

fig. 1
Vladimir Shchuko and Vladimir Gel'freikh
Competition project (reworking of Boris Iofan's scheme) for the Palace
of Soviets, Moscow; perspective of variant on square plan, 1932-33.

Mediating Creativity and Politics: Sixty Years of Architectural Competitions in Russia

Catherine Cooke

In this exhibition, as in any study of Russian avant-garde architecture, many of the most dramatic and poetic images are projects conceived for competitions. There are schemes here which have rightly entered the canon of twentieth-century architecture worldwide, as paradigms of key directions within the new discourse. As the century progresses, it has become increasingly difficult to realize how far away in time and in cultural distance the origins of these projects lie. The schemes' freshness is partly the result of the purity with which they formulated those aesthetic paradigms. It is also a consequence of the fact that the technologies on which such extraordinary formal clarity was predicated have never existed, even as imports, in Russia, and only lately have achieved enough maturity in the West to become part of the ordinary professional armory.

So radical was the constructive clarity of the frame in the Vesnin brothers' schemes for the Palace of Labor in Moscow (1922–23) and the Moscow bureau of *Leningrad Pravda* (1924), for example, that they have by now been inspirational images to many generations of architects. Even more has that technological gap postponed the realization of other visions, in particular of those to be found in Ivan Leonidov's competition schemes of the later 1920s. But as the dense traditional city to which those Vesnin projects relate has been spatially exploded in the West by the motorcar, or left as desert by economic change, Leonidov's models of a way to handle that scale, yet remain urban, have provided a starting point for the problem Peter Wilson has described as "finding a strategy to legitimise empty space." As Wilson said of Berlin, "This city is truly contemporary precisely because it is no longer continuous, connected or coherent."¹

There arises here the whole new category of problems associated with what Bernard Tschumi has called "*la case vide*": the empty slot, the void in the chessboard. Unique paradigms for tackling this city of emptiness were created in the Suprematist concepts of potently energized form, as developed in Leonidov's projects for the Proletarskii district Palace of Culture competition of 1930 or for the competition four years later for Narkomtiazhprom (the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry). Thus Zaha Hadid speaks directly of "liberating the plan from the ground as did the Russian Suprematists." For Hollywood she thereby created "a new kind of urbanism which frees up the ground, programming it in with the landscape, yet being at the same time urban."² But these words are almost identical to those with which the Vesnins' colleague Moisei Ginzburg defended Leonidov's answer to the Lenin Library competition brief in 1927, when Leonidov's dramatic redefinition of an "urban site" was bringing politically-inspired opprobrium on the whole of avant-garde architecture.

This role in the continuing evolution of the twentieth-century city is one of the lives which these projects have led. In their own time, they played a similar role. But they also had another life, as part of a debate about the role of competitions themselves within the development of architecture. This is a debate which is as current now as it was then, focusing as it does on issues of open debate versus arbitrary, anonymous decision; of professionalism versus public participation; of innovation and the new vision versus the "realistic solution."

Like so much in that hyperintensive decade of the 1920s in Russia, this debate raised issues, characteristic of the whole Modernist epoch, with a clarity that continues to provide useful paradigms and tools for thought. But the debate also illuminates the period itself in a new way, by taking us behind the screen which the very potency of the images themselves inevitably erects between us and their provenance. Who organized the competitions, for what clients, with what

motives? How was it that individual architects were competing for individual jobs in a collectivist society, where the profession seems to have been organized into vast state design offices? If competitions were part of a debate about developing a "new architecture," who were the juries, by what criteria did they judge, and how did the profession or public get feedback with which to measure architects' incremental progress? In looking at these questions alongside the projects themselves, we can take the lid off the real professional environment and the live processes within it. We can see the aesthetic issues afresh through entering the test-bed in which they were forged.

One issue of terminology needs exploring before we go further. "Competition," as the birth pangs of a post-socialist Soviet Union have for some years now been reminding us, is at one level a concept alien, even hostile, to the ideology being built in the 1920s. This is not just an observation post hoc. The duality here was reflected at the time in the use of two distinct words for the architectural "competition," with quite different meanings, and much of the battle fought by avant-gardists within the profession, as the 1920s progressed, was aimed at achieving a shift from one to the other, from an inherited word and concept to a new one, born as much of the nature of a complex modern architecture anywhere as it was of Russians' own social and ideological mission.

The traditional word for a competition was *konkurs*. Like so much else in relatively modern Russian vocabulary, *konkurs* came from abroad, from the French *concours*. This is the word we find in the professional press of the nineteenth century and through to the October Revolution. Russia was a capitalist society, albeit a socially and technically primitive one in relation to the West. Insofar as there was a market economy, its motor was the concept of *konkurentsia* that post-Soviet *biznismeny* are now trying to get back into their bloodstreams. From old Russian roots, however, there was another word, *sorevnovanie*, which was sometimes used in Imperial Russia as a loose synonym for *konkurs*, when the reference was to the architectural competition as an event in progress. *Sorevnovanie* has connotations of a more collective process in which those with a common skill or passion "compete" with some enjoyment or celebration of pitting one talent against another. The sporting analogy would be a tournament: there is a winner, or several winners, in different categories, but the participants engage with each other directly in a mutually stimulating exercise of their skills as that winner emerges by gradual elimination. The players may indeed be teams, not individuals.

As we shall see, replacement of the *konkurs* by the *sorevnovanie* was the overriding aim of all the avant-garde groups. The differing architectural philosophies of the Constructivists and the Rationalists, for example, led them to formulate different procedural routines for the contest. As so often in these issues of the 1920s, there was in fact a firm Party-ideological line behind an apparently purely professional debate. The *sorevnovanie* was a tool specifically approved by Lenin. But no one ever mentioned that. In part, this was certainly because the notion was absorbed into the new culture architects had enthusiastically embraced. And in part, it was because the advantage to architecture was plain, in a time of design problems larger than limited professional numbers could handle by traditional ways of working. Ironically—if one looks for the conventional ironic judgment on this era—architects helped their own downfall thereby. It is a fact that the profession's own campaign to work together collectively in teams made it easier to herd architects into anonymous "studios" as fodder for the Party and the building industry in the early 1930s. But the ironic explanation does nothing to open up the sparkling vigor or creative convictions of the

extraordinary laboratory of a new architecture in the years preceding this development.

Competitions under Burgeoning Capitalism

One reason for the amount of debate provoked by the competition issue in the 1920s was the inadequacy of the regulatory and legal framework for architectural competitions inherited from the prerevolutionary regime. Superficially, prerevolutionary Russia had been a capitalist society enjoying, on the eve of World War I, the world's fastest economic growth rate. That rapid growth was accompanied by a commensurate building boom, of which a certain amount was designed through competitions, yet no universally accepted or legally reinforced procedures had been established, despite several attempts, when the war brought building to a halt for ten years. Indeed, the youthfulness of entrepreneurial culture in Russia, where serious industrialization began only in the later nineteenth century, meant that the legality and morality of professionalism as established in European and North American countries was not universally understood, and was even less consistently upheld.

This unsatisfactory situation surrounding competitions did not result from lack of effort by the upper echelons of the architectural profession who led the architectural societies of St. Petersburg, then the capital, and of Moscow. It was their last prerevolutionary draft regulations on competitions which underpinned the first architectural competitions of the Bolshevik era. Indeed, it was the prerevolutionary societies' successors, particularly in Moscow (which in 1918 again became the capital), which alternately sought to instigate better practices and were the victims of attack from the avant-gardists for their efforts.

In autocratic Russia up to the 1860s, almost all significant building—at the central or local level; whether for productive, administrative, or social purposes—was fundamentally state building. Here was a situation that would become familiar again in the 1920s. Competitions had always had an occasional role in the selection of designs for high-prestige or symbolically important buildings. Thus in St. Petersburg, the great Kazan' Cathedral on Nevskii Avenue was the subject of a competition in 1799. Andrei Voronikhin won, and building commenced in a straightforward way in 1801. When in the next decade it came to celebrating the defeat of Napoleon, however, it took twenty years of competing projects for various sites, and much political and aesthetic vituperation, before Konstantin Ton's design started on site in 1839. As cathedrals go, moreover, Ton's did not have a long life: in 1931, only seventy years after its completion, the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour was demolished by Stalin to make way for his Palace of Soviets. With suitable poetic justice, the Palace of Soviets competition, too, was, as we shall see, a long-drawn-out, multistage, and highly vituperative competition, before it finally "proved" the inapplicability of a Modernist architecture to the Bolshevik Party's aspirations.

Through the MVD (the Ministry of Internal Affairs), lesser buildings were also put out to competition. In some cases, the briefs were for "model projects" that could be used, in the tradition established in the eighteenth century, as standard designs throughout the empire. Here again was a concept, unusual in many countries, that would characterize state building in the Soviet period. In 1865, the MVD created a new Building and Technical Committee which administered virtually all state building in Russia right through to the Revolution of 1917.³ It generally recruited from among architectural and engineering graduates of the Building College, which in 1882 became IGI (the Institute of Civil Engineers) and the sparring partner of the Imperial Academy

of Arts for leadership of architectural education and dominance of professional debate. Among the Soviet avant-garde, several leaders of Constructivism were graduates of IGI. Aleksandr and Viktor Vesnin, for example, finished here in 1912. Aleksandr Nikol'skii, the Constructivist group's leader in Leningrad, was another student in their class, and Andrei Ol' had been two years their senior. As LIGI (the Leningrad Institute of Civil Engineers), the school graduated students who frequently provided teams for the intergroup *sorevnovaniia* of the later 1920s. The pioneer of concrete structures in Russia, Aleksandr Kuznetsov, who did so much to make Constructivism's formal ideas buildable, graduated from IGI in 1896; Boris Velikovskii, another of the Constructivists' mentors, graduated in 1904.

In St. Petersburg, therefore, this school was consistently a seedbed of innovative design against the more routinized canons transmitted by the Imperial Academy of Arts. By the mid-1860s, however, Moscow was beginning to go firmly its own way toward a rediscovery of Russia's own historical design roots and against the Classicism of autocracy. Back in the 1830s, the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture had started to take an independent, anti-Academy stance; and in 1867, some leading Moscow architects formed Russia's first independent society to further this cause both within the profession and in the larger public consciousness.⁴ The mission that the society's founder and president, Mikhail Bykovskii, outlined for MAO (the Moscow Architectural Society) was one that carried architects forward easily into the demands of an increasingly modern culture as well as the social priorities of a socialist regime. In less ponderous language, Bykovskii's assertions could have been those of any leader of the avant-garde and, in the latter part of his statement, of the Constructivists in particular:

Utilizing the whole treasure house of contemporary civilization and of science and all its newest inventions, respectfully studying the historical development of our art as manifested in its most glorious monuments, we shall be led by free analysis and our own experience. Our activity will be as far as possible independent of all the prejudices bequeathed to us by tradition. Thus we shall be enabled to work for the achievement of those benefits which architecture can bring to society through erection of buildings which satisfy the contemporary requirements of life, and answer to local climatic conditions, with solidity, hygiene, and economy.

The aesthetic implications were equally clear. The lesson of history, Bykovskii insisted, was that "imitation of forms that have no internal meaning" could produce "beauty." "Nothing which is not based on a rational, truthful application of science and experience to the requirements of contemporary life can create anything genuinely artistic."⁵

It was four years before architects in the capital created any comparable society. When POA (the St. Petersburg Society of Architects) was formed by architects from circles around IGI in 1871, it was naturally not the example of Moscow they claimed to be following. (St. Petersburg did not "follow" Moscow in anything.) POA's initiator, Viktor Shreter, had spent some time in Berlin and had seen there the effectiveness of an independent organization for furthering architectural development and protecting professional interests amid the increasingly rabid commercialism of an entrepreneurial capitalist economy.⁶

As was appropriate to a professional organization in the capital, one of POA's first initiatives was to launch a professional periodical called *Zodchii* (*The Architect*) as a vehicle for nationwide communication. It was an "architectural and technical" monthly (later weekly), more newspaper than magazine, which subsequently advertised itself as carrying "information on competitions, and full programs" for those

competitions the society itself was running.

Initially, there were not many competitions entrusted to either St. Petersburg or Moscow societies, as they had still to win a reputation for trustworthiness. A typical situation was reflected in the very first issue of *The Architect*, which carried notification of a competition announced by the MVD for a "women's correctional prison in St. Petersburg," whose full program was available in *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik* (*The Government Courier*).⁷ The MVD had a special commission responsible for working out competition programs in its field of competence, which was basically the fields where those qualified as "civil engineer," i.e., in IGI, had legal rights "to design and execute structures." This meant competitions for churches, factories, railway structures, prisons, and bridges, and later, in the absence of professional departments or training in technical aspects of town planning, competitions in this area, too.⁸ The prison program suggests that the MVD's conduct of competitions was, on one hand, reliably businesslike. The jury contained representatives of the MVD as organizers, of its Building and Technical Committee, and of the Imperial Academy of Arts; all entries must be submitted under pseudonyms; there would be a ten-day exhibition of the entries to allow public discussion before jury deliberations began; two prizes would be awarded, with the winning schemes becoming the MVD's property. On the other hand, these terms did not fully satisfy the three basic conditions for jury impartiality contained in the published regulations, from 1867, of the Berlin Society of Architects, which were considered by POA an ideal model. The lawyers and technical people on the jury for the prison presumably included suitable "specialists," in order to ensure basic competence of judgment. But the "names of the judges themselves" were not given. The third key principle of the Berlin regulations was that "no judge may have any direct or indirect participation in the competition itself."⁹

During the next year, the larger issues were aired at length in a series of three articles in *The Architect* signed by M. Arnol'd. I suspect that this was a voice from Moscow—the same M. Iu. Arnol'd with whom Bykovskii was preparing a Russian translation of Viollet-le-Duc's *Entretiens*.¹⁰ The *Architect* editors noted that they "could not agree with all the author's conclusions," but "the issue of competitions is so important that it must be fully explored before the St. Petersburg Society . . . works out formal rules as final guidance on setting and judging competitions." Certainly Arnol'd's outspokenly liberal aspirations did not sound like a voice from within the capital:

The principle of the public competition in our time cannot fail to be numbered among that series of great principles which includes, for example, free association and freedom of speech . . .

It is the essence of the competition that talent, knowledge, and labor can manifest themselves in the most favorable conditions possible.

Protectionism, influential connections, intrigues, monopoly power are eliminated.

The motivation is that most attractive of all contests—a contest (sorevnovanie) of the mind, of intellect, of talent and knowledge—a contest which powerfully moves forward science or art.

And finally, the competition benefits the public and the whole of society, exciting their interest in the subject and familiarizing them with the names and works of the practitioners."

Here Arnol'd already distinguishes between the spirit of the *sorevnovanie* and the *konkurentsiia* of the marketplace. Thanks to the different motivations it engenders, he says, the architectural competition produces "a best solution that comes much closer to the best possible" than any solution that can be

obtained by a direct commission, "when there are many specialists in a field and there is considerable competition among them" to get the job, just as work for their office.

Arnol'd detailed the arguments behind his "essential conditions for the success of competitions." The first condition was a certain minimum number of entries in order for a competition to be valid: he proposed "between fifteen and twenty." (Internal rules of POA, by contrast, had decreed that "the prizes announced must without fail be presented even if only one entry is received by the closing date.")¹² Secondly, there must be "high-value prizes and enough of them." This was "not a luxury" but the only way to attract good designs.

His second article dealt with the number and competence of the jury members, and the need for them to be "of such a moral quality that competitors submit their work to their judgment without apprehension."¹³ He stressed that for clients, too, there is "a lot of trouble and great risk" involved in going to competition. Precisely for this reason they must be obligated "to apply to an appropriate professional society" for help. They need help not only in "understanding technical terms and drawings" but in formulating a satisfactory brief. One practice that must be banned was the issuing of "such impossibly short deadlines that there is hardly time to execute the drawings, let alone to do the necessary preliminary study and project development." And once set, the deadline must be stuck to: projects arriving after it must be automatically disqualified.

Where the first two articles echoed the tone of a lawyer, the third rang with the practical voice of a designer. The brief must indicate roughly the building costs the client has in mind, and if possible say "who is to be the builder of the structure proposed." (This latter reflects the uneven level of skills and technology available in the relatively undeveloped Russian building industry.) It must specify "what level of detailing is required in the drawings, and what type and scale of representation is required," since these must be standard for all competitors. "Drawings are the language of architectural thought," he writes, suddenly allowing himself a little poetry, but most of all do client and public need specialist help "when sparkingly effective draftsmanship conceals emptiness." Flashy graphics were therefore to be discouraged. Finally, "it should be an obligatory condition of the program that competitors provide explanatory notes. However clear and good are their drawings, these only represent the architect's thought in its final form; they do not answer the question 'why' or indicate what considerations led the author to select a particular solution." Without such notes, "judges may not grasp the advantages or disadvantages of particular aspects of [the architect's solution]."

Publishing the ten regulations of the Berlin Society in translation, Arnol'd ended by pointing out that the profession held the trump card in its own hands. "The best way to get some rational foundations under the whole competition business" would be to follow the example of the Berliners, who had "firmly agreed to a common moral obligation not to enter competitions which do not observe their basic regulations."¹⁴

Such was the concentration of the architectural profession in the capital that the St. Petersburg Society quickly grew to three or four times the size of the Moscow one.¹⁵ It took a few years before the societies were recognized by the MVD or Moscow City Council as a useful professional intermediary through which to run competitions.¹⁶ The designs of façades for two major new museums, the Polytechnical Museum and the Historical Museum, were, however, major prestige projects for which MAO helped administer competitions in 1873 and 1875, respectively.¹⁷ The acrimony these competitions generated shows how fast Russia's still-embryonic conceptions of professional correctness were being outstripped by the

ebullient energy of the rapidly growing economy in mercantile Moscow and the self-confidence of public organizations founded on this new industrial money.

By August 1875, the "multiple surprises" of these two episodes, with a "no less original" story in Odessa, produced an unsigned article in *The Architect* whose title can be roughly translated as "What the Hell Is Going On with Our Competitions?"¹⁸

Within a brief period we have three competitions for jobs of the highest caliber. And what do we find? For this or that reason, not one of them, as the phrase goes, has 'come off.' Here were three undertakings of vast scale, in which any architectural talent should find glory in participating, in enriching Russia with such products of the building art as all civilized nations are proud of.

Worldwide competitions were announced. Large sums of money were spent, and an even greater bounty of promises. And in the bitter end, all we have is a soap bubble . . .

We wait impatiently for the end of summer vacations at the St. Petersburg Society of Architects, which has made up its mind to work out competition regulations. Then abuse will be significantly reduced, even if not eliminated. In the present state of things, the only ways out are extreme ones: either to refuse once and for all to enter Russian competitions or forever to risk being trampled into the ground. Both are harmful and we must therefore choose the middle way—which is to establish regulations.

Both the Moscow cases were tortuous stories of winning projects deviously overturned by clients. In the case of the Polytechnical Museum, they suddenly decided the building must be in a Neo-Russian style after running a competition for one in an "Italian" style. A selective rerun on impossibly short deadline was the cloak for appointment of another architect of their own choice. In Odessa, the city announced it would build a multimillion-ruble theater, invited "architects all over Europe" to participate (but not Russians), and never announced any results. When competitors traveled to Odessa in despair, the competition committee had simply "disappeared," no one in the City Council would take responsibility, and "the poor foreigners were left to assume that Russian competitions are not at all like foreign ones."

I quote these colorful cases at some length not just as anecdotal *ekzotika* but for their extraordinary similarity to events surrounding Soviet competitions half a century later. All the key elements of the Palace of Soviets episode are here: the bombastic "international" scale of the conception; the insecure-sounding determination that Russia be seen to sit at the table of "all civilized nations"; the client's unpredictable shifts; and the closed "second stages" in pursuit of ideologically "correct" style. And European competitors retiring disillusioned.

Toward Regulations and War

This was the atmosphere in which professional societies replaced governmental bureaucracies as organizers of architectural competitions. Eventually, there were regulations. In March 1881, the St. Petersburg Society set up a drafting commission; in December of the next year, the resulting regulations were affirmed by the membership "to govern any contest conducted under [the society's] auspices"; a month later, and yet again in March 1895, the regulations were augmented further, embodying the more uncontentious elements of good practice agreed to so far.¹⁹

Two general statements in the regulations' preamble are interesting as reflections of the context in which architects viewed the whole competition business and as issues that would come up again in the 1920s. The first was the conception of the competition as a means for the state to

achieve economic benefits through more efficient design solutions. The second was the role of competitions in the training and advancement of young architects. As POA put it here, competitions must be seen as a means of giving the "younger forces in the architectural family" a platform for demonstrating their talents. The society's own competition reports suggest this was already happening in the early 1880s. One well-established St. Petersburg architect, who participated again in the debates of the 1920s, recalled with favor in 1926 that "In prerevolutionary times, it was the habit for major masters not to enter competitions for small buildings, especially if the task was one which did not involve the devising of a new building type. There was no regulation about this, but it was not considered appropriate for the time and skill of major masters to be expended in massacring the weak."²⁰

By the late 1880s, new and more commercial building types were already coming into the purlieu of POA's competitions. In 1888, POA managed the competition for a new Central Building on Russia's permanent commercial fairground at Nizhne-Novgorod, and it seems to have proceeded without drama. On the other hand, in Moscow that same year, the competition announced by the Upper Trading Rows Company for a new building on Red Square (later GUM, the state department store) did not reveal the jurors' names, did not provide for an exhibition of the entries, and gave no indication of professional help in framing the brief.²¹ Big money still made its own rules. Meanwhile, sheer necessity and a new social consciousness produced some attention to cheap housing for industrial workers. In 1895, MAO was asked by the city government to conduct an internal ideas-competition among its members. The next year, a major competition was run in St. Petersburg for a workers' housing complex adjoining the factory of the Russian-American Rubber Company.²²

Early in 1899, MAO, too, published regulations to govern the growing number of competitions taking place under its auspices. Beyond the elements already established as good practice by POA, there was a clear emphasis on protecting the architects. If only one entry is received, and it fulfills the competition conditions, it must get a prize. But far more contentiously, "the final working out of the construction project must go to the architect of the premiated scheme."²³ In the city's biggest recent competition (for rebuilding the vast Hotel Metropol), whose result was announced later that year, this was precisely and famously what did not happen: the first-prize-winning scheme was set aside for building in favor of the fourth-prize winner.²⁴

From the turn of the century to the outbreak of World War I, Russia was in the grip of a building boom that raised professional life, as well as competition activity, to an unprecedented intensity. Annual industrial outputs over these years averaged 6 percent, and in 1910–13, 7.5 percent. Major construction companies, whose work was typical of the superb quality which characterized prestige capitalist architecture everywhere in that decade, were competing to build the headquarters of banks, industrial conglomerates, and learned societies; privately funded schools, hospitals, and medical research institutes; and whole new districts of middle-class apartment housing on high-density European models never previously seen in Russia.²⁵

There were still scandals, and the profession sought further refinement of competition practice. To economize on professional energies and focus upon ideas, many advocates emerged for the two-stage competition, where only a selection of schemes are developed in detail. The issue of the designer's copyright was also a battleground. Fixity of the jury membership was another complaint (which scrutiny of

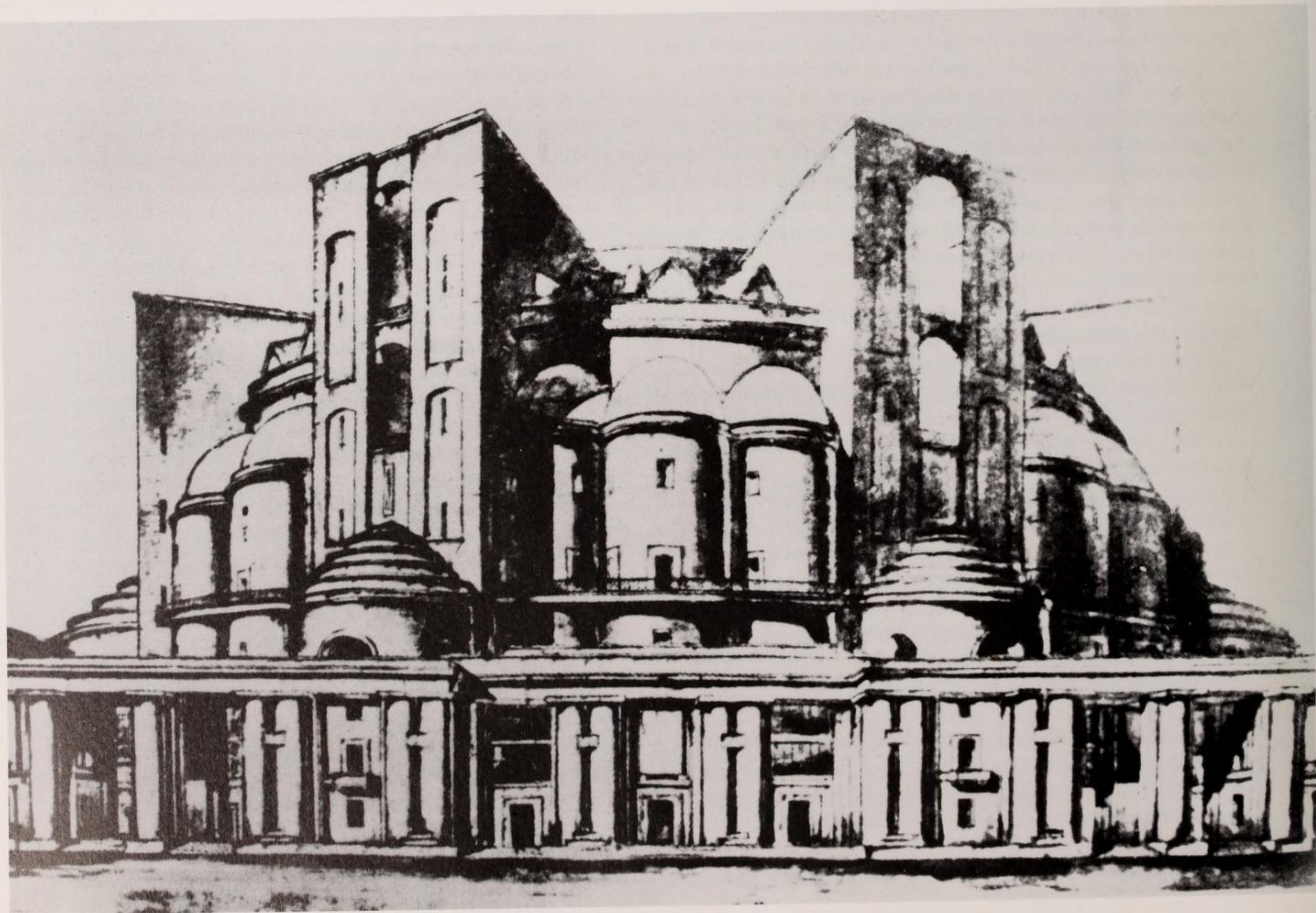
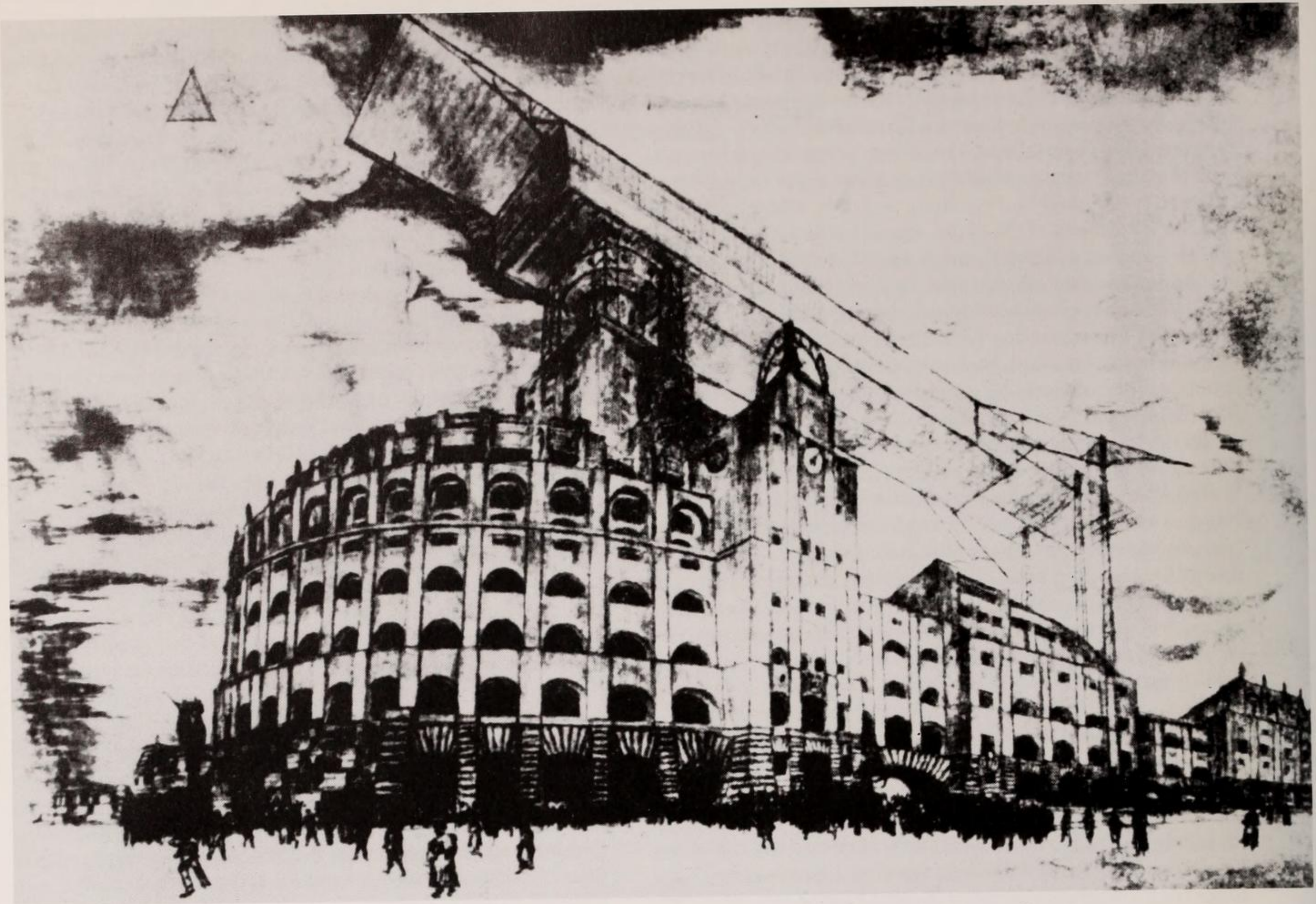
competition announcements and results indicates was certainly warranted). Time and again, the jury was composed of the same elderly members of POA, MAO, or the new third society of Academy-trained "architect-artists," OAKh; where tastes conflicted, many architects did not bother to enter after reading the jury members' names.²⁶ One innovation of programs launched by this new Society of Architect-Artists was a principle that would be much fought for by the avant-garde again in the 1920s: inclusion of a "representative of the competitors" on the jury.²⁷

As 1913 was the last year of normal industrial life before ten years of hostilities and standstill, outputs of that year were the datum by which all Soviet efforts of the 1920s measured progress. "Back to 1913 levels" was the cry, and when this was achieved, mere "restoration" switched to "planned socialist reconstruction" with the First Five-Year Plan in 1927–28. The year 1913 is thus an appropriate moment to survey the scene and look forward in architectural competitions.

The research of Igor' Kazus shows that the total number of architectural competitions announced in Russia that year was forty-one. The peak of forty-nine occurred the year previously, and was not reached again till that crucial year of 1927, when the total recorded in all traceable sources was fifty-seven.²⁸ In fact, the 1913 index of *The Architect* shows that if competitions for town plans and for schemes of public utilities are included, the year's total rises to about sixty.²⁹

Among names in the prize lists of all societies are now many which will continue to feature in such lists through the 1920s. The POA list alone contains Nakhman, who will reappear in the Tsentrosoiuz contest with Le Corbusier; Aleksandr Grinberg, with whom the Constructivist leader Ginzburg collaborated on the Palace of Labor; and Dmitrii Iofan, elder brother of Boris and his collaborator on the winning Palace of Soviets—to name just three.³⁰ The elder Iofan was well established on the editorial board of the *Ezhegodnik Imperatorskogo obshchestva arkhitektorov-khudozbnikov* (*OAKh Projects Annual*) with other seasoned competition winners Ivan Fomin, Vladimir Shchuko, and Aleksei Shchusev³¹—the last was already in Moscow building the Kazan' Railway Station he won in a closed competition of 1911. Going back even further to the first *Ezhegodnik* (*Projects Annual*) MAO published, in 1909, one finds that the three young Vesnin brothers already figure prominently, with a commendation in MAO's competition for a theater in Iaroslavl and third prize for Aleksandr and Viktor, "students of the Institute of Civil Engineers," for a country church with bold, traditional high towers near Samara. Among the Vesnins' elders in the society, Antipov took a first prize for a luxurious City Tramway station. Ivan Rerberg, who would receive vitriol from the Vesnins and their Constructivist friends after another big Moscow competition in 1925, was co-victor in the competition for an extensive office development for the Northern Insurance Company, which soon started on site.³²

Antipov thus knew what he was talking about when, in 1926, he wrote about prerevolutionary competitions. "Competitions were in no way regulated by the old legislation," he said. "In general, legislation occupied such an insignificant place in the whole operation of construction that no real necessity for such legal regulation was felt."³³ In fact, that last observation was not quite correct. By 1913, there were so many different architectural and civil-engineering societies with slightly differing codes, and so many direct "client" competitions bypassing any professional regulation at all, that OAKh took the initiative of presenting a draft for national legislation to the last prerevolutionary Congress of Russian Architects, held in Moscow in December 1913.³⁴ But when realistic competitions resumed again ten years later, it would



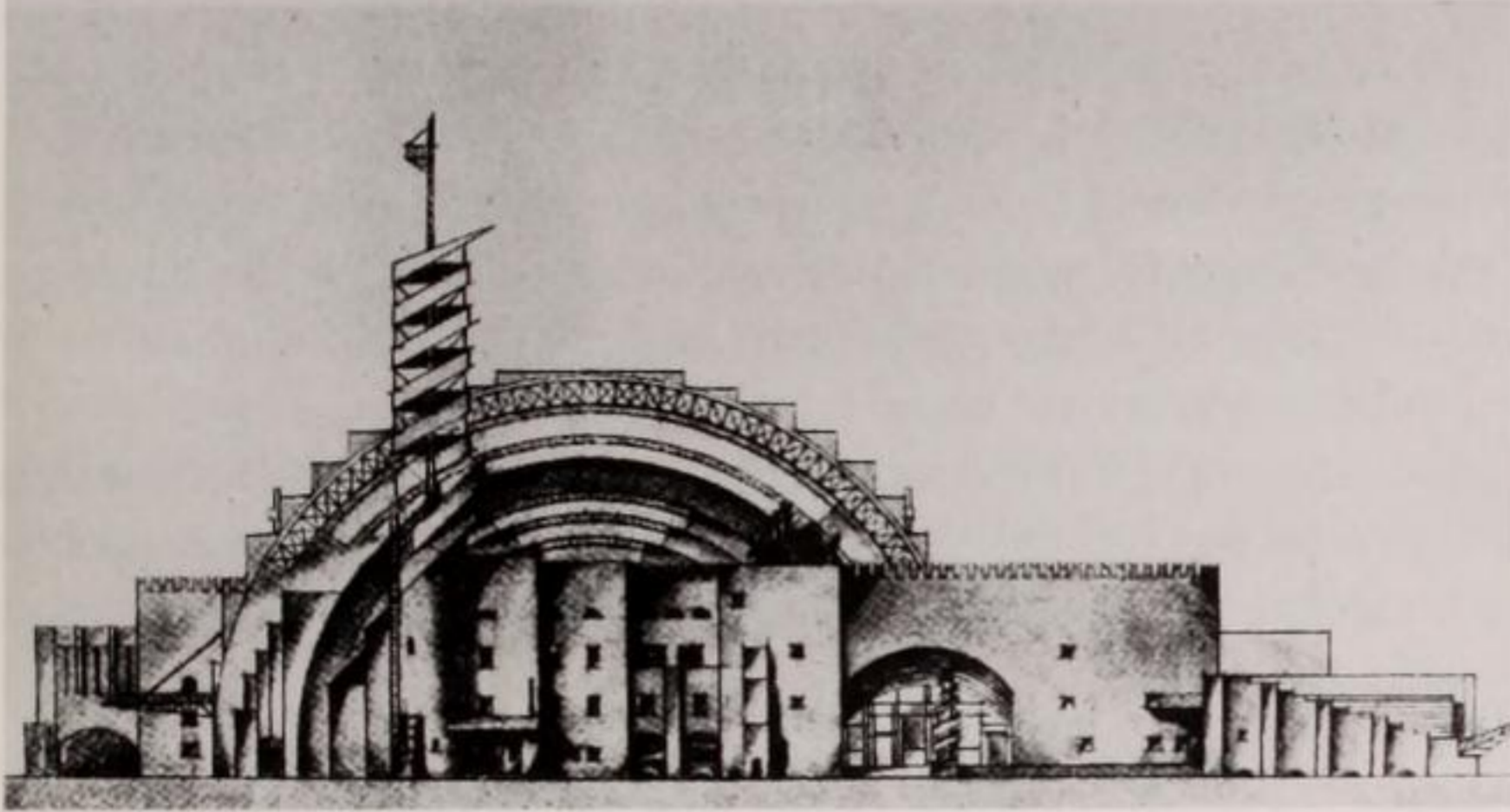
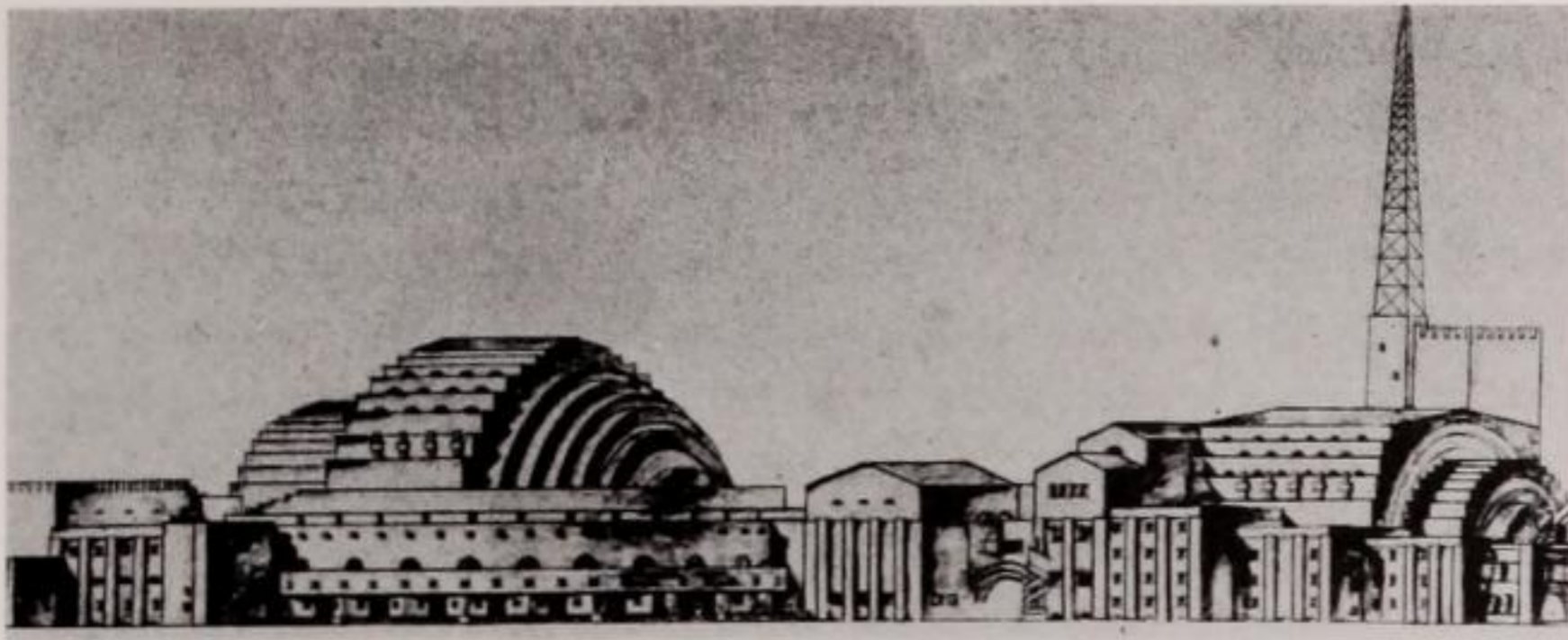
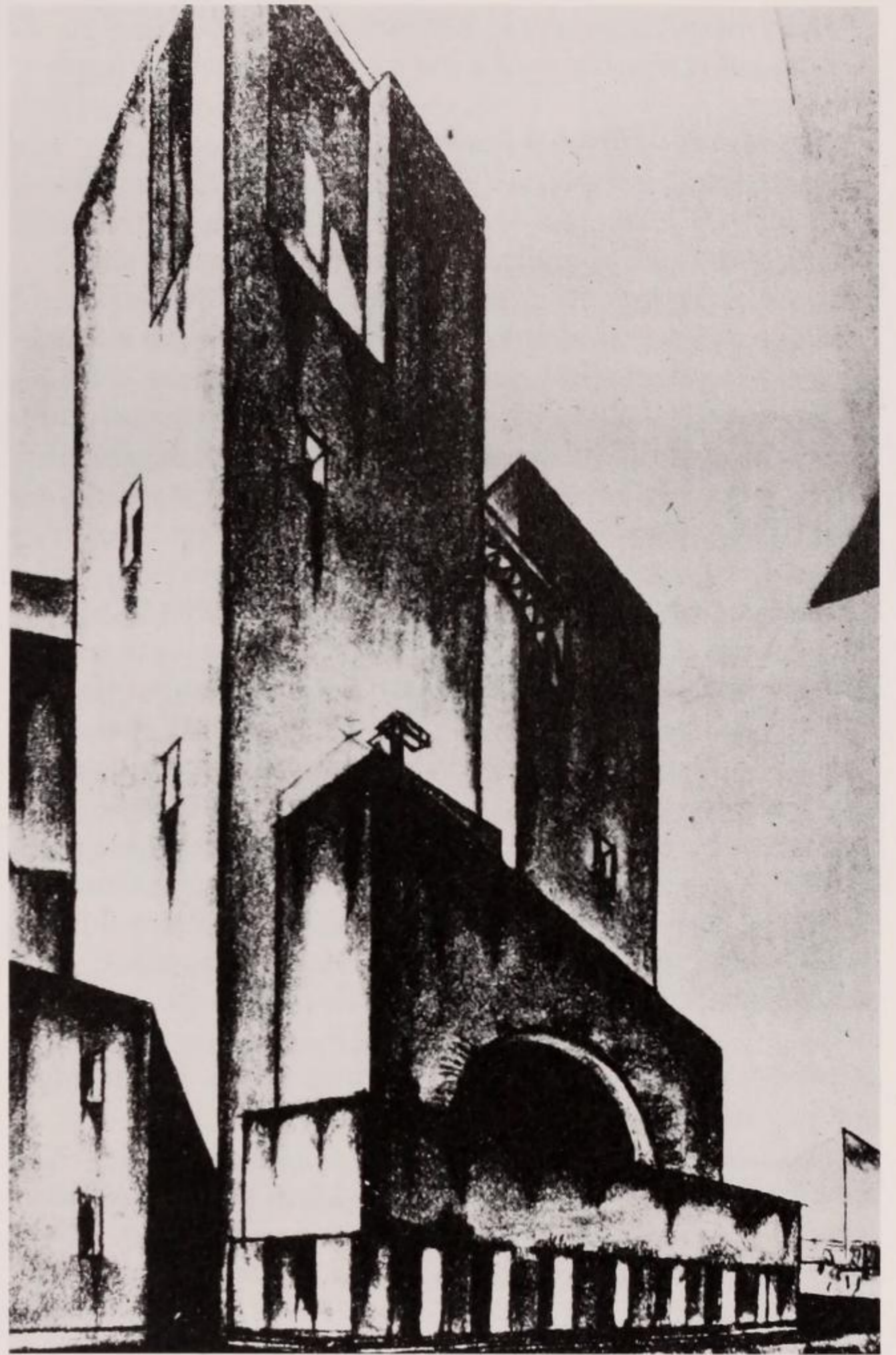


fig. 2
Aleksandr Kuznetsov
Competition project (second-prize winner) for the Palace of Labor,
Moscow; perspective, 1923.

fig. 3
Noi Trotskii
Competition project (first-prize winner) for the Palace of Labor,
Moscow; elevation, 1923.

fig. 4
Il'ia Golosov
Competition project (fifth-prize winner) for the Palace of Labor,
Moscow; elevations, 1923.

fig. 5
Moisei Ginzburg and Aleksandr Grinberg
Competition project for the Palace of Labor, Moscow; perspective, 1923.



be under very different social and technical conditions. Professionally, though, a great deal would be much the same.

Competing without Building

As war took hold, "Intensive public works began in which MAO actively participated by organizing its own lazaret for wounded soldiers . . . run by members' families under the direction of the president's wife."³⁵ The war was bringing Russia to its knees, and uprisings in February 1917 caused Czar Nikolai II to dissolve the quasidemocratic parliament, the Duma, and create a Provisional, or coalition, Government. By the summer, all this government could do against the growing force of a Bolshevik Party supported by masses of workers' councils, or soviets, was to ban its leader, Lenin, from the capital. But he got in, and hid for four months, awaiting the denouement which came in October. Of POA and OAKh in this period we lack records, but MAO was active: "Between the February and October Revolutions, the society continued its scholarly and professional work, and took upon itself the initiative of founding an All-Russian Union of Architects and Engineers, organized both for defense of our professional interests and with the aim of developing construction and the aesthetic bases of architecture."³⁶ Immediately after seizing power and declaring Russia out of the war, Lenin's government issued a decree taking all land and real estate into state ownership.³⁷ In one stroke, of course, this created the opportunity for entirely new forms of land use, as well as a redistribution of population and activities within the existing building stock. The key portfolio for education and propaganda, Narkompros (the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment), was given to Anatolii Lunacharskii, a trusted colleague but a cultivated man with considerable knowledge of the arts. In the spring of 1918, the new government moved to Moscow, which after two hundred years found itself again the capital city. It was now Moscow architects who were at the center of national policymaking, while those in the former capital increasingly focused on their own local affairs.

Like everyone else, architects in the capital now got a trade union. Iakov Raikh, one of the union's governing "temporary collective," proposed a commission to examine all existing sets of competition regulations, Russian and foreign, in order to devise something new.³⁸ Within the new Committee for State Buildings of Vesenkha (the Council of the National Economy), one department had been allocated responsibility for competition affairs, and its own documents reflected the new Party line on them: "In a proletarian state in the epoch of transition to Communism, it is evident on principle that the usefulness of competitions must be recognized, and likewise of prizes, as being measures which develop initiative, awakening energy or simply giving greater productivity of labor."³⁹ There should be competitions for all major building tasks, they said, preferably open ones, and the winner must get the job of executing the building. The competitions would form a "practical school for all participants."

The word used here for "competition" was the traditional *konkurs*, which remained the generic term for an architectural competition throughout the 1920s. But that socialism had a somewhat different notion of "competition" had been clearly spelled out by Lenin, soon after the Revolution, in a paper called "How to Organize the *Sorevnovanie*?" "Bourgeois writers have spent mountains of paper extolling *konkurentsii*," he opened, presenting *konkurentsii* as fundamental to the "capitalist structure" and the "nature of man." That vision might have had some validity at the level of individual craft units, he said, but as mass production operates today,

it means replacement of sorevnovanie by financial swindling, nepotism,

and subservience to the top of the social ladder.

Socialism not only does not cause sorevnovanie to wither away; on the contrary. For the first time it creates the possibility to apply it really widely, on a really mass scale, really to draw the majority of workers into the arena of such work, where they can show their worth, develop their capacities, demonstrate the talents which are an endlessly bubbling spring in the people, but which capitalism trampled, squeezed, suppressed.

*Our task, now that a socialist government is in power, is to organize the sorevnovanie.*⁴⁰

The first competitions of the new era genuinely attempted to embrace this newly collaborative vision, and the collective research process of the *tovarishcheskoe sorevnovanie* (comradely contest) became a regular medium for developing ideas among the new artistic and professional groups.

Nothing practical could happen on the building front as resistance to the Soviets across the country turned to civil war. For several years there would be more destruction than repair, a decimation of the building industry, and nothing new erected. But in Moscow and Petrograd (as St. Petersburg was now called), parallel organizations of architectural offices emerged under Vesenkha's Committee for State Buildings and Izo Narkompros (the Department of Fine Arts of the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment), whose Moscow architectural office was headed by Shchusev and his more rigidly Classicist contemporary, Ivan Zholtovskii.⁴¹ As teachers in the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, they gave employment in these state offices to their former students, young architects like Konstantin Mel'nikov, Vladimir Fidman, and Vladimir Krinskii. In Petrograd, too, it was a small group of the younger prerevolutionary architects who ran the new ventures: Lev Rudnev, Andrei Belograd, Shchuko, and Shchuko's former student, Vladimir Gel'freikh. With nothing to build, they started launching competitions for the new building types of the new society, drawing a cross section of society, from Lunacharskii to workers, into discussion and judgment processes. The very first competition in Petrograd, in 1918–19, was for a "wholly new type of local cultural and educational center, a Palace of Workers." Moscow's first competitions were for a city crematorium (part of the atheism campaign) and a standard House of the People for the villages. Both had a first, closed stage to establish the viability of the brief, followed by a second, open stage. Prizes were numerous, and in a new innovation reflecting everyone's straitened circumstances, it was proposed that all competitors get a payment to cover expenses.⁴²

Here the leading names of the future already started to emerge. First prize for the crematorium went to Il'ia Golosov (the younger of two brothers who qualified in the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture just before the war), who submitted three massive and romantically historicist structures. The school had now been absorbed into the new network of State Free Art Workshops, whence a current student named Nikolai Kolli took third prize with a stepped pyramid of Assyrian proportions. In a similar competition in Petrograd, prerevolutionary habits returned when the grand classical project of Fomin given first prize by the jury displeased the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, which reallocated the prize to an unknown engineer.⁴³

An Avant-Garde and Revival

More stimulating and rewarding territory for most of the younger architects was to be found among their artistic contemporaries in such groups as Zhivskul'ptarkh (the Synthesis of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture Commission) or in the little "institutes" like Inkhuk (the

Institute of Artistic Culture) and "academies" like RAKhN/GAKhN (the Russian Academy of Artistic Sciences/State Academy of Artistic Sciences) that were spawning everywhere as talking shops for experiment and new ideas. Vladimir Tatlin and Kazimir Malevich remained the alternate gurus for many, and slightly younger artists like Aleksandr Rodchenko were developing new directions of their own on the foundation of what the prerevolutionary artistic avant-garde had achieved.

The very first of these groups was called Sinskul'ptarkh (the Synthesis of Sculpture and Architecture Commission), in which the seven architects Sigizmund Dombrovskii, Fidman, Nikolai Ist'selenov, Krinskii, Nikolai Ladovskii, Raikh, and Aleksei Rukhliad'ev met with the sculptor Boris Korolev during a nine-month period in 1919. Determined to free themselves from all control of people like Zholtovskii and Shchusev, they were united by a determination to reinvent architecture from a point completely outside existing canons.⁴⁴ Through an extended form of "comradely contest," a new concept of a mass-assembly building, a Temple of Communion among Nations, was the main vehicle of their formal explorations (see plate nos. 657, 659 for examples by Krinskii). When the painters Rodchenko and Aleksandr Shevchenko joined, the group was renamed Zhivskul'ptarkh, and through 1920 the noncompetitive comradely *sorevnovanie* continued around themes of a communal house (plate nos. 654–655, 658) and a House of Soviets or, as Rodchenko called it, Sovdep (Soviet of Deputies, plate no. 653). In the summer, the group split up and most of the members shifted their activity to the new Inkhuk, which Narkompros had set up in March, under Vasilii Kandinskii, to explore the fundamentals of all visual-art forms.

By the autumn, Kandinskii and his "fine art" ideas had gone. In the first quarter of the next year, architects and artists in the General Working Group of Objective Analysis ran another collective *sorevnovanie* on a theme so fundamental it was to establish the split of aesthetic ideology that spawned the two leading movements of the architectural avant-garde, Rationalism and Constructivism. Each member must prepare works, for communal discussion, which develop "an analysis of the concepts of construction and composition and the boundary between them." (The key portfolio of comparative pairs of analytical designs is now in the Costakis Collection [plate nos. 244–253].)⁴⁵

Ladovskii, Krinskii, and their colleagues went one way, pursuing a notion of integral "composition" whose formal dynamics and perceptual effects they would explore and teach in their subsequent work under the banner of architectural Rationalism. Rodchenko, Aleksei Gan, Georgii and Vladimir Stenberg, and their colleagues went the other way, convinced that the zeitgeist for the new age of the machine was rooted in the principle of clear and conscious "construction," which, in Rodchenko's words, brought "utilization of material together with a predetermined purpose." The latter were joined by Aleksandr Vesnin, youngest of the three brothers. Currently working as a painter, he supported the ideas of the First Working Group of Constructivists, and was soon forming a vital bridge between these new artistic ideas and the world of professional architecture.⁴⁶

That year, 1921, saw the end of the Civil War as Soviet forces conquered the last outposts of the old empire. From an emergency collectivism called War Communism, the government turned to a regime of partial free enterprise called NEP (the New Economic Policy) in order to restart the wheels of economic activity. Centralized bodies like the Committee for State Buildings and the architectural studios of Narkompros were dissolved, to be gradually replaced by a free-for-all of design and construction offices. Some were agencies of local

municipalities; others were effectively profit-and-loss "companies" or, increasingly, cooperatives. NEP recreated a world not so different, for a professional, from that of before, but in an economy now in standstill rather than boom. Both human and technical aspects of the construction industry had been decimated by the hostilities.

There was a role for the architectural societies again, and during 1922, first MAO was revived, then POA and OAKh. Shchusev was MAO's new president; Ivan Ryl'skii and the oldest Vesnin, Leonid, were his deputies; and Antipov was one of two Board secretaries.⁴⁷ "Before us lies a ruined Moscow, a new social and legal environment, in which the architect's work must move in new directions," declared the Board to the membership. Yet, as Antipov reported a year later, "the halt in building activity has created a burdensome state of unemployment among architects." Amid all this, "the organization of architectural competitions is the issue of most burning importance in the society's activity."⁴⁸

Thus MAO sent a circular letter to all relevant industrial and local and central government agencies in August 1922 urging the use of architectural competitions "in order to obtain the very best possible solutions to the rebuilding and planning problems across the whole country . . . and to ensure the rational application of scarce building materials." The letter immediately brought invitations to run two competitions for the Moscow Soviet: for model workers' housing of a new kind, and for "the creation in Moscow of a grandiose Palace of Labor."⁴⁹

With the housing competition, architects resumed pioneering work from the turn of the century, but this was now a genuine attempt to define and explore what "socialist" housing for working people might be. The brief was highly realistic, with detailed schedules of accommodation for small family and single-person apartment housing—with such model amenities as a central laundry, pharmacy, and common meeting room for residents—on two green-field sites on the southern edge of the city. Management of the competition, however, with a jury of ministerial representatives, was highly conventional. Il'ia and Panteleimon Golosov figured in prize lists for both sites. The experienced Leonid Vesnin won one of them. The most original entry, spatially and conceptually, came from the young Mel'nikov. A second stage was aimed at real building, but that was still too optimistic.⁵⁰

The Palace of Labor, of course, was even less likely to get built. Its main spaces were auditoriums for 8,000 and 2,500 people, and a dining hall to seat 1,500. The brief, listing but not dimensioning the rooms, defined the concept of the new organism as a "palace" for great assemblies of workers' representatives. The site was just off Red Square and products of other competitions faced it front and back: the Hotel Metropol', now a government headquarters, to the north, and the Historical Museum to the south. Beyond a general respect for context, the brief specified quite modestly that "In the treatment of its façades and its interiors, the Palace must have a rich feeling corresponding to its purpose, but expressed in simple contemporary forms, not in the specific style of any particular past epoch." A couple of months before the closing date, however, the political charge was intensified in a speech by Sergei Kirov, one of the leading Party activists, to the First All-Union Congress of Soviets which gathered in an improvised accommodation to ratify unification of the country into the USSR. Said Kirov, "These exceptional parliaments of ours will soon need more spacious accommodation . . . let us gather all the riches of our Soviet land, invest all the creativity of our workers and peasants in this monument, to show our friends and foes that we 'semi-Asiatics,' whom they continue to look down upon, are capable of adorning this sinful earth with

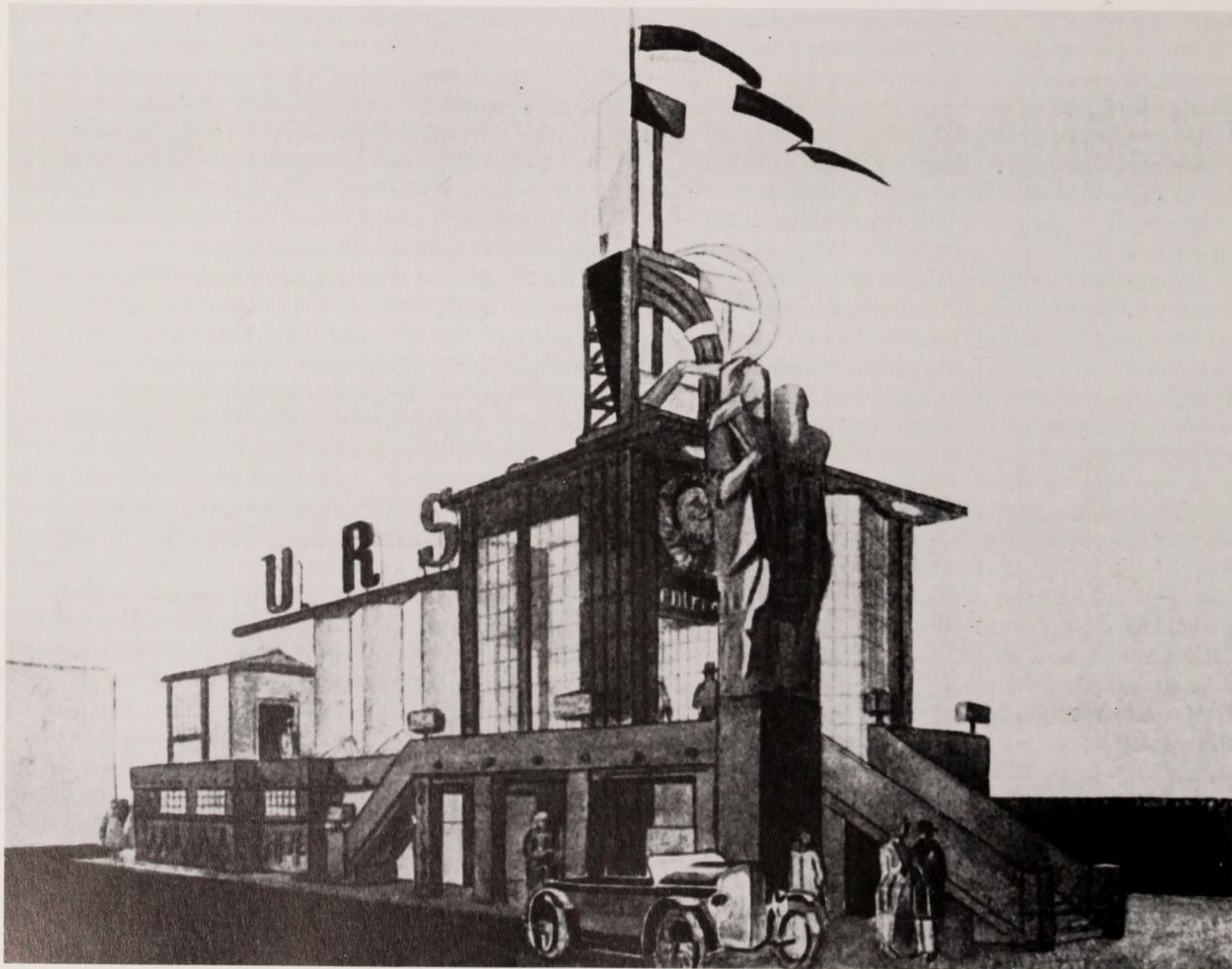
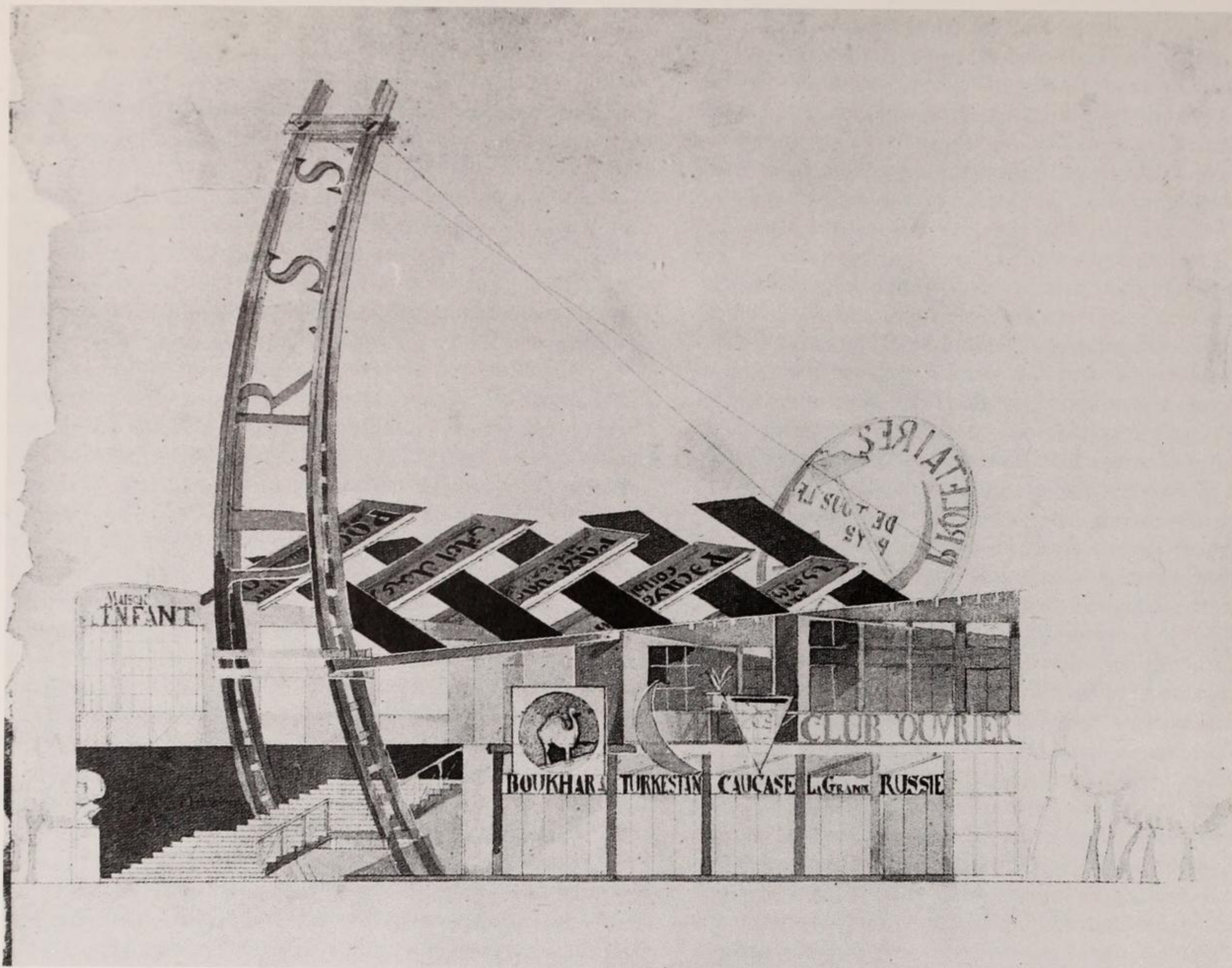


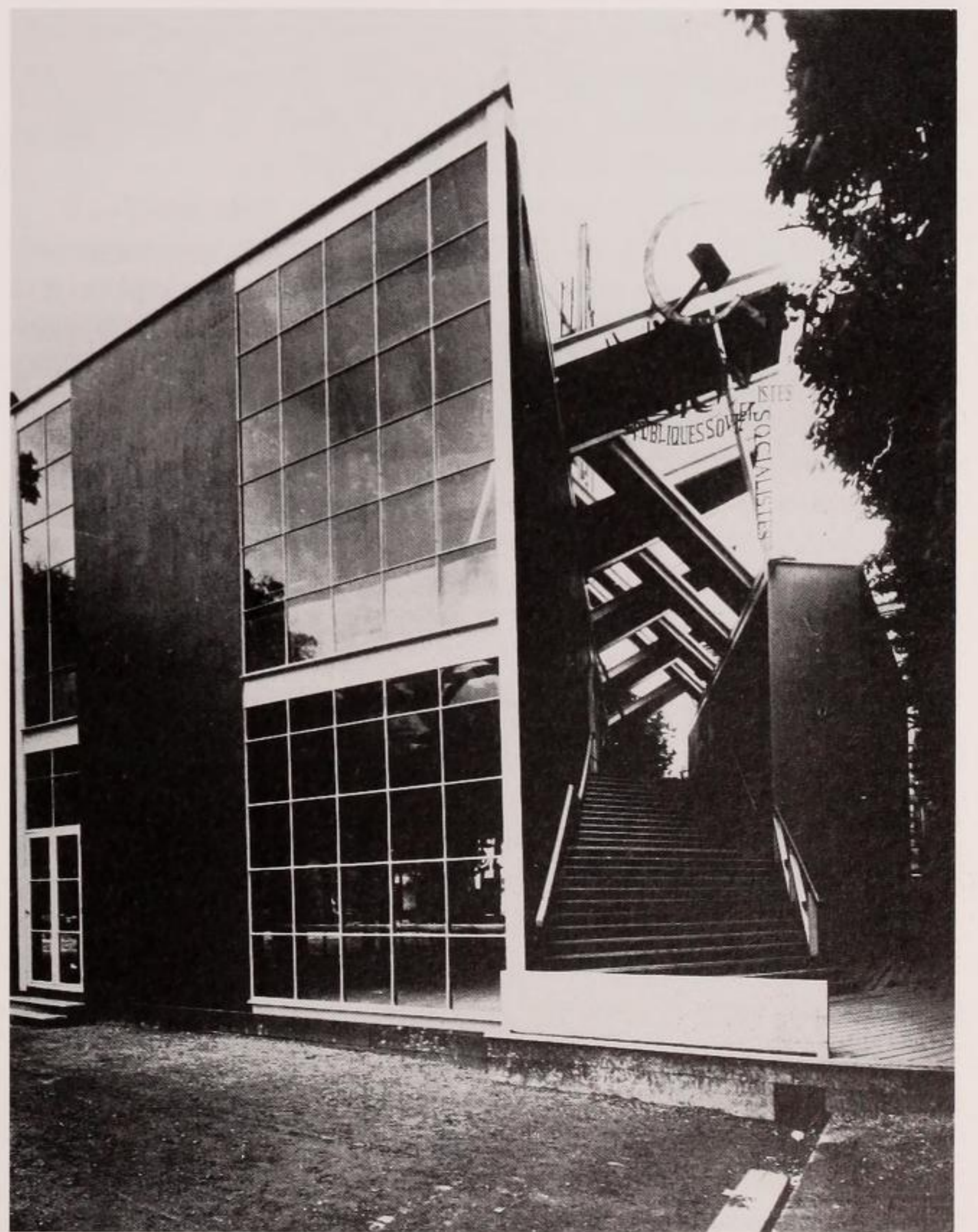


fig. 6
Konstantin Mel'nikov
Competition project (first-prize winner) for the Russian pavilion, Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, Paris; elevation, 1924.

fig. 7
Vladimir Shchuko
Competition project for the Russian pavilion, Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, Paris; perspective, 1924.

fig. 8
Ivan Fomin
Competition project for the Russian pavilion, Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, Paris; elevation, 1924.

fig. 9
Konstantin Mel'nikov
Russian pavilion, Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, Paris; completed building.



such works of great architecture as our enemies never dreamed of."⁵¹

The Palace of Labor competition was to prove seminal to the future of Soviet architecture, in particular through the impact of the Vesnin brothers' third-prize-winning entry.

Forty-seven projects were entered. Faced with handling such massive volumes, but instructed to abandon the "historical styles" with which most of them were trained to articulate such scale, many architects resorted to structurally inarticulate "masses" of masonry in lumpy, indeterminate, and generally romantic compositions. Il'ia Golosov, who came in fifth, gave some of these volumes the profile of gear wheels, others the form of a grid of pilasters (fig. no. 4). The entry of the experienced Belograd, from Petrograd, still had the air of a medieval Italian fortress. Ginzburg, a new young member of MAO, had teamed up with the experienced Grinberg, but their industrial-scale blocks were presented with Piranesian drama (fig. no. 5). The second-prize-winning scheme from another experienced Muscovite, Kuznetsov, was clearly the work of someone who understood the concrete frame imaginatively (fig. no. 2). Mel'nikov had made the building more spatial than solid by exploiting the passages and routes across the site. The winning scheme, by a newly qualified Academy student from Petrograd named Noi Trotskii, was like Hagia Sophia in external profile, but without the towers (fig. no. 3).

In this company the immaculately crisp structure and volumetric articulation of the Vesnins' scheme was unique and extraordinary (plate nos. 679, 681–682). It resulted from a synthesis of experience and ruthlessly fresh thinking. As their notes in the Constructivist literary journal *Lef* (*Left Front of the Arts*) explained: "We set ourselves the task of solving all requirements of the competition according to the principles of constructiveness, utility, rationality, and economy. All forms derive from the most rational distribution of the accommodation and how it is used, from the volumetric dimensions of it, and from the most constructive use of the materials selected, namely, iron, reinforced concrete, and glass."⁵² A few years later, the Vesnins' colleagues looked back to this project as a "landmark for Constructivism in its first real architectural manifestation," "for the first time embodying the essential principles of the new approach . . . attempting the creation of a new social organism, whose inner life flowed as a whole not from stereotypes of the past but from the novelty of the job itself." For its synthesis of social innovation and the new architecture, the Vesnins' Palace of Labor was contrasted to Walter Gropius's externally rather similar Chicago Tribune Tower, of the same date. Gropius's building was "a brilliantly executed, radically constructed object, designed with a new simplicity, but its inner content is the typical American conception of the 'business house,' while the Vesnin 'palace' originates from a new social conception of the fundamental organism of a building, so establishing the most essential characteristic of Constructivism."⁵³ With this scheme so dramatically representing the new movement, one conspicuous feature of the competition was the total absence of the Constructivists' rivals, the Rationalists like Ladovskii and Krinskii. This was no accident. The Rationalists had taken the stand advocated by Arnol'd, "following the example of the Berlin architects," back at the beginning of the competitions debate in Russia, in 1872: they would not enter a competition whose conditions they found in any way unacceptable. Their protest was against the presence on the MAO jury not just of Zholtofskii but also of the aged Fedor Shekhtel', doyen of art nouveau in Moscow at the turn of the century and president of MAO until Shchusev took over during the previous summer.⁵⁴ These two embodied everything the young Rationalists were seeking to eliminate from architecture. This was to be the start

of a campaign of radical activism to reform competition practice that they maintained throughout the decade.

MAO itself had two provincial competitions running, and was currently framing the program for another in Moscow, for a vast national sports complex called the Red Stadium.⁵⁵ It was not alone in the competition-running business: according to Kazus's figures, the annual total of competitions nationwide during 1920–24 ranged between thirteen and fifteen. But MAO was at center stage, and many members recognized that their regulations were "somewhat out-of-date, having last been revised in 1912."⁵⁶ But before their special commission reported back, the Rationalists were raising another protest, demanding changes to the brief for the Red Stadium, in which they and their Vkhutemas (the Higher Artistic-Technical Workshops) students were already somewhat involved. In a later letter to El Lissitzky, Ladovskii reported how "we won the sympathy of comrade Podvoiskii, chairman of the Society for Building the Red Stadium, whose attitude toward Shchusev and MAO was highly skeptical."⁵⁷

In an attempt at peacemaking, the Section of Technical Engineering Cadres in the Trade Union of Builders took the initiative of convening a meeting for all concerned about competitions, but as the Section's chairman Rozhanovich later regretfully admitted, "this discussion did not produce any concrete results."⁵⁸

MAO, however, was getting ever stronger. It was proudly back in publishing with a substantial journal called *Arkhitektura* (*Architecture*). The journal lasted only two issues, but these provide a useful close-up on the period. The production editor was Ginzburg, who had lately returned to Moscow after building some villas and researching vernacular architecture in the Crimea during the Civil War. He was a talented designer, scholarly and widely read, and in touch with new European ideas through having done his first degree in Milan just before the war. Having had time to think, he was now talking and writing prolifically on architectural theory.⁵⁹ His editorials for *Architecture* brought the ideas of Le Corbusier and *L'Esprit nouveau* boldly but diplomatically into the Russian context.⁶⁰ Papers he read to MAO and to the research institute RAKhN took these ideas further, connecting them with the Constructivism of the artist-designers Rodchenko and Gan and with the architectural principles demonstrated by the Vesnins in their Palace of Labor scheme.

Tired of MAO's monopoly in professional affairs, the Rationalists formed their own society in the summer of 1923, the first officially constituted new society since the Revolution. They called it Asnova (the Association of New Architects). Ladovskii and Krinskii were the leaders, and Lissitzky an active if often absent participant, who gave them a prestigious "European" link.⁶¹ In 1924, Ginzburg's earlier papers to MAO and RAKhN came out as the book *Stil' i epokha* (*Style and Epoch*). In his clear theory of architectural history and through his useful, analytical analogies between the problems of designing machines and those of designing socially new building types, Ginzburg gave a clear profile and agenda to the emerging concept of a Constructivist architecture, and a rallying point for its adherents.⁶² Meanwhile, all the "new" architects were increasingly active in competitions.

Takeoff at Home and Image Abroad

The year 1924 saw architects' takeoff into confident new architectures, and with building only just starting again after its "ten years' sleep," competitions were the main medium for developing these approaches and languages. There were five major competitions during this year, three run by MAO, one by a Party newspaper, and one—for the new country's first official building abroad—by the government. The extensive

House of Soviets for Briansk was won by Ginzburg's elder colleague on the Palace of Soviets, Grinberg, who went on to build it with his contemporary, Velikovskii.⁶³ The Moscow headquarters of Arkos, a cooperative venture running Anglo-Russian trade, was won by the Vesnins with a dramatically bold exposed frame, but remained unbuilt.⁶⁴

The *narodnyi dom* or House of the People required for the cotton-industry city of Ivanovo-Voznesensk was a new type explored back in that very first postrevolutionary competition in Petrograd. Since Lenin had died in January 1924, this one was now "named for Lenin." Like the Palace of Labor, these buildings were largely comprised of major auditoriums, and were equally difficult, therefore, to handle convincingly. Il'ia Golosov's scheme (plate no. 699) has some of the same vestigial classical elements he used for the Palace of Labor. It was one of several schemes "commended and recommended to be acquired"; others were by Raikh, Grinberg, Daniil Fridman, and Asnova members Krinskii and Rukhliad'ev. Panteleimon Golosov came in fifth, the Vesnins third, and first prize went to a slightly older member of their generation, Grigorii Barkhin, who graduated from the Imperial Academy of Arts in 1907 and worked for several of the progressive Moscow architects before the war.⁶⁵ In its planning, his building had the clarity of the Vesnins' Palace of Labor, and essentially established the "type" for the *narodnyi dom* for the rest of the decade, but it did not share the Vesnins' confident replacement of wall by frame.

This competition was an open one, run by MAO, and would have been typical of the material which a correspondent of the May issue of the journal *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'* (*The Building Industry*) had in mind when he begged for the best of non-prizewinning competition material to be acquired by some central agency for circulation to the provincial schools, "which are in extreme need of teaching textbooks on architectural design":

When architectural circles in the capitals are discussing contemporary trends in architectural composition with ever greater breadth and subtlety, students who are also future builders have little but albums of railway structures or total trash in their libraries.

Meanwhile, MAO competitions have produced dozens of talented and well-worked-out schemes for various new types of building . . . which we are too poor to publish. Mounted on pinup walls . . . as the basis for group discussions and seminars . . . they would also cease to be 'wasted work' in the designers' portfolios.⁶⁶

Whether or not this was done, the request indicates the great gulf which existed between the center and the provinces in these formative years.

The competition for a little Moscow headquarters for the newspaper *Leningrad Pravda* must rank in world records for the highest ratio of innovation to entries in any contest. It was a closed competition, launched on July 16, 1924, with only three invitations issued: to Mel'nikov, Il'ia Golosov, and the Vesnin brothers (only Aleksandr and Viktor eventually worked on it). Each competitor would receive 170 rubles, with a further 100 for the winner. The jury expressed a slight preference for the Vesnins' scheme, but deemed their entry and Mel'nikov's to deserve equal prizes.⁶⁷ Nothing was built, and no information remains on this competition beyond two sets of competitors' notes and the project drawings.

So powerful are the images, particularly the Vesnins' (plate no. 684), that it is hard to realize these buildings are hardly more than multistoried kiosks. The site allocated, on Strastnaia (now Pushkin) Square in central Moscow, measured six-by-six meters. As the Vesnins' plans show, the accommodation comprised a ground-level reception and sales desk, with room

for the caretaker, a public reading room, and work space for a few correspondents with essential utilities.⁶⁸ For the rest, as all of the competitors saw, the building was an advertisement.

For Golosov's scheme (plate no. 685) no notes remain. However, having had access to archival material, Selim Khan-Magomedov has suggested that Golosov was treating the project as "the application of a device he had worked out as an exercise for his students in the next academic year. It involved the generation of a building volume around the plan form of 'two squares rotated through forty-five degrees, so that from any direction the viewer can perceive the system.'"⁶⁹ Four elevational images are preserved which slightly clarify the result, but its overweening complexity is the best evidence that Khan-Magomedov is right about its conceptual origins.

Mel'nikov's scheme (plate no. 683) also had doubtful realism in its time, given the level of Soviet technology, though it was less unrealistic than the only other Soviet project to propose rotating volumes: Tatlin's model for the *Pamiatnik III-emu Internatsionalu* (*Monument to the Third International*) of five years before. These are the notes accompanying Mel'nikov's project:

I have provided a five-storied building in a lightweight steel structure, in order to give realism to the idea which I had, and became fascinated by, of 'an architecture that is alive.' The pavilion must undoubtedly have an element of advertising, and here it occurred to me to include the advertising within the organism of the actual building.

Onto a static circular pivot-core (containing staircases and elevators) are threaded the floors, which rotate freely in any direction: an endless fairy-tale spectacle of diverse architectural silhouettes—using the force of architectural dynamics that has not yet been put to the test.

The elevational drawing shows each floor rotated to its maximum extension.⁷⁰

The Vesnins' project is, of course, no less keenly pursuing a "concept," but it is built up by different means:

The fundamental task in designing this building was to distribute as rationally as possible, within the six-by-six-meter area for the building foundations, all accommodation necessary for the productive process specified, and to express the productive and agitational character of the building in the façades.

The building is designed, in five stories, of steel, glass, and reinforced concrete. The ground floor contains the newspaper kiosk and caretaker accommodation; first floor—public reading room; second floor—general office and advertising section; third and fourth—editorial staff. Basement—heating.

On the façade facing Strastnaia Square are located: a plate-glass window for current information; apparatus for illuminated advertisements; a clock, loudspeaker, and projector.⁷¹

Beyond this, human movement covers much of the outer surface—on balconies, in two glazed elevators, on the glazed staircase—and all working activity inside is visible across the square. It was a microcosm of the modern city as the Vesnins reinterpreted it from photographs from abroad, from night shots of Broadway and so on. Two years later, when one of their young colleagues reviewed Erich Mendelsohn's photo album *Amerika*, he wrote: "You are suddenly hit by the realization of an idea that was formerly only vaguely coalescing in your mind . . . the idea of the urbanistic city turns from an abstract concept into a reinforced concrete reality."⁷²

The third competition of 1924 represented in the present exhibition was for the building which for the first time would represent the USSR to the world. In January, the Second Congress of Soviets had approved the country's first constitution. One after another, foreign countries then

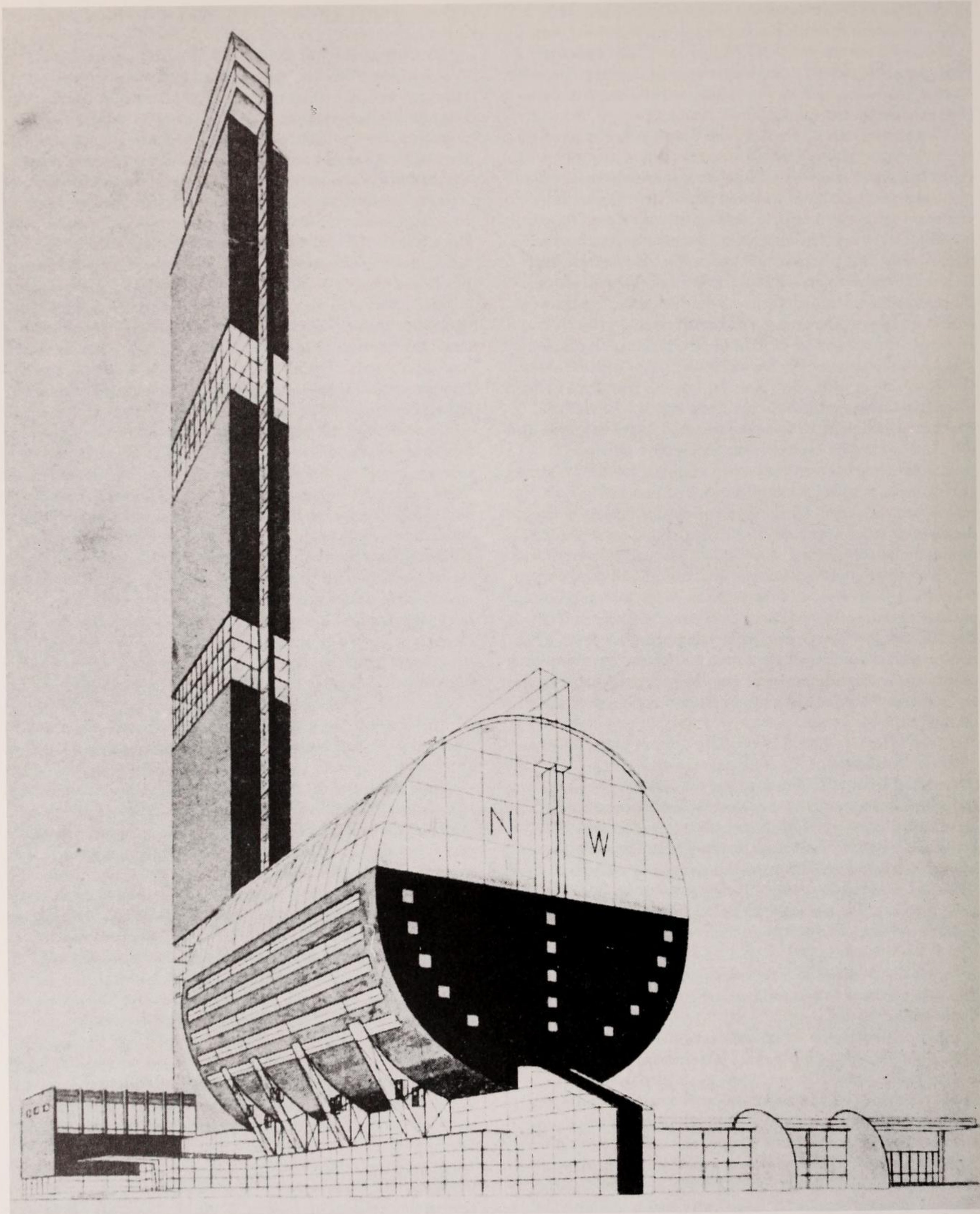
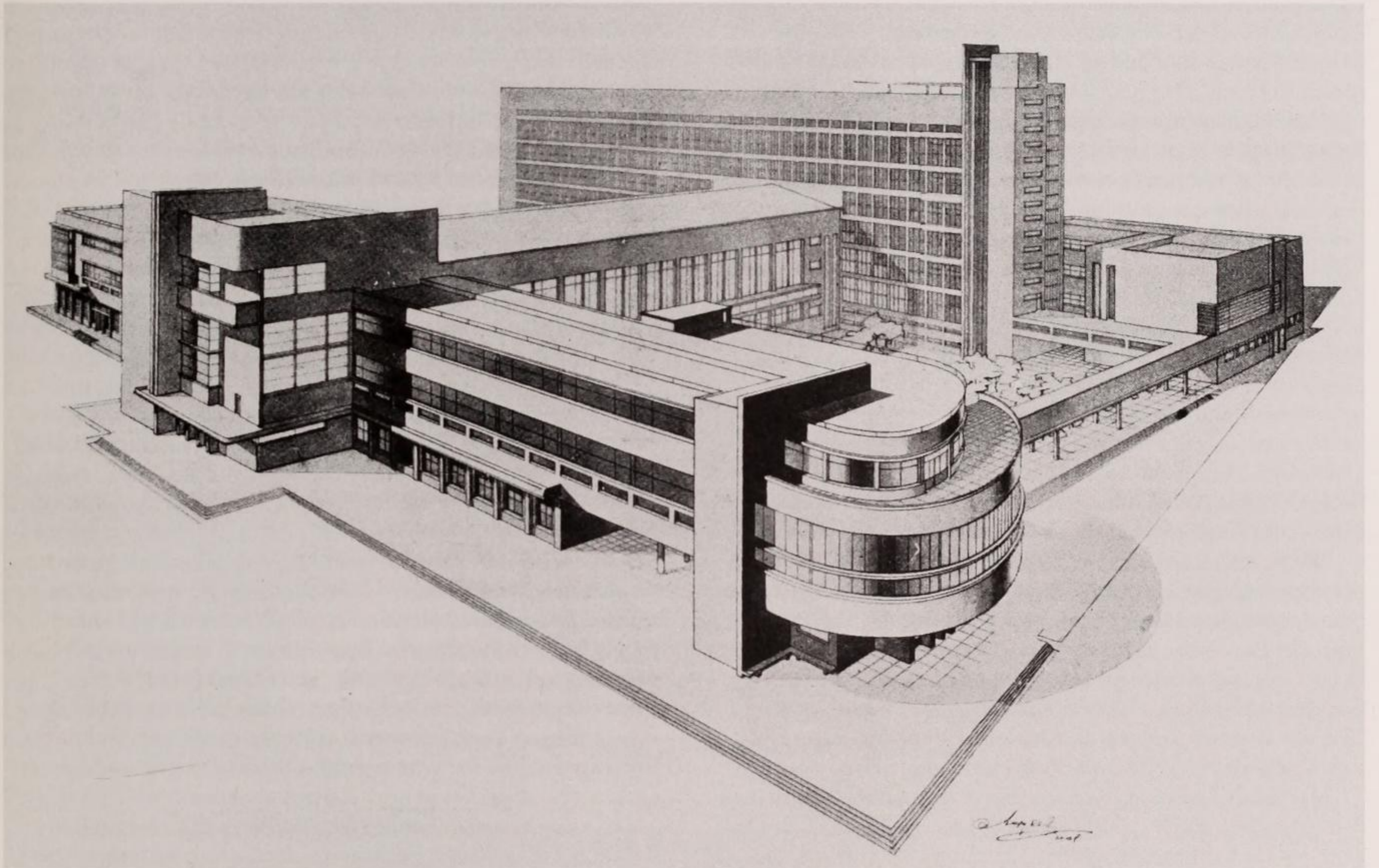
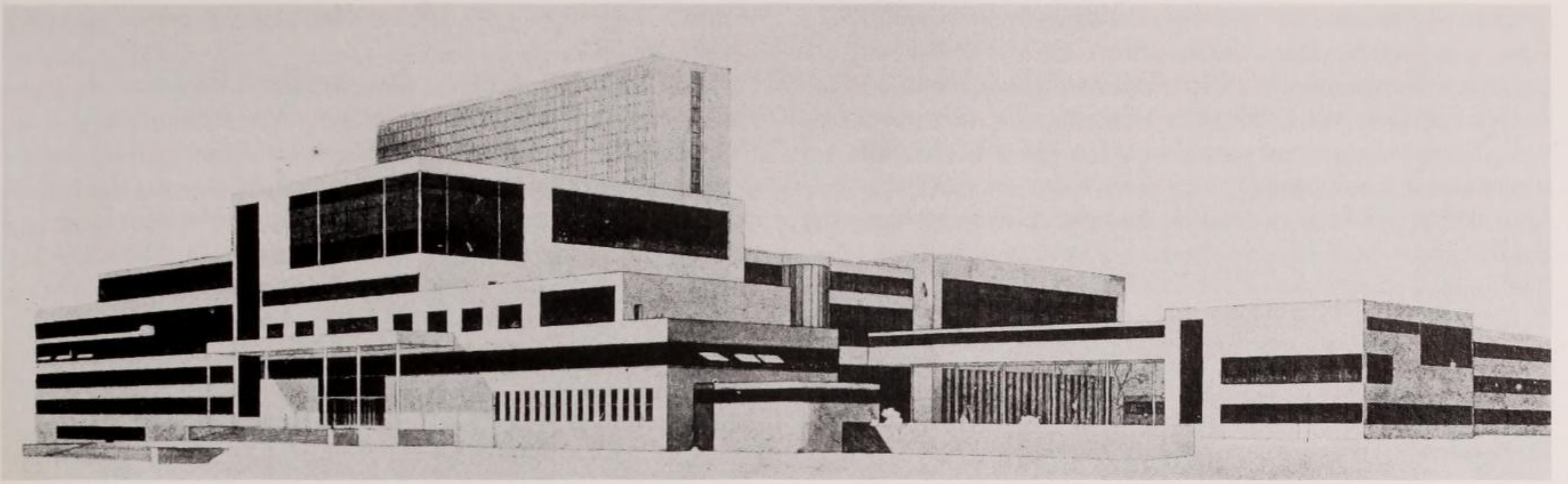


fig. 10
 Viktor Pashkov
 Vkhutemas diploma project: Lenin Library, Moscow; perspective, 1927.

fig. 11
 Aleksandr, Leonid, and Viktor Vesnin
 Competition project (second, closed stage) for the Lenin Library,
 Moscow; perspective, 1928.

fig. 12
 Aleksei Shchusev
 "Modernized" competition project (second, closed stage) for the Lenin
 Library, Moscow; perspective, 1928.

fig. 13
 Vladimir Shchuko and Vladimir Gel'freikh
 Lenin Library, Moscow, as built 1930-41 (a much retouched "official"
 montage with subway entrance pavilion later demolished).



recognized the new state and one of the last to do so was France, on October 28th. Within three days, the Soviet government received a telegram from the French prime minister inviting the USSR to participate in the next year's *Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes* (*International Exhibition of Contemporary Decorative and Industrial Art*), opening in Paris in May. Narkompros put the task in RAKhN's hands. Vladimir Maiakovskii was to plan the catalogue, Rodchenko to handle design exhibits, and a Soviet diplomat in Paris cabled back, "Have chosen site between pavilions of Great Britain and Italy. Area not great so need to build upward."⁷³

On November 15th, as all this got going, a meeting of MAO affirmed the new set of competition regulations finally produced by their commission.⁷⁴ Still highly traditional, the regulations would do nothing to prevent more protest later by Asnova and others. Nor did any such regulations apply to this uniquely prestigious and accelerated contest to represent the nation in Paris.

The "invitation to participate in a closed *sorevnovanie* for a sketch project" was rapidly issued to ten names representing all trends in the competition-winning fraternity: the Vesnins, Ginzburg, Il'ia Golosov, Mel'nikov, Ladovskii, Krinskii, Nikolai Dokuchaev, Shchuko, Fomin, and a group of recent Vkhutemas graduates. The brief stipulated that "The pavilion must above all give an impression of the uniqueness of the USSR, while being characteristic of its architectural achievements. Therefore it must be designed in the spirit of a purely contemporary architecture and, ideologically, must reflect the idea of the USSR as a state of laboring workers and peasants and a brotherly union of different nations."⁷⁵ It must be wooden, cheap, and "allow the greatest possible flow-through of people, with a broad staircase easy to ascend and good ventilation." It had also to be designed at speed.

The students and the Vesnins did not submit, but other projects were first looked at by a committee of architects and others, including Lunacharskii and Maiakovskii, on December 18th. On December 28th, they announced that Mel'nikov's project (fig. no. 6) was "best," followed by Ladovskii's and Ginzburg's. Golosov's scheme (plate no. 697) was not placed. Nor was Fomin's (fig. no. 8), which had most literally sought to embody the synthesis specified by the brief.

Mel'nikov had to redesign so that the rain could not penetrate the central passageway, and be back at 1:30 P.M. the next day for further instructions from Lunacharskii, who would now be the final arbiter of detail. Mel'nikov's reworking of the project in light of those instructions must be brought by 8 P.M. the day after that. The construction schedule was going to be similar, and it was well understood that "best," in the committee's eyes, meant the project that could most satisfactorily be modified for prefabrication and rapid assembly.⁷⁶ The rigor which the Western audience so admired in the final building (fig. no. 9) owed as much to those disciplines as to Mel'nikov's initial conception.⁷⁷ But the result put Soviet avant-garde architecture in the spotlight of international attention.

How Should Competitions Be Run? 1925-26

In 1925, the fruits of NEP were becoming apparent throughout the Soviet economy and, in particular, in building. New cooperative mechanisms throughout the production and service sectors were creating a middle way between the old private enterprise and the fully socialized, planned systems toward which the government was working. According to Kazus's count, there were twenty-nine architectural competitions announced that year, twice as many as in 1924;⁷⁸ even without searching rigorously across the building press, I have identified

fifteen. Not surprisingly, tensions and arguments were growing in parallel.

The two poles of this competition activity were neatly juxtaposed in January. First came a suitably extraordinary competition procedure for the unique task of enshrining the body of "the founder of the Soviet state." In the year since Lenin died, Shchusev had built two temporary timber mausoleums for his body on Red Square. Now a permanent structure was needed. After a speech from Lunacharskii "On Working Out the Competition Conditions," politicians and senior members of the profession announced on January 9th a procedure not of two stages but of three. The first stage was an open competition, in widest possible pursuit of what was essentially a suitably "monumental" image for the structure, and this was launched immediately.⁷⁹ The eventual building was not completed until 1930.

Descending, in Soviet terms, from the sublime to the ordinary, the real national problem was housing. Virtually no cheap workers' housing had been inherited from the old regime. Until resettled in bourgeois housing by the building nationalization of 1917, industrial workers lived in dosshouses, or several families to a room in basements and primitive barrack blocks. Practically as well as symbolically, housing construction was now at the top of the agenda for every local government and industrial concern. As MAO's first competition in this area had stressed, it was a new problem for a new social task, but it needed practical solutions from people with building experience, rather than obscure geometry.

This theme was publicly reinforced in January 1925 by an article in the main periodical of construction and municipal affairs, *The Building Industry*. Velikovskii, author of the article, was an IGI-trained man, a slightly older colleague of the Vesnins. Just starting on his drawing board was the Gostorg building in central Moscow, which Alfred H. Barr, Jr. would describe soon after its completion as "easily the finest modern architecture in Moscow, very Gropius in style with all glass sections, steamboat balconies, etc."⁸⁰ Velikovskii was already deeply involved in the new house-building cooperatives.⁸¹ He was thus well placed to see that "the character of the construction work that is starting to take place now is entirely different from those forms and tasks which we had in the previous epoch," and that beyond the social change, architects faced a change in the nature of design itself.

As a process, said Velikovskii, building design could no longer move by a slow evolution, "developing by stages from one case to the next"; it required the generating of organisms that were entirely new. On the ground, likewise, development could no longer be incremental: new settlements had to be conceived as an integrated whole in one go, "according to a single plan." These tasks were too complex even for "an architect of special and unusually diverse erudition," and design of the new integrated residential areas must become a "public process." "A competition of projects would be such a process," whereby all sections of society, as well as young and old from all relevant professions, could be drawn into discussions, "continuously expanding the range of participants in the process." It must be forbidden to finance any development not proceeding in this way. "Competitions themselves must be modified, to bring them down from the quasi-artistic clouds and get them firmly onto earth-based rails" with real construction and costing details, and clear, simple drawings "that do not distract judges from the essential ideas."⁸²

When the Moscow Soviet announced its first two housing competitions later that year—one for family housing, the other for semi-communalized housing—they were aimed at, and attracted, quite a different section of the architectural

profession from those who succeeded with the prestige public buildings. MAO representatives on the jury were swamped by people from eleven technical and housing organizations, and the brief included such unprecedented requirements as "the serviceable life span of the building must correspond to the amortization period of the capital invested," and "materials and equipment must be those available through the local market and production."⁸³ At a larger scale, Velikovskii's combination of the radical and the practical was typical of the role his slightly older generation could play. More open, participatory processes of this kind abounded over the next few years, though typically (as now) not producing high architecture.

In the explosion of competitions, their subject matter was widening. New big public-assembly buildings—under various names, such as House of Labor or Palace of Culture—were needed as catalysts of new consciousness in towns across the country.⁸⁴ The new industrial and cooperative banks needed buildings. The Moscow House of Textiles competition typified the central business house sought by the central administrations of different industries. As the hub of the country's affairs, Moscow also needed a new Central Telegraph, Telephone, and Post Office, for which another competition ran this year. Even industrial plants became the subjects of competition in November, when Tsugprom (the Central Administration of State Industry) launched the country's first competition in this field, for a textile mill in Ivanovo-Voznesensk.⁸⁵ In December, with great success in restoration of industry achieved under NEP, the Fourteenth Party Congress launched the country on the first step toward central planning. The new official policy was a "socialist industrialization of the USSR" that would be led by heavy industry. Amid all this, the unsuspecting Erich Mendelsohn became the focus of a new row about competitions.

In the spring of 1925, managers of Leningrad's Textile Trust had visited Germany and commissioned Mendelsohn, known to them as a designer of several textile plants, "as a consultant to present an alternative design to the project produced by their own architects" for a large new complex for Leningrad. It was plainly his visit in October, "with a preliminary scheme and model," which brought the situation to public attention.⁸⁶ Someone seems to have alerted *The Building Industry* to a "scandal," on which their editors then sought various views. Thus their December issue carried three "statements" expressing various degrees of indignation. Shchusev and Antipov, president and secretary of MAO, expressed the society's "bewilderment at the issuing by one of our largest industrial trusts of a personal commission to an architect from Germany," for "architects of the USSR are hardly to be pushed aside for any lack of technical adequacy in such tasks." In their opinion, any such commissioning of foreigners "must take place only as a result of a competition, which Soviet architects consider to be the only correct approach [to commissioning a building]." MAO was confident that competitions would show "our architects are closer to understanding our new social priorities than Westerners are."

The Circle of Civil Engineers thought it much better "to bring in from abroad whole teams of relevant specialists from established bureaus, who are accustomed to working on the same project together." Given the gulf in technical standards, Asnova thought it was "more rational to seek organizational means" through which Soviet and Western architects "could conduct work collaboratively."⁸⁷

This did not end the attacks on Mendelsohn: over a year later, he was still publicly defending himself in the Soviet architectural press.⁸⁸ After the Fourteenth Party Congress launched the national industrialization drive in December 1925, building and design work were increasingly distributed among

specialized offices "according to a plan," like everything else. Thus as building began to take off, with architectural competitions continuing to double each year and with an ever greater consciousness of the need for Western technical help, the Mendelsohn row provided timely clarification of principle on how foreign architects were to be used and selected. In the same month, the Constructivists entered all aspects of public debate with new force as they formed an officially registered group, OSA (the Union of Contemporary Architects). The founders were the growing number of architects and students in the circle around Ginzburg and the Vesnins.⁸⁹ During the next year, 1926, they launched a substantial bimonthly architectural journal, *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* (*Contemporary Architecture*). During that next year, the issue of architectural competitions was continuously under debate.

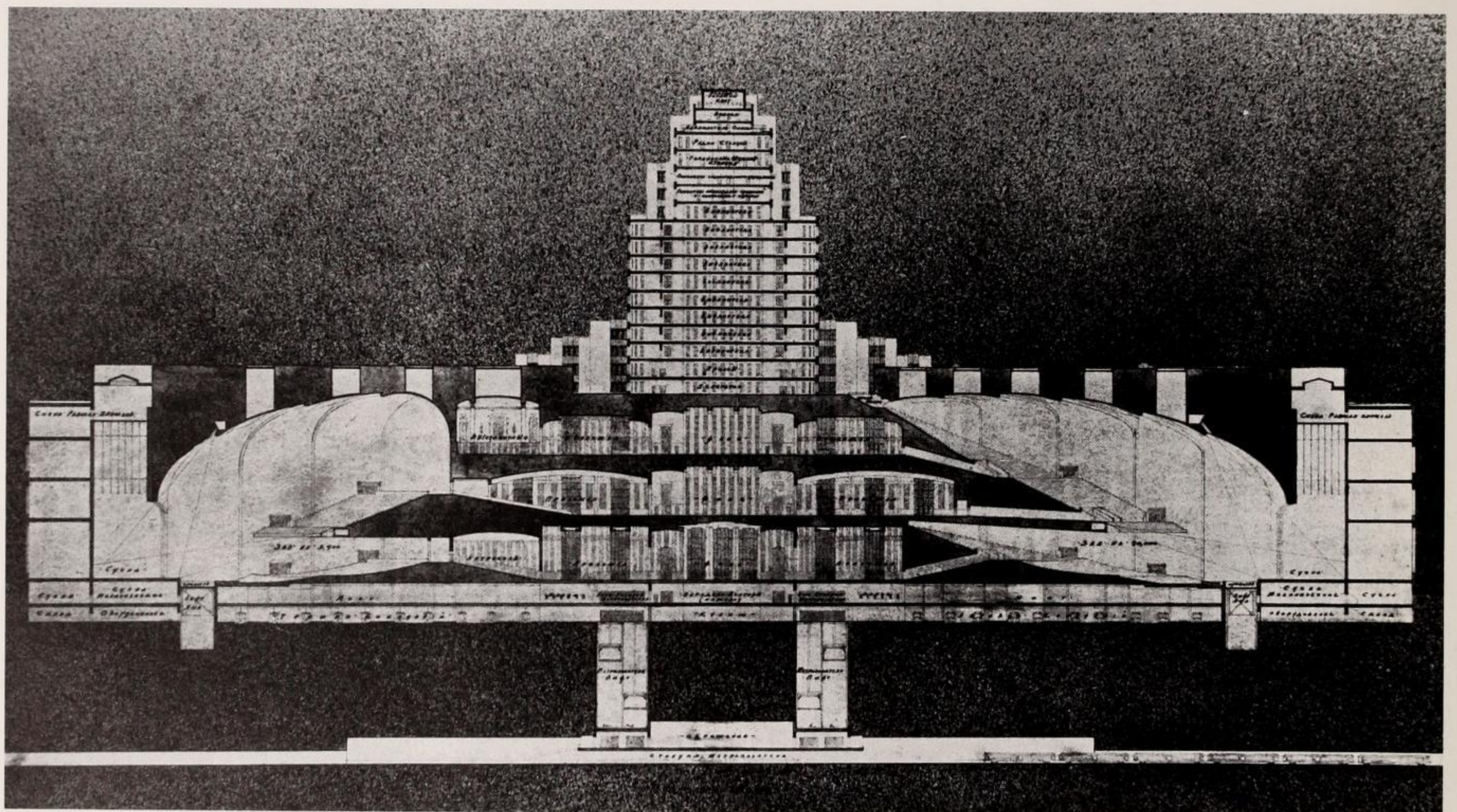
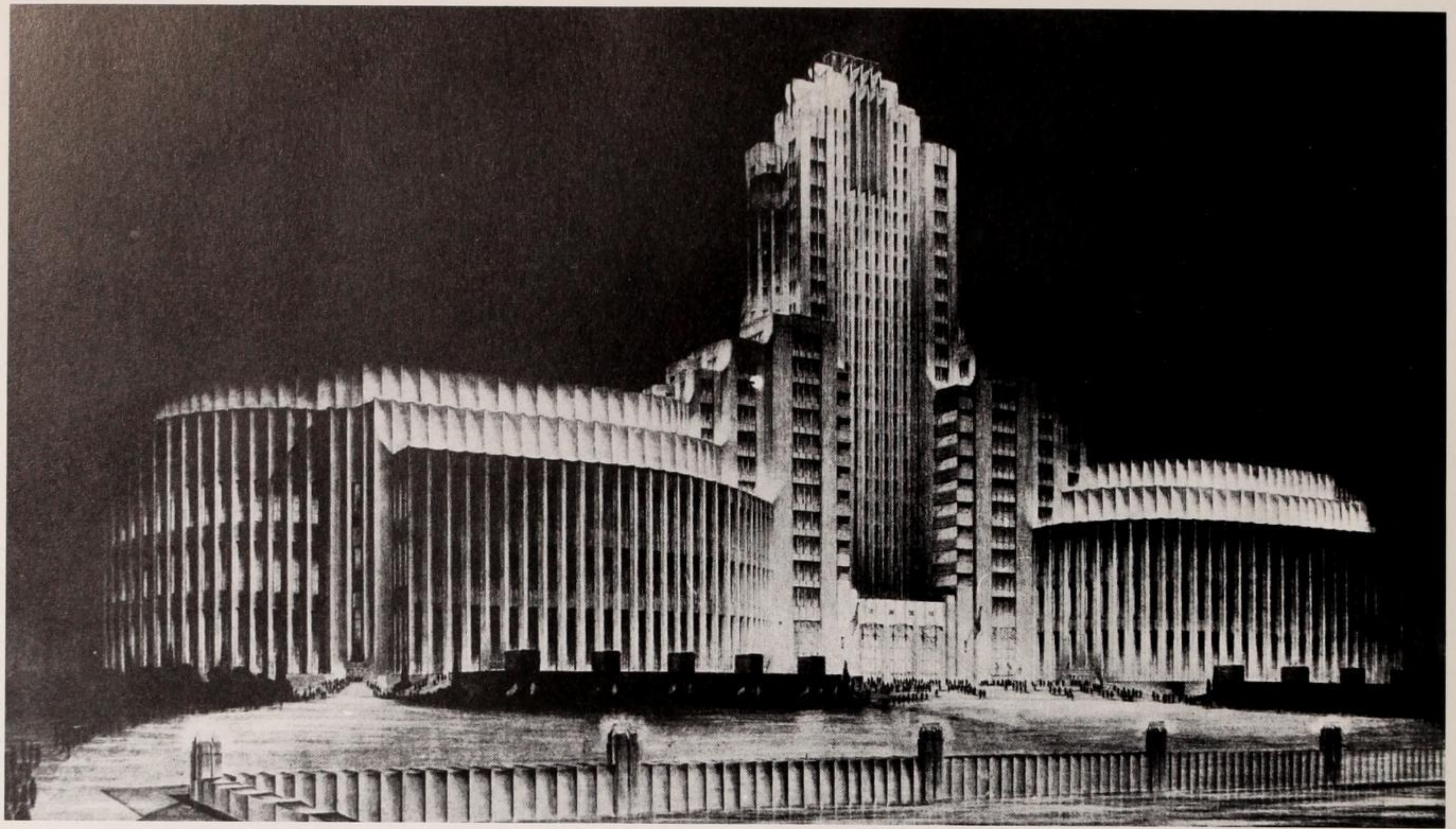
"The Organization of Competitions Is Intolerable"

With so many views already in the air, a senior member of the Technical Cadres department of the Trade Union of Builders, Rozenberg, an OAKh member before and after the Revolution, took several pages of *The Building Industry* in February 1926 to lay out the issues. As his boss Rozhanovich said in a preamble, "there is unanimity only on one fact: that the existing position with the organization of competitions is intolerable under conditions of the Soviet state." The reason was clear, as Rozenberg put it: "Competitions are one of the most advanced and sophisticated methods of creating designs for a building, [but] the culture of competitions that was carefully devised over several decades in czarist times has been transplanted into the new social and political conditions without any questioning of how far it might be appropriate to it." As a systematic exposition of current issues and problems in competition practice, Rozenberg's paper was comparable to that of Arnol'd back at the beginning of the first expansion of competitions, in 1872. Rozenberg examined competitions systematically, as "stimuli to creative design work," and then from legal, economic, professional, and public points of view.

Many of his observations were by now well rehearsed, but he cited new points of great potential importance to the whole competition policy, and some figures that later were to be much used to vindicate the importance of competitions.

As "stimuli to creativity" and as a form of legal contract between designer and client, competitions were not much changed by the new political structure, Rozenberg said. The most profound consequences for the type of competition appropriate in Soviet conditions arose, as he saw it, from "the fact that most buildings are now state property, and that the economic interests of owners and the state therefore now coincide." The real contribution of a competition, he said, was to generate options for "correct utilization of the site allocated for the building, in such a way that the processes which the building serves to organize will be given the most economical and efficient organization possible, for the given volume of construction."

In the nature of design, these issues are the ones "being primarily solved at the level of the basic sketch scheme." "The difference between a good solution and a bad one at this level," he said, "is usually not more than 5–10 percent of building costs, but is sometimes significantly higher, whereas a client's outlay on a competition may be about 1 percent of building costs." Since nothing in the later detailing-up of a building influences this figure significantly, the preference for the competition method is a "simple economic calculation." But more significantly, it indicates that, as a general rule,



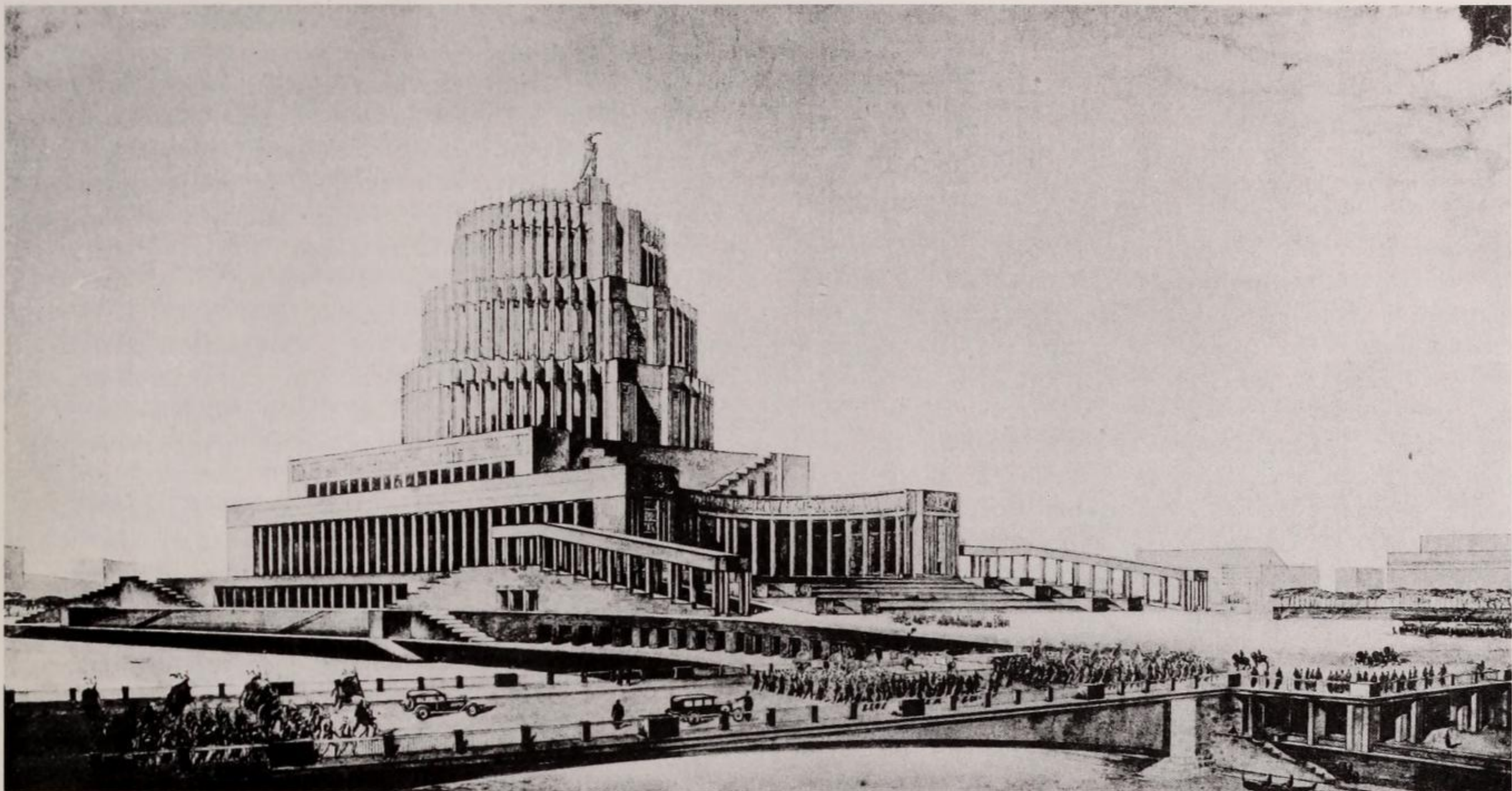


fig. 14
Hector O. Hamilton
*Competition project (reworked scheme) for the Palace of Soviets,
Moscow; perspective of riverward side, 1932.*

fig. 15
Hector O. Hamilton
*Competition project (reworked scheme) for the Palace of Soviets,
Moscow; section, 1932.*

fig. 16
Boris Iofan
*Competition project (selected as basis of final scheme) for the Palace of
Soviets, Moscow; perspective, 1932.*

it is more appropriate to limit the competition to just sketch-stage solutions, requiring a creative concept, since the greater the number of designers attracted into the process, the greater the field of search, and thus the greater probability of finding a successful solution.

This is the viewpoint from which it is necessary to approach the drawing up of the competition program.

This was already a widely held opinion. More contentious was the proposal that competitors should present "not a final set of drawings but an economic and constructional analysis of a series of variants with comparative calculations, derived from what will inevitably have been, as every designer knows, dozens of sketches that precede the finally resolved idea." With this in mind, he said, "it follows that it is better not to set a very exact program which confines creativity, for a very tightly defined program often predetermines one variant of the general solution, reducing creativity to the solution of some geometrical charades."⁹⁰ This view was to be robustly reinforced by OSA in their new journal.

Rozenberg's conclusion was a logical preference for the two-stage competition: the first for sketch schemes; the second, with a fuller brief, to work these into detail. In the new circumstances this was also a far more responsible use of scarce architectural manpower. This led him to the vexed question of inviting foreigners, where his view followed MAO's: wherever "technical intervention" is necessary, "the international competition is the very best form of it." To sort out the competition business and regulate it, there should be a central Competitions Committee, combining state agencies with "representatives of the professional and technical societies" who would have a hierarchy of "commissions" operating in each republic and region.

Much of this was very favorable to the position of the avant-gardists. But this last proposal inflamed another row. In May, a major congress on construction took place in Moscow. As the Constructivists reported it in their new journal, *Contemporary Architecture*: "Rozenberg's proposals for a central bureaucratic organization of competitions met with unanimous rejection by architects attending the congress. It was significant that all differences of view between Muscovites and Leningraders on aspects of detail were set aside, and representatives spoke out as a united front for defense of the slogan 'the free competition, organized by representatives of the competitors.'⁹¹ There were numerous heated exchanges over questions of "the competitor's interests." Shchusev, for instance, insisted that two-stage "sketch" competitions were disastrous for architects, as ordinary people could not read such drawings: "If we permit small-sketch competitions, they will not be properly understood. The public needs to have large-scale detailed drawings."⁹² The most powerful blast came from Asnova just after the congress in a short statement "In Defense of Competitors." Asnova, too, started a journal, modest and short-lived compared to OSA's, but as ever with a fresh, designerly view aimed at maximizing the positive exploitation of design creativity and of advancing architectural innovation.

One side of Asnova's thinking was aimed at achieving a far richer and better informed dialogue between the competitors and the client and jury. Competitors must play a part in shaping the brief that went beyond the usual ritual of questions and answers. More significantly, the whole manner in which jury members "spoke for" entries at the first sifting must be changed, to follow the model of law courts. The mediators between projects and jurors should be specialists, speaking for and against projects in front of the jury, with the competitor having the right "to send in his comments on the experts' conclusions" up to the final judging, in order to guarantee judgments were not made "on the basis of a

misunderstanding about the considerations which have motivated the design." The jury in this model would be akin to a legal jury: not specialists but people to balance the evidence for and against as presented to them by the advocates.

This was interesting and radical, but most fundamental to the question of what competitions were (or are) for were Asnova's proposals on prizes. "The practical fact that only one design is required for actually building" meant that one significant prize should be given to "the scheme which best answers the requirements of the brief." But then "another prize must be given for the project which, though not necessarily following the brief literally, contains in itself an *extraordinary proposal*. Remaining monies should be divided into as many small prizes as possible, to recompense entrants for labor and materials expended."⁹³

Both these proposals have as many ramifications now as then for the terms of judgment, the conduct of a public-professional debate on architecture, and the role of competitions. The issue of the "extraordinary proposal" was one of the most powerful ideas emerging in this entire debate. It led to some of the most vexatious cases raised by competitions of the next few years, in particular as the young Vesnin student, Leonidov, started making his mark. It also goes to the very heart of the larger issue of competitions which I touched on at the beginning, that of their longer-term contribution to developing the collective resources of architecture as a whole.

Leonidov was still very much a student when his teachers launched *Contemporary Architecture*, though his work soon started to appear in it. The first issue, which came out about the time of the Builders Congress, showed OSA increasingly heading for confrontation with MAO. The immediate conflict was over two MAO competitions recently concluded.

The prize list for the House of Textiles competition was well filled with OSA members: of the eight prizes given, Il'ia Golosov took the first, Ginzburg the third, and three other founding members, students and recent graduates, the sixth.⁹⁴ Their complaints about the brief therefore carried some authority, and they precisely exemplified Rozenberg's criticisms of a brief so specific that design was reduced to a "geometrical charade." "The program written by MAO on behalf of the Textile Syndicate already gave 90 percent of the solution." Not only did it go into "the exact floor area for every secretary in the building" but, "as has become typical of our programs," it specified the number of floors the building must have (ten) and, worse still, laid down precisely which activity was to be located on which floor. This building was another multifunctional complex akin to Arkos in its conception. All such complexes were based on the traditional Moscow concept of the *delovyi dvor* or "business house," a trading base that included everything from warehousing to hotel accommodation for visitors. The old business district near Red Square where these new headquarters were being located was full of buildings conceived on this model. As the OSA author (probably Ginzburg) put it in relation to the House of Textiles, "any healthy-thinking architect knows that all these different functions like housing, banking, etc., require different conditions and, in particular, different block depths, so what is the rationality of arranging them thus on the vertical?" By their brief, "the competition organizers cut off at the root any possibility for the emergence of interesting solutions. Briefs like this cannot be the arena for any kind of creative contest." It was merely a "colossal squandering of forty architects' energies."⁹⁵

The story of the Central Telegraph was even more juicy, much of it redolent of prerevolutionary practice. *Contemporary Architecture* headed its attack by reproducing the relevant press

cutting from *Pravda*. In this MAO competition, six prizes were awarded. (Grinberg was first, Leonid and Aleksandr Vesnin second.) The Postal Department had simultaneously commissioned two projects, from Shchusev and Rerberg, *bors concours*. Overturning the competition result, the department had decided Rerberg's was best "for daylighting, construction, and use of site, giving maximum possibilities for future expansion." *Contemporary Architecture* was almost speechless: "Certainly the Postal Department's engineers are not obligated to know anything about architecture. Nonetheless, it would be worth getting them to understand that a building cannot have 'good daylight' when . . ."—and they enumerated the building's absurdities with respect to all claims of its merits, as well as its distinctly retro style.⁹⁶ By a timely accident, Bruno Taut passed through Moscow with Mendelsohn and publicly supported OSA's critique, leaving them happily "convinced that the international front of modern architecture is becoming a practical reality."⁹⁷ In his lecture to MAO, Taut explained the German system of jury decision by secret ballot.⁹⁸

The waste of professional energies was a theme to which Rozenberg returned again in *The Building Industry* in August. Figures from fourteen competitions run by MAO showed eight hundred submissions for the eleven principal ones. Whatever the competitions' value as training for young architects and students, "eighty prizes went to old and distinguished architects, who took between one and eleven prizes each." He recalled the prerevolutionary practice of established architects holding back in favor of the young. The other problem of MAO's dominance was the routinized judgment resulting from "their jury members too zealously manifesting their own tastes." The prerevolutionary situation was returning, when no Muscovite bothered to enter a competition announced by the St. Petersburg society, and vice versa. (Leningraders had far less enthusiastically rejected classical elements in favor of total modernity.) Many of the other old problems were recurring: too short a submission period, so that serious design studies were impossible and entry was reduced to "a kind of lottery." How many entries should constitute a "valid" competition? How to prevent juries full of "specialists and representatives" being so large that "no one felt any real personal responsibility?" Just at the moment when "we need a way to handle the oncoming avalanche of project work," Rozenberg said, "we have competitions that increasingly satisfy nobody: not competitors, client, the public, or the state."⁹⁹

MAO's secretary, Antipov, came back shortly with what was essentially the society's defense, still totally opposed to any "central bureaucracy." But he recognized that Asnova's ideas on "the system of premiation and jury work . . . deserved attention." The one thing worth centralizing (as others had proposed back in 1924) was a publication of good entries "to popularize contemporary architectural trends, especially for the provinces, which are completely cut off from this." In a further plug for his society, he previewed the volume of competition schemes they had in press for precisely this purpose.¹⁰⁰

Boom Years for the New Architecture, 1926-27

Meanwhile, the avant-garde groups went their own ways internally, following their own principles. The Constructivists in OSA started research on the most urgent problem—housing—through organizing their own internal contest, a "comradely socialist *sorevnovanie*," "entirely free, and without program."¹⁰¹ The results of this work, from both the Moscow and Leningrad branches, were highly fruitful, producing new apartment types more relevant to current family structure and new spatial configurations for housing blocks. It formed the starting point of all their well-known housing research

thereafter, in the Stroikom RSFSR (the Russian State Building Committee) and in their Narkomfin and other model projects. Though increasingly opposed to MAO now, the Constructivists were effectively the legatees of the freethinking, scientifically-based approach which MAO had made characteristically Muscovite when it was founded.¹⁰²

Equally focused on housing, Asnova used a commission it had from the Moscow Soviet for a site at Shabolovka in southern Moscow to demonstrate its concept of a competition. Each participant in the first stage received money commensurate with his contribution, with the highest reward going to the *chrezvychainyi* or "extraordinary" proposal. After all participants had discussed the body of work together, and after they had examined the criticisms which came back from the client, the best variants formed the basis for a final project which was worked out together by the authors of those best variants.¹⁰³ The result was genuinely the collective product of group work, and offered, as they saw it, a model for the socialist competition.

As this work proceeded through 1926 and 1927, the number of competitions rose to thirty-five and fifty-seven, respectively,¹⁰⁴ with major public complexes all over the Soviet Union going to competition and with a sharp rise in industrial schemes.

In one notable confrontation, Ginzburg fought a battle of ideologies with Zholtovskii over "how to respond to local traditions" in the House of Soviets competition for Makhachkala in Dagestan; Ginzburg ridiculed Zholtovskii's "stylization" in relation to the results of objective climatic and social study conducted through the Constructivist "functional method of design."¹⁰⁵ By winning a similar competition for the House of Government in Alma-Ata the next year, Ginzburg got his own back and the chance to demonstrate the power of the new approach to handle these Central Asian contexts. In 1926, his Orgametal building was another distinguished "business house" project unrealized for Moscow.¹⁰⁶ A similar design task from that year was the Elektrobank scheme by Il'ia Golosov (plate no. 700). It has become traditional in Soviet literature to call the scheme a "competition project," though to my knowledge no one has produced documentation on the competition itself or other entries. Golosov had designed a housing block for Elektrobank earlier,¹⁰⁷ and this may have been some small contest by invitation. Whatever its origins, the scheme itself is a perfect example of the gulf between "impractical" proposals and the current state of the Soviet building-materials market which had inflamed "realists" at the Builders Congress when they saw the MAO display of competition entries.¹⁰⁸

In 1927, Golosov's elder brother Panteleimon had significant successes. A middle-of-the-road Modernist in MAO and not allied with Constructivism, he took first prize in the spring for the Khar'kov Central Postal Depot, which he then built, and second prize three months later, in another MAO competition, for the Sovkino moviemaking complex outside Moscow.¹⁰⁹ Talented students were following close behind: a group from MVTU (the Moscow Technical School) came in second for Khar'kov; Ginzburg took the first prize for the new Polytechnic in Ivanovo-Voznesensk together with one of his students, Ignatii Milinis, who increasingly figured in the lists on his own. With the spring months dominated by Party decrees on industrialization and rationalization, Leningrad became something of a center for competitions in this field. With the Engineers Association, LAO and OAKh formed a special Bureau for Industrial Competitions, which announced eight of them, and all competitions announced in Leningrad that year were industrial ones.¹¹⁰ One of the very few Iakov Chernikhov designs we have for real buildings appears to have

fig. 17

Ivan Fomin

Competition project for Narkomtiazhprom, Moscow; elevation onto Red Square, 1934.

fig. 18

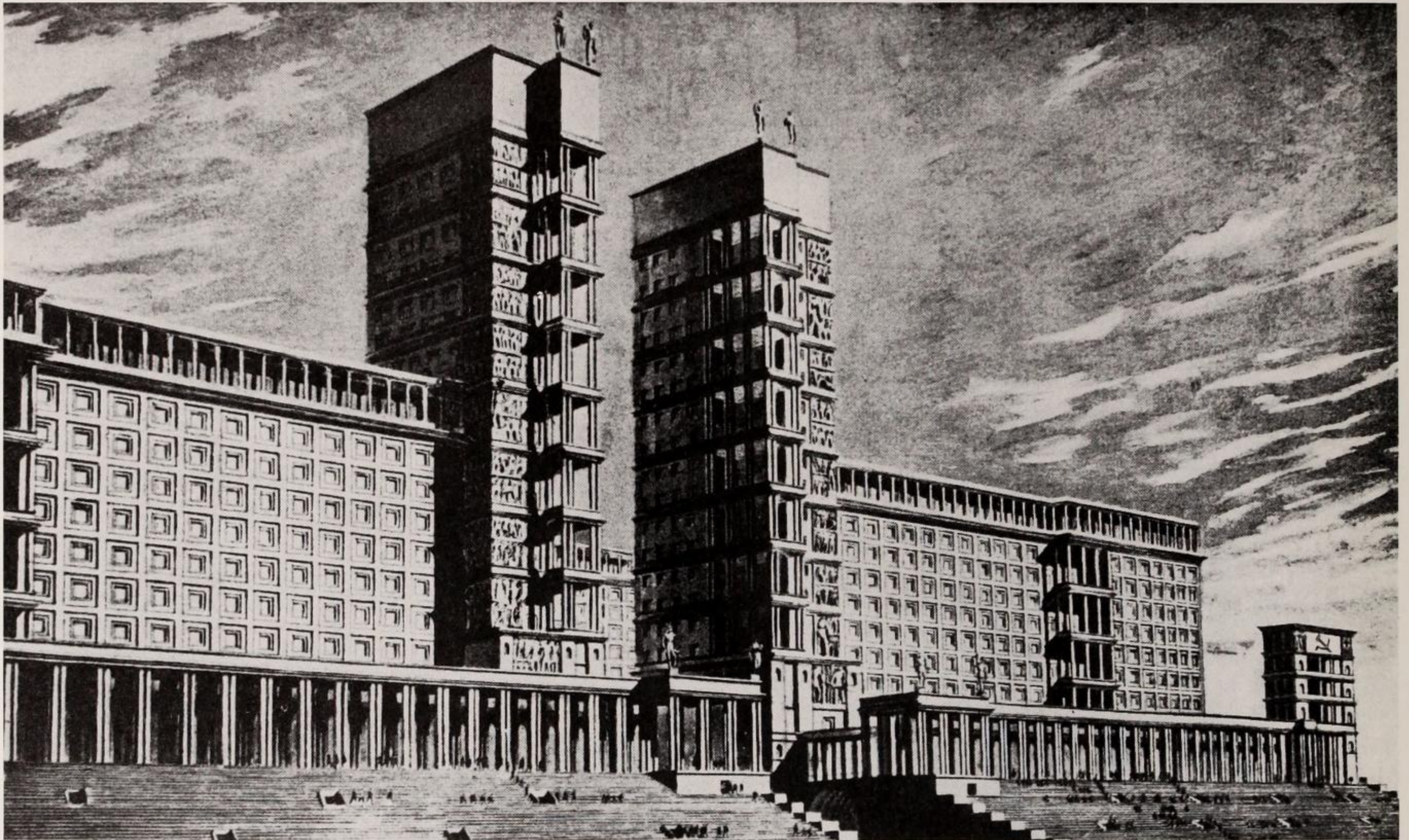
Panteleimon Golosov

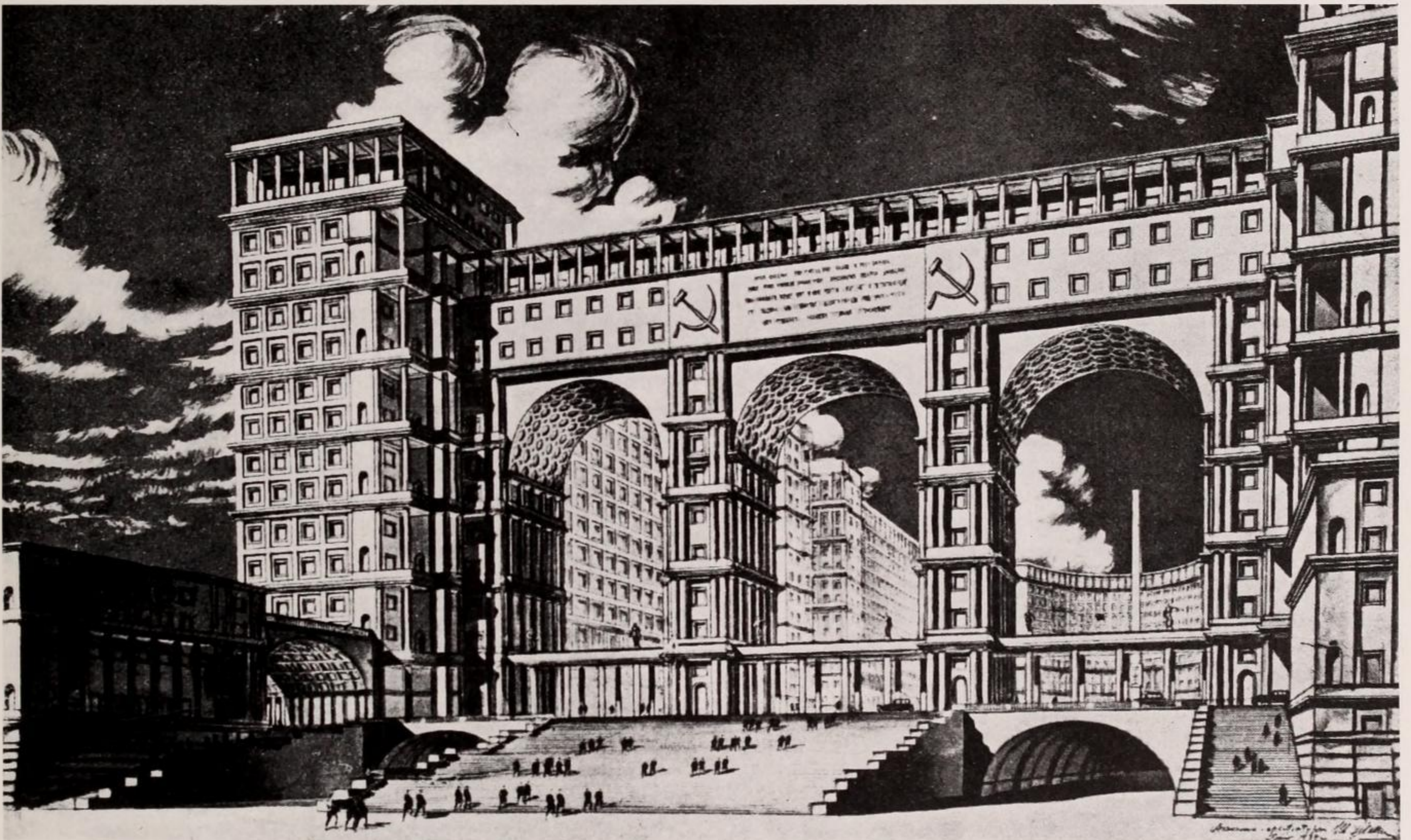
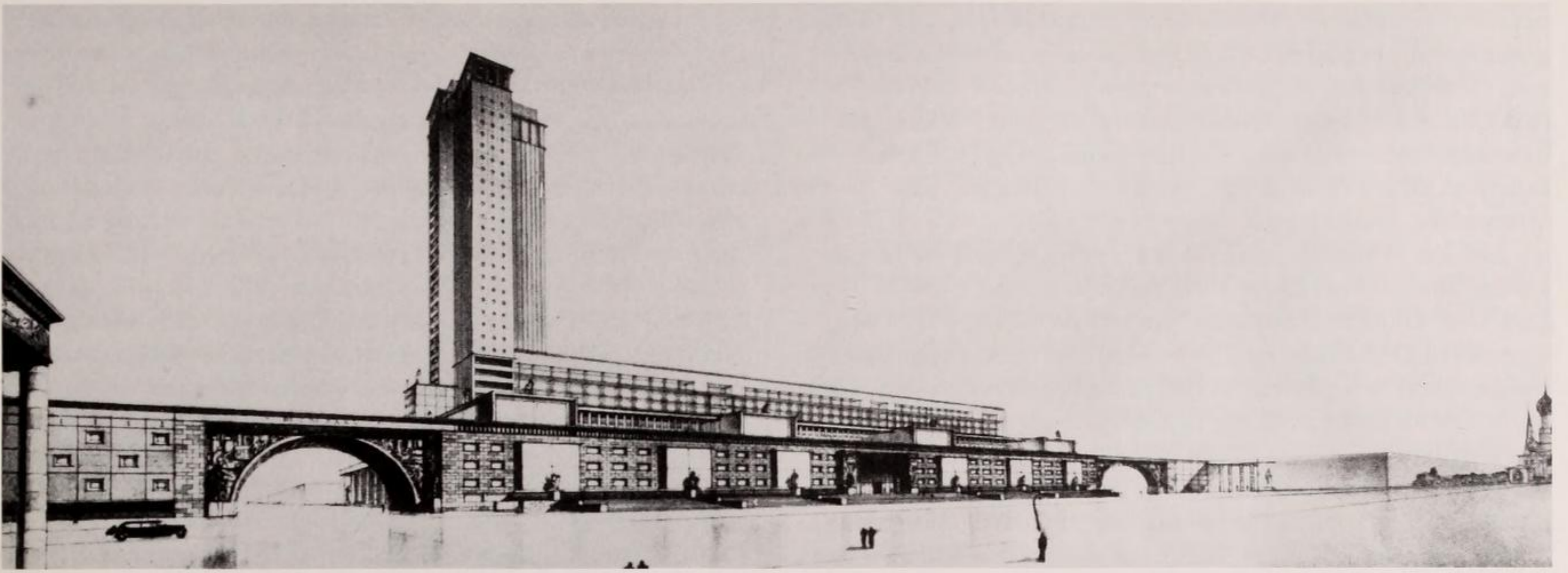
Competition project for Narkomtiazhprom, Moscow; perspective of Red Square side, 1934.

fig. 19

Ivan Fomin

Competition project for Narkomtiazhprom, Moscow; north elevation closing square toward Bol'shoi Theater, 1934.





been for one of these competitions.¹¹¹ In another response to this government campaign, OSA urged Vesenkha to set up a systematic series of competitions for better constructional detailing in buildings. Their international survey of flat-roof detailing conducted by questionnaire to leading Soviet and European architects in the previous year, 1926, had set a "comradely" model here.¹¹²

Sovkino, Alma-Ata, and the first moves toward the Lenin Library competition marked the debut in competitions of Leonidov. Though he was an active and increasingly central member of OSA, his highly individual and radical approach to competitions was the best vindication of Asnova's conception of the "extraordinary." In the first of these three contests, he was unplaced; in the second, he was third; and the Lenin Library scheme was his Vkhutemas final diploma project based on a reinterpretation of the Library committee's brief. In its organization and language, the Alma-Ata scheme was closer to Ginzburg's manner than to Leonidov's own more Suprematist spatiality. Hence it was more acceptable to a jury than were his other schemes.¹¹³ Yet the others were the breakthroughs that have lasted as architectural paradigms.

Sovkino was one of the few competition projects in which Leonidov stuck correctly to the brief's requirements. It was a careful response to the technical needs, but organized with enormous power on the site. One long volume was played off against freestanding "location" areas, embracing them all into one synthesis of landscape flowing into building.¹¹⁴ The diploma project had more complex origins.

Early in 1927, the Lenin Library administrators wanted to conduct explorations prior to a new building competition, and they asked the Architecture Faculty of Vkhutemas if any diploma students would like to explore the task. Some did, and we have the projects of Viktor Pashkov (fig. no. 10) and Leonidov.¹¹⁵ Leonidov did nothing to help the Library by redefining the brief as an Institute of Library Sciences (which was only one small part of the Library's requirement) and moving it from the north side of the Kremlin out to the open spaces of the Lenin Hills on the city's edge (there had long been a utopian notion of erecting some educational memorial to Lenin there).

He treated the site and its volumes in a manner far removed from the logical plan linkages and tight volumes which characteristically resulted from applying the Constructivist "method." But he produced a new image of urbanity enormously potent then as now.¹¹⁶ The scheme came into the spotlight when Leonidov's superb model was displayed in OSA's *Pervaia vystavka sovremennoi arkhitektury* (*First Exhibition of Contemporary Architecture*) at Vkhutemas that summer (see plate no. 418 for Gan's poster for the show).¹¹⁷ Being clearly beyond Soviet building resources of the time, this scheme became the Achilles' heel of Constructivism vis-à-vis politicians and the growing number of fellow professionals tiring of the Constructivists' assumed hegemony over Modernism. For students throughout Moscow schools, it became the seductive touchstone of what was ultimately, as so often, no more than a fashionable stylization.¹¹⁸ Recognizing the danger of this, and likewise the truth of the technical critique, Ginzburg spelled out precisely those merits of the project which have attracted attention again some sixty years later:

This work is especially valuable to us as a categorical break with that whole system of techniques, schemas, and elements which have inevitably become common and habitual (in our design) . . .

Leonidov's Library results in a purely space-oriented architectural treatment which leads away from the traditional conception of a building and toward a reorganization of the very concept of the public space and the city in which such a building might stand . . .

*Leonidov's design in a sense constitutes a landmark and reference point for our future work.*¹¹⁹

Confronting Monumentality, 1928–29

While issuing the challenge to the students, the Library also commissioned an exploratory project from a team under a senior MAO member, Dmitrii Markov, plainly seeking by these two means to make all approved preliminary moves to ensure a viable brief. On January 1, 1928, the open competition for the Lenin Library was announced, conducted by MAO for Narkompros and closing in April. A closed competition was run simultaneously, with schemes invited from the Vesnins, Shchusev, Shchuko, and Rerberg.¹²⁰ The brief was a rich one, for a building of genuine technical and organizational complexity, and in the course of its two stages the competition produced a range of interesting and buildable schemes from the Constructivists and the Rationalists, as well as some stylistically lame attempts at modernity from the older guard. The perspective of the Vesnins' first scheme (plate no. 711) is an extraordinarily elegant design which today's Western technology could realize with stunning crispness.

As the Lenin Library was a state building of symbolic and geographical importance, the brief included specifications of monumentality which had not been much heard in competitions since the early postrevolutionary years but which would soon start to ring out again loudly. Given its role as a memorial to Lenin and its landmark status in the city, the building should reflect "the character of the epoch, incarnating the will of the workers for the building of socialism." It must fit in with the historical architecture of its surroundings, not set itself up in contrast to them. Elevations should be monumental but undecorated and simple. Practically, the Library must function as "a powerful hothouse of knowledge and enlightenment," and overall, give a "harmonious and joyful impression." The jury was a suitable mix of library specialists, relevant Moscow Soviet specialists (including the city's chief planner), two MAO representatives, and Lunacharskii.

At this stage, Markov entered the open competition with two Rationalists, Fridman and Fidman. One historical merit of competitions in this period is the perspective they give on the Rationalists' work. As the members of this group did not build much, and ran no continuing publication, their achievements in building design have been unfairly overpowered in most records by those of the prolific Constructivists. This competition provides good examples of their capacity to produce stunningly powerful and subtle volumetric compositions in a concrete situation with buildings that are also very well planned. The team, which was certainly dominated by Fridman and Fidman, won the open competition from an entry of ten schemes. As for the commissioned schemes, the jury issued a note that Shchusev, Shchuko, and Rerberg had suffered a "relapse into the old styles." Nonetheless, Shchuko and Shchusev, with the Vesnins and the Rationalist team, were asked to redesign and resubmit in November. The guilty parties reclad their schemes in stripped Modernist clothes.¹²¹ Narkompros announced that Shchuko had won, as his scheme had the potential for reworking to greater monumentality.¹²² The noise about that was to come later.

Meanwhile, this competition was running simultaneously with another, of equal complexity, for the large administrative center of Soviet cooperative organizations called Tsentrosoiuz, further north in the capital. This was conducted not by MAO but by VOGI (the Civil Engineers Society). Here foreigners were to be involved, and in approved manner they came in through competition. From April to June 1928, an open competition of Soviet architects produced thirty-two projects

for the very high rewards of twelve prizes and three commendations—surely enough even to satisfy Asnova. Velikovskii won; Kapustina and other young Constructivists were second; and Trotskii, Leningrad winner of the Palace of Labor competition in 1923, was back in the Moscow prize lists. The foreigners invited simultaneously, but with more time, were Le Corbusier, Max Taut, and the Londoners Tait and Burnet, all competing with Tsentrosoiuz's own architects Anatolii Samoilov and Nakhman. Le Corbusier's scheme was preferred, but he was then taken a stage further against Peter Behrens, Zholtovskii, and a mass of Constructivists: the Vesnins, Leonidov, and Aleksandr Pasternak from the Moscow group, and Nikol'skii and Ol' as leaders in Leningrad. A foreigner was clearly heading for this job, yet was not getting it easily. Indeed, more time was spent, with Kolli assisting revisions in Le Corbusier's Paris office before a final scheme was affirmed in April 1929. The story has been told in detail elsewhere.¹²³ It is interesting here as a follow-up to the saga of Mendelsohn, and as a prelude to another saga of foreign invitations for the Palace of Soviets.

Just as Tsentrosoiuz was starting, a very constructive article by Barkhin, a good Modernist and regularly successful competition entrant himself, appeared in *The Building Industry*. (Barkhin was, of course, architect of the famous *Izvestiia* building, completed in 1927.) Barkhin was not a member of either younger group, but what he proposed is interesting as a halfway house toward embracing the priority for design and designers underlying Asnova's proposals for competitions. The issue had been brought alive again by another series of meetings called by the Builders Union in pursuit of some "short basic legal statute" to regulate all matters that "are not highly contentious."¹²⁴

Barkhin had been a MAO member since before the Revolution, but without hesitation declared MAO's regulations "in need of significant reworking." He was highly favorable to creation of a central organization, "for example, under Gosplan," but its powers must be strictly limited to deciding which buildings were obligatorily to be the subject of competitions and what monies were to be made available, and to handling publicity, central records, and any legal adjudications necessary. All design-related matters, including the juries, must remain with the various professional societies and be conducted according to the societies' internal regulations, with clients choosing among societies as they preferred. "Virtually unchanging composition of juries" must cease. This was "a major cause of competition failure" and "harmful to free development of architectural thought." Barkhin therefore proposed, first, that "no one jury member can serve on more than two consecutive competitions." Secondly, that this professional part of the jury "must be chosen from among people who have themselves competed in recent competitions with some success," in order to ensure they are up-to-date with "current trends and architectural concerns." Thirdly, in order to guarantee competitors' confidence in a jury, some part of it should be elected by secret ballot of the competitors, who would send their vote for members of a candidate list when they submitted their schemes. In the process of judgment, not one but two jury members should be scrutineers and spokesmen for any given project, and they should examine its merits according to a standard questionnaire of points established by the whole jury in their initial discussions together. At the preliminary public exhibition, those questionnaire comments must be on display, for public and competitor to comment and respond factually as they wish. Eventual voting according to these criteria should be done by the secret ballot method (as Taut had described from German practice). By this means, the judgment is

"maximally objective, even almost automatic," as schemes are premiated in order of aggregate votes cast for them. When everything is concluded, all records are deposited with the central competitions office. This plan may not be ideal, said Barkhin, and it may need modifications, "but if we start to talk along such lines, these things may more rapidly cease to be a bugbear."¹²⁵

Under the same stimulus of renewed debate, MAO was itself preparing new draft regulations for the overall legalities of competitions, which were sent to Narkompros by MAO's vice president, Leonid Vesnin, in late May. For all Barkhin's determination to distance himself from MAO's position, these draft regulations in no way conflicted with his proposals. Indeed, as conceived in his own paper, they were essentially complementary, being effectively that "short legal statute of the uncontenious" which the Builders Union had sought. For their own contests, they also modified the detail to include two aspects of Barkhin's proposals: numerical voting by jurors, and a statement of the principles which had guided their judgment.¹²⁶ That autumn, a competition for a local department store for the Bauman district of Moscow, for which young Milinis did a crisp scheme, was the first competition judged in that way.¹²⁷

Various other societies also framed new internal regulations for themselves at about the same time. Aru (the Association of Urban Architects), a planning-oriented offshoot of Asnova, carried forward much the same system, except that authors of the best initial schemes would consent to work together later, not be compelled into it: perhaps they had experienced too many comradesly rows. In Leningrad, OAKh now had a thriving competition program of its own and also updated its regulations. While MAO, seeking as ever to lead the whole operation, trundled its draft "Decree of a Directional Character" through various bureaucratic stages until overtaken by centralization of the profession—first locally, then nationally—from 1929 onward.¹²⁸

In new government measures of June 1928 "to get construction in industry in order," the figure of "22.5-percent potential cost savings through design" was being widely bandied about as furthering the argument for competitions. Six months later, in January 1929, Vesenkha was instructing the People's Commissariats, the Narkomats, to use competitions whenever possible.¹²⁹ On the other hand, the same processes of increased economic pressure and centralization were making competitions' very slowness, unpredictability, and high usage of manpower ever less attractive. Annual numbers started dropping, but the central prestige competitions were increasingly becoming stylistic and ideological battlegrounds. The Lenin Library competition, for one, was not closing peacefully.

Modes of Protest, 1929–30: Words or "Extraordinary Proposals"?

In early May 1929, a nationwide assembly of the Constructivist group OSA was gathered in Moscow at their First Congress, when the government commission responsible for the Lenin Library gave the go-ahead for construction of Shchuko's final reworked project. "PROTEST" read the headline inside the front cover of *Contemporary Architecture's* June–July issue. In bold typography were statements from its own Congress Presidium, the Aru Presidium, the Council of Asnova, the Architectural Club of Vkhutein (the Higher Artistic-Technical Institute), and the Bureau of the new "proletarian" architectural society, Vopra (the All-Union Association of Proletarian Architects); a note across the bottom stated that "The editors have also received a series of protests from other architectural organizations."

OSA expressed its “decisive and categorical protest.” The “reactionary design . . . weakest of all submitted,” had been “very negatively received by the broad Soviet public in all meetings and debates, as well as in government and party newspapers.” (*Izvestiia*, *Pravda*, and *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* had spread the debate nationwide.) “Soviet public opinion cannot be so rudely ignored”: the government must radically reexamine its decision. For Aru, this case reinforced its members’ view that “public opinion must be organized around questions of quality in new buildings of state importance.” The open competition was a failure because the loading of the jury with members of MAO predetermined the group of architects for whom it was “worth entering.” The closed competition failed because “the organizers confused building experience with architectural talent.” Both factors served to exclude the young. A new Library competition should take place “on a different organizational basis, with the *konkurs* transformed into a socialist *sorevnovanie* between teams from all existing architectural groups and societies.” To Asnova, this decision was another in the line that had started with the Central Telegraph. Only public involvement could stop “bureaucratic departments inviting chosen individuals” like this. Vopra echoed this, and the Vkhutein people had “already protested when preliminary projects emerged in the first competition.” Four perspectives from Shchuko and Shchusev schemes were featured in suitably retro frames at the top of the page. In the groveling patois of prerevolutionary domestic servants, the caption sarcastically asked: “How may we oblige you, sir? People like us are not too proud for anything.”¹³⁰

Shchuko’s former student and long-time partner, Gel’freikh, came from Leningrad to work with him, and the building went slowly ahead (fig. no. 13). But the episode no doubt contributed to the proposal OSA published on the page opposite the protests, a proposal for “all progressive forces” in Soviet architecture to come together in a Federation of Revolutionary Architects. They would be stronger together than apart, “for fighting the eclectic and unprincipled in Soviet architecture, for reorganization of competition affairs,” and much else.¹³¹ The Vesnins’ second Library scheme followed as the main building feature of that *Contemporary Architecture* issue (fig. no. 11).

The differences between groups went too deep for any such federation to be formed, but various factors were favoring team design within the groups. One factor was the increasingly aggressive Party hostility to assertions of individual identity over the collective. Another was the increasing complexity and pressure of the building tasks themselves. In January 1929, as I have mentioned, Vesenkha instructed the Narkomats to use competitions wherever possible. In December of that year, the Narkomats’ own supreme body, Sovnarkom, forbade them “from handing out design work to individual persons.”¹³² The combined implications were clear: competitions should be used to raise standards, but they must be competitions of teams, not of individuals. Though fueled by different motivations, cries for replacement of “competitions” by teamwork in intergroup *sorevnovaniia* were moving this hitherto most individualistic aspect of professional practice in the same direction. After Asnova’s long propaganda for that approach, it was finally used in two major Moscow competitions during 1929–30. Some groups fielded one person, others fielded a team after intragroup exploration of the task, but entries were submitted in the group name. In both these competitions, Leonidov was OSA’s representative. In both, he was pilloried for rewriting the brief, but he had devised potent new architectural paradigms in the process.

The first contest, in late 1929, was for another example of the integrated “business house” or *delovyi dvor*, again in the old business district of Moscow alongside Red Square, whose

monuments must be respected. This so-called House of Industry was a headquarters for Vesenkha, which invited teams or representatives from Asnova, Aru, VOGI, Vopra, MAO, OSA, and the architecture faculties of Vkhutein and MVTU to compete. Seven projects were eventually submitted and Panteleimon Golosov took first prize for MAO with a conventionally organized nine-storied office building on an F-shaped plan, forming two deep, dull courts.¹³³

Leonidov completely rethought the activity of “working in an office” and produced a building concept akin to the best Western office-building practice of the 1980s or 1990s: open-plan working areas for all, with integral green-planted areas everywhere for frequent brief periods of indoor or fresh-air relaxation; integral feeding and health facilities; a rooftop running track and summertime swimming pool. With great political correctness, all this was aimed at “economy” and “rationalization”: by “raising the individual’s energy and vitality,” the building would “increase labor productivity”—and all that had been achieved with a floor area 40,000 square meters less than the brief had specified. To open up the city and liberate ground space, all accommodation was drawn up into a single Miesian tower of some forty stories.¹³⁴ “Buildings of the tower type are not permitted,” said the brief.¹³⁵ So this truly “extraordinary” and forward-looking new paradigm for the office building was disqualified.

As this competition closed in March 1930, another began, for a Palace of Culture to serve the Proletarskii district on Moscow’s southern edge, where employment was mainly in the AMO car plant. The competition was run by the main trade union at the plant, the Union of Metalworkers, and was exemplary in being an intergroup *sorevnovanie* for both Moscow and Leningrad, with maximum worker participation in debate, and openly published judgments.

Leningrad organizations did not distinguish themselves. The LOA entry was “very detailed, but crude in its architecture.” LIGI had “lovingly executed the program” but created “a series of small courtyards that would disorient the visitor.” “The work of the Leningrad Vkhutein has no interest whatever.” (Coming from the former Academy of Arts, this scheme may have been classical.)¹³⁶ MAO, OAKh, the Moscow Vkhutein, and MVTU got no further. Vopra, LIGI, Aru with Asnova, and, somewhat surprisingly, OSA in the person of Leonidov were invited to a second stage. The exquisite little white-on-black drawings with collage which are in the present exhibition (plate nos. 714–716) formed part of Leonidov’s first-stage submission.

On the site, Leonidov marked out a line of four grid-squares containing, in sequence, a physical-culture area of soccer and other outdoor pitches around a square pyramidal sports pavilion; an open-air terrain with one small building in the corner, for mass parades; a park area with large and small lightweight hemispherical domes for theatrical and other mass performances; and a scientific and historical study center, with one long building and an outdoor screen and projection area.¹³⁷ It is an essentially Suprematist composition of subtly placed prismatic structures, whose three-dimensional tensions, on hilly riverside land looking back over the city, demand a model. As in any scheme of Leonidov’s, or any in this genre, the overall spatial system created by built volumes in the landscape is ill-conveyed by plan and elevation.

Public opinion might not have liked Shchuko, but most of it was a long way from seeing any “architecture” in Leonidov’s submission. So, indeed, was most of the profession. The whole thing “lacks the high emotional power which workers demand as the materialized expression of the power of their class.” The architect was “talented, but an anarchist, a petit-bourgeois,” “cut off from reality.” The long building was a “barrack of

Nikolai I." The site was a "desert." "The chessboard device may organize the drawings, but it does nothing to organize the Palace of Culture." Though obscured by this detailed comment, the real essence of what Leonidov had done was in fact recognized by both sides. As the report in *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* (*Construction of Moscow*) said, "Workers in their speeches drew attention to a profoundly individualistic attitude toward the program, which led to a total ignoring of its demands, producing an irrelevant experimentalism."¹³⁸

More specific was the Asnova and Aru man Georgii Krutikov, in *The Building Industry*: "The OSA project by Leonidov stands apart from all the others" because it was "based on a reorganization of cultural provision for the whole Proletarskii district." He had "evenly dispersed" all elements of mass catering, activities for children, and classrooms for adult education around the district, so that only the really "mass" activities remained to be accommodated on this site. Again, there were no marks to be gained for a radical rethinking of the problem which produced a new paradigm. It was another example of what Asnova called the "extraordinary project." But in late 1930, times were increasingly conformist. Thus the same Krutikov who once did the *Gorod na vozdushnykh putiakh soobshcheniia* (*A City on Aerial Paths of Communication*, 1928, plate nos. 688–692) was careful. Leonidov had been a fellow student only one year his senior in Vkhutemas. Krutikov merely reported that "The project was rejected because there is no real basis for implementing a cultural combine on this model."¹³⁹

Leonidov's second scheme brought many elements back onto the site and was more compact, but still "cut off from reality."¹⁴⁰ The eventual building by the Vesnins, though only partly executed, was extensive. But it was an entirely conventional Modernist complex.

Earlier that year, hard realism won Panteleimon Golosov the commission for *Pravda's* new printing plant and publishing center (plate no. 713). This was a closed competition with a three-week deadline, the projects coming from a team in Gosproekt, Shchusev and Leonid Teplitskii, Golosov with Aleksandr Kurovskii, and a somewhat schematic one from Lissitzky.¹⁴¹ (He was currently working for the Soviet press on foreign exhibitions.) Golosov's was a thoroughly professional modern building that could have served similar purposes in Europe or North America. Started the next year and completed in 1935, it still houses the whole *Pravda*-related publishing empire today.

"To Show Our Friends and Foes"

The Lenin Library and Palace of Culture competitions of 1928–30 gave clear indications of a social atmosphere in which the practical performance of a public building was becoming of less interest to official clients than something communicating a sense of achievement, in a conventional way symbolic of success and power, or "monumental." As ever in such symbol-building, the client, whether individual or collective, could not visualize what that "symbolic object" looked like; in the nature of the artistic process, clients define their "right" form by successive rejections from the range of alternatives generated by artists. Even more explicitly than in the Lenin Library case, the competition for the Palace of Soviets, in 1931–33, was a tortuous process of elimination in pursuit of a form rich enough in resonances to become a "monument" or "symbol." Ironically, the building being demolished for it was another official statement of government self-congratulation. Itself the product of fierce battles over the relationship of ideology and style, Ton's Cathedral of Christ the Saviour set no precedents for a smooth ride here.

The Palace of Soviets competition was explicitly launched

by the Party in early 1931 as a resumption of the Palace of Labor idea of 1922–23. As the Palace Construction Council declared in its publicity, "The First Congress of Soviets in 1922 decreed that a building be erected in Moscow for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: a Palace for meetings of the soviets of the Union. Only now, though, with the great successes of socialist construction achieved and the First Five-Year Plan completed in four years . . . are all preconditions fulfilled for realizing the First Congress's decision."¹⁴² The numbers of delegates forming these soviets meant a building with auditoriums for 15,000 and 8,000 people. Beyond that significant technical challenge was another, which, as the Council pointed out, "posed for designers a somewhat unusual task" of generating a symbolic concept or "image" for a building that must "characterize our epoch, as a physical manifestation of the will of the workers for the building of socialism."¹⁴³ For these symbol-making tasks, as had been said when the Lenin Mausoleum competition was planned in 1924–25, the more widely the net is cast, the greater the probability of someone, somewhere, generating a form capable of evoking and bearing the necessary symbolic loading.

In this as in other respects, the Palace of Soviets competition procedure was well framed in relation to earlier experience and critiques. A first "consultation stage was aimed at further refinement of the basic brief,"¹⁴⁴ and was in part conducted as an intergroup *sorevnovanie* with fifteen schemes, twelve commissioned and three sent as personal initiatives. This stage later became known as the "preliminary closed competition," but the Construction Council was at pains to stress it was noncompetitive. On the basis of lessons learned, a brief was then issued for a competition open to all Soviet architects and the workers at large.¹⁴⁵ Certain foreigners were also invited: Le Corbusier, keen for more work in Moscow, "accepted enthusiastically," as did Perret, Lamb, and Urban from the United States; Mendelsohn, Gropius, and Poelzig from Germany; and Boris Iofan's former teacher in Rome, Brazini, from Italy. Ostberg, the Swede, "stated his price for a sketch project would be 39,000 gold rubles, so discussions with him were dropped."¹⁴⁶ Some other foreigners entered, too, notably the emigré Russians Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner, and Lubetkin with his friends Blum and Sigalin. Hector Hamilton from New York was likewise an uninvited entrant; I suspect he was attracted by the challenge after visiting Moscow in "a group of American architects . . . who are building a radio-city in New York and who lectured on their work, and saw the preliminary Palace projects" in admiring amazement at their scale.¹⁴⁷

The schedule of accommodation issued was not absurdly detailed for such a task. Precise specifications were given of the drawings required. There were clear statements of priority and organizational principle. After review of the preliminary projects, a full table of their performances against various functional criteria was published; a similar table was published for the better projects of the open competition. Drawings from each of the preliminary schemes were published, with detailed comments on their merits and failures, in journals and in six thousand copies of a second *Biulleten' Upravleniia stroitel'stvom Dvortsa sovetov pri prezidiume TsIK SSSR* (*Bulletin of the Central Committee's Special Administration for the Palace of Soviets*), which included answers to competitors' questions with discussions of the acoustic and servicing tasks. There were public exhibitions and extensive public discussions in workers' clubs and other forums around the city, after both the preliminary submission in July 1931 and the full open submission that December. Virtually every project submitted to the vast second stage was published in a special issue of the main architectural journal, with a brief paragraph of comment.¹⁴⁸ At this level, the openness could hardly be faulted. On the ever-crucial matter of

jury membership, however, the situation was ominously different. It was naturally a question asked by competitors: "Who is the jury?" It was question no. 37 of 38 which were answered in the first *Bulletin* in September: "In accordance with the general conditions applying in this competition, there will not be a jury in the usual form. Scrutiny and preliminary evaluation of the projects will be carried out for the Construction Council by technical experts whom the Council will designate. Final evaluation of the projects and distribution of the prizes will be done by the Construction Council in accordance with requirements, as well as evaluation of the schemes by the broad mass of workers and by elements of the Government." A couple of years before, that statement would have led to a mass professional boycott. The calls to national duty surrounding this event made that no longer an option. Architects' real freedom to choose would have been no greater if they had known that the jury chairman was Central Committee member Gleb Krzhizhanovskii and that the jury's two leading cultural figures were the key theorists of emerging Socialist Realism, Lunacharskii and Maksim Gor'kii. Amid all the pressures of the Five-Year Plan, employers of architects were under government instruction to "relieve them of other burdens . . . so they may participate in this task of such enormous political importance."¹⁴⁹

The saga of the many stages that ensued, as the jury and Party edged their way toward defining a "truly proletarian architecture" and a building that would be a "product of the great art of Bolshevism," is not our interest here. Nor are the theories of Bolshevik aesthetics and Socialist Realism reflected in the decisions. I have discussed them elsewhere.¹⁵⁰ It was a saga that ran to four main stages, and on into extensive discussions and redesignings thereafter. The projects in the present exhibition derive from three of those four main stages. Of the schemes here, four were commissioned for the exploratory first stage during February–July 1931; one, Gabo and Pevsner's, was submitted to the open competition of July–December 1931 (plate nos. 719–720); the last, Ginzburg's, was commissioned at the first of two more closed stages which followed during 1932 and early 1933 (plate nos. 723–724). The avant-garde emphasis of the present exhibition means that the projects here are in no way a balanced sample of the overall body of submissions. No non-Modernist drawings serve to indicate the weight of classical and eclectic historicism that opposed them. Only Gabo and Pevsner's scheme, ironically, is "monumental." Indeed, it predicts with some accuracy (though less hypertrophy) the profile that would emerge from later stages, as Boris Iofan's second scheme was developed under Party guidance into a "final design" (fig. nos. 1, 16); his officially co-opted assistants were Shchuko and Gel'freikh, and his architect his elder brother Dmitrii, all in different ways now considered "reliable."

With good procedures and well-prepared, carefully presented brief, how did this competition become an international "scandal" from which so many retreated disillusioned?

Blame on the jury is misplaced. They were entirely consistent, and there was plenty in the brief to indicate their aspirations. Quantitatively, the key statements may have been dominated by technical detail, but they were clear to those in tune with the current atmosphere. "The building must be given an aesthetic treatment of the maximum ideological clarity, which clearly expresses its essence" and "corresponds to its importance as an artistic and architectural monument of the capital of the USSR." In the abstract, these statements could be interpreted variously. But by mid-1931—indeed, at any time after the Lenin Library confrontation—their implications were unambiguous. So much so that the invitations to avant-

gardists seem in retrospect intended as invitations to hang themselves: on any other basis it is surprising that people like the Vesnins and Ginzburg were being invited to later stages at all. "Facing materials must be appropriate," and samples of exotic Soviet marbles were already going on public display.¹⁵¹ On the other hand, barriers of cultural and linguistic distance gave the Westerners every excuse. (Jean-Louis Cohen has noted that Le Corbusier received "very bad" translations.)¹⁵² The indicative document was the second *Bulletin*. Its printing dates indicate no one would have got it much before submission on December 1st, but if we look at its critiques of the projects in the present show, the perceived shortcomings and connotations of the Modernist projects become ruthlessly clear.

The project of Nikolai Beseda, Krutikov, Vitalii Lavrov, and Valentin Popov (plate no. 718) was the team entry of Aru. They had moved part of the complex onto an adjacent site, "unnecessarily carving up the district," and had destroyed any atmosphere in "the great auditorium by making it like a stadium." Above it, "as the Palace's main external feature," rose "a great glazed tower providing things the Palace does not need"; this and "mechanical means of changing the space" were "superfluous mechanization." Throughout the project they had thus "taken the line of least resistance rather than solve real problems." The final punch line condemned them thus: "By ignoring the aesthetic aspects of the building, the authors have produced a solution that derives from the abstract fantasizing of the intelligentsia"—there was by now, in the Soviet government's eyes, no more anti-proletarian class.

Ladovskii was the leader of Aru, but his was a one-man submission (plate no. 725). His combination of dome and tower had produced "the most compact and economical scheme in terms of site use" among them all. On the other hand, his treatment of the great halls was "spatially abstract and a very academic constructive expression." Almost alone (except for Hamilton later), he had embraced the proposed subway station in the building's circulation, but the movements of people were so concentrated as to be "catastrophically dangerous and impermissible." The external appearance was "abstract, schematic" and "totally neglects the role of the spatial arts."

Nikol'skii was the leader of the Constructivist group in Leningrad, but he, too, had been invited as an individual. In the critics' eyes, his scheme (plate nos. 721–722) was very confused in its imagery. It "resembles an industrial building squashed flat" through which rises "a form like an Eastern hat." In approved Constructivist fashion, he presented the "flow diagrams" around which the building was planned. The critics knew about this stuff, however: "Automatic derivation of the form from the functions without architectural or artistic treatment leads to a typical Constructivist solution of the task, ignoring the aesthetic element in architecture and having nothing to do with the 'monumental building . . . fitting in with the monuments of Moscow' specified in the brief."

To the juries' justifiable and ill-concealed fury, several schemes had placed the building on another site. Even Shchusev was guilty of this, though his building was "realistic" (and still thoroughly Modernist). Fidman, in a dramatically simple non-invited submission "with the wholly unsuitable form reminiscent of an airship," had taken the references to 1923 literally and placed the building on the Palace of Labor site at the far end of the Kremlin. The team entry from the Constructivists (now called SASS [the Sector of Architects of Socialist Building], not OSA) was even more insubordinate.

In this case, the scheme was not by Leonidov: he was working in the Crimea with Ginzburg. The team comprised two of Leonidov's students, Pavlov and Mikhail Kuznetsov, who were well versed in his approach. In the critics' words, they had

removed from the site everything except the great hall. All other accommodation has been distributed in a circle around the map of Moscow and forms no part of the project. This is done in order to create around the hall a vast public plaza for 'mass actions' and physical-culture exercises in the open air . . .

All this leads the authors to create vast lifting walls, roofs that open back, a staircase 170 meters wide, and a vast overload of superfluous mechanization of 'dynamic' parts of the hall . . . With its glass and steel construction, this is a model example of technological fetishism . . . Businesslike architectural design has been given up for graphic exercises that have no real content . . . It represents the bourgeois tendency in architecture, ideologically hostile to proletarian architecture.¹⁵³

If the foreigners could have read this when their copies of the second *Bulletin* arrived, the final jury verdict would have surprised them less. In one quasi-official commentary, Barkhin, on the "committee of experts," described the projects collectively as "disappointing."¹⁵⁴ Some were, by any standards. Others, notably Le Corbusier's "factory-like hangar," were magnificent answers to a problem of crazy scale for the site, yet were objectively "disappointing" in relation to those key phrases of the brief.

The three equal first prizes in this open competition went to an eclectic, basically classical scheme by Boris Iofan; to Hamilton, for reasons about which there are various speculations¹⁵⁵; and to Zholtovskii, for a sprawling but typically literate "Classical Palace" complex of mammoth scale. This last, in particular, was an example of the ironic general critique made of the preliminary schemes: that they "repeated the mistake made by the architect Ton, author of the Cathedral that is being demolished, who mechanically enlarged a little five-domed church to the grandiose dimensions of a cathedral." None of them had produced a "proletarian, Bolshevik architecture, born of the battle for building socialism." Through the pencils of their loyal adherents in the profession, the Palace Construction Council eventually devised that for themselves, in accordance with their notions of a realism that was Socialist, if definitely not practically realistic. With much energy invested in the Tsentrosoiuz, but construction near a standstill and no fees forthcoming, Le Corbusier kept his correspondence civil, and at the level of Lunacharskii.¹⁵⁶ CIAM (the Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne), on the other hand, in the persons of Giedion, van Esteren, and the suitably named Bourgeois, sent two letters to Stalin, telling this heir of Lenin that his chosen project was "a direct insult to the spirit of the Russian Revolution" and that "The world, which has its eyes fixed on the development of the great Soviet construction effort, will be stupefied by it."¹⁵⁷ If the letters ever arrived, they no doubt provoked a gleeful toast. "Stupefying our enemies" was, after all, precisely the competition's real agenda.

Using Competitions Sparingly

During the months of March to July 1932, while Ginzburg was doing the third-stage Palace of Soviets scheme, the dramatic changes took place which had threatened the profession for several years. On April 23rd, the Party issued a Decree on the Restructuring of Literary and Artistic Organizations, which abolished independent professional groups and societies in all creative fields. On July 18th, a central and official Union of Soviet Architects was formed and all the familiar groups like MAO, Asnova, Aru, OSA/SASS, and OAKh were dissolved.¹⁵⁸

The years of freedom to group and regroup, to debate and protest—over competition practices or anything else—were finished. Ginzburg was on the Board of the new Union, as were Viktor Vesnin, Ladovskii, and Fridman, but in company with

Zholtovskii and Vopra's Karo Alabian. The official "method" of the Union, as of all creative activity, was now Socialist Realism, a synthesis of "critically assimilated" (i.e., politically "correct") elements of the heritage and a new content and new technologies, all geared to creating optimistic Party- and class-reinforcing imagery. I have discussed the development and meaning of this in architecture elsewhere.¹⁵⁹

During 1932, with the Second Five-Year Plan of economic reconstruction just starting, the new priorities were reinforced by the creation of Narkomtiazhprom. Heavy industry was the leading sector of the economy in its battle "to catch up with and outstrip capitalism," and Narkomtiazhprom's administration was thus symbolically the main engine of the country's revolutionary reconstruction. It was obvious that Narkomtiazhprom should be located at the symbolic center of the state. More than that, it should literally trample underfoot the old regime's center of business and financial power in Kitaigorod, the Wall Street of capitalist Moscow, where we have seen lesser unbuilt competition projects for "industrial headquarters," such as Arkos and the House of Industry, being sited during the 1920s. Kitaigorod is separated from Red Square by the great galleria structure of the Upper Trading Rows (GUM), the competition for which had caused quarrels back in the 1890s. These would be demolished to place Narkomtiazhprom on the suitably enlarged central space of the nation, and the vast four-hectare site could be further enlarged as the architects chose.¹⁶⁰

After another lengthy series of competitions, involving Germans, Le Corbusier, and innumerable Soviet professionals, strategic planning studies were under way in the Moscow Soviet for a socialist restructuring, and a rescaling to twentieth-century needs, of the whole medieval and capitalist city. On two sides of the Narkomtiazhprom site was the tightly-knit fabric of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commercial development. On its other two sides stood some of Russia's greatest architectural monuments, like the Kremlin and St. Basil's, the Bol'shoi Theater and Teatral'naia Square, quite apart from such products of more recent contests as the Historical Museum, the Hotel Metropol', or the Lenin Mausoleum.

In this delicate and still unresolved planning situation a closed competition was launched in 1934, apparently by the all-powerful Narkomtiazhprom itself, and plainly without professional advice of appropriate caliber or vision. "What reflection did this exceptional architectural and planning task find in the competition brief?" asked the main commentary on resulting projects in *Construction of Moscow* at the end of the year. As the author himself answered: "Almost none. Along with the paragraphs relating to interdepartmental links in offices and supplementary accommodation, to the need for elevators and hot-water central heating, there was just a small mention of architecture: 'of the need for the most careful attention to the complex around it . . . to choice of entrance axis . . . to application of various facing marbles, and of sculpture, painting, etc., inside and out.' That's all. Not a single word on the overall compositional solution of the new architectural ensemble for the entire nation around Red Square." Some of the twelve entrants had indeed "involved themselves in the task far more deeply than was suggested in the brief." But general opinion was reflected in Aranovich's judgment that "as a whole, the competition must be considered to have failed." It had been entirely the wrong kind of competition. "The brief demanded that competitors focus on internal planning and technical equipment instead of working on site plans and sketch projects with schematic indications of building masses—which at this stage of the design would have been appropriate."¹⁶¹ Behind the superficial megalomania, the

great Narkomat's vision had been totally self-centered and myopic. Hence the competition process itself had got paralyzed in detail. But so, too, more surprisingly, had some of the architects.

More than any earlier competition, this one revealed the limitations of orthodox Constructivism and what Ginzburg had earlier called "that whole system of techniques, schemas, and elements which have inevitably become habitual with us." Yet again it was Leonidov (plate nos. 729–732) who had "taken a bold leap out of ordinariness" and produced a "purely space-oriented architectural treatment which leads away from the traditional conception of a building toward a reorganization of the very concept of the public space and the city in which such a building might stand."¹⁶² As the commentator Aranovich reported, a range of distinct paradigms had emerged. In one of them, exemplified by Abram Zaslavskii and Avraam Faifel's project, a high building looked over the Kremlin to address the other new insertion of the Palace of Soviets at its far end, producing a longitudinal symmetry and a ninety-degree reorientation of Red Square's "main" axis. Others, notably Boris Korshunov and Fomin (both experienced urbanists), had continued but enlarged the fabric of hollow courtyards characterizing the old city, enclosing traditionally resolved urban spaces with the monuments around the great complex itself. A third type, exemplified by Aleksandr and Viktor Vesnins' project, said Aranovich, was "solved in quite another way." But "the main difference does not lie in the fact that Fomin as ever is classical, and the Vesnins, also as ever, are Constructivist in orientation. The difference is deeper: while Fomin's project [fig. nos. 17, 19] is a proposal for the reconstruction of Red Square, the Vesnins' project has approached [the task] only as a building for Narkomtiashprom." As the jury had put it, "in the Vesnins' project, Red Square is reduced to being just the adjacent area, and does not acquire any specific form defined by architectural masses. Sverdlov Square [to the north] is not architecturally completed." A look at the Vesnins' perspective (plate no. 733) confirms the judgment that "Their tall composition is completely cut off from Red Square. It ignores requirements for any relationship of scale with the mausoleum or the Kremlin, categorically refusing to engage in any ensemble with any other buildings whatever. This is not a spatial organization of the city center but an object which individualistically distinguishes itself from the space of the center." Ginzburg's almost identical scheme "also proceeds not from an architectural reconstruction of Red Square but from a literal reading of the design task set."¹⁶³

As with the Palace of Soviets competition a few years before, the client/jury combination was engaged in a learning process, but here it was not stylistic. Mere solution of the brief as set by the client quickly revealed its limitations. The strange way that the Vesnins' and Ginzburg's schemes got "stuck," despite several "redesigns," on a single identical model, showed that there was no indicator to a larger conceptual solution from within the brief itself. All the lessons laboriously learned in the 1920s—about the merits of two-stage, exploratory competitions, about the dialogue that produced about a problem's real nature—had been ignored.

Mel'nikov's literalness was of another order (plate nos. 727–728). His plan was built on two Roman "fives"—intersecting Vs—for the two Five-Year Plans. "Technology" and the "heritage" were collaged together as vast moving staircases rising through great shaft-bearings to a monstrous compilation of heroic sculptural figures, all doubly dramatized by the gulf down to sixteen partially exposed floors to which Red Square's ground surface suddenly descended. The message he sought to convey is a matter for speculation. As

contemporaries well understood, it was certainly neither civil nor sympathetic to the new official definition of what constituted "architecture."

In one sense, Mel'nikov's was the "extraordinary proposal" of this competition, but it was not one that offered any new paradigm. Conceptually, it differed little from the Vesnins' scheme. On the other hand, the official commentary bracketed his entry with Leonidov's as "the two frankly utopian and formalistic schemes."¹⁶⁴ Of Mel'nikov one might agree with the criticism that here he had "misused his outstanding talents for artistic and spatial invention," but on Leonidov one must unquestionably disagree.

To the jury, Leonidov's "overall architectural conception" was "pretentious," "the placing of the three very tall vertical volumes is too close, and appears accidental."¹⁶⁵ (In the new canon as written by the Palace of Soviets jury, anything asymmetrical was "accidental" and manifested "unplannedness.") As I have written elsewhere, the cluster of three towers, in my view, certainly refers to the traditional three towers in the *pogost* or symbolic heart of the Russian village, and is but one of numerous appropriate historical references which Leonidov has subtly reworked into a new, highly contextual, synthesis. Low buildings around the site are addressed with low building, forming richly but simply resolved new urban spaces to north and south, as well as viewing terraces onto Red Square and its parades. The polychrome drum marking the Narkomtiashprom workers' club refers to, but focally supercedes, the religious monument of St. Basil's. A crossroute from the heart of Kitaigorod focuses dramatically on the Lenin Mausoleum. Lissitzky was the only official commentator to concede that while Mel'nikov's scheme was merely "embarrassing," Leonidov's "series of sketches," with St. Basil's, the Kremlin river frontage, Red Square, and the Bol'shoi Theater, showed evidence of "trying to find a unity for the new complex."¹⁶⁶

Leonidov's own accompanying notes indicated an entirely different level of thinking beyond this local resolution of the site. Here was a consideration of process: of the process of rebalancing that takes place when a massive new element enters a historically evolved context or "ensemble." "The role of some buildings within the central Moscow complex will change . . . with construction of a colossal new building." Leonidov's formal response to this was clear. The only possible "new instrument" in the delicate "symphony" which Red Square and the Kremlin create is one "that will lead the orchestra." The new composition must be founded not on "details . . . but on simplicity, severity, harmonious dynamism . . . on the principle of aesthetic contrast."¹⁶⁷

As I noted in relation to Leonidov's Palace of Culture project, these schemes which recompose a whole landscape, be the landscape natural or man-made, need three-dimensional representations which embrace the whole canvas that is being conceived. Here a model of the complex alone cannot show how this new "instrument" sounds in the symphony. Nor can it show the subtlety of a synthesis of historical memory and new technology which was as far removed from the jury's (and, I suspect, his contemporaries') experience as was the technology it posited. Having now achieved the technology, and being ourselves confronted with these scaleless masses and *cases vides* in the matrix of historic cities, the subtlety and the method itself have something to say to us.

The method of problem resolution appropriate at that scale, as the Vesnins' and Ginzburg's failure here indicates, is not conventionally Constructivist. It requires a radicalism which the Constructivists themselves recognized, as editors of *Contemporary Architecture*, back in 1930. It depends on precisely that feature in Leonidov's work which overrides its

shortcomings, as they said, to “make it in certain respects better and more valuable than the work of his competitors”: “This is the fact that Leonidov speaks in his projects as an architect who is a social activist, who is a thinker, who does not slavishly execute the architectural task posed to him but socially redirects it, sometimes drawing up another program, introducing into it everything which from his point of view will help speed up the reconstruction of our daily life.”¹⁶⁸ The “reconstruction” here was “onto socialist principles,” but that is of no significance for the relevance of the method. The method which combines “simplicity” with “harmonious dynamism” at this scale is essentially Suprematist. The “forms” are “units of energy” in a perceptual space, in what Malevich called “the space inside the skull.”¹⁶⁹

As I have already observed, one valuable result of looking at Russian avant-garde architecture through competitions is the new light it throws on a traditionally OSA-centered view of the period. Mainstream Constructivists were very successful, and rightly so, as designers of immediately useful new buildings and building types, but these are contributions to their own time, not to the future. By looking more closely into the competitions, we see Asnova’s capacity to produce formally and spatially very powerful buildings. But we also see their contribution to discussions of the larger architectural agenda. They in particular raised questions of the organizational means by which creative work can be most fruitfully fostered; of what “competition” means—mutual stimulus or mutual “defeat”—in creative fields; of its aim when formalized into a discrete event. Is it for consolidating and reinforcing established prototypes, or setting markers for the future?

Their answer to that was embodied in the concept of the two parallel prizes, for the “best answer to the task in the brief” and for the “extraordinary proposal.” That distinction remains a very valuable clarifier of underlying architectural intentions. It also provides an answer to the argument against competitions raised by their Dutch contemporary J. J. P. Oud, in his time extensively published in *Contemporary Architecture*, who all his life refused to enter competitions as “hopelessly inadequate” for producing architecture. Twenty years after the Narkomtiazhprom contest, Oud wrote: “It is precisely the incessant to-and-fro between the wishes of the sponsor and the ideas of the architect which make building into a living embodiment of society’s needs. It is in this respect that competitions are hopelessly inadequate; because of this permanent lack of contact they lead to a cut-out architecture . . . Because the contact between life and design is so minimal in competitions, it is best to use them sparingly.”¹⁷⁰ The lesson of the 1920s is that “useful” results depend on clear thinking about intentions. As the contest of Iofan versus Leonidov continues, however, the paradigms established by “extraordinary proposals” remain important as clarifiers of architectural thought, long after their own time.

Notes

1. Peter Wilson, “Berlin—The Forum of Sand,” in A. Papadakis, C. Cooke, and A. Benjamin, eds., *Deconstruction: Omnibus Volume* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), p. 253.
2. Zaha Hadid, “The project for Kurfürstendamm 70, Berlin,” and “The project for West Hollywood Civic Center,” in Papadakis, Cooke, and Benjamin, *Deconstruction*, pp. 209, 219.
3. N. A. Smurova, “Organizatsiia konkursnogo dela v Rossii,” in A. Strigalev, ed., *Problemy istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury. Sbornik*, Moscow, 1983, pp. 14–21; pp. 14–15, quoting material in the Central State Archive for Literature and Art, Moscow.
4. On the formation and early history, including competitions activity, of MAO, see *Istoricheskaia zapiska o deiatel'nosti Moskovskogo arkhitekturnogo obshchestva 1867–1897*, Moscow, 1897.
5. Bykovskii, speech in MAO, November 24, 1868, in *Ezhegodnik MAO* 5 (1928), p. 9, and *Istoricheskaia zapiska*, pp. 7–9.
6. *Zodchii* 1 (1872), pp. 4–7 surveys the formation and early origins of POA.
7. Advertisement in *Zodchii* 1 (1872), p. 65; 3 (1872), p. 166; and 5 (1872), p. 79.
8. Smurova, “Organizatsiia,” p. 14.
9. M. Arnol'd, “K voprosu o konkursakh,” *Zodchii* 6 (1872), pp. 80–84 gives these regulations in full (p. 84).
10. *Istoricheskaia zapiska*, p. 6.
11. M. Arnol'd, “K voprosu o konkursakh,” *Zodchii* 4 (1872), pp. 60–63, and editors’ note, p. 60.
12. “Ustav i dopolnitel'nie k nemu pravila POA,” *Zodchii* 6 (1872), pp. 99–100, para. 28 “O konkursakh.”
13. M. Arnol'd, “K voprosu o konkursakh,” *Zodchii* 5 (1872), pp. 65–68.
14. Arnol'd, “K voprosu,” *Zodchii* 6 (1872), pp. 80–84.
15. Within months, POA already had 126 architect members (*Zodchii* 1 [1872], p. 7) and it continued to rise, whereas MAO membership quickly leveled off around 50 actual architects (*Istoricheskaia zapiska*, pp. 7, 11, 20, etc.), and they were constantly short of resources for their public ventures.
16. On the earliest MAO competitions, see *Istoricheskaia zapiska*, pp. 10–16. Early POA competitions are recorded in *Zodchii*.
17. *Istoricheskaia zapiska*, pp. 22–28.
18. “Chto takoe nashi konkursy?,” *Zodchii* 7–8 (1875), pp. 83–86. Historical Museum announced in *Zodchii* 1 (1875), p. 12. On the Polytechnical Museum, see “Po povodu konkursa na proekt fasada Muzeia v Moskve,” *Zodchii* 6 (1875), pp. 32, 46, and 70.
19. *Pravila dlia arkhitekturnykh konkursov, utverzhdennykh S-Peterburgskim obshchestvom arkhitektorov dlia svoego rukovodstva, v sobraniakh 14 dek. 1882, 11 ianv. 1883 i 28 marta 1895*, St. Petersburg, 1896. For summary, see Smurova, “Organizatsiia,” pp. 16–17.
20. A. V. Rozenberg, “Sovremennaia praktika konkursnogo dela,” *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'* 8 (1926), pp. 564–66.
21. “Konkurs na proekt zdaniia vysochaishi utverzhdennogo Obshchestva verkhnikh torgovykh riadov na Krasnoi ploshchadi v Moskve,” *Nedelia stroitelia* 44 (1888), p. 228.

22. On Moscow venture, see *Istoricheskie zapiski MAO*, pp. 66–67; St. Petersburg competition noted in William Craft Brumfield, *The Origins of Modernism in Russian Architecture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 302 n. 2, from *Stroitel'* 9–10 (1897), pp. 321–54.
23. “Pravila konkursov MAO,” *Nedelia stroitelia* 4 (1899), p. 29. For summary, see Smurova, “Organizatsiia,” p. 19.
24. For notes on the Hotel Metropol' saga in English, see Brumfield, *Origins of Modernism*, pp. 85, 87.
25. Brumfield, *Origins of Modernism*, discusses housing and some other building types.
26. Announcements, juries, and results can be found in *Zodchii*, *Nedelia stroitelia*, and in the *Ezhegodnik* of the architectural societies OAKh and MAO; grievances about the system are frequently under discussion in *Zodchii*, particularly from 1904–5 onward.
27. OAKh's loose flyers distributed in *Zodchii*, for example, with 4 (1914) for Tashkent City Summer Theater. In bound volumes these have usually been lost, but they may still sometimes be found in loose issues.
28. I. A. Kazus, “Arkhitekturnye konkursy 1917–1933 godov. Opyt sravnitel'nogo statisticheskogo analiza,” in A. Strigalev, ed., *Problemy istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury. Sbornik*, Moscow, 1980, pp. 5–15; graphs p. 11.
29. “Konkursy,” *Oglavlenie zhurnala Zodchii za 1913 god*, pp. vii–viii.
30. “Konkursnye proekty,” *Oglavlenie zhurnala Zodchii za 1913 god*, p. iv.
31. *Ezhegodnik Imperatorskogo obshchestva arkhitektorov-khudozhnikov* 9 (1914), p. 3.
32. *Ezhegodnik Moskovskogo arkhitekturnogo obshchestva* 1 (1909).
33. P. Antipov, “K voprosu organizatsii arkhitekturnykh konkursov,” *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'* 12 (1926), pp. 885–87.
34. Lecture of A. Tamanian to Fifth Congress of Russian Architects, “Proekt pravila dlia konkursov, ob'iavliaemykh arkhitekturnymi obshchestvennymi organizatsiiami,” *Zodchii* 3 (1914).
35. I. Mashkov, “Moskovskoe arkhitekturnoe obshchestvo 1867–1927gg,” *Ezhegodnik MAO* 5 (1928), pp. 9–14.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
37. “Dekret o zemle,” *Izvestiia*, October 28, 1917, p. 1.
38. I. A. Kazus, “Organizatsiia konkursnogo proektirovaniia v sovetskoi arkhitekture (diskussii i praktika),” in Strigalev, *Problemy istorii*, 1983, pp. 21–34; p. 23, from sources in the Central State Archive for Literature and Art, Moscow.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 23, from sources in TsGANKh.
40. V. I. Lenin, “Kak organizovat' sorevnovanie?,” December 1917, in his *Polnoe sobranie sochineniia*, 5th ed., Moscow, 1962, vol. 35, pp. 195–96.
41. Documents in V. Khazanova, comp., *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917–1925. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1963) and I. Kazus, “Pervye arkhitekturno-proektnye masterskie sovetskoi Rossii,” in *Problemy teorii i istorii arkhitektury. Sbornik*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 65–71; pp. 65–66.
42. For documents on these competitions, see Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917–1925*, pp. 134–38 (from *Iskusstvo kommuny* 7 [January 19, 1919], *Zhizn' iskusstva*, May 10–11, 1919, etc.) and p. 214; V. Khazanova, *Sovetskaia arkhitektura pervykh let Oktiabria*, Moscow, 1970, p. 122 (from Norvert in *Khudozhestvennaia zhizn' i* [1919]); and Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917–1925*, pp. 214–17.
43. These results from Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917–1925*, pp. 138, 217.
44. On Sinskul'ptarkh, etc., see Selim O. Khan-Magomedov, *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920s and 1930s*, ed. Catherine Cooke, trans. Alexander Lieven (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), pp. 67–69.
45. S. O. Khan-Magomedov, “Diskussii v Inkhuke o sootnoshenii konstruktssii i kompozitsii (ianv.–apr. 1921 goda),” in *Tekhnicheskaiia estetika*, Trudy VNIITE, sbornik no. 20 (Moscow: VNIITE, 1979) pp. 40–78. For verbatim transcripts of part of the discussion, see Selim O. Khan-Magomedov, *Rodchenko: The Complete Work*, ed. Vieri Quilici, trans. Huw Evans (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), pp. 83–89; for Inkhuk portfolio, see Angelica Zander Rudenstine, ed., *Russian Avant-Garde Art: The George Costakis Collection* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), pp. 110–27.
46. For discussion of the key ideas of Rationalism and Constructivism, with buildings and translated documents, see C. Cooke and J. Ageros, eds., *The Avant-Garde: Russian Architecture in the Twenties*, London and New York, 1991; on the development of Constructivist ideas, see also C. Cooke, “Form is a function, X,” in Cooke, ed., *Russian Avant-Garde Art and Architecture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), pp. 34–49, enlarged in Papadakis, Cooke, and Benjamin, *Deconstruction*, pp. 21–37. For an account of this whole period which complements the present study by focus on theoretical and stylistic positions of leading figures, see Catherine Cooke, “Images in Context,” in *Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1990), pp. 10–48.
47. For details on dates of re-formation, membership, etc., see V. Khazanova, comp., *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1926–1932. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), pp. 7–9 (MAO), 26–27 (POA and OAKh). On MAO, see Mashkov, “Moskovskoe,” p. 13; P. Antipov, “Khronika,” *Arkhitektura* 1–2 (1923), pp. 47–49.
48. Antipov, “Khronika,” pp. 47–49.
49. *Ibid.*
50. Brief, etc., in Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917–1925*, pp. 51–55; projects and review, in *Arkhitektura* 3–4 (1923), pp. 34–45; second stage, in Antipov, “Khronika,” pp. 68–69.
51. Brief, site plan, and longer extract from Kirov's speech, in Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917–1925*, pp. 146–49. Competition announced in September 1922, closed February 5, 1923.
52. Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917–1925*, p. 151n, reprinted from *LEF* 4 (1924), pp. 59–62.
53. M. Ia. Ginzburg, “Itogi i perspektivy,” *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 4–5 (1927), pp. 112–18.
54. Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1926–1932*, p. 40 gives essentials; see also Kazus, “Organizatsiia,” p. 25 on further protest over brief.
55. Antipov, “Khronika.”
56. Report on Norvert lecture of May 2, 1923, in Antipov, “Khronika.”

57. Kazus, "Organizatsiia," pp. 25, 33 n. 19, from sources in the Central State Archive for Literature and Art, Moscow. On student involvement, see Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1926-1932*, p. 58, and I. Kokkinaki, "Gradostroitel'nyi proekt . . . 1-i etap proektirovaniia Krasnogo stadiona," in A. Strigalev, ed., *Problemy istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury. Sbornik*, Moscow, 1985, pp. 68-79.
58. Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1926-1932*, p. 8; A. Rozhanovich, "K voprosu ob organizatsii konkursnogo dela," *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost' 2* (1926), p. 139.
59. On Ginzburg's early career, see Anatole Senkevitch, introduction to Moisei Ginzburg, *Style and Epoch*, trans. Anatole Senkevitch (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982).
60. "Estetika sovremennosti," *Arkhitektura* 1-2 (1923), pp. 3-6; "Staroe i novoe," *Arkhitektura* 3-4 (1923), p. 3.
61. Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1926-1932*, pp. 39-40; Khan-Magomedov, *Pioneers*, pp. 141-42.
62. For English translation, see Ginzburg, *Style and Epoch*.
63. Photographs of completed House of Soviets, Briansk, in *Ezhegodnik MAO 5* (1928), pp. 41-43.
64. Arkos project published in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 1 (1926), pp. 5, 7-8.
65. On the *narodnyi dom* in Ivanovo, see Khazanova, *Sovetskaia arkhitektura pervykh let*, pp. 132-34; A. G. Barkhina, *G. B. Barkhin* (Moscow: Stroizdat, 1981), pp. 40-41, which also gives prize list; fully published in *Konkursy MAO 1923-1926*, Moscow, 1927, pp. 5-16.
66. N. Sheviakov, "K voprosu ob ispol'zovanii rezul'tatov arkhitekturnykh konkursov," *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost' 5* (1924), p. 360.
67. Notes by Kazus, in C. Cooke and I. Kazus, *Soviet Architectural Competitions, 1920s-1930s*, London, 1992, p. 19. On prize money, see A. Strigalev and I. Kokkinaki, eds., *K. S. Mel'nikov* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1985), p. 262 n. 31.
68. Elevations, plans, section, and perspective published in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 1 (1926), pp. 1-3.
69. S. O. Khan-Magomedov, *Il'ia Golosov* (Moscow: Stroizdat, 1988), p. 114, from material in the Central State Archive for Literature and Art, Moscow; four elevations, p. 115.
70. Strigalev and Kokkinaki, *Mel'nikov*, p. 158; also incompletely in M. G. Barkhin, ed., *Mastera sovetskoi arkhitektury ob arkhitekture* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1975), vol. 2, p. 163.
71. Vesnin project notes, *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 1 (1926), p. 1.
72. A. L. Pasternak, "Amerika," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 4 (1926), pp. 92-93.
73. Telegrams published in M. Astaf'eva-Dlugach, "K istorii sooruzheniia pervykh sovetskikh vystavochnykh pavilionov," in V. A. Tikhanov, ed., *Voprosy sovetskogo izobrazitel'nogo iskusstva i arkhitektury*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 391-407. Allocation of tasks, etc., from documents in Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917-1925*, p. 190.
74. Kazus, "Organizatsiia," pp. 25, 33 n. 21.
75. Full brief published in Astaf'eva-Dlugach, "K istorii," pp. 401-2.
76. Minutes of meeting of exhibition committee, December 28, 1924, in Astaf'eva-Dlugach, "K istorii," pp. 402-3. Some other material, including Fomin text, in Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917-1925*, pp. 187-88, 190.
77. On details of building and Western responses, see S. Frederick Starr, *K. Melnikov. Le Pavillon sovietique Paris 1925*, Paris, 1981. On role of Rodchenko, builders, etc., see Jean-Louis Cohen, "Il padiglione di Melnikov a Parigi: Una seconda ricostruzione," *Casabella*, November 1986, pp. 40-51.
78. Kazus, "Arkhitekturnye konkursy," p. 11.
79. On permanent Lenin Mausoleum, see Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917-1925*, pp. 227-29.
80. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "Russian Diary" (of a trip in the winter of 1927-28), in I. Sandler and A. Newman, eds., *Defining Modern Art: Selected Writings of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.* (New York: Abrams, 1986), p. 116. In this entry, Barr calls it the "trade union building."
81. Velikovskii housing of 1925, see *Ezhegodnik MAO 5* (1928), p. 26.
82. B. Velikovskii, "Arkhitekturnye konkursy v zhilstroitel'stve," *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost' 1* (1925), pp. 3-4.
83. Competition briefs in Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1917-1925*, pp. 61-64.
84. An accessible source of many such projects is Khan-Magomedov, *Pioneers*.
85. Kazus, "Arkhitekturnye konkursy," p. 9.
86. Mendelsohn's defense, "Pis'mo Erika Mendel'sona," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 3 (1927), p. 108, gives full chronology of events and work done.
87. "O privilechenii inostrannykh spetsialistov k stroitel'stvu SSSR," *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost' 12* (1925), pp. 822-23.
88. "Pis'mo Erika Mendel'sona."
89. On the formation of OSA, see Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1926-1932*, pp. 65-68.
90. A. V. Rozenberg, "Osnovnye polozeniia organizatsii konkursov v sovremennykh usloviakh," and introductory note, A. Rozhanovich, "K voprosu ob organizatsii konkursnogo dela," *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost' 2* (1926), pp. 139-43.
91. Ia. A. Kornfel'd, "Arkhitektura na pervom s"ezde po grazhdanskomu i inzhenernomu stroitel'stvu," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 2 (1926), p. 58.
92. *Trudy Pervogo vsesoiuznogo s"ezda po grazhdanskomu i inzhenernomu stroitel'stvu*, Moscow, 1928; some of this particular discussion is summarized in Kazus, "Organizatsiia," p. 28.
93. "V zashchitu konkurentov," *Izvestiia ASNova* 1 (1926), n. pag.
94. Full prize list in "Nedavnye konkursy," *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost' 2* (1926), pp. 143-44, and *Konkursy MAO 1923-1926*.
95. "K konkursu Doma tekstilei," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 1 (1926), p. 12. Contents of building also in Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1926-1932*, p. 38.
96. "Khronika. K predstoiashchemu ukrasheniiu Moskvy," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 1 (1926), p. 16.
97. "Sobesedovanie v VOKSe," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 2 (1926), pp. 60-62.

98. Reported in Kazus, "Organizatsiia," p. 29, from *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'* 6–7 (1926).
99. A. V. Rozenberg, "Sovremennaia praktika."
100. P. Antipov, "K voprosu organizatsii"; the forthcoming volume was *Konkursy MAO 1923–1926*.
101. "Tovarishcheskoe sorevnovanie OSA," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 4 (1926), p. ii; 4–5 (1927), p. 158. The jury was the "OSA collective," i.e., all members together; for another on communal housing, see *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 4 (1929), pp. 121–22.
102. On their method of work, housing research, and the link to prerevolutionary theory, see Cooke, "Form is a function, X"; Irina Kokkinaki, "The first exhibition of modern architecture in Moscow," *Architectural Design* 5–6 (1983), pp. 50–59; and C. Cooke, "Roots of a method: pre-Revolutionary architectural thought," *A&V: Monografias de arquitectura y vivienda* 29 (1991).
103. V. Lavrov, "Uchastie ASNOVA v zhilishchnom stroitel'stve Mossovet," *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 1 (1928), pp. 14–17.
104. Kazus, "Arkhitekturnye konkursy," p. 11.
105. Ginzburg project published in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 4–5 (1927), pp. 113, 115; fully illustrated in Anatole Kopp, *Constructivist Architecture in the USSR* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), pp. 88–89. Zholtofskii project published in *Ezhegodnik MAO* 5 (1928), pp. 51–52, and ridiculed by OSA in "Nasha deistvitel'nost'," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 2 (1927), pp. 47–50.
106. Ginzburg's Alma-Ata project in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 3 (1928), pp. 75–77 and *Ezhegodnik MAO* 6 (1930), pp. 130–31. Numerous drawings also in Kopp, *Constructivist Architecture*, pp. 90–91. Ginzburg's Orgametal scheme in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 2 (1927), pp. 62–63.
107. Golosov Elektrobank housing block in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 2 (1926), p. 59.
108. "Steklo v sovremennoi arkhitekture," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 3 (1926), pp. 63–64.
109. Panteleimon Golosov projects in *Ezhegodnik MAO* 5 (1928), pp. 102–3 (Khar'kov), 116 (Sovkino).
110. Quoted from *Izvestiia* and Party decisions in Kazus, "Arkhitekturnye konkursy," p. 9.
111. Chernikhov Red Nailer factory project in *Ezhegodnik OAKh* 13 (1930), p. 134.
112. "Nasha deistvitel'nost'," pp. 47–50, and "Anketa o ploskoi kryshe," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 4 (1926), pp. 98–103.
113. Leonidov's Alma-Ata project in *Ezhegodnik MAO* 6 (1930), pp. 134–35; *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 2 (1928), pp. 63–65, and in Andrei Gozak and Andrei Leonidov, *Ivan Leonidov: The Complete Works* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), pp. 53–55.
114. Leonidov's Sovkino in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 1 (1928), pp. 5–8, and Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, pp. 50–52.
115. On early history, see Kazus, in Cooke and Kazus, *Soviet Architectural Competitions*, p. 23. Pashkov's project in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 6 (1927), p. 185.
116. Leonidov project in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 4–5 (1927), pp. 119–24, and Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, pp. 42–49.
117. On this exhibition, see Kokkinaki, "The first exhibition."
118. For typical critique in *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'*, see Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, p. 42.
119. Ginzburg, "Itogi i perspektivy," partially translated in Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, p. 42.
120. Markov preliminary project published in *Ezhegodnik MAO* 5 (1928), pp. 70–71. Details of the competition from note by Kazus, from archives, in Cooke and Kazus, *Soviet Architectural Competitions*, p. 23.
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122. Kazus, archival notes, in Cooke and Kazus, *Soviet Architectural Competitions*.
123. Jean-Louis Cohen, *Le Corbusier et la mystique de l'URSS: Théories et projets pour Moscou* (Paris: Pierre Mardaga, 1987), with full bibliography of Russian sources. See also archival notes by Kazus, in Cooke and Kazus, *Soviet Architectural Competitions*, and Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, pp. 56–57.
124. Editorial preface to G. Barkhin, "K voprosu ob arkhitekturnykh konkursakh (v diskussionom poriadke)," *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'* 4 (1928), p. 304.
125. Barkhin, "K voprosu ob arkhitekturnykh konkursakh," pp. 304–6.
126. Full text of draft *polozhenie* and Vesnin letter, from archival materials in the Central State Archive for Literature and Art, Moscow, published in Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1926–1932*, pp. 22–25.
127. On competition, see Kazus, "Organizatsiia," p. 30 (no references given); Milinis project illustrated in Khan-Magomedov, *Pioneers*, fig. 1336.
128. Archival material on Stroikom STO and MOVANO, from the Central State Archive for Literature and Art, Moscow, in Kazus, "Organizatsiia," p. 31.
129. Decree of Sovnarkom SSSR, June 1, 1928, "O merakh k uporiadocheniiu kapital'nogo stroitel'stva promyshlennosti i elektrostroitel'stva"; Decree of VSNKh SSSR, January 13, 1929, "Organizatsiia izyskatelskikh i proektirovochnykh rabot v promyshlennom stroitel'stve."
130. "Protest," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 3 (1929), inside front cover.
131. "Sozdadim federatsiiu revoliutsionnykh arkhitektorov," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 3 (1929), p. 89.
132. Decree of Sovnarkom SSSR, December 26, 1929, "O merakh k ozdorovleniiu stroitel'stva," *Pravda*, December 29, 1929.
133. N. Dokuchaev, "Konkurs na Dom promyshlennosti," *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 3 (1930), pp. 31–33.
134. Leonidov's project and description in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 4 (1930), pp. 1–2, and Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, p. 69.
135. Extracts from brief in Dokuchaev, "Konkurs," p. 31.
136. Jury comments published in *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 8–9 (1930), p. 24.
137. Leonidov's project and description in *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 1 (1930), pp. 1–6, and Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, pp. 72–76.
138. A. Karra and V. Simbirtsev, "Forpost proletarskoi kul'tury," *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 8–9 (1930), p. 22; partial English translation in Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, p. 77.

139. G. Krutikov, "Voprosy prostranstvennoi organizatsii kul'turnogo kombinata," *Stroitel'naia promyshlennost'* 10 (1930), p. 794; partial English translation in Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, p. 77.
140. Illustrated in *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 1-2 (1931), p. 29, and Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, p. 78.
141. Lissitzky's model and drawing are illustrated in Khan-Magomedov, *Pioneers*, figs. 1145-46.
142. From Decree (*Postanovlenie*) of the Construction Council on Launching the Competition for a Palace of Soviets Design, quoted in *Biulleten' Upravleniia stroitel'stvom Dvortsa sovetov pri prezidiume TsIK SSSR* 1 (September 1931), p. 3 (hereafter cited as *Biulleten'*).
143. "Delo vsekh tvorcheskikh sil sovetskoi obshchestvennosti," *Biulleten'* 1 (September 1931), p. 5, and "Utochnennoe zadanie," *Biulleten'* 1 (September 1931), p. 7.
144. *Biulleten'* 1 (September 1931), p. 16.
145. Competition announced in *Izvestiia*, July 13, 1931. Brief published in *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 7 (1931), pp. 8-10 under heading "Vse na konkurs." In *Biulleten'* 1 (September 1931), submission deadline extended from October 20th to December 1st, and modifications to brief published that "take into account lessons of the preliminary design stage," *ibid.*, p. 2.
146. *Biulleten'* 1 (September 1931), p. 16, and *Biulleten'* 2-3 (October 1931), p. 56.
147. *Biulleten'* 2-3 (October 1931), p. 56.
148. "Pervye proekty Dvortsa sovetov," *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 8 (1931), pp. 2-7. They were more systematically presented in *Biulleten'* 1 (September 1931), where p. 2 gives dates for the final exhibitions, etc. *Biulleten'* 2-3 (October 1931), p. 56 gives reports on preliminary exhibitions. One of the biggest public discussions, on November 18, 1931, was held in the AMO factory, for which the Proletarskii district Palace of Culture was being built; reported in *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 11 (1931), pp. 4-5.
149. *Biulleten'* 1 (September 1931); on jury see p. 16; on time off, see p. 12. Later jury members were named, though Cohen, *Le Corbusier*, p. 228, gives different names from those supplied from archives by Kazus, in Cooke and Kazus, *Soviet Architectural Competitions*, p. 59.
150. Cooke, "Images in Context," pp. 25-28, 40, and in more detail in C. Cooke, "The theory and practice of Socialist Realism in Soviet architecture," in B. Taylor and M. Cullern Bown, eds., *The Art of the Soviets*, forthcoming.
151. *Biulleten'* 1 (September 1931), pp. 5, 7; on marbles, etc., see *Biulleten'* 2-3 (October 1931), p. 56.
152. Jean-Louis Cohen, *Le Corbusier and the Mystique of the USSR: Theories and Projects for Moscow, 1928-1936*, Princeton, 1992, p. 169.
153. *Biulleten'* 2-3 (October 1931), pp. 6-8 (Beseda, etc.), 28-30 (Ladovskii), 33-35 (Nikol'skii), 42-45 (Shchusev), 39-41 (Fidman), 13-15 (Pavlov and Kuznetsov).
154. G. B. Barkhin, "Inostrannye arkhitektory na konkurse Dvortsa sovetov," in *Dvoretsov. Vsesoiuznyi konkurs 1932g* (Moscow: Union of Soviet Architects, 1932), pp. 83-84. For foreign entries, see *Architectural Review*, May 1932, pp. 196-200.
155. Cohen, *Le Corbusier*, p. 198 (from documents in the Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris), attributes Hamilton's success to "intrigues of Albert Kahn," who was building Soviet factories. The best American source on Hamilton, etc., is "Soviet Palace Competition," *Architectural Forum*, March 1932, pp. A-D.
156. On this, see Cohen, *Le Corbusier*, pp. 188-95.
157. Letters of March 1932, CIRPAC in Barcelona to Stalin, and April 1932, CIAM officers to Stalin, in CIAM Archives, ETH-Zurich.
158. Decree of TsK VKP(b), April 23, 1932, "O perestroike literaturno-khudozhestvennykh organizatsii," *Pravda*, April 24, 1932; reproduced in Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1926-1932*, p. 163; in English in C. Vaughan James, *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 120. Notice, "Soiuz sovetskikh arkhitektorov," *Izvestiia*, July 18, 1932, in Khazanova, *Iz istorii sovetskoi arkhitektury 1926-1932*, p. 163.
159. Cooke, "Theory and practice of Socialist Realism."
160. Brief outlined in D. Aranovich, "Arkhitekturnaia rekonstruktsiia tsentra Moskvy. Konkurs proektov doma Narkomtiazhproma," *Stroitel'stvo Moskvy* 10 (1934), pp. 20-29; further details by Kazus from archival sources, in Cooke and Kazus, *Soviet Architectural Competitions*, p. 85.
161. Aranovich, "Arkhitekturnaia rekonstruktsiia," pp. 20-21.
162. Ginzburg, "Itogi i perspektivy."
163. Aranovich, "Arkhitekturnaia rekonstruktsiia," p. 23.
164. Editorial introduction to publication of Narkomtiazhprom projects in *Arkhitektura SSSR* 10 (1934), pp. 4-5; partial English translation in Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, p. 115.
165. Jury quoted in Aranovich, "Arkhitekturnaia rekonstruktsiia," p. 28.
166. Catherine Cooke, "Ivan Leonidov: Vision and Historicism," *Architectural Design* 6 (1986), pp. 12-21; Cooke, "Images in Context," pp. 42-45. L. Lisitskii [El Lissitzky], "Forum sotsialisticheskoi Moskvy," *Arkhitektura SSSR* 10 (1934), pp. 4-5.
167. Leonidov's description from *Arkhitektura SSSR* 10 (1934), pp. 14-15; in English in Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, p. 75.
168. "Ot redaktsii," *Sovremennaia arkhitektura* 5 (1930), pp. 2-3; English translation in Gozak and Leonidov, *Leonidov*, p. 75.
169. "Having established the specific features of the Suprematist system, I charge the young architects, in the broadest sense, with the further development of a specifically architectural Suprematism . . . I myself have entered a remote and for me new realm of thought; as best I can I give an account of what I perceive in the infinite space of the human skull." Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematizm. 34 risunka* (Vitebsk: Unovis, 1920), as translated in K. S. Malevich, *Essays on Art, 1915-1933*, ed. Troels Andersen, trans. Xenia Glowacki-Prus and Arnold McMillin (Copenhagen: Borgen, 1969), vol. 1, p. 126. On Suprematism as "units of energy," see C. Cooke, "Malevich: from theory into teaching," in A. Papadakis, ed., *Malevich*, London, 1989, pp. 6-27, especially pp. 11, 14, 17-19.
170. J. J. P. Oud, from unspecified text of 1954, quoted in H. de Haan and I. Haagsma, *Architects in Competition*, New York, 1988, p. 18.

The Great Utopia

*The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde,
1915–1932*

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

State Tret'iakov Gallery

State Russian Museum

Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt

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