

Charles University

Faculty of Philosophy and Arts

Institute of World History, Seminar of General and Comparative History

Dissertation Thesis

Natalia Linitskaya, Mgr.

Place Of Formation Of The Soviet Man: Tractormakers' Neighborhood In Minsk
In Late Stalinism and Postsocialism

Sídliště Traktorového závodu v Minsku: prostor utváření identity Bělorusů v
období pozdního stalinismu a poststalinismu

Advisor:

Mgr. Mikuláš Pešta, PhD.

2021

Prohlašuji, že jsem dizertační práci vypracovala samostatně, že jsem řádně citovala všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

Content

Introduction	pp. 4-5
Methodological notions and literature.....	pp. 6-11
Sources	pp. 12-13
1. The Neighborhood	pp. 14
1.1. What is <i>zhilmassiv</i>	pp. 14-19
1.2. Change in style	p. 20
1.3. Socialist realist mass housing construction after the war...	pp. 21-23
2. Situation in the city.....	pp. 24-27
2.1. Overview	p. 27
2.2. Block-gardens.....	pp. 29-33
2.3. Workers' boulevard.....	pp. 34-36
3. Tractorbuilders	p. 37
3.1. Characteristic of the first period.....	pp. 37-40
3.2. Initial chaos.....	pp. 41-44
3.3. Settling down.....	pp. 45-48
3.4. Disobedience	pp. 49
4. Housing	pp. 56-61
5. Everyday activities	pp. 62-66
6. Sisterhood of dormitory.....	pp. 67-68
Conclusion.....	pp. 69-71
Sources, Bibliography, List of Attachments	pp. 72-78

Introduction

A tractor plant— one of several enterprises situated in Minsk in 1946¹ - transformed agrarian land, industrialized and urbanized it. Village youth came to work to the city in order to survive in the postwar years of hunger and destruction, as especially desperate conditions were in countryside. A large social group became involved into a social experiment - forming soviet man – man who toiled for future happiness and was eager to wait for it during his life time.

In the tents and barracks, overcrowded rooms, waiting for bread and getting to public bath, people of the tractor neighborhood as well as the whole soviet country were coerced to live for bright future. They were living in a great country, addressed as “citizens of our big motherland”, “masters of the enterprise”. Hardships were temporary, the party was directing and “creating normal conditions of life”. Labor had to be delivered to “the party and government”, applying all the strength and diligence, it was “creative labor” with inner need for study and self-perfection.

Coercion was part of this project – people were forced to march to paradise of social equality and material abundance. “Unconscious” was the one, who did not want to labor for tomorrow. The power created a phenomenon of infantile consciousness who was eager to wait for future for unlimited time. Such consciousness was frightened of changes. The collapse of the Soviet Union was unexpected and most of the population was not prepared. Changes that arrived

¹ Another giant plant was automobile, both were placed simultaneously on the basis of prewar workshops, in case of automobile – it was originally designed as tank repairing. It would be instructive to pay attention to both of the plants, but the author concentrated on the tractor only.

were perceived as inevitability, but were not supported largely, people had to adjust to them.²

In order to get production of the tractors started and increased, the party authorities got to agitate – to charge the site with enthusiasm of creation, labor deed for the sake of reconstruction. In reality enthusiasm was overestimated, workshops were overwhelmed with deficiencies, and slogans did not have effect other than practical: put into the windows of unfinished workshops instead of glass, to protect from wind was blowing. Labor was unfree and people were aware of ignorance and arrogance of the leadership. People who were yesterday enthusiastically engaged in overwork for sake of reconstruction, as the case of war veterans demonstrated, were resentful in the 1950s when they rejected to overwork.

Others, heroes of labor created by propaganda, liked flattering images of themselves, accepted existing terms. There were frustrated hooligans, and lucky professionals who found joy and satisfaction in their everyday labor. People worked because they had to live, it was imperative of time: work for reconstruction and striving for normalcy of everyday life. And hope for better was decisive. Despite everything collective of the plant was built and it delivered positive identification to its members.

Young people of the tractor neighborhood endured, used opportunities of education, perceived labor as meaningful and developed identification with the plant. Not being socialized into ideology, they took up any possibilities that the soviet power provided – work, education – those who were more diligent, others tried to find a better place – closer to the funds, in a canteen. A career-maker could use party language, accepting all kinds of fraud and do move upwards.

² Levada, Yu.A. Homo Postsoveticus. Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost. 2000. №6, p. 9.

Methodological notions and literature

Consent with the authorities, that included peace, prosperity, work, individual security, family life, women's work, public order and security³, while distancing from belief in the idea of communism was growing.

E. Zubkova described the postwar generation as having inner freedom. They did not know the fear of the terror, they were free from mutual responsibility of it. They did not know disappointment of the war generation who waited for liberalization of the system. They had illusions, but hopes as well and no presumption of sanctity of soviet political system. They had stored inner independence, to compare with people coming to age in peaceful time. Their psychological age was more mature than biological. Many of them had various war experiences - being in the partisan brigades, driven to Germany, imprisoned in the Nazi camps, in detention and filtration camps. They had strong will. And they wanted to use possibilities declared by the soviet power, standing against unfriendly unhelping world, where chances were hard to reach, great effort was to be applied, patience developed. Endurance that they showed, modesty of their expectations – simple material things – and their young age – they had time to wait for improvement.⁴

A sociological concept “soviet man” should be introduced. It was proposed by a Russian sociologist Yuriy Levada, it was based on analysis of the opinion polls

³ Lindenberger, Thomas: Tacit Minimal Consensus: The Always Precarious East German Dictatorship. In: Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes. Fascism, Nazism, Communism, pp. 212-215.

⁴ Zubkova E.Yu.: Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshchestvo: politika i povsednevnost', 1945-1953. Moskva RAN: Institut rossijskoj istorii 2000, p. 136.

conducted in 1989-1991.⁵ It was a set of qualities that were developed within the members of soviet society, that was seen by the author as a project of creation new man by revolutionary intellectuals. These qualities are: forced self-isolationism, a mind barrier between „ours“ and „their“, state-paternalist orientation – not thinking oneself outside state system that is imagined as overwhelming, totalitarian, and having conscious of adolescent. Hierarchical egalitarianism and thinking on national question in imperial framework.⁶

Another methodological point of departure were oral histories of soviet men and women, life stories of whom were written down and presented in collection „Soviet People. Scenes from History“.⁷ The author was inspired with the notion of Jochen Hellbeck on how a man internalized soviet state and correlated, recreated his subjectivity with ideological guidelines.⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick saw tactics of ordinary soviet people in new social reality where state was omnipresent.⁹ At the same time, relations between ideology and material life, realm of objects and human body are interesting, to mention Ol’ga Gurova „Soviet Lingerie between Ideology and Everyday“.¹⁰

A study on postwar everyday life in Belarus was written by Iryna Kashtalyan, where the author articulated dearth conditions of postwar situation, pointed at specific social groups – veterans, known as *frontoviki*, who could be critically charged towards soviet power and restricted by it, and *zapadniki* – population of

⁵ Levada, Y.: Sovetskiy prostoy chelovek. Opyt sotsial’nogo portreta na rubezhe 90-h godov. Moskva: Mirovoy okean 1993.

⁶ Levada, Y.: Sovetskiy prostoy chelovek, p. 23

⁷ Kozlova N.N. Sovetskie Lyudi. Sceny iz Istorii [Soviet People. Scenes from History]. Mosva: Evropa 2005.

⁸ Hellbeck, Jochen: Revolution on My Mind. Writing a Diary Under Stalin. Cambridge MA. Harvard University Press 2006.

⁹ Fitzpatrick, Sheila: Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times. Soviet Russia in the 1930s. Cambridge University Press 2009.

¹⁰ Gurova O.Y.: Sovetskoe nizhnee bel’jo mezhdru ideologiej I povsednevnost’ju [Soviet underwear between ideology and everyday life]. Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie 2008.

kresy wschodnie - territories that were part of Poland, captured by the Red Army, while presented as “reunified” in soviet propaganda. Not only Western Belarus, but BSSR was suspicious to the central power – Kashtalyan pointed at the politics of directing professionals from other republics. Also her study of places of memory of the soviet repressions must be mentioned.¹¹ Kashtalyan did not defend in Belarus her dissertation based on archival sources of the central committee of the communist party of Belorussia, it was found as “blackening soviet reality” - in 2007, the fact that reflects fully on the state of belarusian politics of memory and Belarusian academicians as “soviet men”.

Yet, archives of Belarus were explored by German historians - Thomas Bohn in particular. T. Bohn explored Minsk as exemplar socialist city, finding grey zones beyond its facade – illegal settlements that appeared from deficit of housing, spaces of cultural resistance as praying houses of Protestants at the city outskirts under Khrushchev and disobedience of newcomers, fresh urbanites-workers of the tractor plant who rejected to pay the ticket on tram.¹²

Frustrated youth of stalinist construction sites is a subject of Katherine Lebow in the articles “Public works, Private Lives: Youth Brigades in Nowa Huta in the 1950s”¹³ The situation in Poland was similar to belarusian – large reserves of working hands from agriculture were eager to move to construction of new socialist sites. Youth desired improvement of their lives, uniform of conscription service *Sluzba Polsce* was a way to change rags worn back in the villages. It was believed by the polish communists, that they delivered civilization to the village

¹¹ Kashtalyan, Iryna: *Shtodzionnae zhyccio belaruskaj spalechansci u 1945-1953*. [Everyday Life of Belarusian Society in 1945-1953] PhD. Dissertaion 2007. Kashtalyan, Iryna: “Belarus pad uplyvam palityčnykh rëprësiij saveckaha času (1917-1953)”, In: *Mescy pamiaci achviaraŭ kamunizmu ŭ Belarusi* [Places of Memory of the Victims of Communism in Belarus], Anna Kaminski (Ed.), Fond dasledvanniaŭ kamunistyčnykh dyktatur 2010, p. 15. Print.

¹² Thomas M. Bohn, *Minsk – Musterstadt des Sozialismus. Stadtplanung und Urbanisierung in der Sowjetunion nach 1945*, Köln: Böhlau 2008.

¹³ Katherine A. Lebow: “Public works, Private Lives: Youth Brigades in Nowa Huta in the 1950s”. *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 10/ Is. 02./July 2001, pp. 199-219.

youth.¹⁴ Youth in its turn recognized that it received the results of improvement and worked with enthusiasm for the sake of oneself, one's own family and Poland – not for party.¹⁵ But the failure of communist cultural project to provide adequate possibilities of leisure led to frustration of youth and elaboration of their own, gang culture, that had “a sense of both marginalisation and entitlement”.¹⁶ Lebow speaks of a growing mistrust and fear of this unarticulated mass by authorities.

The very nature of socialist city built on green grass created by same political, economical and cultural methods, makes all stalinist projects structurally similar, finds Jajesniak-Quast. For setting time frame of this work a notion on socialist transformation as technological process that took about 15 years and was completed at the sway of Khrushchev's modernization was used. Stalinization of Central and Eastern Europe also involved a social project of constructing new class of workers that ran with both “acceptance and protest”.¹⁷

Donald Filtzer was a guide through the workshop difficult reality, as inquired into conditions of the working class throughout Stalinist period and under Khrushchev. He described young workers as the most vulnerable social group of late Stalinism as they lacked possibilities to bargain on the shop floor, he or she could undertake only individual action. On mass, soviet workers were not interested in ideology, lacked motivation. The mindset of young generation was „alienation“ and „deep political apathy“, Filtzer concluded.¹⁸

¹⁴Lebow: *Public works, Private Lives...*, p. 213.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 217.

¹⁷ Jajeśniak-Quast, Dagmar: *Stahlgiganten in der sozialistischen Transformation. Nowa Huta in Krakau, EKO in Eisenhuettenstadt und Kunčice in Ostrava*. Wiesbaden, Harrasowitz Verlag 2010, p. 15.

¹⁸ Filtzer, Donald: *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism: Labour and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War II*. Cambridge University Press 2002, pp. 118-119.

The author was inspired by the concept of self-will, Eigensinn, reading Alf Luedtke history of everyday life.¹⁹

City as justification of socialism

Socialist city was studied by Russian scholars, particularly how concept of garden city inspired architects as emancipation environment, but turned social engineering instrument in the Stalinist system of mobilization economics. Social facilities, housing when distributed from above, enrolled man into networks of control. It was shown by Mark Meerovich in “Cemetery of Socialist Cities”.²⁰ Plant that concentrated financial means became empire that took care of its employees through everyday structures of public alimentation, child and medical care, housing, and existing outside these structures marginalized.

Urbanism and architecture are good tools for examining soviet society and power. Housing was justification of socialism as emancipatory project, founds out Zarecor for the case of housing in Nová Ostrava, and what exactly forms socialist style took is studied by Kimberly Zarecor in detail.²¹ Politics of disciplination through imposing urban way of life over former villagers and their appropriation of new life style were shown in a new socialist town in Hungary by Sandor Horvath.²²

Socialist housing design, avant-garde, pulled researches as soon as it became possible to remember it, in 1974 appeared a profound student work with reach

¹⁹ Ludtke Alf: *Istoriya povsednevnosti v Germanii: novyie podhody k izucheniyu truda, vojny i vlasti*. Translated by K.A. Levinson et al. Introduction by S.V. Zhuravlyov. Moskva: Rosspen 2010.

²⁰ Meerovich M.G., Konysheva E.V., Khmel'nitsky D.S. *Kladbishche socgorodov: gradostroitel'naya politika v SSSR (1928-1932)*. [Cemetery of Socialist City: Urban Policy in USSR]. Moskva 2011.

²¹ Zarecor, Kimberly Elman: *Manufacturing Socialist Modernity. Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960*. Pittsburgh:University of Pittsburgh Press 2011

²² Horvath, Sandor: *The Urban Villagers of the First Hungarian Socialist City*. A paper delivered at the European Association of Urban History, Stockholm 2006.

graphic material.²³ In 1980 a daughter of one of the Leningrad constructivist architect V.E. Khazanova published her work on the soviet architecture of the first five-year plan where she touched on the main topics – socialist settlement, socialist city, socialist way of living, housing.²⁴ Soviet urban theory was studied by Y. Kosenkova throughout socialist period²⁵, particularly of interest is her book on postwar urbanism and its idea of ensemble and city-organism, architectural design that had humanist appeal.²⁶ Soviet city as experiment in creating public spaces that provided people with large possibilities of leisure and self-perfection opposite to overcrowd communal space was pointed at by Bronovitskaya.²⁷

²³ Kirillov, V.V.: Put' poiska i eksperimenta. Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 20-h – nachala 30-h godov.[Way of Search and Experiment. From History of Soviet Architecture of 1920-beginning of 1930]. Moscow University Publishing 1974.

²⁴ Khazanova, V.E.: Sovetskaya arkhitektura pervoy pyatiletki. Problemy goroda budushchego. [Soviet architecture of the first Five-Year Plan. Problematics of City of Future] Moskva: Nauka 1980.

²⁵ Sovetskoe gradostroitel'stvo. 1917-1941.[Soviet Urban Planning] Kosenkova Yu.L. (ed.) Kniga 1, 2. Moskva: Progress-Tradiciya 2018.

²⁶ Kosenkova Yu.L.: Sovetskiy gorod 1940-h – pervoj poloviny 1950-s godov. Ot tvorcheskikh poiskov k praktike stroitel'stva. [Soviet City 1940-first half of 1950s. From Creative Search to Practice of Construction]. Moskva: URSS 2009.

²⁷A.Ju. Bronovitskaya Otrkytyi gorod: sovetskiy eksperiment. In: Estetika "ottepeli". Novoe v arkhitekture, iskusstve, kul'ture. Ed. By O.V. Kazakova, Moskva: Rosspen 2013, pp. 100-109, here: 102.

Sources

The main source are the funds of the party bureau/committee of the tractor plant, the cell of which was turned into a large organization by transferring engineers-communists from all the Soviet Union. Here one must say that collective of the tractor plant represented various social groups – old guard of engineers of industrial enterprises of the first five-year plans – Kharkov, Chelyabinsk tractor plants, aviation construction as well, postwar plants of Altay (Minsk automobile plant in its turn, enjoyed Moscow, Yaroslavl cadres who built up the collective of engineers).

Throughout the period, to prove Filtzer's thesis on factory as contested field²⁸ - the protocols are full of discussions of individual disobedience of workers that reflect politics of shop floor relations involving social, national backgrounds. 345 members were men and 81 women, 110 Belarusians, 192 Russians, 74 Jews, 45 Ukrainians, 1 Tatar, 1 Polak, 1 Estonian, 1 Latvian and 1 Czech. 88 with high education, 120 with not completed elementary. ²⁹

Disobedience of the workers was part of everyday life at industrial site in socialism. Protest of the high- and middle-qualified workers against official power hierarchies, chiefs and engineers. The author was also intended to show everyday action on shop floor, small acts of self-will that were entangled into micropolitical relations at shop floor, be it wage, bonuses or a one-man uprising against housing manager – dependent and in its turn effecting macroprocesses.

A lot of cases are on “moral decline” in private life, such as drinking and unfaithfulness of spouses, and also misconduct in relation to housing fund. By the 1960s, party organization became less involved into discussion of action on the

²⁸ Filtzer, D.: Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism. Labor and the Restoration of the Stalinist System After World War II. Cambridge University Press 2002, p, 224.

²⁹GAMO, 28, 1, 24, 60.

shop floor, and rather discussed export sells and who would get on list for trips abroad.

“Blackening of reality” in the newspaper “Traktor” and the role of caricature
Stalinist period was absolutely rigid in expression. The newspaper of the workshops and construction site could print only positive reports. In the second half of 1950s and in the 1960s the newspaper regularly reported on shortcomings and provides a look into society of the tractorbuilders who were both colleagues at work and neighbors. The newspaper had a network of workers-reporters and photographers, and with its feuilletons could make some chiefs and exemplar career-makers nervous.

A number of interviews with the tractorbuilders were hold in 2012-2020. They were mostly workers, and all of them got qualification, were retired.

The first chapter is introducing of the place of habitat, the neighborhood of the tractorbuilders as architectural and social idea. In the second chapter the author shows everyday of tracrobuiders in the workshops, then moves to housing and finishes with leisure. Village youth remained village, did not became urban. This was part of their independence. Frustration that was felt by less motivated is inextricable part of the project of soviet man. One was keen on study, be it a part of soviet project of modernization or out of inner demand, but hooliganism was omnipresent.

1. Neighborhood

1.1 What is *zhilmassiv*

The principles of housing construction in the 1920s and 1930s were: rationalization of flat cell, new aesthetics of house, new type of block and social facilities. The style of housing was constructivist, with the turn to socialist realism initiated by Stalin in 1932, the look of houses was changing but basic rules of urban space were untouched. The reasons of popularity of low-rise mass housing series after the end of the war must be explained.

Soviet power had to cope with the consequences of the politics of tightening of “bourgeois” flat, that created communal overcrowded space, destruction of housing fund in the civil war and growing influx of village migrants into the cities. Workers housing was demanded – cheap, modern. Since the middle 1920s urban construction began to revive through the workers’ cooperatives that used financial aid of the professional unions, local soviets (municipalities). The latter were the main developers.³⁰ In 1924 an All-Union Committee for promotion of workers cooperative housing construction was organized and the first competition for the projects of housing for a working district of Traktornaya street was hold.³¹ The street was situated in the vicinity of Putilov factory that produced first soviet tractors. The factory then got the name of Kirov.

New type of housing, new type of flat and new principles of organization of space were searched for.³² This meant: industrial methods of construction, standardization of floor-plan, and ensemble quality of development were awaited.

³⁰ A.Ju. Bronovitskaya Otrkytyi gorod: sovetskiy eksperiment.[Open City: Soviet Experiment] In: Estetika “ottepeli”. Novoe v arkhitekture, iskusstve, kul'ture.[Aesthetics of Thaw. New in Arhitecture, Art, Culture] Ed. By O.V. Kazakova, Moskva: Rosspen 2013, pp. 100-109, here: 102.

³¹ Arhitekturnaya grafika epohi konstruktivizma. V sobranii gosudarstvennogo muzeya istorii Sankt-Peterburga. [Architectural Graphics of the Constructivist Epoch. In the Collections of the State Museum of History of Saint-Petersburg]. Catalogue. Sankt-Petersburg 2008, pp. 12, 119.

³² Kirikov B.M., Shtiglitz M.S.: Arhitektura leningradskogo avangarda. Putevoditel'. [Architecture of Leningrad Avantgard. Guide] Sankt-Peterburg 2012, p. 75.

Simplicity and sanitary standard as opposed to unnecessary bourgeois décor was the guidance in style: the unadorned houses with large windows, flats oriented on two sides and to the South and East. A complex of housing in neoclassicist style with avant-garde details – such image of proletarian simplicity was found for Traktornaya street by A.I. Gegello, A.S. Nikol'skiy, G.A. Simonov.³³

Applying several floor-plans enabled to situate all apartments to hygienic requirements: flats on two sides for airing through and solarization, oriented North-South. The new concept of flat was also based on rational approach to space, that is, rational organization of household activities, and reduction of flat square. The ideal was individual flat with water supply, canalization, heating - minimal comfort. But flats were communal, one room per family was usual.

Another type of housing, a blocked house – two-floors house with flats in two levels each having its own entrance - that was a more economical version of cottage was elaborated throughout 1918-1920s.³⁴ Living in connection to nature was imagined as suitable and elevating for working class. A blocked house could be in functionalist style. However, minimal flat section won, blocked house was less economical, it was decided that to standardize a flat, not a house, would be cheaper. Apartment house based on flat cells became the main method of construction.

Groups of apartment houses of 5-6 floors high built at the yet undeveloped city territories became the main method of urban development and acquired a popular name *zhiloy massiv* (mass housing estate), shortened according to the contemporary fashion of short words-slogans – *zhimassiv*. It was a new type of urban dwelling - housing for masses. Housing was built in constructivist style

³³ Kirikov B.M., Shtiglitz M.S.: *Arhitektura leningradskogo avangarda*, pp. 74-81.

³⁴ Bylinkin, N.P., Kalmykova V.N., Ryabushin A.V., Sergeeva G.V.: *Istoriya sovetskoy arhitektury (1917-1954 gg.)* [History of Soviet Architecture], 2nd edition. Moscow: Strojizdat, 1985, p. 37.

governed by “simplicity and laconism”.³⁵ Such houses were slender, facades were adorned only with a network of windows that corresponded to the floor-plan, rows of balconies created rhythm, combination of materials - bricks and dark stucco. Wall surfaces in contrast with large surfaces of glass. “Laconism, simplicity” that described constructivist language, fit communism. “Ascetic strictness of forms was the result of search for symbolic expression of *Zeitgeist*, which, as it seemed, excluded the very thought of going beyond necessary minimum, demanding self-denial in the name of future.³⁶

Construction was limited with scarcity of resources, that is why housing of Traktornaya could not be higher than three-floors - there was deficit of bricks, old railways were reused for iron constructions. Industrialization of construction, prefabrication of the elements of housing was only studied by the soviet architects.³⁷

A block became initial unit of urban development and it was based on rational approach. It was enlarged to let in sun, air. Block was pedestrian, free from transit movement, greenery was part of design. Elementary services were situated within it - children daycare facilities, canteens and laundries. Spatial-functional connections between all the elements of block, housing, greenery and facilities were conceived in such way that to create holistic space. Children facilities – in the green area, school – in pedestrian reach, bath house – to serve several blocks.

In its turn, block was inbuilt into the system of services, organized in levels – elements of block, district and all-city importance.³⁸ Clubs, shops and schools

³⁵ Ol' G.A., Levinson E.Eh.: Evgeniy Levinson. Leningrad: Stroyizdat, Lenigradskoe otdelenie 1976, p. 38.

³⁶ Ikonnikov A.V., *Arhitektura Moskvy. XX vek.*[Architecture of Moscow] Moskva: Moskovskij rabochij 1984, p. 43-44.

³⁷ Gegello, A.I.: *Iz tvorcheskogo opyta. Vozniknovenie i razvitie arhitekturnogo zamysla.* [From the Creative Experience. Emerging and Developing of Architectural Concept] Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo po arkhitekture, stroitel'stvu 1962.

³⁸Kirillov, V.V.: *Put' poiska i eksperimenta. Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 20-h – nachala 30-h godov.* Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1974, p.81.

served larger areas of housing .39 New type social services - mechanized canteen, universal shop, *univermag*, house of socialist culture, and a new type administration - House of Soviets - built district level. Park of leisure and culture, a stadium were added to the infrastructure of the first socialist Kirov district in Leningrad. Constructivism crystallized new social types of architecture.40

Zhilmassiv had a vast inner yards, a new urban concept. It is instructive to remember design of Red Vienna social housing program: a large semi-private, semi-public block. It established new relations between city and workers housing, the latter not separated from the rest of city life being enclosed at the outskirts, on the contrary, it placed worker amidst city. Urban life ran inside blocks that were self-sufficient and through them as space was transient.

Inner space became focus of design. Aesthetic qualities were derived from constructive ones. Axial symmetry and perimetric compositions of the early designs were “overcome”41, became asymmetric, dynamic, free and unbound to street. Buildings were paired at angles or united with arches, were of varying height, stepped back from the front line of the street. Perception of space was programmed - for clear and energetic impression. Attention of the architects was focused at creation of holistic space, interconnection of all the elements into environment.42

The instructions for new proletarian look were: “to inform the buildings with the character of the most simple and cheapest construction and at the same time depict [in architecture] new socialist formation and new way of life (*byt*) that was in the process of becoming, achieving at the same time a level of artistic beauty that

³⁹OI', Levinson, pp. 19-20.

⁴⁰Kirillov, Put' eksperimenta..., p. 46.

⁴¹Kirillov, Put' eksperimenta..., p. 63.

⁴²Ikonnikov, A.V. Arkhitektura goroda. Esteticheskie problemy kompozicii. [Architecture of City. Aesthetic Problems of Composition] Moskva: Strojizdat 1972, pp. 87-88, 98-99

corresponded to modern taste”.⁴³ The jury of the competition for Traktornaya street did not accept “barrack-like uniformity” of functionalism. On the contrary, verandahs and balconies were welcomed.

From the beginning of the 1930s bare facades acquired details of architectural decor and constructivist dynamics of space froze. The basic unit of environment became local yards-gardens.⁴⁴ Turn to classicism transformed the scheme of block. Block was enclosed, symmetric, “ceremonious”. At the same time, block continued to be interpreted as basic territorial unit that was organized with social facilities.

Change in style did not stop the work at standardization of flat cell. In the 1920s it was three-rooms, in 1937 the main type became two-rooms. In 1940, the Institute of mass housing offered two main variants of standardized flats: *malometrazhnaya* – of reduced amount of square meters - and *polnometrazhnaya* – with enlarged floor-plan.

The methods of German architect Ernst May became an important episode in the housing construction in USSR. His novel methods were: industrialization of building - to assemble houses from prefabricated parts that took three weeks, or even few days in some cases. Blueprints were produced in conveyor manner. His housing was built according to sanitary principles (provision with minimal housing), also with garden city approach and in functional style. May was fond of new way of organizing buildings - situating South-North and by meridian in rows so that air freely circulated amidst the buildings, sun lit all the flats. It had no street, but alley formed by the side facades. ⁴⁵

⁴³Arhitekturnaya grafika epohi konstruktivizma. V sobranii gosudarstvennogo muzeya istorii Sankt-Peterburga. Catalogue. Sankt-Petersburg 2008, pp. 12.

⁴⁴ Ol', Levinson, pp. 46-7.

⁴⁵ Gropius's idea. Ikonnikov, Arkhitektura goroda, p. 75.

In 1925-1930 he built a number of neighborhoods at the outskirts of Frankfurt-am-Main, a coherent garden city design known as New Frankfurt. Soviet authorities invited him together with the staff of his architectural bureau to build housing in Magnitogorsk.⁴⁶ Industrialization of building was attractive for the soviet power beginning the forced industrialization program and demanding methods of quick construction.

Functionalism and minimal dwelling had socially liberating message – equality and right of everyone for shelter.⁴⁷ At first industrialization program welcomed functionalist methods and then rejected low-rise neighborhood as bourgeois - it was too expensive.

⁴⁶Konysheva E., Meerovich M., Flirl T.: Ernst May v istorii sovetskoy industrializacii. Project Baikal, 138.

⁴⁷Kirillov, 77-78.

1.2 Change in style

The first five-year plan (1928-1932) declared the course on «building socialism in one country». Industrialization, collectivization and cultural revolution ran under reinforced guidance of the state. „First socialist state“ represented itself to the world and to its own society as mighty and unshakeable. Stalin, being the main architect of „building socialism“, chose traditional style and persecuted avantgarde for its attempt at political project of reorganization of life.⁴⁸ Proper to the soviet state became: Antiquity, Renaissance and Russian Classicism.⁴⁹ These styles fit representation of state a priori, were adapted to socialism, filled with allegoric figures of men and women elaborated in antique manner but having signs of socialist reality – workers with hammers, students with books, emblems of opulence – sheaves, wreaths, vases were used for decoration.

In urbanism, the concept of beautiful city arranged into ensemble overwhelmed theory. Modern streets of the first socialist capital, Moscow, were designed for parades, demonstrations - the rituals of socialist state and for flaneuring.

New style must be and was comprehensive to social masses that took up social lifts provided by the new politics. New society wanted to look at classic architecture and even archaic forms, like zikkurates and piramides. And such was the project of the House of Soviets however never built. There was a symbol of the soviet country and emancipation of socialism that was appealing to the world: in 1937 in Paris took place World Exhibition, USSR represented itself to the world with a statue „Worker and Kolkhoz Girl“ - they symbolized the union of proletariat and peasantry and the tools they hold were hammer and sickle. They called the rest of the world to freedom.

⁴⁸Groys, Total Art of Stalinism, pp. 34-35.

⁴⁹ Groys, p. 72.

1.3 Socialist realist mass housing construction after the war

The need to build cheap and fast after the war was hindered by deficit of materials and construction mechanisms, lack of specialists. Houses of small cubage - 300-400 m, of 1-3 floors on the basis of standardized constructive scheme and industrially made elements of construction were immediate decision. The types were of 6-24 flats and of size of a cottage or a blocked house, the floor-plans were economical. It was easy to build and fast to move in. Such houses could be built by half professional building brigades. Flats were canalized and had water supply and heat – basic urban goods.

The theoretical framework of socialist urbanism – city as beautiful ensemble - dictated to adjust low-rise neighborhood building to „ensemble thinking“.50 The decision was to use one constructive scheme, sanitary units, material for the walls (bricks or slack) and roof in one set, but to elaborate different configurations within it: flat composition (1-4 rooms), extension (1-3 sections), number of floors (2-3), either meridional or latitudinal orientation and spatial composition of the plan – frontal, angular or in forms of Russian letters П and Г.⁵¹ It enabled to create blocks-ensembles, streets and neighborhoods – uniform, standard, as massives should be, but varying in details - all projects of a series were unified by one decorative motive consisting of a modest number of details. Along the typified doors, windows, staircases, decorative elements were made industrially as well.

Motives of „big architecture“ masked modesty of construction and created mood of peaceful and stable life. Silhouette of a house was created by Hip roof, frontons. Bow-windows, mansards, balconies elaborated facade. Rustication blocks. Portico. Especially popular were loggias borrowed from representative houses. “Variety

⁵⁰ Kosenkova Yu.L.: Sovetskiy gorod 1940-h – pervoj poloviny 1950-s godov. [Soviet City 1940-first half of 1950s. From Creative Search to Practice of Construction], p. 34

⁵¹ Voinov, Zhilishchnoe stroitel'stvo, p. 69. Plessein, B.D., Smirnov N.N. Serial method of typified planning of housing. [Seriynyi metod tipovogo proektirovaniia zhilyh zdaniy]. Moscow: State architectural publishing, 1949, p. 19.

and picturesque”, “modest and simplicity”, “intimicity and picturesqueness” described regular housing.

It was a probe of mass housing construction, that aimed at standard quality. All-union Committee for Architecture obliged the plants and local soviet to use types for new construction from the catalogue only.⁵² Thus, construction was standardized.⁵³

In 1944 planning workshops launched into designing houses in series. In 1948 a dozen of series, each having 2-9 projects, was ready. The series were defined for building across the USSR, but materials and constructions varied depending on climate. Belarus missed the first phase of work (information on traditional constructions and material should have been gathered and analyzed) and elaborated its own sets in 1951 only. It used common types.

The album of 1948 contained types for nurseries, kindergartens, schools, canteens, clubs, houses of culture, bath houses and dormitories. Requirement to build in complex blocks (all-inclusive, with engineering communication and communal services) and overall design was repeated in 1947: together with houses - «roads, pavements, water supply, canalization, fences, buildings related to housekeeping activities and greenery, of course. Series were designed for perimetric configuration of blocks. There was practical meaning to it: enclosed space was comfortable for households, keeping a shed inside.

Middle range regular architecture was humanistic, insists a scholar. Design was realistic, because means coincided with the aims – to provide housing quickly and to create liveable environment.⁵⁴ Blocks within cities, industrial outskirts and new

⁵² NARB 903, 1, 201, 43. The Catalogue of projects of two-floors housing. Committee for the Architecture. Moscow: State architectural publishing 1947.

⁵³ A lot of workshops with their own types of housing. Standard provided quality, possibility of control. From the text of decree. NARB, 903, 1, 190, 106.

⁵⁴ Kosenkva, Sovetskiy gorod., p. 41.

towns were developed with the series - Kiev district New Darnitsa, of Zaporozh'ye. Moscow, Berezniki. The most famous was a town Novaya Kahovka. It was thought that urbanism would be developed in this humanic direction – of low-rise towns-ensembles.⁵⁵

Standard low-rise houses became the first regular tissue in the new districts of the postwar Minsk. Typified sets were obligatory for new construction in the cities, and of course, for the workers' neighborhoods that emerged in the postwar plan of reconstruction, among them plants of Minsk - the tractor, automobile, motorcycle.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ NARB: 903, 1, 201, 43.

2. Situation in the city

Two giant plants, the tractor and the automobile, were granted to Belorussia within the plan of reconstruction. According to the fourth five-year plan, 1946-1950, BSSR acquired new economical profile – industrial. Before the war BSSR was specialized in local raw production – turf, wood- and food-processing. New main branches became machine-construction, chemistry, energetics.⁵⁷

One of the reasons was geographical situation of the republic, close to the industrially developed regions of the Soviet union and Eastern camp that enabled to Success of BSSR was in human resources. The amount of toiling in industry grew from 29400 in 1950 to 568500 in 1960, more than 1 mln in 1970 and continued to grow in slower tempo.⁵⁸

Industrialization changed cities, where it drew working force. Minsk share in GDP of the republic was 26,4% 1955.⁵⁹

Minsk underwent the fastest among the same sized soviet cities growth – 13 against 11% per year. The main plants were placed in Minsk. This overcentralized city everyone tried to reach. 41,1% of all who came to Minsk were from countryside, 43,1 – in 1965, 44,6 – in 1970, 49,3 – in 1976 and 51,5 – in 1977.⁶⁰ Free labor force was teaming to mostly unqualified job places of the machine-building plants. In the end of 1965 Minsk had 756, 3 thousand, breaking forth

⁵⁷Bohn, T.: Haradskoe planavannie i Urbanizacyia u Saveckim Sauze paslya 1945 hoda. Trans. Rytanovich M., Minsk: Zmicier Kolas 2016, p. 77.

⁵⁸ Bohn, Haradskoe planavannie..., p. 76.

⁵⁹ Pol'skij, S. A.: Demograficheskie problemy razvitija Minska [Demographic Problems of Minsk Development]. Minsk: Izdatelstvo BGU 1976, pp. 12, 20.

⁶⁰Pol'skij, S.A.: Problemy racional'nogo ispol'zovanija trudovyh resursov Minska. In: Problemy rasselenija v BSSR. Ed. By Pol'skij S.A. Minsk: Nauka i Tehnika, 1980, p. 137.

estimations of growth⁶¹ due to migration into metallurgy and heavy-machines construction, mostly as hand labor.

Except for the giants of the tractor and automobile, there was a number of workshops of related productions: motorcycle (1946), bearing (1948), gear wheels (1952), wheel tractors (1954), by the new wave of modernization – automatic lines and aggregate machines (1961), motor workshops (1963). Minsk and particularly, its South-East district became a machine-building hub. Metallurgy and machine-building reached 40% in the economics of Minsk in 1955 against 17,5 in 1950.⁶²

Each plant built housing and social facilities for the workers, the largest plants, the tractor and automobile that employed several thousands of workers, had neighborhoods. They occupied a large, the size of the old city, area in the South-East direction that was attached to the city.

20 mln was the budget of the construction site, 38 mln – of the whole Minsk.⁶³ Urbanism was dependent on industrial plan, calculated on the basis of the needs of industry. Plants acquired financing for housing construction. Industrial numbers defined the amount of working force, engineers and technicians, service personnel, and other social groups were also calculated. So, the master plan of 1946 planned 48 thousand of workers in metallurgical branch and 300 thousand of population of Minsk.⁶⁴ Population was – 500 thousand.

Master Plan was shown to the public of Minsk in June 1946. Radial-ring structure, industry was concentrated at the outskirts, protection zones of greenery

⁶¹Kirichenko, Vital': Minsk. Istoricheskiy portret goroda. 1953-1959. Minsk. Istoricheskiy portret goroda. 1953-1959. Minsk: "Belarus" 2006, p. 29.

⁶² Pol'skij: Demograficheskie problemy razvitija Minska [Demographic Problems of Minsk Development], p. 12.

⁶³ NARB, 777, 1, 2, 2 vol, 63.

⁶⁴BGANTD, 3, 1,1, 45 ob.

inbetween.⁶⁵ Building zones were 5-7-floors for the center 35%, 3-4-floor of the streets attached to the center and for the main streets of the neighborhoods - also 35%, residential 2-3-floors – 15% и 15% - edges built with cottages. Gardens and inner yards - 62,5%.⁶⁶ The city grew twice bigger with incorporation of the South-East suburbs — from 4,5 thousand hectares to 9,3 thousand, and the city edge ran by 13 thousand.⁶⁷ In 1951 the master plan was corrected, as the territory was too stretched, and 70% was defined for high-rise construction.⁶⁸ [1]

Soviet urban theory insisted on concept of “city-organism” that included all the far flung neighborhoods into city. This represented strong power and priority of public over private. It was explained that only connection to the city provided real democratic communication, public life and enjoying all modern facilities.⁶⁹ It was fear of autonomy of neighborhood community.

At the same time, quality of building in the neighborhood of socialist were declared as high as in the center – socialist city was “city without periphery”. Housing of the plants was promoted as having same level of comfort as the housing in the center. Neighborhoods were built as representative ensembles and demonstrated as achievement of postwar socialist reconstruction together with the central Stalin avenue.

City was organized in districts, functional and compositional units. Each had a center that was functional and compositional, a square with house of soviet. South-East direction was defined for development yet in the prewar plans. It had favourable climate due to the river Slep'yanka, and winds were taken into account.

⁶⁵Bohn, 2016, p. 100.

⁶⁶BGANTiD, 3, 4, 528, 35-6

⁶⁷BGANTD, 3, 1, 1, 10

⁶⁸Bohn, 2016, p. 109.

⁶⁹Kosenkova, Sovetskiy gorod., p. 47.

The automobile occupied 135 thousand sq m, and the tractor — 130. According to the plan, the housing of these plants was to merge with other plants' neighborhoods and form a large district for 200 thousand people.⁷⁰ This was Stalinskiy district later split into two.

Connections with the city were found by the main arteries connecting the far-flung territories. The neighborhood was inbuilt into the city by Dolgobrodskaya street, a suburban road in the past and one of the main lines in the master plan of 1946. A tramline was planned for connecting new industrial outskirts with the center yet before the war, in 194 a viaduct that spanned over the railways was ready. Tram ran from avtozavod to traktorny and then reached the intersection of Dolgobrodskaya and Sovetskaya streets. This was the main connection before the metro was introduced.

The place of juncture of Dolgobrodskaya street with Mogilyovskoe highway became the center of the district.

⁷⁰Voinov, Zhilishchnoe stroitel'stvo, p. 71.

2.1. Overview

150 thousand square meters of housing built on 30 hectares was supposed to accommodate 32 thousand of staff of the plant. ⁷¹ Cultural-communal services were standard – fabrika-kuhnya was planned, a club and palace of culture, nurseries, kindergartens, schools, a polyclinics and a hospital, a public bath.⁷² Pine-trees served sanitary belt, between the plant and the housing - only 300 hundred meters across Dolgobrodskaya street. The territory was compact, proportionally outlined, structured into blocks. [2]

Several periods of construction can be traced out in relation to all-country political and architectural changes as well as local workshops politics of production. 1946-1953, the plan of the neighborhood was directed with the numbers of needed workers: 10 thousand and 20 thousand sq.m. Basic two-floor houses were built and the main street was finished just in 1953. Housing was needed to pull and motivate workers.

The second phase began with Stalinist decorated buildings, but some of them had no stucco anymore. In 1959 the 14th block of new appearance and of new floor-plans was built and large-blocks prefabs on the edges were built in open yards. The growth of production output again defined the housing strategy, people moved from barracks. This time was marked with building of the House of culture - the workshops got the new building for its twenty-years birthday in modernized style.

Changes in style were visible, but building still maintained ensemble principles. 1970s and 80s did not. The edges of the neighborhood that were open to the canal and greenery, now were cut with panel prefabs. Also situated in the yards, five-storey houses destroyed that zoning. The plant administration provided the workers with more housing, social and cultural facilities.

⁷¹GAMO, 69, 1, 189, 11

⁷²NARB, 4 п, 29, 838, 5.

2.2. Blocks-gardens

The blueprints of the plant were provided by Giproavtoprom, the State institute for planning automobile industry, and basic ensemble of housing was designed by a filial of the Institute, GSSPI-4, a planning bureau based in Kharkov.⁷³ S.

Rozenfeld and V. Kostenko planned the neighborhood.⁷⁴ The master plan was to be ready by 1949, in 1951 corrections were introduced into the master plan of Minsk and the neighborhood acquired new elements – the main square in front of the factory administration buildings.

The principle of organization was: combining regular typified housing with local ensembles of individually planned buildings. Space was differentiated according to functional zones: 3-5 floors high blocks along the main streets, inner blocks of 2 floors. While representative spots were being designed, floor plans of the regular houses were at disposition to be picked from the catalogue and organized into blocks.

The process of planning and construction was checked by the Committee for the Matters of Architecture by the Council of Ministers of BSSR on 20.05.1948⁷⁵ and consequently, 07.07.1948 by their chief, the all-union Committee.⁷⁶ In that moment, the “township of the tractorbuilders” had 56 houses and 124 were awaited, almost all of them two-floors, of 6-, 8-, 16- and 24- flats. Stakhanovskaya (Shock-workers'), Klubnaya (Club), Promyshlennaya (Industrial) streets and Bannyi (Bath), Uchenicheskiy (Pupil's) lanes equaled 8 blocks.

⁷³ NARB, 777, 1, 3, 149

⁷⁴ NARB: 903, 1, 153, 266

⁷⁵ НАРБ. The head of the Committee Osmolovsky reported on the state to his boss, the head of the Committee for Architecture by the Council of Ministers of USSR. f. 903, op. 1, d. 135, ll. 118-119.

⁷⁶ NARB, f. 903, op. 1, d. 135, ll. 117-117 ob.

The commission awaited coherence of look, achieved by certain, not big amount of various themes in architecture, but found too many of different projects already built. It broke the principle of one set for one block, it was recommended not to use houses from other sets for keeping space concise.⁷⁷ Perimeters of the garden yards were dotted with the low-rise series 201 with verandahs, 202 had two picky frontones, 203 simple enough to be placed at the frontier street, 205, 226 angular variant had a fronton to stress the corner and an archivolt above the balcony door. Houses also varied in size. [3, 4]

“Arranged” space of the inner yard was a difficult task. The manual of using series informed: An “architectural face” of a district or a block was not in “individual character of particular houses - “[it] played secondary, submitted role”, - but in “various combinations of typified projects in relation with small architectural elements, gates, entries, services and greenery. Interplay of all elements provided “environment, ensemble”^{.78}

Low-rise blocks were 2-4 hectars. Inner space was zoned: leisure spots - quiet place with benches and a fountain, active - sport- and playgrounds, housekeeping amenities – sheds, vegetable garden by the houses, garbage cans, greenery up to 60%.

Transverse axis, compositional articulation of points of perspective, corners made space comprehensive. There need to be one central element in a block that would organize perception of space. The composition of one of the first blocks, block 5 at Promyshlennaya street, was the most common decision of a block. The block was split into two symmetrical parts, inner yards, by the building of a nursery in the

⁷⁷ Plessein, B.D., Smirnov N.N. Serial method of typified planning of housing. [Seriynyi metod tipovogo proektirovaniia zhilyh zdanii]. Moscow: State architectural publishing, 1949, p. 9.

⁷⁸ Plessein, Smirnov, p. 9.

center. The entrance to the block was arranged by two Γ-faced houses, a nursery garden in the back of the block expanded the green zone. [Add 5]

Γ-faced buildings of 201 series, that played both constructive and decorative function, were elaborated at the architectural workshops of the Department of Oil production, by O.A. Yafa, the chief of the workshops was S. Maslikh. These architects started careers at the site of Dneproges housing and gained experience as functionalists. That is why 201 was both constructive and simple, organizing corners and inner space of the blocks. So an inner yard in block 12 at Pupil's lane was created.

The corner type of 201 series is picturesque, it has verandahs at the ground and upper floors. Verandahs and balconies were welcomed elements of workers houses. It provided possibilities for households and created atmosphere of cottage that was welcomed after a shift in a hot workshop. An individual cottage or a blocked house would develop personality of a working man...⁷⁹ Another detail of 201-12 - a balcony bending over the corner of the second floor – decorated simple body of the building. Its metal structure interplayed with the bars of the fences and gates designing the entrance into the block. This corner of Promyshlennaya street with lush greenery had a look of a south town, peaceful, it was shown as an example in the text book “Workers blocks”.

Yards were spaces where household activities ran that helped people to survive.

The role of central elements played three-floors, some houses were typified – those had decorative elements of arched windows of the ground floors and balconies. Such were the House of Stakhanovites (1946) and the House of Engineers (1948). Other projects of three-floors were individualized – they stretched for several sections so that two houses occupied one side of a block in the beginning of

⁷⁹Kirillov, Put' eksperimenta..., 112.

Stakhanovskaya. This method was common for constructivist and functionalist housing. A tower above the corner of one of them decorated the crossroad. The windows, almost not decorated, but still reminded of art deco. [6]

Corner bay-windows with decorative towers at the top were popular in modernist and eclectic architecture of Kharkov, the hometown of the architect Kostenko, but V.A. Korol' saw it as "poorly made modern". Nevertheless they remained.

"A neighborhood (posiolok) is situated at a high point and, observable ... should create a silhouette and have towers at important spots." Kostenko designed a tower at the entrance to the ensemble, that looked like a lantern, Korol' found it "bad modernism".

Space was carefully designed. Streets proportion calculated as ratio between breadth and height. Intervals between houses decorated with arches.

Kostenko proposed to organize the main street with ensemble with cour d'honneurs improving conditions of life of the inhabitants... without worsening architectural design of the main street."⁸⁰ Three-floor houses that also stretched at several sections did not pretend to be urbanized, bay-windows to the ground and an arranging of the top with frontons. At first designed in raw-brick of red and white colors, it was covered by stucco because no quality bricks were available.⁸¹ Color was part of design, creating positive mood. Palette of stucco was warm - ochre, gold, light grey. Arched windows were again used for the windowsills.

The central street of the tractor site ran amidst the inner blocks that remained chamber and quiet. There was good ratio between the height of the four- and three-floors houses with breadth of pavements, liveable especially when there was not many cars. The road was designed with a green stripe in the middle, that was decorated with vases. All was interpreted as space of rest. [7, 8]

⁸⁰ NARB, 903, 1, 153, 299.

⁸¹ Ibid.

The second part of Stakhanovskaya was green, a park was planted in the middle of a block.

Larger central blocks of 6-8 hectares, the second front ready in the second half of the 1950s was organized according to same methods. It was developed with groups of houses within large yards. A cour d'honneur and transverse axis with a house closing perspective. Rentability of space returned into consideration of the planners.

2.3. Workers' Boulevard

The centre was designed as combination of high-rise and greenery of a boulevard, in 1956. The Tractorbuilders' boulevard was a Park of Culture and Leisure en miniature, a necessary part of socialist urbanism, with obligatory plaster figure of "A Girl with paddle". The neighborhood had two sculpture groups: two football-players and two girls with a ball in a moment of throwing it into a basket. The overall design of blocks and space that included gates into the yards and fences, decorative fencing of the streets, greenery, sculptures took time to achieve. The Pionerskiy park had plaster figures of pioneers, and a deer in a park without name, depicting conflictless society with its favorite sceneries - childhood, nature. [9, 10, 11]

Three rays, Workshops Ring, linked the neighborhood to the city artery. The entrance space was opened to the factory gates, left unbuilt, the pine-trees preserved as sanitary belt. The central square was not shaped. Expensive projects of stalinist architecture remained on paper only. The house of culture appeared twenty years later. Prewar officers' clubs served to both sites.

A soviet enterprise, be it a plant, a power station had dominating position due to its sheer size. Movement was directed towards the factory gates – it was movement towards future.

In the moment of discussion of the square and the administration buildings, director Suslov V. proposed light and glass construction of a technical school and administration building. A square at the industrial side was built up with two symmetrical towers of the workshop administration, with an arched pavillon of the factory gates inbetween. Tower-like buildings were quite typical, varying in degree of elaboration of their "bodies" with architectural elements – pilasters, loggias. Similar type constructions adorned Minsk railroad square. A six-floor house in the center of the site was elaborated. Through the arched windows of the ground floor one could see a pharmacy. It was a site of civilization.

Social facilities of everyday reach were built in 1946-1948 and concentrated in the oldest part of Stakhanovskaya street. First shops were placed in the ground floors of the three-floors – a shop with cloth, a food store, gastronom in the oldest part. Univermag, a necessary element of a big neighborhood, was split into a number of shops that were situated in the ground floors along the main avenue.

A school and a public bath, situated opposite each other in the quiet residential part of Stakhanovskaya, the school sit deeply in the yard beyond the fence, the public bath's front space was opened. The buildings did not interfere into each other's space, Stakhanovskaya was enlarged at this point, and a small stall with beer, vodka and simple snacks – an indispensable part of a “bathing day”. Polyclinics were placed here too.

Remnants of the pine-tree forest occupied four front blocks of the ensemble. Here were: an open-air market, wooden shops, one sold books and stationery, another one - bread.

Barracks and plywood sheds serving as shelters for newcomers, remnants of village housing were present into the 1960s. The city that did not become big yet, maintained closeness to nature, villages, had garden outfit.

Man of the postwar time was as Zubkova put it full of hope, and also illusions, but experience of war made him value materiality of things such as roof and walls. He and she appreciated their personal life, privacy and family.

Poetics of house spoke about peaceful life, a house was archetypic with its hip roof. House “as if participated in his and her life”, it supported with a shed, vegetable garden. It had political meaning, described in 1943: “Construction of small housing – what a noble and grateful task... To create for man a cosy (uyutnoe), warm, beautiful home that gives him joy of life. Here is also poetics, not

pathos of Victory as a monument, but lyricism. This lyrical poetics is born of love towards man, towards people”.⁸²

Human-size, lyrical, hopeful – for better life. Spatial structure and this mood. Verandahs of the kindergartens for children to walk in any weather. Low-rise, yard a common school for everybody promoted of establishment of personal connections, even on a surface level everybody knew everybody. Life in yards with mutual help in a half-urban, half-village in cultural sense, separated from the power. Poverty was the main trait of the postwar history of people. Clearly defined yard was “basis of children collectives, the role of which was far from being just negative”.⁸³

Yard was opened and merged with space of street in the 1960s, in the 1980s, period of high-rise prefabs.

⁸² Kosenkova, Sovetskiy gorod, p. 42.

⁸³ Ikonnikov A.V. Obraz goroda i ego razvitie. Arhitektura i stroitel'stvo, 1982, 29.

3. Tractorbuilders

3.1. Characteristic of the first period, 1945-1950

Postwar industrialization transformed Belarus to “assembling workshop of USSR”. The annual economic growth of Belarus was on average 13, 9% against 11,7% in the whole union.⁸⁴ In 1976, the share of Belarus in HDP of Soviet union by the production of fertilizers 43%, tractors 15%, bicycles 14%, gear 14%, watches 13%.⁸⁵

Technical progress, heavy industry, machines were believed to deliver emancipation to people. A joyous plea of a young poet - “Do not call my country the land of dark forests anymore // Look, the factory lights are shining above it!” - was pronounced when electricity, chemical fertilizers and tractors were only just introduced into kolkhozes of Belarus.⁸⁶ Agrarian country that was associated in the communist narrative with backwardness, turned industrial.

The plant was needed, as there was only a third of agricultural technic left. The need in tractors was clear to Ponomarenko, the first secretary of TsK KPB(b). He planned tractor and automobile spare parts construction yet on the eve of the war.⁸⁷ But avia construction production was placed at the outskirts of Minsk - close to the border with the West. Several large workshops began in November 1940 in shock tempo, but it was a belated decision, construction was not completed when the war broke out. Several gigantic workshops waited for solution. Ponomarenko managed to get financing for the half-unfinished, half-destroyed industrial site - this was not easy in summer-autumn 1945 when new production was unthinkable to build

⁸⁴PEŠKOVA, A.N.: Osobennosti formirovanija i ispol'zovanija trudovyh resursov Belorusskoj SSR. In: Problemy rasselenija v BSSR. Ed. by POL'SKIJ S. A. Minsk: “Nauka i Teknika” 1980, pp 125-126.

⁸⁵Bohn, 2016, 77.

⁸⁶ Kiričenka, Kastus': Ne zovite moju respubliku stranoju tiomnyh lesov, // Posmotrite, nad neju svetjatsa ogni zavodskikh korpusov... *Molodaja Belarus'*. Sbornik stichov belorusskich poetov. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Komsomola 1952.

⁸⁷ Diary of P. Ponomarenko was published in a journal Nyoman, №7-8, 2008. Here: №7, p.174

amidst ruins.⁸⁸ 12.10.1945 he announced placing the tractor plant in town at the meeting of the party “aktiv” of the town “on direct appointment of comrade Stalin”.⁸⁹

According to the framework of Dagmar Jajeśniak-Quast that she proposed for the countries of Eastern camp, postwar stalinist transformation took about fifteen years to be completed at the sway of Khrushchev's modernization. This is true for the tractor plant: first authentic model MTZ-2 was assembled in 1953, in 1961-62 the plant managed to restructure production line for a new kind of model, MTZ-50. This needed a well-coordinated collective effort and was an achievement for the whole tractor branch. Minsk tractorbuilders could be proud. Especially, if to take into consideration that production started from scratch and the beginning of it was not promising - only 0,04 of machine produced in 1950.⁹⁰ Belorussia did not have experience neither in such large and complicated building that included giant foundry workshop, nor in constructing machines, needed to prepare its own specialists.

Deliberate plan repeated forced industrialization of the 1930s, started in March 1946. The production goals of new plant were in accordance with the goals of the all-union plan of reconstruction: to restore, to reach the level of the prewar production and overcome it.⁹¹ This meant that tractor production was to be built from scratch and produce 5 thousand machines by 1950. Full capacity of fifty tractors per day. The plant occupied 155 thousand m², 75 of it was built anew. 12,5 thousand working was planned and the same amount for the building workers.⁹²

⁸⁸ Flagman, a volume on history of the plant, cites memories of Ponomarenko: he “gained support of the minister of automobile construction” and collect signatures from forty other ministries and Glavks. Leonov M.V., Medvedev M.T. Flagman belorusskoy industrii. [Flagman of Belorussian Industry] Minsk 2001, pp. 22-23.

⁸⁹ GAMO. 69п, 1, 28, 253

⁹⁰Ekonomika Sovetskoy Belorussii, 1917-1967.[Economics of Soviet Belorussia] p. 330.

⁹¹ Promyshlennost' i rabochiy klass SSSR 1946-1950. Materialy i dokumenty. [Industry and working class of USSR. 1946-1950. Materials and Documents]. Khlusov, M.I. (ed.). Moskva: Nauka 1989, p. 22.

⁹² NARB, 4p, 29, 838, 2-3.

War prisoners were the first working force, and replacement was needed before they were off.

First production and complete of construction of the workshops were planned to be done at one and the same time. This complicated and prolonged the beginning. The site got the status of “all-union shock construction” in the mid 1947. Investment doubled – building trust Beltraktorostroj (BTS) acquired 90 in 1947 (to compare with 20 mln for the second half of 1946).⁹³ 600 mln got the whole site for five years.⁹⁴

As soon as Minsk was liberated in July 1944, partisan troops were placed at the automechanic workshops and aviaconstruction workshops - 1000 partisans at each. Only 431 builders were free, and 460 of free workers remained.⁹⁵ Others escaped.

Up to 2 thousands of war prisoners were situated at both plants in May 1946 and 2 thousand of *ITL*, criminal prisoners. In a year, in June 1947 the amount of war prisoners was 4300 at MTZ only, and 2 thousand of soviet prisoners.⁹⁶

Heavy industry was absolute priority as to investment. Neglect and scarcity of basic needs – housing, food, clothes payed for it. Take off was possible due to people's heroic effort.

Mobilization model was applied as it already happened in USSR in the 1930s: during short time loads of working force – village youth mainly - was recruited, their contracts did not allow to leave the site. This was a labor army living in

⁹³NARB, 4 п, 35, 175, 74.

⁹⁴ GAMO, 28, 1, 15, 127.

⁹⁵ NARB, 4п, 35, 720, 104; GAMO, 69п, 1, 189, 23-24

⁹⁶ GAMO, 69п, 1, 131, 206-10

barracks on dearth daily ration. Youth had the lowest position, having no industrial culture, no collective identity, they did not have possibilities to bargain.

The party committee of Minsk repeated to the plant administration: you are building working class of Belorussia. A modern country needed modern social structure, the tractor plant prepared national cadres for national economics.

There was two points to it, firstly they were to become workers. The plant administration needed „to inculcate attitudes of industrial work“ - „respect for authority, accurate time keeping, long-term commitment to remaining in the same enterprise.“⁹⁷

To gain and maintain, “fix” labor “cadres”, who would stay at the plant by providing possibilities to earn, training, housing. And the first workers needed to prepare new shift. There was such a core of the tractorbuilders' collective – entering the workshops in the 1950s, they retired in the 1990s.

Political meaning – it was blacksmith shop of soviet man.

⁹⁷ Filtzer, 2002, p. 159.

3.2. Initial chaos

In 1946-47 BSSR suffered from hunger as the whole Soviet union. Kolkhoz starved and had no money.⁹⁸ Villagers, members of kolkhoz, did not have passports and could not leave them – only organized recruiting to jobs in the city gave such a possibility. Though kolkhoz chairmen let youth go either for a small bribe or just after one cried. To go to construction site was represented as dignity – best kolkhoz brigades became building brigades in the city.

04.05.1946 TsK KPB(b) issued resolution on preparing cadres for tractor and automobile plants.⁹⁹ Organized recruitment began in May – Komsomol activists and agents of the plant were sent out to the villages. “Youth of Belorussia! It is a great honor to participate in the first giant construction sites of the Belorussian republic – the tractor and automobile plants...” 5 thousand people was awaited.

Komsomol attracted: “construction is in full swing – workshops, neighborhoods, canteens are being built. The builders will live in dormitories with modern facilities and radio. Evening courses, libraries, clubs will be opened... Everyone will be able to obtain high qualification in blacksmithing, casting, to become a toolmaker, turner, miller, electrician, technician.”¹⁰⁰

Official day of foundation was 29.05.1946. By that date, 1981 people arrived to the tractor site.¹⁰¹ Among them youth mainly. [12]

The contract guaranteed minimal wage, clothes, food. The plant administration was to supply the workers with bread cards and small sum of money for alimentation during the trip on train, some clothes if there was none - boots, bed sheets.

⁹⁸ *Historyia Belarusi. Belarus' u 1946-2001 gg.* T. 6. Kasciuk, Mikhail. Minsk: “Sovremennaya shkola” 2011, p. 77.

⁹⁹ GAMO, 69, 1, 78, 76

¹⁰⁰ NARB, 4п, 29, 368, 17.

¹⁰¹ About the same amount was gathered for the Automobile construction site. NARB, 4п, 29, 329, 74.

The sum was small, sheets were sold for food, and boots were given not to everybody. At the plants of Altay (Miass, Zlatoust), Stalingrad young people slept by two in one bed to get warm in the cold dormitories and pulled on all the clothes they had. Remembering hardships became possible only in the 1960s, a book with memories of avtozavodcy was edited. On-the-job took half a year, or a year. Throughout that year 600 of apprentices deserted or fell ill because of hard living conditions.

Two special organizations were parts of each plant: OKS - department of capital construction that built housing and social facilities. ORS, department for the workers' supplies, distributed food and manufacture through centralized storages.

Until the end of rationing in December 1947, bread cards were the foundation of life - if cards were stolen, one could count only on kindness of the neighbors by barrack. Population acquired different ratios: 700 grams of bread per day for unqualified workers, 500 grams for non-working groups. Cheating with weight of bread was regular.

Canteen dinners were served on coupons, additional coupons were given to apprentices - 80 grams of cereal and 100 grams of bread. Food was untasty, but UNNRA helped with a 100 thousand tons of canned black beans, cooks prepared soup – the most economical way of consumption. Potatoes and vegetables got to be stored, stew and sausage asked from the centralized funds. Delicious was fat herring with potatoes. A dinner costed 8-9, salary of an unqualified worker was 250-300. 102

“Being defines consciousness,” - explained the state of affairs the first komsomol organizer of the plant, komsorg Aleksyuk. Consciousness was defined by drinking. A former partisan took out a knife and threatened a cook, as dinners took hours with only 10 dishes available. Similarly, 600 automobile plant workers turned

¹⁰² GAMO, 69, 1, 142, 18

against their canteen, made the cooks flee and poured soup themselves.¹⁰³ War experience made violent conduct a norm.

“Unhealthy, even antisoviet conversations“ were to be heard in Minsk.¹⁰⁴

„Igor felt that he was not listened to trustfully. Somebody who was hiding beyond the backs of others unconfidently shout out – What kind of construction site is it? - Destruction only. They gathered us to look at ruins. Put out into the tents, like coakroaches. Is this called order?“ By the intonation of the question Igor felt that the mood was „one of a kind“. ¹⁰⁵

Young people deserted as soon as were assigned with sheets and bread cards.¹⁰⁶ They departed to other construction sites of Minsk in hope to obtain a better place.

The situation of 1944-46 and even in 1947 was „desperate“ – brigades wandered around, or stayed in dirty canteens, dormitories, gambled and „speculated“ with scarce commodities, drank and coarsed chiefs. ¹⁰⁷ Soviet power was absent in the barracks, not able to “improve” conditions of life. Dormitories were feared by the party agitators and the chiefs. There were robbery gangs.¹⁰⁸ The laboring troops of *ITL* – *ispravitel’no-trudovyje lagerya*, soviet criminal prisoners, were set free and transferred to the building teams so that they could be more motivated with higher earnings. They – who “did not fear Siberia” - were settled in the same dormitories with those “who tried to organize their lives” - orphans, young homeless, beggars and thieves who were conscripted to the schools of factory training FZO. They agitated to not obey to the authorities. In their turn, authorities did not know how to

¹⁰³ GAMO, 69п, 1, 6, 98

¹⁰⁴ GAMO, 28, 1, 11, 92

¹⁰⁵ Lyutova Vera. *Zarevo nad lesom. A story.* [Glow over Forest] Minsk: State Publishing 1951.

¹⁰⁶ GAMO, 4, 35, 175, 111

¹⁰⁷ GAMO, 28,1,1,7-8

¹⁰⁸ GAMO, 28, 1, 4, 13.

deal with difficult kids who „cleaned germans boots, sold ciggarrets, got used to unbound life“. As result, conscripts of FZO were resentful towards power that deceived worker „no matter how much you work“.

Dormitories of FZO, were the worst, and they relied on state pension. They did not organize their life themselves and did not intend to better it, on the contrary. Conditions were checked by the *obkom* (oblast‘, region) party secretary. Non-working doors, window glass broken, no chairs. He constated that authorities did not organize mood for settling down.¹⁰⁹ And they did not.¹¹⁰ They did not bother changing working robe and lay on bed – anyway sheets they did not have.

Party cells sent agitators to raise motivation to work. “How steel was tempered” was read.

Sleeping places were organized in the workshops, ground floor for boys, upper – for girls. Free labor forces arranged their life in overcrowded barracks the way they could, boys-apprentices or girls-builders who lived in barracks constructed in the village Slepjanka did not remember them as too grim or dull as they put their own feelings into space and a stove was enough to survive.

In a dormitory room “everyone had same rights and duties, but different lives” - there were those who wanted to improve their situation, and those who were resented. One was intended to get out, another one was too alienated from the regime. They knew that the plant could not fire them, they did not bother with subordination.

¹⁰⁹ GAMO, 69n, 1, 136, 110-117

¹¹⁰ A. N. Mentioned that they did not make it till pension, died earlier. Conversation with A.N.

3.3. Settling down

First production of the plant were ploughs for marshes 1947, first success. In 1949, the plant managed production of motors. Production of a model based on Kirovets, KD-35, original of the Kirov plant in Leningrad, began next year. At the same time, authentic model passed state exam in 1949. In 1953 the first tractor Belarus was produced, a model without a cabin. The plant produced two types of tractors.

Qualified workers, engineers, technicians and technologists were required for blueprint work, but only young graduates were available. Experienced workers to master details and nodes and apprentices into the tool-making workshop. The main aim was: to install and master machine-tools and nodes of the tractor.

The plant desperately needed workers with experience and took anyone even without a labor record book - directly “from the gate” – registration in Minsk was not required until 1950 at least. Previous training or education were important. Those who obtained a profession during army service, especially new technical skills, were lucky. They could get a better payed position and reach salary 1000 rubles. A young man who absolved Labor Reserves, served in the army and returned to the plant, had a hope for improvement in his life.

With elementary school education, only the hardest job in the toughest space of the plant - in the foundry cellars, for girls – it was also heavy manual job in lifting, ware-housing, doing primitive operations.

14-15-years old boys and 15-16-years old girls could receive a trade in a trading school of Labor Reserves, RU (remeslennoje uchilishche). It was part of a system of professional training for industry established in 1940, that conscripted youth for machine-tool operators, turners and other popular trades. Trainees were on state pension, lived in the dormitories and wore uniform. Another type of this system

was factory training schools, FZO. It provided with mass professions in coal mining, metallurgy, on transport and also obliged to work for four years afterwards in production. The plant had a FZO (300) and the building trust had it too (700).¹¹¹ Conscripts escaped, of 250 students only 111 students of RU graduated in 1948.¹¹²

One could enter RU voluntarily as well. A former trainee of the system remembered that he spent few days wandering around after he was told that there was not vacant places in the groups. He got lucky to get in and 8 grades of education helped him to get into a group of electricians. This was a profession of future. The plant built its own assemble line and prepared engineers in a newly opened technical school.

Unqualified. A group of 843 people was defined for building team.¹¹³ Share of women labor in the building trust – 40% by the end of 1947.¹¹⁴ Girls and boys were pulled by the possibilities to earn, girls fit because they were more disciplined and could be payed less. It was small money, at least some, as kolkhoz did not pay. Kolkhoz girls were occupied with auxiliary work - pulled carts loaded with stones and handed bricks to the brick-layers. Girls assisted stakhanovites – model Stalinist workers who considerable overfulfilled plan numbers, obtained salaries and bonuses - enabling them to achieve high results and get payed. Both, auxiliary workers and stakhanovites, experienced brick-layers, were model workers of the period of reconstruction, representing building new life.

¹¹¹GAMO, 28, 1, 11, 26.

¹¹²Marchenko, Rabochiy class Belorussii. [Working Class of Belorussia], p. 124.

¹¹³ 894 were directed to the automobile plant. NARB, 4, 29, 329, 74

¹¹⁴ NARB, f.4, op. 29, d. 701, l. 6.

Study was to be organized. „In the daytime – hard labor, study - in the evening.“ Enterprise provided training: evening schools for working youth, technical courses and studying rooms, schools of stakhanovite skill, technic circles - 1800 workers were “covered” by technical study - “techobuch” in 1953, but it was quantity, not quality.¹¹⁵ The level of the students was not adequate. To combine study and work one needed at least to work in the early shift, foremen were adverse towards trained workers as they new norms. In the interwar industrialization, there was inclination towards knowledge and recognition that only knowledge led to improvement of one’s social and material conditions.¹¹⁶ But in the 1950s, “bearded men” went to the studying rooms in thrive for knowledge in the 1950s, not youth.

Give us bread, not books, asked youth in the beginning. Komsomol and party hoped to inspire youth by lectures on Minsk so that they understood they were now in the capital. But several hours of lecture were just boring. Workers builders' cultural and conscious level was low. In 1952 certificates in technical study were to be handed out in festive way to raise prestige of study.¹¹⁷

Settling people and things down. Zubkova pointed, people got used to war and imagined peaceful life as something unreachable but desirable at most. That is why things like electricity and radio, a stadium and a volley-ball play, going to a bath house were the most important. Restoration of normal life was an organized action of overcoming anarchy. Centralized commands did not work, only personal local commitment could help.

¹¹⁵ GAMO, 28,1, 57, 91.

¹¹⁶ Zhuravlyov, Mukhin: Krepost' socializma, p. 46

¹¹⁷ GAMO, 28, 1, 41, 32.

First normalcies. First housing was finished by March 1948. In order to keep the needed workers, there was 21,8 thousand square meters ready for the International Women day in 1948.¹¹⁸ Lucky young families moved from dormitories-barracks – he from his and she from hers. They obtained 1,5-rooms flat with a kitchen, corridor and storage room, without a bath yet, but with a room for it, and for themselves only. More usually, a room in a three- or two-rooms flat.

The neighborhood was planned to have a shop selling perfumery, an ice cream cafe – living space was designed for consume. The adresates of that happiness were model workers, stakhanovites. In reality, first facilities were plots with potato, sheds with rabbits, a market place, yet. First grocery shop was opened in the first house – the house of Engineers and Technicians, ITR, fabric store appeared in the second house – of Stakhanovites. New prices were published in the newspaper Traktor on the front page. Difference in salaries was considerable. After graduating, young workers got 250-300 per month. A qualified construction worker asked for 250-300 per day. Salary of an engineer was 600-700 rubbles. And a stakhanovite earned 1000. His first pleasures were: clothes, food. The cheapest cup costed 22 rubles.

¹¹⁸ NARB, Report for the Committee for Architecture, 903, 1, 192, 74. In 1947, 5980 employees altogether. NARB, f. 4 п, 29, 838, 26.

3.4. Disobedience

On the background of repressive law and mobilization policy, one can discern various types of reaction and tactics of shop floor habitat. There were individual acts of disobedience – from overt non-subordination on the shop floor to unarticulated hooliganism. It is also necessary to speak about endurance, discipline that stemmed from value of labor as such and did not exclude neither agreement, nor inner alienation from the authorities.

Labor code was criminalized (in 1951, comrade courts were occupied with discipline, in 1956 fully discharged of criminalization). Being 20 minutes late equaled absence and was punished with 25% of pay reduction during 6 months.¹¹⁹ Worker was fixed to the working place. Without a labor record book, one cannot be hired. Director decided himself either to send a case to the prosecutor's service or close eyes.¹²⁰ Deficits of the immediate postwar period were severe: there was no electric energy (only one generator worked for production), no supplies and no work, so people left their job places.

In order to maintain working force, norms were hold down and calculated „kilometer-long“. But to achieve the plan numbers with the same amount of workers and making out of the machine-tool what they could, norms got to be risen.¹²¹ In 1948 productivity was attempted to be risen as the plant made a progress in installment of equipment and energy supplies became more regular. In that moment, each month 40-50 cases of absenteeism were sent to the court.¹²²

¹¹⁹Vert, 158.

¹²⁰ GAMO: 69, 1, 63, 65.

¹²¹ GAMO, 28, 1, 12, 101

¹²² GAMO, 28,1, 15, 57

Workers who got high qualification did not was to put up with reduction of earnings. Also, those workers were people with life experience. In 1949, senior foreman Gomyliaev, a member of the party since 1939, beaten the chief of the department of labor and salary for not agreeing with the payment.¹²³ Another foreman “torn down” the shift duty in front of the workers, because it was impossible to complete.

Individual strike was not a rare thing. “A hooligan act” was committed in August 1952 by communist Shishliannikov, a caster, frontovik with 8 wounds, giving 2 loads of metal in 1 shift. He got payed for overwork same amount as his apprentices – 1,5 thousand rubles and quarelled with the chief of the casting workshop, finding it unjust for he was “a specialist”. He did not take up work for the next two days (being actually on the shop floor). The case was taken to the party meeting where Shishlyannikov admitted his guilt of offending the chief, but told that would not go out to work (“rabotat' ne pojdu” was crossed with blue pencil in the protocol).¹²⁴

Being unable to change the terms, people could only be reluctant to overwork and neglect public duties.

In 1951, the law on absenteeism was laxed on 14.07. – such cases were taken not to criminal, but to comrade court on the shop floor.¹²⁵ The number of cases grew – 928 in the second half of 1951, 753 – in the first half of 1952. Foremen acquired chances to relax overtly. A foreman handed out duties and left to drink. Workers, seeing he left, also went to canteen where they drank. Another foreman, instead of fulfilling the task, organized his brigade for drinking in 1951.¹²⁶ Bad discipline

¹²³GAMO, 28, 1, 22, 25.

¹²⁴GAMO, 28, 1, 49, 5-6.

¹²⁵GAMO, 28,1, 40, 79

¹²⁶GAMO, 28, 1, 32, 59.

was connected with bad earnings due to deficits.¹²⁷ Reduction in payment in 1952: 35 rubles per day if full capacity, 17 with not full. ¹²⁸

At the same time, in 1950-1955 extensive growth of economics proceeded, and it meant that giant enterprises consumed more working force. The plant felt constant deficit in experienced forces - workers who already got trained, were being conscripted to the army service, but new ones without training were hired. In 1951 the plant employed around 7 thousand workers.¹²⁹ Plus 3 thousand of untrained new workers were hired by 1952.¹³⁰ And in 1954 – plus 6 thousand.¹³¹

In 1956 20-years old were taken to court for browling – angry with the low payments they drank low salary away.

Workers were uninvolved into ideology and did not have leisure opportunities that would appeal to them, as cultural offer of komsomol could not interest them. In 1952, 3 thousand of young workers did not have basic 7-grades of school education.¹³²

Workers got drunk at dancing and debauched on return home via the workshops. Each weekend there was 6-7 injurees at home, 118 during three months of 1952.¹³³ One could not sleep in a house at the central street because of browling in the night.

Hooliganism and “outright challenge to authority” was part of young and unqualified workers' culture. The politics of the party was to redirect the focus of

¹²⁷ GAMO , 28, 1, 151, 6.

¹²⁸ GAMO, 28, 1, 44, 86.

¹²⁹ GAMO, 28, 1, 32, 249-50

¹³⁰GAMO, 28, 1, 40, 43.

¹³¹ GAMO, 28, 1, 80, 30-1

¹³²GAMO, 28, 1, 32, 241.

¹³³ GAMO, 28,1, 40, 56.

grievances onto managers. At both construction and production sites relationships between workers and authorities were tensed. Managers were afraid of the workers, because workers could “demand fulfilling of proper conditions” and a manager who did not have good position – a Jew, for example, could get into trouble of being excluded from the party.

The route of a tram that workers took to city and back was reinforced with militia posts because workers not only refused to pay the ticket, but menaced to beat conductors. Arefyev, the chief of the technologists, reported that worker Kiselyov argued with him in tram (space overtaken by the rebellious workers) and threatened to break his glasses.¹³⁴ Such was revival of proletarian revolution anarchy.

In the second half of the 1950s workers demanded democratic sharing of the bonuses and again turned against managers: when workers got a third of the extra payment for introducing in production of new - bi-metal technology.

In 1958 tractor Belarus was admitted with first price at the Brussels World Exhibition. A public lecture on it based personal impressions was hold in the summer theater. Then followed lectures on “Alcoholism and delinquency”. “Heroism and courage of the komsomol members in the Great Patriotic War”. Evening for young tractorbuilders “Where to go study”. Evening of questions and answers on medical topics.¹³⁵

In 1954 Leonid Utyosov gave a concert at the Central park in Minsk, a famous soviet artist and musician. But it was not common. Clubs had monotonous programs. Druzhinniky, introduced in 1959 to control rowdies in the cities, instead took tram to town to beat people in the park. Involvement of young workers into public life failed.

¹³⁴GAMO, 28, 1, 29, 19.

¹³⁵ GAMO, f. 28 п, 1, 214, 61.

A Polish site of Stalinization Nova Huta in Krakow had some components of everyday life: control, taking care, propaganda and agitation, rules of exploitation and rules of private life. Similarly, recruits of Sluzba Polsce were pulled there from the villages in desire to become modern. But they did not find their place, cultural program of communists did not match yesterday villagers. They wanted to be urbanites. Young people did not belong neither to ordered citizens, nor were they dissidents, instead they chose identification by territorial sign, behaved like bands.

Collective absenteeism on traditional holidays happened in large workshops of over thousand workers. In 1953, blacksmiths celebrated Eastern for two days.¹³⁶ In 1954, 70 workers in a stump shop did not come to working place on 03.05.¹³⁷ In lad casting same year same day.¹³⁸ In 1955, assembling shop missed 120 workers the day after the Eastern.¹³⁹

Strikes was response to norms-increasing. Trade union chairman had to achieve consent at the shop floor before the norms were introduced. But workers learned about reduction in payment in the moment of payment. 5 komsomol members went on strike after norm-cutting.¹⁴⁰ During Khrushchev time, strikes became quite often.

Turnover was tremendous: in 1955 30 persons per day were fired and 50 hired in a stump workshop. ¹⁴¹

¹³⁶GAMO, 28, 1, 70, 30.

¹³⁷ GAMO, 28, 1, 80, 44.

¹³⁸ GAMO, 28, 1, 82, 143.

¹³⁹GAMO, 28, 1, 112,185.

¹⁴⁰ GAMO, 28, 1, 80, 60.

¹⁴¹GAMO, 28,1,112, 185-186.

The plant was dangerous place – a long battle was led for installment of a fan into foundry. Workers were helped to get out from the cellars in the end of the shift.¹⁴² Neither had workers drinking gas water in 1959. At the initial period youth did not meet kindness at the site, on the contrary - disorganization of the stalinist system, ravaged with deficits and ignorance. Mood that governed the construction-site – “everybody was angry” because busy with survival. “If you need to pick them up, then you go yourself and walk them here”, said a chauffeur when asked for a car to pick the arriving recruits at the train station. Then he took the car himself and departed to the city.

A workshop was alien. A socialist workshop was overwhelmed by deficits and struggling to get plan in the end of each month. Each element of collective struggled “to wend his way” through the system that considered them alien.¹⁴³ The simplest things missed: there was no a well-made cart or ladder – workers carried engines from the conveyor in hands. In order to get job, workers stole material. Foremen - more than half of them were *praktiki* – those who mastered trade in practice – at the shop floor - treated kids rudely. Workers in their turn treated those who were weaker – women. Burawoy described space where young worker on piece-rate – and this method of payment was introduced – as “insecure”, one could only think of a better job, a better machine, possibility of supplementary wage or bonuses.¹⁴⁴

The party promoted shock-work, overfulfilling the plan numbers, that would be not possible if they were not provided with the best machines and regular supplies. Workers were not pleased with them, especially if they were women. So, comrade Shitikova was taken her machine-tool by her mates who forced her work at another

¹⁴² GAMO, 28, 1, 258, 25.

¹⁴³Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and De-Stalinization*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁴ Burawoy, Michael: *The Politics of Production. Factory Regimes under Capitalism and Socialism*. London/New York 1985, p. 172.

machine.¹⁴⁵ Brigades of excellent quality, of socialist labor were privileged collectives, they had best workers who were given best duties and did not take young and unexperienced. Technical study was not recognized by the foremen praktiks.

Retired tractorbuilders did not want to leave the plant. Workshops were to be collectives where everyone was aware of the common aim and connected with each other, while doing his or her operation: “Each one fulfills his task in a workshop, as if in a battle.” Such was a slogan of the 1920s that equaled war and industry fronts. A workshop may be a nice environment if one put love into it, friendly, and Raduta remembered a fikus she grew and the discipline she achieved at her collective.

¹⁴⁵GAMO, 28, 1, 11, 8

4. Housing

The main motivation was a prospect to obtain a flat, or at least a room. The plant administration was obliged to provide its workers with housing, it was inscribed into collective contract, the plant lost needed workers or did not obtain them for lag in housing construction. 68% of Minsk fund was departmental, other developers were city council, ispolkom, and individual, private housing. The norm of housing underlined the rules – 6 m per person. “Housing was a tool of social stratification, coercion for labor and an incentive... Soviet power tried to fix worker, combining a man, housing and work...”¹⁴⁶

To get on a waiting list – each work shop had its own list of workers who were in need, only those who worked for amount of years were taken into consideration. In first positions were those who had an outstanding work performance, stakhanovites, rationalizers, or needed specialists invited from other plants of the Soviet Union; families of fallen in the war, veterans with large families, and „occupying overcrowded and unhealthy space”.¹⁴⁷ Housing commission of the trade union examined conditions of living, decisions were made by so called triangulars of workshop – a shop floor manager, a party cell leader and a chairman of a workshop trade union cell and, authorized by the director assistant for communal issues.¹⁴⁸

Corruption of the system of distribution hindered production - needed specialists could not be hired.¹⁴⁹ To ask for room, workers had to show themselves as disciplined good workers. Veterans, stakhanovites with families could feel justified to. But they not always wanted to ask. The more qualified a worker was, the less he wanted to be humiliated at the director’s assistant office. “There are better people who live in worse conditions than I” said a veteran and a miller overfulfilling

¹⁴⁶ Meerovich, Kladbishcha sotsgorodov, p. 183.

¹⁴⁷ GAMO, f. 3341, op. 1, d. 1212, l. 75.

¹⁴⁸ GAMO, f. 3341, op. 1, d. 1125, l. 12.

¹⁴⁹ 1947: GAMO, 28, 1, 11, 11

norms, “I could have asked for somebody else, but I did not like to ask for myself” said a girl. Specialists not only did not participate in collectivist activities, but also did no quarrel with the administration.

A story of housing. A long but promised way to obtain housing was being at one and the same plant without leaving it. Consider one such way. An RU trainee entered the course in 1952 and this was beginning of his working experience. After graduating and army service in the he returned to the plant - the plant then promised housing. This was the stage of dormitories – 25 boys in RU, workers’ dormitory for 4 people.

After marriage, they obtained a small-size-family type of flat – one room with a niche plus kitchen, or one room in a three-rooms flat – “a kitchen for 3 housewives”, but married couples also lived in dormitories – of either husband’s or wife’s. It was strictly forbidden, but usual. 8-beds rooms could be divided into 2 parts.

With additions to family people obtained bigger rooms. The story of a trainee student – professional of 31 years long waiting ended in 1983. By that moment A.N. queued in two lines (it was possible): at the plant and city council, *ispolkom*, the latter worked in 1983. They left the Stakhanovskaya street for a flat in Altayskaya street – a microdistrict of prefabs at the outskirts, flats were given to the workers who came from Altay tractor plant.

Saying “it was luck”, he was not meaning it ironically. Other possibilities were not available. he did not go to quarrel, bribe, did not leave the plant to search another work places with more easy way to get housing. A.N. had patience to go through all the stages. He did not run away from RU, and returned to the plant that promised housing, but not in short term. He had modest expectations. His housing situation was not the worst one – a room was large, the house was nice and

environment friendly. There was green space opposite the block where they could walk with the children.

Possibility of expanding one's space, getting a bigger room or flat appeared towards the middle of the 1960s with the results of Khrushchev housing policy when more housing was built in the neighborhood, at the edges of it and in new districts. People were resettled. In 1962 as much as 30 flats were allotted for the cadres who stayed since 1944-1946.¹⁵⁰

Obtaining housing was made easier - for new workers that were needed for the fulfilment of the plan: no city registration was required - Minsk region was enough. Amount of years one needed to work at one place was reduced from five to three.

Popular method and cooperative housing

The plant financed cooperative housing, casters, backsmiths obtained credits. It was the first construction of prefabs – large blocks – in the neighborhood replacing barracks – just the same spot.¹⁵¹ In 1960 there stayed 500 people.¹⁵² Barracks were knocked down.

“Popular method” - building housing in collectives of the workshops and with scraps from production. Decree on development of housing construction in USSR, 31.07.1957 beyond the plan targets by the means of the workshops¹⁵³: workers' collectives themselves built after shifts, using scrap of the production site, the cheapest and simplest constructions without decor. One built in hope to live in a

¹⁵⁰GAMO, 28 п, 5, 5, l. 97.

¹⁵¹ GAMO, f. 28 п, 2, 13, 65.

¹⁵²GAMO, f. 3341, op. 1, d. 1129, l. 1 a.

¹⁵³GAMO, f. 28 п, 1, 183, 49.

house one had built. Appeared in Slepianka – 15 thousand m for 664 families, 1956-1960.¹⁵⁴ In 1958 the amount of workers in the settlement reached 16 thousand and one needed to build 20-22 thousand of square meters annually - twice more than was usually achieved at very best. In 1956, the average living space was less than a half of the sanitary norm and during 1957 those who had that much, were not entitled to get more.¹⁵⁵

People themselves knocked down barracks and themselves built new houses.

Misconduct. Pushing back front. One could menace to kill chairman of the trade union committee, or write a plea to the Interational Red Cross for realization of his human right of having space to live but it would change nothing, one would only loose job (in second case). Who would obtain room was subjected to deliberate decisions and manipulations – flats were given to those who occupied social positions close to the center of distribution – employees of *ZhKKh*, housing-communal complex that the plant controlled. The chairman of *ZhKKh* and the director assistant for communal issues were the key figures in distribution of flats, „a totally unsensitive man who did not react to any critic“.¹⁵⁶ Critic of bureaucrats was pronounced many times. In 1961, an incident with democracy. The chairman of the workshops trade union committee, Egorov, inspired by the decree „On enforcement of the role of trade union committees in solution of communal and housing questions“, and teased by the workers – “What kind of trade union it is, if it never gets into argument with administration?” - was brave to go against Litvinov. The case was that Litvinov again tacitly allowed a capture of a flat by a *ZhKKh* employee, and that time it was brash. The incident was discussed at the party committee. Old guard did not like liberty of trade union, besides Litvinov was a convenient figure - a master of formal replies and a protected by the former

¹⁵⁴ GAMO, f. 28 п ,2, 3, 123

¹⁵⁵GAMO, f. 3341, op. 1, d. 44, l. 113.

¹⁵⁶ GAMO, 28p, 1, 81, 138.

director of the plant who went up the career staircase. Director could not go against old guard: yes, it was a capture, and a brash one. But Litvinov being assigned by the city committee of the party and Sovnarkhoz (Council of regional economics) was out of control of the trade union, Egorov could only report, advice, but cannot impose decisions to the party committee! In the end, Egorov got informed that he „hurried“ and was told about it. A sensation did happen, but an attempt at democratic action failed. Litvinov as if nothing happened read a lecture in 1962 “On planning and perspectives of housing construction” and “On cooperative construction at MTZ”.¹⁵⁷

If one did not have a registration in Minsk (or region), he or she could rent a room privately. So, a foremen rented places for six girls. In order not to have a big bill for electricity, he put a fixture on electric meter, but still collected 2-3 rubles for electricity. When an inspector found out machination, the foreman made the girls to pay the fine. Girls complained after he took a coat of one of them as they refused to pay the fine for the second time.¹⁵⁸

Over-night construction out of plywood boxes – packs (tara) used for transportation of details, was situated at the south end, near the river. People put it overnight and went the next day for registration to the ispolkom office. Its existence was no secret, well-known to militia and plant authorities alike. Yes, building without permission was illegal, but it was yet a norm of law to register oneself on a living area once there was such to claim. Foremen and managers gave green light to their workers as they needed working force.¹⁵⁹ The situation began to change in 1956 with the stiffening of the registration control, in 1959 registration

¹⁵⁷ GAMO, 28, 5, 5, 247 ob.

¹⁵⁸ GAMO, 28, 2, 5, 160. 1960.

¹⁵⁹Conversation with L.G. 28th May 2013.

in a barrack, or a school stopped.¹⁶⁰ Once barracks or sheds were left by their inhabitants for new flats, new newcomers occupied them.

Registration could be bought for 1200 rubles, a room costed 2000 rubles and same was the size of bribery.¹⁶¹ So much were salaries of assistant director and main engineer in 1952. A room at Koshevogo street, the central avenue of the neighborhood, was sold by its inhabitant ten times to ten different citizens, altogether for over 20 thousand rubles in 1958-1959.¹⁶²

10 thousand rubles of credit gave the plant administration for building of individual houses, but one needed to invest more. Areal of individual cottages indeed surrounded the plant and became part of the city – Slep'yanka, Drazhnyaya. In 1957, 75 workers and employees were building individually.¹⁶³ These workers could live maintaining their traditional life style.

¹⁶⁰GAMO, f. 3341, op. 1, d. 44, l. 34.

¹⁶¹ GAMO, 28, 1, 180, 118.

¹⁶² GAMO, 28 п, 2, 1, 48.

¹⁶³ GAMO: 28, 1, 180, 51.

5. Everyday activities

The plant organized sport, medical, recreational and cultural activities. To „improve cultural and material conditions of the workers of the tractor and automobile plants“ was a political task. Cultured leisure for workers originated in the 1920s when “traditional” was interpreted as “obsolete”, and “socialist proletarian” was “enlightened” and “modern”. Cultural revolution aimed at creation of new kind of man, the party promoted a cultured image of soviet man, with a concept of *kulturnost'* elaborated in the 1930s.¹⁶⁴ Mass-political education was new practice.

Until 1954, a small building by a workshop served as a tractorbuilders' club. 10 rubles for “evening” - a concert program and a lecture, 5 for dances, 2 for dances with radiola collected the automobile club. Western trophy films were shown if a club got movie-projector.¹⁶⁵ Dances were also western, “of the worst taste”. Rooms were heavily smoked.

Music and dancing were omnipresence. Dancing floors, *ploshchadki*, *pyatachki* were constructed, but girls danced at a dinner break near the workshops. What one needed were a harmonica, gramophone or radio. The tractor plant visit card, a dancing circle of popular creativity “*Lyavonikha*” (Belarusian polka-dance) was born from a dance of the girls in front of their workshop.

Youth of komsomol was not satisfied with only dancing. Each komsomolets had to be involved into physical culture and be *fizkul'turnik*. In 1949, acrobatics, boxing, gymnastics started being trained in the sport society of the plant *Torpedo*, that moment 150 of young people. They obtained a training hall with equipment and sport form.

¹⁶⁴ Vokov V.V.: *Koncepciya kul'turnosti, 1935-1938 gody. Sovetskaya civilizaciya i povsednevnost' stalinskogo vremeni*. [Concept of kul'turnost', 1935-1938. Soviet civilization and everyday of Stalinism].

¹⁶⁵ GAMO, 69п, 1, 81, 55.

The football club “Traktor” was established in 1946. A stadium was promised, but the allotment was planted with potato, only in 1950 a stadium appeared, but at the very center of the neighborhood. Football was beloved by soviet people, played in each yard by the boys and their fathers went to stadiums.

A work shop was a unit of socialization into soviet culture. Komsomol organized red corners at the workshops for intelligent spending a dinner break and free time – with radio, newspapers, table plays - chess and chessmates. To bring flowers, to subscribe for youth magazines, dreamt komsorg Zhdanova.¹⁶⁶ Small libraries were welcomed. And the whole trade union library counted on ten thousand volumes in the end of the decade.

Since the very first months at the new construction site, village youth was educated into soviet culture. Learning songs – soviet songs that village youth did not know. And learning about Minsk that represented the story of Belarus becoming soviet.

When the club started to work properly, it provided not only dances, but technical circles – on photography, automechanic.

In 1957, in the Park of Leisure and Culture, was opened a summer theater for 2000 places for music evenings, dancing and lectures.¹⁶⁷ It hold large programs that consisted of two parts: educational in the beginning and then recreational.

Lectures on a range of topics were given each week and afterwards films on corresponding topics were demonstrated. In result, an all-round educated person.

Hygiene norms, good taste, moral qualities. “On hygiene of woman”, “On tastes and manners”, “To dress simply, modestly, elegantly”, “How to maintain youth”. Ethics and morality “On truthfulness and honesty”, read by a teacher of history, “On force of character”. Culture of relations was quicksand, instructions were

¹⁶⁶ GAMO, 28, 1, 25, 68.

¹⁶⁷ GAMO, 28, 1, 180, 58.

given for family life “What a family must be”, upbringing children, and “On friendship, comradeship and love”. Another direction of education was basics knowledge of law, including labor code, on the possibilities of education, technic, art and literature.

With Khrushchev's grip over religion workers who belonged to the Christian sect of Protestantism, *baptisty* of the plant were fought with atheistic propaganda. They were hard-working and asoviet in life style that they practiced at the wooden outskirts of Drazhnya.¹⁶⁸ Lectures were given: “Truth on religion with demonstration of experiments”, “On religious morality and communist morality”. Interesting were lectures that touched on traditional beliefs and were addressed to - “On dreams”, “Was there a beginning and whether there will be the end of the world”.

In the second half of the 1950s “Society of spreading scientific and political knowledge” provided lectures “On atomic energy”, and On the result of Geneve peaceful conference, On television, radiotechnics, and On the problem of interplanetary communication. Education was poured though popular people's reading: calendars, that had small articles on how to maintain youth, to apply cosmetics.

Casual spending leisure time of the working men was tinkering, football, a chess play, domino, or to have a drink. One could go to stalls spotted across the neighborhood - with vodka and beer, a cheese sandwich and sweets. There one could get in fight with militia. In 1955 were torn down blue dunai. But immediately cheap wine was opened in Cafeteria-automat that appeared in Khrushchevs' sway of modern kitchen facilities.

¹⁶⁸GAMO, 28, 5, 5, 96. Reacting to an article in Soviet Belorussia “At the outskirts of city”, 01.11.1962.

Fight against alcoholism and “obsolete” traditional rituals was tried with Komsomol weddings – celebrated in the club without alcohol.

Soviet man was interested in international politics and successes of USSR in struggle for peace. Political education of masses. Lectures on political topics: On international position of USSR. Propagandists had to give lectures to semi-literate youth.

In their turn, young villagers were hungry for modernity. This included urban attire, furnishing, alimentation habits. Work on new construction sites enabled put on new dress. “Drums, bit bit. I will get rid of old *sarafan*, Now we cut forest, in the city skirts” proceeded a popular short song of the 1920s and 1930s.

Everyday was a mixture of modern soviet phenomena with old traditional elements, bricollage. For example, traditional hobbies – knitting, lacing shawls – girls' occupation in light summer night sitting by the window remained part of leisure. Gramophone desks, bicycles for children, cameras for fathers was bought.

First salaries were spent on clothes. New attire was so important for girls who did not have a nice dress since all their clothes were lost in fires of the war.

Fashionable were sweaters with short sleeves, deficit, that was sold illegally – brought from Litva. As soon as perm became fashionable, girls made it. To show that one was doing well in the city, girls photographed wearing watches. They took on a pair one by one, a picture was sent to parents. In 1947, exhibition of Czechoslovak shoes was shown in the shop at the main street of the neighborhood.

But young men did follow fashion as well. On arrival, it was half-village - a checkered suit, trousers into high boots, and after first salaries - it was a full suit with broad shoulders, dark blue or grey steel, a leather coat bought “at a market price” and a tie in large red, green and purple checkers that even a director did not have. On a dating both were wearing light raincoats – a garment that was the biggest deficit, absolute must. And they went out to the city's central park.

Children facilities, summer camps – a city one in the neighborhood park and one in the countryside with 2-times alimentation were organized in 1956.¹⁶⁹ In a one-day sanatorium, a rest house, lying on clean sheets, listening to the radio, one felt that communism might not be far.

¹⁶⁹ GAMO, 28, 1, 153, 296.

6. Sisterhood of Dormitory

The first housing were barracks for forty people. People needed to survive, a furnace, oven was the source of life. Dull workers' dormitory with four beds in a room and only nails for hanging workers' robe could be decorated with postcards on the wall, girls pinned photographs of famous artists. But there were nice rooms as well, arranged with all the possible cosiness: lace napkins, photographs of relatives on the walls. The girls decorated themselves eagerly – with a nice blouse or a brooch. It is worth mentioning, that girls were quiet independent, emancipated and deriving pleasure of being responsible and free – they did not hurry into marriage.¹⁷⁰

How was that time remembered? As merry despite everything.¹⁷¹ Accordion, “garmoshka” helped. Builders were settled in Slepyanka dormitories, aside the main neighborhood, where village houses were still remaining in the 1950s and new cottages were appearing credited by the plant. After hard work, one returned to a room shared by five girls of the same age. “You get home, eat quickly – and that time we were payed little – snack with half a loaf of white bread and tea and go to the dancefloor. And there are lads with harmonikas. Dances. Merry, young.” A narrator explained that it was young age that helped them pass through drain and in its turn, drain took all strength and possibilities to reflect on environment: “What kind of hardships can youth have? Work a bit, got tired so much.”¹⁷²

After marriage, moving to a flat, life began running quickly, people were settling in. “What did we want?” - simple wishes to have more money, clothes, food. Some of them bought piglets and grew them to eat for October festivities.¹⁷³ “We lived here in harmony. Gathered with the neighbors, music, dances... Our neighbor

¹⁷⁰ Conversation with N.A. Birich, May 2014.

¹⁷¹ Conversation with Kiselyova O.I., May 2013.

¹⁷² Conversation with R.N.Astapchik, November, December 2015.

¹⁷³ Conversation with M.F. Glushko, August 2012.

played harmonika”. “And then we somehow quickly took a dacha.” “We worked and did not think about anything”.¹⁷⁴ [13]

¹⁷⁴ Conversation with R.N.Astapchik, November, December 2015.

Conclusion

Those young girls and boys who came to the site in 1946 and onwards had different fates. The author met some of them, who passed through hardships, decided to stay and remained for fifty years working at the plant. They acquired a trade, and some of them achieved success.

One of the girls managed to produce details by five machines at once already during her apprenticeship at Stalingrad tractor plant in 1946-1947, accurately, it went out just right. “The chief did not want to let me go.” A skilled worker was demanded. It rose self-esteem. In few years she acquired a personal label that she put at the first tractor. She also was the leading dancer at the popular creativity collective Lyavonikha that represented the plant on a good artistic level.¹⁷⁵

As they lived in socialism, they endured hardships: “It was hard... But what, I built. It was necessary to build.” “Too heavy, not for girls”.¹⁷⁶ They put up with shortcomings, that were “temporary”, but lasting for decades - such as not working conditioner, old and dangerous machines. They were waiting for a flat for thirty years, devoted time to garden plots, but also to public duties such as leading a circle of folk dance by a housing management, *domoupravlenie*. They got used that authorities, those above, said that “our plant successfully fulfills the tasks of the party and government, and only in some points there were shortcomings”. This became a magic formula that people accepted despite they knew how bad things were in reality. They used to raise their hands at the political meetings without actually thinking about the subject – they had their own problems on mind, they

¹⁷⁵ Conversation with A.N. Raduta, February 2016.

¹⁷⁶ Conversation with R.N. Astapchik, December 2015.

“voted for decisions the meaning of which they did not really understand.”¹⁷⁷ One respondent described her life: “We lived without thinking about anything”.¹⁷⁸ When the regime collapsed, people faced gap that was covered before with collectivist festivals, belief in future and devotion to stability.

On that way, they were gradually losing illusions, as they had been learning reality at the shop floor and in housing managements. Being in the beginning shy of the authorities, they learned to keep distance between private and public. Some of them rejected the propositions to enter the party, saying only “judge me as if I am a communist”, others were never proposed to, so far they stood from public life being immersed into family and neighborhood community. “We did not enter the party, we were simple workers.” But without being in the party, joy and merriness of participating in the May Day demonstrations was remembered: “Oj, I loved it, each time I went. Well, everyone went and we went with children up to the center with harmonikas, songs.”¹⁷⁹ Being soviet included participation in collectivist festival and living without thinking.

There was one especially valuable idea amidst the values of tacit consent – labor, mentioned while remembering difficulties at the work shop and delimiting one’s own attitude: “After all, it is said in the Bible to work decently”.¹⁸⁰

They learned to live in sake of future and they kept enduring after the collapse of the Soviet Union, some believed that the rulers would decide everything well. [14]

¹⁷⁷ A. Galich, a Soviet-Russian poet, described the way a doctor surgeon participated in the party meetings, “deadly tired”, thinking about her patients, never about decisions of the party council. Aleksandr Galich: *Vozvrascchenije [Return]*. Leningrad: Muzyka, 1990, p. 255.

¹⁷⁸ Conversation with R.N. Astapchik, November 2015.

¹⁷⁹ Conversation with R.N. Astapchik, November 2015.

¹⁸⁰ Conversation with A.K. Malejko, November 2014.

Sh. Fitzpatrick names three underlining narratives of the 1930s: “out of backwardness”, “building in the present for future” and “if tomorrow is war”.¹⁸¹ When the war did happen, “only not war again” became the foundation of consent between people and power. Zubkova noticed: People forgave the power any unpopular decision if it was justified by peace.¹⁸² At the same time, two other narrative lines remained alive. „Out of backwardness“ was very strong for BSSR and for each of the tractorbuilders, as well as „to live for future generations – for children“.

¹⁸¹ Fitzpatrick: *Everyday Stalinism*, 1999, p. 8.

¹⁸² Zubkova, E. *Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshchestvo: politika i povsednevnost'*. 1945-1953. Moskva 1999, p. 131.

Sources:

State archive of Minsk and Minsk region, GAMO:

Fund of the Minsk Tractor plant, 3341

Fund of the party committee of the Tractor plant, 28 п

Fund of the party committee of city Minsk, 69 п

Fund of Minsk executive committee, 6

National Archive of Belarus, NARB:

Fund of KPB, the Communist party of Belorussia, 4 п

Fund of the Department for Architecture by the Council of Ministers of the BSSR,
903

State Archive of Scientific-Technical Documentation, BGANTiD:

Fund of Master Plans, 3

Personal fund of architect Parsadanov, G.

National Library of Belarus:

The Catalogue of projects of two-floors housing. Committee for the Architecture.
Moscow: State architectural publishing 1947.

Promyshlennost' i rabochiy klass SSSR 1946-1950. Dokumenty i Materialy.
[Industry and Working class of USSR. 1946-1950. Documents and Materials].
Khlusov M.I. (ed.) Moskva: Nauka 1989.

Belaruski Traktarny. A collection of stories and poems. State publishing BSSR,
Minsk 1950.

Lyutova Vera, *Zarevo nad lesom*. [Glow over the Forest] A story. State publishing
BSSR 1951.

Collection of poems of young poets of Belorussia. *Molodaja Belarus* [Young
Belarus], Leningrad: TsK VLKSM publishing "Molodaja gvardija" 1952.

Interviews with the senior residents of the tractor plant neighborhood, former
workers of the plant and state servants, 2012-2017.

Bibliography:

Soviet society and working class

Burawoy, Michael: *The Politics of Production. Factory Regimes under Capitalism
and Socialism*. London/New York 1985.

Dobson, Miriam: *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime and The
Fate of Reform After Stalin*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2009.

Filtzer, Donald: *Soviet Workers and de-Stalinization: the Consolidation of the
Modern System of Soviet Production Relations, 1953-1964*. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press 1992.

Filtzer, Donald: *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism. Labor and the Restoration of
the Stalinist System After World War II*. Cambridge University Press 2002.

- Filtzer, Donald: *The Hazards of Urban Life in Late Stalinist Russia. Health, hygiene, and living standards, 1943-1953*. Cambridge University Press 2010.
- Heumos, Peter: “*Vyhrn'me si rukávy než se kola zastaví!*“ *Dělníci a státní socialismus v Československu, 1945-1968*. Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR 2006.
- Kotkin, Steven: *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley: University of California Press 1995.
- Lebow, Katherine A.: “*Public works, Private Lives: Youth Brigades in Nowa Huta in the 1950s*”. *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 10/ Is. 02/July 2001
- Levada, Y.: *Sovetskiy prostoy chelovek. Opyt sotsial'nogo portreta na rubezhe 90-h godov*. [Soviet ordinary man. Attempt at Social Portrait on the Edge of 90']. Moskva: Mirovoy okean 1993.
- Lüdtke, Alf: *Istorija povsednevnosti v Germanii. Novyie podhody k izucheniyu truda, vojny i vlasti*. [History of Everyday in Germany. New approaches to studying Labor, War and Power]. Translated by K.A. Levinson et al. Introduction by S.V. Zhuravlyov. Moskva 2010.
- Lindenberger, Thomas: *Tacit Minimal Consensus: The Always Precarious East German Dictatorship*. In: *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes. Fascism, Nazism, Communism*. Corner, Paul (ed.) Oxford University Press 2009.
- Malia, Martin: *Sovetskaya tragediya. Istorija socializma v Rossii. 1917-1991*. [Soviet Tragedy. History of Socialism in Russia. 1917-1991] Translated by Jurasovskiy A.V., Jurasovskaya A.V. Moskva: ROSSPEN 2004.
- Pittaway, Mark: *The Social Limits of State Control Time, the Industrial Wage Relation, and Social Identity in Stalinist Hungary, 1948–1953*. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1999.
- Popitz, Heinrich et. al. *Das Gesellschaftsbild des Arbeiters: soziologische Untersuchungen in der Huettneindustrie*. Tuebingen: Mohr 1961.
- Werth, Nicolas: *Istorija Sovetskogo Gosudarstva. 1900-1991*. [History of Soviet State. 1900-1991] Translated from French. Moskva, Moskva-Progress 1994.

Zubkova, Elena. *Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshchestvo: politika i povsednevnost'* [Soviet Society After War: Politics and Everyday Life]. 1945-1953. Moskva 1999.
Žuravliov, S. V.; M. Ju. Mukhin: "*Krepost' socializma*": *Povsednevnost' i motivacija truda na sovetskom predpriyatii, 1928-1938*. ["Fortress' of socialism: Everyday and Labor Motivation at the Soviet Enterprise] Moskva: ROSSPEN 2004.

Stalinization, urbanization

Beyrau, Dietrich; Lindner, Rainer (eds.): *Handbuch der Geschichte Weißrusslands*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2001.

Thomas M. Bohn, *Minsk – Musterstadt des Sozialismus. Stadtplanung und Urbanisierung in der Sowjetunion nach 1945*, Köln: Böhlau 2008.

Bohn, Thomas: *Minskiy Fenomen: gorodskoe planirovanie i urbanizaciya v Sovetskomoj soyuznoj respublike Belorussii posle Vtoroj mirovoj vojny*. Moskva 2013.

"Von jüdischen Shtetln zu sowjetischen Industriestädten. Paradoxien der Urbanisierung Weißrusslands," Von der "europäischen Stadt" zur "sozialistischen Stadt" und zurück? Urbane Transformationen im östlichen Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts, Thomas M. Bohn (ed.), München: Oldenburg Verlag 2009.

Ekonomika Sovetskoi Belorussii. 1917-1967. [Economics of Soviet Belorussia. 1917-1967]. Minsk: "Nauka i Tekhnika" 1967.

Jajeśniak-Quast, Dagmar: *Stahlgiganten in der sozialistischen Transformation: Nowa Huta in Krakau, EKO in Eisenhüttenstadt und Kunčice in Ostrava*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2010

Minsk i Minchane. Dzesjac stagoddziau gistoryi [Minsk and Minsk's. Ten centuries of history], Minsk: Belaruskaja navuka 2010

Pol'skij, Spartak A.: *Kliuchevyje problemy social'no-ekonomičeskogo razvitija Minska*. [Key problematic of socio-economic development of Minsk]. Minsk 1981.

Swain, Geoffrey; Swain, Nigel. *Eastern Europe Since 1945*. Palgrave Macmillan 2004.

Socialist Urbanism and Architecture

Åman, Anders: *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1992.

Arhitekturnaya grafika epohi konstruktivizma. V sobranii gosudarstvennogo muzeya istorii Sankt-Peterburga. Catalogue. [Architectural graphics of the Constructivist Epoque. In the Collections of the State Museum of History of Saint-Petersburg]. Sankt-Petersburg 2008

Jegorov, Jurij Alekseevich: *Gradostroitelstvo Belorussii* [Urban Planning of Belorussia], Moscow: Gosudarstvennoje izdatelstvo literatury po stroitelstvu i arkhitekture 1954.

Ikonnikov, A.V. *Arkhitektura goroda. Esteticheskie problemy kompozicii*. [Architecture of City. Aesthetic Problems of Composition] Moskva: Strojizdat 1972

Ikonnikov, A.V.: *Prostranstvo i forma v arkhitekture i gradostroitelstve* [Space and Form in Architecture and Urban Planning], Moscow: KomKniga 2006

Kirichenko, Vital': *Minsk. Histarychny partret horada. 1953-1959. Minsk. Istoricheskij portret goroda. 1953-1959*. [Historical Portait of City] Minsk: "Belarus" 2006

Korol', Vladimir Adamovich; Voinov, Aleksandr Petrovich; Zaslavskij Evgenij, Lvovich et al., Minsk. *Opyt poslevojennoj rekonstrukcii i razvitija* [Minsk. Experience of the Post-War Reconstruction and Development], Moscow: Stojizdat 1966.

Kirillov, V.V.: *Put' poiska I eksperimenta. Iz istorii sovetskoy arkhitektury 20-h – nachala 30-h godov* [The Way of Search and Experiment. From History of Soviet Architecture of 1920 – beginning of 1930]. Moscow University Press 1974.

Khazanova, V.E.: *Sovetskaya arkhitektura pervoy pyatiletki. Problemy goroda*

budushchego. [Soviet Architecture of the First Five-Year Plan. Problematics of City of Future]. Moskva: Nauka 1980.

Lebina, Natalja: *Povsednevnaia žizn' sovetskogo goroda: Normy i anomalii. 1920-1930 gody*. [Everyday life of Soviet City: Norms and Anomalies]. Sankt-Peterburg 1999.

Meerovich M.G., Konyshcheva E.V., Khmel'nitsky D.S. *Kladbishche socgorodov: gradostroitel'naya politika v SSSR (1928-1932)*. [Cemetery of Socialist City: Urban Policy in USSR]. Moskva 2011.

Pol'skij, Spartak Aleksandrovich: *Demograficheskie problemy razvitija Minska* [Demographic Problems of Minsk Development]. Minsk: Izdatelstvo BGU 1976

Shamruk, Alla Sergejevna: *Arkhitektura Belarusi XX–XXI v.: Evolyuciya stilej i khudozhestvennykh koncepcij* [The Evolution of Styles and Artistic Concepts], Minsk: Belorusskaja nauka 2007.

Voinov, Aleksandr Petrovich: *Zhilishchnoe stroitelstvo v Belorusskoj SSR* [Housing Construction in the Belorussian SSR]. Minsk 1980.

Zarecor, Kimberly Elman: *Manufacturing Socialist Modernity. Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press 2011.

Art, Ideology and Fashion

Bartlett, Djurdja: *FashionEast. The Spectre that haunted Communism*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England 2010.

Boym, Svetlana: *Common Places. Mythologies of Everyday Life*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1994.

Clark, Katerina: *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941*, Cambridge, Mass. – London: Harvard University Press 2011

Crowley, David, and Susan Emily Reid (eds.): *Socialist Spaces. Sites of Everyday Life in Eastern Bloc*. Oxford: Berg 2005.

Dobrenko, Evgeny, and Eric Naiman (eds.): *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art*

and Ideology of Soviet Space. Seattle: University of Washington Press 2003.

Vera Dunham. *In Stalin's Time. Middleclass values in Soviet fiction*. Duke University Press 1990.

Groys, Boris: *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Asthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*. Trans. by Charles Rouge. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1992.

Gurova O.Y.: *Sovetskoe nizhnee bel'jo mezhdue ideologii i povsednevnost'ju* [Soviet Underwear between Ideology and Everyday]. Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie 2008.

Vail', Petr; Genis. Aleksandr: 60-e. *Mir sovetskogo cheloveka*. [60'. The World of Soviet Man]. Moskva: Act Corpus 2013.

Attachments

1. Master Plan of Minsk, 1946. BGANTiD.
2. Plan of the neighborhood, Googlemaps, Internet.
3. Promyshlennaya Street, from the Internet.
4. Promyshlennaya street, verandahs. From the Internet archive MinskPhotoHistoryNews.
5. Block with a nursery, from the Internet.
6. Stakhanovskaya street. BGANTiD.
7. The main street, leisure green zone. From the Internet.
8. The main street, cour d'honneur. A postcard, photo by M. Alpert, 1953. From the Internet
9. The central place with the highest building, BGANTiD.
10. The Tractorbuilders Boulevard, overview, from the Internet.
11. The Tractorbuilders Boulevard, detail. A Postcard. Publishing house "Belarus", 1964, photo by Anan'yiny A. and M.
12. Arrival of the recruited builders and workers to the plant, from the Internet.
13. A photo of two cohabitants from a dormitory, 1952. From private archive of R.N. Astapchik.

14. A yard at Stakhanovskaya street, March 2015. Photo by I. Korzun.