Aesthetic Mechanisms of Stalinization in Romanian Architecture:

The Case of Hunedoara, 1947-1954

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Abstract

While historians have approached the process of popular democracies' absorption into the Soviet system at the end of the Second World War by stressing political and economic relations within the decision-making structures, the urban spaces produced during this interval, as sites of social interaction, remained under-researched. In Romania, the project conducted in Hunedoara between 1947 and 1954 illustrates the extent to which the Romanian communist state was aware of the urban space's potential for social manipulation, as well as the strategies this authority undertook to employ politically the formative function of the built environment. The thesis revolves around three main questions: What did modernization mean for Romanian society by the end of World War II? To what degree did the attempts of Stalinization manage to impose on Romanian society the Soviet Union's cultural values and principles? And how can studying urban architecture tell us more about these topics? Drawing on newspaper and archival materials, the thesis concludes that inside the communist system, the ability to define "modernity" much less bringing it into being, depended on whether political elites and the party could provide institutional unity and coherent decision-making.

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I

Introduction

An experiment conducted by Kevin Lynch during the 1970s encouraged participants to imagine their urban surroundings by creating descriptions and sketches, and by performing imaginary trips into their city. The research concluded that references to the city's physical world identify trails (streets, walkways, channels, and railways), boundaries (shores, walls), districts, nodes (junctions or squares, street corners), and milestone (buildings, signs, and other physical objects). These represented mental forms shaped by the citizens' continuous controlled movement inside the city.[1] Lynch argued that emotional security, visual enjoyment and a "potential depth and intensity of urban experience" were given by the degree of clarity of a built environment.[2] In his experiment, Lynch reduced the urban space's significance to a "perceptual knowledge of physical form," and emphasized attempts to "impose some form of imagining order onto the urban fabric" by focusing upon introspections in the human mind.[3] However, as other researchers in the field of urban space have pointed out, the experiment's conclusions "tend to ignore that such a picture is socially produced and its nature, as a representation of social processes, is ideological."[4] Accordingly, what individuals perceive as legible signs inside the urban perimeter reflects, in fact, the space commissioner's long-term visions. Therefore, how urban meanings reached the population's consciousness rested upon the political authority's manipulative and interpretative strategies. Conveying readable urban symbols out of local, regional, and national symbols, state authorities and

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[1] Kevin Lynch, "The Image of the City and Its Elements," in *The City Image*, ed. Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 478-83; see also Ali Madanipour, *Design of Urban Space. An Inquiry into a Socio-Spatial Process* (Newcastle: John Wiley and Sons Press, 1996), 67-8.
[2] Lynch, "The Image of the City," 478.
[3] Madanipour, *Design of Urban Space*, 68.
[4] Ibid., 69.

planning structures could speculate upon the substantial formative capacity of a built environment and could assemble, for the purposes of legitimation, grand narratives that would imagine modern nations and communities.

This research project questions the extent to which a political regime, namely the Romanian communist state, was aware of the urban space's potential for social manipulation, as well as the strategies this authority undertook to employ politically the formative function of the built environment. At the end of the 1940s, the Romanian city Hunedoara had 7,000 inhabitants. By the end of World War II, when the Romanian communists had to integrate the country's program of industrial development into the Soviet economic system, the old settlement could not provide enough dwelling facilities for the population to be employed in the local steel plant.[5] Between 1947 and 1954, three successive phases (1947-1948, 1949-1950, and 1951-1954) were planned to develop the city spectacularly and raise the population to 60,000 over the following twenty years. The "Garden City" project, designed and built between 1947 and 1948, and the socialist-realist project, constructed between 1951 and 1954, were the most important. This thesis describes how Hunedoara was built.

The project identifies the state's investment in the urban enterprise with the "aesthetic mechanisms of Stalinization"[6] used to create an imagined socialist urban

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[5] R. Marcus, "Sistematizarea oraşului Hunedoara," *Arhitectura* 2 (1959): 8; for a history of the local steel plant, see N. Chindler, V.Dâncan, I.Dobrin, R.Păţan, S.Popa, *Combinatul siderurgic Hunedoara. 1884-1974* (Bucharest: Ed. Academiei), 1974; Ludovic Bathory, Stefan Csucsuja, Gheorghe Iancu, Marcel Stirban, *Dezvoltarea întreprinderilor metalurgice din Transilvania. 1919-1940* (Cluj Napoca, 2003).

[6] The thesis uses the concept of "Stalinization" to designate how by the end of the Second World War, the Eastern European countries were absorbed into the Soviet sphere and exposed to the incoming ideology associated with the rule of Stalin. As such, it "can be defined as a set of tenets, policies and practices instituted by the Soviet government during the years in which Stalin was in power, 1928-53. It was characterized by extreme coercion employed for the purpose of economic and social transformation. Among the particular feature of Stalinism were the abolition of private property and free trade; the collectivization of agriculture; a planned economy and rapid industrialization, and terror." See David

community in communist Romania.[7] Whereas, according to Soviet requirements, building the city around a heavy-industry site was a necessary step in the process of economic development, the project also brought to bear an extraordinary concentration and deployment of visual tactics and strategies. Propaganda, mass media campaigns, and building legislation approached the urban space from different perspectives. Submitted in order to create long-standing images of socialist success, these strategies manipulated the architectural significance of the built environment based on citizens' urban experiences set by street plans, city views, and historical narratives. Accordingly,

> … the Stalinist system generally, and its art particularly, aspired to create a utopia of total communication, the utopia of a language that would be mono-semantic, terminological, fully adequate to reality. Therefore, the permanent concern with clarity reflected the concerns and objectives of the system to address the understanding of the environment.[8]

This concern with clarity, juxtaposed socialist-realist rhetoric with mechanisms that, by the end of the Second World War, assisted the Romanian communist state's program, which defined itself as modernizing.[9] The project revolves around three main questions. What did modernization mean for Romanian society by the end of World War II? To what degree did the attempts of Stalinization manage to impose on Romanian society the Soviet Union's cultural values and principles? And how can studying urban architecture tell us more about these topics?

Hoffmann, "Introduction: Interpretations of Stalinism," in *Stalinism, The Essential Reading,* ed. David Hoffmann (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 2.

[7] For a theoretical discussion on the constructions of the national identities through the political decision-making, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

[8] Leonid Heller, "A World of Prettiness: Socialist Realism and Its Aesthetic Categories," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 3 (1995): 697.

[9] See Stelian Tănase, *Elite şi Societate. Guvernarea Gheorghiu-Dej 1948–1965* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1998); Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians* (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1991).

By engaging micro-history in a parallel process of revealing larger patterns of cultural production, the thesis aims to uncover a pattern on Romania's absorption into the Soviet orbit. Hunedoara is located in the historical province of Transylvania. For centuries under Austrian and Hungarian rule, then integrated into the Romanian state by the end of World War I, the province's cultural specificity synthesized a Central European tradition of Gothic and Baroque architecture. Furthermore, the two decades following World War I created an artistic tradition in line with European modernist trends. Therefore, it becomes interesting to map out how, after the end of World War II, the local cultural tradition of the place was adapted to the socialist-realist rhetoric stating that culture should be necessarily "national in form and socialist in content."

Figure 1.1 View of the Hunedoara Steel Plant during the 1960s. Courtesy Constantin Gaina.

As such, a decades-long process of ideological and economic transformations during which Hunedoara grew to be imagined as a model socialist site marked the forceful communist drive to gaining legitimacy through the use and abuse of "national form into socialist content" and anchor the rhetorical aim of "revolutionary future" into the metaphorical permanence of history. While concerned with how the city was built between 1947 and 1954, the paper argues that the intense dual engagement with both creation and control of architectural images, as practiced by the communist authorities in Hunedoara, revealed an ambivalence about Romania's new socialist-realist culture that was most noticeable in the proposed building solutions.

On one hand, ideologically, the cultural and propaganda institutions, the Communist Party's mass-media structures and "The Romanian Friendship Society for Strengthening the Relations with the Soviet Union" (ARLUS) assimilated socialist-realist rhetoric effortlessly. To this, the tided connections with the Soviet Union played a significant part. As early as 1946, the mass media, including the architects' monthly bulletin, presented extensive title lists of Soviet books available for reading at the ARLUS library.[10]

On the other hand, architecturally, the designers encountered difficulties in converting the Soviet message to Romanian reality, mostly because of the nature of their profession. For instance, in 1946, while concerned with the issue of post-war national reconstruction, Gustav Gusti mentioned three mandatory steps in the building process: research, planning, and execution. Accordingly, building a house, not to mention a city, would require a long-term effort, sophisticated planning methods, and rigorous

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[10] *Buletinul Societăţii Arhitecţilor din România* 8 (August-October 1946): 17-8; *Forum, Buletinul Uniunii Sindicatelor de Artişti, Scriitori si Ziarişti din România* 1 (January 1947): 2-3.

legislation, which would span the overall building process over several years.[11] Architecture was slower to change and in spite of its attempts to accommodate official requirements, former constructive patterns and ideologies, influenced strongly by Western modernist influences of the 1920s and 1930s or Central European housing traditions, were more dominant and even more efficient in creating the built environment. Within the local conditions, the existing culture's interaction with the arriving rhetoric of socialist realism provides the historian with an excellent example of the manipulation and interpretation of local symbolism and its conversion into meaningful political messages. The initial juxtaposition of socialist-realist discourse with the "Garden-City" modernist buildings by the end of the 1940s, and the subsequent recovery of architecture's design and symbolism with the construction of the socialist-realist city, during the early 1950s, illustrates the interaction of the political dynamic and the building dynamic.

This thesis examines the process of building the city, and implicitly of constructing the communist system, by analyzing how, over a specific time frame, the political authorities confiscated, step by step, the built environment's production, distribution, and reception by institutionalizing the planning process and bringing it under the Soviet ideological and institutional shelter. The thesis will show that within the Romanian communist system there were serious discrepancies between the official content of architectural discourse and its actual materialization and, furthermore, that the initial program of socio-political transformation initiated by the communist regime, although placed under the sign of modernization, failed because of institutional and decisional inconsistencies. The case of Hunedoara tells us much about not only

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[11] See, *Buletinul Societăţii Arhitecţilor din România* 7 (June 1946): 19.

architecture and urban planning in communist systems, but also about efficiency, financial mismanagement, and political incongruities.

In general, this topic is not new: similar questions concerning post-war Eastern European reconstruction have been asked previously. However, Romania as a specific case study remains under-researched. This project aims to focus on how the Romanian Communist Party sought locally to fulfill requirements elaborated in Moscow and widely distributed throughout the Eastern bloc. This analysis is based on Romanian newspapers and magazines published between 1947 and 1954 and documents available in the Hunedoara County's local and provincial archives. The Archive of the City Hall of Hunedoara includes the Executive Committee's administrative decisions and city plans, development schemes, and blueprints. The County Archives holdings cover extensively the Provincial Executive meetings, governmental dispositions, the Propaganda and Urbanism department's decisions, and, partially, the regional urban development schemes. Of course, the nature of these sources is extremely important. The archival materials provide insightful data about political and institutional functioning. Newspapers published under the communist regime reflected the official discourse and served as propaganda instruments; therefore, most of the data available in the press cannot be trusted completely, or considered to reveal historical reality with much accuracy. Architecture magazines published between 1946 and 1954 uncovered significantly the planning interactions, whilst the publications' infusion with ideological language over a particular period might relate to some changes within the system. Yet, while the sources describe governmental decisions and the legislative regulations on one hand, and personal interactions or the local bureaucratic apparatus on the other, they do not reveal much

about the political initiatives' social consequences. Indeed, how individuals placed themselves in relation to the new political regime and the new aesthetic was framed by the economic politics and widespread human-rights abuses.[12] To uncover the real image of Romanian society by the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, the information provided by the primary sources for this project would have to be corroborated by personal recollections, diaries, autobiographies, oral histories, and files held by the Secret Police Archives. Such research is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, this project will focus on the official discourse of Stalinization as it applies to the building process and not on inhabitants' individual reactions to the built environment or on the way their lives and interactions were actually shaped by it.

1. Socialist Realism as "Invented Tradition" - Some Methodological Considerations:

Acknowledging that invented traditions illustrate an attempt to generate an authority, Eric Hobsbawm stated that the creation of state identities throughout Europe illustrates how, inside a modern system of government, popular consciousness is brought into line with what that authority expects the public to believe.

> 'Invented Tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past... In short, they are

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[12] See Ghiţa Ionescu, *Communism in Romania, 1944-1962* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964); Stephen Fischer Galati, *The New Romania: From People's Democracy to Socialist Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); John Michael Montais, *Economic Development in Communist Romania* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); Kenneth Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthroughs and National Development: The Case of Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Robert R. King, *The History of Romanian Communist Party* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980); Michael Shafir, *Romania. Politics, Economics, and Society. Political Stagnation and Simulated Change* (London, 1985); Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons, A Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Robert Levy, *Ana Pauker, The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition.[13]

While invented traditions can serve as "evidence in understanding history," they circumscribe a complex set of social and ideological ideals shared by a community within a particular context.[14] In this respect, architecture often serves the state's needs when it comes to inventing national tradition, because it endows historical monuments and local or national heritage with a dual status: "dispensers of knowledge and pleasure placed at the disposition of all, and cultural products that are fabricated, packaged, and diffused by authorities seeking recognition."[15]

In the Soviet system, socialist-realist rhetoric acted as an invented narrative in the service of the state; it can also be seen as having helped to shape the USSR into the kind of "imagined community" that Benedict Anderson formally described.[16] While the major characteristics of the socialist-realist aesthetic will be approached in the next chapter of the thesis, the discussion below illustrates how the Soviet state employed the rhetoric for political purposes and why it was juxtaposed with the construction of national narratives. As Katerina Clark has pointed out, the institutionalization of socialist realism in the Soviet Union, in the early 1930s, was a key moment in the country's evolution and coincided with the start of the nation-building process.[17] A complex rhetoric elaborated during the 1930s, and formalized after the Second World War, socialist realism was "a

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[13] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction," in *The Invention of Tradition,* ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-5.

[14] Ibid., 2.

[15] Francoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 143.

[16] See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, op. cit.

[17] Katerina Clark, "Socialist Realism and the Sacralizing of Space," in *The Landscape of Stalinism, the Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 5.

political aesthetic from the start."[18] In the Soviet Union, under the precarious economic conditions produced by collectivization and the first Five-Year Plan, the rhetoric of socialist realism came to counterbalance the reality of material deprivation and political repression with the promise of an upcoming radiant experience under socialism. Understood as a solution to compensate for the unfulfilled revolutionary utopian dreams of the 1920s Russian avant-garde and to express society's need for realism and order, socialist realism mobilized artists to participate in the socialist construction of the modernized future and to depict reality in its revolutionary development, "not as it was, but as it would become."[19]

A complex institutional dynamic established the interaction of production, distribution, and reception within limits set by the Soviet state.[20] Thus, socialist realism replaced "traditional aesthetic categories" with deeply ideological principles like "commitment" to the party's line, "reflection" of socio-economic reality as opposed to abstractedness, "typicality of characters and situations," "positive heroes," "revolutionary romanticism," and "narodnost" (nationality or popular appeal). To sum up, socialist realism had to be "national in form and socialist in content."[21]

This slogan transformed and displaced historical images to articulate fragments of an approximately and selectively real past in order to serve the social, cultural, and political Soviet power. Under Stalin, cultural constructs including the depiction of

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[18] Bernice Rosenthal, *New Myth, New World: From Nietzsche to Stalinism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 293.

[19] Rosenthal, *New Myth*, 293-4; see also Nina Kolesnikoff and Walter Smyrniw eds.**,** *Socialist Realism Revisited: Selected Papers from the McMaster Conference* (Hamilton: McMaster University, 1994).

[20] Leonid Heller and Antoine Baudin, 'Le realisme socialiste comme organization du champ culturel," in *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 3 (1993): 309.

[21] Rosenthal, *New Myth, New World,* 295.

history, became links in "a chain of socio-discursive connections."[22] While socialist realism provided the state with the mechanisms to employ politically national myths and historical stories, "a new reception strategy had to be formulated in revolutionary culture as a consequence of the collapse that occurred when the old culture got a new consumer."[23] Whether the target was shaping the individual's consciousness or creating group solidarities, the rhetoric performed on two levels. Firstly, national appeal would uncover what Régine Robin has called "filiations, a discursive memory at work."[24] The local heritage's symbolic meaning manipulated by institutionalized Soviet systems of education and propaganda would allow the individual to discern, within Soviet cultural constructs, the "socialist content."[25] Secondly, "national in form" would delineate the ideology of the urban space's correct use. While national would act as a "catalyst image," individuals' conduct would be shaped by reciprocal influences during mass gatherings.[26] As Manfredo Tafuri has mentioned,

> … such recreational-pedagogical experiences were centered on exceptional architectural typologies. The ideology of the public is but one aspect of the ideology of the city as a productive unit in the proper sense of the term, and as an instrument for coordinating the cycle of production-distribution-consumption.[27]

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[22] Régine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), xx.

[23] Evgeni Dobrenko, "The Disaster of Middlebrow Taste, or, Who 'Invented' Socialist Realism?," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 3 (1995): 774.

[24] Robin, *Socialist Realism*, xx.

[25] Accordingly, "national audiences were the only legitimate arbiters of socialist art and that the national styles were the only possible mediums through which to reach them." See Greg Castillo, "People at an Exhibition," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 3 (1995): 730; for the functioning of the propaganda structures, see Terry Martin, "Modernization or Neo-traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism" in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, ed. David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 161-185.

[26] Robin, *Socialist Realism*, 112.

[27] See Manfredo Tafuri, "Toward a Critique of Architectural Ideology," in *Architecture Theory Since 1968*, ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998), 17.

In the Soviet Union, originally, "national in form and socialist in content" conveyed the integration of the various regions of Soviet territory under a centralized authority to create a nation-state on the ruins of the former fragmented empire. While the construction of the Soviet consciousness had been, by nature, an "exhibitionistic process," the All Union Agricultural Exhibition (VSKhV), inaugurated in Moscow in 1939, initially displayed for the Soviet masses the imperial technological development and prosperity on one hand and, on the other, the mightiness and variation of artistic national forms of expression.[28] Such spaces created the impression of economic dynamism, productivity, happiness and plenty.[29] Later, "national in form and socialist in content" rhetorically supported the exportation of the Soviet system into the newly-established Eastern European "popular democracies," as the USSR called them, and the construction of socialism atop the ruins of the war-devastated states.

Methodologically, the thesis uses the "invented tradition" concept to explain why, after the communist takeover by the end of the 1940s, the Romanian communist system employed both the socialist-realist architecture and the motto "national in form and socialist in content" to construct a national narrative of social and economic modernization, which assisted the country's absorption process into the Soviet structure. According to the communists' logic, building Hunedoara was tantamount to building the nation. This project revolves around three fundamental historical and theoretical problems: the shift from autonomous to state institutionalized planning and cultural

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[28] Greg Castillo, "Socialist Realism and Built Nationalism in the Cold War 'Battle of the Styles'," *Centropa* 1 (2001): 86.

[29] Since the nineteenth century, world's fairs played a major role in allowing mass interactions, voyeuristic practices, and commercial tourism. By the middle of the century, these displays caused structural changes and affected the evolution of forms of housing, social interaction, and human relations. See Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994); Susan Reid, "Socialist Realism in the Stalinist Terror: the *Industry of Socialism* Art Exhibition, 1935-41," *Russian Review* 2 (2001): 153-184.

structures; whether the state had the institutional capacity to produce and distribute architectural cultural products skillfully; and how the official discourse imagined the urban experience that was to be provided by the built environment would be like.

2. Historiography:

Generally accepting that socialist realism could not be properly understood unless approached in relation to the Russian avant-garde of the 1920s, historians formulated two perspectives.[30] One is the tradition represented by C. Cooke, Hugh Hudson, and V. Paperny, which acknowledged the definitive break between avant-garde and modernism on the one hand, and totalitarianism on the other.[31] Another approach defined socialist realism as an "artistic method" and approached it from historical, semiological, and culturological conceptualizations, which, as Leonid Heller has pointed out, "are not so much descriptions as interpretations of the phenomenon of Soviet aesthetics and, as a rule, of Soviet culture as a whole."[32] Explaining the "aesthetization of politics" as a legitimate drive toward the success of the Soviet project, Groys, Gutkin, Robin, and Clark saw in socialist realism a tradition that used the artist's true, historically concrete depiction of reality in order to substitute the state's project to a "conscious strategy of

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[30] Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art: in the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy, and the People's Republic of China* (London: Collins Harvill, 1990); Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); idem, *Art under Stalin* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1991).
[31] Catherine Cooke, "Socialist Realism Architecture: Theory and Practice," in *Art of the Soviets. Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in a One-Party State, 1917-1992*, ed. Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 86-106; idem, "Beauty as a Route to 'Radiant Ruture': Responses of Soviet Architecture," *Journal of Design History* 2 (1997): 137-160; Hugh D. Hudson, *Blueprints and Blood: the Stalinization of Soviet Architecture, 1917-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); V. Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin*: *Culture Two* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002).
[32] Heller, "The World of Prettiness," 687-8.

myth mobilizing creation."[33] These assumptions echoed statements made by cultural historians to explain how the Enlightenment thought and the spread of technology throughout Europe generated the development of modern society by promoting "social intervention in the name of rational social reform" and produced numerous case studies.[34]

To stress the impact of cultural practice upon political interaction, historians have understood post-war Soviet society from the perspective of the relationships between the state and the population, the state and the institutions, and the state and the cultural products. Vera Dunham, Jeffrey Brooks, or Richard Stites among others, discuss how even after the end of World War II the coming of peacetime, Soviet society continued to operate as if mobilized for war. This fact redefined both the function of popular culture within the Soviet system and the culture's function within the political system.[35] Others have stressed that the separation between the Cold War's international scene and domestic affairs could not provide a comprehensive view unless employed as a political and socio-economic system in "a serious of logical interactions between several players

[33] See Boris Groys, "The Birth of Socialist Realism from the Spirit of the Russian Avant-Garde," in *Post-Impressionism to World War II*, ed. Debbie Lewer (Malden: Blackwell, 2006); idem, "The Art of Totality," in *The Landscape of Stalinism: the Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003); idem, "The Artist as Consumer," in *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture*, ed. Christoph Grunenberg and Max Hollein (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002); Irina Gutkin, *The Cultural Origins of the Socialist Realist Aesthetic, 1890-1934* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999); Robin, *Socialist Realism*; Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel. History as Ritual* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Rosenthal, *New Myth, New World*, 287; see also Mariia Chegodaeva, "Mass Culture and Socialist Realism," *Russian Studies in History* 2 (2003): 49-65; James von Geldern and Richard Stites, eds., *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia: Tales, Poems, Songs, Plays, and Folklore, 1917- 1953* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); John McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[34] David Hoffmann, *Stalinism: the Essential Readings* (Malden: Blackwell Pub., 2003), 5; idem, *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); David Christian, *Imperial and Soviet Russia, Power, Privilege and the Challenge of Modernity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); S. Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain. Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
[35] Vera Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990); Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Richard Stites, *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

both within and outside the Soviet Union."[36] Approaching both the ideological and institutional inflexibility, and the narrative canonization of postwar Soviet propaganda, Timothy Colton and Donald J. Raleigh have emphasized particularly the influence of Zhdanov's cultural rhetoric.[37] The members of the "Lausanne project" formulated a similar point of view: analyzing the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe's bureaucratic interaction, Heller and Baudain argued that the post-war Soviet aesthetic system imagined a "vanishing reality," transforming the 1930s myth of the future "radiant reality" into a utopian rhetoric and expressing ideology through institutional solidification and a triumphalist style in the arts, architecture, and literature.[38]

These interactions have been researched within the context of ideological interaction between Moscow and Eastern European states. Aman Andres' book *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era* draws on the interaction between modernism and traditionalism, giving attention o the institutionalization of architectural practice, professional transformation, and Moscow's intervention in building decisions.[39] Essay collections edited by Susan Reid and David Crowley have mostly focused on postwar Soviet system in Eastern Europe from the

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[36] J. Fürst, "Introduction," *Late Stalinist Russia: Society between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, ed. Juliane Fürst (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 4; Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace: Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945-1953* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[37] Timothy Colton, *Moscow, Governing the Socialist Metropolis* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995); Donald J. Raleigh, ed., *Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917-1953* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001).

[38] Antoine Baudain, *Le réalisme socialiste soviétique de la période jdanovienne, 1947-1953,* vol. 1: *Les arts plastiques et leurs institutions* (Berne, New York and Paris: P. Lang, 1997); idem, "'Why is Soviet Painting Hidden From Us?' Zhdanov Art and Its International Relations and Fallout, 1947-1953." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 1995 94(3): 881-913; Leonid Heller, "A World of Prettiness: Socialist Realism and its Aesthetic Categories," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 3 (1995): 687-714; Leonid Heller and Antoine Baudin, 'Le realisme socialiste comme organization du champ culturel," in *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 3 (1993): 307-345; Thomas Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book: Real Socialism and Socialist Realism in Stalin's Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[39] Anders Aman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era: an Aspect of Cold War History* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

perspective of socialist space and material culture during the Cold War years. Greg Castillo's research on East German architecture contextualized the transition from modernism to socialist realism within Cold War conditions and the Soviet ideology.[40]

Romanian historiography on Stalinization after the fall of the communist regime in 1989 has focused particularly upon political and economic issues. Dennis Deletant, Vladimir Tismăneanu, Stelian Tănase, Liviu Târău and recently Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură emphasized the impact of Soviet politics upon the internal Romanian politics but discussed only tangentially the cultural consequences of Soviet dominance.[41] However, Andi Mihalache, Magda Cârneci, and Augustin Ioan have researched connections between cultural production and political decision-making.[42] Collections of interviews with former members of the Communist Party provided interesting perspectives on the internal functioning of the organization as well on the personal experiences of the leadership. Thus the interviews conducted by Lavinia Betea with Ion Ghoerghe Maurer, Gheorghe Apostu and Alexandru Bârlădeanu uncovered somewhat the backstage interactions in Romanian political life. Furthermore, memoirs penned by Petru Tugui,

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[40] Susan E. Reid and David Crowley ed., *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002); idem *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); Greg Castillo, "Blueprint for a Cultural Revolution: Herman Henselmann and the Architecture of German Socialist Realism," *Slavonica* 1 (2005): 31-51; idem, "Socialist Realism and Built Nationalism in the Cold War 'Battle of Styles,'" *Centropa* 2, 1 (2001): 84-93; idem, "The Bauhaus in Cold War Germany," in *Bauhaus Culture: from Weimar to the Cold War*, ed. Kathleen James-Chakraborty (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 171-95; see also Oskar Stanislaw Czarnik, "Control of Literary Communication in the 1945-1956 Period in Poland," *Libraries & Culture* 1 (2001): 104-115; James Cracraft and Daniel Rowland, ed., *Architectures of Russian Identity: 1500 to the present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[41] Dennis Deletant, *Romania under Communist Rule* (Iasi and Portland: Center for Romanian Studies, 1999); Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for all Seasons;* Tănase, *Elite si societe*; Liviu Târău, *Intre Washington si Moscova* (Cluj: Ed. Tribuna, 2005); Ionescu-Gura, Nicoleta, *Nomenclatura Comitetului Central al Partidului Muncitoresc Roman* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2006); idem, *Stalinizarea Romaniei, Republica Populara Romana 1948-1950* (Bucharest: All, 2005).

[42] Andi Mihalache, *Istorie si practici discursive in România democrat-populara* (Bucharest: Albatros, 2003); Magda Cârneci, *Artele plastice in România, 1947-1989* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 2001); Augustin Ioan, *Power, Play and National Identity* (Bucharest: Editura Fundatiei culturale romane, 1999).

former head of the Literature Department during Gheorghiu-Dej's regime, reveal similarly interesting facts. As far as the architects are concerned, studies on professional interaction with the regime have been sparse. Cezar Lăzărescu's commemorative book edited by his widow Ileana Lăzărescu provides researchers with some biographical information, but lacks any critical approach to the events described.[43]

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[43] Lavinia Betea, *Maurer si lumea de ieri, mărturii despre stalinizarea României* (Cluj: Ed. Dacia, 2001); idem, *Alexandru Bârlădeanu despre Dej, Ceauşescu şi Iliescu* (Bucharest: Editura Evenimentul Românesc, 1998); Petru Tugui, *Istoria si limba româna în vremea lui Gheorghiu-Dej: memoriile unui fost sef de Secţie a CC al PMR* (Bucharest: Editura Ion Cristoiu, 1999); Ileana Lăzărescu, *Vise in piatra* (Bucharest: Capitel, 2003).

II

Romania's Absorption into the Soviet System

Romania's absorption into the Soviet bloc, accomplished by the end of 1947, occurred after several years of institutional and ideological dialogue between local communists and officials in Moscow. The process involved a variety of mechanisms, both institutional and political.[1] This chapter will briefly describe the political communization of postwar Romania; it will then look backward to examine architectural trends in Romania, from the 1920s to the imposition of the socialist-realist style in the late 1940s.

1. The Romanian Communist Party:

Between 1944 and 1948, the state, political parties, and other institutions confronted the Soviet model; only the Communist Party assimilated it skillfully. For instance, in 1944, the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP) had less than 1,000 members. Party leaders carried out a rapid enlargement process that Marxist-Leninist jargon calls "the construction of the party."[2] By the end of February 1948, the number had spectacularly increased to 800,000. However, in 1948, the central leadership initiated a crusade to eliminate careerist elements, previous associates with the Iron Guard (a fascist organization), and those in

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[1] Romania withdrew from the Axis on 23 August 1944, immediately joining the Allied powers. However, the situation was not recognized by the Soviets until September 12, by which point the Red Army had occupied Romanian capital, Bucharest, and other parts of the country. The Armistice Agreement conferred on the Soviet Union a general supervision of the economy. Article 10 required the Romanian government to make regular currency payments and guarantee the use of infrastructure, materials, and services to the High Command; article 11 stipulated reparations for Soviet losses, at $300 million over six years, in commodities; article 12 obliged the Romanian government to return all valuables and materials removed from Russia during the war. Article 16 introduced censorship in order to "guarantee the democratization of the country." The Declaration on Liberated Europe, signed by the Allies in February 1945 at Yalta, did not stand in the way of Soviet expansion in the region. On 6 March an obedient government, led by Petru Groza, was imposed. The Treaty of Peace, signed on 10 February 1947, legalized the Soviet military presence. On 30 December 1947, the king abdicated and left the country. The same day, the country was proclaimed the Popular Republic of Romania.

[2] Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons,* 127.

contact with foreign elements. The verification process initially removed from the Communist Party 192,000 supposedly hostile elements, and their exclusion augmented the sense of terror that permeated most of Romanian society. By 1955, the total number of excluded members reached 400,000.[3] The Romanian Workers' Party (RWP) held its first congress on 21-23 February 1948, and Gheorghiu-Dej was elected Secretary General and party leader; Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca, and Theohari Georgescu were named the other three members of the Secretariat. Before 1952, the party did not have a coherent decision-making voice, as each leader tried to accumulate as much political capital as possible.[4] The conflicts revolved around the ideological contradictions between "Moscow loyalists" (Pauker, Luca, and Georgescu) and "home communists" (Gheorghiu-Dej) regarding how to govern the country and bring the Soviet rhetoric to reality.[5]

As the 1950s began, Gheorghiu-Dej, a "home communist," yet a loyal enforcer of Stalin's rule, gained the sole power for himself and his supporters. In 1952, Pauker, Luca and Georgescu were purged. Gheorghiu-Dej's action against his three rivals coincided with the growth of his influence in the party.[6] Thus, he had taken advantage of the increased party discipline brought about by the elimination campaign of the late 1948, as well as by territorial reorganization in September 1950, when the counties (*judeţ*) were replaced with a "three-tier" Soviet system of regions, districts (*pleşe*), and communes. This expanded the local bureaucracy, which helped Gheorghiu-Dej and his group to gain

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Kenneth Jowitt, *Revolutionary Breakthrough and National Development. The Case of Romania, 1944-1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 98.

[5] The distinction between "Muscovites" and "home communists" regarded the fact that, before the establishment of communism, part of the leaders have spent the war years in Moscow, others have been arrested during the workers' strikes that occurred in Romania during 1930s. The former were imprisoned, and developed a sense of appurtenance and solidarity.

[6] Robert King, *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, 93.

power over the local and parliamentary elections of 13 March 1951.[7] In 1952, the new constitution stated that the Romanian People's Republic had come into being because of the Soviet Union's victory over fascist Germany and the Soviet army's liberation of Romania.[8] Dej exploited the Soviet link to legitimate his own political position. On 2 June 1952, he was appointed as President of the Council of Ministers, while continuing to serve as Secretary General of the party.[9] Now the preeminent figure of the party, Gheorghiu-Dej ruled the country until his death in 1965.

2. The Garden City:

The "Garden City" architectural model, which was to prove important in Romania, has a long history. Originally formulated in 1898 by Ebenezer Howard's essay "Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to the Real Reform," the concept proposed an urban design that stressed quality houses at affordable prices. The "Garden City" anticipated a circular city of 30,000 inhabitants built on 1,000 acres. Economically based on the idea of changing the value of land by increasing the number of migrants, a "Garden City" project would consist of individual dwellings and plots of land grouped concentrically around an industrial objective. The ideal of the "Garden City" was collective integration and social harmony among workers; the concept was presented as a counterpoint to the individualistic, multicultural character of the metropolis. Howard maintained that by providing a home to well-fed, well-dressed, and well-educated workers, the "Garden City" would give rise to a qualitatively different experience, one that fostered stronger

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[7] Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons*, 134; Dennis Deletant, *Romania under Communist Rule* (Oxford: The Center for Romanian Studies, 1999), 84.
[8] Shafir, *Romania*, 33.
[9] Deletant, *Romania Under Communist Rule*, 86.

community and a better work ethic.[10] Furthermore, Howard's concept implied that the development of a specific urban space should greatly depend on the existence of a decision-making factor whose power consisted of "holding land, planning the city, timing the order of buildings, and providing the necessary social services."[11]

Over the following decades, radicalized by the Bauhaus school of design, the "Garden City" principle provided the basis for building programs in many interwar social programs all over Europe.[12] In Germany, to an extent greater than in other European countries, architects served municipal authorities by building important housing projects. By the end of the 1920s, preeminent architects of the moment such as Ernest May, Bruno Taut, or Walter Gropius designed and built countless "Siedlungen" (identical successive housing).[13] The houses aimed to create uniform residential estates, with equal exposure to sun and light, functional space distribution, and modern facades in order to define the minimum lodging for a regular family. This model was disseminated throughout Europe.[14]

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[10] Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler, eds., *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Stephen V. Ward, ed., *The Garden City: Past, Present, and Future* (London and New York: Spon, 1992); Standish Meacham, *Regaining Paradise: Englishness and the Early Garden City Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Walter L. Creese, *The Search for Environment: The Garden City, Before and After* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966)**.**

[11] Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Evolution, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (Penguin Books, 1966), 593 and 586-592.

[12] Rainer K. Wick, *Teaching at the Bauhaus* (New York, Distributed Art Publishers, 2000); Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus, 1919-1933* (Köln: B. Taschen, 1998); Manfred Koob, ed., *Bauhaus, Avant-Garde of the Twenties: Visionary Architecture* (Heidelberg: Editions Braus, 1994); Elaine S. Hochman, *Bauhaus: Crucible of Modernism* (New York: Fromm International, 1997).

[13] Norbert Schoenauer**,** *6000 Years of Housing* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 395.

[14] Kathleen James-Chakraborty, ed., *Bauhaus Culture: from Weimar to the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to our House* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1981); A. Kopp, "Foreign Architects in the Soviet Union," in *Reshaping Russian Architecture: Western Technology, Utopian Dreams*, ed. William C. Brumfield (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 180-1.

3. Romanian Architecture before the Establishment of the Communist Regime:

During the 1920s and 1930s in Romania, public architecture fluctuated stylistically between divergent ideological tendencies: modernism versus traditionalism, and centralism versus regionalism. Attempts undertaken by some architects to support the centralizing tendencies of the Romanian state that was in the process of integrating the new provinces of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transylvania into the country's administrative structure opened up discussions about architecture's function within the Romanian national state.[15] Architecturally, the question had proven extremely difficult since, in these provinces, monuments constructed by the ethnic Romanians were sparse. Architects synthesized a style named Neo-Romanian, which featured monumental building, initially religious, and later administrative, on which Byzantine elements had been superimposed. This style gave buildings a sense of nationhood and unity. Another style emerged in 1935, when, to modernize an almost medieval city, the most famous architects of the time, led by Duliu Marcu, drew up a new urban plan for Bucharest. The result, which derived from a local classicism, was meant to embody the political visions of the monarch's regime, and was even named the "King Carol II" in his honour. Marcu and his colleagues proposed for Bucharest a program of street reorganization, the building of monumental edifices for state institutions, and the creation of large squares for mass parades and public interactions.[16]

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[15] At the beginning of the 1920s, Romanian leaders had to choose between two administrative systems: the German federalist system and the French centralist one. The Romanians choose the second; therefore, the architecture commissioned by the state had to convey ideas of unity and centralist authority.

[16] Carmen Popescu, *Le style national roumain. Construire une nation à travers l'architecture 1881-1945* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004), 340-55; Augustin Ioan, 'Arhitectura interbelica si chestiunea nationala,' in *Teme ale arhitecturii din România in secolul XX*, ed. Ana-Maria Zaharide, Mariana Celac, Augustin Ioan (Bucharest: Editura Institutului Cultural Roman, 2003), 55-81.

In Romania during the 1920s and 1930s, modernist architecture's principles were extensively debated. Influenced by Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus school, Radu Udroiu, the future head of the Architecture Division under Gheorghiu-Dej, argued that modern architecture was "a total art form that coordinated many disciplines."[17] The magazine that acted as the key forum for the debates led by Udroiu and Floarea Stănculescu was *Căminul*, which in its brief existence (1928-1929) dealt with questions of house-building technologies. Modernism's theoreticians advanced an urban formula that would combine the comfort of small cities with the economic might of the great metropolis, just as the "Garden City" architectural model had previously proposed. By the end of the 1920s, and during the 1930s in Bucharest, Vatra Luminoasă, and Resiţa, architects like Horea Creangă, Marcel Janco and Radu Udroiu were designing and constructing residential establishments for workers.[18] During the 1930s, theoretical debates revolved around the breakthrough of vernacular architectural models and drew upon the sociological and folkloric research conducted by Dimitrie Gusti at the Institute for Social Research.[19] Traditional forms in modern architecture coincided with a European trend that explored essential structures and functional building types and provided designers with new and innovative resources and construction solutions. The 1930s construction ideology favored an easily accessible and affordable house pattern that synthesized the modernist

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[17] Radu Udroiu, Marcel Janco and Nicolae Nedelescu actively militated in the favor of modernist architecture and related it to social, economical, and cultural Romanian trends. All three published extensively on Le Corbusier's theories and used their writings to urge Romanian society to accept and endorse the modernist movement. Radu Udroiu, "Le Corbusier-Vers une Architecture," *Căminul* 1 (1928): 27-8, cited in Luminiţa Machedon, *Romanian Modernism* (Cambrige: MIT Press, 1999), 63; see also Popescu, *Le style national roumain.* 325-40.

[18] See Duliu Marcu, *Arhitectura* (Bucharest: Ed. Tehnica, 1960), 231-37; Ana Maria Zaharide, "Locuinta in creatia lui Horia Creangă," in *Horia Creangă, Catalogul expoziţiei organizate la 100 de ani de la nastere* (Bucarest: Editura Uniunii Arhitectilor din Romania, 1992), 118-121.

[19] Radu Patrulius, *Viaţa si opera lui Horea Creangă* (Bucharest: Ed. Tehnica, 1992), 49; Machedon, *Romanian Modernism*, 254.

principles of the "Garden City" on the one hand and, on the other, the vernacular tradition.[20]

Following the modernists of the 1920s and 1930s, a group of more radical modernist artists appeared in the beginning of the 1940s. This group, isolated from the rest of the continent during the war, became very active at the end of the conflict and restored its connections with the European artistic circles.[21] The artistic dialogue between postwar Romanian and European artistic media influenced not only design production, but also artistic education. As such, at the school of architecture in Bucharest beneficed from the involvement in the teaching activities of some of the well-known figures of Romanian modernism. The architectural education spanned over six years of university training, and strongly influences by the French Beaux Arts, consisted of both arts and polytechnic ideas, with emphasis on modernist design influenced by the French line of thinking. Well-known figures like Richard Bordenache, GM Cantacuzino, Octav Doicescu, Adrian Gheorghiu, Grigore Ionescu were involved in teaching. Their presence gave the learning system a particular feature, which encouraged students and young architects to regard reconstruction issues and political debates of the mid 1940s as genuinely stimulating for architectural experiments and daring urban solutions.[22]

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[20] Stephen Calloway, ed., *The Elements of Style: A Practical Encyclopedia of Interior Architectural Details, from 1485 to the Present* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991); Vicky Richardson, *New Vernacular Architecture* (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2001).

[21] See, Stelian Tanase, ed., *Avantgarda romaneasca in arhivele Sigurantei* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2008); Magda Carneci, *Artele plastice*; S.A. Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács ed, *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930* (Los Angeles and Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).

[22] See Ion Mircea Enescu, *Arhitect sub comunism* (Bucharest: Paideia, 2007); Eugenia Greceanu, "Sovietizarea învatamantului în arhitectură," in *Arhitecţi în timpul dictaturii. Amintiri*, ed. Viorica Curea (Bucharest: Simetria, 2005), 123-4.

However, by the end of the decade, due to the general political confusion, they had all conformed to socialist-realist principles imported by the Soviets.[23]

4. <u>Socialist Realism in Architecture:</u>

In 1931, the Soviet authorities launched an international competition to build a vast "Palace of Soviets" in Moscow. The palace was never built, but four rounds of competition determined the form it was to have taken. The first, which opened in 1931, set the stylistic guidelines. The second round attracted 160 entries, including twenty from abroad. At this point, the Council of the Construction of the Place of Soviets stressed that "monumental quality, simplicity, integrity, and elegance in the architectural presentation" - now defined as fundamental features of socialist realism - could be achieved by "the application both of new methods and the best employed in classical architecture."[24] Two contests followed immediately afterward, and by the middle of 1933, a team consisting of Boris Iofan, Vladimir Shchukoand and Vladimir Gelfeikh won the contest.[25] Intended to replace the Church of Christ the Redeemer (a nineteenth-century cathedral designed by Konstantin Ton and demolished by the Stalinist regime in 1931), the Palace was to have almost utopian dimensions. The seating capacity varied between 6,000 and 21,000. The building's impressive facades were adorned with columns, friezes, and arches. Meant to be visible from any part of Moscow, the palace was to be tall, bold, symmetrical, and

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[23] Piotr Piotrowski, "Modernism and Totalitarianism II. Myths of Geometry: Neo-Constructivism in Central Europe, 1948-1970," *Artium Quaestiones* 11 (2000): 114; see also Alexandru Beldiman, Magda Carneci, eds., *Bucharest in the 1920s-1940s: Between Avant-Garde and Modernism* (Bucharest: Uniunea arhitectilor din Romania, 1994).

[24] Selim O. Khan-Magomedov, *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920s and 1930s* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 402.

[25] See W. C. Brumfield, *A History of Russian Architecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 485-6; Alexei Tarkhanov and Sergei Kavtaradze, *Architecture of the Stalin Era* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 44-55; Khan-Magomedov, *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture*, 402-3.

permanent. Its architectural style had to synthesize classical architecture with elements of the historic heritage, and to master present-day construction techniques and materials. The Palace of Soviets would be an emblem for the proletariat, showing that workers were capable of building fine monuments and had come to power forever.[26] Accordingly, "in its search for an appropriate style, Soviet architecture must strive for realistic criteria, for clarity and precision in its images, which must be easily comprehensible by and accessible to the masses."[27]

The "Palace of Soviets" was never completed, but the artistic interactions generated by this venture illustrated the major steps in the establishment of the socialist-realist style in architecture and opened up the debates that cast socialist realism as necessarily "national in form and socialist in content." As Hudson has pointed out, the regime felt that architecture had to be intelligible to the uneducated masses who were going to move into the city after the industrial boom produced by the supposed industrialization of the beginning of the 1930s. The most accessible style was seen to be the Neoclassical, "which derived its effect in large part from its association with tsarist classicism and the architecture of state awe."[28] Socialist-realist architecture joined the classical heritage with the use of modern technology. Initially, the Soviets understood "classical" to mean Greek, Roman, and Renaissance styles because of the supposedly democratic nature of these regimes. Accordingly, "an artwork was party-minded insofar as it contributed to the construction of communism, or, insofar as it commented on the burning problems which confronted the socialist society."[29]

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[26] Tarkhanov and Kavtaradze**,** *Architecture of the Stalin Era,* 47.
[27] *Arkhitektura SSSR* 1 (1933): 1, cited in Tarkhanov and Kavtaradze**,** *Architecture of the Stalin Era*, 49.
[28] Hudson, *Blueprints and Blood*, 78.
[29] Heller, "The World of Prettiness," 689.

In addition, the architectural profession had been institutionalized. In 1933, the Moscow Architectural Institute was founded, and the USSR Academy of Architecture was created in 1934. Anyone wishing to practice the profession was required to belong to the Union of Soviet Architects (along to the Union of Soviet Workers, the Union of Soviet Composers, etc.). In June 1937, Russian modernism was officially dismissed at the First All-Union Congress of Architecture. Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's watchdog over the arts, gained virtually unchecked power over Soviet culture until his death in 1948.[30]

As far as urban planning was concerned, once disputes between various architectural strategies ended, a new rhetoric had emerged, fully in line with the doctrine of socialist realism.[31] Accordingly, as Arkady Grigorievich Mordvinov explained in December 1935 in a speech delivered at the Sixth Session of the Academy of Architecture, the historical purpose of the Soviet city was to provide an economically efficient settlement for community life, whose structures would express the people's national consciousness. A socialist city had to be distinct from a "Garden City," and had to comprise collective dwellings and state-owned, multistory buildings.[32] This new conception of the city introduced the so-called "quartal": representing the urban space delineated by the intersection of four streets, the quartal became the main urban structure within the perimeter of the city. Buildings constructed around that perimeter had to trace an enclosed space using similarly constructed buildings, organized in an ensemble of

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[30] Brumfield, *A History of Russian Architecture*, 490; B. A. Ruble, "Moscow's Revolution Architecture," in *Reshaping Russian Architecture*, 113.

[31] See Hudson, *Blueprints and Blood*, 69-83; for international context, see Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: an Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

[32] Ebenezer Howard's concept of the "Garden City" influenced early Soviet architectural practices. During the 1920s, reconstruction plans for Moscow, Petrograd, and Erevan, along with building projects for smaller industrial centers followed the basic pattern of the "Garden City." The economic and social conditions in the Soviet Union in the 1920s favored this kind of urban approach.

stylistically sober and simple edifices. The interior of these quartals was devoted to green spaces and public zones.

The socialist-realist city would allow the universal access to education and culture through the multitude of libraries, cultural centers, and schools, and assert the equality of living standards. The city would be planned around the center, which would dominate the city's architectural unique identity, "determined by squares, main streets, and dominant buildings."[33] To synthesize these planning and design principles, Vladimir Semenov and Sergei Chernyshev drew up the Moscow plan, accepted in 1935, and later recalled as the quintessential illustration of the socialist-realist planning pattern.[34] By the end of World War II, because of the victory over Nazi Germany, then because of international confrontation during the Cold War, impressive triumphalist buildings were constructed to express Soviet technological and economic superiority first in Moscow, then throughout the USSR.

5. Exporting the Principle to Eastern Europe:

During the process of exporting socialist realism to Eastern Europe, Soviet ideologues followed similar step with each country.[35] Between 1945 and 1948, modernist manifestations were allowed to coexist with socialist-realist discourse, timidly employed by marginal communist organizations, such as the Friendship Associations with the Soviet Union, which organized local actions like the "Month of Friendship with the USSR," or the "Soviet Week." However, as early as 1947, in a speech delivered at the

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[33] Tarkhanov and Kavtaradze, *Architecture of the Stalin Era*, 98.
[34] Brumfield, *A History of Russian Architecture*, 486.
[35] Norman Naimark and Leonid Gibianskii, ed., *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944-1949* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997).

first session of the newly reopened Academy of Arts, the president Aleksandr Gerasimov stressed the task of promoting socialist realism in Eastern Europe at the expense of avant-gardism. According to Antoine Baudin, "even if the Soviet exhibits presented up to that moment in Eastern Europe had been 'a great success' they were nevertheless threatened by an activation of formalist currents and even an unbridled reactionary campaign against Soviet art in the press which justified energetic decontamination measures."[36]

Once the communist parties reached absolute power by the end of the 1940s, declarations that the socialist-realist method was the only correct one grew more vehement. The Soviets increased the numbers of itinerary exhibitions displayed in the so-called "popular democracies."[37] The USSR also organized field trips that allowed architects from the Eastern European countries to visit Soviet cities. These trips had multiple purposes. First, the USSR wished to tutor Eastern Europeans about the supposed superiority of Soviet civilization, reborn from the ruins of World War II, powerful and almighty. In addition, these trips were meant to indoctrinate East European architects and convince them on theoretical and methodological grounds to abandon modernist approaches in favor of Soviet forms of classicism, under an institutionalized structure of architectural production. Those privileged enough to have benefitted from these visits were highly placed within the party structure; in time, such visits increased in number and frequency.[38] From 1949 on, institutionalization within the artistic realm, the centralization of media information, the introduction of censure, and the reevaluation of academic

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[36] Baudin, "Zhdanov Art and its International Fallout," 889.
[37] The term "popular democracy" refers to the political regimes established in the Eastern Europe by the end of the Second World War, and delineates a political regime under strict control of the Soviet Union and where human rights and liberties were restricted. See, Ivan Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1990: Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-38.
[38] See Piotrowski, "Modernism and Totalitarianism," 103-5.

curricula were seen as necessary steps to increase the popular democracies' ties to the Soviet Union.[39] After 1950, legislative and political measures definitively set the lines in cultural production that were followed thoroughly until Stalin's death in 1953, after which socialist-realist constrains were somewhat loosened.[40]

6. Stalinism's Impact upon Romanian Architecture:

Parallel with the Romanian Communist Party's process of political solidification, the cultural sphere was shaped by Soviet influences as well. Already, by the end of 1944 two bodies dominated the Romanian cultural landscape: the Minister of Propaganda led by art historian Petre Constantinescu-Iaşi, a university professor and during the 1930s, president of the Romanian Soviet Society, and the "Friendship Association for the Strengthening of the Romanian Soviet Relations" (ARLUS), also headed by Constantinescu-Iaşi. In 1948, the Minister of Propaganda was transformed into the Minister of Arts and Information. Constantinescu-Iaşi remained in charge of it and with the aid of Mihail Roller, the local Zhdanov in the field of history, supervised the nation's cultural activities.[41]

Established by the end of 1944, soon after the surfacing on the political scene of the Romanian Communist Party, ARLUS was directly subordinated to its Soviet model, VOKS, which propagated Soviet cultural values abroad. In 1944, at the headquarters of ARLUS, notorious Soviet officials, including the head of VOKS, Vladimir Kemenov, the

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[39] Ibid.

[40] For a comprehensive discussion on individual cases in the Eastern European postwar architecture, see Aman, *Architecture and Ideology.*

[41] See Florin Constantiniu, Alin Alexandru Spanu, "A existat, in 1945, un plan de comunizare al Romaniei?," in *Adevarul literar si artistic* 583 X (2001): 8-10; T. A. Volokitina, "Sovietizarea Europei de rasarit," *Magazin istoric* XXXVII, 3 (2003): 61-64; Andrej Koryn, "Between the East and the West. International aspects of the Sovietization of Central Eastern Europe: 1945-1947," in *Idees politique et mentalites en Pologne et en Romanie entre l'Orient et l'Occident (XVIIIe-XXe siecles)*, ed. G Platon, V. Ciobanu (Cluj Napoca: Dacia, 2002), 117-132; Alexandru Dutu, "Fazele ideologiei comuniste si perspectiva comparatistă," in *Cotidianul* (31 January 1994): 8.

Soviet advisor Andrei Vishinski (Stalin's mouthpiece during the show trials of the 1930s), and numerous Soviet delegates introduced socialist-realist rhetoric to Romanian officials. ARLUS made use of the existing infrastructure − mass media, the museum network, and local bureaucracy − to interpret, adapt, and apply the Soviet system. Facilitating Soviet-Romanian cultural collaboration, the association provided information on industrial, agricultural, and scientific Soviet achievements, and thereby played a key role in introducing theoretical methods for the development of the Romanian economy.[42] ARLUS brought together representatives of all fields of cultural creation. The organizational structure, more sophisticated than an academy or even a university, comprised twelve separate departments: economy, science, literature and philosophy, applied science, social science, army, communications and transport, education, press, propaganda, art, and sport-tourism. Each section had one president, one vice-president, several secretaries, and one librarian.[43] Although theoretically, the complex web of mass communication techniques functioned faultlessly, practically, the system faced the burden of bureaucratic inconsistencies and administrative chaos, and before 1948, its influence was strictly limited to its members.[44] In terms of its influence on architecture before the late 1940s, discrepancies between Soviet architectural literature accessible to the public through ARLUS libraries, and French language writings published between 1945 and 1947 available in Bucharest bookstores convey the idea that within the profession there were two parallel drives. Furthermore, before 1948, Romanian architects actively

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[42] Adrian Cioroianu, *Pe umerii lui Marx. O introducere în istoria comunismului românesc* (Bucharest: Ed. Curtea Veche, 2005), chapter 5.
[43] Ibid..
[44] Ibid..

participated at international congresses of architecture and urban planning in France, Great Britain, Switzerland, and Germany.[45]

The institutionalization of socialist realism in Romania combined ambitious initiatives with institutional delays. In 1949, for instance, Romania was one of the first Eastern bloc countries to mount an artistic exhibition honoring Stalin's seventieth birthday; it also renamed Brasov "The Stalin City."[46] At the end of 1947, the Romanian Architects Association merged into AGIR (Association of Romanian Engineers), which in 1949 was transformed into AST (Association of Scientific Technicians). Between 1949 and 1952, within the Ministry of Construction there were established the National Burro of Systematization and the Centre for Regional Planning; within the Romanian Academy of Science, the Centre for Research in Architecture and Demography and the Department for Research in Folklore were responsible for research activity.

On 13 November 1952, the Romanian Communist Party's Central Committee agreed upon three resolutions, which marked the complete institutionalization of socialist realism in architecture. The first concerned the construction and reconstruction of the Romanian urban territory and the ideological training of architects, the second a new plan for Bucharest and the third an underground metro system for the same city, all of which illustrated the ongoing centralist-institutional tendencies manifested by the communist state. The Romanian Counsel of Ministers' State Committee for Architecture and Construction became an extraordinary decision-making organism over national building issues, and expanded its authority over all planning structures no mater their previous institutional affiliation. Its monthly bulletin published government's legislation on

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[45] See *Buletinul Societăţtii Arhitecţilor Români* 8 (1946): 4-6 and 15-6.
[46] Ioan, *Power, Play and National Identity*, 68.

building program. Accordingly, there were established Regional and Local Systematization offices, led by chief-architects appointed individually by the Prime Minister Gheorghiu-Dej. The Institute for Urban Planning and Constructions (ISPROR) was created to serve the State Committee's building priorities.[47] On 21 December 1952, the Architects' Union was established, and its president, Duliu Marcu, saluted the "bright perspectives that the party's decisions had opened for the Romanian people."[48]

In addition, at the beginning of the 1950s, the first number of *Arhitectura* ("Architecture") was published. This periodical soon gained ascendancy over all alternative professional publications and became a propaganda tool. An article published in 1952 integrated architecture and buildings in the ideological context of the moment and further related construction programs to a number of key political concepts imported from the Soviet Union's vocabulary: "class interest," "five-year plans," "the working class," "native land," the "struggle against bourgeois ideology," "decadent culture of the West," "imperialism," "peaceful reconstruction," and "national tradition."[49] Romanian architecture, the article argued, had to be "national in form and socialist in content." This dictum interfered with the efforts to make the construction of urban experience an aesthetic exercise, instead forcing architects to employ vernacular images as a way of defining modernity as progress and technology for the sake of socialist transformation.[50]

Stylistically, the shift from "unduly modernist landscape" to "serene socialist realism" occurred in Romania between 1949 and 1954, causing not just a visual

[47] See *Arhitectură şi Urbanism* 11 (1952): 2-5; *Buletinul Comitetului de Stat pentru Arhitectură şi Construcţii al Consiliului de Miniştri* 1 (1953): 18-25 and 140-143.
[48] Ibid.
[49] M. Locar, "Pe drumul unei noi arhitecturi in RPR," *Arhitectura si Urbanism* 1-2 (1952): 3-15.
[50] For an overview on the 1952 interactions within the cultural field, see Mihaela Cristea, ed., *Reconstituiri necesare. Sedinta din 27 Iunie 1952 a Uniunilor de Creatie din Romania* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2005).

conversion, but as well a redeployment of the social function of the architecture. Comprised in the rhetoric's main tenet "national in form and socialist in content" it was synonym with the allocation of formative function within a social system. Therefore, architecture came to play a more central place within the society whereas the space had been allocated the main function of mediating between the political authority and the masses. The continuous dialogue between Moscow and Bucharest set the bases for the new architecture. Already by the mid-to-late 19940s, influenced by the architecture practiced extensively in Romania prior to World War II, architects traveled to Moscow with the modernist designs for the future Casa Scânteii. There, two members of the Soviet Academy, K. Simonov and Mordvinov, the same member of the Soviet Academy of Architecture who had theorized the correct aspect of the socialist-realist city during the 1930s, advised them on how to adapt local Romanian realities to socialist-realist rhetoric. In 1949, after rejecting several of the Romanians' projects on the grounds of "formalism," the Russians proposed instead an architecture that was "national in form and socialist in content." The Romanian architects brought with them from Moscow new plans for the Casa Scânteii that now called for it to be built as a smaller version of the recently constructed Moscow State University building in Lenin Hills.[51] This episode, mentioned by Horia Maicu in an article published in 1952 in *Arhitectură şi Urbanism*, was regarded as the benchmark in converting the Romanian architecture to "national in form and socialist in content" rhetoric. Indeed, according to Maicu's statement, the style of the Casa Scânteii synthesized the entire Romanian architectural repertoire, and the

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[51] Aman, *Architecture and Ideology*, 67.

Soviet's advice on how to employ the local heritage proved consistent in eliminating modernist manifestations.[52]

Figure 2.1 Lomonosov Moscow State University (1949-1953). Architects Lev Rudnev et al.

Figure 2.2 "Casa Scânteii," Bucharest (1951-1954). Architects Horia Maicu et al.

In 1953, another Romanian delegation, led by Horia Maicu, the chief-architect of the Casa Scânteii, paid a visit to the Soviet Union. While Moscow, the principal example of the USSR's enormous technological and artistic power, was usually the first stop in during these pilgrimages, the architects' instruction in this case included journeys to war-torn cities such as Kiev, Stalingrad, and Leningrad. Romanian architects headed to other Soviet cities, such as Yerevan and Tbilisi.[53] There, they were introduced to building projects that the Soviet part forward as models for the Romanians to imitate. According to Horia Maicu, the trip offered a full perspective on the triumph of the Soviet rebuilding process; the Romanians all agreed that "national in form and socialist in content" best summarized the architectural essence of socialist realism. In Yerevan, they learned that "under national form, influenced by the old architectonic traditions, was the new content

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[52] Horia Maicu, "Despre folosirea moştenirii trecutului în arhitectura Casei Scânteii," *Arhitectură şi Urbanism* 4-5 (1952): 9-14.

[53] *Scânteia tineretului* (4 January 1954): 2.

of the Soviet capital of Armenia."[54] Equally important, by viewing Armenian buildings,

they understood that the tie with the national form was "subordinated through discreet

ornaments and details."[55] They discussed how the traditional and the national had to be

reproduced clearly, a step which would supposedly link the consciousness of the past to

that of the present. Tbilisi showed them that, the people of Georgia had started looking to

the past before the other peoples of the Soviet Union had.[56]

      To sum up, Romania's absorption into the Soviet cultural sphere occurred under

an institutional and ideological exchange of ideas between Bucharest and Moscow; it also

involved the reevaluation of the artistic hierarchies within the communist state. Viewing

cultural production from this perspective opens up the question of how these actions,

produced by major international events, were manifested in various individual cases and

to what extent the materialization of socialist realism was conditioned by local conditions

specific to each country or region.

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] According to Catherine Cooke, the Government House of the Georgian Republic in Tbilisi, designed by Korokin and Lezhava, or the Agriculture Commissariat of Armenia in Yerevan, designed by Tamanyan, were the most shown pieces of architecture that respected the visual norms of socialist realism. Thus, "in both these cases, a generally classical *parti*, which speaks of centrality and authority, is typically reworked at the level of spatial and decorative detail through indigenous traditions; in the Georgian case, of deeply shaded country sides and clean-cut non-treatment of masonry, and in the Armenian, of rhythmic and linear bas-relief decoration." See Cooke, "Beauty as a Route," 100.

III

The First Phase in the Construction of the City (1947-1949)

In the mid-to-late 1940s, Andrei Zhdanov, Central Committee Secretary, Politburo member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and Stalin's spokesperson in the cultural field, identified two antagonistic cultural spheres: the West and the Soviet Union.[1] He argued that the West's artistic idioms were inappropriate for a socialist society, and that socialist realism was the most modern art of the moment, yet realistic enough to conform to the popular artistic demands of the masses.[2] The cultural campaign that followed these statements, known as the *Zhdanovshchina* after its initiator, was not hard to understand: by the end of World War II, the former allies were trying to restore social order and reconstruct war-devastated infrastructures. The rebuilding process mirrored the tense ideological state of affairs that took over the international scene once the Cold War set in and, as Soviets argued, the International Congress of Architecture held in Lausanne in September 1948 marked the definitive aesthetic fracture between the two worlds.[3] Echoing political developments, "the ideological and aesthetic polarization between the West and the USSR produced an artistic antagonism that was certainly more visible than in other disciplines."[4] In the Soviet Union, an inflexible bureaucratic cultural network of societies, academies, and institutions took control over cultural production and made sure that aesthetics respected the Party's line. In the Eastern bloc, the so-called

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[1] As a reaction to the Marshall Plan, the Soviets initiated the Cominform. At the opening conference, Zhdanov, who was also responsible for the party's relations with the exterior, introduced the "two champs theory." See Scott Parrish, "The Marshall Plan and the Division of Europe," in *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944-1949*, ed. Norman Naimark and Leonid Gibianskii (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 284-6.

[2] C. N. Boterbloem, "The Death of Andrei Zhdanov," *SEER* 2 (2002): 267.

[3] A translation of an article about the Congress signed by V. Scvaricov was published in *Flacăra* (24 September 1948): 5.

[4] Baudin, "'Why is Soviet Painting Hidden from Us?'," 227.

"Friendship Associations with the Soviet Union" carried out the difficult task of accommodating the local institutional structures quickly and efficiently to the new political reality. Already by the end of 1947, ARLUS (Romanian Friendship Association for Strengthening the Relations with the Soviet Union) voiced by M. Magheru, its General Secretary, subscribed to the "two champs theory" and acknowledged the Soviet merit into the Romanian reconstruction program.[5] In Romania, as everywhere else in the Eastern bloc, however, the influential modernist Western practices that had previously shaped the local traditions challenged the Soviet ideology's capacity to counterbalance the heterogeneous cultures inside the Eastern bloc, and also the content of the socialist-realist slogan "national in form and socialist in content."

Viewing the Hunedoara building project within this frame immediately opens up two lines of inquiry: the built environment's ideology and the state's logistical capacity to convey for the masses the urban space's intended meaning. Culturally and politically, ARLUS tailored its rhetoric to Soviet ideological regulations. Architecturally, the Hunedoara case illustrates the interaction between designers and politicians on one hand, and local traditions and Soviet rhetoric on the other, and questions the significance that architectural discourse had within the socialist state system, given that the communist state employed socialist-realist narratives to advertise Western building patterns. By addressing both archival and newspaper information, I will argue that during the late 1940s, the well-established international rhetoric that opposed the West and the East was familiar to political circles alone and mostly unable to influence cultural organs not under the communists' direct control.

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[5] M. Magheru, "Raport general asupra activității ARLUS din 31 Decembrie 1947," in *Buletinul ARLUS* IV 1-2 (January-February 1948): 9-11; see also Baudin, "'Why is Soviet Painting Hidden from Us?'," 227.

1. <u>Political Decision-making:</u>

While on 6 March 1945 the Soviets managed to impose their will in Romania by setting a Soviet sympathetic government led by Petru Groza, transforming the local communist organization into a new political elite – and an efficient instrument in Moscow hands – was a crucial task.[6] In October 1945, at the party's first national meeting, newly-elected Secretary General Gheorghiu-Dej delivered a theoretically compelling speech that fit the project of social modernization into the Soviet ideological strategy; it addressed a vide variety of issues, such as the development of a planned economy, heavy industrialization, electrification, and the collectivization of agriculture. This ambitious project was to be realized on two levels: the modernization of the state and the modernization of the individuals.[7]

Whereas modernity was the expression of technological development, the transformation of the Romanian state would be achieved through the manipulation of consumption ideology with the development of heavy industry providing financial stability. Gheorghiu-Dej argued that "according to the specialists' estimations, the plants of Hunedoara would supply the national steel production for at least another thirty years."[8] Dej imagined a highly centralized system dominated economically and culturally by the steel industry, and in which society would be held together by commonly accepted

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[6] The instauration of the Groza government in March 1945 was the first step in the process of integrating the country into the Soviet system. Over the years to follow, however, the Romanian political life evolved from a multiparty system to a monolithic political regime under the communist ideology by the end of 1947. For a detailed approach on the political transformation in the Eastern European system by the end of World War II, see Hugh Seton-Watson, *East European Revolution* (London: Methuen, 1950); also, Z. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Block: Unity and Conflict* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967).

[7] Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, "Raportul politic al Comitetului Central la Conferința națională a Partidului Comunist Român, octombrie 1945," *Articole si cuvântari* (Bucharest, 1959), 61-8; see also, *Scânteia* (29 October 1945): 1.

[8] Since the end of World War I, the plants had been owned by the Romanian state. See Ludovic Bathory, "Dezvoltarea uzinelor de fier ale statului de la Hunedoara intre anii 1919-1940," in *Dezvoltarea întreprinderilor metalurgice din Transilvania* (1919-1940), ed. Ludovic Bathory, Stefan Csucsuja, Gheorghe Iancu, Marcel Stirban (Cluj Napoca, 2003), 168-208.

values derived not from below, but from above. State institutions would produce and disseminate from those institutions an industrial ideology. The steel plants in Hunedoara, the largest in the country by the end of World War II, were the major provider of heavy industrial goods, not just for internal consumption, but with careful management export as well.[9] However, Gheorghiu-Dej's discourse overemphasized the importance of the site. He thought investments into this plant would be capable of stimulating the nation's entire economy, thereby increasing the levels of consumption, and improving the ordinary workers' standards of living. Furthermore, this economic strategy would provide the country with stability and economic power, as well as financial independence through the increase of commercial exports. The building of a socialist political system would follow from this, and in turn would be succeeded by a system management phase. Its principal task would be to integrate the regime with other non-party sectors of society, such as urban development, housing, consumption, and commodity production.[10]

The modernization of the individual would derive from the modernization of the state. Generically known as the "new man" concept, this was a root idea of communism and synthesized a vide range of qualities, which were assigned by socialist-realist art and literature to the so-called "positive hero." The new citizen had to be active, energetic and culturally competent, versatile, physically fit and able to subjugate nature. In a classless society, the "new man" embodied superior qualities that would make the communist society distinctive. The immediate consequence of the emergence of the "new man" would be efficiency in work, cultural and technological progress, and social dynamism. Therefore, addressing the built environment as the constitutive factor in the process of

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[9] Gheorghiu-Dej, "Raportul politic," 63.
[10] Ibid.

defining the new individual entailed an ultimate connection between the environment's ideological significance and the individuals' reading of the political decision.[11] In this respect, the built environment's major function consisted of creating "new images to embody and transmit messages and myths to audiences who were themselves always moving forward as their political consciousness and aesthetic sensibilities developed."[12] Dej declared that "The continuous performance of Soviet industrial principles will produce the increase in housing and city standards thanks to the existence of a complex industrial Soviet-like enterprise."[13] Although Dej did not explicitly stress this point, the 1945 political program implied that, because of the development of a Soviet-like industrial center in Hunedoara, the city constructed there would respect the ongoing Soviet architectural patterns of residence. Within the future socialist society, "material culture was part of the social holism, which had a significant impact upon the silhouette of those objects that shaped economic and political relations as well as individual social consciousness."[14] Hence, during this period of intensifying political conflict and radical transformation, architecture encompassed the significance of decisions at the very core of the building process. The discourse used the concept of modernization as a mode of social integration based on patterns of cultural practices organized around economic principles, which would further "get the city right, and produce the right citizens."[15]

This discourse used excessively ideological terminology that would later turn into omnipresent linguistic stereotypes, and provided the communists with a major

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[11] See Jay Bergman, "The Idea of Individual Liberation in Bolshevik Visions of the New Soviet Man," *European History Quarterly* 27 (1997): 57-93.

[12] Cooke, "Beauty as a Route," 143.

[13] *Buletinul Comitetului de Stat pentru Construcţii, Arhitectură şi Sistematizare* I (1946): 1-2.

[14] Cooke, "Beauty as a Route to Radiant Future," 141.

[15] David Crowley, "Warsaw Interiors: The Public Life of Private Spaces, 1949-65," in *Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in Eastern Bloc*, ed. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 186.

opportunity to establish their leadership.[16] Dej's statement, made before the party members in 1945, revealed emerging patterns of authority and had multiple purposes. Internally, it formulated a ruling program for a political structure that had recently surfaced on the Romanian public scene, financially feeble and socially fragile. Externally, it legitimized the organization in front of its fellow communist parties.

2. The Garden City Program:

In 1947, committed to the 1945 Party's political program, the state began investing in the Steel Plants of Hunedoara. At the end of 1947, the communists took absolute power in Romania. A decree issued on 18 July 1948 established a state Planning Commission that would exert full control over the development of all branches of the Romanian national economy.[17] Its chairperson was Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, who was also the Minister of National Economy and General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party.[18] Between 1947 and 1948, under the leadership of Gustav Gusti, the Institute of Planning and Constructions (IPC) drew up a plan named "A Labor City at Hunedoara," which followed the "Garden City" architectural model. The building program in the city should be viewed from two distinctive perspectives: political and architectural.

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[16] According to Ionescu the decision concerning Dej's leadership was not a definitive one. The leadership was divided between Dej, Pauker, Luca, and Georgescu. Thus, in spite of Dej's premier position within the party structures, several leaders shared the power until 1952. Dej was appointed as political secretary, position that apparently was tantamount to that of General Secretary. See Ghița Ionescu, *Communism in Romania 1944-1962* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 142.

[17] The nationalization of industry and the planning of the economy started with one-year plans in 1949 and 1950, and the first five-year plan in 1951 accelerated what the communist authorities understood by modernization. Stephan Fisher Galati, *Romania under Communism*, 441.

[18] Dennis Deletant and Maurice Pearton, "The Soviet Takeovers in Romania, 1944-1948," in *Romania Observed. Studies in Contemporary Romanian History*, ed. D. Deletant and M. Pearton (Bucharest, Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1998), 155.

First, politically, the project was an attempt to provide the masses with a sample of the political program that materialized after October 1945, when ambitious objectives set the Communist Party's agenda. Meanwhile, already by the mid 1947 the Communist Party progressed from a marginal political organization into the central decision-making factor within the Romanian society. Accordingly, the Hunedoara project had to be completed through a national development stratagem that required lucid strategies and significant financial resources. As in many other socialist systems, much of the time, the efforts of communist officials focused on raising productivity, and successive state strategies required accommodations and concessions, but generated additional pressure and repression, as well.[19] For instance, an article published in 1947 stated that, "the party had demanded us to utilize the metallurgic industrial potential, namely the functioning of the four furnaces, in the Hunedoara plant."[20] However, because the party required, something does not necessarily mean that it also provided financial resources to complete the task: the forth furnace, for instance, was not inaugurated until 24 March 1950.[21] Local circumstances thus established a new balance of power in which both workers and institutions' directors influenced the system as their personal interests required; often the central projects failed because of financial incoherencies.[22] There are reasons to suspect that this pecuniary inconsistency affected the building sector as well.

Second, architecturally, the Hunedoara project contracted certain Western elements and therefore called into question newly-formulated Soviet ideas about the city,

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[19] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Stalin and his Stalinism: Power and Authority in the Soviet Union, 1930-1953," in *Stalinism. The Essential Readings*, ed. David Hoffmann (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 17.

[20] *Scânteia* (17 December 1947): 1.

[21] *Scânteia* (25 March 1950): 1.

[22] Robert Service, "Stalinism and the Soviet State Order," in *Redefining Stalinism*, ed. Harold Shukman (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), 13; see also Catherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

architecture, and the built environment. The Communist Party employed the aforementioned Soviet architectural discourse and based its assumptions on ideological and political certainties. Theoretically infallible, the party's program asked local Romanian architects for building solutions and appropriate urban models. The architects, however, implemented the modernizing project according to their own understanding and adopted conventions of space, size, and alignment that expressed modernist aims to reorganize labor and industrial production; their program mainly stressed professional values over explicitly ideological ones.

Broadly speaking, before 1947, Romanian architects received little opportunity to implement their visions about urban reconstruction. Mostly due to financial problems, in the years prior to the First Congress of the Romanian Architects held in October 1948, architects were eagerly engaged in genuinely professional debates regarding reconstruction solutions in the context of European trends, and less involved in planning.[23] In 1947, for instance, G.M. Cantacuzino, spokesperson and mentor for generations of Romanian architects, proposed building solutions in line with "Garden City" patterns; he was keenly aware that the country could not exist in isolation from the world and fully embraced ongoing European architectural trends in the hope of establishing a universal system of values.[24] In his book *For an Aesthetic of Reconstruction* ("Pentru o estetică a reconstrucției"), Cantacuzino called for the integration of peripheral communities into the national consciousness.[25]

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[23] See *Buletinul Societății Arhitecților Români* 8 (1946): 4-5.

[24] G M Cantacuzino, *Izvoare si Popasuri* (Bucharest: 1934), 72.

[25] G M Cantacuzino, *Pentru o estetică a reconstrucției* (Bucarest: Paideia, 2001), 12-20; see also Marian Moiceanu, *Despre un secol de arhitectură modernă românească* (Bucharest: Editura Universitară Ion Mincu, 2006), 144-5 and 160-70.

Furthermore, in March 1947, M. Silianu stressed that up until that day, decision-making factors drew neither a national urban plan nor a facile legislative package to support the reconstruction program, and the absence of a set of specific socio-economical priorities assumed politically made it difficult for architects to build major urban programs.[26] In terms of urban options, Silianu rightly observed that Romanian architecture of the moment synthesized three aesthetic directions: a modernist style interested in functionalist solutions, a stylized classicism, and a vernacular architecture concerned with regional geometries. By continuing that synthesis, he argued, the architects would actually create a genuinely national Romanian stile, which would solve an aesthetic concern in need of consideration for quite some time.[27] In terms of feasible urban solutions, Silianu's thesis revolved around the 1930s CIAM ideas and prioritized the space within a city in line with the four principles of the *Chart of Athens*: separations of functions, circulation, recreation, and work.[28] One year later, Stefan Bălan restated the fundamental values of CIAM Chart in the process of urban development.[29]

Within this theoretical frame between 1946 and 1948, the Romanian Architects Association organized grope discussions and seminars, which had to convey the principles of collective dwelling systems into feasible building solutions and provide architects with answers on planning's methodology, space functions, social dynamics and

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[26] The year 1947 was the last moment in the process of communist takeover. All the hostile elements were eliminated from the Romanian political life, the press and any other means of communication was put under the communists' strict control. However, until 30 December 1947 Romania was a monarchy. At the end of 1947, there was established an Urbanism Committee under the Ministry of Industry.

[27] M. Silianu, "Cadrul actual al problemelor de urbanism şi arhitectură," in *Revistele Tehnice AGIR-Arhitectură şi Construcţii* 1 (March 1947): 10-3.

[28] Ibid., 12; see also G. M. Cantacuzino, *Pentru o estetică a reconstrucţiei*.

[29] Stefan Bălan, "Consideraţiuni asupra urbanismului contemporan," in *Revistele Tehnice AGIR-Arhitectură şi Construcţii* 1 (January-February 1948): 17-21.

construction materials.[30] Led by Gustav Gusti, these seminars were concerned particularly with finding planning solutions for large-scale dwelling assembles; as Gusti himself acknowledged in an address published in 1948, the recently completed Hunedoara project was the very outcome of these seminars.[31] Furthermore, the program in Hunedoara benefitted from the 1946 "Concepţii moderne în contrucţia locuinţelor" ("Modern concepts in building's development"), and the experience in Ferentari dwelling project in Bucharest.[32]

In this respect, Gusti's contribution consisted of employing research data and planning methodology from the Study grope to a major building enterprise on one hand, and on the other, proposing a compelling theoretical framework on the post-war modern living and comfort standards as applied to a national urban setting. A singular approach within the post-war Romanian architecture, Gusti's theoretical program targeted two distinctive issues: the internal structure of the dwelling and the urban space's distribution.

In terms of planning's setting, the architects considered the CIAM separation of functions principles as concrete physical differences within the urban space. As such, the city was planned to be constructed at about forty-five minutes by foot from the perimeter of the historic city and industrial site.[33] This reconfiguration reflected a clear position of the architects to separate functions within the city. Furthermore, they argued that "the squares − pietas, more or less monumental, excessively long sidewalks, and broadly speaking large spaces covered with pavement to the detriment of green areas - would

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[30] *Buletinul Societăţii Arhitecţilor Români* 12 (January 1948): 5-6, and idem, 14 (September 1948): 2-3.
[31] Gusti, "Contribuţii la studiul locuinţei populare," *Revistele Tehnice AGIR-Arhitectură şi Construcţii* 7 (1948): 21.
[32] *Buletinul Societăţii Arhitecţilor Români* 14 (September 1948): 4.
[33] Arhivele Naţionale ale României, Direcţia Judeţeană a Arhivelor Statului, Deva, fond Oraş (hereafter DJASD-*Oraş)*, 1/1948, 37.

illustrate a bad use of the urban space."[34] The dwelling space synthesized daring modernist experiments and innovations in construction methodology; some of the key concepts used in these documents were "density," "wide and sunny rooms," "modern amenities," "centralized heating system" with the distribution of hot air through the ceiling, "preponderance of green areas," "west or south-east room orientation." Gusti supported a rational distribution of both space and functions within the dwelling's perimeter and recommended several furnishing solutions for each room-type. For the 1947-1948 projects, the two major functions of the dwelling's structure - leisure and hygiene - had to be separated in order to provide the most appropriate living environment. Because, as Gustav Gusti argued "the coordination of exterior and interior is the essence of the whole problem of the new architecture," the organizing of the interior space had to be optimized according to the principle of "circulation."[35] The house plan was economical and compact, almost inscribed in a square, proposing a cohabitation of functions and amenities in order to improve the functionality of the dwelling space.[36] Accordingly, representing the finest solution in room distribution around the dwelling's main utilities, the pattern would be standardized so that variables like number of rooms, number of persons inhabiting that space or number of floors would have no thoroughly impact upon the intended dwelling's functionality. The furniture would have to set to fit the rooms' minimal dimensions and in the absence of a well-researched manual of interior design, Gusti recommended the "Architect's Book."[37]

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[34] *Buletinul Societății Arhitecților Români* 7 (June-July 1946): 11 and 21-23.
[35] Gusti, "Contribuții la studiul locuinței populare," 21.
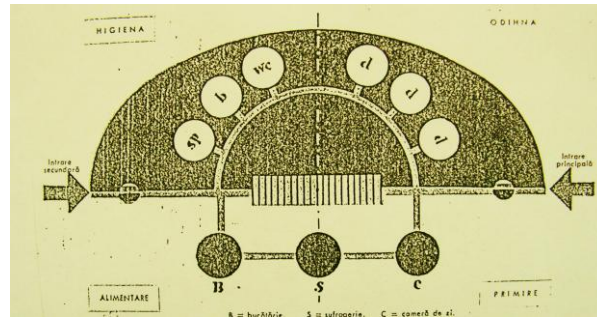[36] Ibid., 22.
[37] Ibid., 23.

Figure 3.1 Gustav Gusti's "Circulation Principle." From Gustav Gusti "Contribuții la studiul locuinței populare," *Revistele Tehnice AGIR-Arhitectură și Construcții* 7 (1947): 15.

Architecturally, in Hunedoara, the modernity of the project was expressed by both the general urban plan and the houses' interior, which were designed according to the latest requirements of finishes and technological comfort.[38]

Figure 3.2 Hunedoara, 1947 Proposed Urban Plan, dwelling detail (below) and general (right). Architects Gustav Gusti et al. From Gustav Gusti, "Contribuții la studiul locuinței populare," *Revistele Tehnice AGIR-Arhitectură și Construcții* 7 (1947): 21
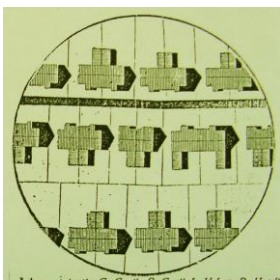
In the initial project, the architects Gustav Gusti, A. Moisescu, and V.I. Perceac planned to build 1,000 apartments, in one-storey-high houses, each with 500 square meters of private land.[39] The new neighborhood had to shelter twenty-five per cent of the

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[38] Arhivele Naționale ale României, Direcția Judeţeană a Arhivelor Statului, Deva, fond Primaria Hunedoara (hereafter DJASD-PJH), 1948, vol. 14, 33.

[39] DJASD-PJH, 19/1948, 1.

Steel Works' employees and, additionally, had to support an extensive urban plan, which would allow further building in case the industrial establishment's development or political demands required it. Because of the local conditions and the demand for living space, the building began by the end of 1947 and was completed only four weeks later.[40]

The project began as perimeter block developments (lining the street edge) that were gradually transformed into apartment slabs with compact, efficiently planned units. In line with the professional planning trends of the 1940s, the dwellings followed an urban ordering initially proposed by the "Garden City" movement, with streets drawn concentrically around a public space where public buildings would be constructed. In Hunedoara, the project adopted a system of north-south streets, orientated in parallel, and buildings grouped in pairs. These featured parallel rows of apartment blocks in a park setting to provide both the living rooms and the bedrooms and kitchens with sun exposure.[41] Interested particularly in sun orientation, architects followed building patterns previously experimented with in Germany during the late 1920s, and designed an urban space somewhat monotonous in terms of exterior variation of the facades.[42]

Economically, those homes would had been cheap, functional, and numerous. Sociologically, they would had brought about collective integration, in effect transforming architectural discourse by casting designers as agents of social change and modernization. To acquire such personal transformation the architects opted for a functionalist architecture and paid particular attention to the interior organization of space. As proposed by the architects, the design of the Hunedoara houses started from the interior space that would reflect new patterns of urban living within modernist planning

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[40] DJASD-*Oraş*, 21/1948, 36-7.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Norbert Schoenauer, *6000 Years of Housing* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 394.

principles. The architects projected three different types of apartments. Each dwelling included one living room, up to three bedrooms, and some outbuildings. The average size of a dwelling, with three separate rooms, plus annexes, was of 140 square meters.[43] According to the "principle of circulation" on which the future estate housing was to be based, the architects standardized the planning components that composed different types of buildings. The smallest housing unit − three rooms and a kitchen − featured a large living area flanked by bedrooms and side rooms. One or two more rooms could be added to obtain larger dwellings; alternatively, a second floor could be added to all or part of the original bungalow unit to create two-storey family houses.[44]

Along with individual houses, a series of blocks of one-room apartments for single workers, and some social, cultural, and health-specialized buildings were projected. During the 1947 campaign, there were realized, according to this project (later known as "solution A"), the first forty-four dwellings, as well as the road binding them to the old settlement (which represented the northern border of the new district).[45]

However, these dwellings did not meet the social needs of the years following World War II, when the demand for housing increased constantly. Thus, in 1948, to organize space more efficiently, architects changed the initial project, and replaced one-storey buildings with two-storey buildings.[46]

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[43] Grigore Ionescu, *Architectura în Romania în perioada anilor 1944-1969* (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Press, 1969), 14.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Gustav Gusti, "Contribuţii la studiul locuinţei populare," *Revistele tehnice AGIR-Architectură şi Construcţii* 7 (1947): 321.

[46] Gustav Gusti, "Un oraş muncitoresc la Hunedoara," *Revistele tehince AGIR - Arhitectură şi Construcţii* II 4 (1948): 263.

Figure 3.3 "Garden City" Solution A, 1947. Architects Gustav Gusti et al. (Photo 2008).

This second scheme, designed by Gustav Gusti, C. Gusti, and Dumitru Hardt, and known as "solution B," fulfilled more efficiently the project's initial requirements to accommodate numerous workers quickly.[47] The task of molding interior space was complicated by the need to respond to external urban space. The new perimeter was built on lands inappropriate for any urban development. The houses, however, were equal to

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[47] DJASD-*Oras*, 39/1948, 51.

the new expectations of comfort; they permitted flexible interior spaces, and rose to the

contemporary standards of amenities.[48]
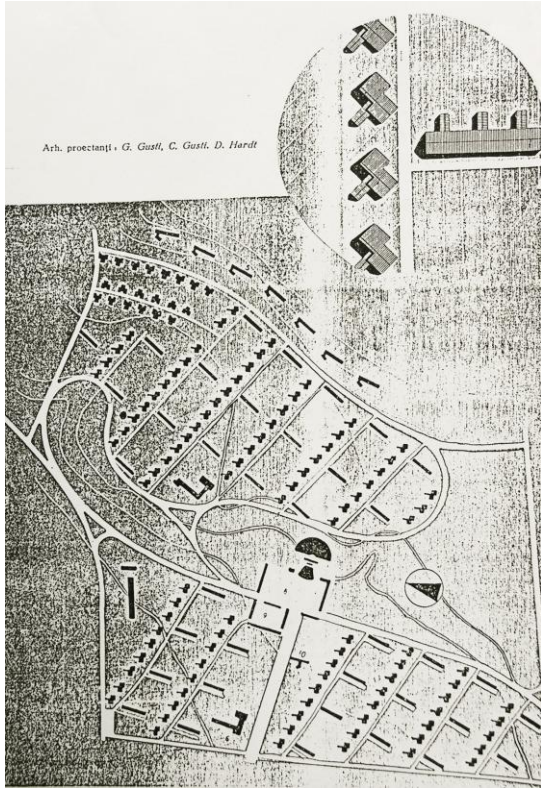
Figure 3.4 Hunedoara, 1948 Proposed Urban Plan ("Solution B"). Detail and general project. Architects Gustav Gusti et al. From Gustav Gusti, "Un oras muncitoresc," 26.

Figure 3.5 1960s "Garden City" view ("Solution B"). Architects Gustav Gusti et al. Courtesy Constantin Gaina.

According to "solution B," the project proposed a compression of living functions

so that more people used less space. One solution was to combine the kitchen and the

living room into one single space measuring less than twenty square meters, half of the

initial projected surface.[49] Before the change, the rooms' dimensions had been quite

large; the average size of a dwelling did not exceed eighty square meters. According to

"solution B," the two-storey individual buildings were initially designed to host two

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[48] For the postwar building standards in Romania, see Cantacuzino, *Pentru o estetică a reconstrucţiei.*
[49] Gusti, "Un oras muncitoresc," 22.

families in one single apartment.[50] Some magazines even published furnishing solutions.[51]

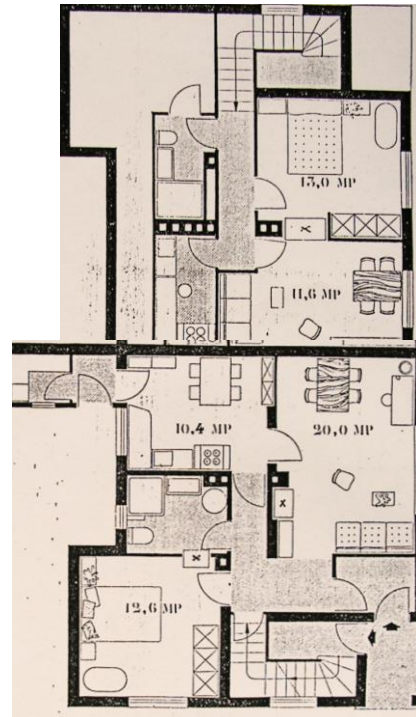**Figure 3.6** Hunedoara "Solution B." Dwelling detail.
Furnishing solutions for a two storey
single family dwelling with options to host simultaneously
two families featuring up to eight persons (right).
From Gustav Gusti, "Un oras," 27.

Figure 3.7 Hunedoara "Solution B," Exterior view
(below). (Photo 2008).

The typology of the project was similar to low-cost projects conducted during the 1930s in Romania. The modernity of the housing was manifested both at the level of the particular architectural object, to which new functional and aesthetic principles were applied, and more generally in the urban space's exterior, which was given form by the presence of the new housing. Between 1947 and 1948, both projects were finalized partially; the state built 100 apartments out of 1,000 planned.[52] As far as public buildings

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[50] Arhiva Primăriei Municipiului Hunedoara, fond IGO (hereafter APMH-Igo), 1948, vol. 8589, 4.
[51] Ibid., 7.
[52] Gusti, "Un oraş muncitoresc," 267.

were concerned, or the city's socialist silhouette - with high-rise and impressive squares, esplanades and streets – these items had not even been included in the initial project.
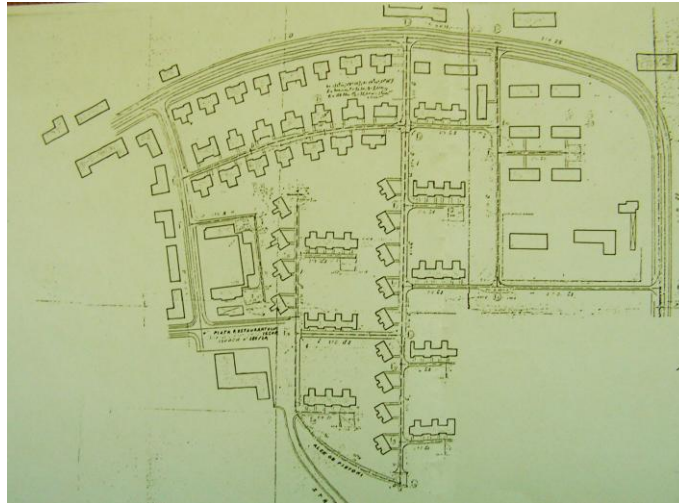
Figure 3.8 Hunedoara, 1947-1948 Final Urban Plan. From APMH-Igo, 1948, vol. 8589, 17.

3. <u>Dwellings for Steel:</u>

In February 1948 at the Second Congress of the Romanian Communist Party, politicians launched a vehement critique against the ways national construction sites were led, planning conducted, ideology assimilated, and progress noticed. Officials in charge with the written press hurried to assimilate the party's point of view and saved no effort to publicly showing their familiarity with the new literary critique instrument: "art as ideology."[53] In the written media, concepts relating to the socialist-realist agenda became ubiquitous, and various institutions, usually under ARLUS or party's direct control, turned their attention to the arts as a solution to their concern on interacting with the masses.

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[53] Ana Selejan, *Trădarea intelectualilor. Reeducare şi prigoana* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 2005), 389-94; see idem, *Literatura in totalitarism (1949-1951). Intemeietori si capodopere* (Bucharest: Polirom, 2007).

In light of this at the beginning of 1948, *Flacăra*, the weekly review of the Association of Artists, Writers, and Journalists, announced that artists would get involved into the national reconstruction programs, which were recently identified with the Communist Party's agenda. By moving onto the construction sites, artists would organize locally the cultural activities on one hand, and on the other would use their personal experiences as inspiration sources for valuable socialist-realist creations.[54] The outcome of the artists' involvement was the so-called "construction-site literature," a collection of propaganda fiction and journalistic investigations focusing on the Romanian building programs, which stressed the overall construction effort and placed less spotlight on personal stories or workers' volunteer engagement. In July 1948, however, an editor at *Scânteia*, the Communist Party's daily newspaper, wrote an article that criticized the content of *Flacăra* magazine for fallacious coverage of cultural activities, which echoed the construction of the "new man," and building programs including the Hunedoara one, which revealed, he said, "the Romanian state's dynamism and great economic potential."[55] He argued that, generally, in the transformation of the Romanian communist society, architecture was to play the central part in educating the masses and communicating socialist ideology to the population. Furthermore, architecture equally encompassed economic development, socialist construction, the validity of the concept of the new man, and the exceptionality of the new proletarian morale.[56] This interaction, as Catherine Cooke has pointed out "was essential for the aesthetics to become central in the

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[54] *Flacăra* (8 February 1948): 1.
[55] *Scânteia* (18 July 1948): 3; *Flacăra* magazine was first published in 1948. It was a weekly periodical covering artistic and literary issues.
[56] Ibid.

communist system as they shaped the entire process of communication."[57] Yet, *Flacăra*
magazine dismissed all these ideological certainties, presented an indistinct viewpoint on
the country's newest building sites, and placed no emphasis whatsoever upon "socialist
competition,"[58] which was considered the only true method of activating new structures
and values.[59]

Within a month following *Scânteia*'s intervention, *Flacăra* published several
responses that admitted the allegations of ideological flaws and subscribed to the Soviet
ideology's main tenet according to which "socialist realism was tantamount to workers'
involvement into the national programs" and use of individual heroes' example within
mass-media would increase the reconstruction program's dynamism. Furthermore, artists
were trained and re-sent to Hunedoara and other industrial sites.[60] A similar point of view
was expressed by the exhibition "Architecture and Urbanism in Romanian People's
Republic" planned to be opened to the public in October 1948, and designed in order to
highlight the reconstruction program as originating in the people's engagement and
volunteer work.[61]

In light of these ideological interactions of the 1948, the authorities saw
architecture as the cultural basis for the workers' education. It mediated the process of
converting socialist-realist rhetoric into a cognitive factor of the surrounding world. By
the end of 1948, for example, in several consecutive issues of *Scânteia*, the editors

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[57] Catherine Cooke, "Socialist Realist Architecture: Theory and Practice," 88.
[58] *Scânteia* was the official newspaper of the Romanian communist structures and reflected the points of view held by the Secretary General Central Committee, led by Gheorghiu-Dej. *Scânteia* was not subordinated to the Propaganda Section (lately Direction) within the Ministry of the Arts and Information, which was led by Leonte Rautu.
[59] *Scânteia* (15 July 1948): 3; on "socialist competitions" see Service, *Stalinism,* 15; and Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book*, 165.
[60] *Flacăra* (1 August 1948): 1-2.
[61] *Buletinul Societăţii Arhitecţilor Români* 13 (July 1948): 7.

published the telling life story of Budoy, one of the most important workers of the steel plants from Hunedoara.[62] He began working in the plant in 1927, after having served his country, as a soldier in the army. In 1929, a severe sickness forced him to retire "for an entire year." He was fired because the leadership of the plant (which, incidentally, belonged to the state) did not care about the employees' private inconveniences. In 1933, after strikes that paralyzed the entire economy, Budoy witnessed fearfully how the military had been deployed at the entrance of the enterprise. Finally, the end of World War II found him engaged in the most thorough reconstruction program, which both the plant and the city had ever encountered.[63] A young co-worker Atanasiu looked up at Budoy with reverence. Atanasiu who had left his family in Bucharest to assist with Hunedoara's construction, represented the potentially heroic younger generation that would learn from friends like Budoy. Although offered a return home several times, Atanasiu declined the proposal persistently because, he said, "he was needed here!"[64] The story is a typical socialist-realist one, used by the propagandistic media to relate the regime's message to the masses.

By the end of 1940s, the "socialist-realist canon was already so formalized that it was possible to construct a unified reality from elements previously created in the Soviet Union." [65] These were transmitted to the Eastern bloc as standardized narratives thought to appeal easily to the masses. Such forms of advertised messages, used by the entire propagandistic apparatus and not only by the mass media, by this time employed typical plots and forms of expression, standardized narratives conveying monolithic meanings.

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[62] *Scânteia* (3 December 1948):1.
[63] See *Scânteia* (4 December 1948): 1.
[64] *Scânteia* (5 December 1948): 1.
[65] Boris Groys, "The Birth of Socialist Realism From the Spirit of the Russian Avant-Garde," in *Post-Impressionism to World War II*, ed. Debbie Lewer (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 290.

For instance, the hero of most of the propagandistic materials of that time was a Soviet representative who, had usually crossed over into a state of consciousness; while, Katerina Clark has pointed out, "the phases of his life symbolically recapitulate the stages of historical progress as ascribed in Marxist Leninist theory."[66] Budoy was obviously a victim of the economic crisis that affected the world economy in the late 1920s.[67] The hard times made him stronger and helped him to develop a socialist consciousness that served admirably the communists' purposes of instilling strong anti-imperialist attitudes amongst the regime's subjects. The basis was not an abstract ideological construct, but an individual's illustrative personal experience. Within the Soviet positive-hero typology of the late 1940s, Budoy was the very essence of the model worker who was active in society, a social model and a mentor; he had life experience and was loyal to the communist regime. This kind of individual - mature, conscious, and wise, as Budoy was - greatly differed from the young, spontaneous, energetic Atanasiu. Consequently, inside the propagandistic narrative of the post-war pattern of socialist realism, the initiation of the positive but spontaneous youth often provided a subplot, rather than a central plot: it was the subordinate of the hero who was initiated, not the hero himself.[68] The central plot was a tale of promotion or reward since in the end Atanasiu was given a better home and reunited with his family.[69] Although very simple in content, the Budoy-Atanasiu story raises compelling questions regarding historical relevance, ideological value within the socialist realist narrative both locally and regionally, and relevance for the built environment.

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[66] Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 10.
[67] See *Scânteia* (1 May 1948): 1.
[68] Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 202.
[69] For similar examples in the Soviet Union's visual culture, see Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 250-60.

In 1933, when troops were deployed at the entrance of the Grivița factory, railway workers started strikes and numerous social movements protesting against the difficult working conditions. Faced with unprecedented social problems, Romanian authorities used the militarily to bring people to order. At least 2,000 people were arrested. Some of the protesters, among them Gheorghiu-Dej and the rest of the future group "home communists," were imprisoned. In the communists' world-view, the year 1933 was extremely important. It marked the formation of the "home communists" group that in 1952 would win the internal party struggles against the Moscow group. Consequently, to construct a national narrative, the communist rhetoric emphasized the participation of Gheorghiu-Dej's Central Committee for Action in the 1933 events.[70] After the war, communist propaganda about the events of 1933 stressed military abuses, as well as the protests and actions carried out against these abuses at all industrial sites.[71] It also revised history to depict Gheorghiu-Dej, really a marginal personality in 1933, as the real promoter, leader, and organizer of social protests.[72]

Reiterated periodically, this story conveyed the symbolic evolution of the typical party leader. Ideologically, the story framed a highly hierarchical system in which historical events uncovered the working class's historical legitimacy. Whether it was Gheorghiu-Dej or any other worker, interactions and conflicts with the old regime revealed successive steps in the formation of communist consciousness. The communist

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[70] Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive în România democrat- populară*, 224.
[71] King, *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, 21-3.
[72] Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive*, 226; see also Alice Mocănescu, 'Surviving 1956: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and 'The Cult of Personality' in Romania," in *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc*, ed. Apor Balázs (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); see also *Flacăra* (15 February 1948): 1.

leaders used any available occasion to integrate in the public discourse events of their personal past, to invent a tradition, and later to transform it into legitimating narratives.[73]

The anti-imperialist attitude had to ritualize the public life through the generalized involvement of society.[74] Socialist-realist was full of legitimizing stories and heroic figures. Their meaningful life experience conveyed for readers ideological meanings that the regime hoped would transmit desirable models of human conduct.[75] The story of Budoy and Atanasiu conveyed messages of growth by means of self-consciousness and retrospection, and not on mandatory regulations. The story illustrated the already theorized function of the built environment by advertising the urban experience as thinkable, viable, and rewarding both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it was practiced.

Moreover, through a system of material reward, architecture mediated between the state, which owned the legal instruments to build, and the workers, who needed dwellings to be happy and efficient in the plant. This was not out of place, as Victoria Bonnell has pointed out,

> Arts, after World War II, no longer had exhortation as their main theme; they no longer called upon people to perform superhuman feats... Hard work was of course part of the new and blissful postwar world projected by political posters, but now considerable emphasis was placed on the satisfaction and reward derived from work well done and even on contemplation of the good life provided by Soviet society.[76]

In Hunedoara, the relative energetic activity of 1947-1949 suggested an "enthusiasm of the beginning" and shortage of living space. Accordingly, by the end of 1948, authorities

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[73] DJAS-Pref., 3/1948, 25.

[74] Heller and Baudin, "Le réalisme socialiste comme organisation du champ culturel," *Cahiers du monde russe* 34/3 (1993): 312-3.

[75] DJAS-Pref, 3/1948, 48.

[76] Bonnell, *The Iconography of Power*, 260.

officially cheered the project's success, and several newspapers published images and photographs of the new city. They advertised the city and formulated a slogan "fortress of steel and workers."[77] Surprisingly, nobody at that time criticized the Garden City's individual dwellings and plots in Hunedoara. Quite the opposite! In *Scânteia*, publishers proudly presented the cases of Mezei Dumitru, Chilianu Gheorghe, Beches Ladislau, and Cazan Stefan, young workers who had been twice blessed: on 7 November 1948, they received from the Party comfortable dwellings to live in, and after having learned the Matulinet Soviet steel production method, surpassed the daily production plans by twenty per cent.[78]

Sociologically, the advertisement of workers' names and their professional accomplishments, because of Soviet prowess in producing steel, implied that industrialization would provide the basis for a new Soviet system of social cohesion. It also suggested discursively the points initially expressed in the October 1945 political program and afterwards reiterated periodically. The practice of rewarding workers with dwellings raises the issue of how effective the buildings were in making them feel communists, and also how well the state replicated the Soviet model. As Foucault writes, buildings do not "simply represent power, nor have an inherent political significance."[79] Still, on 7 November 1948 when the "Garden City" dwelling assembly had been inaugurated, the Association for Strengthening of the Soviet Romanian Friendship (ARLUS) organized public manifestations and meetings where 3,000 workers stated their

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[77] The industrial site has been developed on a historical perimeter. As early as 1948, the propaganda structures employed for economic purposes the significance of the historical site in order to create a myth: the development of the economy was a consequence of an historical evolution where the past events were seen as genuinely causes of the present economical success.

[78] *Scânteia* (10 November 1948): 1; also DJASD-PJH, 39/1948, 51.

[79] Michael Foucault, "Space Knowledge and Power," in *Architecture: Theory since 1968,* ed. K. Michael Hays (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), 429.

gratitude for their daily lives' spectacular modernization. Pictures of Stalin and Lenin, of the local leaders, red flags, and banners pointed out the Soviet character of the commemoration.[80]

Strictly, from the officials' viewpoint, the Garden City model was authentically Soviet.[81] Yet, this opinion's expression and perceived correctness depended substantially on both the public's capacity to distinguish, evaluate, and employ the advertised political criteria. It was not a given that the inhabitants sought to embody the Soviet program of modernization, or to bring their heterodox thoughts into line with what they were expected to believe. This dissociation was confirmed, to some extent, in May 1949, when a monthly report made by the Education Department about the ARLUS celebration of November 1948 judged the popular involvement and interest to be rather unsatisfactory. Authorities identified spectators by various age groups. Politicians acknowledged the poor quality of the propagandists' ideological training and the institutional chaos in which they functioned. They also noted that "the youth changes its attitude and mentality rapidly": therefore, for propagandistic efficiency, any upcoming action was to be focused particularly upon this age category.[82] In line with the ideological demands of the moment, the concern about how particular age categories responded to the political rhetoric proved that "the Zhdanovshchina [the Soviet-imposed crackdown on the arts] and anti-cosmopolitan campaign were not only designed to frighten writers and intellectuals into

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[80] DJASD-*Oraş*, 92/1948, 78-9.
[81] DJASD – Hd, 39/1948, 27.
[82] DJAS-Pref., 80/1949, 4.

conformity, they were also meant to rouse the young and radical against ideological complacency."[83]

Ideally, the Soviet hero would dwell in an apartment that the state had built according to the principles of socialist-realist architecture. This type of individual would be so perfect that he could judge, from one single glance at a picture, the hierarchical relationships between figures, the architects' ideological intentions, and the moral character of the socialist world that was emerging from the Second World War as a strong warrior against the imperialist camp. In postwar Romania, the regime had to assemble as much positive socialist evidence as possible in order to convince the masses about the legitimacy of the new rule. The state traded steel for dwellings, and equally made use of the modernist buildings as products committed to the advancement of a socialist planned economy that did not yet exist in 1948 Romania. Thus, official organs like *Scânteia* presumed that, in Romania, as in other socialist countries, "Garden City" buildings would provide the basis for a new Soviet culture and consciousness.

4. Conclusion:

Broadly speaking, the questions raised by the finished product in Hunedoara addressed both the decision-making and the planning rhetoric. Illustrated as independent programs pursuing parallel drives commissioned by an ambiguous cultural strategy, the program of the late 1940s displayed, however, strategies undertaken by embryonic institutional organizations, which for the time being employed separately the state's modernizing rhetoric. While newspapers mirrored the establishment of a massive administrative

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[83] Juliane Fürst, "Introduction," in *Late Stalinist Russia: Society Between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, ed. Juliane Fürst (London and New York: Rutledge, 2006), 15.

system of image management, the propagandist message got closer to what Sheila Fitzpatrick has defined as "the discourse of socialist realism," a form of publicized ideal to counterbalance chaotic realities.[84] Architecturally, however, the modernist formula "form follows function" was juxtaposed over the socialist-realist rhetoric "national in form and socialist in content." On one hand, the socialist-realist requirement to endow urban space with a distinctive topological identity failed to materialize because the socialist-realist rhetoric had no influence whatsoever upon the architectural product. On the other hand, the city's positioning within the national program of social modernization was uncertain since between the designers' building effort and the politicians' project there was a gap unlikely to be bridged. Therefore, once the first phase in the building process had been concluded, the planners were facing a difficult endeavor in addressing on the one hand the authorities' increasing demand for dwellings and on the other the pressing socialist-realist elements that had to be assimilated into the architectural vocabulary. Such a state of affairs immediately shifted the building rhetoric from designers' practices toward political and institutional control over the building program.

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[84] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front. Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 217.

IV

The second phase (1949-1951)

A member of the Communist Party since the war, N. Bădescu launched at the AST congress in October 1949, a campaign against cosmopolitanism and imperialist bourgeois architecture. In January 1950, *Arhitectura* published his speech integrally, and in the years to come, other authors frequently cited fragments. Politically legitimated by Gheoghiu-Dej's ideas delivered at the party's congress in 1948, Bădescu's discourse sketched the future architecture's rhetoric necessarily as "national in form and socialist in content." He identified both cosmopolitanism and its reverse nationalism with reflections of bourgeois culture that divided the working class, and opted instead for patriotism and proletariat's internationalism, arisen from workers' critical view of the past and their revolutionary engagement with the future. Architecturally, Bădescu launched a beclouded attack against Le Corbusier's "five architectural principles" and CIAM four-point urban scheme, both associated with the expensive constructive solutions of functionalism, and argued that such forms of building contravened with the aspirations of the working class. Blaming cosmopolitanism for "denying the folk art's value," he further criticized both the ideology that fueled the modernist building programs and the finished outcomes.[1] Bădescu's discourse circumscribed profound transformations at the level of ideological speech in terms of "nation," "people," and "tradition" occurred around that time in Romania, which rallied institutional crystallization and called for political decision-

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[1] N. Bădescu, "Impotriva cosmopolitismului şi arhitecturii burgheze imperialiste," *Arhitectura* 1 (1950): 5-17; on Bădescu's association with the Communist Party during the war, see, Ion Mircea Ionescu, *Arhitect sub comunism* (Bucharest: Paideia, 2007), 24 and 225; Eugenia Greceanu, "Sovietizarea învăţamântului în arhitectură," in *Arhitecţi în timpul dictaturii. Amintiri*, ed. Viorica Curea (Bucharest: Simetria, 2005), 123-4.

making's involvement into the building program.[2] Institutionally, "from 1950 on, the organizational, doctrinal, and aesthetic Soviet program, henceforth the absolute Soviet standard, could be applied and adapted (in accordance with the principle of 'national in form and socialist in content'), with all of its propagandistic detours and its entire generic or thematic hierarchy."[3] Research campaigns to evaluate the local dwelling customs came to complete the decision-making's dynamic and their findings aimed to integrate quickly and efficiently the new urban solutions into a supposedly authentic socialist-realist Romanian tradition. Nevertheless, since the institutional configuration framed the texture of society during the Cold War, the construction of Hunedoara during the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s should be approached in terms of individual responsibility versus institutional engagement, and of architectural knowledge and professional debate versus political-mindedness.[4] This chapter revolves around the stylistic evolution of architecture within the city, from modernist designs towards Soviet constructs, and the institutional crystallization inside the socialist state that was coupled with the leadership's strengthening within the Communist Party, and aims to uncover how the first components of the socialist-realist aesthetic were absorbed by the Romanian architectural vocabulary and how this process was illustrated locally in Hunedoara.

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[2] At the end of 1948, the Romanian Workers' Party Central Committee adopted a resolution on the national issues. In the summer of 1949, the Romanian Academy launched an attack against cosmopolitanism and bourgeois imperialism, which was fallowed on 28 June 1949 by a memorandum on the scientific activities in Romania, which had to be in line with the Soviet Union. See, Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, *Stalinizarea României, Republica Populară Româna 1948-1950* (Bucharest: All, 2005), 461-2; Lucian Nastasă, "Studiu introductiv," in *Minorități etnoculturale. Mărturii documentare. Evreii din România (1945-1965)*, ed. Lucian Nastasa (Cluj: Centrul de Resurse pentru Diversitate Etnoculturală, 2003), 38-9.

[3] Baudin, "Zhdanov Art and Its International Fallout," 890; see also Baudin and Heller, "Le réalisme socialiste comme organisation du champ culturel,' 313-5; J. Guldberg, "Socialist Realism as Institutional Practice," in *The Culture of the Stalin Period*, ed. Hans Günther (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 149-77.

[4] According to Katherine Verdery the Cold War was not only a military confrontation but also "a form of knowledge and a cognitive organization of the world." See Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 7.

1. Making Space Political:

Although the plans for Casa Scânteii had been finalized in Moscow in 1949, its building did not begin until the end of 1950.[5] Coincidently, or not, in 1951, construction began in Hunedoara of several public buildings – a railway station, a hospital, the house of culture – where architects used decorative elements similar those in Bucharest. The public buildings' construction in Hunedoara started after several years of institutional correspondence between local authorities and governmental officials. Demand for a House of Culture, for instance, arose by the beginning of 1948, when officials started to plan the cultural activities organized by ARLUS.[6]

In Hunedoara, the public buildings' architectural style echoed the Byzantine tradition. Of the three, the House of Culture employed an asymmetrical planning and structure. The buildings in Hunedoara varied in form and finish, with individual decorative motifs derived from what, in 1949, officials from Moscow and Bucharest agreed upon to be the traditional Romanian national style. The buildings were transformed into symbols of socialist realism, and classical features such as columns, balustrades, fountains, adorning the facades were introduced into architecture. Both the "Casa Scânteii" in Bucharest and the public buildings in Hunedoara had similar decorations: arches, grouped columns, Byzantine decorations, semi-circle windows.[7] Architects borrowed Byzantine ornaments, removed their religious significance, and,

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[5] *Scânteia* (14 March 1950): 1; Horia Maicu, "Despre proiectarea Casei Scânteii," *Arhitectura* 1 (1951): 3-13; Stefan Bălan, "Calculul de rezistențăa la Casa Scânteii," *Arhitectura* 1 (1951) 14-19; H. Hornstein, "Problema instalațiilor la Casa Scânteii," *Arhitectura* 1 (1951): 20-22; A. Stavrescu, "Instalațiile electrice la Casa Scânteii," *Arhitectura* 1 (1951): 23-25.

[6] DJASD–Hd, 42/1948, 18.

[7] For a detailed description of the "Casa Scânteii," see also Aman, *Architecture and Ideology*, 135-41.

Figure 4.1 "Casa Scânteii," Bucharest (1950-1953). Exterior view.

Figure 4.2 South-west façade The House of Culture, Hunedoara (1950-1951). Architects Radu Berindei and A. Ghelber. Courtesy C. Gaina.

Figure 4.3 "Casa Scânteii," detail of façade.

Figure 4.4 "Casa Scânteii," Bucharest. Detail façade.

Figure 4.5 The House of Culture, Hunedoara. Detail West wing façade. (Photo 2005).

Figure 4.6 The House of Culture, Hunedoara. Details East wing facade. (Photo 2005).

Figure 4.7 A "Casa Scânteii," Bucharest. Entrance detail.

Figure 4.7 B The House of Culture, Hunedoara. Entrance detail. (Photo 2005).
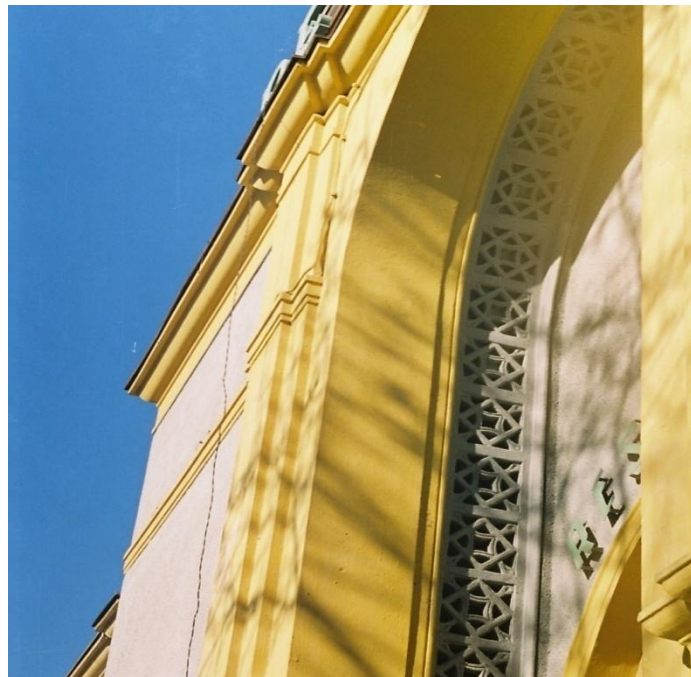
Figure 4.7 C "Casa Scânteii," Bucharest. Façade detail.

through an impressive manipulation of well-known Soviet emblems, created a new Romanian socialist realist style, which was based on Neo-Classical style. Yet, in spite of socialist realism's tenet of critically assimilating the historical heritage by means of architectural motifs, optioned for Byzantine forms and marginalized the regional individuality.[8]

In both cases, architects employed at the State Committee for Architecture and Constructions finalized the blueprints. Until the early 1950s, communists' interest in aesthetic institutionalization had been scant, which as Piotr Piotrowski has pointed out, revealed not their lack of interest in architecture's evolution, or any cultural production for that matter, but concerns in "analyzing the system of power, ideological constructs, and economic transformation."[9] Individual buildings, therefore, were commissioned from the teams led by politically accepted architects, while the finished outcomes, such as the Casa Scânteii, were considered individual creations and awarded the state prises for merit. By the end of 1949, architects returned from Moscow with the correct socialist-realist models, and showed them to other practitioners. A. Ghelber and R. Berindei, the designers responsible for the public projects in Hunedoara, searched the plans of Casa Scânteii, copied some geometrical elements, and included them in the blueprints they were working on.[10] Architecture was, as ever, slower than the other arts to change. Therefore, it is likely that these professional interactions occurred sometime during late 1949 and the beginning of 1950, when, ideologically and politically, the existing

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[8] One of the most important characteristics of socialist realism consisted of assimilating the local traditions into an architectural rhetoric. Yet, as far as the Eastern European cultures were concerned there existed architectural differences between regions. Therefore, in devising the "best" architectural option, the communist authorities synthesized locally emergent styles and not trans-regional forms of expression.

[9] Piotr Piotrowski, "Modernism and Totalitarianism (II): Myths of Geometry: Neo-Constructivism in Central Europe: 1948-1970," *Artium Quaestiones* 11 (2000): 102.

[10] Grigore Ionescu, *Histoire de l'architecture en Roumanie* (Bucharest: Romanian Academy Press, 1972), 519.

institutional framework encouraged a culture that shunned accountability, and produced an assimilation of the socialist-realist form before a proper understanding of its content.[11]

On one hand, architecturally, the socialist-realist forms utilized by the end of 1949 were not used to express the official political viewpoint alone. The public buildings in Hunedoara legitimated a number of different artistic practices, which, inside the newly organized socialist system, allowed the negotiation of the rhetoric's non-visual character through visual reminiscences. In this way, they unveiled a profession held together by commonly accepted values, driven from above by institutions, which produced and disseminated ideology from the state. In other words, architectural production was derived from a combination of force and consent.[12] To a degree, the public buildings in Hunedoara organically continued practices undertaken prior to World War II by Romanian public building programs.

Consequently, by the end of the 1940s, confronted with the ambiguous task to create a rhetoric "national in form and socialist in content," Romanian architects built on the pre-existing architectural tradition. As already pointed out in the second chapter of this thesis, since the early 1920s, Romania had undertaken one of the most intense campaigns of nation building in the region, aiming to integrate the newly established provinces into the unitary state. Concerned with both administrative and cultural issues of reorganization, the state imagined a unitary discourse that had to integrate heterogeneous practices into a homogenous cultural and bureaucratic tradition. From this perspective, the process initiated at the beginning of the 1920s, "was not necessarily the product of

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[11] See Eugenia Greceanu, "Sovietizarea învăţamântului în arhitectură," in *Arhitecţi în timpul dictaturii. Amintiri*, ed. Viorica Curea (Bucharest: Simetria, 2005), 123-30.

[12] According to Ion Mircea Enescu, the real architect of the Casa Scanteii was Cleopa Alfanti, and not Horia Maicu. See, Enescu, *Arhitect sub comunism*, 20-4.

modernization and industrialization but the anticipating development of any significant component of modernization."[13] Architecturally, a synthesis of Neo-Classicism and traditional Byzantine geometries fashioned the moment's national visual vocabulary. After the establishment of communism, however, the state's project converted and built on the former ideas and saw the community of that moment as the "fairly recent product of the organization of human beings into large centrally educated culturally homogenous units which fueled their sense of national belonging consisted in the rise of an industrial society."[14] After the war, economic and financial strategies prevailed in the national discourse. They illustrated a relation between industry/modernity and nation-building tactics: as one scholar notes "just as the state in industrially backward societies can substitute budgetary policies for the organic accumulation of capital to generate the sums needed for industrialization, so the state can presumably substitute cultural policies for the structures of industrial societies, which are prerequisites for the development of an idea of a nation."[15] In terms of architecture, once confronted with the Soviets' visual practices and cultural strategies, Romanian communists reinvented a tradition that had been previously invented in the 1920s. Politically, from the communists' point of view, it is quite possible that, while rejuvenating the economic program initiated in Hunedoara by the mid-1940s, the rapid assimilation of decorative elements employed practices of power constructed to implement a "hierarchization of images."[16] They had to pursue a reorganization of political meanings, albeit, in the style of socialist realism, public

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[13] Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 7.

[14] Ibid., 5-6.

[15] Ibid., 7.

[16] About the practices of hierarchization of visual images within the socialist practice, the invented tradition and the institutional procedure undertaken by the state to construct the transformative process of communist society, see Heller, "The World of Prettiness."

edifices and not dwellings had been initially constructed. The Casa Scânteii in Bucharest and the public buildings in Hunedoara placed the significance of the Soviet politics, institutions, and ideology in the centre of the city, thus marginalizing any form of local tradition, and making the language of the official government coincide with the language of the architecture. The ideal architectural model, canonized in Moscow, acted as a safety net, providing the state, whose authority was still threatened, with double security. The monumentality of the various versions of Byzantine decorative elements would reflect, the communists argued, the country's immense economic and cultural achievements.[17]

2. Second Building Phase (1949-1951):

In 1949, the accommodation capacity of Hunedoara did not exceed 8,000 inhabitants. In spite of industrial programs elaborated by the party during the second phase of construction (1949-1951), the ideological discrepancies of the previous years continued. However, this stage could be easily viewed as a transitional one, where socialist realism's rhetoric grew stronger within the official discourse. Already by the end of 1947, the Romanian officials contacted the local authorities in Hunedoara for starting preliminary research necessary for the systematization plan. The data gathered locally during 1948 was sent to Bucharest where the Architects' Association was appointed to undertake the groundwork planning.[18] In 1949 at the IPC (the Urbanism Department in the Ministry of Construction) headquarters in Bucharest, Stefan Popovici and Adrian Gheorghiu began research for drawing the systematization plan for Hunedoara. The initial research,

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[17] In the official press released in 1950 and 1951 the new project at the Casa Scânteii gathered around the building site public enthusiasm.

[18] See *Arhiva Primariei Hunedoara – Sistematizare, Urbanism si Amenajarea Teritoriului*, 1/1947, 1-16, and 2/1949, 1-8.

conducted in close collaboration with sociologists and economists aimed to sketch the socio-demographic character of the region. Announced as a pioneering drive in post-war Romania, the research focused on social and demographic details and had to identify solutions to facilitate a shift in the regional structure from an agrarian-based to an industrialized economy. The systematization project's focus was, of course, to name solutions to implement locally the Soviet urban typologies.[19]

In response to the systematization project elaborated by the end of 1949, a group of architects organized in Bucharest, at the headquarters of both IPC and ARLUS, discussions regarding the socialist dwellings' patterns. Architects claimed they were inspired by "the Soviet ethnographic methodology of regional analysis and research," and N. Bădescu's 1950 article, "Against cosmopolitism and bourgeois architecture," which opposed cosmopolitism and formalism to socialist realism. In this respect, the Urbanism Department recommended the establishment of two new structures under the Department of Research of the Minister of Construction that had to gather relevant documentary material on architectural heritage and translate integrally into Romanian Soviet ideological texts. Furthermore, in 1950, the Urbanism Department organized two successive research campaigns in Hunedoara, which had to center around regional architecture's typology and construction materials. Architects explained their choice to focus on Hunedoara because "there was about to be created an important industrial centre and a socialist city, and because it was located in Transylvania, where issues related to national arts were more complicated."[20] As such, the campaign in Hunedoara, started in 1949, was the beginning of extensive professional debates on architect's social role and

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[19] Stefan Popovici, "Sistematizarea regiunii Hunedoara," *Arhitctura* 2 (1951): 10-7.
[20] "Expoziția arhitecturii populare în Hunedoara," *Arhitectura* 4 (1951): 11.

use of vernacular heritage as national art, and announced changes that were about to shaken from the ground up both the profession and the planning practice. The arguments placed behind the program in Hunedoara conveyed a socialist-realist agenda in line with previously expressed principles of architecture's social function. The program should be read on two levels.

On one hand, by the beginning of 1951, Petre Antonescu, a long-standing figure of the Romanian architecture observed that "the local heritage of the Hunedoara region uncovered an architecture capable to reflect reality and endow each building with a natural beauty."[21] The appeal to regional architecture in creating patterns for social dwellings targeted Bădescu's idea that socialist-realist architecture had to be "national in form and socialist in content." Accordingly, the local vernacular architecture would be studied from the perspective of space distribution, buildings' proportions, and connections between form and function, and would provide the designers with the bases for future socialist-realist architecture and standardized construction patterns.[22]

On the other hand, the systematization project, drawn for the region, opened up discussion on the issue of standardization in construction, development of large urban estates, and later use of pre-fabricated materials in buildings' manufacture. ARLUS and the Ministry of Construction hosted a lecture series, featuring Gustav Gusti, H. Delavrancea, and Daniel Farb, which was soon followed by several planning contests at the IPC.[23] The jury, led by Gustav Gusti, now transformed into a local theoretician of Soviet architectural ideology, selected several dwelling' types and argued that they could

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[21] Ibid., 12.

[22] See "Documente de arhitectură românească," Arhitectura 1 (1950): 21-4.

[23] Daniel Farb, "Din activitatea cercurilor de arhitectură şi urbanism ASIT, filiala Bucureşti," *Arhitectură şi Urbanism* 1-2 (1952): 53; "Din activitatea AST," *Arhitectura* 4-5 (1950): 132.

provide the architects with a facile start in planning, which would help them eliminate "the cosmopolite influence though the use of regional forms."[24] The projects proposed over-sized variations on the vernacular architecture, in terms of both roof geometry and ground imprint, with two-room apartments puzzled together in order to fit the rectangular building's perimeter. The furnishing solutions were adapted to serve a minimal space of no more than 45 square meters per dwelling, while the finishes and amenities were distributed according to designers' individual preferences. In evaluating the projects, resemblance with the traditional building played the main cart.[25]

In spite of these research campaigns, at the time the second building phase began in Hunedoara, neither the systematization plan was approved, nor the dwelling pattern typified. Nevertheless, the demand for dwellings made officials complete a new urban project in Hunedoara, which was the outcome of the aforementioned professional interactions. Designed by D. Hardt, Cezar Lăzărescu, R. Moisescu, and V. Perceac, it was constructed between 1949 and 1951. The project, initiated in 1949 parallel with the First Annual Economic plan, which had foreseen an industrial boom, and finalized in 1951, proposed a more compact urban structure, with two-storey buildings.[26] The blocks had two-room apartments, and the interior space's dimensions have been substantially narrowed down from eighty to forty square meters per dwelling.[27] These flats had spatial planning featuring rooms that opened one into another without a corridor or hallway, which affected the functionality of the dwelling and allowed inhabitants little privacy.

[24] "A patra aniversare a RPR," *Arhitectură și Urbanism* 12 (1951): 3-4.
[25] Gustav Gusti, "Considerații asupra concursului pentru planurile de locuințe," *Arhitectura* 2-3 (1950): 69-77; see also Enescu, *Arhitect sub comunism*, 228-30; Emil Calmanovici, "Sarcini in sectorul construcțiilor," *Revistele Tehnice AGIR-Constructii publice* 4 (1949): 97.
[26] DJASD-*Oras*, 50/1950, 8.
[27] Ionescu, *Arhitectura*, 35.

Out of twenty considered, only six buildings were constructed. In 1950, the authorities hoped to gain "a maximal satisfaction by permanently meeting the material and cultural needs of the entire local community by successfully engaging technical findings in the industry of construction in the almost perfect socialist society."[28]

Figure 4.8 Exterior view traditional peasant house, Southern Transylvanian area.

Figure 4.8 Collective dwellings, Hunedoara (1949-1951), Entrance detail. Architects D. Hardt et al. (Photo 2008).

Figure 4.9 Collective dwellings, Hunedoara (1949-1951). Exterior view. D. Hardt et al. (Photo 2008).

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[28] Cezar Lăzărescu, "Ideologia restructurării urbane," *Arhitectura* 1 (1951): 3.

3. <u>Putting Principle into Practice:</u>

In 1951, the first Five-Year Plan of the Romanian economy began.[29] The Plan revolved around the great building projects of communism, such as industrialization, urbanization, and economic integration into the Soviet structure. In 1951 in Hunedoara, the government reorganized the plant in order to double steel production.[30] In the same year, the working class "unanimously and enthusiastically" recommended that the Romanian Council of Ministers rename the Steel Plant the Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej Steelworks.[31] On 13 July 1951, only three months after local elections that gave Dej more control over administrative structures, the Romanian Government approved the project of systematizing the city. Furthermore, the systematizing project was included in the Five Year Plan. This practically reconfirmed the political engagement towards the finalization of the project, as the Soviet organizational prototype required. The First Five-Year Plan, along with the national reconstruction program, ensured the socialist content of architecture. [32]

Politically, the renaming of the Steel Works illustrated a particular model of patronage where all tried to personally supervise the implementation of the projects while

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[29] Ambitious objectives were set. Special attention was granted to the steel industry and the building sector, whose production had to increase by no less than 243 per cent over the following five years. Like their Soviet role model, Romanians desired the finalization of the first five-year plan in only four. The initiation of the planned economy coincided with the new economic agreement signed between Romania and the USSR in 1951 that stipulated the increase in the Romanian exports towards the Soviets by 50 per cent and reconfirmed Sovrom companies as valid economic organisms. Dej invoked the tremendous help of the Soviet Union, both ideological and technological, which made the socialist development of the country possible. See *Scânteia* (4 January 1951): 1; also *Pentru pace trainică, pentru democraţie populară*, 44 (156), 2 November 1951.

[30] APMH-Igo, 1952, 2102 III, 19.

[31] APMH, 14/1952, 46; see also *Drumul soclaismulu,* (29 November 1951): 1.

[32] APMJ-*Secretariat*, 9/1952, 48; for official investment figures in dwellings in Hunedoara, see "Legea pentru planul cincinal de dezvolatrea economiei nationale, articolul 38," *Arhitectura* 1 (1951): 1.

"having their own people working for them."[33] For Romania in general, and for Hunedoara in particular, the effort to increase the Communist Party's coherence and to reduce the disunity within the organization was successful, and the building process became more likely to succeed. In 1951, in Hunedoara, the supervision of the urban investments was entrusted to Chivu Stoica, Minister of Industry, and one of Gheorghiu-Dej's most fervent political supporters. Stoica was also responsible for the reorganization of the Steel Plant in the city, and in this quality, he supervised the expropriation campaign of the land where the city was to be built.[34] Within the political scene of the time, Gheorghiu-Dej's power position was still uncertain. Thus, by appointing a member of the government in this key position, Gheorghiu-Dej implemented a system where, ideally, local problems were easily traced and eliminated.

Similar to the rest of Eastern European countries, to fix the mistakes of the past and, to unify socialist-realist practices, the Romanian authorities first initiated the institutionalization of the architectural profession by abolishing, in 1951, the architects' private practices and transforming them into employees of large state planning bureaus.[35] This move towards institutional conformity, which further made the architect responsible for the built environment's ideological discourse, dislodged the autonomous individual artist and replaced his business with structured office practices and ideological

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[33] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 32.
[34] DJASD-PoH, 27/1953, 139.
[35] APMJ-*Secretariat*, 24/1952, 49. In the rest of Eastern European countries, state planning bureaus were established in 1948-49. In Romania, however, such professional institutionalization was intended in 1948, then reached its climax in 1951, when small business like pharmacies, medical practices, artistic centers, or commercial points were the last to pass into the state's property. "The state planning bureaus were large workplaces, often with a couple of hundred employees and consultants of all kinds gathered under one roof. Most of them operated at the regional level, but some of them specialized in hospitals, factories, or military buildings. The organizational pattern came from the Soviet Union. The state planning bureaus were a precondition without which the sequel would hardly have been possible." See Aman, *Architecture*, 23; I. M. Enescu, "Anatomia unor vremuri amobinabile," in *Arhitecți în timpul dictaturii*, 41-2.

architectural training, each of them having an equal impact upon the architectural outcome. In Hunedoara, for instance, the recently established State Committee for Architecture and Constructions, an organ responsible to the Romanian Council of Ministers led by Gheorghiu-Dej, executed the planning and the topographical urban development projects.[36]

A document released by the Romanian Government, "Instructions for the Executions of the Topographic Plans of the Cities and Popular Centers," stipulated the new establishment's functioning and internal organization, and made illegal any private design company that had been active in the field until that moment.[37] In the city, the central government approved specific regulations for the urban space's aesthetic appearances in terms of both street organization and façade decoration. These instructions, which addressed the dwelling sector particularly, provided directives for dwellings' construction and advanced standardized building patterns. After 1951, changes occurred not only in the urban planning principles, but in the building technology, as well. Initially introduced in Romania in 1950, "hard-core" modern concepts like "prefabrication," "standardization," and "urban control" became ubiquitous after 1951.[38] The only method to solve the massive need for buildings, prefabricated materials permitted the standardization of project designs and construction solutions: they also unified the artistic appearance of buildings using industrially produced architraves, capitals, and columns, etc. This solution was extremely advantageous, because it reduced

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[36] DJASD-PoH, 4/1953, 5.
[37] DJASD-OP, 34/1954, 34.
[38] M. Barsci, "Pentru construcțiile de masa," *Arhitectură şi Construcții* 6 (1955), 49; M. Cotescu, "Elemente de tip nou in noile case de locuințe," *Arhitectură şi Urbanism* 9-10 (1952); E. Szigeti, "Problema intreținerii cladirilor," *Revistele Tehnice A. S. T., seria Arhitectura* 2-3 (1950): 110-118.

the term of project's completion and lowered the building costs, while ideologically it successfully addressed the issue of formalism in planning and design.[39]

At stake in these decisions was the absolute control the party hoped to acquire, as it defines its institutions as "partial sources of social right, the seat of de facto founding authority, a certain task or enterprise, and a postulated, a priori consensus."[40] The State Committee for Architecture and Constructions advised the executive committee of the city's City Hall to establish, within its structures, an office of architecture to supervise the systematization plan.[41] They demanded order and commitment from everybody responsible so that the city's socialist building would be successfully completed.[42] Constantin Ieremski was appointed as chief-architect of the city.[43] An extended meeting of the Romanian Communist Party Central Committee held on 19 and 20 August 1953 further stressed those decisions.[44] Yet, one year later, on 24 November 1954, the first problems occurred. Initially, the local employees complained that there simply was no space necessary for the separate office. Later, lack of qualified personnel and financial resources delayed the fulfillment of the legislative regulation to such an extent that the recently opened structure's responsibilities overlapped with those of the executive committee within the city hall. This generated a detour of financial resources towards other departments and structures of the city hall, leaving the systematization office unable

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[39] The use of prefabricated materials is generally associated with Khrushchev's mass building campaigns of the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, as early as the end of the 1940s, both in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, the standardization of design projects and the increase in housing demand required efficient building technologies that could fulfill both aesthetic and constructive requirements.

[40] Gordon, "Introduction," 32.

[41] DJASD- PJH, 39/1953, 90.

[42] DJASD-*Oraş*, 34/1954, 5.

[43] See DJASD- PJH, 29/1953, 90; and DJASD- *Oras*, 34/1954, 5.

[44] Ibid., 10; see also *Buletinul Comitetului de Stat pentru Arhitectură şi Construcţii al Consiliului de Miniştri* 10 (1953): 78-9.

to carry out its duties. The separate systematization office affiliated with city hall was closed. [45]

After such institutionalization, the transmission of ideas and their implementation encountered fewer difficulties. There existed at least two very effective tools for putting the government's wishes into practice. First, state ownership of urban land achieved though expropriations within the city limits, which fixed its value into parameters set by the state. Second, social order, which would express the emergence of the all-mighty party-state within the Romanian society where institutions were cast to employ its policy on one hand, and on the other the supposedly identification of the communists' program with the masses' would then turn successfully. Both methods were used. In 1951, the government declared the project in Hunedoara to be of national importance, initiated a concerted campaign of expropriations under the command of Constantin Iarunski, and to begin with, handed over one hundred hectares to municipal authorities for the building of the future socialist city. [46]

4. Ideological Discourse:

In 1952, an itinerant exhibition of the Romanian socialist architecture was shown in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. Among the exhibits counted the plans of the Casa Scânteii, the constructions in Bucharest planned between 1949 and 1951, and a detailed overview of the Hunedoara project. While presented as a Romanian experiment in the socialist systematization of the cities, a pioneering approach toward both building

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[45] DJASD-*Oraş*, 34/1954, 13.
[46] Ibid., 34; for a detailed overview of the expropriation process see *Arhiva Primariei Municipiului Hunedoara – Exproprieri*, file "Exproprieri pentru construirea 'Oras muncitoresc' Hunedoara decret 54/1951," 1-155; and file "Exproprieri pentru construirea 'Oras muncitoresc' Hunedoara decret 515/1953, 1-65.

patterns' standardization, and "national in form and socialist in content" concept's implementation, the case of Hunedoara did not unveil a long-term solution to the architects' dilemma.[47] In light of this, the socialist-realist agenda continued to attract everybody's attention and in 1952, the Romanian Communist Party ideologues emphasized that until that very moment "the collectivity" in Hunedoara had not found any means to express itself while living in the "Garden City."[48] Their points of view seamed, nevertheless, to flow in a logical succession, which circumscribed both ideological and political transformations recently noticed and called for dismantling the ideology that had generated the previous building projects.

The 1950s building discourse focused upon several levels of theoretical argumentation: the production, the distribution, and the reception of the city's built environment. The discourses deconstructed systematically the modernist project of the "Garden City" in Hunedoara, to some extent even the hybrid urban solutions of the beginning of the 1950s, and questioned the significance of workers' quotidian experience by emphasizing the human space's socio-economic symbolic meaning. This mechanism, which illustrated the planning structures and decision-makers' preoccupation with creating urban benchmarks that would activate the readers' perception, came not from below, but from above, where professional artists and architects began to be trained to manufacture a readily intelligible socialist art created for easy access to the masses. Party architects, among whom Locar and Lăzărescu voiced vehemently the significance of social function of architecture in Hunedoara, identified the key concepts of the correct socialist-realist program: beautiful buildings to fuel the cultural ambitions of the masses

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[47] See "Expoziţia arhitecturii in RPR la Moscova," *Arhitectură şi Urbanism* 9-10 (1952): 10-1.
[48] Lăzărescu, "Proiectarea locuinţelor muncitoreşti la Hunedoara," *Arhitectură si Urbanism* 6-7 (1951): 17.

and establish the topological identity of the city, the architects' ideological training, and the planning program's institutionalization.

Firstly, in line with Nicolae Bădescu, Lăzărescu integrated his discourse into the postwar socialist-realist rhetoric actively disseminated by the Romanian cultural media since 1947, when the mass media already controlled by ARLUS began to publish Andrei Zhdanov's ideas and articles, and produced effects shortly after at the Communist Party's second congress in 1948.[49] In 1951, another collection of essays, "Against Bourgeois Art and Aesthetics," edited by the VOKS leader Kemenev, undertook on the one hand the defense of the Renaissance as a positive historical phenomenon and, on the other, the categorization of any modernist project as an instrument of American imperialism.[50] Ideologically, Kemenev restated socialist realism's major tenet of critically assimilating the historic heritage and setting connections between the artistic product and social justice on the one hand, and on the other the polarization between the communist East and the capitalist West. This was a rigorous visual censorship campaign, which quickly produced effects. The ideas articulated by Lăzărescu revolved around those very issues approached by the Russian ideologue.

Distinguishing between the Soviet and the European city, Lăzărescu made official the party's denunciation of "the faceless international architectural uniformity" of the international architectural modernism.[51] With cubicle houses imported from the West, this building system had no organic continuity with the vernacular tradition of Romanian

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[49] Radu Bogdan, "Un martor al realimului socialist," *Dilema* III 115 and 116 (24 and 31 March 1995): 8.
[50] Baudin, "Zhdanov Art and Its International Fallout," 887; for the emerging debates on Renaissance in the socialist-realist architectural style see Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin*, 19-23.
[51] Lăzărescu, "Proiectarea locuinţelor muncitoreşti la Hunedoara," 19.

architecture, Lăzărescu argued.[52] He regarded the "Garden City" in Hunedoara as outdated and reactionary.[53] Accordingly, the general line initially expressed in the Soviet Union by Zhdanov and Kemenev, and later in Romania, by Lăzărescu among others, consisted in rejecting any artistic interaction or dialogue between communist visual strategies and non-Soviet ideologies or "modernist traditions."[54] Thus,

> The negative example of Western modernity, rather than the positive reference to "the national heritage," was globally invoked to justify most of the arguments of this new current. The anti-imperialist campaign can therefore be seen as an application, in the visual art, of the policy against "servility to the West" with its attendant "anti-cosmopolitan" motif.[55]

Lăzărescu criticized the architects for giving to much priority to building costs. This, he said, caused housing standards to decrease and small dwellings lacking "artistic expression" to be built. The workers' houses had roofs with no cornices, sheer walls, and no window architraves or raised lintels, no capitals or pediments, no colors aside from the compound shades of white, beige, gray, and black. Lăzărescu accused the "Garden City" of repeating the mistakes of the past: monotonous buildings, high economic costs, and finally, disregard for a city's individual topological, cultural, or social identity and beauty.[56] His idea of beauty corresponded with the socialist-realist rhetoric professed in the Soviet Union since the 1930s, when Stalin's henchman, Lazar Kaganovici stated:

> The proletariat does not just want buildings; it does not simply want to live comfortably. It wants its buildings to be beautiful. And it wants its

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[52] This discourse foreruns the ideas formulated on 13 November 1952 when at a meeting of the party leadership, the CC of the RCP officially institutionalized the architecture and published in *Arhitectură si Urbanism* III (1952): 3.

[53] Roland Strobel, "From Cosmopolitan Fantasies to National Traditions: Socialist Realism in East Berlin," in *Urbanism: Imported or Exported?*, ed. Joe Nasr and Mercedes Volait (London, 2003), 136.

[54] Baudin, "Zhdanov Art and Its International Fallout," 883.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ionescu, *Arhitectura in Romania în perioada 1944-1969*, 37.

housing, its architecture, its towns, to be more beautiful than in all the countries of Europe and America.[57]

By the end of the Second World War, however, beauty associated with the building program was transformed into an intrinsic ideological value; according to Leonid Heller, post-war socialist realism "acquired an aesthetic character becoming the bearer of beauty reproduced by means of art."[58] Aesthetics expressed a beautiful reality, immediate, and ubiquitous, already in place.

Secondly, Lăzărescu delineated the parameters of a real modern socialist urban space. Because "the previous constructions had been so small," the "revolutionary character of the socialist worker had not been fully expressed by that environment, therefore serious damage had been caused to the good life of the working people, and the cost of living had become even more expensive."[59] Accordingly, the correct architecture had to be understood by the masses, to express reality in its revolutionary development, to address the masses' cultural needs of beauty and monumentality. To be meaningful, architects had to embody the most valuable local traditions of the people, and to transmit national sentiments and socialist aspirations toward the revolutionary development of daily life. However, "Garden City" houses looked a lot like those "minimal working dwellings" built prior to World War II in Romania. Accordingly, the most modern art of the moment, namely socialist realism, could not look like Western art.[60]

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[57] Kaganovich cited in Cooke, "Beauty as a Route," 147.
[58] According to this, as Heller has stressed, the distinction between the ideological demands embodied in the artistic method's elements – party-mindedness, ideological commitment, typicality of the situations, narodnost – and the aesthetic character of the rhetoric, clearly expressed during the 1930s in the Soviet Union, ceased to exist. See Heller, "The World of Prettiness," 706.
[59] DJASD-*Oraş*, 35/1954, 7.
[60] N. Djasi, "Impotriva formalismului în arhitectură," *Arhitectură şi Construcţii* 5 (1952): 93.

Typically for an anti-modernist crusade, Lăzărescu stressed that these first forty-four buildings were tainted by cosmopolitanism and formalism, a concern that in the context of the moment was emblematic for the socialist realist aesthetics' infusion and the institutional crystallization. Thus, the 1952 architectural discourse employed the concept of "national in form and socialist in content" to circumscribe a thorough critique of the early 1950s' constructions, too. In spite of some voices inclined to emphasize the positive aspects within the program, other criticized the inappropriate use of local traditions, which eventually unveiled lack of understanding of the "national in form" concept, or worse presence of consistent cosmopolitan influences within the IPC. For instance, archaizing geometries, with medieval and baroque reminiscences used extensively in the detriment of vernacular forms as was noticed at the local hospital, continued to serve cosmopolitan trends and marginalized national influences. The public space within the city thus had a medieval look where some public buildings resembled a monastery.[61]

The purpose of any socialist building program was to disseminate optimism amongst the inhabitants. Lăzărescu identified the "Garden City" with cultural decadence and pessimism, judging its building proposals socially impracticable. He further took the side of classicism, claiming that it could reincarnate a popular sense of cultural tradition and social enthusiasm. Criticizing the Garden City's organization of space, (even though he himself had been involved in the early stages of construction) Lăzărescu pointed to the square, the boulevard, and the monument as the major determinants of the socialist urban fabric, thus suggesting the quartals.[62] His intervention continued a line of thinking going

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[61] See Locar, "Pe drumul unei noi arhitecturi," 13-4; H. Delavrancea, "Sanatoriul de noapte din Hunedoara," *Arhitectură şi Urbanism* 8 (1952): 3-7.

[62] In a later account regarding the early stages of his career, Lăzărescu argued that the buildings from 1949 stood against the communist ideology of the moment by not following socialist-realist principles (even

back in 1950, when an account published by *Arhitectura* presented the program in Hunedoara as the start of the Soviet planning in Romania. Accordingly, Gustav Gusti drew the first typified dwellings and identified an urban solution, consisting of both space disposition and buildings' facades, as a closer version of socialist realism. *Scânteia* further voiced the party's involvement into the building program.[63] Denouncing the initial building project, Lăzărescu questioned the real impact that the older buildings could have upon people living in them. [64]

Lăzărescu opined that these flows had emerged because "although talented architects were involved, the teams did not have an ideological training."[65] The architect was not to look critically at the new political and social system; his role was to support the regime and to encourage ordinary people to build a socialist society. As Heller has pointed out, "in order to be perceived ideologically committed all artwork's elements had to contribute to the uncovering of a dominant idea, which functioned as a structural focus of and chief motivation for these elements."[66] Authorities, therefore, were to guard against any ideological impurity, because, as Alexandru Locar, another architect involved in the planning of the Hunedoara project, had pointed out "there can be many enemies and saboteurs. Class vigilance requires full attention to prevent such mistakes in the future."[67] Two facts emerge from this. On one hand, such discourse introduced the typology of the ideal professional architect, who had to be part of the ideological

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though by that time socialist realism was a concept rather unclear). Implausibly he presented himself as an initiator of de-Stalinization, in other words as an anti-Stalin crusader before Stalinization actually occurred. See Ileana Lăzărescu, *Vise in piatră* (Bucharest: Capitel, 2003), 29-31.

[63] See A. Locar, "Pe drumul unei noi arhitecturi in RPR," *Arhitectură şi Urbanism* 1-2 (1952): 10-3; *Scânteia* (28 March 1950): 1; *Scânteia* (23 October 1950): 1.

[64] For a discussion on quartal's function within the soviet urban space, see the second chapter of the thesis.

[65] Lăzărescu, "Din experiența proiectarii si construirii," 34.

[66] Heller, "World of Prettiness," 689.

[67] Alexandru Locar, "Aspecte ideologice în proiectare," *Arhitectura RPR* 6-7 (1954): 29; idem, "Pe drumul unei noi arhitecturi in RPR," *Arhitectura si Urbanism* 1-2 (1952); 3-4.

enterprise. On the other, it stressed institutional involvement in the country's building programs, which could not be brought to fruition unless a coherent decision-making structure organized the actions and projects set by the party and its ideology.

Conclusion:

The communist program of modernization called for planning structures' institutional crystallization within the Romanian party-state. Therefore, the evolution of socialist-realist architecture was constructed on two levels. On one hand, the Romanian Communist Party seamed to be continuing an ideological campaign began in 1949 that consisted of rejecting cosmopolitism and formalism parallel with organization's internal solidification and institutional cohesion in all areas of the state leadership. On the other hand, the role of planning structures in this dynamic was framed by the degree to which these structures' priorities came to overlap the party's objectives. Accordingly, by the end of the 1940s, aware of the increasing demand for clear ideological benchmarks inside the urban perimeters architects had constructed, political decision-makers undertook dramatic actions to facilitate the public's effective reading of the built environment. The cultural capital needed for architecture consisted of academic qualifications and educational attainments. It employed the complex interaction of state structures, architectural professional organizations, and political ideologies. Whereas, documents like the "Instructions for the Execution of the Topographic Plans of the Cities and Popular Centers" focused upon the production and transformation of space, they also played a central role in creating an interface between the state and the building institutions, in effect transforming the architect into a planner. This transformation, which began to

redefine the built environment's social function by emphasizing architecture's educational role, integrated the city more effectively into the socialist society and, albeit by coercion, solved partially the institutional discrepancies existent inside the state system.

V

<u>The Socialist-Realist City (1951-1954)</u>

In contrast with Bauhaus formalism and CIAM functionalism, the early 1950s socialist-realist architectural rhetoric restated the historical function of the urban site within the new economic system and "called for the cultural and historic determination of the respective city."[1] An inherent critique of the modernist functions of the city, thus, the rhetoric opened up a process that implied a re-hierarchization of urban categories within the Soviet bloc's city spaces.[2] In line with such ideas, in 1954 Gheorghe Petraşcu employed a retrospective overview of the Romanian architectural trends, as noticed in Hunedoara and in other centers throughout the country, and redefined the connection between the nature of the urban experience and the designers' capacity to convey clearly into cultural constructs the physical space of the city, which was otherwise controlled and shaped by street distribution, urban networks, and furniture. Arguing that the link between form and content would stress the mandatory interdependence between public space and the stories it produced, and insisting that urban spaces created after socialist realism's institutionalization must be what Robin has later referred to as a "cultural base for the total education," the discourse assimilated education to beauty.[3]

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[1] Joan Ockman, *Architecture Culture 1943-1968* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 125. Initially, CIAM established the principles of the correct city; the model became popular in Western Europe after the end of the Second World War. Postwar rebuilding programs in Western Europe followed this scheme and subscribed to the ideology of modernity as a process, of creating spaces in which the new society would take shape.

[2] Ockman, *Architecture Culture 1943-1968*, 125. In the forties, the key terms were culture, science, thought, art, and technology. "Culture" in Russian "has traditionally stood for what happens when a peasant moves from his traditional house in favour of an urban way of life. From this perspective, culture is modernization, and broadly speaking is also learning and the arts. Culture in the Soviet Union's cultural practice regarded a vast sphere of behavioral aspects. Culture meant civilization, education, access to information, urban values, urban development, and democratization of knowledge and of everyday life." See Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 208.

[3] Gheorghe Petraşcu, "Câteva probleme de compoziţie şi plastică în legătură cu proiectarea clădirilor de locuinţe cu puţine caturi," *Arhitectura RPR* 6-7 (1954): 43-4; Robin, *Socialist Realism*, xxii.

Yet, the capacity of the urban space to convey the state's politics greatly depended upon the inhabitancies' willingness to read the buildings accordingly, which bounded the politicians and architects' discourse to its exclusively official character. Therefore, in terms of educating the masses, the social functions of these cultural constructs, encompassed eventually the degree to which the newly constructed socialist-realist spaces served the purposes of beauty and socialist existence, which would be thus planned as to provide intimacy for the family life and cultural development, modern amenities and furniture on one hand, and on the other, recreation and benefices from the collective life within the quartal structure.[4] In Hunedoara, building upon the institutional and legislative solidification of the early 1950s, the project conducted between 1951 and 1954 followed the Soviet theoretical path and integrated architectural product into the national discourse of modernization and social education. This chapter questions the state's attempts to identify its official political program with the citizens' agenda and to give institutional structures and the legislative decisions the best form in order to create the desired social symbiosis of inhabitants' urban experiences and architectural interpretations.

1. **Building the City:**

While all the buildings constructed in Hunedoara during 1950 (and designed, most likely in late 1949) were public buildings, from 1951 onwards, official attention focused upon massive investments in dwellings. In 1951, Cezar Lăzărescu, the head of the group Urbanism II, which was housed in the Ministry of Constructions, wrote the official

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[4] Ibid., 44.

documentation for the systematization of Hunedoara.[5] According to the project adopted in 1951, by 1970 the Steel Plant was to have 15,500 employees. In planning the development strategies, the designers took into account Soviet methods of demographic estimation. Accordingly, by 1970 the city was to have 40,000 inhabitants. No fewer than 30,000 individuals would receive dwellings in the newly built city.[6] In addition, since in 1951, Hunedoara's total accommodation capacity had not surpassed 8,000 a new neighborhood would have to be raised from the ground up if the thousands of projected arrivals were to have homes.[7] Consequently, in November 1952 a last project was drawn up for Hunedoara, based on the idea of linking the old "Garden City" with the new one.[8] The plan, initiated by Gheorghe Pavlu, followed the 1951 statement (written by architect Radu Laurian, the chief of the urbanism department, and Caesar Lăzărescu, the chief of group Urbanism II) and proposed the growth of the city to 30,000 inhabitants.[9]

Figure 5.1 1960s perspective over a 1952 quartal space, Hunedoara. Architects Radu Udroiu et al. Courtesy Constantin Gaina.

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[5] APMJ-*Secretariat*, 16/1952, 25.

[6] Ibid., 45.

[7] DJASD-PoH, 54/1952, 14.

[8] G. Porumbescu, "Proiectarea locinţelor muncitoreşti la Hunedoara," *Arhitectură şi Urbanism* 6-7 (1952): 17; I.S.P.R.O.R (Institutul de proiectari) meaning, - The Institute for Building and Design was a structure within the Ministry of Constructions.
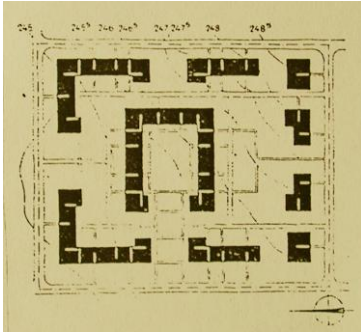
[9] Ibid., 19.

Figure 5.2 Quartal project (1953). Detail. From Cezar Lazarescu, "Din experienta proiectarii," *Arhitectura* 1 (1953): 6.
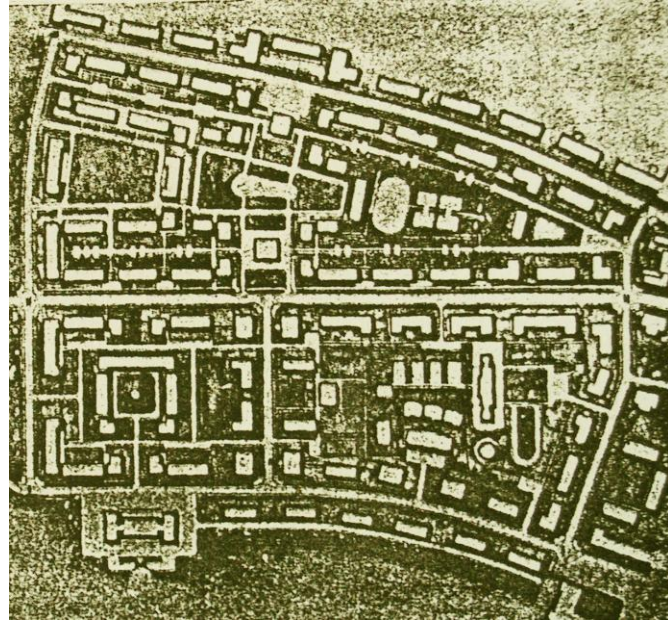
Figure 5.3 Ante-project Quartal Plans (1952-1953). From G. Porumbescu, "Proiectarea locinţelor muncitoreşti la Hunedoara," *Arhitectură şi Urbanism* 6-7 (1952): 13.

The next step was a project calling for a future increase in the city's population by one hundred per cent (up to 60,000 inhabitants), elaborated in 1954 by a group from the recently established I.S.P.R.O.R under the leadership of the architect Gheorghe Petrascu.[10] This group was to develop new urban and architectural designs in keeping with socialist realism in the form that prevailed since 1952.

In 1954, a new question was raised, though a decision of the Council of Ministers, concerning the quest for new ways to eliminate the industrial noxiousness that affected inner-city residential areas. Housing workers on large residential estates and constructing extensive industrial centers within the plant produced drab and polluted places. Investments in the maintenance and renewal of industrial and environmental equipment were not made, because doing so would hurt profits. The cheapest alternative was to

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[10] Gustav Gusti, "Locuinţa în clădiri în puţine caturi," *Arhitectura RPR* 6 (1954): 25.

accommodate the population from the industrial centers in the neighboring towns. Based on these new conditions, an I.S.P.R.O.R. group headed by architect Adrian Gheroghiu (who drew up a project for the micro-region Hunedoara–Deva-Calan) made two proposals. The first sought the maximum accommodation in the city of Deva (located fifteen kilometers from the city of Hunedoara) and planning to arrange public transportation to and from Hunedoara. The second project proposed creating new districts for workers that would meet the present requirements in the town of Hunedoara.[11] In May, of the same year, a new plan of construction and urban development was drawn up for Hunedoara. It confirmed the building of a new neighborhood, according to the second proposal of development, close to the previous socialist-realist district. The planned buildings maintained the interior organization of space within socialist-realist apartments but were designed with new facades: simple, and visually neutral.[12]

2. <u>The Socialist-Realist Space:</u>

Ideologically justified through the need for "maximal satisfaction of the material and cultural needs of the working class," the socialist urban site's spectacular development reflected the importation of Soviet ideology and technology.[13] As aesthetic rhetoric crystallized after 1951, and professional unity of action replaced architectural debates and aspirations, designers employed "correct" architecture to express "the decency of the working class."[14] There were six apartments on each level, so each apartment ran half the width of the building. They had two rooms and a kitchen, a hall, and a bathroom.

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[11] Alexandru Locar, "Aspecte ideologice în proiectare," *Arhitectura RPR* 5 (1954): 20.
[12] APMH-Igo, 1955, 2102/III, blueprints A-2/18, A-6/18 apartment buildings 23, 31, 32, 33, 28.
[13] Lăzărescu, "In legătură cu proiectarea construcțiilor de locuințe," *Arhitectura RPR* 7 (1954): 28.
[14] DJASD-PoH, 50/1950, 8.

Depending on the rooms' distribution, the apartments' surfaces varied from forty to sixty square meters. A general characteristic was the small kitchen. In addition, each dwelling had a storage space in the basement and another one in the attic.[15]

Figure 5.4 Hunedoara, Exterior view collective dwelling, 1951-1952. Architects Gheorghe Pavlu et al. (Photo 2005).

The project implemented between 1951 and 1954 ended up building, along with the dwellings, a new train station, a hospital with its own library, one school, one kindergarten and nursery school to educate the children and to enable their mothers to have a job, two commercial centers, and one public cultural institution with public library, a bread fabric, and a cinema.[16] The hospital, generically named "the house of

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[15] APMH-Igo, 1955, 47/1954, 56.
[16] DJASD-Pref., 13/1952, 9; *Drumul socialismului* (16 August 1951): 1.

rest" was built outside the city's perimeter, proved that the role of this kind of institutions was insignificant in socialist planning, and workers' health was unquestionable.

Figure 5.5 Kindergarten (1952-1953). (Photo 2008).

Figure 5.6 Bread Factory (1951-1952). (Photo 2008).

In accordance with socialist realism's tenet of recycling past architectural styles, the new project made direct links to the architecture of the local historical heritage by "critically" developing specific details of new classical and vernacular geometries. The centre, Bucharest, opted for Byzantine architecture, while Hunedoara, until 1953, chose Gothic brick architecture and local wooden buildings, a trademark of north Romanian, Transylvanian cities as inspirational source.[17] These options all reflected somewhat convoluted arguments about the progressive social role of the place in different epochs. In the city, architects used the medieval and Baroque style native to the region and adapted them to the new facades.

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[17] See, Aman, *Architecture and Ideology*, 112-3.

Figure 5.7 Hunedoara, Exterior view collective dwellings, 1952. Architects Radu Udroiu et al. (Photo 2008).

After the Second Party Congress in August 1953, the aesthetic options changed somewhat. Previous constructive options associated with local Gothic and Baroque architecture were considered inappropriate to employ the local traditions, and searches towards correct forms of representation synthesized classical and vernacular architecture.[18] As part of the project of building palaces for the people, apartment blocs, along with public buildings, were decorated with columns and other classical elements. Furthermore, the gray buildings had to become more colorful and bright. The dimensions were sensibly reduced in scale. The entrances, ramps, and stairways were points of exchange between public and private space; the regional or the local style with its eaves, lucarnes, shutters, and half-timbered gables, delineated a Central European tradition, and less a regional specificity.

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[18] See I. Silvan, "In legatura cu proiectarea sectinunilor de locuinte," *Arhitectura RPR* 1 (1954): 8-10; Gustav Gusti, "Locuinta in cladiri cu putine caturi," *Arhitectura RPR* 6-7 (1954): 17-30.

Figure 5.8 Hunedoara, Exterior view collective dwellings, 1953. Architects Gh. Pavlu et al. (Photo 2008).
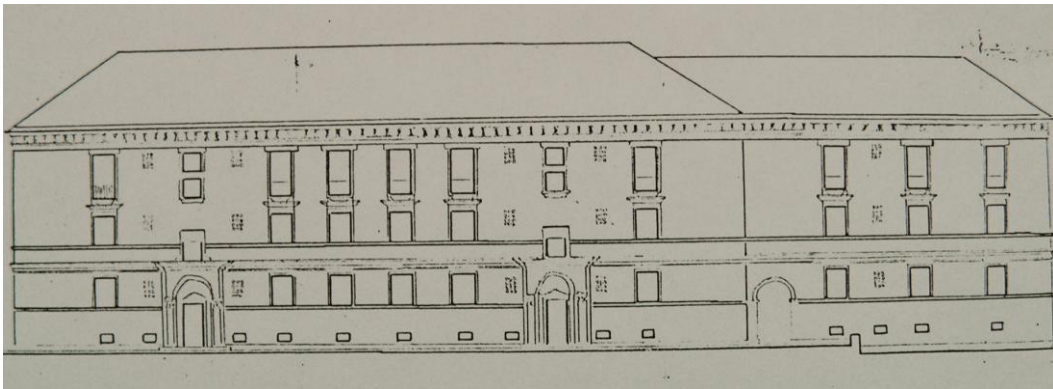

Figure 5.9 Façade collective dwellings (1953). Ante-project. Architects Gh. Pavlu et al. From AMPH-Igo, A-3/18.

The look of the city with its styles of architecture, the fabric of its enclosed squares and its picturesque facades suddenly appeared to contrast sharply with the representational insertions of the modern from the "Garden City" neighborhood. The public space of the third phase (1952-1954) projected by Gheorghe Petrascu, Nicolae Porumboiu, and Radu Udroiu was divided into quartals; the city was planned as a single, unitary physical ensemble. Using a collective dwelling system and regular grid of arteries as the simple, flexible support for a Soviet urban structure, the officials concern relating

size and density within the urban perimeter relied on the quartal. The average size, estimated at about four hectares, was later recalled as rather small and potentially causing unbalanced urban composition and an unhealthy life for the inhabitants.[19] Meanwhile, the project set a density of 280 inhabitants per hectare. There were five-storey buildings and green areas; public gardens and parks provided perimeters for family recreation. Accordingly, the land was heavily developed, and the buildings were closer together.[20] Such elements of urban planning were integrated with other components like modern systems of hygiene, running water, transportation, and infrastructure.[21]

The dwellings, unlike the public buildings previously constructed, served the purpose of wholeness with a continuous system of balanced compositions and assemblies of public space. The town centre was set for public celebrations and festive parades to mark important events in the socialist calendar such as 1 May, 23 August (National Day), and 7 November (the anniversary of the Russian Revolution).[22] In spite of the large scale of the building project, the costs employed were minimal. In line with arguments about the economic profitability of the socialist city in regard to the previous building attempts, the newer plans aimed to integrate construction costs into the planned economy. The total cost of the city, including the infrastructure (railways and roads to nearby cities) was estimated at 28,525 lei per inhabitant, an amount regarded by the officials an extremely profitable for an urban project.[23] Although the amount cannot be converted to the present-day currency, it was precisely the profitability issue that helped to distinguish the socialist-realist city from the Garden City one.

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[19] Marcu, "Aspecte ideologice," 10.
[20] *Scânteia* (5 August 1952): 1.
[21] APMH-Igo, 3/1952, 7.
[22] DJASD-PoH, 1953, 18, 2.
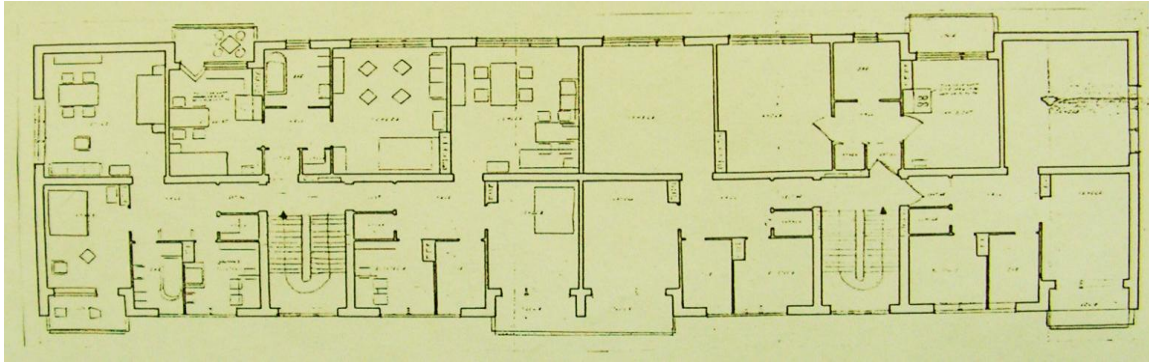[23] DJASD-PoH, 1954, 34, 10.

Figure 5.10 Ante-project collective dwelling plan with furnishing solutions, 1953. From AMPJ-Igo, A-2/18.

3. A City for Steel:

Under the socialist regime of the early 1950s, experiencing the city by reading it, and not just using it (walking through it, or dwelling and working in it), was a constituent element of both building the city and building in the city. As discussed in the third chapter, constructing the socialist site's meaning was achieved by several methods. One was the intensive practice of urbanization, construction and social re-stratification, which the state undertook in order to implement a political program of modernization.[24] Another, related to this, was the tendency of the Romanian state to effect changes by the launching of "campaigns" accompanied by heavy propaganda. To provide proof that the system functioned, the official discourse invariably presented Hunedoara as the winner of these competitions.[25]

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[24] Clark discusses the centrality of architecture in the Soviet projects of social re-stratification under the promise of political and economic modernization. Her approach defines the Soviet spatiality in terms of centre and periphery and emphasizes the assimilation by architecture of traditional visual images. See Clark, "Socialist Realism and the Sacralizing of Space," in *The Landscape of Stalinism: the Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 3-18.

[25] *Drumul socialismului* (17 December 1953): 1.

The mechanism was quite simple. In 1951, for example, the party announced a national construction program to modernize and implement the socialist project in Hunedoara. Citizens were encouraged to help at the building sites, and records mention that more than 1,500 out of the 8,600 inhabitants volunteered.[26] Most of the time, individual personalities, transformed overnight into working-class heroes, enlivened a space that portrayed the city, and not just the plant, as a "universe of merchandize."[27] Such figures mediated between the state and the masses. The state supervised the volunteer works, which were organized by the Propaganda Department, led by the cultural advisor Gheorghe Lupaşcu, and strictly tabulated the results after each effort.[28] The archival holdings on this topic are numerous. Illustrating a sophisticated campaign of social integration and mobilization, the documents available in the local and regional archives, along with newspaper articles, show how institutional interaction between the state and the masses integrated cultural activities in the building program. During their monthly meetings, the County Executive Committees discussed citizens' involvement in the building phases, as well as individual interest in the building program, cultural activities conducted by various institutions and types of reward.[29] Records mention that to maintain cultural well-being, the state organized workers' meetings with the rest of the city's population, public lectures and festivals, movie projections and numerous Russian song contests.[30] In spite of the multitude of public activities, which engaged the entire local community, most important for the city's construction was the central story of

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[26] DJASD-*Secretariat*, 3/1951, 38.
[27] Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity, Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 43.
[28] DJAS-*Oraş*, 20/1952, 875.
[29] *Drumul socialismului* (19 February 1951): 1; *Drumul socialismului* (12 July 1953): 3.
[30] *Drumul socialismului* (15 January 1951): 1.

personal experiences associated with the project. For instance, during 1953, thanks to volunteers like Ciki Ludovic and Darlea Damian, no fewer than 3,000 apartments and several educational buildings had been finished and distributed to citizens.[31]

Published periodically, such data would increase the public's curiosity and place in the national spotlight individuals who had, typically, worked numerous projects to be able to contribute to the program. Much more efficient than real interaction between officials and inhabitants, such widely circulated articles about the city, with their graphic and photographic content, transformed the space of Hunedoara, and not just its dwellings, into an "advertised spectacle." The publicity made the city circulate nation wide, as if "it suddenly lost mass and volume, while the readers, and not just the inhabitants, consumed it."[32] As a direct consequence, citizens throughout the country, as well as those within the city, would begin to "see" considerable progress in housing conditions and numerous advantages to living inside the city; this in turn was supposed to convince them to move to an industrial site. Ideally, individuals most readily would accept the idea of having a new house in a new socialist-realist style, and would consider that only the socialist ideological construct would grant them such well-being in an urban setting. Once settled inside the city, citizens were encouraged to get involved in the daily life of the community by advancing ideas about the city, by interacting socially, and by fostering cultural solidarities.[33] Yet, each of these practices in themselves can be rendered problematic, as can the relationship between them and the definition of modernity.

First, the modernity of the space consisted of endowing inhabitants with responsibility for the city itself and engaging them actively in the preliminary

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[31] *Drumul socialismului* (11 March 1954): 1.
[32] Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity*, 43.
[33] *Drumul socialismului* (12 July 1953): 3; *Drumul socialismului* (20 August 1953): 2.

institutionalized phases of the building process. In 1951, the government demanded that local authorities postpone any building project unless it had been previously accepted in a public meeting. Regarded as a democratic measure, the *idea* of consulting civil society on issues concerning the community is ubiquitous in any law of urbanism adopted by every modern political system around the globe, although how meaningful the consultations actually are depends on the society in question. In Hunedoara, workers and inhabitants were given the chance to verbalize their visions about the future city. Local officials organized public meetings where technicians, architects, workers, and inhabitants formulated opinions and concerns about the recently adopted systematization plan.[34] The government's representative had to gather their suggestions in writing, and forward the minutes to the central institutions. According to the legislative dispositions, within forty-five days after the public meeting had adjourned, the government had to adopt the final version of the systematization plan.[35]

In theory, institutional involvement of the citizens would facilitate the creation, and eventually the evolution, of some architectural products towards a socialist style. By the beginning of the 1950s, the campaign to integrate urban space as part of public discourse would force the government and the planning offices to take seriously the need to explore the multiple possibilities of illustrating socialist-realist architecture as "revelatory and creative."[36] Furthermore, the government would conclude that the projected socialist-realist city had to respect the topological identity of the space and also provide inhabitants with the most appropriate and clear representation of their collective urban identity.

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[34] APMH-*Executive*, 2/1952, 9.
[35] DJASD-*Secretariat*, 16/1952, 47.
[36] Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Boston: MIT Press, 1997), 25.

In reality, the initial emphasis on how the future city should look, rather than on how to construct it reveals more about the officials' preoccupation to elaborate ideologically correct legislative texts and regulations, than about the officials' actual intent to implement those political decisions. Therefore, although the government demanded workers and inhabitants to get involved in the systematization project, there could not be found any record of how these wishes shaped the final project, or even about any public meeting held in the city around that date.[37]

Second, since as Beatriz Colomina has pointed out, "the newspaper is an instigator, not a table of contents," the modernity of Hunedoara was achieved by practices of urbanization thus delineated new social relations amongst the city's inhabitants by means of professional integration.[38] Architectural education was essential to making the city readable and at the same time providing enough information to suggest how to read the city. Legibility would thus provide legitimacy.[39]

Initially, in this process of construction and political consolidation, the party became, theoretically, the generator of wealth, happiness and national industrial development. In 1949, under the party's supervision steel production became the presumptive cause of general happiness and national fulfillment. That year, production had to increase by thirty-five per cent. In Hunedoara, workers like Ilea Ion, Partenie

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[37] For similar dispositions in Soviet space see for instance Susan Reid, "Khrushchev's children's paradise: the Pioneer Palace, Moscow, 1958," in *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002); see also Monica Ruthers, "The Moscow Gorky Street in Late Stalinism: Space, History and *Lebenswelten*," in *Late Stalinist Russia. Society between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, ed. Juliane Fürst (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 251. Monica Ruthers has showed that in 1935, when the project for the reconstruction of Gorky Street was underway, citizens were requested to deposit their suggestions for the projects in "a special letterbox."

[38] Colomina *Privacy and Publicity*, 23.

[39] *Drumul socialismului* (20 August 1953): 2; *Drumul socialismului* (17 December 1953): 1.

Marisca and Gheorghe Andruț successfully surpassed the monthly plans.[40] However, in 1950 heavy industry "would have an increase without precedent. Over the following months, due to the Soviets' help and technological assistance, the total production figures would increase by 853 per cent."[41] In the building sector, less "ambitious" investments projected an increase by sixty percent, while constructing "the great edifices of culture and light."[42] These kinds of enthusiastic phrases, as Jeffrey Brooks has pointed out,

> … appeared mainly in commentaries on subjects regarding the working class, industrialization, and modernization, and one can recuperate something of the intended meaning of socialist realism as it pertained to subject, author, and audience within this larger linguistic milieu.[43]

On the one hand, such phrases would endow with political legitimacy several less popular social and economic measures initiated by the communist structures, which by 1951 brought the workers into a state of generalized rejection and tension, initiating strikes and protests across the country.[44] On the other hand, these phrases would carry a propagandistic weight because this type of worker - highly-educated, culturally and technically, like the rest of individuals who had adopted the Soviet model - had to find different and more efficient means of industrial production.[45]

The message replaced the real identities with pseudo-identities, which created a system of cultural and social representation for the geographical and spatial location of the city. For instance, the interaction between Budoy and Atanasiu, which, although emblematic for the early stages of communism was just an isolated example in the time's

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[40] *Scânteia* (10 September 1949): 1.
[41] *Drumul Socialismului* (18 December 1950): 2; *Drumul socialismului* (19 February 1951): 3.
[42] Ibid., see also L. Târău, *Intre Washington şi Moscova*, 352.
[43] Jeffery Brooks, "Socialist Realism in Pravda. Read All About It!," *Slavic Review* 53, 4 (1994): 974.
[44] For more detail on this, see Levy, *The Rise and Fall*.
[45] *Scânteia tineretului* (4 August 1951): 1; *Drumul socialismului* (19 February 1951): 3; and idem (28 February 1951): 3.

newspapers, was in another story taken one step further: Costache Vasile served as example not just for his colleagues, but for the entire community. Like a genuine hero, Costache Vasile, in line with Soviet methods, managed to increase the daily production by more than fifty per cent.[46] It seemed impossible to put the economy back on its feet until Costache Vasile pointed out that all the problems could be solved by employing the Soviet methods of production. He was so dedicated that, when the bureaucrats undermined his visionary plans for the plant, he put so much trust in the party's encouragement that he overcame the hardships alone.[47] Furthermore, in 1953, the Stakhanovite Gheorhe Furca identified Hunedoara as the very embodiment of socialist success. Furca managed to help production to such an extent that as early as the end of 1953, he had already been working towards the 1956 industrial plans.[48] Textually, these stories, especially the co-optation of the Stakhavite concept, reveal how Soviet patterns of socialist-realist rhetoric had been employed by the Romanian propaganda department. As Leonid Heller has pointed out,

> … the typical industrial novel of the early 1950s, in which the plot was based on the ups and downs of industrial production, would prove insufficiently "party minded." For that, the plot would have to include scenes of workers studying and sharpening their skills, transforming themselves into a technological intelligentsia.[49]

At this time, the workers' personal life experience prior to the establishment of the communist regime had no relevance where socialist-realist rhetoric was concerned. The

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[46] *Drumul socialismului* (11 January 1953): 1.
[47] See *Scânteia* (8 February 1953): 1.
[48] *Drumul socialismului* (10 January 1954): 2.
[49] Heller, "The World of Prettiness," 689-690.

qualities associated with the workers' names consisted of values illustrated by their social involvement in present-day activities.[50]

The industrial city was imagined as the ideal place to live because it lived Stakhanovites like Costache Vasile and Gheorghe Fulca.[51] In addition, to make it even more convincing, inhabitants agreed in written testimonial to follow the example of Stakhanovites in work and life, and to celebrate publicly the party's glorious moments and the state's impressive transformation.[52] Officially, the techniques for practicing social relations, which were "formed and modulated spatially, and allowed for the efficient expansion of power," increased the urban population.[53] According to the *National Statistic Bulletin*, between 1951 and 1954, Hunedoara's annual population growth was 6.9 per cent, the highest in Romania.[54] Seventy per cent of the inhabitants were migrants, originating in other regions of the country, and consequently in great need of dwellings. However, the socio-cultural forms built up from disparate elements into a whole should be the result of individual creative action instead of external impersonal force. Can interpersonal interactions and the ways individuals judged the truthfulness of the communist regime be reconstructed, even with access to the local files of the Communist Party?

Thirdly, the Romanian communists tried fashioning solidarities to counter cultural challenges posed by existing local traditions by using a combination of industrial militancy and neighborhood ties. They employed newspapers or photographs to redraw

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[50] See, *Drumul socialismului* (28 January 1954): 1, and idem (3 January 1954): 3.
[51] *Drumul socialismului* (11 January 1953): 1.
[52] See *Drumul socialismului* (12 July 1953): 3; for the content of the agreement between the workers and the inhabitants, see *Scânteia* (16 September 1953): 3; also, *Drumul socialismului* (8 February 1953): 3.
[53] *Scânteia* (16 September 1953): 3.
[54] *Buletinul Statistic al Romaniei*, 1955.

the boundaries of everyday life. A panoramic photograph of the city, published in 1953 in the regional newspaper *Drumul socialismului*, depicted a continuously developing city where public buildings and dwellings coexisted in total harmony, and illustrated the socialist nature of the new establishment. In the foreground, the educational buildings – the kindergarten and the school – were architecturally depicting the principle of critical assimilation of local historic heritage by synthesizing elements of both regional gothic and Central European Baroque style. Behind them, the rest of the city depicted the socialist content of the communist project through the dwelling assemblies' quartal planimetry and organization of the facades.[55]

A fruitful source for reconstructing the interaction between the state and the masses as a form of cultural dialogue consisted of letters that the workers were said to address to the country's leadership and published into in the newspapers periodically. In May 1951, Sorin Baeşaru sent a letter to Gheorghiu-Dej to stress his enthusiasm for having received a new house and a decent salary.[56] To some extent, the everlasting parallel between socialist and western world was maintained; here, though, it formed on the daily experience of Soviet life, which was depicted as much superior to the occidental one.[57] The city, therefore, was seen not just as an accommodation perimeter. It coincided with a process of personal evolution and progress. In 1953, another worker explains in detail his movement from an insalubrious house into a modern home, which, in return for his involvement in industrial work, the party offered him. The city was shown to be capable of producing general sentiments of optimism and facilitating the imposition of a

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[55] See *Drumul socialismului* (11 April 1953): 2; see also, idem (22 January 1953): 2.
[56] *Drumul socialismului* (8 May 1951): 2.
[57] Ibid.

social order, an educational and value system, unaltered by any harmful influence.[58] Architecture, therefore, insofar as it was directly linked to the reality of production, was able to create an ideological climate to integrate the design fully into a comprehensive state project that reorganized production, distribution, and reception, and controlled the inhabitants' behavior inside the city. The citizens were made aware that they were privileged enough to dwell in one of the most important industrial centers of the country and, within the newspapers' pages, they made no secret of that.[59]

During the Labor Day celebration of 1 May 1953, flags, flowers, and pictures of Marx, Engels, Stalin and Lenin, as well as those of Gheorghiu-Dej, adorned the public squares and the dwelling ensembles. The meeting was organized in Freedom Square (Piata Libertății) where thousands of workers applauded the hard-working workers.[60] The anniversary celebration opened with a show of Russian music and poems, continued with sequences of Russian dances. The climax of the ceremonies was the parade of the Stakhanovites Costache Vasile, Gheorghe Furca, Gheorghe Nemes, and Ion Haulica. The project was intended not just as housing, but about the forging of identities by means of the urban experience.[61] The constant references to Gheorghiu-Dej and Stalin in the context of city-building appeared to contemporary readers as something of a formula reiterated periodically. Gheorghiu-Dej was presented as Stalin's disciple, following his example and trying to implement his teachings. Gheorghiu-Dej expressed the paternalistic concern the party had manifested while enlivening the words of Stalin,

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[58] *Scânteia* (6 January 1954): 3.
[59] Ibid., *Drumul socialismului* (22 January 1953): 2; *Drumul socialismului* (5 January 1954): 1.
[60] *Scânteia,* (2 May 1953): 3.
[61] Ibid.

which made possible "the building of the newest and lightest dwellings in the city."[62] By the end of 1951, the institutionalized system began to solidify; on these grounds the politicians manipulated the ideological significance of the city and of the new housing in terms of their potential to redress historic wrongs. No longer was the city the domain of the bourgeoisie; the space was reclaimed in a great program of socialist engineering where the city built here reflected the very Stalinist principle "man was the most precious capital."[63]

The way this familiar texture of working-class collective life – the banners, the songs, the houses of culture, the social events organized by ARLUS – was set into place demonstrates the degree to which this collective life was articulated into an explicitly political identity. Socialist realism used the concept of modernization as a model of social integration based on patterns of cultural practices that were organized around economic principles that might resemble what Alan Swingewood defined as "a highly rationalized system of cultural production which socialized individuals effectively in a state of ideological conformism."[64] Emphasis was placed on urban public space as sites for political celebration and the personal development of each individual within the social collective. For this strategy to succeed, moreover, the state had to create individuals who were capable of understanding consciously the ideological subtleties of this new urban space.

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[62] *Drumul socialismului* (6 May 1954): 2; see also, idem (26 March 1951): 1; idem (8 May 1951): 1.

[63] *Drumul socialismului* (15 January 1951): 1; idem (5 February 1951): 1, idem (16 August 1951): 2.

[64] Alan Swingewood, *Cultural Theory and the Problem of Modernity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998),

Conclusion:

Adopting the Five Year Plan in 1951 provided the prerequisites for the bureaucratization of public life, meaning the reevaluation of architects' positions and attributes within the relationship between "architects, planners, and their client, the State."[65] Therefore, the specific form that the city took was tied to the activities of political elites and dependent on both institutional unity and decision-making coherence within the party organization. Furthermore, the construction of the city occurred simultaneously with the consolidation of political power within the communist system and solidified definitively the assumption that architecture was and had to be the outcome product of this fully institutionalized system.

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[65] Crowley, "Warsaw Interiors: The Public Life of Private Spaces, 1949-65," 186.

<u>**VI**</u>

<u>**Conclusion**</u>

This research project examined the evolution of Romania's postwar intended modernization process under the influence of communist institutional practices imposed by the USSR. The research began from the assumption that the built environment plays a fundamental role in shaping the collective social consciousness and, that Soviet style urban design, therefore, had the potential to become a viable instrument in the attempts undertaken by a certain political regime to establish its legitimacy. The thesis concerned itself with the official discourse elaborated by the communist structures and its impact on the building dynamic; it did not aim to provide real, concrete social interactions within the newly-established socialist society. Therefore, these findings should be contextualized within the wider study of propaganda production, as opposed to reception, in Romanian especially and the Soviet Union's Eastern bloc as a whole.

Inside the communist system, the ability to define "modernity" much less bringing it into being, depended on whether political elites and the party could provide institutional unity and coherent decision-making. In Romania, they could not, at least until around 1952. Before then, political fragmentation, ideological contradictions, and fights for power dominated the Romanian public life and affected, among other things, the production of propaganda, architectural or otherwise. Furthermore, the political conflict illustrated in the previous chapters did not carry a consistent ideological debate, was dominated by individual disagreements. Therefore, most of the political events should be regarded closely linked with the political evolution of the party's Secretary General Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej. These problems also damaged the potential of

building projects like the Hunedoara expansion. Therefore, although politicians tried to use architectural institutions to mediate between the state and the citizens, architecture's overall capacity to accomplish constructive tasks was substantially diminished. Until the early 1950s, the institutional dynamic essential for the construction of socialist realism embraced the entire range of the state's decision-making structures such as financial organizations and political forces, and not just those belonging to a few cultural establishments, such as ARLUS, the Propaganda Department, or the mass media. During the late 1940s, these various actors were pursuing different goals. Propagandists and cultural institutions were concerned with conforming to Stalinist ideological parameters, while political and economic bodies occupied themselves more with searching for potential ways to build communism. With the start of the Five Year Plan in 1951, public life sufficiently was bureaucratized and political power sufficiently centralized, to permit greater coherence, both in terms of rhetoric and decision-making.

Nevertheless, building projects like Hunedoara were vulnerable to changing ideological language. If judged from the perspective of the ideological orientation of 1959, the urban development plan in Hunedoara "could be characterized as being obviously formalistic."[1] After 1954, architecture followed a new road. In an address delivered in December 1954 at the meeting of the Union of Soviet Architects, the new Soviet leader Khrushchev condemned the building practices that had characterized Stalinist projects but not the ideology that animated them.[2] Khrushchev condemned excessive decoration and the waste of financial resources on superfluous architectural enterprises. The effect of Khrushchev's comments was quickly felt in the Popular

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[1] Marcus, "Sistematizarea," 20.
[2] On the political context in which the discourse was delivered, see Cooke, "Beauty as a Route."

Democracies: his speech was translated in Romanian in 1955 and published by the review *Arhitectura*.[3] Consequently, a new urban development plan was elaborated in Hunedoara, by the mid-1950s. In this case, unlike in previous plans, the schemes respected the internal organization of the space as well as the building typology, but were striped of any decorative elements. This choice reconfirmed that, within the communist system, architectural creation was subject to strict political control and governmental strategies.

Figure 6.1 View of the former Hunedoara Steel Plant. (Photo 2008).

On the long term, the Steel Plant that had been closely linked to the development of the city reached by the end of the 1980s more than 30,000 employees, and quickly declined afterwards during the post-socialist era. The communist program of modernization to

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[3] N. Khrushchev, "Despre introducerea pe scară largă a metodelor industriale, imbunatațirea calitații şi reducerea costului construcțiilor," *Arhitectura RPR* 2 (1955): 31-36.

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which both the Steel Plant and the city rhetorically subscribed, and where history and vernacular heritage supposedly fueled the legitimizing discourse, survived as long as the communist regime was all mighty.

From the continuous interaction of institutional and ideological rhetoric, new research questions arise. On one hand, it would be interesting to study individual reactions to the built environment. How did urban designs affect people's daily experience of the quotidian features of life under communism? On the other hand, stressing institutional evolution and, researching the impact of socialist realism upon the architectural profession (or, more broadly, upon artistic circles) could uncover the steps taken by both the state and professionals to adapt an artistic vocabulary to new Soviet rhetoric. It would also be fruitful to examine the professional evolution of individual artists inside the socialist system or the forced exile of others. The connections and collaborations of Romanian architects with their European peers during the late 1950s and the whole 1960s would be worth investigating as well.

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