Cities of a new type (Dunaújváros, 21-22 May 15)

Dunaújváros, Hungary, May 21–22, 2015
Deadline: Dec 1, 2014

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Cities of a new type. New industrial cities in popular democracies after 1945
International conference in Dunaújváros

In the socialist countries after 1945, several cities were erected from scratch next to an industrial complex: the main ones were Dunaújváros (named Sztálinváros from 1951 to 1961) in Hungary, Eisenhüttenstadt (Stalinstadt from 1953 to 1961) in East Germany, Nowa Huta in Poland and Dimitrovgrad in Bulgaria. They were supposed to become cities of a new type, different from the chaotic, segregated and capitalist city. They had to invent a socialist way of life and the population of these cities (mostly workers) did create a specific working class culture, even if it was different from the one that was expected by the authorities. Each city was progressively built through ideological ambitions, but also through concrete constraints and unexpected evolutions. The history of each city has so far been studied and written mostly from a national or regional perspective. We want to consider them from an international point of view and to put them in a comparative and transnational perspective.

We will consider the entire socialist period, from the late 1940s to the late 1980s. That is to say not only the time of the construction (the early fifties) but also the following decades, when the young cities got older and were transformed, according to local factors and according to the transformation of each popular democracy. However, we will not consider the post-socialist period.

The conference will focus on the four above-mentioned cities, but it will also consider smaller new cities (Ózd and Komló in Hungary, Nová Dubnica in Czechoslovakia, Nowe Tychy and Jastrz?bie in Poland, Schwedt and Hoyerswerda in East Germany, etc.) and new districts in already existing cities (for instance, Poruba next to Ostrava in Czechoslovakia or Halle-Neustadt next to Halle in East Germany).

We particularly welcome papers investigating topics such as:
- The comparison between the cities. The conference will examine both the history of the towns (plan, architecture, construction techniques, etc.) and the history of the people who came to the towns (migrations, work in the factory, everyday life, housing, etc.). For each topic, comparisons shed light on unnoticed facts. For instance, putting next to each other the plans of the new cities shows significant differences and leads to think about the urban morphology or about the relationships between the city and the factory. Similarly, comparisons between the pieces of furniture in the new apartments lead to think about design in socialist regime.

- The understanding of exchanges between the cities. Archives give evidence of economic and cul-

tural collaboration, mainly through delegations exchanges. And these exchanges concerned the different involved actors: decision-makers of local authorities, party members, city planners, engineers, workers. What did people from Nowa Huta know from Dunaújváros and Eisenhüttenstadt? In what extent did these cities constitute a network? In this sense, the conference participates in the current historiographical reflection on the economic and cultural collaboration between socialist countries and on the integration of socialist space.

- The question of the models. What was presented and considered as model? In the official discourse, there was only one model: the USSR and its main new city from the 1930s, Magnitogorsk. But the actual influence of the Soviet Union is hard to understand. What was known exactly from the Soviet Union? What was imitated? Magnitogorsk seems to have been very far and actually little known; other building sites, like the reconstruction of Stalingrad, were maybe more familiar. And the USSR founded many new cities, all over its huge territory and during the entire socialist time. What was done with this knowledge? The contribution of specialists in Soviet history would be very appreciated.
Despite the official discourses, Soviet Union was certainly not the only model. The new cities in Eastern Europe also looked at what was done in Western Europe and also outside Europe. These cities were built through different derivatives and borrowings that were put together.

The conference will be held in Dunaújváros and Hungarian researchers will then present hitherto unseen archives from the steel factory Dunaferr: paintings, photographs and various sources about the functioning of the factory or about the daily life of workers (for instance Dunaferr possesses a precious collection of brigádnapló – the diary that each brigade had to write about work and life in the factory). Such archives, which present interesting resemblances with archives from similar cities, will contribute to the historical, nuanced and objective understanding of the socialist way of life.

Please send an abstract of up to 500 words and a brief academic CV to pepperart.dunaujvaros@gmail.com. Deadline for submission of proposals is 1st December 2014. Conference language is English. Funding is available to cover travel and accommodation expenses.

Organisation committee:
Jérôme Bazin, Paris-Est Créteil University.
Mihály Molnár, Pepper Art Projects (Budapest). Dóra Molnár Pepper Art Projects (Budapest).
Gábor Rieder, independent art historian (Budapest).

Scientific board: Ulf Brunnbauer (Regensburg University), Sándor Horváth (Hungarian Academy of Sciences), Dagmara Jaje?niak-Quast (Frankfurt/Oder University), Katherine Lebow (Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Research), Andreas Ludwig (Potsdam Center of Contemporary History), György Szücs (Hungarian National Gallery).

Reference:
CFP: Cities of a new type (Dunaújváros, 21-22 May 15). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 20, 2014 (accessed Oct 30, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/8693>.