

ABSTRACTS

Sára Bárdi: The Fight for the Hinterland: Two Propaganda Exhibitions in the 1940s

Exhibitions can be used to address a wide range of society, to showcase art, to raise awareness, to educate, and to shape public opinion. By their very nature, exhibitions can have a direct or indirect political or ideological content. In the 1930s and 1940s, in the context of the ideological struggles of the period and the events leading to the Second World War, political motivation and propaganda became particularly important in the history of exhibitions.

The study focuses on the presentation of two propaganda exhibitions held in Budapest in the early 1940s, both reflecting on the same historical and political events, however, their approaches and their visual and artistic solutions were markedly different. The *Anti-Bolshevik Exhibition*, organized by the Hungarian National Defense Association and supported by the government, opened in 1941 in the Vigadó to legitimize the war with the Soviet Union for the hinterland and to reinforce and substantiate the enemy's image. The visuals of the exhibition served to convey the content in a suggestive way. The *Anti-Bolshevik Exhibition* was followed by the 1942 *Freedom and the People* art exhibition by the Socialist Artists' Group, which had its roots in the nascent Hungarian anti-fascist independence movement and people's front politics. The exhibition held at the Headquarters of the Iron Workers' Union was, however, banned by a decree of the Minister of the Interior within three days. The censorship was instigated by the anti-Bolshevism of higher political circles, and pressure from the conservative and far-right press.

Both exhibitions were seen as vehicles for political and ideological messages in the war hinterland. The aim of the organizers was to reach a wider audience to propagate their views on Hungary's participation in the war. It is their expressed political propaganda that places the two exhibitions of disparate genres on a common platform.

Márkus Keller: State Expectations: Official State Statistics and Understanding Society in the Socialist Period

Statistics are never innocent. Although many studies have shown that statistical sources are as much in need of critical reading as politicians' statements, social statistics still shine with the light of reliability. Many people believe that if the figures are not directly falsified or denied, they are essentially credible and accurate descriptions of the society under study. However, a more thorough analysis should leave no doubt that, on the one hand, the concepts of statistical data

collection fundamentally determine and limit the picture of the society they may yield, and, on the other hand, these concepts are closely linked to both the agenda of the government that commissions statistical surveys and to the expectations and needs of various social groups.

This study examines how and to what extent their content is determined by the circumstances of the formation of statistical sources and the environment surrounding them. The main question include: Who was statistical data collection addressed to and what was its function in socialist Hungary? Who did the Central Statistical Office answer to and what did it want to know? What expectations and constraints did the Hungarian state impose on its statisticians after 1945?

Edit Lantos: Hungarian Architects and the “Destructive Influence of the Decadent Architecture of the Imperialist West” between 1945 and 1957

The phrase in the title comes from a text entitled „Dear Comrade Rákosi!”, originally published in 1952 as the editorial of the first issue of the first volume of the journal *Hungarian Architectural Art*. The phrasing indicates that any interest in Western architecture and embracing its influence were undesirable in the dictatorship. Since the freedom of information is fundamental to any intellectual profession, this paper will examine how the direction of the architects’ opportunities in this domain was affected by the political turns of 1947–1949 and 1954–1956.

To this end, the study opens with an overview of articles on Western architecture in the architectural press after 1945 and then look at how the directions and methods of information acquisition changed in this period.

Based on the articles published in four of the most important architectural journals of the period, *Tér és Forma* (1928–1948), *Új Építészeti*, the supplement to *Magyar Technika: Műszaki és Gazdaságtudományi Folyóirat* (1946–1949), *Építés-Építészeti: Az Építőművészet, Tudomány és Gyakorlat Lapja* (1949–1951) and *Magyar Építőművészet* (1952–), the study describes reports on both Western architecture exhibitions held in Hungary (1946: American and British; 1947 French; 1957: international; 1958: UIA) and exhibitions abroad (1947: Paris, Milan; 1957: Berlin). This is followed by the discussion of study trips (1947, 1948 Belgium, Switzerland, etc.; 1955 France), lectures by Western architects (1949, 1953, André Lurçat; 1950, Ulf Bjuggren; 1956, Pierre Vago), and international cooperation with professional organisations such as the Congrès Technique International in 1946, the Congrès International d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in 1947, and the Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA) in 1948 and 1955.

The second part of the paper deals with the availability of journals and the proportion of Western architectural publications in the Hungarian professional

press. Between 1945 and 1958, more than 200 extracts were obtained from some 30 Western journals. The distribution over time shows that the presentation of Western literature began to decline in 1949, with no Western sources cited at all between 1951 and 1953, and the opening of 1954 continued this decline in the following year. The study points out that from 1949 onwards, in addition to accessing information through extracts in the Hungarian press, Western architectural journals themselves were available for architects in Hungary at their workplaces, in specialist libraries such as the Association of Hungarian Architects, National Monument Inspectorate, the Library of Budapest University of Technology, as well as personal subscription.

While the patterns of Western exhibitions, study tours, organizational contacts, and number of references in the literature mirror the stages of the rise of the dictatorship and the degrees of losing freedom in the Rákosi era and in the period after Stalin's death, they shed light on the reasons for the tightening control, too.

Mónika Pilkhoffer: Membership of the Hungarian Society of Engineers and Architects in the Age of Dualism

The association was founded in 1867 under the name of the Hungarian Engineers' Association (Magyar Mérnök-Egyesület), bringing together engineers and architects in a single organization based on an Austrian model. In 1871, responding to the threat of the architects' secession, the association changed its name to Hungarian Association of Engineers and Architects, and operated under this name until 1944. The new name reflected not so much the actual market forces as the equal role sought by the architects, who were financially unable to form an independent association and had a lower social status than engineers. The association published two periodicals (the *Gazette* and the *Weekly Bulletin*), had a library, a manuscript collection, a publishing company from 1883, and a fully equipped headquarters after 1908.

The Association had 755 members in 1867 and 3,753 in 1914, quintupling its membership during the years of dualism. This growth was the result of the rising number of engineers and architects, now trained in national institutions; in the 1884 regulation of practice in the industry; and in the creation of the association's rural branches from 1906 onwards. The membership of the Hungarian Association of Engineers and Architects continued to grow despite the proliferation of professional associations at the turn of the century, which is a testament to its prestige and its power of advocacy as a united professional body.

The sources available regarding the membership in this period enable two types of analysis: tracing the evolution of the total membership between 1867 and 1918 and examining the proportion of architects within the association using the 1914 membership roll. The former, in addition to the rising figures, provides an insight into the different types of membership and the proportion

of members from Budapest and the countryside; the latter, examining members working in the field of architecture, helps identify the qualifications of the professionals (architect, master builder, building contractor, mason). Although only two out of the association's eight sections had architects in their membership, accounting for less than 20% of all members, their active involvement in the association put them on an equal footing with engineers.

Zsolt Szijártó: Budapest/West-Berlin: Apartments, Urban Spaces, Subcultural Communities. Tibor Soskuti's Photographs from the 1980s and 1990s

The publication is the first – pilot – chapter of a planned longer work designed to map, collect and archive the cultural heritage, special knowledge of Hungarians living in Berlin, as well as their impact on the urban environment (society, culture, everyday life). The “subject” and the protagonist of the study is the artist Tibor Soskuti (Soso), an important participant and perpetuator of the Budapest underground scene of the 1980s. Following his active involvement in the underground culture of Budapest between 1978 and 1983, and later becoming a chronicler of its main actors, Soskuti “defected” in 1986 and settled in West Berlin, where he has lived to date. The analysis of his life story and art sheds light on a special period, the relatively early days of metropolitan migration, immediately before the fall of communism. The study provides insight into a specific group of the Hungarian diaspora in Berlin defined by both their generation and their art, and, at micro-level, offers answers to more general questions of migration research: what did it mean for a young person from behind the Iron Curtain to arrive in a large Western European city in the mid-1980s and start a new life there?

In a somewhat unconventional way, the study seeks answers to these questions through an analysis of photographs taken by Soskuti in Budapest and his new life in West Berlin. How can we use photographic documents to reconstruct the circumstances and experience of living in the diaspora in a specific period, generation, socio-cultural milieu? What do they tell us about his relationship with two kinds of urban space and socio-political micro-environment in Budapest and West Berlin? To what extent can different experiences, patterns of the use of space and visual representations be observed in Soskuti's photographs taken as a participant in a closed subculture in Budapest and as a member of a minority ethnic group in West Berlin? Are these two group identities separable?

Domonkos Wettstein: Architects and Holiday Homes: The Changing Forms of Professional Practice at Lake Balaton between the 1960s and the 1980s

From the late 1950s onwards, the construction of holiday homes on Lake Balaton posed new challenges for architects involved in regional development. Although holiday home architecture had developed in the first half of the century in both foreign and domestic resort areas, professionals faced increasing problems in controlling and coordinating the growing number of construction projects, which were typically designed by builders and local contractors rather than by trained architects. There was therefore a need to both educate clients and supervise contractors. The study approaches the issue of holiday home construction from the perspective of the architectural profession, and open to view the activities of architects who were not only involved in designing buildings, but in the regional development of Balaton as well. In 1958, a unified regional plan was drawn up for the development of the Balaton region, the implementation of which was also coordinated by architects. The plan was awarded the Sir Patrick Abercrombie Prize of the International Union of Architects (UIA) in 1965. In addition to building design, the architects were also involved in the coordination of municipal and regional development, which required their periodic presence on site.

The study examines the changing professional roles and seasonal lifestyles of the architects in the context of the Balaton coast from the early 1950s to the late 1980s. The personal archives provide insights into the architects' everyday life. Correspondence and diaries paint a vivid picture of the social roles and relationships of those involved in the development projects. In addition to regulation, alternative means were necessary to improve the quality of mass holiday home building. The architects of the period organized design competitions, and made available blueprints, publications and exhibitions to help holiday home builders. Exploring the impact of raising public awareness, the study shows the links between the architectural profession and the holiday home community.

During this period, regional professional practice was transformed in several stages shaped by changes in development policy. The arc of this transformation process is clearly discernible from the late 1950s to the mid-1980s. Initially, architects were able to shape the region through their professional positions, but later, the reorganization of governmental facilities gradually pushed them out of regional institutions and besides their architectural work they could influence processes only through their public involvement and publications. The detailed analysis of the society of holiday home owners and building trends have been dealt with in detail in previous publications, so these issues fall outside the purview of the present study.