in running the subsidiary household.

Property in the personal ownership or use of citizens must not serve for the deprivation of unearned income or be used to the detriment of the interests of society...

Article 44. Citizens of the USSR have the right to housing. This right is ensured by the development and protection of the state and social housing fund; by assistance to cooperative and individual housing construction; by a fair distribution, which under social supervision of living space available in accordance with the realization of the program for the construction of well-built housing; and also by moderate payments for rent and municipal services. Citizens of the USSR are bound to treat carefully the housing made available to them...

7 October 1977
7th Session of the USSR Supreme Soviet...

With regard to land, house, and personal property, the "plot of land" concept is used again in this document. The word "ownership", however, has been removed from the text where the plot of land is discussed. In 1936 people were granted "personal ownership" of these parcels, while in 1977 they were merely granted "use" of them. This reflects a pattern in the later Brezhnev years in which control in many areas was tightened, and many Stalinist traditions began to reappear.

In later years Brezhnev often spoke about the 1977 constitution and its achievements. In particular he frequently cited the fact that Soviet citizens have a "right" to housing. He praised the Soviet Union as the first country to recognize officially that housing is a fundamental right of mankind.
4.5 Housing in the USSR under Gorbachev

Even if the coup attempt of 19 August 1991 had not taken place, I would still have asserted here that change was indeed taking place and would continue to do so in the future in the Soviet Union. The fact that there was a coup attempt merely reinforces that assertion, and it ensures not only that change will take place, but also that it will take place faster and more drastically. In September 1991, the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR approved as one of its final acts of legislation the "Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms".

This was to have the effect of clarifying and preserving the rights of the people at the same time that the rights of the government were being taken away. Once again, land, house, and property were discussed, as follows:\textsuperscript{40}

"Declaration of Human Rights and Freedoms of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)...

\textbf{Article 21.} Every person has the right to move freely inside the country, choose residence and location. The right can be limited only by law. Citizens have the right to leave their country and return to it, and they cannot be expelled from the country...

\textbf{Article 24.} Every person enjoys property rights, including the right to own, use, and dispose of property, both individually and jointly with other individuals. Ownership rights are guaranteed by law. The inalienable right to own property guarantees personal individual interests and freedoms...

\textbf{Article 27.} Every person has the right to state support in receiving and permanently utilizing an apartment with basic amenities in state or publicly owned buildings or in building houses individually. A person cannot be dispossessed of housing arbitrarily, unless on grounds established by law...

\textit{5 September 1991}
\textit{USSR Congress of People's Deputies...}"

\textsuperscript{40} New York Times, 9 September 1991.
Many of the rights listed in this declaration are closer in wording to the rights stated in the earlier Imperial constitution than to the rights stated in any of the succeeding Soviet constitutions. One can only guess why this is the case. Perhaps the people have begun to distinguish between rule and right. They now may have recognized that while Imperial rule was no more desirable than Soviet rule, some Imperial rights seem to make more sense than those proclaimed during the Soviet era.
Mankind

Universality. Specificity. There are certain questions and issues that are common to all mankind, and there are others that apply only to certain cultures. All these questions and issues face mankind. Many of these questions and issues are faced by architects. Architects, as leaders and as followers, encounter such questions and issues in their work. Whether culture is a part of architecture or vice versa, both deal with questions and issues of importance to mankind. These are the kinds of questions that this project seeks to address.
5.1 Universality

Is housing a basic right of mankind? This is a question that has been addressed not only by the Soviet Union of today, but also by architects and theorists in other nations and in other times as well. Answers to this question are speculative and subjective.


In the Preface I stated my initial intentions to design two houses, each representing an extreme. But what are the extremes as far as mankind is concerned? All extremes are subjective and speculative. The answer to the question of the very nature of extremes depends upon the person to whom the question is posed. All people define their own extremes. As this applies to housing, some people choose apartment living, while others choose to live in houses. There are a variety of options and a variety of decisions.

The architect should not make those choices himself. The architect responds to and is responsible to mankind and to its variety of people. The architect need not follow orders, but he must accommodate choice. With regard to housing, the architect should provide a distinct range of housing types. It is from this range that people will define their extremes and make their choices.

5.2 Specificity
The particular case of housing in the Soviet Union is one that has long fascinated me. What strikes me about Soviet housing is that, while there are many obvious problems with it, one cannot deny that it was created to satisfy a simple goal: to house people. While the Soviet state ignored many of the questions posed earlier, it did address the question of housing as a fundamental right. In this respect, it is to be admired.

Many people speak about the blandness or dullness of Soviet housing. Some cite socialist architecture in general as "tiresome". These are subjective responses. But what lies behind them? Is the problem with Soviet housing the repetition? Is it the monotony? Is it the lack of delight? Is it the minimal spaces? Is it the quality of materials?

These statements and questions are often made and asked by architects and others who make a habit of continuously asking and never even attempting to answer questions. Were they truly aware and concerned, they might ask similar questions of the architecture of their own cultures. While Soviet housing may simply house people at the expense of all other concerns, it does accomplish what it sets out to do. What are the goals of housing in the United States? Certainly variety is a goal, but is a basic right to housing a goal as well? Is the possibility of a basic right to housing even addressed at all in the United States?

Answers to these and all housing questions are subjective and speculative. Housing is a subjective issue, as the contrast between views toward housing in the United States and the Soviet Union is wide and obvious. In the Soviet Union, the citizen is guaranteed housing, but is offered no variety or choice as to what that housing will be. In the United States, the citizen is presented with various housing options, but is not guaranteed any of them. While Soviet housing has failed to offer variety, American housing has failed to house people.
Neither situation is perfect. Neither solves both the issues of providing shelter and providing variety. People suffer in both situations. In the Soviet Union, some people are dissatisfied; in the United States, some people are displaced. Just as the Soviet Union has institutionalized painful monotony as a housing guarantee, the United States has institutionally accepted homelessness as a housing choice.

I do not pretend to judge which of these situations is superior to the other. In fact I would have to assume that both are equally insufficient. Mankind has produced these two extreme examples of what is important in housing. Neither is complete: Neither is perfect. Neither is universally accepted. Together they could have the potential to be all things to all people, at least in theory.

A guarantee of housing is a form of security. A choice of housing is a form of liberty. Mankind desires both security and liberty. In the Soviet Union housing is characterized as security without liberty. In the United States housing is characterized as liberty without security. I seek to find a way to make the two work together: security and liberty.

By nature of the fact that this project is situated in the Soviet Union, my proposal involves the introduction of housing liberty - albeit on a very modest level - into an established system of housing security. It is less a collision of principles and more a determination of balance. First, at the human scale, what types of housing are available? Second, on the communal level, on a larger scale, what type of a neighborhood does this create? Third, in urban terms, what type of a city does this imply? These are the questions which I ask myself. These are the problems I seek to solve. My proposal is not the solution, but
merely an alternative. It is meant to emphasize the internal advantages and address the internal disadvantages of a particular situation.
6 Proposal

House Type. Housing Region. Master Plan. This proposal is based on the premise that architecture is inherently a process of solving problems. The problem that this proposal deals with is housing. Every problem has conditions. The conditions of this problem are the specific ideas about architecture, culture, city, house, and mankind that have been discussed. All the issues, facts, figures, quotes, and ideas on the previous pages may sound like an overdone preamble. In my opinion, however, they are necessary and crucial to the understanding of not only what is proposed, but also why it is proposed.
6.1 House Type

At the scale of the house type I dealt with the following existing limitations and assumptions particular to Soviet housing: space requirements, unit types, building systems, and desire of the occupant.

With regard to space requirements, housing standards have existed since the time of the Great October Revolution. Each Soviet citizen is guaranteed a certain amount of total space, a set proportion of which is defined as living space. Living space includes only space defined by the dimensions of a room, while total space also includes service spaces such as hallways, closets, and balconies. These numbers - always denoted in square meters - have grown steadily over the years and have recently been constant. The current standard space requirements are 12 square meters for total space per person and 9 square meters for living space per person. In nearly all cases this space requirement is met by a 3-by-3 meter space for living space and a 3-by-4 meter space for total space.

With regard to unit types, several exist in the Soviet Union. While any observer would notice that a significant portion of built housing in the Soviet Union is of the high-rise apartment building type, it is nevertheless astonishing to hear that no less than 99.9% of new housing construction is of this type. While this creates the impression of an oppressively monotonous environment, some variety does exist in unit type. While specific building plans vary from each other, the unit types themselves remain relatively constant. Soviet apartments come in one-room, two-room, and three-room variations. Components that make up these variations are as follows:
(1) The kitchen, bath, and toilet are usually grouped together for efficiency and utility. The space occupied by these elements together is usually 12 square meters. This space counts toward the space requirements per person in each unit, but it is not counted as one of the rooms in a unit.

(2) The first room in all units is a common room, which - with the aid of a "sofa bed" or convertible couch - doubles as a bedroom always in the one-room variation, and sometimes in the other variations as well. The common room is the point of entrance into each unit from the hallway. If the unit has a balcony, it is accessed from a door in the common room.

(3) The second room is a bedroom. It is usually the same size as the common room, if not smaller. In this room there would normally be one or two beds. The beds are always twin sized and are sometimes pushed together to create a larger bed, as double, queen, and king sized beds do not exist inside the Soviet Union.

(4) The third room is also a bedroom, although it is considerably smaller than the other bedroom. In most cases part of the space of this room is taken away to create a hallway allowing separate passage from the common room to the other bedroom. In this room there is only one bed.

Not readily seen in these descriptions is the significance of the balcony. The balcony is a special part of the Soviet housing unit, as it is the occupant's only direct connection to the outside, and thus to nature. The Soviet balcony is a personal expression of the occupant. People congregate on balconies, enclose balconies, put furniture on balconies, grow plants on balconies, sing on balconies, bathe on balconies, sleep on balconies, and so on.

Perhaps it is a product of the restrictive nature of the insides of Soviet housing units that their balconies - as the only outside elements of those units - are characterized by such a lack of restriction. Nevertheless the balcony is an important element, and it is the idea of the balcony that I have intentionally preserved.

With regard to building systems, three major types of housing construction techniques are used throughout the Soviet Union in general, and in and around Moscow in particular. The first is brick construction. This is the least prevalent technique, because it takes the longest to complete, and it requires the most skill to complete correctly. The second is large concrete block construction. This is nearly as rare as brick construction, but its drawbacks
stem less from time and more from a lack of production facilities and distribution mechanisms. The final is concrete panel construction. The majority of housing construction throughout the country is of this type, and it is the most used technique in Moscow as well. All panels are prefabricated, with holes punched for windows and doors, and they come in 3-by-3 meter and 3-by-4 meter sizes. These panels have an average thickness of 0.20 to 0.40 meters, depending upon climatic requirements and insulation quality. The panels are used for all walls, as well as for common ceiling/floor conditions.

With regard to desire of the occupant, the Soviet Union - parts of which were previously within the Russian Empire - began as an agricultural peasant society. People have a special connection to land. Today, with the incredible urban growth of the larger cities, even urban dwellers flee to the countryside on the edges of those cities, on the weekends and in the summers, to care for gardens on a small plots of land. This runs contrary to the recent "collective" past, but it underscores the desire for private property, individual expression, and the care for land that characterize the people of the Soviet Union. As stated earlier, along with the housing guarantees present in the Soviet constitutions there have been guarantees of small plots of land for private use. While in the most dense urban environments these units of land are located far away from the housing units themselves, there is no reason why - in a situation of decreased density - these land units cannot be located near or adjacent to the housing units themselves.

Keeping aware all of these limitations I propose adaptation of existing Soviet housing unit types to suit conditions of decreased density. Specifically I propose a two-story house type with a shared stairway, and a one-story house type with an adjacent specified land unit. I propose the continued use of the existing apartment building house type, with a height limit
of four stories, and with common spaces and parking to be located on the first floor of the building. In the case of all three types residential land units would be provided either adjacent to the housing units for the one-story variation, or elsewhere in the housing region for the two-story and four-story variations.

6.2 Housing Region

At the scale of the housing region I dealt with the relationship and balance between different house types, as well as the social and spatial programmatic requirements of a housing region in the Soviet Union.

With regard to relationships and balance between different house types, I propose a mix of all three house types: four-story structures with apartments and balconies, two-story structures with flats and balconies or yards, and one-story structures with yards. This mix must acknowledge and address the adjacent conditions between these different house types, and it not only must anticipate, but also should guide future growth.

With regard to the social and spatial programmatic requirements of a housing region in the Soviet Union, I use what I call the "12 Basic Guarantees to the Soviet Citizen", which I define as the following:

(1) food and clothing;
(2) housing;
(3) employment;
(4) transportation;
(5) property;
(6) leisure;
(7) health care;
(8) child care;
(9) elderly care;
(10) education;
(11) information; and
(12) choice.
Unlike constitutional precedent in the United States, in which the people declare their rights
to the government, the situation in the Soviet Union is that the government guarantees
eights to the people. This was also the case in the Russian Empire, when it was the Tsar
instead of the Soviet government that guaranteed the rights of the citizens. The fact that I
call these things "guarantees" is significant, because they are different from rights. The
Soviet citizen, for example, is not simply told that he has the right to something. He is, in
fact guaranteed state support and assistance in receiving something. This applies to all
things listed, including housing. I do not wish to judge whether American or Soviet
constitutional precedent is more right. I merely wish to propose another way of solving the
problem of housing Soviet people, who have lived with, accepted, and in the future seek to
preserve the system of guarantee as the basis for the provision of all rights, both collective
and individual.

Taking the "12 Basic Guarantees to the Soviet Citizen" as a checklist for the planning of a
housing region, the planner is responsible for showing how all of these guarantees will be
fulfilled. Fulfillment of the guarantee of employment usually predates the establishment of
a housing region, as the housing region is primarily constructed to house people who work
for a company or an organization, usually at a factory or plant already existing elsewhere.
Fulfillment of the guarantee of housing is implicit in my earlier proposals of specific house types. I propose fulfillment of the guarantee of transportation through (1) locating the housing region close to existing auto and rail networks for transportation to and from the region; and (2) integrating new auto and pedestrian circulation into the housing region for transportation within the region. I propose fulfillment of the guarantee of leisure through creation of green areas and parks, which are important to and well-used by Soviet city dwellers. I propose fulfillment of the remaining eight guarantees through the use of space on the first floors of the four-story structures. This space would be used for various community facilities designed to fulfill each of the specific guarantees. First, I propose fulfillment of the guarantee of food and clothing through creation of food and clothing stores. Second, I propose fulfillment of the guarantee of property through provision of plots of land to all residents. Third, I propose fulfillment of the guarantee of health care through establishment of clinics. Fourth, I propose fulfillment of the guarantee of child care through establishment of daycare centers. Fifth, I propose fulfillment of the guarantee of elderly care through establishment of nursing homes and senior citizen centers. Sixth, I propose fulfillment of the guarantee of education through creation of schools. Seventh, I propose fulfillment of the guarantee of information through establishment of kiosks and news stands. Eighth, I propose fulfillment of the guarantees of choice through establishment of public meeting halls for demonstration, worship, or simply gathering.

6.3 Master Plan

At the scale of the Master Plan I dealt with the concept of land distribution and land use in general, as well as how land distribution and land use apply to natural areas, rural areas, urban areas, and housing regions.
With regard to the concept of land distribution and land use in general, some system should be devised to deal with future changes from the existing system of complete state ownership of all land and all means of production. In the most open and rural areas around Soviet cities in general and Moscow in particular, agriculture is the way of life. Existing farms do not function to their maximum potential effectiveness and efficiency. All are either large collective farms or state farms. Private farming in essence does not exist. In the future, things may change such that large farms may be bought by either commercial companies or organizations, and the small private farm may be reinstated as a permitted form of agricultural employment. I propose a unitized system of land distribution and land use based on large units of land for commercial farming and small units of land for private farming. The commercial farming land unit would be 1 square kilometer (1000-by-1000 meters), and the private farming land unit would be 1 hectare (100-by-100 meters). This system of measurement would be tied to the concept of a residential land unit at the scale of the house type, with the size of a residential land unit set at 1 are (10-by-10 meters).

With regard to how land distribution and land use apply to natural areas, rural areas, urban areas, and housing regions, it is important define priorities for development and growth of a city. In the case of many Soviet cities in general and Moscow in particular, the natural areas - because of state ownership of land - can be enjoyed by all people. I propose that the collective ownership of these areas be preserved through the establishment of natural zones. I propose that areas such as rivers, ponds, forests, hills, and other natural "treasures" be set aside and designated as off-limits to future development. I propose that this be achieved in general through legislation, and specifically through the establishment of minimum building setbacks and development distances from these zones.
By overlaying the notation of specific natural zones, the grid of various land unit types, and the plans of housing regions, I propose a Master Plan for the growth and development of the city of Moscow in the Soviet Union. It is a pattern and guide for the future. It addresses existing traditions and limitations in the areas of architecture, culture, city, house and mankind. In addition, however, it allows for and anticipates changes in all those traditions and limitations as well.
FIGURES:

(1) Map:
FIGURES:

(2) Photographs: Moscow Housing
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FIGURES:

(3) Diagrams (First Group): Unit Plans
(4) Proposal: Housing, plans, first floor
(5) Proposal: Housing, plans, second floor
FIGURES:

(6) Diagrams (Second Group): Unit Facades
FIGURES:

(7) Proposal: Housing, facades
FIGURES:

(8) Proposal: Housing, facades
FIGURES:

(9) Proposal: Section
FIGURES:

(10) Diagrams (Third Group): Housing Region
FIGURES:

(11) Proposal: Pedestrian Path, perspective
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(12) Proposal: Automobile Road, perspective
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(13) Proposal: Housing Region, plan
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(14) Map: City of Moscow
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(16) Map: Moscow Oblast
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(17) Diagrams (Fifth Group): Moscow Oblast
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(18) Proposal: Group of Housing Regions, plan
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(19) Proposal: Group of Housing Regions, perspective
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FIGURES:

(20) Proposal: Master Plan for Moscow, plan
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