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**URBAN PLANNING TRADITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS
OF THE PRESENT**

Abstract – *This paper discusses the historical and theoretical outlined in the second part of the conference title: “from traditions to today’s demands”. Both concepts, presented in opposition to each other, need to be clarified. Urban planning traditions have been diverse. Today’s demands also cannot be defined in a univocal way. Our aim is to identify the most valuable traditions that are worthy enough to be preserved and cultivated in future. We have to admit that in contemporary urban planning, there are traditions that contradict earlier customs and rules that at a certain point in history were recognized as outdated. They have to be revised. There is a need to abandon the tradition of opposing the city and the village, as well as the Soviet directive to erase the differences between the two and the destruction of unpromising villages. The dramatic increase in the territories of urban districts, now identified with the cities themselves as a result of the reform of local self-government in Russia, and active agglomeration processes require the development of fundamentally new ideas about the structure and character of a modern city, incorporating an extremely diverse architectural and natural environment. The task is to minimize conflicts between the types of planning and development that are alien to each other and to eliminate their occurrence in the future. The paper formulates the author’s ideas on the actualization of some long-standing communal and corresponding urban-planning traditions and creation of friendly relations between difference loci of residential territories that definitely should have certain autonomy, and thus have wide enough spatial breaches, and by no means they should become monolithic residential areas. The democratic social organization requires the formation of an adequate morphology of contemporary settlements.*

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Town-planning traditions were very different in different eras and among different nations and states. The requirements of modernity also cannot be defined unambiguously. One can guess that the organizers of this conference, formulating its title, had in mind the eternal opposition between traditionalism and innovation. At the same time, they meant that the concept of modernity is inseparable from scientific and technological progress, which invariably causes innovative transformations. Such a view on what is happening, indeed, prevailed in the twentieth century. It remains influential today. However, it is becoming more and more obvious that other views, right down to the directly opposite, conservative-traditionalist ones have the right to exist. An expanding public and professional movement to preserve the heritage, the spirit of the place, cultural identity, etc. goes against the progressist-modernist vector of civilizational development and seeks to curb its destructive energy.

The modern movement in European architecture was initiated by the left-wing political slogans of a radical transformation of society and the environment of its life activity. The old capitalist cities were then subjected to merciless criticism, which depreciated their entire cultural potential accumulated over the centuries. [Le Corbusier].

A revolution occurred in our country opened the possibility of a wide-scale implementation of the most daring vanguard ideas. Many then enthusiastically set about creating the new on the ruins of the old. And after giving up the avant-garde architectural and artistic trends, when social realism with its historical continuity began to spread, the year 1917 continued to position itself as the beginning of a completely new era. Neither the impetuous reforms of N.S. Khrushchev with the promises of intimate communism, nor the "stagnant" policy of building "developed socialism" shook that idéologème. Finally, we came to a new revolution that canceled the achievements of the old one, but not completely.

We fail to turn over the hardest page of history in order to deprive key events of the 20th century of burning relevance. The fact that this is, indeed, overdue, is evidenced by the rejection of the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution. That was a momentous event, which definitely disappointed a lot of Soviet patriots, but made it clear that everything was over.

In the field of professional culture and education, the cult of VHUTEMAS and their European counterpart Bauhaus continues to remain a remarkably persistent anachronism, as if they have laid the foundations of our profession. The first year students of all Russian architectural schools are taught the basics of the volume-spatial composition, which go back to N.A. Ladovsky, revived in the 1960s by V.F. Krinsky, I.V. Lamtsov and A.M. Turkus. Having emerged under the slogans of rationalism, this very schematic avant-garde teaching is now being presented as our classic, the golden fund [Melodinsky]. It is good that there are substantial historical and architectural disciplines that compensate for the flaws of such formalistic propaedeutics. It is also good that the great masters of the "old school" affected our education in their time. But the abstractions of the left, modernist sense were too influential and destructive in terms of the revolutionary in relation to the truly classical tradition. It is hard to disagree with A.G. Rappaport, who considers this to be the reason for the degradation of modern architecture which has lost its fundamental content and, as a consequence, has merged with the design - a purely applied, decorative art [Rappaport].

The meaning of the aforesaid is that the requirements of modernity are not at all reduced to architectural innovation for the sake of innovation. Modernity includes the heritage of past epochs, and cultural traditions that have survived to the present, even if they seem irrational and outdated to someone. Everything that exists is in our reality, in the present, identified with modernity.

I foresee objections to such identification, based on the definitions of modern-outdated, fashionable-old-fashioned, progressive-regressive, etc. Without denying these definitions, I nevertheless argue that the concept of modernity cannot be politicized, by sending all those who disagree with the official interpretation of progress and the image of the future it generates to the category of retarding the development reactionaries. Indeed there were great civilizations which cultivated their traditions.

A significant argument in my reasoning is the historical fact that at the turn of the 20-21 centuries the strategic slogan - "sustainable development" - was put forward and adopted by all developed countries. A.V. Ikonnikov then estimated at its true worth, expressing confidence that the utopian thinking inherent in the twentieth century will become a thing of the past, and "the new century will be a time of searching for sustainable balance and harmony, which will spread to architecture as well" [Ikonnikov, 64].

Humanity has come to realize the need for a balanced, smooth development, allowing of no social and economic distortions, political upheavals and international conflicts. The priority was to improve environment, the living environment quality and resource and energy conservation, preservation of natural and cultural heritage. To develop these ideas, the Russian Academy of Architecture and Building Sciences was asked to pursue "biosphere compatibility" of both new and old, unfavorable in this regard, populated places [Ilyichev]. By and large, we are talking

about mitigating the anthropogenic and associated with it man-made pressure on the Earth, and ultimately - the harmonization of the relationship between man and nature on a planetary scale.

This lofty goal is perceived, however, as a practically unachievable dream, for each country individually, and international unions and coalitions, have a lot of their own intractable problems. Politicians and businessmen are concerned about gaining quick success in fierce competition. From here come the calls for maximum economic benefits and the creation of all sorts of breakthrough research and production technologies. Sustainability of development has to be forgotten.

This has a direct bearing on architecture and town planning. If in the last decades the policy of “resettlement of Russia” was consistently pursued (expression by AI Solzhenitsyn), then there would not have been a frightening imbalance in the settlement system in favor of megacities, and especially of large sizes - Moscow. Much better would have been the case with the restoration of architectural monuments and the preservation of the historically established urban environment. The new building would become more contextual, delirious in relation to the peculiarities of the place. In Russia, highly artistic and original modern architecture could be born. This is prevented by the existing opposition of pragmatic architectural and town planning design and work with heritage.

The powers of the building complex, acting together with the large construction business and persistently prolonging the life of modernist clichés in their Soviet version, are too strong. The technocratic approach to architectural design does not give up its position, hiding behind the indisputable authority of the innovative development path. And life requires something completely different: the rise of a humanitarian, socio-cultural, ethno-confessional and artistic approach to architecture as a great art and inspired creativity.

There is a need to identify half-forgotten, but valuable, city-building traditions worthy of maintenance, updating and use in the future. There are also such techniques and rules characteristic for modern urban planning, having already become traditions for us, which should be subjected to a serious revision.

First of all, one should pay attention to the stereotype of a large, multi-storey, densely built-up, concrete-glass city. Despite the occasional criticism, such a city is considered rational from an economic and functional point of view. And the main thing that ensures its longevity is a sense of prestige of living in it. The idea of the progressiveness of urban civilizations, for which it is the cities that allegedly served as the “locomotives” of development has been too long cultivated in us. This was mingled with the painful impression of the realities of the Soviet era, when cities were better supplied, equipped, purposefully developed, as opposed to the villages, which were considered unpromising and generally disappearing type of settlements. That had an ideological currently forgotten background: in the cities, at the factories an advanced working class was formed, and in the villages there remained an inert petty-bourgeois peasantry without any future.

Not so long ago, we had a correspondence dispute with E.I. Zagorodnov a former chief architect of Novosibirsk region, concerning the ideas of urbanism and desurbanism. He stated that it was unbecoming for such a great power as Russia to move into small houses [Zagorodnov], and I explained to him that in their single-family houses people become big and free, whereas in huge multi-unit ones they are small, pathetic and faceless [Bondarenko, 2010]. Unfortunately, my opponent expressed the position of the majority. The reaction of some governors to the proposal to preserve and restore the dilapidated wooden buildings of historic city blocks is well known: no, they are not going to “live in the village” (thank you, M.G. Meerovich for this information).

The ambitious “renovation” program, announced by Moscow, absolutely allows of no lightening of the urban load on residential territories, but only aggravates it. But after all, the city and its inhabitants are so acutely lacking in the comfort of a quiet small-scale and especially estate environment [Bondarenko, 2007]. The main thing is that they have no freedom of choice.

I am convinced that when citizens have such freedom, many of them will prefer their own house with a plot, even if the uncomfortable surroundings of a high-rise metropolis remain around. It is only necessary to dispel the myth of the high cost of the cottage, allegedly incomparable with the apartment. Both can be expensive and relatively cheap. Only the fact that a single-family house with a plot is the richest type of manor dwelling [Lebedeva] is indispensable. We will definitely return to the oldest tradition of urban estate building, if we consistently take care of improving the quality of the living environment.

The dramatic increase in the territories of urban districts resulting from the relatively recent Russian reform of local self-government, which have now become identified with the cities themselves, as well as active agglomeration and globalization processes require the development of fundamentally new ideas about the possible and desired morphology and about the very architectural image of the modern city, which incorporates a multitude of completely heterogeneous three-dimensional and landscape elements. The goal is to minimize conflicts between administratively united but alien to each other types of planning and development and to exclude their growth in the future.

In this situation, it is necessary to recognize that the decisions going back to the tradition of radical transformations of enlarging settlements in order to give them planning, compositional and stylistic integrity were erroneous. Such a tradition is fraught with not only excessive material costs, but also with psychological trauma, and most importantly, the loss of unique historical, cultural and natural values.

An opposite - inductive approach seems weak, weak-willed, forcing to put up with chaos. However, it is driven by a caring attitude towards each locus as a subject of soft, gentle integration. The whole turns to be not monolithic, but discrete, multiple.

This is at variance with the ideals of forming the city as a well-organized architectural composition, as a single ensemble characteristic of New Time, as well as with modernist aspirations for the functional-planning, volumetric-spatial and large-scale integrity of new architectural entities. Although, virtually all real-life cities even those built on a single regular plan, have not absolute, but relative integrity. It is important to grasp in order to abandon categorical judgments hereabout.

With the inclusion of Russian cities in the global economic networks, they encounter an ever more noticeable separation of architectural and spatial loci of international and local values [Ptichnikova]. To hinder what is happening is almost impossible. People want not to lose theirs, but at the same time to acquire something advanced and extraordinary. How to reconcile these opposing intentions? Should contrasting compositions or kind of a medium-arithmetic mixture be created? I am sure that neither can be done. There is a third way, the meaning of which is to prevent conflicts. It is possible with the abandonment of a simplified understanding of the problem of the integrity of the city. Why should a huge settlement be a single organism? In my opinion, it may well be a community of different organisms.

I must also say that the time has come to revise the theoretical tenets of modern anthropocentric urban planning, absolutizing and schematizing the role of man and society in life on Earth. The development of science and technology should be aimed not at prideful growth and transformation of nature at the need of short-term economic benefits, but at helping it in the fight against destructive natural processes, at improvement activity with the care of all its organic and inorganic components. This brings us back to the long-forgotten old - very ancient human views and traditions imbued with primitive pantheism.

Organically growing together with the landscape, imbued with the spirit of the place, traditional settlements became the property not only of human communities, but also of the "Mother of the Raw Earth" itself, which carefully sheltered them. Hence, here is the reason for the uniqueness of each farm, village, city, which received its own character, its own scale, image. All this is felt today, when it comes to historical settlements, unique architectural complexes, monasteries, manors.

But why modern construction does not fit into the same logic? Obviously, its origin is due to a completely different, proud, globalist-technocratic ideology. A vivid testimony to this is the skyscrapers, expressing the gust of earthlings into the heavenly heights and the courage of their engineering thought, going against all winds and earthquake. True, the severity of such sensations has long been dulled by the mass character of high-rise construction. But this does not mean that there is no point in talking about them. There is sense and it worries. The typing of the mass construction, and the general standardization of the urban environment, up to the elements of the beautification, which, in fact, should correspond to the spirit of each particular place also worry.

The ancient tradition of separating the serf core of the city became a thing of the past. With reservations about some of the surviving medieval castles and kremlins, this statement can be agreed. Present day cities differ from villages only in their very large size and density of construction in central parts. Is it good that this creates, at times, the impression of a structureless jumble?

Someone will answer that it is good, because it seems to give the right to resolutely rebuild and merge this entire area into something single. But for supporters of the multi-core, polycentric, patchwork structure of the residential tissue, this is bad, insofar as the observed chaos leads to the collision and destruction of those nuclei and loci that could serve as structural units of the city formation. The aforementioned word 'jumble' implies that one interferes with another in a spontaneous collision, "driving over", suppression and destruction.

In favor of multi-part, "patchwork" fabric speaks the fact that the city from social perspective has been from time immemorial and, it must be admitted, remains today nothing more than a territorial, neighboring community, that is, a place of peaceful coexistence, living together of different people, their groups and unions. It follows that it would be very useful for us to refer to the long-standing traditions of building good-neighborly relations between relatively autonomous, functionally and architecturally self-sufficient worlds. The key to success in this field is respectful treatment of each of them and the rejection of encroachments on someone's legal sovereignty.

When we are engaged in monuments of architecture and town planning of art, establish the boundaries of their territories and protected zones, this becomes quite obvious. In modern town planning, however, other rules dominate, which have also become traditions now, namely: the violent arrangement of one to another, the subordination of any particulars to the interests of the whole. These later traditions are a stumbling block; they have discredited and outdated themselves. They must be abandoned in favor of previous ones, worthy of reflection and rebirth in a new capacity.

Some architectural objects with their town-planning loci should by all means receive a certain measure of independence that is, sufficient spatial gaps between themselves and in no case should be monolithic in solid arrays that suppress and smear the articulation of their own images. A good urban environment requires a single-piece approach to its formation. Is not this what wonderful historical cities testify to?

It must be added to the said that the today declared democratic social system itself is in need of creating an adequate morphology of the settlements.

There still exists an influential but erroneous tradition of unifying residential development under the slogans of achieving social justice. In fact, this is how ambitions of totalitarian regimes manifest themselves, with a firm hand leading the loyal subjects to happiness. True democracy is inextricably linked with the interests and abilities of individuals, very different in nature and variable in time. Hence the need for individualization and architectural and urban planning solutions comes out.

A person is able to adapt to any environment, but this does not mean that he befits to continue being content with the scarce products of the current construction industry. Even if the assortment of architectural proposals is significantly increased, it still will not lead to real success

of the business. The architecture for sale is not at all the same as architecture to order, for oneself, for one's family and heirs.

Hence the conclusion that the high objectives of socio-cultural development lead in the long run to a revival at the new level of the traditions of private ownership, mostly single-family estate development of settlements, regardless of their status. It is quite clear that garden towns of the village type will be preferable to the "stone jungle" cities prevailing today, which will be a thing of the past as a degrading human dignity heritage of the industrial era with its failed revolutionary utopian social experiments.

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