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ARCHITECTURE MASTER SCHOOLS: COMMUNISM, PATRIARCHY, AND PEDAGOGY

Abstract

In post-1945 East-Central European communist states, the education of artists, architects, and designers was central to creating symbolic forms for a new communist "civilization." With their emphasis on mass production and applied design, technical universities and colleges of applied arts served that purpose well, advancing socialist goals of collectivization, industrialization, and placating citizens with consumer goods. Yet the parallel resurgence under socialism of bourgeois academy atelier models – select students led by a revered male master – is perhaps less obvious. Master schools of architecture in Prague and Budapest and state master workshops in Zagreb and other Yugoslav cities enrolled young practitioner elites in individualized study conferring high cultural status, often through prominent commissions. Merging pedagogy and ideology, these schools grappled with both socialist and capitalist forms of professionalization and the patriarchal legacy of the "master" embodied in their names – with ensuing tensions between class privilege, individual identity, and social equality, in particular gender equity. Some master schools closed even before their sponsor states disbanded, suggesting that "emulation of the master" conflicted with regime ideology, foreshadowing the end of the political if not the personal patriarchy of the communist state.

Keywords: architectural education, communism, master school, master workshop, Budapest, Prague, Zagreb

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INTRODUCTION

Reflecting on the communist era in East-Central Europe today – more than forty years after the fall of the Iron Curtain – we often see it through one of two extremes: either as a time of political oppression and obedience produced by institutionalized socialism in the Eastern Bloc between the 1940s and the late 1980s or, at the other end of the spectrum, a period of high aspirations for a more egalitarian and just society with benefits such as health care and education available to all. In this essay we turn to educational institutions that occupied a peculiar space in between these extremes, cannily navigating the world of "architecture and state" by combining political conformity and evasion, collectivism and elitism. Master schools and master workshops became unique postgraduate architecture institutions in several communist states – including Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia – most originating after World War II and paralleling similar models in the Soviet Union. They include the Državna majstorska radionica za arhitekturu (State Master Workshop for Architecture) in Zagreb, the Mesteriskola (Master School) in Budapest and the 'master' or 'special' Škola architektury, Akademie Výtvarných Umění (Master School of

architecture of the Academy of Fine Arts) in Prague. These institutions enjoyed higher cultural status than colleges of applied arts or technical universities, with each enrolling a small, highly competitively selected group of students, who were often licensed architects pursuing individualized courses of study.

Most architects in communist East-Central Europe were trained at technical universities that enrolled hundreds of students yearly and offered mass lectures and tightly prescribed professional curricula in design, technology and planning. Located in large, usually new institutional buildings, these schools produced a new technocratic class central to collectivizing and industrializing socialist spaces. In addition to university-based education, socialist architects were also trained in colleges of applied arts, often situated in large nineteenth-century buildings, which also embraced technology and design but were more often focused on the industrialization of interior and product design in order to appease communist populations with material benefits.

Unlike these university or art college settings, master schools and workshops were more singular and independent. Located in urban villas in prestigious neighborhoods and often led by a single tutor, they echoed the intimacy and ethos of both medieval master masons' lodges and aristocratic and bourgeois academies. The collectivity of the medieval lodges perhaps resonated with communist aspirations for communal life and training and thus provided an acceptable model. But the "survival" of bourgeois academies under communism is somewhat less obvious. Initially originating in the 17th century, academies of fine arts – or *beaux arts* academies – were dedicated, through drawing and debate, to the pursuit of symbolic architectural forms in the service of merchant princes and royalty. By the 19th century empires such as Austria-Hungary adopted the *beaux arts* atelier model, in which a selected group of students was led by a venerated male "master" artist or architect.

Despite such privileged aristocratic and bourgeois history, communist regimes quickly appropriated academies as postgraduate master ateliers producing symbolic and built representations of social progress. This was the case in the Soviet Union, where such master ateliers were compatible with the academicist Stalinist style that they were meant to produce. The Soviet model inspired new or legitimized existing master ateliers in East-Central Europe.[1] These master schools or master workshops evolved to accommodate shifting political climates and ideological messages, often more quickly than the technical schools, embracing socialist realism, then high modernism, and later brutalism and postmodernism. Such a broad evolutionary arc suggests both the longevity and resilience of the master school model and a certain diversity of cultural and social production of communist spaces, as evidenced by the three schools discussed in this essay and their home cities: Zagreb, Prague, and Budapest.

1 Some master ateliers – those in Prague or Vienna, for example – had roots in the 18th century, whereas others, such as Zagreb's, emerged in the 1940s.

STATE MASTER WORKSHOP FOR ARCHITECTURE, ZAGREB

In the decades after World War II ambitious young architects assembled in a neoclassical villa on a hill above Zagreb to further their studies in the Državna majstorska radionica za arhitekturu, or State Master Workshop for Architecture (**fig. 1**). Offering both apprenticeships and postgraduate study, it was one of several painting, sculpture, and architecture workshops founded in Yugoslav cities such as Belgrade and Ljubljana in 1947, at the height of the country's short-lived Stalinist orthodoxy.[2] Inspired by similar Soviet enterprises, it offered two- and three-year postgraduate government bursaries to a talented elite working under experienced "master" architects, training them in advanced socialist aesthetics for prominent public commissions. Despite Yugoslavia's exit from the Soviet sphere of influence in 1948, the Zagreb workshop survived for more than three decades, representing an unusually independent hybrid integrating academia and practice, art and architecture.

The workshop was led between 1952 and 1964 by Dragutin (Drago) Ibler, a prominent modernist with major Yugoslav interwar commissions, including public buildings and residences, who quickly shifted the focus away from socialist realism. He was also no stranger to integrating architecture with fine arts. A student of Hans Poelzig at the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin, Ibler had returned home in 1926 to set up the department of architecture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. The school of architecture at the Royal Academy – which came to be known as the Ibler school[3] – would

Fig. 1. Mijo Geher and Aladar Baranyai, Villa Ehrlich-Marić, Zagreb (1890–1891 by Mijo Geher, renovation by Aladar Baranyai in 1928). Later Državna majstorska radionica za arhitekturu (State Master Workshop for Architecture), today Croatian Museum of Architecture. Ulica Ivana Gorana Kovačića 37, Zagreb. Photograph by Igor Marjanović.

2 On the historical overview of Yugoslav master workshops, see Davorin Vujčić, "Majstorske radionice likovnih umjetnosti: Majstorska radionica Antuna Augustinčića" [Fine Art Master Workshops: Master Workshop of Antun Augustinčić], *Anali Galerije Antuna Augustinčića*, no. 26 (2007): 35–86.

3 On the Ibler school, see Željka Čorak, *U funkciji znaka: Drago Ibler i hrvatska arhitektura izmedju dva rata* [In the Function of a Sign: Drago Ibler and Croatian Architecture between the World Wars] (Zagreb: Centar za povijesne znanosti, 1981), 70–74. See also Ariana Novina, "Škola za arhitekturu na Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti u Zagrebu – Iblerova škola arhitekture" [School of Architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb – the Ibler School of Architecture], *Peristil l: zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti*, no. 47 (2004): 135–144.

continue to operate until Ibler immigrated to Switzerland in 1941 as the Croatian Nazi "Ustashe" regime seized power. Despite being much smaller than the Department of Architecture of the Faculty of Technical Studies of the University of Zagreb, which was modeled on the Germanic polytechnic tradition, it produced some of the most significant modernist practitioners in prewar Yugoslavia. Ibler was also closely linked to the arts and between the two World Wars served as the president of the radical art group Zemlja (Earth), which promoted social activism and political critique. Ibler spent most of the war years in Switzerland, where he was closely aligned with the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM). On his return to Croatia and Yugoslavia in 1950, he attempted to revive the architecture program at the Zagreb Academy of Fine Arts but eventually settled for leading its "satellite" postgraduate program, the Master Workshop. There he used the authority and relative independence of the *beaux arts* atelier "master" role to shift the workshop from socialist realism to modernism as a symbol of cultural progress and global connectivity, aspirations reflected in his key role in Dubrovnik's 1956 CIAM X meeting.[4]

The workshop was housed in the Villa Ehrlich-Marić, which also served as Ibler's private office and his home – he slept on its upper story (**fig. 1**). Located in an elite Zagreb neighborhood, its elegant bourgeois rooms provided generous studio space while lush landscaping reinforced a feeling of "being apart", amplifying the workshop's privileged position outside tight political control. The workshop had relative autonomy as it shifted between institutions and funding sources: from the federal to the local government, from the Academy of Fine Arts to the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Once enrolled in this program, the workshop participants worked on Ibler's many state commissions, including the iconic "Wooden Skyscraper" (1956–1958) in Zagreb, the Yugoslav embassy in Moscow (1959; unrealized), and state residences in Belgrade and beyond. The Wooden Skyscraper remains a testament to the workshop's aesthetic: it combines wood and concrete, merging modernism with local vernacular tradition. Andrija Mutnjaković, later a prominent practitioner and director of the Croatian Museum of Architecture, remembers spending long days at the villa, working on the Wooden Skyscraper drawings and talking to Ibler, who at the time was also deeply engaged nationally, serving as the president of the Yugoslav Association of Architects. According to Mutnjaković, the use of wood was inspired by the so-called *ganjčec* wooden porches often found in local villages.[5]

After Ibler's death, the workshop was led from 1964 to 1984 by Drago Galić, Ibler's student and close associate on major interwar projects. Galić

4 Tamara Bjažić Klarin, "CIAM Networking – International Congress of Modern Architecture and Croatian Architects in the 1950s", *Život umjetnosti: časopis o modernoj i suvremenoj umjetnosti i arhitekturi*, vol. 99, no. 2 (2016): 40–57.

5 Andrija Mutnjaković, conversation with Igor Marjanović, Zagreb, May 28, 2019. See also Andrija Mutnjaković, "Drago Ibler," *Arhitektura*, no. 158–159 (1976): 4–11.

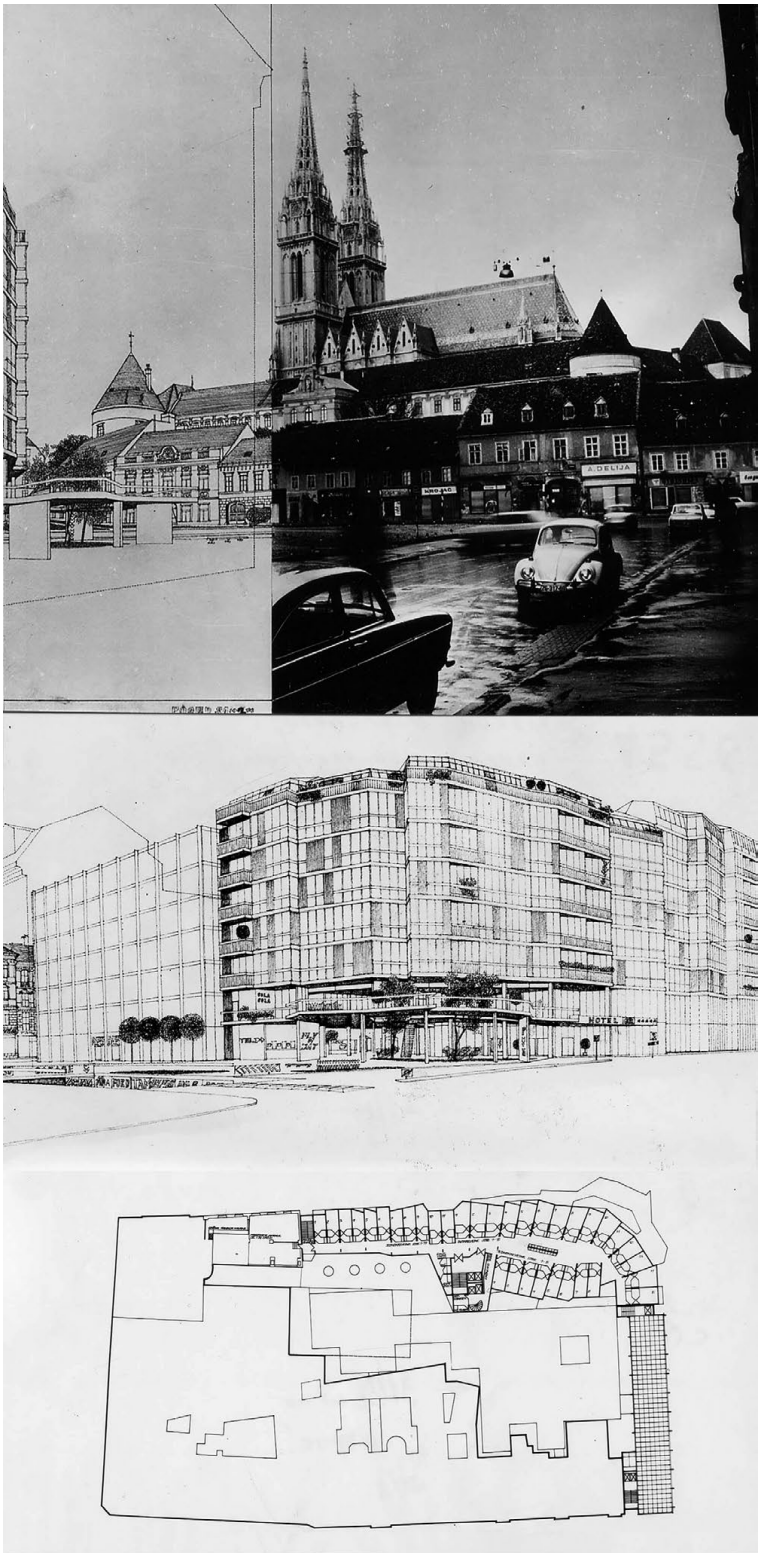

Fig. 2. Ines Filipović, Nikola Filipović, Branko Kincl, State Master Workshop for Architecture of Drago Galić, Project for Hotel Gradski Podrum (Urban Cellar), Zagreb, competition entry, first prize, 1967. Courtesy of Croatian Museum of Architecture, Zagreb.

maintained its independence, mentoring a cadre subsequently influential in Croatian academia and practice, including Hildegard Auf-Franić, who later served as the dean of architecture at the University of Zagreb. Unlike Ibler, Galić encouraged participants to pursue projects and competitions on their own – hotels, recreational districts, and cultural institutions – allowing the workshop to serve as an incubator for participants' own professional offices (**fig. 2**). Artistic drawings and models from this period fused a socially and formally progressive agenda, and projects grew in scale to encompass large housing estates and entire city sectors, spurring further growth of the regional form of modernism that fully spanned the university and academy. While men like Galić continued to hold leadership positions at the Master Workshop, there was also an increase in the representation of women among the participants, including Melita Rački, who later pursued educational opportunities abroad, including in Japan.

Intimate and elite, the workshop resulted in much built work and successful competition entries. As such, it formed a highly enterprising and productive – if still ideologically acceptable – bridge between academia and practice. Operating fairly informally in its last years, it gradually dissolved in the 1980s.[6] This closure was due in part to its unofficial character and reliance on a singular person, as well as its idiosyncratic disposition – both outside the institutional educational system and too close to fading centers of communist power.

Yet its volume of built work was radical for a Yugoslav educational enterprise, ensuring the survival and ascendancy of modernism as the mainstream building practice in postwar socialist Croatia and Yugoslavia.

6 The Croatian Museum of Architecture lists 1952–1982 as the years of operation, while Velimir Neidhardt wrote that the Zagreb Master Workshop closed in 1984. Davorin Vujčić on the other hand suggests that Galić might have led some version of the workshop until his passing in 1992. See Zvonko Kusić, Velimir Neidhardt, Andrija Mutnjaković, Borka Bobovec, Iva Ceraj, Dubravka Kisić, and Marina Smokvina, *Hrvatski Muzej Arhitekture / Croatian Museum of Architecture* (Zagreb: Croatian Academy of Art and Sciences, 2018); Velimir Neidhardt, "Drago Galić (1907–1992)," *Život umjetnosti: časopis za pitanja likovne kulture*, no. 52/53 (1992/93): 30–35; Vujčić, "Majstorske radionice," 46.

MASTER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PRAGUE

Further north, also in a villa-like building adjoining a large park on a Prague hill, a communist-era enterprise trained young architects through a three-year postgraduate architecture course. The 'mistrovská' Škola architektury, or 'master' School of architecture, was, unlike the Zagreb workshop, a long-standing part of an established art institution, the Prague Academy of Fine Arts, and under communism continued to nurture the nation's architectural elite (**fig. 3**). Between one and five postgraduate or, sometimes, advanced undergraduate architecture students were admitted yearly. Students received no state financial support other than free tuition, and many were already licensed and working in state offices. A single professor – renowned for integrating architecture and art – led the school, supported by architectural assistants, professional consultants, and a secretary. Its post-World War II roster of teachers included, as professors, the acclaimed modernists Jaroslav Fragner (1945–1966) and František Cubr (1968–1976) and, later, as associate professors, the conservationist and exhibition designer Marian Bělohradský (1966–1968, 1977–1982, both times as interim director) and the brutalist Vratislav Růžička (1982–1988).

The Prague Academy of Fine Arts had deep historical roots, originating at the end of the 18th century as an aristocratic initiative modeled on the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and the Academies of Fine Arts in Munich and Dresden.

Fig. 3. Jan Kotěra and Josef Gočár, Mistrovská škola architektury (Master School of Architecture), Academy of Fine Arts, U Akademie 2, Prague, original building project 1922–1924. Renovation by Marcela Steinbachová, Skupina Architekti, 2018–2020. Photograph by Tomáš Souček.

Architecture became a separate topic of study in the mid-1900s. In 1910 Jan Kotěra, a pupil of Otto Wagner, became the lead professor of architecture and, with previous director Josef Gočár, designed the "architecture villa." Completed in 1924, it had two floors of studios, with office space for the director, assistants, and secretary above.[6]

The Academy of Fine Arts closed under Nazi occupation, reopening in 1945 under the leadership of Fragner, who also updated the villa's interior.[7] With impeccable political credentials due to his prewar membership in the left-leaning avant-garde group Devětsil (Nine Forces), Fragner was able to preserve the Master School by presenting it as his own practice despite communist regime pressure in 1948 to nationalize architectural education. His role as director of Projekt Studio R, an entity of the state-run architecture office Stavoprojekt Praha, in some ways made him untouchable because his work with students on major Prague state commissions was symbolically important to the regime.[8] The Master School's work on the renovation of the Karolinum – Charles University's central complex – had to be completed by 1948, in time for the university's 600th anniversary. And the rebuilding of the Protestant Betlémská Kaple (Bethlehem Chapel, 1949–1954), closely linked to the 15th-century Hussite movement, was seen by the regime as a vital celebration of communism.[9] Nationalization of the Master School would have ground these projects to a halt.[10]

Fragner did not, however, prevent the infiltration of politics entirely. In 1951 the state declared that the school's architecture curriculum must include classes in Marxism-Leninism, Russian language and – at the height of Cold War anxiety – military training. These supplemented the usual studio course work in drawing, model making, art and architectural history, construction technology, building typology, urbanism, organization of construction, and light and sound, taught by professionals working in state practices or the Academy's art professors. The program's mission was explicit: "to link to life

6 "Historie AVU" [History of AVU], Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze / Škola architektury prof. Emila Přikryla [Academy of Fine Arts / Emil Přikryl's School of Architecture], accessed December 12, 2021, http://arch.avu.cz/index.php?page=school&school_page=history.

7 See "Tisková zpráva k památkovému obnovení budovy Školy architektury ze dne 12. 2. 2020" [Press Release on the Historic Renovation of the Building of the School of Architecture, dated 12 February 2020], accessed January 10, 2022, https://www.avu.cz/document/tiskov%C3%A1-zpr%C3%A1va-k-pam%C3%A1tkov%C3%A9mu-obnoven%C3%AD-budovy-%C5%A1koly-architektury-avu-6165.

8 Project Studio R of Stavoprojekt Prague later formed the basis of the Specializovaný Ústav pro Rekonstrukce Památkových Měst a Objektů, or SURPMO (State Institute for the Reconstruction of Monuments, Cities, and Buildings).

9 The communist adoption of Jan Hus as a heroic figure was central to the merger of socialism and nationalism in the ČSSR, a rejection of the Habsburg imperialist past, and a Slavic identity that was more conducive to Soviet hegemony.

10 "Historie AVU" [History of AVU], Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze / Škola architektury prof. Emila Přikryla [Academy of Fine Arts / Emil Přikryl's School of Architecture], accessed December 12, 2021, http://arch.avu.cz/index.php?page=school&school_page=history. All the translations of the quotations are made by Rüedi Ray.

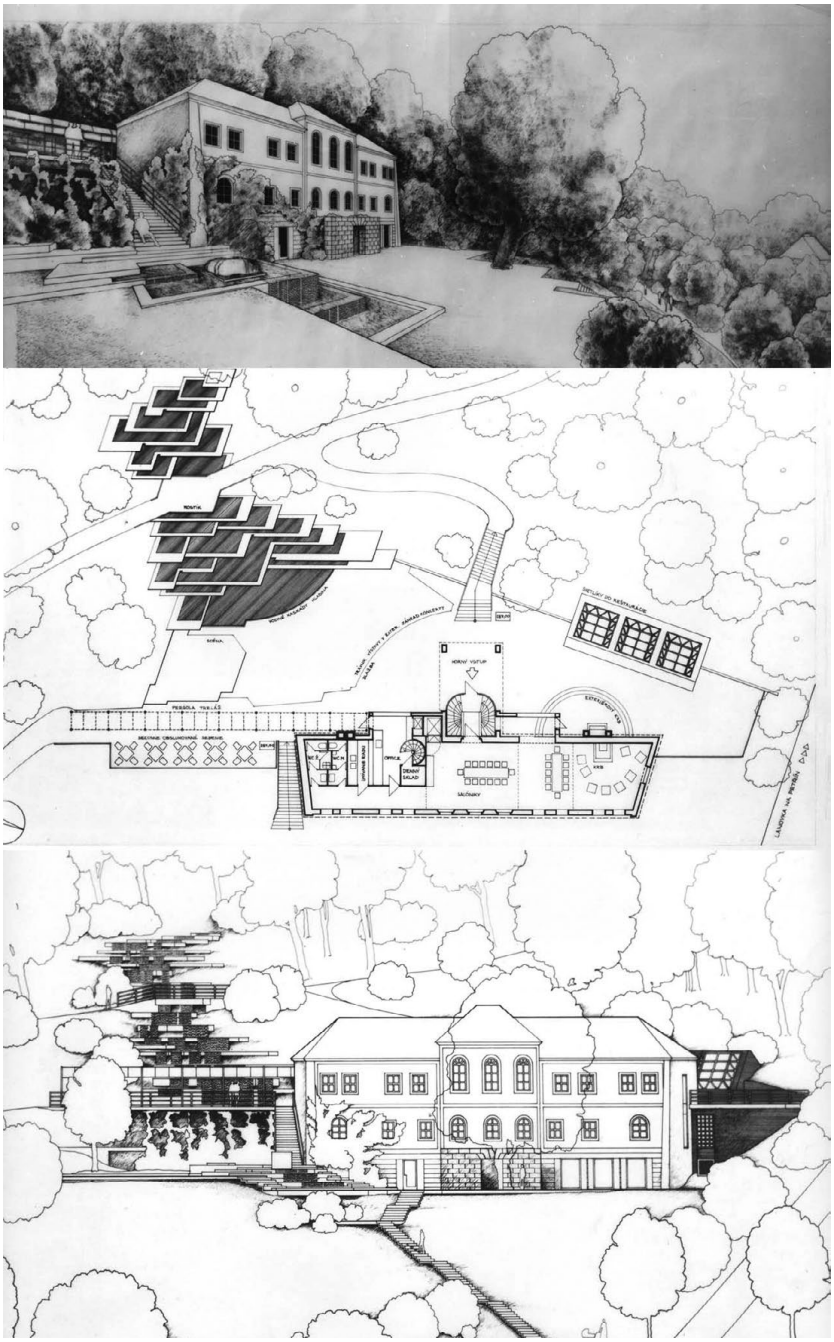

Fig. 4. Albert Mikovíny, Prague Academy of Fine Arts, Master School of Architecture student project for the renovation of the Nebozízek restaurant, Petřín hill, Prague, 1982. Courtesy of Zdenka Nováková. By permission of Albert Mikovíny.

and to perform specific tasks given by industry, agriculture, trips to workplaces, and brigades."[11]

The architecture studio, with most curricular hours, was taught by the lead professor and his assistants, following the *beaux arts* atelier model. Students often attended individually; under Fragner they met after work, with critiques continuing late into the night; under Cubr and afterward, they met mostly during the day. Projects reflected both political priorities and symbolic, formal, and philosophical aspects of socialist values. In the 1960s, maternity schools and housing on key Prague sites upheld collective ideals. Projects paralleling major cultural commissions (theaters, opera houses, galleries, recreation sites) reinforced national pride and leisure activities, and Union of International Architects design competitions promoted the East in the West. As in Zagreb, under Fragner students worked on his prestigious state commissions; Cubr kept his practice separate, but with his academy assistant Zdenka Nováková, later associate professor herself, as his professional collaborator.[12] Nováková's student Albert Mikovíny's 1982 drawings for a restaurant on Petřín hill, near Prague Castle, resonate with the soft tones of traditional buildings and landscapes – a reflection of the budding contextualism of the era – while at the same time recalling abstract modernism through geometric terraced fountains (**fig. 4**).

The Master School's prestige and a more lenient political atmosphere in the 1960s sometimes allowed party orthodoxy to be evaded. Fragner, who

11 "Učební Plán Vysokých Škol Výtvarných Umění: Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze a Vysoká škola výtvarných umění v Bratislavě" [Curriculum of University-Level Institutions of Fine Arts: Academy of Fine Arts in Prague and University of Fine Arts in Bratislava], Ministry of Education, Science and the Arts, July 7, 1951, 1.

12 After Cubr's death in 1976, Nováková continued to lead the office's projects and, with Bělohradský as interim director, was promoted to associate professor, equal in rank to both Bělohradský and Růžička.

was obliged to invite party-sanctioned architects, cannily served them enough alcohol to keep them from following the studio's work.[13] Yet in the Stalinist 1950s his teaching – maybe due to political anxiety – was terse, with little studio discussion.[14] When Cubr succeeded Fragner in 1968, the studio's independence grew.[15] Cubr too was deeply respected within and beyond the academy, mainly for his acclaimed Czech Pavilion at Expo 58 in Brussels, which carefully integrated art and architecture, symbolizing communism's turn to high modernism and focus on leisure and the arts. The school's culture of trust and protection led to freer conversations and stronger links between architecture and art. Although the so-called normalization period of the 1970s and 1980s circumscribed the school's activities, the studio's intimacy and connection of architecture and art remained.

Such an intimate and open-minded experience was not available to all, especially not in the first two postwar decades, even when communist zeal was at its highest and ideological messages of equality dominated. In the 1940s and 1950s there was only one woman graduate. Of 35 graduates in the 1960s only six were female, even though men and women enrolled in technical university undergraduate programs in close to equal numbers. Percentages of Master School women students were similarly low in the 1970s and 1980s, despite Nováková's significant role during those decades. And of the more than 40 instructors who taught between 1945 and 1989, only three were women.[16]

Today the school's two key eras are still named after their professors: the Fragner school and the Cubr school, echoing similar enterprises such as the Ibler school in Zagreb.[17] Such "mastery," also embodied in the title of "academic architect," which students received upon graduation, conferred prestige and later prominence for alumni practitioners and educators, some of whom are members of today's senior Czech architectural elite. Disproportionally male and Czech or Moravian – as opposed to Silesian, Slovak or of another ethnicity – despite radical political changes since 1989, such an elite represents the ongoing dominance of the solo patriarch in the reproduction of professional and personal identity.

MASTER SCHOOL, BUDAPEST

Budapest's Mesteriskola, or Master School, like its counterparts in Zagreb and Prague, was an elite postgraduate program. Like the Zagreb workshop, it was a new entity founded in 1953 to immerse postgraduates in Hungarian

13 Eva Jiřičná, interview with the authors, June 17, 2020.

14 See Rostislav Švácha, personal notes, cited in *Alena Šrámková: Architektura* [Alena Šrámková: Architecture], ed. Helena Doudová et al. (Prague: Kant, 2019), 105 n19.

15 See Zdenka Nováková, "František Cubr," accessed June 15, 2021, https://www.archiweb.cz/frantisek-cubr.

16 They were assistants to Cubr, Bělohradský, and Růžička. The youngest hire was also expected to act as secretary; Bělohradský did so under Fragner, and Zdenka Nováková and Iva Knappová did so under Cubr and Růžička, respectively. Jiřina Loudová taught without assuming a secretarial role. Zdenka Nováková, email correspondence with Katerina Rüedi Ray, January 19, 2022.

17 Bělohradský and Růžička were never promoted to professor; their eras are thus not named after them.

Fig. 5. Antal Gottgeb, Almásy-Andrássy mansion, 1877, known as MÉSZ-hall, headquarters of Magyar Építőművészek Szövetsége (Chamber of Hungarian Architects), Ötpacsirta utca 2/Múzeum utca, Budapest. Photograph by Daniel Kovacs.

and international architectural theory and practice, which at the time meant resolutely promoting the Muscovite architecture of young socialist realism.[18] Coordinated by Budapest Technical University and the Hungarian Chamber of Architects, it was led by the modernist István Janáky, succeeded in 1957 by another modernist, Jenő Szendrői. The first cohort comprised twenty-one students, mentored by eight founding "masters" – prominent architects including István Nyíri, Gyula Rimanóczy, and Károly Weichinger.[19]

The school generally accepted approximately 20 licensed architects biannually from 100 to 200 applicants working in state architectural offices. As with the schools in Zagreb and Prague, entry was highly selective. Its teaching, too, centered on individual mentorship but was supported by large group lectures, discussions, yearly two- or three-day symposia in various Hungarian cities, and field trips to buildings, to other Eastern Bloc states, and occasionally to friendly nations outside the bloc.[20] Students met for lectures and debates, sometimes at the university but mostly at the so-called MÉSZ-hall, the national headquarters of the Hungarian Chamber of Architects in Budapest. This grand building was the former Almásy-Andrássy mansion – a stately two-story structure with tall ceilings, an art nouveau entrance, and a monumental neoclassical exterior (**fig. 5**).

18 Tamás Devényi, cited in "Mesteriskola 2020 – Szendrői-díj odaítélése és a XXVI. ciklus indulása" [Master School 2020 – Award of the Szendrői Prize and the Start of the XXVI Cycle], accessed June 26, 2021, https://epiteszforum.hu/mesteriskola-2020--szendroi-dij-odaitelese-es-a-mixxvi-ciklus-indulasa-.

19 Lajos Arnóth, "MESTERiskola, Folytatás, 26 Fiatal Építész" [MASTER Course, 26 Young Architects], exhibition catalog, 3, accessed May 31, 2021, https://issuu.com/mesteriskola/docs/mesteriskola_katalogus_preview_2005.

20 Botond Bognar, interview with the authors, July 8, 2020. The 1972–1974 Master School cycle also included a trip to Egypt, funded by competition entry fees. See Jenő Szendrői, *Magyar Építőművészet*, vol. 23, no. 6 (1974): 46.

Studio teaching, however, took place at the master's office desk and involved the completion, over two years, of a number of projects. State architectural offices had to approve participants' enrollment and time to attend lectures and events. They also appointed prominent office architects as "masters." Szendrői later recalled how young architects grouped around an older master, in an almost patriarchal form.[21] Through emulation of the older generation, the master school was to "conquer … manipulated, prefabricated thinking … [and support] the framing of a conscious and independent personality."[22] It was this promise of individuality and autonomy that soon troubled the regime. Accusing it, in the harsh post-1956 years, of elite training and lack of active socialist political involvement, the regime closed the school in 1960.[23] It reemerged in 1970 as an informal discussion group called Fiatal Építészek Köre (Circle of Young Architects) and only from 1982 again functioned officially under the Mesteriskola name.

The curriculum was broader than those in Zagreb and Prague. By 1974 it included topics in architectural theory, economic and social development, sociology, organizational and management theory, aesthetics, structural design, mathematical logic, computer technology, systems theory, theory of technology, urban design, and social tasks of architecture. The masters included practicing architects but also key professors from the Budapesti Müszaki Egyetem (Budapest University of Technology) and the Magyar Iparmüvészeti Föiskola (Hungarian College of Applied Arts), many of whom were active practitioners through their institutional departments. Students also had lectures by Hungary's economic, cultural, and political elite.[24]

Yet here too women were underrepresented. For example, in the early 1970s, of the school's 40 or so lecturers, one was a woman. The 1972 competition for entry to the school attracted 80 applicants, and thus, unusually, 33 were accepted, but only six were women. The portfolios of student projects exemplify the transitional nature of the time, referencing both modern and postmodern tendencies: Ágnes Schwarczuk's drawings of large-scale modular structures exemplify the former, while Béla Rex Kiss's drawings represent the latter, providing snapshots of contemporary culture similar to the work of Archigram and Superstudio (**fig. 6**).[25] Like those in Prague, the projects in Budapest had shifted in focus and aesthetic by 1987, with the drawings now incorporating the

21 Jenő Szendrői, cited in ÉMÉ Mesteriskola, XX. Ciklus [ÉMÉ Master School, XX. Cycle], accessed May 31, 2021, https://web.archive.org/web/20130613200831/http://mesteriskola.hu/.

22 Jenő Szendrői, *Der Architekt*, no. 12 (1991), cited in Lajos Arnóth, "MESTERiskola, Folytatás, 26 Fiatal Építész" [MASTER Course, 26 Young Architects], exhibition catalog, 3, accessed May 31, 2021, https://issuu.com/mesteriskola/docs/mesteriskola_katalogus_preview_2005.

23 "A Mesteriskoláról" [About the Master School], accessed June 10, 2021, https://mesteriskola.wordpress.com/mesteriskola/.

24 Ferenc Vámossy, "Az elméleti képzés témakörei, témai és témavezetői" [Topics, Themes, and Supervisors of Theoretical Training], *Magyar Építőművészet*, vol. 23, no. 6 (1974): 47.

25 See *Magyar Építőművészet*, vol. 23, no. 6 (1974): 41–42.

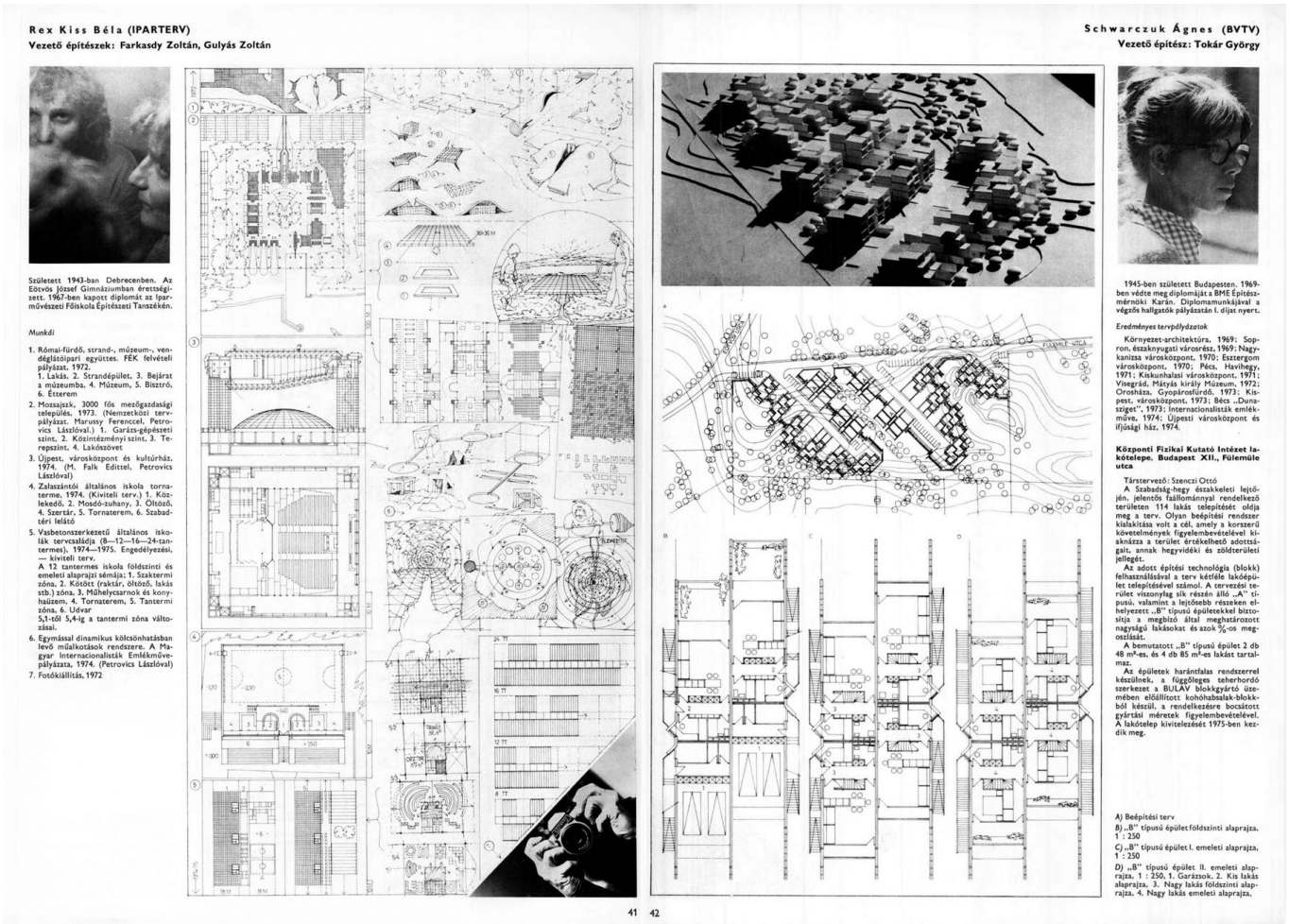

Fig. 6. Béla Rex Kiss, projects and competitions, and Ágnes Schwarczuk, housing estate of the Central Physics Research Institute, in: *Magyar Építőművészet*, vol. 23, no. 6 (1974): 41, 42. Courtesy of *Magyar Építőművészet.* By permission of Béla Rex Kiss and Ágnes Schwarczuk.

historical context of Hungarian cities but also echoing Western postmodern tendencies – a sign of Hungary's loosened "goulash socialism." By this time the cohort size was down to around 20, a quarter of whom were women.[26]

As in Zagreb and Prague, careful selection winnowed the profession's elite down to ten or so individuals per year. This often favored men, due to the continued pressures of family life and demands on women, despite socialism's proclaimed equality. The program's professionally beneficial personal connections and automatic passage upon graduation to membership in the Hungarian Chamber of Architects – of higher status than architectural licensing alone – created an influential elite. Despite the school's decade-long hiatus, key masters and participants became leading practitioners and educators both before and after 1989.

CONCLUSION: MASTERS, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNIST PATRIARCHY

The impact of the master schools lay in their capacity to quickly produce a privileged cadre of practicing architects, surpassing Western models of Master's-level education, in which academic experimentation was more removed from

26 "A Mesteriskola IX. ciklusának felvételi tervpályázata: A Magyar Építészeti Múzeum" [The Master School IX. Cycle Competition: The Hungarian Architecture Museum], *Magyar Építőművészet*, vol. 78, no. 6 (1987): 3–7.

Fig. 7. Poster for *Majstori, majstori!* (literally, "Masters, Masters!," released internationally as *All That Jack's*), 1980, directed by Goran Marković. Courtesy of the Yugoslav Film Archive, Belgrade.

practice, and licensure and accreditation were, and remain, slow and costly. Even more so than their Western counterparts, master schools contributed to the creation of an architectural elite – a form of professionalization as social distinction discussed by Pierre Bourdieu and Magali Sarfatti Larson. The master atelier's exclusive, emulation-based teaching model resonates with Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and its unconscious corporeal/environmental enculturation that creates, in addition to institutionalized cultural capital, the embodied cultural capital of an educated person of distinction.[27] It also resembles the intimacy through which, according to Sarfatti Larson, professional education unconsciously reproduces internalized moral and epistemological norms.[28] Its exclusivity, instead of maintaining market closure, as in the West, ensured different degrees of ideological compliance (a kind of political closure). It created, separated, elevated, and rewarded a state-sanctioned professional cadre far smaller (and thus more controllable) than that graduating from Master's programs in the West.[29]

Yet these master schools also recall another form of separation, in which the meaning of the word *master* suggests not only power hierarchies but also gender stereotypes. Directed by the Prague-educated filmmaker Goran Marković, *Majstori, majstori!* (Masters, Masters!) is a 1980 Yugoslav film about the often-denied socialist class system (**fig.** 7). It tells the story of a dysfunctional elementary school and its employees, bookended by two characters: the powerless female

27 See Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72, and Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 241–258.

28 See Magali Sarfatti Larson, "The Production of Expertise and the Constitution of Expert Power," in *The Authority of Experts: Studies in History and Theory*, ed. Thomas L. Haskell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 28–80.

29 See Michael Burrage and Rolf Torstendahl, *Professions in Theory and History: Rethinking the Study of the Professions* (London: Sage, 1990), 23.

school director, played by Semka Sokolović-Bertok, and the school's janitor, Keva (slang for "mom" in Serbo-Croatian), played by an actual janitor, Smilja Zdravković. The plot revolves around a single event: Keva's retirement dinner party, set in the school's gym and evoking the imagery of the Last Supper. Laden with food, alcohol, and internal intrigue, the movie portrays a chaotic organization in which even a capable school director is completely helpless in enforcing responsibility and efficacy. Throughout the endless party, Keva stays silent as others speak up and "celebrate" her life. When everyone leaves, she is left doing what she has done all her life: cleaning up the mess. *Masters, Masters!* depicts a decaying socialist enterprise and implied class system centered on several binary opposites: the educated urban elite versus the uneducated rural working class. In portraying the silent female janitor and helpless female director, the film also exposes socialist gender stereotypes and the blunt sexism of a supposedly egalitarian society.

Masters, Masters! and the master schools both recall the patriarchal order sustaining the master as a paternalistic father figure. European architecture's patriarchy goes back at least to patrilineal medieval masons' ordinances protecting the monopoly over their labor value. By the 19th century patriarchy had permeated the collective architectural unconscious when, as Elizabeth Wilson has written, rapid urbanization became associated with fears of rampant female sexuality.[30] In the 20th century communist efforts at liberating women from the "great confinements" of motherhood and home only partially dislodged such legacies; indeed, while women often made up 50 percent of architecture undergraduates, far fewer of them joined postgraduate master workshops and their subsequent elites.

Through individual mentorship of young professionals immersed in built work, master schools pursued symbolic refinement and built work via one-on-one dialogue with and emulation of revered masters. Their high-profile cultural projects (opera houses, theaters, resorts, and expo pavilions) or collective buildings (schools, factories, housing) worthy of the communist state and Western audiences, bridged architecture and art; exhibited locally and abroad, and sometimes built, they propelled "master graduate" careers.

Despite the limitations of both education and practice in a state system that sought to achieve its political goals through mass education at technical universities, Prague's and Budapest's master schools survived and impacted the discipline beyond the fall of the Iron Curtain. Despite their prominence, however, some master schools and workshops closed temporarily or disappeared even before their sponsor states disbanded, indicating that "emulation of the master" could create fatal conflicts between architecture and the state. Nevertheless, their continuance – with their individualism and elitism – also foreshadowed the dissolution of the political, if not the personal, patriarchy of the communist world.

30 See Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (London: Virago, 1991).