Building Soviet Vyborg: Architectural Encounter in the Soviet-Finnish Borderland, 1960s-1980s

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Comparative History

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Budapest, Hungary
2017

Abstract

The research project *Building Soviet Vyborg: an architectural encounter in the Soviet-Finnish borderland, 1960s-1980s* is dedicated to the study of the Soviet-Finnish encounters in the sphere of architecture and architectural engineering on the example of Vyborg, once second-largest Finnish town appended to the Soviet Union during the Second World War. The project has two main aims: to contribute to the analysis of contested built environment of Vyborg by approaching it from the standpoint of spatial history; to escape the narration of history of Soviet architecture from exclusively the system of power relations by focusing on local cross-border networks and encounters. In this research, the Soviet-Finnish borderland is perceived as space created a possibility for cultural and technological exchange between the countries on the both sides of the "Iron Curtain."

Acknowledgements

As well as the construction of Vyborg, my research is the result of numerous encounters with people to whom I owe the outcomes of this work. My most scincer gratitude goes to my supervisor Marsha Siefert, who helped to tame and articulate the fluttering ideas, but also made the writing process joyful and comfortable. I am similarly indebted to my second reader, Charles Shaw, who provoked with rightful questions and helped to position my case study in the broader context.

During my St. Petersburg years in the History Department of the Higher School of Economics where I started my research, I was lucky to work under the supervision of Alexander Semyonov, who insightfully helped me to pave the field of inquiry and tolerated my stubborn infatuation with buildings, not empires. I am much obliged to Daria Bocharnikova who also was there from the very beginning introducing me to the exciting world of Soviet architecture.

The research could not be possible without my Vyborg friend Pavel Pokidko, whose excursions were a fount of information and a great inspiration for this work. I also would like to express my greatest gratitude to my interviewees – Vyborg archietcts who agreed to share their stories with me.

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Introduction

The analysis of the architecture and composition of a city can reveal how a society organized and imagined its life in the certain time period. In the course of the 20th century with its political tensions, architecture became an important tool of competition between the states, while the horizontal links of exchange were established among the architectural professionals across borders. The comparative studies of market-driven and socialist built environments often excluded the discussion on the links between their professional architectural communities. In her research on post-WWII Hungarian and East German architecture, Virag Molnar pointed out that in case of the countries of state socialism, "the oppressive presence of the state over professionals is routinely postulated without closely examining the ways in which state control was exercised, legitimated or questioned by various professions and the specific intellectual, institutional, and political constellations that indeed guided professional conduct." [1] This thesis considers the encounter between architectural professionals of the Soviet Union and Finland working in socialist and capitalist systems by emphasizing shared goals, challenges and imperatives in the course of the ongoing architectural modernization in both countries. In order to adequately use architecture and architectural thought as a heuristic tool, this thesis discusses the encounter on the regional level – using the example of the contested city of Vyborg ceded to the Soviet Union from Finland during the Second World War. I am arguing that the complex built environment of Vyborg where entanglement of Finnish and Soviet architectural practices was woven into an urban space enhanced synchronic and diachronic encounters between Soviet and Finnish architects.

Synchronic encounters were provided by the infrastructures of professional exchange established during of the so-called "Khrushchev Thaw," the favorable neutral

[1] Virag Molnar, *Building the State: Architecture, Politics, and State Formation in Postwar Central Europe* (Routledge, 2013), 15.

position of Finland in the Cold War alignment, the shared environmental conditions with Finland and the ceded territories of the Karelian Isthmus, the search of the Soviet government of new architectural solutions based on modern technological possibilities of industrial production, and, in some cases, with the inability of the Soviet management to cope with the development of the ceded territories. It was characterized by travels of Soviet architects across borders within the study trips to Finland, and the travel of Finnish architects and construction companies – to the Soviet Union.

Diachronic encounters were characterized by the interest of the Soviet architects in the Finnish architectural heritage of the 1930s that was preserved on the territory of the ceded Vyborg. Within the course of such an encounter, the architectural techniques new to the Soviet architecture of the 1960s-1980s were appropriated from the Finnish architecture of the 1930s, created a specific vision of the temporality of architectural modernization in the region among Soviet architects, as well as their attempt in establishing local architectural practices based on the implicit criticism of the ongoing mass housing modernization.

Given these points, in *Building Soviet Vyborg* I am showing the ambiguity of the dichotomy between the socialist and the capitalist ways of producing the built environment by exploring the results of their encounter. In order to explain and define these notions, I am focusing on the visions of the architects participating in the building Soviet Vyborg, and the analysis and the role of the spatial and architectural conditions of the region, where the complex architectural development was taking place. Based on archival research and oral history interviews, this thesis is looking into architects' understanding of what makes a "Soviet" city, and in what sense foreign achievements and developments were adopted in order to inspire and develop its built environment locally.

1 Soviet architecture in the boundary: theoretical premises and historical contexts

The following chapter provides theoretical, historiographical and methodological contexts for *Building Soviet Vyborg*. The first section is dedicated to a review of the genealogy of the spatial approach in the history of the Soviet Union. The category of "space", understood as an entanglement of a complex material, environmental, and social realities, is instrumentalized in order to complicate the existing opposition between the "socialist" and "capitalist" ways of producing the built environment. Such exploration is conducted in the Russian-Finnish borderland – a space that provided a possibility of cross-border exchange between professional architectural communities on both sides of the "Iron Curtain." In the second section, the relevance of the case study of Vyborg in the context of the Soviet-Finnish encounter is explained. In the third section, I am outlining the context for the mass housing modernization in the Soviet Union and the current historiographical trends in the research of Soviet architecture of the 1960s-80s. In the fourth section, I am addressing the source base that is used in the current study and introducing the analytical strategy for its interpretation.

1.1 Spatial history and importance of a place

For the last half century, the analysis of urban space within the disciplines of architecture, geography, and urban planning has not been confined exclusively to the material, physical, and graphical dimensions of human existence. Since then, social sciences, such as history, sociology, anthropology, gender studies, ethnography, literary studies, and psychology, have contributed significantly to the formation of the spatial school of thought, which asserts that space exists not only materially but also at the level of meanings, narratives, social relations, and the psyche that makes it a complex category

of analysis.[2] On the other hand, such disciplines as human geography and architectural theory made a contribution to the field of social sciences. Particularly, the category of "space" was instrumentalized in order to critically approach the problem of historical epistemology,[3] oppressive state politics in relation to human subject, [4][5] the importance of lived experience and emotional response to architecture, [6] the inner contradiction of liberal democratic societies, [7] and the marginalization of certain social groups,[8] to name a few.

Practicing spatial history does not imply a revision of the field of history, but rather an addition to the existing research optics that are needed to address problematic concepts, questions, and chronological divisions. One of the functions of the spatial optics in history is to follow the continuities that are lost while utilizing formal periodization and to complicate the terms that are called to describe division (casually, a domain of the political history), such as a "border." A spatial approach conceptualizes geographical space, environment, and architecture not as a form, but as a substance and pays attention to the role of spaces in shaping the historical process. On the other hand, it recognizes the importance of technology and human agency in reshaping the environment both on the material and discursive levels. Thus, the spatial approach in history deepens the historical vision by focusing not only on temporal durability, but also on a spatial dimension of human existence.[9]

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[2] Yishai Blank and Issi Rosen-Zvi, "Introduction: The spacial turn in social theory," *HAGAR Studies in Culture, Polity and Identities* 1(2010): 3-9.

[3] Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (Verso, 1989).

[4] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, 1 edition (Malden, MA; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992).;

[5] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall, 3 edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[6] Gaston Bachelard and John R. Stilgoe, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas, Reprint edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).

[7] Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton University Press, 2001).

[8] Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2011).

[9] See, for example: Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*.

A "Spatial Turn" was also occurring in the field of the history of the Soviet Union. As Nick Baron pointed out in his overview, however, there is no such "self-conscious spatial 'school' of historiography" of the Soviet Union that could be characterized by a unique methodological approach. However, the growing "spatial" research interest could be characterized by a shared concern to define the "mediating role of culturally-defined spatial practices and spatially-configured cultural practices".[10] In other words, this approach is driven by the will to understand how cultures produced spaces and how spaces, in return, conditioned cultural practices.

The Soviet project was famous for its ambition to transform and conquer spaces – The Virgin Lands campaign, the flight to the Moon, the construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline, the development of the far North, the mass housing reform immediately come to mind. In fact, the cultural studies of Soviet space has been a trend as early as since the 1970s-1980s when first theorists in the Soviet Union, among them Vladimir Paperny[11] and Vladimir Toporov,[12] applied methods of cultural semiotics to the analysis of architecture, urban culture, and spatial practices in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Whereas Anatole Kopp,[13] Vyacheslav Glazychev,[14] and Selim Khan Magomedov[15] produced the first accounts on the history of early Soviet architecture.

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[10] Nick Baron, "New Spatial Histories of Twentieth Century Russia and the Soviet Union: Surveying the Landscape," *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 55, no. 3 (2007): 374.

[11] Firstly written in the late 1970s as a dissertation at the Institute for the Theory and History of Architecture in Moscow: Vladimir Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two*, trans. John Hill and Roann Barris, 1 edition (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[12] Vladimir Toporov, *Prostranstvo i tekst. Tekst: semantika i struktura* (Moscow, 1983); Vladimir Toporov, *Peterburgsky tekst russkoy literatury. Izbrannye trudy* (St. Peterburg, 2003); Vladimir Toporov, "Drevnyaya Moskva v baltyskoy perspektive" in *Balto-slavyanskiye issledovaniya*. (Moscow, 1982), 3-61; Vladimir Toporov, "Vilnius, Wilno, Vilna: gorod i mif" in *Balto-slavyanskiye etnoyazykovye kontakty* (Moscow, 1980), 3-71; Vladimir Toporov, "Odicheskaya pesn gorodu Rige" (1595) Baziliya Pliniya" *in Balto-slavyanskiye issledovaniya. Vyp. XV* (Moscow, 2002), 42-46.

[13] Anatole Kopp, *Town and Revolution: Soviet Architecture and City Planning. 1917—1935* (London, 1970).

[14] The book was competed in 1989, but remains unpublished: Vyacheslav Glazychev, *Rossiya v petle modernizatsii: 1850—1950*.

[15] In the Soviet period Khan Magomedov published research on the architecture of Southern Dagestan, on the creative legacy of the architects of the Soviet avant-garde, such as Ivan Leonidov, Konstantin Melnikov, Ilya Golosov, Alexander Vesnin and Moses Ginzburg.

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought a new wave of interest in its spatial history, as well as in the archeology of Soviet material culture. This trend could be explained by several factors, namely the opening of the previously unavailable archives, and the visibility of changes in the material environment of the post-Soviet countries, which are increasingly subjected to neo-liberal modernization that made researchers think about what material environment is gradually disappearing into the past. On the other hand, the borderland conflicts that came along with *Perestroika* and followed up on the dissolution of the Soviet Union, such as Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Russo-Georgian War in South Ossetia, and Russia's annexation of Crimea, brought the attention of social anthropologists to the longer border dynamics in the region.[16] Although there is a significant amount of research done in the field of early Soviet and post-Soviet spatial history, significantly less literature refers to the post-WWII and Khrushchev periods.[17] Discussion on the architectural thought in the late and post-Socialist period is only now beginning to take shape.[18]

Thus, in the research *Building Soviet Vyborg*, I will be interested in both exploring the blind spots in the literature, and moving to the borderland to see which "spatial characteristics" the Soviet project revealed in the case of the encounter with the "Western" or "capitalist" spatial paradigm that is conventionally conceived as opposite to the Soviet one. In the course of presenting the results of my research, I hope to complicate such a strong division by applying spatial optics to the existing comparative framework between "socialist" and "capitalist" ways of producing a built environment.

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[16] Tone Bringa and Hege Toje, *Eurasian Borderlands: Spatializing Borders in the Aftermath of State Collapse* (Springer, 2016).

[17] Virág Molnár. Building the State: Architecture, Politics, and State Formation in Post-War Central Europe (London: Routledge, 2013); Kimberly Elman Zarecor. Manufacturing Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1960 (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011); ; Mark B. Smith, *Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

[18] Timothy Alexander Nunan, "Ecologies of Socialism: Soviet Gradostroitel'stvo and Late Soviet Socialism," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 3, no. 2 (July 2012): 106–15; Daria Bocharnikova, "Inventing Socialist Modern: A History of the Architectural Profession in the USSR, 1932-1971." PhD diss., European University Institute, 2014; Diana Kurkovsky West, "Cybersovietica: Planning, Design, and the Cybernetics of Soviet Space, 1954-1986." PhD diss., The Princenton University, 2013.

Following the question posed by Susan Reid and David Crowley, "what might distinguish "socialist spaces" from any other?"[19], many researchers attempted to identify specific features of the "socialist" way of producing built spaces. Characteristics like equal mediation of resources by the state within the system of planned economy, "ideological cartography" of monuments and streets names that supposed to communicate the masses in a ubiquitous semiotic field, self-discipline practices, and creation of a new "subject" through new spatial practices were marked as exemplary.

This claim for uniqueness was opposed by followers of the neo-Weberian school who highlighted the commonalities in capitalist and socialist urban development strategies claiming, that the logic of industrial development was the main determinant in urbanization disregard to a political regime.[20] This argument was strengthened by Kate Brown, who famously contended that the American and Soviet atomic cities were identical in their spatial organization and strategies of population management.[21] Thus, within the existing geopolitical Cold War, American and Soviet plutonium production created similar spaces that were organized and were functioning in a similar way.

Going from the comparative approach to the growing field of entangled Cold War histories, a spatial approach also remains useful in enhancing study of the border regimes of the Cold War, cross-border cooperation, and encounters. A "border" is both a political and geographical term that simultaneously delineates political entities and brings its subjects together by providing a possibility of shared social, economic, and cultural practices. As was shown by Emiliya Karaboeva, the fact of the very existence of the

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[19] David Crowley and Susan Emily Reid, *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (Berg, 2002), 4.

[20] Gregory Andrusz, Michael Harloe, and Ivan Szelenyi, *Cities After Socialism: Urban and Regional Change and Conflict in Post-Socialist Societies* (John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 101.

[21] In order to come up with such a conclusion, Brown engaged with the on-site analysis of American Richland and Soviet Ozersk and paid significant attention to the landscapes of those cities. The atomic cities on both sides of the "Iron Curtain" were similarly designed as utopian limited-access cities with exclusively high supply for its loyal citizens, where intentional daily dumping of radioactive was hidden for years. See: Kathryn L. Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

border between so-called "socialist" and "Western" capitalist blocks, led to a creation of a "liminal group" of international truck drivers that used the space of existing road networks to maneuver between "official" and "unofficial" practices of Cold War relations.[22] Thus, the preexisting infrastructural network significantly shaped their social identification in the context of a political conflict. Accordingly, in the research of on the Russian-Finnish boundary, Anssi Paasi conceptualized the boundary as an object, rather than a subject of analysis. Paasi argued that the boundary cannot be described as a physical line delineating two states, yet should be analyzed "from a broader, socio-culturally grounded perspective" [23] as a place of "spatial socialization." [24] In the borderland space, Finnish and Russian communities encountered possibilities for both identifying differences and building shared social practices.

Following this approach, I am arguing that the analysis of the Soviet-Finnish boundary, the meeting point of the so-called "Western" capitalist and "Soviet" socialist worlds, must be addressed from the broader perspective that, apart from the geopolitical aspect, encompasses the analysis of spatial practices (in case of the current research – mainly architectural practice) and cross-border encounter generated by it. In order to do so, I propose a shift from the analysis of the boundary to the notion of the borderland – the territory at or near the boundary, and to trace the local patterns of production of spaces using architectural and urban planning practices of the local architectural community. Since this thesis mainly engages with the spatial history of the Soviet Union, I will primarily be addressing the "Soviet" side of the Soviet-Finnish borderland while applying the term in the following analysis. Still, the spatial scope will allow looking beyond this division by bringing in shared environmental conditions, as well as the urban

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[22] Emiliya Karaboeva, "Borders and Go-Betweens: Bulgarian International Truck Drivers during the Cold War," *East Central Europe* 41 (2014): 223.

[23] Anssi Paasi, *Territories, Boundaries, and Consciousness: The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Boundary* (J. Wiley & Sons, 1996), 27.

[24] Ibid., 8.

planning and architectural patterns of the former Finnish territories of the Karelian Isthmus ceded to the Soviet Union during the WWII.

1.2 Vyborg – the ceded "West" of the Soviet architecture

Vyborg is a unique place in the Soviet-Finnish borderland that serves as an example of simultaneously transformative and reactionary tendencies in the development of its urban space in the post-WWII and late Soviet periods. The city of Vyborg is located in the west of the Karelian Isthmus, 174 km from St. Petersburg and 244 km from Helsinki. Vyborg was a truly contested territory throughout its history. A Karelian settlement on the route of the Hansiatic merchants to Novgorod, it was captured by Swedes in 1293 and turned into a fortified settlement.[25] The town came under the control of the Russian empire in 1721, as a result of the Great Northern War. In 1811, by the order of the emperor Alexander I, it was included to the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland. During this period, Vyborg citizens spoke four languages – Finnish, Swedish, Russian, and German, and were actively involved in the international trade and cultural relations.[26] In 1917, Finland received its independence from the newly established Bolshevik state, and Vyborg started to be developed as the second largest regional, industrial, and cultural center in the country. During the Second World War, the town and neighboring territories of the Karelian Isthmus were appended to the Soviet Union twice – for the first time in 1940, then recaptured by Finns again in 1941, and finally ceded to the Soviet Union in 1944.[27]

The multiple transformations and international influences in Vyborg were imprinted on its architectural and urban planning composition. Upon the moment of the

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[25] Pirjo Uino, *Ancient Karelia: Archaeological Studies* (Finska Fornminnesföreningens Tidskrift, 1997)., 118.

[26] Lyubov Kudryavtseva, "Borba Za 'mesto Pamyati' V Imperii: Istoriya Pamyatnika Osnovatelyu Vyborga Torgilsu Knutssonu," *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2004): 419.

[27] Ekaterina Melnikova, "Svoya Chuzhaya Istoriya: Finskaya Kareliya Glazami Sovetskikh Pereselentsev," *Neprikosnovenny Zapas* 2, no. 64 (2009), accessed May 15, 2017. http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2009/2/me4.html.

final surrender of the city to the Soviet Union, its architectural core comprised of the layers dating back to the "medieval Swedish" period of the city, the diverse developments of the times of the Grand Dutchy of Finland, when local multinational communities influenced the development of its architectural ensembles, the examples of so-called "Northern modern" style, characteristic of the Baltic region and Scandinavian architectural school, that re-interpreted the national medieval architecture, as well as the monuments of the Finnish "functional" architecture of the 1920s-30s that emphasized a rapid leap in the economic development of the city that almost for three decades became the second largest urban center of independent Finland.[28] All in all, the diversity of Vyborg's architectural organization was unique for the spatial experiences of the Soviet citizens, whereas the closest example, Kaliningrad was almost completely destroyed during the military operations.[29]

Fig. 1 Architectural layers of Vyborg city center 2014

Photo of the author

[28] For a more detailed analysis of the formation of the architectural core of Vyborg, see: Kimmo Katajala, *Meanings of an Urban Space: Understanding the Historical Layers of Viborg* (Lit Verlag, 2016).

[29] Bert Hoppe, "Borba Protiv Vrazheskogo Proshlogo: Kyonigsberg/Kaliningrad Kak Mesto Pamyati V Poslevoyennom SSSR," *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2004): 241.

Once a multinational city, Vyborg was completely deprived of all its local population. Instead, settlers from 12 different regions of the Soviet Union were sent to the ceded areas. Unlike the other cases of contested borderland cities, such as Kaliningrad or Lviv, the main particularity of such territorial transfer was the total evacuation of the Finnish population.[30] In 1944, at the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR, a special department was created to coordinate the resettlement policy in the territory of Eastern Karelia. In the given region for settlers, favorable conditions were created: settlers were provided with a housing for initial settling, as well as financial assistance for the organization of the household. The Council carried out the recruitment of demobilized and collective farmers, whose property suffered during the War. Eventually, in the 1940s-1950s, Soviet Karelia was populated by people from the Kalinin, Kirov, Yaroslavl, Vladimir, Pskov, Novgorod, Vologda and Ryazan regions, the Byelorussian and Ukrainian SSR, the Chuvash and Mordovian ASSR.[31]

As was shown in the interviews with first settlers of the ceded areas, main topic for the description of the territory was the "foreignness"and "Europeanness" of the urban spaces and material culture that were exposed to the incoming Soviet citizens.[32] Thus, despite the total evacuation of the local Finnish population, the spatial organization of the ceded areas became a "contact zone" that provided the experience of the alien urban and social environment for the Soviet newcomers. Life in the "foreign" or "Western" spatial reality of Vyborg was a unique experience for the Soviet citizens. As was shown by Alexei Yurchak in the analysis of the late Soviet reality, *zagranitsa* or *Zapad* for the average Soviet subject was rather a "discursive formation" and hardly described as "a

[30] Melnikova, "Svoya Chuzhaya Istoriya: Finskaya Kareliya Glazami Sovetskikh Pereselentsev", accessed May 15, 2017. http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2009/2/me4.html.
[31] V. Yu. Makarova *Granitsa i lyudi: vospominaniya sovetskikh pereselentsev Priladozhskoy Karelii i Karelskogo peresheyka* (Evropeysky universitet v Sankt-Peterburge, 2005), 11.
[32] Ibid., 374.

coherent "territory" or object." [33] Whereas in Vyborg the new settlers not only encountered the foreign spatial organization, but even used objects left by the Finnish evacuees.[34]

The evacuation of the Finnish population was accompanied by the liquidation of the archives with architectural project documentation that were relocated to Finland.[35] At the same time, Vyborg was recognized as a historically valuable city, and in the late 1950s first lists of historic buildings to be restored were issued. [36] A structure for implementing the restoration of Vyborg was introduced by the Council of People's Commissars. Despite the fact that Vyborg was restored under the revenge-seeking slogan of "the return of the ancient Russian city,"[37] key monuments of Swedish and Finnish periods were included in the list of historical monuments. This list was handed down to the Leningrad Oblast Executive Committee, and Vyborg Oblast Executive Committee appointed architectural and planning organizations, which made measurements and plans, and construction companies that were supposed to conduct the restoration. Thus, the architects that were relocated to conduct the post-War restoration of the city were put in a dual position: on the one hand, they were requested to restore the Vyborg urban environment as a "historical settlement", and on the other hand, they did not possess enough information and resources for doing so.

Until the summer of 1958, Vyborg was developed in a closed regime: border

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[33] Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton University Press, 2006), 161.

[34] Melnikova, "Svoya Chuzhaya Istoriya: Finskaya Kareliya Glazami Sovetskikh Pereselentsev", accessed May 15, 2017. http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2009/2/me4.html.

[35] Alexander Schver, "Post-war reconstruction," in *Alvar Aalto. The Karelian masterpiece*, ed. Lubov Kudryavtseva (Vyborg, 2008), 61.

[36] Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation of St. Petersburg (CGANTD) f. 388 (Protocols of the Leningrad Regional Architectural Commission), op. 1-2. d. 344, 2. (Order No. 352 of the Lenoblispolkom of the Council of Working People's Deputies dated 29 April 1958 "On the allocation of funds to the Department for Construction and Architecture of the Lenoblispolkom for the restoration of monuments of architecture of Vyborg").

[37] "V chest 20-letiya osvobozhdeniya Vyborga. Pamyati geroyev," *Vyborgsky Kommunist*, June 21, 1964, 1.

control was in force and access to non-residents was strictly limited.[38] In 1958, the status of the city was changed with the opening of the local branch of the tourist agency "Intourist".[39] From that moment, foreign tourists could stop in Vyborg on their way to Leningrad or visit the city on with a 24-hours visa.[40] Appearance of foreigners in the city in the late 1950s – the beginning of 1960s changed the status of the urban development of the area, for it started to be considered as a showcase of the Soviet Union on the Western border. It created new challenges for the architectural organizations working in Vyborg, as well as in the Karelian Isthmus, due to the key architectural projects should have been developed according to the international standards. The newly built districts of the city were included in the tourist routes to present the successes of the twenty-year development of territory by the Soviet Union.

For the implementation of the program of the further restoration and development of Vyborg, a branch of Leningrad Institute Lengiprogor (later renamed Lengrazhdanproekt) was opened in the city. During the period of 1960s-80s, the Institute's staff comprised of 200-360 architects, which was the large number for the Leningrad's main office regional satellite. The Institute worked both on projects for the ongoing reconstruction and prepared documentation for the planning of other cities of the Karelian isthmus and some regions of the Soviet Union. In the 1960s-80s, the architects of the Lengrazhdanproekt branch and other construction organizations worked out individual projects for the historic center of the city, project documentation for mass residential development, the general plan for the development of Vyborg (1963), and

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[38] More information on the post-War development and memory policy in Vyborg: Eugene Petrov and Taisiya Krinitsina, "From Finnish Urban Space to Soviet Urban Planning: The Development, Approval and Implementation of the First Soviet Master Plan of Vyborg in 1944-1953," in *Meanings of an Urban Space: Understanding the Historical Layers of Viborg,* ed. Kimmo Katajala (Lit Verlag, 2016), 123-153.; Ksenia Litvinenko, "Konstruirovaniye identichnosti: sovetskiye arkhitektory v Vyborge 1941-1957" in *Konstruiruya sovetskoye? Politicheskoye soznaniye, povsednevnye praktiki, novye identichnosti : materialy devyatoy mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii studentov i aspiranstov (16-18 aprelya 2015 goda, Sankt-Peterburg)* (Sankt-Peterburg : Izdatelstvo Evropeyskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2015), C. 97-105.

[39] Petri Neuvonen et al., *Vyborg : Arkhitekturny Putevoditel* (Vyborg: SN, 2006), 31.

[40] V. Adaskina, *Znakomtes - Vyborg: putevoditel* (Lenizdat, 1965), 35-36.

engaged in the adaptation of standard residential series for city needs.[41] The latest stage of the Soviet era development of Vyborg, which began in 1963 and lasted until the end of the 1980s, was characterized by the realization of two trends: on the one hand, gradual completion of the restoration and building of the old part of the city, which should have been carried out on the basis of individual design taking into account the specifics of the existing urban structure, and on the other hand, a complex development of new residential areas in the southern part of the city, unfolding in an empty space – the former urban outskirts.[42]

While the descriptive history is known, what remains not yet considered in the research literature was the cooperation of Soviet and Finnish architects unfolding both inside and outside the control of the local government. The so-called "Thaw" in Vyborg can be counted not from the conventional point of 1954, but from the late 1950s on when the status of the closed city was partially removed and foreign tourists, architects, and residents of Leningrad were able to visit the city, while still going through complex border control procedures. Although, according to eyewitness accounts, the barriers were lifted only in the early 1960s,[43] the architectural and cultural life of Vyborg started to flow in a different direction. The location of the city on the Karelian Isthmus, the only Soviet territory bordering the capitalist state, enriched the hybrid essence of the new urban development that was influenced by both the practice of local architects operating within the system of Soviet directives and regulations, and the involvement of the Finnish construction companies and architects to the project of the architectural modernization of the ceded areas. Hence, as it will be shown in the following chapters, Soviet architects working in Vyborg and surrounding areas not only attempted to revive local pre-war

[41]Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation of St. Petersburg (CGANTD) f. 393 (Explanatory note to the report on production and financial activities of the Vyborg branch of the Lengrazhdanproekt Institute, 1967), op. 11. d. 106, 1. (Description of the main activity of the Institute).

[42] Ibid., 157.

[43] Dmitry P. Fridlyand oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in St. Peterburg, Russian Federation, 2015-03-21.

architectural principles, but also to collaborate with Finnish architects in several joined projects on the territory of the Soviet state creating a unique environment inside the system of the "Soviet" urban planning.

It should be noted that important favorable condition for a "friendship" between Soviet and Finnish architects in the period between 1960s-1980s was enriched by a specific status of Finland in the political context of the Cold War. The special position of Finland in the geopolitical sphere was primarily caused by its non-alignment status. Finland was not a NATO member and tried to avoid the involvement to the ongoing conflict between the "great powers." Politics of the so-called "Paasikivi-Kekkonen line" actively favored the peaceful and friendly policy towards the Soviet Union. Whereas the dynamic development of new forms of possible cooperation at the cultural level,[44] as well as new transport and tourist infrastructures,[45] led to an increase in personal cross-border connections accommodating the ongoing "Thaw."

From the Soviet side, Nikita Khrushchev also made concessions in establishing good-neighborly political relations with Finland. After the president of Finland Juho Kusti and prime minister Urho Kekkonen visited Moscow in 1955, the Soviet government agreed to give the Porkala naval base back to Finland, 37 years before the lease of the area had to come to an end. As Rina Kulla pointed out, this was a strategically important step in confirming Finnish sovereignty after the great post-WWII territorial loss.[46] Additionally, Khrushchev did not object to the inclusion of Finland in international trade relations with Scandinavian countries, namely within the Nordic Council.[47] At the same time, Finland became an important trade partner of the Soviet Union. For example, with the completion of the Saimaa channel in 1968, Finland started

[44] See, for example: Simo Mikkonen, *The Finnish-Soviet Society: From Political to Cultural Connections* (Kikimora Publications, 2015), https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/handle/123456789/45530.

[45] For example, a ferry connection between Helsinki and Tallin (since 1965), the Saimaa channel between Lappeenranta and Vyborg (since 1962).

[46] Rinna Kullaa, *Non-Alignment and Its Origins in Cold War Europe: Yugoslavia, Finland and the Soviet Challenge* (I.B.Tauris, 2012), 116.

[47] Ibid., 117.

to export wood for the pulp-and-paper mills located in the ceded territories of Karelian isthmus. Thus, in the 1950s-1960s, Finnish-Soviet international relations were favored on the highest level, both in Finland and the Soviet Union. This factor was crucial for the Soviet architects in Vyborg that needed to justify their professional and personal involvement with the Finnish colleagues. The importance of such contacts was enhanced by shared goals in overcoming the housing crisis and increasing the working class living standard that was characteristic for both Finnish and Soviet post-WWII modernization projects. This factor was especially important with the introduction of the all-Union prefabricated mass housing production and construction known as "Khrushchev housing reform" called to solve the housing crisis in the Soviet Union, as well as the contemporaneous developments of prefabricated housing technologies in Finland.

1.3 The "Khrushchev" reform on a regional scale

Although researchers agree that the first attempts to come up with the design samples for mass housing in the Soviet Union were launched already in the pre-WWII period, its capacity in solving the housing problem remained limited. The so-called "Khrushchev" housing reform became an important context for the realization of existing ideas on a mass scale. In the late 1950s, the architectural modernization in the Soviet Union was launched, producing the dominant architectural paradigm for the second half of the 20th century – houses from prefabricated mass produced units. The inception of the reform began with the Resolution of 1955 on "Against Superfluity in Project Design and Construction" by Nikita Khrushchev. The Resolution assumed a break with the extensive use of the decorative elements typical for the architectural language of the Stalin period and launched the optimization of building construction.[48] The strict costs control assumed

[48] William Craft Brumfield and Blair A. Ruble, *Russian Housing in the Modern Age: Design and Social History* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 238.

the increase of investment into a colossal social project – accommodation of each Soviet family with a private apartment at any place of the country, from Vladivostok to Kaliningrad.[49] The results of the reduction of costs and the optimization of production capacities at house-building plants were truly impressive. According to Stephen Harris, by the 1970s it allowed to accommodate 140,900,000 people in newly built private apartments.[50] Most of them had previously been located in villages, barracks, and cabins, and had no prior experience of living in a private space in the urbanized setting. However, the results of the Reform were often unsatisfactory. Due to the increased speed of construction, many of the houses were built poorly, making the people unsatisfied with the fulfillment of the Party's promises.

The Resolution also almost completely changed the focus of Soviet architectural practice. With the inception of the new rules, a dramatic technicization of the architectural profession occurred. For many architects, the reform brought extreme restrictions to their creative capacities, such as the use of a classical order, due to the mechanization of the design through the introduction of the strict norms.

Accordingly, most of the authors contributing to the current study of Cold War post-Stalin architecture dedicated significant attention to the roles and challenges of the Reform. As Daria Bocharnikova pointed out, current historiographies of Khrushchev and late Soviet architecture tend to debate the relation between the architects as professionals and the state socialist system's main demand – a unifying norm.[51] For instance, Stephen Harris highlighted that Soviet architects were constrainted by a *khrushchevka's* type design and for a long time were deprived of the possibility of creative engagement in their practice. Their professional abilities were limited to technical work targeted at the

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[49] Berger, "Philipp Meuser and Dimitrij Zadorin, *Towards a Typology of Soviet Mass Housing: Prefabrication in the USSR, 1955 - 1991* (DOM Publishers, 2016).", accessed December 31, 2016, http://www.alvaraaltoresearch.fi/articles/vyborg-aalto-library-case-study/#.WGfKlbaLSAw.

[50] Steven E. Harris, *Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press / Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013)., 5.

[51] Daria Bocharnikova, "Inventing Socialist Modern : A History of the Architectural Profession in the USSR, 1954-1971" (Thesis, 2014), 26.

rapid urbanization that required sticking to a low budget design and was deprived of any architectural solutions.[52] In addition to that, Kimberly Zarecor contended that post-WWII mass housing was in line with the interwar avant-garde aspirations and a social mission of architecture that gradually transformed the architect from the artist to an industrial producer. Thus, she bridges the continuity between the 1920s avant-garde projects and the Soviet quest for urbanization in the 1960s and challenges the notion of the "suppressed" architect highlighting the transformation of the professional discourse.[53] Both claims are accurately highlighting the tensions created by the reform, however, the dominance of the certain trend is depending on the analysis of a particular architectural community and challenges that they faced locally.

The all-embracing scale and often low-quality of the newly built housing created a space for negotiation between the Soviet citizens and the authorities. For instance, Christine Varga-Harris presented the Khrushchev housing reform as the point of consolidation of the Soviet society on the basis of shared household conditions. The culture of petitioning, she argued, became a space for negotiation between the state visions of the housing question and the complaints of the *khrushchevkas* dwellers: "in terms of their approach, petitioners appeared to be "speaking Bolshevik" – drawing from the vocabulary of official discourse and creating a field of play."[54] Thus, she argued that by experiencing the hardships of life in *khrushchevka* and formulating the problems on the language of power relations, the socialist self became not a set number of values, but rather the construct resulted from the citizen-language-authority mediation in the manner of Stephen Kotkin's citizens of Magnitogorsk.[55]

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[52] Steven E. Harris, *Communism on Tomorrow Street: Mass Housing and Everyday Life after Stalin,* 6.

[53] Kimberly Zarecor, "Architecture in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union," in *A Critical History of Contemporary Architecture: 1960-2010*, ed. Elie G. Haddad and David Rifkind (Farnham, Surrey: Routledge, 2014), 255-291.

[54] Christine Varga-Harris, *Stories of House and Home: Soviet Apartment Life during the Khrushchev Years* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 12.

[55] Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (University of California Press, 1995).

An important point was made by Virag Molnar who showed that although architecture has invariably remained an important tool for "realizing the political goals of the socialist (and post-socialist) state," both the nature and significance of the role of architecture, as well as the professional discourses and practices of architects, have changed significantly over time.[56] Molnar outlined the periodization based on the changing meanings of the socialist architectural practice, namely the 1950s when architecture was instrumentalized in order to serve "the political propaganda", 1960s-70s when it was reinvented as a tool for a "social reform," and the 1980s when it served merely as a "cultural medium" that allowed local societies to "regain their distinctive national and regional traditions."[57] Thus, the shifts in the meaning of the architectural profession resonated with the contemporaneous political changes, however the transition occurred with the delay both due to the local differences, and the specificity of architectural practice that has a complex institutional organization, and requires more time to generate its product – buildings.

In his research on Soviet architecture of Tashkent, Paul Stronski also brought a regional scale to these discussions. He showed that in the case of post-Stalin Tashkent, Soviet planners faced a number of problems, such as local weather conditions that were better addressed by "traditional" Central Asian houses that provided shade and cool in summer, unlike *khruchshevkas* in the Chilanzar district erected in the 1950s. Moreover, the local self-governing communities – *mahallah* were appropriated to the model of the Sovietization in this particular region, which created an alternative model of Soviet urban modernization.[58]

Similar tendencies of departing from the "magistral" line of Soviet urban modernization could be traced in the late Soviet development of Vyborg if professional

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[56] Virag Molnar, *Building the State: Architecture, Politics, and State Formation in Postwar Central Europe* (Routledge, 2013), 7.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Paul Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930–1966* (University of Pittsburgh Pre, 2010).

discourses are taken into consideration, imperatives and practices of the local architectural community. In Vyborg and the Karelian Isthmus, along with the all-Soviet attempt of homogenization of mass-housing architecture, regional architectural practices emerged that were dependent rather on the local trends inherited from the pre-WWII urban development of the area (mainly, Finnish architectural heritage of the 1930s), as well as the contemporaneous urban and technological developments of the neighboring Finland. My argument would be that Soviet architecture and urban planning heavily relied on local cultural, economic, and political circumstances. Thus, the previous analysis of socialist urbanization on the example of the Soviet Union still being conducted mainly in the metropolitan areas (such as Moscow, Leningrad), Republican capitals, or "new cities" or mono-industrial towns served large enterprises (such as Magnitogorsk, Belaya Kalitva, Rodniki, etc.) cannot completely reflect the complex matrix of the Khrushchev and late Soviet way of producing the built environment in the periphery. As Alexei Yurchak contended, such phenomena cannot be described as a total Soviet project of mastering the space, yet by a number of experiences of different "places"[59] that provided various possibilities for negotiation.

1.4 Sources and analytical strategy

In order to write the spatial history of Vyborg in the 1960s-80s, it is necessary to approach the level of the local architectural community who used the possibilities provided in the borderland area in their professional practice. Accordingly, this study draws on different types of historical sources that reveal different layers of the architectural practice in Vyborg.

Party-level documents and decrees that regulated the architectural practice on the state level are mainly accessed through the secondary sources or open publications.

[59] Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*, 156-157.

Negotiations of the local city government, City Executive Committee, with the higher party and state bodies on the issues of restoration, improvement, and maintenance of the city, as well as its own decrees and requests, were analyzed through the documents from Leningrad Regional State Archive.

The activities of the union-level architectural organizations, such as the Leningrad Union of Architects, in organizing study trips to Finland, meetings with Finnish architects and organizing open lectures, are analyzed on the materials of the Central State Archive of Literature and Art of St. Petersburg. The use of the documents of the Leningrad Architectural Union is justified by two aspects. Firstly, Leningrad was an important center of the regional architectural activity, in which Vyborg architects actively participated. Secondly, the analogous materials of the Vyborg architectural Union were destroyed, which imposed certain limitations for this level of the research.

The level of the local architectural activity in Vyborg is represented in the source base by the use of secondary literature and archival documents of the urban planning and architectural organizations conducting projects in Vyborg in the 1960s-80s. Mainly it is the archive of the urban planning institute Lengrazhdanproekt which is currently divided into three parts. The first part that includes yearly reports and correspondence with Gosstroy, the central government body that supervised the construction in the Soviet Union in 1950-1991, on a negotiation of the projects, is accessed from the holdings of the Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation of St. Petersburg. The second part includes project documentation – architectural blueprints, details of the interior design, photo fixations, floor plans of the buildings (both implemented and unrealized projects). These materials are held at the Archive of the Vyborg branch of Lengrazhdanproekt that was miraculously saved by the Natalia, the one and only archivist currently working on cataloging and moving the archive. The third part that includes photos of completed buildings and fragmented reports are held at the Archive of the

Historical and Architectural Museum "Vyborg Castle" – Vyborg Museum-Reserve. Apart from the archive of Lengrazhdanproekt, I also used the holdings of the Archive of the Research and Design Institute for Housing and Communal Construction LenNIIproekt in St. Petersburg.

In order to enter the level of ongoing discussions on architectural development in Vyborg in the 1960s-80s, I analyzed thematically-related publications in the local newspaper "Vyborg Communist," the editors of which acquainted the city dwellers with the process of the development of the city, published the texts of excursions offering new interpretations of the historical space of Vyborg, and debated the quality of the new housing stock. In addition, I looked through the publications of the Vyborg architects in the professional architectural journal "Arhitektura i Stroitel'stvo Leningrada" ("Architecture and Construction of Leningrad") that served one of the main spaces for reviews of completed and proposed projects, critical discussion among architects and engineers, and exchange of opinions with the colleagues in the regional center – Leningrad.

In order to contextualize and deepen the data from the official sources and fill the existing lacunas in the source base, I conducted five oral history interviews with the architects who occupied leading positions in the urban planning and architectural practice in Vyborg during the period of 1960s-80s. I tried to include respondents from different generations, educational backgrounds, and areas of architectural practice, which covered architecture, architectural engineering, restoration, urban planning, and interior design. The interviewees were selected according to a snowball sampling. The questionnaires were gradually developing while the analysis of the archival and press sources was ongoing. Although the oral history interviews are problematic sources due to the passage of time between the analyzed activity and its interpretation and power-authority relations

set in the very moment of the interview,[60] they served as a main navigator for selecting the case-studies. Collected data added to the understanding of the motivations, informal encounters, opinions, debates, and links that are not fixed in the archival and official sources.

[60] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (Routledge, 2016), 161.

2 People on the Move: Infrastructures of a Soviet-Finnish Architectural Encounter

In the following chapter, I will be looking at the infrastructures of personal cross-border encounters between Finland and the Soviet Union, and the individual engagement of architects with the possibilities these encounters provided. In particular, I will be interested not in the actual processes of border crossing, but rather in the reasons for such movement and the meanings that intermediaries (in this case, the architects themselves) ascribed to them. I will argue that a significant element of Soviet architectural thinking and practice in the ceded territories of Vyborg and the Karelian isthmus in the 1960s-80s came from their diachronic encounters with pre-war Finnish architecture of the 1930s that was preserved in Vyborg, alongside personal cooperation with Finnish architects and the involvement of Finnish construction companies to the project of the architectural modernization of the area. A multileveled encounter caused creation of a combination of Soviet and Finnish engineering and architectural practices, that made the example of Vyborg and the Karelian isthmus a unique case in the history of Soviet architecture.

2.1 Synchronic encounter and study trips to Finland

The "opening" of Soviet architectural practice occurred during the so-called era of the "Thaw". The "Thaw", the synchronic term for describing the period between the end of Stalin's rule and the late 1960s, was coined by Ilya Ehrenburg in the eponymous novelette written in 1954. It referred to liberalization in the spheres of arts and culture, material goods and the daily life of Soviet citizens, as well as the relaxation of controls relating to contacts with the "West". Being instrumentalized by researchers of the Khrushchev period, the term proved to be problematic as a category of analysis. For instance, such events as the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the

dispersal of the avant-garde exhibition in the Moscow Manege in 1962, and the continuing function of the GULAG system of correctional and concentration camps, clearly do not fit the liberalizing narrative. I would, thus, offer to conceptualize the "Thaw" as not merely a sign of the Khrushchev epoch, but a set of possibilities that were given to selected professional groups in particular spheres such as architecture, which, as I will show in the following section, can be rightfully considered in this framework.

The perception of Soviet architecture as the highest point of architectural development, crystallized in the 1930s-1950s, was replaced by the call "to master advanced achievements of domestic and foreign urban development"[61] with the advent of the "Khrushchev" housing reform. Soviet architecture was no longer considered to constitute the essence of all great styles of the past, the characteristic of the Stalinist imaginary, but as a modernizing entity that needed to catch up with contemporaneous developments in Western Europe and the United States. The opening in the field of architecture was marked by increased personal encounters between architects, greater availability of information about Western architectural practices, and technologies[62] which, in fact, prepared the engagement of Western architects with the project of socialist modernization that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Not all the spheres of art and culture benefited from the so-called era of the "Thaw" as much as architecture. Unlike architects, who were encouraged to learn and adapt Western practices to the needs of socialist modernization, abstract artists and sculptors, for instance, were famously prohibited from the possibility to engage with the

[61] Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR on November 4 1955 № 1871 "On the elimination of excesses in design and construction," accessed May 15, 2017. http://sovarch.ru/postanovlenie55.

[62] The main sources of information about contemporaneous architectural developments abroad, professional architectural journals, were again available for practicing architects and students of architecture. For example, the influential French magazine "Architecture d'aujourd'hui" became available in the university libraries since the early 1960s.

"Western" transfers.[63] As was shown by Simo Mikkonen, state-led institutions for cultural exchange with foreign countries, such as the Finnish-Soviet Society, often formally resembled a political ritual of friendship rather than meaningful cultural activity.[64] The encounter in the sphere of architecture, however, was less ritualized, due to the practical aspect of architectural activity. Encounters in this sphere were more closely associated with the quest for technological development. Thus, the primary reason why Soviet architects were given the possibility to encounter the Western experience in architecture and urban planning practice was that this encounter, apart from the search for new aesthetics, was supposed to bring in a constructive change in solving the question of post-war urbanization and advancement in engineering.

According to this aim, the first professional excursions for Soviet architects were organized as study trips. As Olga Yakushenko showed, in the second half of the 1950s, the number of such trips increased with the support of the Soviet government.[65] The architects who participated in the excursions to foreign countries still needed to receive a recommendation from the sending organization, as well as to go through investigation procedures at the Commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU for Traveling Abroad (since December 1962 – Personnel Department of Diplomatic and Foreign Economic Bodies of the CPSU Central Committee).[66] The selection was tough and unpredictable. For example, an architect's request to travel abroad could be declined even if (s)he had already had experience of leaving the Soviet Union.

During the trips abroad, the architects visited both completed architectural projects and building sites, as well as meeting with foreign colleagues to discuss methods of planning and construction. Although participation in such excursions was available

[63] Yury Yakovlevich Gerchuk, "Krovoizliyaniye v MOSKh", ili, Khrushchev v Manezhe [1 dekabrya 1962 goda] (Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2008).
[64] Mikkonen, *The Finnish-Soviet Society*.
[65] Olga Yakushenko, "Sovetskaya arkhitektura i Zapad: otkrytiye i assimilyatsiya zapadnogo opyta v sovetskoy arkhitekture kontsa 1950-kh – 1960-kh godov," Laboratorium. *Zhurnal sotsialnykh issledovany*, no. 2 (2016): 89.
[66] Ibid.

only for a small number of well-established architects, the participants shared their experiences performing lectures, accompanied with pictures and slides, to the architectural students and the members of the Architectural Unions. For instance, the Chairman of the Board of the Leningrad Branch of the Union of Soviet Architects, A. Lubosh, made a presentation about his twelve-day trip to Sweden in 1958. In his report at the Leningrad Union of Architects, Lubosh emphasized the "advisability of the use of the experience of Swedish architecture and construction" in Soviet construction practice.[67] In particular, calling attention to the Swedish experience in planning and development of residential quarters, he stated: "It would be useful for our builders to go to Sweden and see how there, without the use of industrial means, a high level of quality was achieved, in construction, finishing and equipment".[68] In fact, the problem of mass low-rise housing construction in the Soviet Union had already become a hotly debated topic after the Second World War. Then, in conditions of a shortage of housing, construction materials, labor, and the fragility of construction organizations, it was necessary to quickly create large areas of residential space at low cost. This problem became even more widespread in the 1960s, when urbanization began not only on the periphery of cities, but also in the collective farms created as substitutes for village-type settlements. For these reasons, during their study trips Soviet architects were primarily encouraged to learn about aspects of dense mass housing from their Western colleagues.

Similar aims had been successfully met by the architects of neighboring Finland. Like the Soviet Union, Finland came out of WWII with great losses: ten percent of its territory was ceded to the Soviet Union, forcing 420,000 people to be resettled from the Karelian isthmus; as such, heavy post-war reparations became a burden for the

[67] Leningrad Regional State Archive (LOGAV) f. 341 (Leningrad Union of Architects), op. 1. d. 513, 45. (The verbatim report of the report of the Chairman of the Board of the Leningrad Union of Architects A. A. Lyubosh "Through the cities of Sweden.", 1958).
[68] Ibid.

developing economy of the country.[69] However, since the 1950s Finland had witnessed mass urbanization, which was accompanied with the creation of the welfare state—along with the existence of market capitalism, comprehensive housing, medical, educational, sport and leisure infrastructures were successfully introduced in the growing cities. These tendencies were resonating with the ongoing processes in the Soviet Union. According to Mark Smith, a critique of the Khrushchev housing reform created a space for a debate between the Soviet state and its citizens' demands for property and welfare rights.[70] Hence, the successful achievements of neighboring Finland in overcoming the post-war crisis, and providing new residential infrastructure with basic social services for all, became of interest to the Soviet state that faced mass criticism of the results of ongoing urbanization. In fact, most of the Soviet visiting architects that were sent abroad during the period of 1961-1967 went to Finland (329 people), twice as many as to England (168) and Italy (121).[71] Thus, Finnish experience in the spheres of architecture and urban planning were a high priority in the Soviet context of the 1960s.

In 1957, First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Nikita Khrushchev himself made his first official visit to Finland since the beginning of the Winter War in 1939. Notably, he attended the construction of the new district of Tapiola near Helsinki—a mass housing development situated on the natural site, which was built according to the principles of organic architecture (a garden city) introduced by Ebenezer Howard in 1898.[72] The Tapiola housing project was inserted into many textbooks for Soviet architects, and quickly became an example of an alternative urban planning scheme. The

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[69] Erkki Pihkala, "The Political Economy of Post-War Finland, 1945–19521," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 47, no. 3 (September 1, 1999): 27–28.

[70] Smith, *Property of Communists*.

[71] Olga Yakushenko, "Sovetskaya arkhitektura i Zapad: otkrytiye i assimilyatsiya zapadnogo opyta v sovetskoy arkhitekture kontsa 1950-kh – 1960-kh godov," Laboratorium. Zhurnal sotsialnykh issledovany, no. 2 (2016): 90.

[72] GARAGEMCA, Olga Kazakova «Razvitiye I Voploshcheniye Idei Na Primere Zelenograda», accessed May 27, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaViRTeQUTI.

architect who realized the garden city idea for Tapiola was Otto-Iivari Meurman, the chief architect of Vyborg (than Viipuri) in 1918-1937.

Some of the principles of Tapiola design were used in the Soviet Union in the 1960s; for instance, in the case of the planning of Zelenograd, a scientific and production center of Soviet microelectronics built in the 1960s-1990s, forty kilometers north-west of Moscow. According to Olga Kazakova, structurally, such transfers became possible with the transition from the magistral system of urban planning to the quarter one that arose in the Soviet Union between the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s.[73] As well as in the case of Tapiola, the initial project of Zelenograd by Igor Rozhin was planned in the context of non-urbanized territory—in the natural landscape. Like in Tapiola, Soviet housing was comprised of low-rise prefabricated buildings situated according to a free layout with attention paid to the surrounding natural relief. This decision resonated with the idea of decentralization of the overpopulated urban centers, providing a new standard of housing and infrastructure for the working class, and developing a new type of settlement with the pathos of acquiring new territories (typical of 1960s discourse). Thus, the encounter between the Soviet Union and Finland became possible both on the political level, and the level of urban planning aspirations and requirements of the Soviet system that in some cases made the urban development strategies of its capitalist neighbor extremely attractive.

2.2 Diachronic encounters and restoration practices in Vyborg

The Soviet-Finnish encounter in the sphere of architecture and urban planning acquired specific features in Vyborg and the surrounding territories of the Karelian isthmus that were ceded to the Soviet Union from Finland after WWII. Due to the fact that the pre-WWII architectural core of Vyborg was inherited by the newly established “Soviet” city

[73] Ibid.

and had to be maintained by incoming architects and citizens,[74] the interdependency between Finnish and Soviet architects was established on a personal level.

The dependence on the pre-WWII "foreign" urban planning was evident in Vyborg, which retained almost all the infrastructure that was previously created by the Finnish architects. In fact, the employees of the Vyborg branch of Lengrazhdanproekt, the biggest local architectural and urban planning institute, who were dealing with maintaining the city infrastructure, such as the water supply, were put in a dual position: they were operating within the boundaries of unifying Soviet norms, but needed to manage the infrastructural issues that occurred in the Finnish pre-war engineering systems. For example, sometimes they did not even know where the water pipes were located, which made the infrastructural maintenance of the city extremely unpredictable.[75] The fact that all the architectural drawings and project documentation of pre-war Vyborg's buildings were evacuated to Finland made the situation even more complicated. Without these documents, Soviet architects could not conduct critical restoration of Vyborg's historical buildings which needed to be protected according to the 1945 decree on Historic cities.[76] As a result of the "blind" restoration that was typical for the 1950s, many buildings in Vyborg lost their initial architectural composition: facades were often simplified, scarce materials were substituted, and interior layouts rearranged to accommodate more people in newly established *kommunalki*. In addition, in the 1950s, some buildings were intentionally rearranged in the classicist style. This gesture was intended to emphasize the symbolic link to Leningrad, which became the new metropolis for Vyborg.[77]

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[74] The topic of the architectural development of Vyborg by Soviet architects in the 1960s-70s will be addressed in the Chapter III.

[75] Lubov Evseeva oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2017-04-20.

[76] The impact of the Decree on the post-war architectural practice in Vyborg which will be closely examined in the following chapter.

[77] Read more about the trends in the post-war reconstruction of Vyborg in:

The situation changed in the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, with the partial opening of the Soviet-Finnish border, when the first agreements between so-called "twin cities" (*goroda-pobratimy*) were introduced. Twin cities agreements assumed the establishment of permanent friendly ties for mutual acquaintance with life, history, and culture among the citizens. For instance, such a link was established between Soviet Leningrad and Finnish Turku (the capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland until 1812) in the late 1950s. Along with the establishment of contacts between cities, architects also started to travel—in 1957, the first delegation of Leningrad architects was sent to Finland.[78] The establishment of such ties led to the enlargement of knowledge about Finnish cultural contexts in the Soviet Union. For instance, the Leningrad-Turku agreement resulted in a publication by Vladimir Pilavsky, "Turku: Twin cities of Leningrad" (Turku. *Goroda-pobratimy* Leningrada), where he addressed topics such as the history of the formation of the city and its historical and cultural ties with Russia and the Soviet Union. Great attention was paid to the modern architectural appearance of the city, in the creation of which leading Finnish architects were involved.[79] With such publications, a systematic study of Finnish architecture began in the Soviet Union. It was led by such architectural historians as Andrei Gozak in Moscow and Andrei Ikonnikov in Leningrad.

Vyborg architects, however, were deprived of trips to Finland until the 1970s. The historical literature about the pre-WWII history of the city was also highly limited. This could be explained by the fact that until this time the city did not have an institutionalized Union of Architects (established in 1976) that could engage in sending its members to foreign trips, and still had the strict status of a border military town, which complicated

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Ksenia Litvinenko, "Konstruirovaniye identichnosti: sovetskiye arkhitektory v Vyborge 1941-1957," in *Konstruiruya «sovetskoye»? Politicheskoye soznaniye, povsednevnye praktiki, novye identichnosti : materialy devyatoy mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii studentov i aspiranstov (16-18 aprelya 2015 goda, Sankt-Peterburg).* (SPb. : Izdatelstvo Yevropeyskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2015), 97-105.

[78] Karin Hallas-Murula "Finnish modernism and Estonian Architecture," *Project Baltia* 3 (2015): 89-90.

[79] Vladimir Pilyavsky, Turku. Goroda-pobratimy Leningrada (Stroyizdat. Leningradskoye otdeleniye, 1974).

the leaving procedures. However, after the opening of a branch of the Soviet tourist agency Intourist in 1958, foreign tourists, including Finns, gained the possibility to visit the city.[80] This change brought the possibility of personal encounters between the Finnish visitors and Vyborg city dwellers.

One of the first Vyborg architects who visited Finland, Viktor Dmitriev, remembered that the story of his encounter started with the restoration project of the Round Tower—one of the two battle towers of the medieval Vyborg fortress preserved in the city from the mid-16th century. At the beginning of the 1970s, Dmitriev started working on restoration of the tower, which acquired the status of a historical monument in 1947, but was still used as the pharmacy warehouse and later was handed over to the Trust of Public Catering. Such unobvious functional use of the medieval building was possible due to the fact that in 1922, according to the project of Finnish architects Uno Ullberg and Jalmari Lankinen, the tower was modified into a restaurant, and accommodated the meetings of the Viipuri Technical Club. Thus, the new *bildungsprogram* of the Tower introduced in 1922 was organically inherited in the Soviet period.

Restoring the wall murals of the Round Tower, Dmitriev started learning the Finnish language in order to translate and interpret the historical plots depicted in the drawings (which were supplemented with inscriptions in Latin, Finnish and Swedish): "I have mastered all this myself, with a dictionary," recalled the architect.[81] This gesture shows the level of self-organization of the architect involved in the restoration project, that officially did not require the knowledge of Finnish.

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[80] Vyborg : Arkhitekturny Putevoditel / Petri Neuvonen, Tuula Peyukhya, Tapani Mustonen ; Per. S Angl. I Fin.: Lyubov Kudryavtseva, 2006, 31.

[81] Viktor Dmitriev oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2015-11-25.

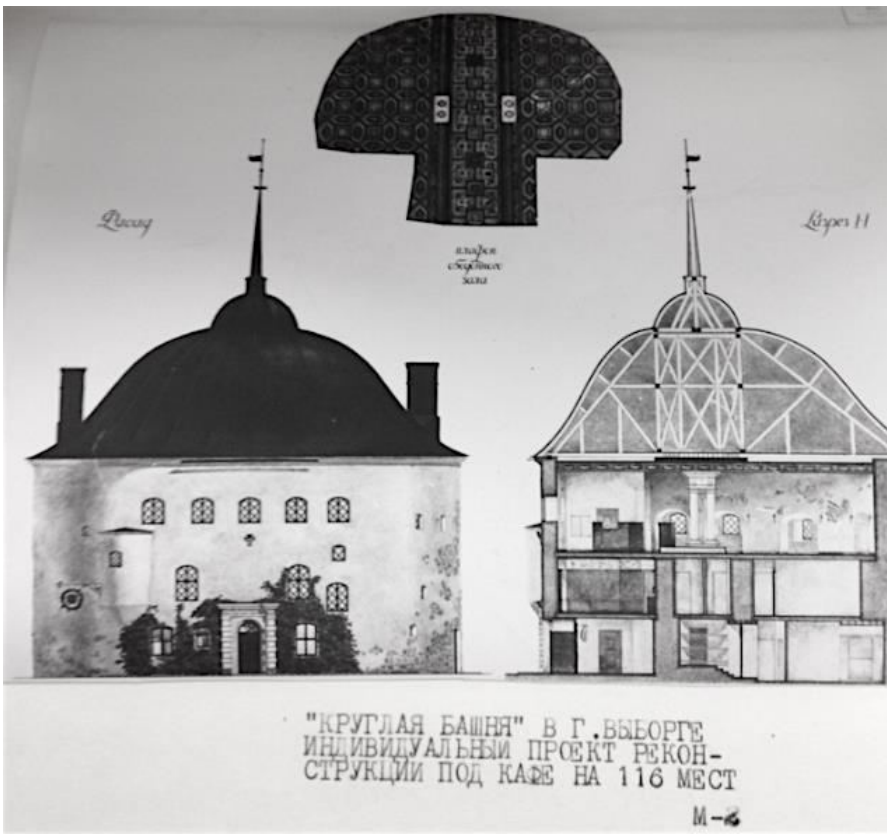

Fig. 2 "Round tower in Vyborg": a reconstruction project for a cafe of 166 seats Viktor Dmitriev 1972

Courtesy of Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation in St. Petersburg

All in all, the restoration went slowly, due to the absence of any historical drawings of the tower and any information about the transformation of the building's architectural composition conducted by Finnish architects back in the 1920s—everything was evacuated to Finland during the surrender of the city to the Soviet Union. In order to proceed with the restoration, Dmitriev used the growing network of Soviet-Finnish personal cross-border encounters developing in the city with the partial opening of borders. He found the contact of Uha Lankinen, the son of the former Vyborg architect Jalmari Lankinen who worked in Vyborg during the pre-War years, and send him a letter with a request for the information on the Round Tower.[82] Jalmari Lankinen, the father of the addressee of the letter, Uha Lankinen, had been Uno Ullberg's assistant at the restoration project of the Tower back in 1922. Uha Lankinen, also a practicing architect, responded to the letter and in one week met Dmitriev in the Round Tower:

[82] Ibid.

> Well, we met at the Round Tower, and immediately established a contact, a friendship began. And, in fact, he invited me to his home in 1979. Due to them I discovered Finland, the literature began to appear, thanks to them, I in general became so advanced with respect to Vyborg, because since then I had my own Vyborg history.[83]

Thus, within the frames of the restoration project conducted in the state urban planning Institute, the personal trajectory and encounter occurred without overt state control. While the visits across the Soviet-Finnish border were regulated by the Personnel Department of Diplomatic and Foreign Economic Bodies of the CPSU Central Committee, once there the Soviet architects were given some degree of freedom to encounter and cooperate with their Finnish colleagues. The trip to Finland to which Dmitiriev referred was organized by the Vyborg Architectural Union—each year, one local architect was sent on the official study trip to Finland within the delegation of the Soviet architects. Using the infrastructure of professional architectural encounters provided at the state level, Dmitriev collected information about pre-WWII Vyborg, both for broadening his professional competencies in the ongoing restoration projects, and for his own curiosity.

Soon he started to deliver project documentation also to the employees of the other urban planning Institute operating in the city—Lenoblproekt. As the director of the Institute Lubov Evseeva remembered:

> I held the original Finnish architectural drawings in my hands only once, when we were making the hotel "Vyborg". There was a two-level cellar in the courtyard [...] and we were doing some sort of work there…re-planning something […] when we did some work in the historical center, we always made a historical reference, well, not ourselves, we ordered it from Fridland, Dmitriev [...] and they, with a historical reference, have already given us these materials so that we can already work.[84]

Thus, the absence of the original project documentation of the historical buildings that were put under restoration in Vyborg, created the possibility of cross-border

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[83] Ibid.

[84] Lubov Evseeva oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2017-04-20.

encounters, justified by professional needs, that privileged the local architects, such as Viktor Dmitriev and Dmitry Fridlyand, privileged due to the personal connection he managed to establish with his Finnish colleague.

Among other Vyborg architects who visited Finland in the end of the 1970s were Lengrazhdaproekt's employees Dmitry Fridlyand, Irina Popova and Nelli Li.[85] Li also encountered original pre-WWII drawings while conducting the restoration of one of the architectural monuments—a small mansion belonging to shipbuilder Leo Hackman, erected near Vyborg by the architect Uno Ullberg in 1928. The architect described her first encounter with the building in the 1970s:

> […] by the standards of that time, the house was quite modern. For example, it had an artesian well there, a pit for car service, and a driver's house. The building itself was not so big, but luxurious. It was built in style… there is such a semi-official concept—like art nouveau, but it was a new national style with features of modernity. Stucco molding, forging, stone finishing—it is incredibly interesting and at the same time very modern.[86]

In this passage, a specific perception of temporality could be noticed. Nelli Li framed the monument erected almost half a century before the beginning of the restoration as a building that would emerge as modern in the contemporaneous architectural-technological context.

Thus, we can see the specificity of restoration practices in Vyborg—sometimes architects were encountering the historical monuments of the pre-WWII period that were ahead of the contemporaneous context of Soviet building construction and functional organization. The features of modernity described by Li in this passage are also quite curious—an artesian well was rather a feature of rural settlement architecture, that provided a direct access to ground water, while a pit for car service and the driver's house were signs of private solvency that were not expressively part of the Soviet modernizing

[85] Nelli Li was sent to Finland in 1976, Irina Popova in 1977, and Dmitry Fridlyand in the following year – 1978.

[86] Nelli Li oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2015-11-23.

discouse, which instead called for the creation of advance systems of planning and design that, as was shown by Diana West, relied on the cybernetic theory.[87] In comparison with this general trend, the framing of modernity provided by Li depicted it rather retrospectively, as it was embodied in the monument yet to be restored.

Accordingly, in order to reconstruct the delicate design of Otto-Iivari Meurman, Li also used the social infrastructure of the border in order to meet people from Finland on an everyday basis:

> By chance I met a Finnish woman. Her name was Sirka Saromeri. She lived near Imatra and was the daughter of Leo Hackman's driver. From her I obtained a book with the floor plans of the building. […] When I arrived to Helsinki, the Finnish restorer Hecky Häinanen helped me with the rest. At that time the Finns began to come here to inspect their native places. There was also an interest in communication. I'm not talking about Juha Lankinen, who helped the local architects in truth even in Soviet times. We had a close exchange of literature.[88]

Thus, in the context of late Soviet Vyborg, contacts and social links that were cut during the early post-war period with the evacuation of the Finnish population of the city, started gradually to be reestablished with the partial opening of borders. The specific situation within the local architectural profession, in particular, involvement in the restoration of the pre-WWII monuments, was one reason to build up new links. Such links gave Finnish architects and former Vyborg citizens the possibility to encounter with their lost hometown. For instance, Juha Lankinen, who provided Soviet architects with the project documentation and historical literature on pre-war Vyborg and was mentioned several times above, had his own rationale behind his actions.

Juha Lankinen was born in Vyborg in 1937, several years before the surrender of the city to the Soviet Union. He inherited an interest in the architecture of the town from his father, Yalmari Lankinen, who was employed in the Uno Ullberg's architectural bureau. During the evacuation of the city Yalmari Lankinen, an amateur photographer,

[87] Diana Kurkovsky West, "CyberSovietica: Planning, Design, and the Cybernetics of Soviet Space, 1954-1986," 2013, http://dataspace.princeton.edu/jspui/handle/88435/dsp01g732d9108.

[88] Nelli Li oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2015-11-23.

took several thousand photographs of the houses, parks, squares and fortifications of Vyborg. Later in the 1960s, when Juha Lankinen started his own architectural practice, he decided to use the family archive in order to create an architectural model of the pre-war Vyborg that his family left in 1944.[89] In order to proceed with the project, Lankinen needed to conduct a full-scale photo survey of the city. However, until the early 1980s foreign tourists were not allowed to stay in the city for more than twenty-four hours. Viktor Dmitriev helped Lankinen by providing the photos:

> […] we had cooperation, because he needed a full-scale survey, but he did not have much time to do so [...] I did some of the photos. Just imagine: to pass some kind of a film to a foreign citizen! […] in general, it was suspicious […] imagine, how it looked from the outside".[90]

Thus, the link established by the Legrazhdanproekt's Viktor Dmitriev was a result of a reciprocal cooperation between a Soviet and a Finnish architect. The access to the information and project documentation provided by Lankinen helped Soviet architects to establish a continuity between pre-WWII and late Soviet architectural practices and conduct restoration of the existing buildings of the city. The restoration projects, thus, were of a specific architectural practice in Vyborg due to the requirement of access to information about the pre-war history of the city, which was still limited at that time. Simultaneously, the infrastructure of state-supported study trips to Finland, as well as the partial opening of the borders that allowed Finnish people to visit Vyborg again after 1958, allowed local architects to establish their own contacts for professional practice and personal interests. By transgressing the rules of the border (circulation of foreign literature that was not approved by Glavlit was prohibited), some of the architects mentioned in this chapter created specific conditions for their architectural practice

[89] "Yuha Lankinen. Arkhitektor Pamyati," Gazeta «Vyborg», accessed May 22, 2017, http://gazetavyborg.ru/article.php?table=events&item=65675927&album=.

[90] Viktor Dmitriev oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2015-11-25.

working in close cooperation with their Finnish colleagues who often acted as their consultants.

Thus, in the late Soviet architectural practice of Vyborg we can see as an example of what Alexey Yurchak called "vnye"—the condition of being simultaneously inside and outside of the Soviet reality. Vyborg architects could not only leave the Soviet Union to the "West", but also project Finnish architectural practices to the Soviet ones, creating a complex vision of Vyborg's urban space with an uncertain temporality of modernization, some signs of which, according to some recollections, ended with the surrender of the city to the Soviet Union—as, for instance, Nelli Li described Leo Hackman's house. *Zagranitsa* for them was not elsewhere, it was embodied in the pre-WWII urban space of the city. Hence, the restoration projects became of a specific architectural practice in Vyborg, for they provided another type of cross-border encounter—a diachronic one that assumed the everyday exploration of the Finnish pre-war architectural heritage. Consequently, in the imagination of Vyborg architects "West" existed both spatially (beyond the border), as well as temporally (in the past). In addition, the infrastructure of study trips to Finland provided by the Union of Architects, and the exploration of contemporaneous Finnish architectural practices, was used by some Vyborg architects as a source of information about the history of the city that was received from their personal encounters with Finnish colleagues. Thus, the Soviet state provided a network of cross-border exchange without being able to control and foresee its results, which had an outcome in the formation of architectural practices specific to the ceded town.

2.3 The engagement of Finnish architects in building Vyborg and the Karelian Isthmus

In this section I am going to bring in the interests and practices of the Finnish architects and construction companies that were involved in architectural projects in Vyborg and the Karelian isthmus, and became engaged with the project of modernization of the ceded areas. Their involvement, I am arguing here, challenges the unity of the project of Soviet modernization of the Karelian isthmus, and in some cases reveals the inability of the Soviet state to cope with the goals of developing new territories and accommodating new settlers.

Along with the Soviet architects visiting Finland, some Finnish architects were also coming to the Soviet Union. In 1962, Finnish architect-academician Alvar Aalto was invited by the Architectural Section of the Union of Societies of Friendship with Foreign Countries to give a lecture for the practicing architects and students of architecture in Leningrad.[91] The name of Alvar Aalto, one of the most well-known Finnish architects of that time, was associated with the construction of significant works of modern architecture both in the cities of Finland and in major urban centers of a number of European countries, widely recognized in the circles of the international architectural community. Among them were the House of Workers' Culture in Helsinki, the building of the Pension Board in Helsinki, the building of the Pedagogical Institute in the city of Jyväskylä, the church in Imatra, and by the time of his lecture, the public centers of Bremen and Wolfsburg in Germany were under construction according to his designs. One of the earliest, but most famous works of the architect, the city library, was then in the territory of the Soviet Union—in Vyborg. However, this fact remained unspoken during the lecture.

[91] Central State Archive of Literature and Art of St. Petersbueg (TSGALI) f. 341 (Leningrad Union of Architects), op. 1 d. 606. (Verbatim report on the creative meeting of the architects of Leningrad with the Finnish architect-academician Alvar Aalto, 14th May, 1962), 2.

During the lecture, Aalto spoke about the projects of his design, accompanied by film slides. In the introduction to his lecture, he emphasized that he would be talking about "our own architectural language" that is shared by both Soviet and Finnish architects, who are facing the challenges of "construction of a new society" that are addressed to the architectural professionals.[92] Following this claim, he concentrated the talk around the building and development of the factory sites and the workers' housing projects—both burning issues for Soviet architecture in the 1960s. Presenting his project of a sulphate-cellulose plant in Sumylla (1937) he addressed the topics of modernization of factory equipment and the construction of flexible architectural solutions for future innovation that were crucial for contemporaneous developments of enterprises in the ceded territories of the Karelian isthmus.[93] Aalto continued speaking about the factory-related workers' housing and addressed the topics of efficient construction, which was also key to Soviet architectural practice within the context of the "Khrushchev" housing reform: "The standard is the key to social progress; it is well known that the standard brings us extraordinary benefits by helping to develop a democratic society faster, but at the same time the standard is also our enemy, as it leads to monotony if it is misused. It is possible to create a new type of standard […] of an elastic standard […] Due to improper standardization, a dictatorship of technology arises, and this dictatorship, perhaps, is even more harmful than a political dictatorship (laughter and applause in the audience)".[94] Thus, Aalto addressed common challenges of Soviet and Finnish architects that were key to both professional groups, despite the difference in political regimes.

Following this claim, Aalto proposed a planning scheme for mass urban housing that, according to a verbatim report, provoked interest from the audience. The residential buildings of the housing block, according to his proposal, were built in construction

[92] Ibid., 7.
[93] Ibid., 8.
[94] Ibid., 18.

queues from prefabricated blocks (just as Soviet *khrishchevki* did). However, the main novelty of the Aalto scheme was that the architect retained the possibility of changing 10% of the initial complex with the beginning of each queue, according to new ideas he had during the process. Such compromise still allowed the construction of economically efficient buildings, but made it possible to break the multi-tonality of a mass housing complex, as well as quickly solve problems in planning by making instant changes to the project. This was a very provocative statement for Soviet architects who designed according to strict standards that infringed on their creative findings, as well as the possibility of changing the plan directly on the construction site.

Alvar Aalto also touched upon the aspect of taking advantage of natural surroundings. He argued for the clever use of a given natural site that assumed the search for smart engineering solutions, as for instance, was found in the case of Sunila's housing complex. The three-story buildings were located on both sides of the mountain slope, so that from each floor dwellers could look out directly to nature.[95] This aspect was particularly important for the architects working with the ceded territories of the Karelian isthmus that were a challenging natural environment. As well as in Finland, the natural conditions of Vyborg and the Karelian Isthmus already created a number of complicated tasks for the Soviet architects. Thus, by framing the key points of the lecture, Aalto tried to provide Soviet architects with the understanding that the experience of Finnish architectural practice can be used in the context of Soviet planning and construction.

By the end of the 1950s, the first Finnish construction companies started to become interested in the Soviet Union as a possible client for their work, since their interest in Finnish experience was high. For instance, in 1959, after the visit to the Soviet Union, the company Rakennushallitus sent the collection of Finnish building norms in

[95] Ibid., 9-10.

gratitude for the organized trip.[96] This was a tricky gesture, since the Soviet norms of mass housing construction were still very strict and targeted to the maximum decrease of building costs that slowed down the development of innovative solutions, as well as the involvement of foreign architects in construction.

However, the first engagements with Finnish construction companies within the ceded territories of the Karelian Isthmus can be dated back as early as to the 1940s. This cooperation occurred in the towns, such as Sovietsky (former Iohannes) and Svetogorsk (former Enso), where large industrial production, put into operation during the pre-war period, were located. As was shown by Pavel Pokid'ko and Elena Kochetkova in their research on the post-war history of the Sovietsky factory, the Soviet specialists were struggling to operate the "foreign" factories, because parts of the factories' hardware had been evacuated to the inner regions of Finland. It was returned chaotically to the Soviet state as part of postwar reparations.[97] Workers of the factory were accommodated in old Finnish houses and barracks, the restoration of which was handled by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the RSFSR.[98] However, the amount of staff needed to operate the factory was not comparable with the places available for accommodation, because the organization of the housing construction did not catch up with the growing amount of settlers. In the late 1940s, the leadership of the Sovietsky pulp-and-paper mill decided to buy ready-made single-family houses to cope with the dwelling crisis that caused this critique in the contemporaneous press: "The capital construction department of the pulp-and-paper mill is preparing 300 square meters of housing for young specialists. In the house of the young specialist 20 engineers and technicians will be accommodated. Our own construction allows you to abandon the expensive purchase of

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[96] Central State Archive of Literature and Art of St. Petersbueg (TSGALI) f. 341 (Leningrad Union of Architects), op. 1 d. 499. (Correspondence of the Union of Soviet architects and architects of other countries on the organization of excursions, technical assistance and other issues, 1958-1959), 16.

[97] Yelena Kochetkova and Pavel Pokidko, "History of the Factory in Johannes (Sovetsky) in 1944-1951," *Rossiiskaia Istoria* (2016): 166.

[98] Ibid.,169.

houses in Finland counted for one family. We can build houses for more people at a lower cost." [99] Thus, Finnish single-family houses that were used to solve the contemporaneous post-war crisis in Finland, did not fit into the needs and capabilities of the Sovietsky post-war situation that encouraged accommodation of more people at low cost.

Fig. 3 Finnish houses in Svetogorsk: under construction 1980

Personal archive of R. D. Gorkovenko
Courtesy of Svetogorsk Local history Museum

However, the practices of ordering housing construction for accommodation of workers came back in the 1980s in Svetogorsk, when the Finnish company took full responsibility for the complete reconstruction of the enterprise, as well as for the construction of residential buildings in the city, a hotel and a canteen for workers. In 1972, documents for the reconstruction and expansion of the Svetogorsk pulp-and-paper mill had been signed by the Finnish Republic. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, Alexey Kosygin, and President of the Republic of Finland, Urho Kekkonen, personally supervised the ongoing construction. Along with the reconstruction of the enterprise, a Finnish construction company erected a full mass housing district, a

[99] *Vyborg Communist,* June 20, 1948, 2.

canteen and a hotel in the city. This time they offered the company not single-family homes, but a mass housing district of high quality.

Fig. 4 Interior of the dining room for workers of the Svetogorsk pulp-and-paper mill, built by the Finnish construction company on the territory of the plant. 1980

Personal archive of R. D. Gorkovenko

The architectural engagement with the modernization project in Svetogorsk became possible as a supplement for the technological cooperation between Finland and the Soviet Union at the reconstruction of the city-forming enterprise. This dependence on technological transfers from Finland grew from the post-war years, as the development of the enterprise constantly required consultations and help from Finland.

In Vyborg, however, such encounters occured without the involvement of the industrial development factor, yet was connected with establishing a tourist infrastructure and creating a "face of the city"—a new hotel. Despite the fact that tourists from abroad were allowed to visit Vyborg since 1958, they were not allowed to stay in the city overnight. Officially, Vyborg remained something of a transit location on the way to Leningrad. Things were about to change with the construction of the new hotel launched in 1973. According to the decision of the Vyborg City Council №373 from December 13, 1973, the picturesque site near the Salakkalahti bay was allocated to erect a hotel building

with “heightened requirements to the architectural and artistic decision of the façade”[100] that would meet international standards. The hotel building, accommodating 400-450 people with a restaurant, a bar, a sauna with a swimming pool, a hairdresser salon and the legendary hard currency store “Berezka” was supposed to match the international standards and maintain the appropriate face of the Western border of the Soviet Union.

Fig. 5 Construction of the hotel “Druzhba” in Vyborg 1982

Courtesy of the Archive of the Historical and Architectural Museum “Vyborg Castle” - Vyborg Museum-Reserve

The ship-like building on the Salakkalahti bay was planned in Leningrad by Vladimir Scherbin, the head of the architectural and planning workshop № 6 in the Institute LenNIIProject. However, in 1979 the complete construction and interior design (including furniture and tableware) was ordered from the Finnish company Perusyhtymä Oy.[101] All the building materials, as well as the final architectural and planning solutions, were negotiated with the Finnish company.[102] According to the decree of the State Committee of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR for Construction Affairs, “the cost

[100] Archive of the Research and Design Institute for Housing and Civil Engineering LenNIIProject f. 6565-2 (Hotel Intourist “Druzhba”), d. 8766. (Architectural and planning requirements), 29.

[101] Archive of the Research and Design Institute for Housing and Civil Engineering LenNIIProject f. 6565-2 (Hotel Intourist “Druzhba”), d. 8766. (Project documentation).

[102] Archive of the Research and Design Institute for Housing and Civil Engineering LenNIIProject f. 6565-2 (Hotel Intourist “Druzhba”), d. 8766. (Architectural and planning requirements), 29.

of developing the architectural and construction section of the technical project"[103] of Druzhba were allowed to be determined by individual calculation, which was exceptional for most of the individual projects in the Soviet Union, which were more likely to be tailored to the existing budget.

Apart from the requirements to meet international standards of hotel building, one can assume that the reason for collaboration with Perusyhtymä Oy was the challenging natural landscape of the construction site. The building had to be erected on a sand-quicksand terrain (the shores of the bay were artificially washed in the pre-war period) that was challenging and risky for Soviet engineers at that time. However, Finnish builders were quite familiar with this type of soil and successfully completed the construction. Druzhba was officially opened in 1982. According to the agreement with the Perusyhtymä Oy, the company was also responsible for preparing the hotel staff (217 people) to meet with international guests, so along with the construction Finns also introduced hospitality practices.[104]

As a result, the building fit into the norms and requirements of Soviet architecture, but was completed and furnished by the Finnish technologies and materials. Everything in the building, from the materials for the outdoor cladding to the furniture and tableware, were completed by Perusyhtymä Oy, giving both the Soviet architects and the local citizens the direct experiences of contemporaneous Finnish material space organization.

To conclude, the example of the development of Vyborg and the Karelian Isthmus after WWII confirms the thesis on the specific nature of architectural practices on the Soviet-Finnish border that surely could not be united by the umbrella of "Soviet" architecture. Contrary to that, I would offer to frame the Soviet architectural and urban planning practice through a scope that takes into consideration not only power relations,

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[103] Archive of the Research and Design Institute for Housing and Civil Engineering LenNIIProject f. 6565-2 (Hotel Intourist "Druzhba"), d. 8766. (Decision of Gosstroy of the RSFSR), 16.

[104] L. Mironova "Gostinitsa Druzhba," *Vyborg Communist,* July 27, 1984, 19.

but the technological reception, the history of the architectural profession, and the space with its material and climatic features. From the example of the development of the urban space in Vyborg, we can witness how architects working in the city used the state-supported infrastructure of the friendly ties with Finland in order to proceed with their own interests and visions, as shown in the example of the restoration projects in the city. At the same time, Finnish builders themselves participated in the realization of the socialist development of the ceded territories: through constructing the housing estates and infrastructure in Svetogorsk, though education activities in the case of Alvar Aalto, and through individual projects (hotel "Druzhba"), conducting the realization of the projects within the Soviet urban planning system. Thus, the Soviet-Finnish borderland area was truly a Raum in the Heideggerian sense—a space which created a possibility for cultural and technological exchange between the countries on the both sides of the "Iron Curtain", where Soviet norms could be filled with absolutely different meanings, values, and kinds of practices.

3 “Creative covers” for Vyborg architectural practice

In the following chapter, I am looking at the reactions of Vyborg architects to the ongoing Soviet mass housing modernization that resulted in the creation of a specific local professional ethos based on its implicit critique. There are three factors offered Vyborg architects more opportunities in professional practice providing them with inspiration, creative and legal “covers.” The status of the “historic city” allowed Vyborg architects to negotiate and erect singular architectural projects that qualitatively differed from the mass housing prefabricated architecture. The encounter with the Finnish functionalist monuments of the 1930s, particularly the city library by Alvar Aalto, inspired them to experiment with new architectural typologies and technological solutions that were not widely practiced in the Soviet Union. Last, the challenging regional environmental conditions of the Karelian Isthmus that blurred the political borders with Finland served as a creative cover to cite-specific architectural projects that were a characteristic feature of the architectural practice of the neighboring Finland and the Baltic republics. On the other hand, it is shown how many of these aspirations failed due to restrictions, technological and resource shortages of Soviet architectural practice of the 1960s-70s.

3.1 “Old” vs “New”: implicit critique of the “Soviet” mass housing program

The major construction activities in the Soviet Union were led according to the goals of development of the state economy. In the 1950s-1960s, architecture was instrumentalized in order to solve the consequences of ongoing major industrial developments. New energy and industrial construction entailed the reconstruction of existing cities and creation of new urban centers. The massive development of residential

and public buildings was needed to accommodate the employees of the enterprises and overcome the overall housing shortage. In order to handle the pace of the rapid industrialization, methods of mass housing construction were widely introduced to the Soviet Union, following the goals of the Decree "Against the Superfluity in Design and Construction." New mass housing neighborhoods were built according to strict standards and in a short time in all Soviet Republics creating a homogenized space for managing the population.

The main feature of such rapid reorganization was its visibility. In the existing cities, the new mass housing districts offered a dramatically different environment comparing to the pre-War and Stalin architectural grids. The difference lied in the aesthetic program of the new neighborhoods that was repetitive, predictable, and followed the logic of economics and minimally available building resources. Such difference divided the existing cities with new development into "old" and "new" sections. However, on the level of Russian SFSR this division was legally recognized only in 15 "oldest Russian" cities.[105] The architects in these cities were privileged with the possibility of creating singular individual designs of buildings that were tailored for specific local conditions. This measure was adopted to prevent the complete disturbance of the historical centers of "valuable" historical cities. Soon Vyborg received similar status that assumed the protection of its historical center.[106] The main reason for such a gesture was the fact that, the architectural monuments (including fortification complexes and even dwelling houses) dated back to the 16th century were preserved in Vyborg. Such ancient buildings did not exist in any historic city of the Soviet Union. Moreover, in the local press, these monuments were presented as a heritage of the "ancient Russian

[105] Nikolay Bylinkin and Aleksandr Ryabushin *Istoriya sovetskoy arkhitektury, 1917-1954* (Stroyizdat, 1985), 176.

[106] Viktor Dmitriev, "The Vyborg Modern Examination and Conservation problems," in *Art Nouveau Jugendstil Architecture. Publications of the Finnish National Commission for UNESCO No 59* (Helsinki, 1991), 162.

town."[107] It legitimized the protection of Vyborg's historical center that was not officially recognized of a "foreign" origin.

Consequently, Soviet architects working in Vyborg received a creative cover to avoid the use of mass type design samples and defend the need for the singular design solution in the historic center. During 1964-1965 Vyborg branch of the urban planning institute Lengrazhdanproekt started to negotiate with State Committee for Construction (Gosstroy) on the first singular projects in the historical center of the city. Such projects were justified by the specific urban development conditions of the pre-WWII urban composition and allowed more freedom in the architectural practice then the mass housing of type design. Thus, Vyborg architects used the possibilities provided on the state level to protect their creative practice from the mechanization of mass housing requirements. However, they still participated in the development of the mass housing designs in the Southern part of the city that was not included to a protection zone.

Fig. 6 New neighborhood in southern Vyborg June 1972

Courtesy of the Archive of the Historical and Architectural Museum "Vyborg Castle" - Vyborg Museum-Reserve

[107] "V chest 20-letiya osvobozhdeniya Vyborga. Pamyati geroyev," *Vyborgsky Kommunist*, June 21, 1964, 1.

The discourse of historic preservation was not novel for the Vyborg architectural practice in the context of the ongoing housing modernization. The professionals coming to work to the ceded city were mostly recruited from Leningrad Academy of Arts. The feature of the Leningrad architectural school was its adherence to local neoclassical tradition that was not shaken even in the boiling 1920s with the rise of the international modernist architectural movement. [108] Attention to the classical heritage among Leningrad architects, similarly to Vyborg, was a way to protect their positions and the relative independence of architectural practice in the city, which like in the other Soviet republics, existed and was cultivated according to Stalin's nationality policy. With the advent of new modernization directives from Gosstroy, the architects were deprived of basic expressive tools in working with facade design or unusual planning and began to look for new ways to maintain the local architectural tradition. One of the main challenges for them, as it was shown in the dissertation by Daniil Ovcharenko, was the search for new ways of placing modern buildings in a historical context without disturbing the existing architectural ensemble.[109] Many Leningrad architects who worked during the restrictive housing reform brought this agenda to Vyborg, which thrilled them with its diverse urban environment, as well as existing legal covers for creative practice. The possibilities given by the existing 'historical' heritage of Vyborg became the agenda for the newcoming local architectural community. In fact, all the Vyborg architects interviewed for the current study recalled the duality of their architectural practice, as they were building in two cities – "old" pre-war and "Soviet" Vyborg.

According to the article that Lengrazhdanproekt's Dmitry Fridlyand published in the journal "Architecture and Construction of Leningrad" in 1978, due to the "cohesive

[108] For a more detailed explanation of the crystallization of the neoclassical trend in the early Soviet architecture, see: William Craft Brumfield, *The Origins of Modernism in Russian Architecture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 237-323.

[109] Daniil Ovcharenko, "Nasledovanie gradostroitel'nyh tradicij v proektirovanii žiloj sredy Leningrada 1960-80" (PhD diss., Saint-Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering (SPSUACE), 2015).

structure of Vyborg, the natural landscape conditions and the historical logic of development, the further formation of a holistic urban organism was clearly differentiated into two planning parts – the Northern one that included the architecture of the 13th – early 20th centuries, and the Southern one that was defined the new face of the city".[110] Thus, already in the contemporaneous imagination of the architects working in Vyborg the opposition between the old and new Vyborg existed. The new Southern part of the city was modernized by mass housing type designs and almost completely refrained architects from creative treatment of the given locality, whereas working in the historic center, acquired the possibilities of objecting the ubiquitous simplification and mechanization of the architectural practice via individual design.

The analysis of the publications in the local press proves that the topos of the division between the "old" and "new" Vyborg was a hotly debated topic already in the 1960s-1970s. For instance, in 1968 the newspaper "Construction worker" published the article criticizing the newbuilt mass housing district in Vyborg entitled "Spare your city". Unlike other existing critiques targeted against the bad quality of the rapid housing construction, such as leaking roofs, reduced living space, and problems with water supply, the Vyborg article noted that the newly build *microraion* did not look like "the old Vyborg, to which local residents have already become accustomed".[111] Dullness and boredom of the repetitive architecture of the microraion "A" was humorously labeled "Vyborgskie Cheryomushki" – after the name of the first Soviet mass housing neighborhood built in Moscow in the 1950-60s and known after its panel houses, so-called *khrushchevki*. The authors of the article contended that such type of the urban development could be erected in "any Soviet city" that is absolutely unacceptable in

[110] Dmitry Fridlyand, "Vyborg ancient, Vyborg young. Actual problems in the formation of the city," *Construction and Architecture of Leningrad* 12 (1978): 22.

[111] G. Baluev, G. Platonov "Poshchadite svoy gorod," *Stroitelny rabochy* 11 (1968) in: Regional State Archive (LOGAV) f. P-118 (Personal fund of Evgenii Kepp), op. 2. d. 7, 157. (The clipping from the newspaper "Construction worker", Spring 1968, the article "Spare your city").

Vyborg with its rich historical-architectural complex that needed to be protected and developed rather than depersonalized.

So far it is hard to say that such duality was usual for the Soviet urban development of the 1960s-70s. The lack of research on the regional variations in Soviet architecture practice did not allow to make an unambiguous conclusion. However, similar division between the "old" and "new" was identified in the former colonial settings of Central Asian region. Paul Stronski highlighted that in the case of architectural modernization of post-Stalin Tashkent, Soviet planners faced a number of problems, such as local weather conditions that were better addressed by "traditional" Central Asian houses that provided shade and cool in summer, unlike *khruchshevkas* in the Chilanzar district erected in the 1950s. Moreover, the local self-governing communities – *mahallah* were appropriated to the model of the Sovietization in this particular region, which created an alternative model of Soviet urban modernization.[112]

In Vyborg, such an alternative was embodied in the pre-war Finnish architecture of the 1910s-1930s. As it was pointed out by the chief architectural engineer of Vyborg's Lengrazhdanproekt Alexander Schver, criteria for determining the degree of comfort of dwelling buildings were established among the locals. The crush-test was determined by the weather conditions. Unlike sunny Tashkent, winters and summers in Vyborg were cool. The sea climate caused excessive rainfall, and the proximity of open water brought constant wind. Therefore, comfortable buildings were primarily considered to be well insulated and warm. "Well, – commented Schver, – of course, people wanted to live in old Finnish houses. First, they were old brick buildings that were warm. After all, our large panel houses with slots between the panels were heavily blown by the wind."[113] The finishing quality of Vyborg panel mass houses was low due to often the absense of

[112] Stronski, *Tashkent*, 14, 151, 154, 269.

[113] Alexander M. Schver oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2014-11-22.

the appropriate construction materials and professional builders. Sometimes employees of the local enterprises participated in the construction themselves that led to the application of amateur construction methods. Pre-Soviet housing remained in the city was perceived by both architects and local residents as more comfortable and suitable for living than new houses built in post-war times. The opposition of the Soviet mass housing neighborhoods to the well-built old Finnish houses was, thus, of concern of the local citizens and architects who were responsible for the comfortable accommodation of city dwellers.

Thus, situating the Soviet mass housing project in a specific place or region, as was shown in the examples of Tashkent and Vyborg. One can trace the different meanings and challenges that made the project of Soviet modernization less modern than preceding vernacular architectural solutions. Such conclusions become visible only within spatial scope that assumes the examination of the unfolding of all-Soviet modernization within the frame of the given climatic conditions and ethos of local architectural professionals. Hence, one of the core characteristics of production of consumption of a "socialist" spaces was that these spaces were filled with different meanings or criticisms and could be subverted in line with locally available legal covers.

The main peculiarity of the Vyborg case in the local implicit criticism of the ongoing housing modernization was that the "vernacular" architecture, Finnish pre-war houses, were not officially recognized in the official discourse on the level of Gosstroy, due to "Finnish" nationality was not included to the body of recognized Soviet nations whose local architectural traditions were fostered in line with the Soviet nationality policy. Administratively, Vyborg was included to the Leningrad region and should represent the face of the Russian SFSR in the Western border. Instead, for its own citizens it became a material representation of the "foreign" architectural practices.

For instance, among the interviews taken from first Soviet settlers to Vyborg and the Karelian Isthmus, the metaphor of moving to another planet, an entirely different world, different from the world of the Soviet collective farm or the Soviet city, is often used to describe the spaces of the ceded territories. One of the respondents remembered:

> Of course ... and, behold, it's still something ... as we came to another ... well, not the country, but, probably, to another planet. Here, this feeling. Honestly! Because such clean h[ouses] ... streets. Although they ... the city was broken ... clean streets. Somehow ... everything ... such convenience, everything ... and ... and ... and, here, till now I have a feeling how we came to some kind of ... I do not know ... into another civilization, that's for sure.[114]

"Another" spatial reality located only 174 km from Leningrad, to which respondent referred, was mostly built in Vyborg during the 30 pre-War years, when the city was the second largest city in Finland. The country got independence from the newly established Bolshevik state in 1917 and started active development of the territories of Karelian Isthmus that was chosen to be the center of agriculture and industrial production. Although the new Soviet settlers moving to Vyborg were deprived of the knowledge on the interwar historical context, they were encountering with the specific spatial reality of the ceded territories that soon started to be described as "the European city" in the Soviet Union.

As well as new settlers, architects Despite the almost complete absence of historical materials on the pre-Soviet period of the development of Vyborg, the architects could analyze it according to the evidence that could not be classified or evacuated – architecture. Becoming familiar with the city's architectural and town planning situation, they had an understanding of how the city functioned in the pre-Soviet period, as the building technologies of Finnish functionalism attracted them with high quality of finishing and construction works, as well as a convenient but economical layout that was lacking in Soviet architectural practice and encouraged by the above mentioned Directive

[114] V. Yu. Makarova, Granitsa i lyudi: vospominaniya sovetskikh pereselentsev Priladozhskoy Karelii i Karelskogo peresheyka (Evropeysky universitet v Sankt-Peterburge, 2005), 374.

"Against Superfluity in Architecture". In particular, the architect of the Giprogor Institute, which operated on the territory of the Vyborg since the 1940s, N. I. Solofnenko reflected in one of the first publications on the analysis of the Vyborg architecture of the 1930s :

> Among the many objects made in the last 15-20 years in the constructivist style, there are some distinguished buildings which, with a common compositional solution, the silhouette, and details of the facades, can with good reason be regarded as highly artistic, full-fledged architectural structures.[115]

Buildings in the "constructivist style" to which Solofnenko refers are the Finnish functionalist buildings of the 1920s-1930s. For their description, the architect used the familiar vocabulary, probably obtained while contemporaneous reading of the magazine "Architecture of the USSR." It should be noted that this article was published before 1946, when constructivism officially fell into disrepute at the pages of the magazine. After this milestone in the history of the Soviet architecture, constructivists buildings in the normative discourse began to be referred to as examples of "burgeoise" architecture. However, with the return of the approval of the modernist aesthetics in 1954, these buildings again start to be referred as "modern" in contemporaneous publications.

[115] N. A. Solofnenko "Arkhitektura i zastroyka Vyborga," *Arkhitektura Leningrada* 1 (1941): 60.

Fig. 7 Vyborg gynecological and maternity hospital built in 1937 by Uno Ulberg 1957

Courtesy of the Archive of the Historical and Architectural Museum "Vyborg Castle" - Vyborg Museum-Reserve

Students and professors of the architectural department of the Leningrad Academy of Arts were also interested in the "modern" pre-Soviet architecture of the ceded Vyborg. With the partial relaxation of the border regime in 1958, they received a possibility to visit Vyborg. The architect Dmitry Fridlyand, who came to work at Vyborg's Lengrazhdanproekt in the early 1960s, noted that the reason for such choice was precisely the desire to get acquainted with the architecture of the city. For the first time he visited Vyborg as part of the above mentioned excursion organized by Andrei Ikonnikov, who was his instructor at the Academy:

> We just entered into another world. [...] It was impossible to see it anywhere. It was a tremendous impression. [...] There, on the corner of Moscow avenue and the Mira street, where now a ruined cinema "Rodina" is located... The interior of this cinema was completely unexpected for us. The walls there were covered with wood lining. In 1960, the walls lined with wood were a discovery for us. Later this was universally done in the Soviet Union. <...> In general, even what we did not expect to see, we saw. Therefore, we had no doubts about where to go to work. Especially when you consider that at that time in all design organizations there was a famine for architects. In general, we came there and started to create something.[116]

[116] Dmitry P. Fridlyand oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in St. Peterburg, Russian Federation, 2015-03-21

Thus, in the opinion of the architectural professional community, Vyborg was simultaneously a place where their creative aspirations could be developed under the exhisting legal possibilities, yet the city also brought inspiration for contemporary architectural practice by solutions used by the Finnish architects back in the 1930s. Division between the "Soviet" (Southern part of the city) and the "Old" (Northern part) Vyborg, to which citizens, as well as architects had an emotional appeal, led to a formation of an alternative architectural strategy conducted within the boundaries of the historical city. Legal preconditions for the construction of the individual projects in this part that could be approved by Gosstroy gave possibilities to create architecture that did not disrupt, but was defined by the local urban environment. For instanstance, the building of House of Soviets in the other annexed city, Kaliningrad, was designed as a vertical dominant, whereas in Vyborg it retained horizontal axis that did not disrupt the scale of the square in the historic center of the city. Thus, the review of the project by Lengrazhdanproekt's Irina Popova published in 1976 suggested that "the town-planning situation predetermined" the "main geometric parameters" of the building, whereas "harmonious combination with the surrounding historical buildings, tactful detailing of architectural forms, the use of characteristic finishing materials, continued the best traditions of the architecture of Vyborg".[117] The project assumed the use of such rare materials as the red brick facing, white concrete and granite. This combination of materials supported the characteristic color of the existing Vyborg architecture.

In fact, the project of the House of Soviets, the building with the function alien to the historical-cultural composition of Vyborg, was justified through "local" references, such as the use of materials characteristic to the pre-WWII architecture of Vyborg – red brick, white concrete, and granite. The motto of Irina Popova, the author of the project, was, thus, to complete the architectural composition of the square in the historical center

[117] "Leningradsky dnevnik: Budet Dom Sovetov v Vyborge," *Stroitelstvo i arkhitektura Leningrada* 8 (1976): 17.

of the city by introducing not only the appropriate scale, but also material references to the architectural context. Thus, Popova's approach was framed contrary to the ongoing housing modernization that treated the space as *tabula rasa* and was deprived almost completely of the references to the spacio-cultural conditions of the given locality.

3.2 Restoration of Alvar Aalto library as an inspiration for critical architectural practice

Restoration projects of the monuments of the pre-War functionalist architecture mentioned in the previous section became of a second creative cover for Vyborg architects. The truly central building in the context of Vyborg restoration practices described in the section 2.2 was the city library erected in 1935. In her analysis of the city library, Laura Berger contended that while talking about the Vyborg case "it is often difficult to delineate the difference between the Library and the city, for, often these are used to express perceptions of things that are more abstract and much of greater scale."[118] Clearly, the library building can be considered at the same time as a marker of a political and social changes occurred in the city and the space that created and shaped them. Thus, it became possible to "read" such information analyzing material transformations and social practices and entanglements inside the architectural profession followed the existence of the building in Vyborg.

The initial project of the library belonged to a Finnish architect Alvar Aalto who won the competition for the design back in 1927. According to the new urban plan for the development of the city, the library should have become one of the new dominants of Vyborg architectural composition.[119] According to the plan, the building was located at the central Esplanade park, next to the city's biggest Lutheran cathedral. The library

[118] Laura Berger "The Case of Alvar Aalto Library, Vyborg, Rusia" in *Alvar Aalto Researchers' Network*, February 1st, 2013, accessed December 31, 2016, http://www.alvaraaltoresearch.fi/articles/vyborg-aalto-library-case-study/#.WGfKlbaLSAw.

[119] Berger, "The Case of Alvar Aalto Library, Vyborg, Russia", accessed December 31, 2016, http://www.alvaraaltoresearch.fi/articles/vyborg-aalto-library-case-study/#.WGfKlbaLSAw.

balanced the massive Gothic-style cathedral with its simple, geometrical shapes that were quite daring for the Finnish architectural tradition of the 1920s. Back then, it was still rooted in the reference to historical styles and national romanticism highlighting the growing strength of Finland that got its independence in 1917.[120]

Fig. 8
Alvar Aalto library in Vyborg, Russia 2014

Photo from Flickr, licenced use.

Due to its technical innovative features, the library in Vyborg inaugurated in 1935 was praised across the professional architectural journals worldwide contributing to the growing popularity of the Finnish modern architectural school.[121] Thus, upon the construction of the library, the building was perceived as an innovation of a Finnish architecture recognized on the international level.

The cubic volumes of the library were freely placed in the natural context of the park offering a contrast to a surrounding greenery with the white walls covered with stucco. The entrance to the library was covered with locally mined stone giving a reference to the nature of the area. Aalto chose the free planning scheme in arranging of

[120] Mikhail Milchik, "Aalto Library in Vyborg town planning system," in *Alvar Aalto. The Karelian masterpiece*, ed. Lubov Kudryavtseva (Vyborg, 2008), 56.

[121] "Bibliothèque Viipuri," *Architectur le rau J'urdui* 10 (1937): 74-75; E. J. Carter, "Viipuri library, Finland," *Library Association Record* 38 (1936): 415-418; H. Lemaitre, "La nouvelle biblioteque de Viipuri," *Archives et Bilioteques* 2 (1936): 146-147; P. M. Shand, "Viipuri library, Finland," *Architectural review* 79 (1936): 107-114.

the building in space, inscribed in the hilly terrain of the park. The white building almost deprived of the decorations still localized some features popular in the contemporaneous Finnish architecture – a cozy interior with comfortable furniture, extensive use of wood in interior decoration, and innovative engineering systems, such as ceiling heating or light lanterns in the roof of the main reading hall that allowed to illuminate the whole room with natural light. According to the definition of Kenneth Frampton, the library represented the "regional" version of the international modernist movement. The architectural composition of the building that referenced the local landscape, made use of wood and chaotic elements (such as the wavy ceiling) in the interior design, was an implicit resistance to the universalistic approach of the dominating Corbusier-like modernist style.[122]

Fig. 9
Interior of the Alvar Aalto library in Vyborg, Russia
2014

Photo from Flickr, licenced use.

Unlike the building of the neighbouring cathedral and the railway station, the city library was not blown up by the Soviet troops that were leaving the city in 1941. Thus, it was not recognized as a sumbolic target for suppression, unlike the other two buildings completed in the style of Nordic national romanticism. However, the building greatly suffered from the blast wave and needed restoration, as many other buildings in Vyborg.

[122] Kenneth Frampton. Towards a Critical Regionalism: six points for an architecture of resistance. In: FOSTER, Hal (Ed.). *The anti-aesthetic:* essays on Postmodern culture (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 16-30.

During the post-war period the city library stood in ruins for almost a decade and required complete restoration. The correspondence between Council of Ministers of the RSFSR and Vyborg City Council of Working People's Deputies of the Leningrad Region shows that the restoration was postponed several times due to the lack of resources.[123] This factor indicates that the primary goal of the local government during the post-war years was to restore the industry and provide with newcomers with basic housing conditions, while the reconstruction of the social infrastructure was organized more than 10 years later.

In 1953 the first restoration project was entrusted to the chief architect of Vyborg Petr Rosenblum who was asked to prepare the project for the restoration of the library. The fact that the project was passed to the person, with the highest administrative position in the sphere of city architecture highlighted the importance of the reconstruction for the local government. In response to the request, Rosenblum produced two projects: the first one was the restoration that treated the building as a monument that assumed closest preservation of its structure and appearance, whereas the other one, on the contrary, implied the alteration of the façade of the building that was supposed to be decorated with a colonnade in the style of so-called "Soviet classics."[124] Apparently, the second project was done to prevent the restoration of a functionalist monument, since functionalism and constructivism were blamed as "formalism" on a state level up until the early 1950s.

The post-war restoration projects of the Vyborg library give an example of the state of the uncertainty in the mediation between the architectural practices and governmental visions on reshaping the city. The two Rosenblum's reconstruction proposals were drifting between the will to stand within the professional tasks and practices and the awareness of the ideological symbolism supported on the state level that might be

[123]Leningrad Regional State Archive (LOGAV) f. P-437 (Correspondence with higher party and state bodies on the issues of restoration, improvement and maintenance of the city in 1953), op. 2. d. 194, 4. (Letter about the restoration of the city library, 3 January 1953).

[124] Alexander Schver, "Post-war reconstruction," in *Alvar Aalto. The Karelian masterpiece*, ed. Lubov Kudryavtseva (Vyborg, 2008), 61.

enhanced on the level of architectural form.[125] However, the later rationale was not fulfulled in the case of the restoration of the city library, due to the death of its author, Petr Rosenblum, in 1957 and the change in the policy in the field of architectural and urban planning following the directive "Against Superfluity in Design and Construction", which was supposed to depart from the ornamental language of neoclassicism of the Stalin era. Thus, the directive's output and the change in the architectural and town planning paradigm in Vyborg influenced the predestination of the library building. The project for decorating the minimalist facade with columns was rejected, and Lengrazhdanproekt's Alexander Schver was appointed the new project architect responsible for the restoration of the library which was completed in 1966.

Schver did everything possible to recover the Aalto initial design and retain the integrity of building's architectural structure.[126] For instance, he argued against the organization of the black box cinema in the library lecture hall (which it supposed to become under the government project of *cinemafication* Vyborg).[127]

As a result of the post-war evacuations, Schver was deprived of original copywrite drawings by Aalto. All the project documentation was relocated to Finland with the evacuation of the local population in 1944. However, the architect tried to request the documents from the author approaching the Secretary of the Vyborg City Party Committee. However, the Moscow Committee for Architecture rejected the query of the Secretary of the Vyborg City Party Committee and Schver himself, on the request of

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[125] It should be noted that during the first period of post-war restoration several buildings of the city finally acquired the new, classicist, facade, that is the newly built railway station and the building opposite to it. In the review of the architectural competition for the Vyborg railway station, published in the journal "Architecture of the USSR", the criteria for selecting the winning project were formulated. The first prize was awarded to the project "Leningrad-Vyborg" by the architects A. V. Vasiliev, D. S. Goldgor, S. B. Speransky. The architectural solution of the facades in this project was completed in the classicist style that, according to the jury, fullty expressed "the idea of entering the USSR, the idea of a connection with Leningrad". See: I. Maseyev "Vokzal v Vyborge. Konkurs na arkhitekturnoye oformleniye," *Arkhitektura i stroitelstvo Leningrada* 16 (1951): 41-42.

[126] Lengrazhdanproekt Vyborg Branch Archive (Project documentation), d. 624/A-8,1. (City Library. Overhaul and additional equipment, 1966).

[127] Nick Baron, "New Spatial Histories of Twentieth Century Russia and the Soviet Union: Surveying the Landscape," *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 55, no. 3 (2007): 374–400.

copyright drawings Alvar Aalto from Finland.[128] As a result, at the disposal of the architect were only old photos of the building. All the project documentation and new architectural drawings were prepared according to the Shver's new measurments. Schver described conditions of such restoration as a "blind design" and claimed that it was impossible to recreate the initial project of the 1935.[129] In addition, the architect pointed out that materials allocated for the restoration were incompatible with the original ones: "At that time, of course, there was a terrible shortage of materials and a terrible shortage of architects and builders."[130] Although all the original materials were changed to the available Soviet analogues, Schver's motto was to attempt to get to return the building to the original design where possible. For example, the architect reconstructed such a small detail as the constructions for the vertical gardening on the outer walls of the building according to the initial design, although such solution was not practiced widely in the Soviet architecture of the public buildings.[131]

The overall construction quality of the 1930s remained completely unattainable in the Soviet restoration of the 1960s. The façade with the continuous glazing was maintained, however the dimensions of the metal frames were changed due to its huge original size that could not be reproduced. The design of the innovative light lanterns that opened the ceiling of the main reading hall in 57 places allowing the entrance of the natural light was also changed. The lanterns originally made from the thick glass that kept their own weight had to be replaced with ones that suppressed to be connected to the roof just with a glue that immediately caused the leak of the roof. During the restoration, the function of the wooden resonating ceiling in the library's lecture hall restored according

[128] Alexander Schver, "Post-war reconstruction," in *Alvar Aalto. The Karelian masterpiece*, ed. Lubov Kudryavtseva (Vyborg, 2008), 61.
[129] Alexander M. Schver oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2014-11-22.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Lengrazhdanproekt Vyborg Branch Archive (Project documentation), f. P4(0), op. 785, d. 624/A-8,1. (City Library. Overhaul and additional equipment, 1966).

to photos was also lost, due to the absence of technical drawings.[132] Some original furniture planned by Alval Aalto was preserved in the library and, according to the project, mixed with the newly made objects of the Soviet production.

Although the original arrangement of furniture was changed, the library retained to be "open", according to the Aalto's plan. Unlike other contemporaneous libraries erected in the Soviet period, Vyborg city library had more liberatitive *bildungsprogram*: the visitors could freely approach the opened shelves and read books in the comfortable chairs and relaxed atmosphere. This peculiarity was immediately marked by the library first visitors, and it soon acquired a name "Americal library" among its visitor's due to its easy-going arrangement.[133] Hence, the library became a representation of the local collective image of the imaginary "West" that could be although experienced – diachronically.

Fig. 10
Ceiling windows in the Alvar Aalto library in Vyborg, Russia 2014

Photo by Egor Rogalev. With permission of the author

[132] Alexander M. Schver oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2014-11-22.

[133] Laura Berger "The Case of Alvar Aalto Library, Vyborg, Rusia" in *Alvar Aalto Researchers' Network*, February 1st, 2013, accessed December 31, 2016, http://www.alvaraaltoresearch.fi/articles/vyborg-aalto-library-case-study/#.WGfKlbaLSAw.

To sum up, the result of the reconstruction was only the partial restoration of the original project resulted in the hybrid version of the Alvar Aalto initial design and the material and technological restrictions of the Soviet restoration project. The original request for the reconstruction of the library was partly failed due to the absence of analogous building materials and technological solutions. Moreover, the limitations and failures of the Soviet supply system were recognized by the author of the Soviet project – Alexander Schver.

Following the material transformations that took place in the library, the building also acquired an important social function. The results of the restoration created a new identification of the library for the Soviet architects. The "unreachable" nature of the initial project made the building iconic for both local Vyborg and Leningrad architects. For instance, the chief architect of Vyborg in 1987 Nelly Li even stated that the visit to the library became "one of the reasons for her moving to Vyborg after the graduation from the Academy".[134] Li first encountered with Vyborg's architecture after the completion of the Shver's restoration and recalled her perception of the library's design in comparison with the contemporaneous Soviet architecture:

> Architecture then [1960s] was not so interesting and, of course, this object [the Vyborg city library] seemed to me to be arch-modern. I must say that the condition of its exterior was quite decent, despite the fact that many functions of the building did not work, for example, as we later learned, the famous acoustic ceiling, which was repaired after the war by wooden slats with rounded corners at the end. There was no acoustics, for it was necessary for the slats to be smooth. All this was very interesting. After that I became interested in Vyborg, and my classmate and I decided to come here after the institute.[135]

[134] Nelly Li oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2015-11-23.
[135] Ibid.

In this passage, we can trace the particular "dimension"[136] of the space of the library for the architect. Li explained her rationale of choosing to move to work in Vyborg as a result in the interest in the architectural composition of the building erected in 1935. The inability to fully understand the organization of Aalto technical solutions created an unusual perception of the building time-wise, for it appeared more "modern"
as compared to the existing architectural practice to which Li was accustomed.

In the 1970s, the architectural student from Leningrad Michael Kirolin also encountered with the library reconstructed by Alexander Shver. Krolin outlined similar affective dimention from the presence in the building:

> An unforgettable impression of youth, when […] I came to Vyborg and saw this miracle, built as if by aliens, creatures with other logic, so simple, lapidary in appearance and so intricately and wisely organized inside. The barely noticeable relief of the site was so skilfully used with the help of the game of marking rooms on the drops to the floor, which forced me to think hard about how this was achieved. The amazing effect of even daylight in a large hall, even in cloudy weather, a toilet box at the entrance with a high ceiling and a light dome and other small wonders were still seen everywhere, despite the losses [of the reconstruction].[137]

The library in Krolin's personal recollection stands out as an example of the ideal architecture which principles could not be fully implemented in the Soviet Union due to the lack of comparable construction materials and techniques, most often limited budgets for project planning phase, different building norms (such as, for example, sanitary norms of insolation), and request to standardization and reduction of construction costs, made the complete implementation of the Aalto principles almost impossible. However, some of the buildings erected in Vyborg during the late Soviet period, and the peculiar professional identity of the architects working in the city made the situation not so unilateral, for some of the Li's Vyborg colleagues attempted to apply principles of

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[136] Baron, "New Spatial Histories of Twentieth Century Russia and the Soviet Union.", 389.

[137] Comment to the article " Library of Alvar Aalto in Vyborg," *Www.admagazine.ru*, accessed May 10, 2017, http://www.admagazine.ru/inter/75261_biblioteka-alvara-aalto-v-vyborge.php. Reproduced with the permission of the author.

Finnish architecture of the 1930s, the city library by Aalto among them, to the Soviet context:

> No doubt, there was a desire to build a house that does not hurt the eye with the lack of architecture, characteristic of the mass standardized design. Of course, as the new design samples, we used Vyborg architecture of the 1920s-30s. We have tried somehow to approach it. I must say that the architecture of this period in Finland was very discreet. […] That is, simple geometric shapes, simple openings in the wall. At best, the windows were outlined with plaster, for it would be less expensive than, for example, they did with brick buildings during the Art Nouveau period […].[138]

The difference between this vision of the library as the alternative way of organizing space in the context of Soviet architectural modernization that came with the party request "Against the superfluity" and Rosenblum's hesitations described above is quiet strong. The perception of the library as the object that should be fit to the reality of the *Sovietizing* city as a means of symbolic connection to Leningrad, or just a reconstructed economic space, shifted to the perception of it as a monument that needs not only to be protected in its state, but to be a model for further architectural developments.

Among the Vyborg architects, the reference to Finnish architectural experience is visible in the works of Boris Sobolev, the alumni of the architectural faculty of the Leningrad Academy of Arts. In 1960 Sobolev participated in the excursion to Vyborg organized by the professor Andrei Ikonnikov and three years later came to work in Lengrazhdanproekt. In 1967, Sobolev completed the construction of the extension for the school building erected in 1912 by the architect Allan Shulman on Kutuzov Avenue.[139]

The extension's design principle iterated the composition of the city library by Alvar Aalto. It was also designed as a combination of functionally labeled volumes – separate blocks for classrooms, a transit unit between the old and new parts. The

[138] Dmitry P. Fridlyand oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in St. Peterburg, Russian Federation, 2015-03-21.

[139] Lengrazhdanproekt Vyborg Branch Archive (Project documentation), f. П3, op. 758, d. 595/АС-5. (The city of Vyborg. Expansion of the School No. 11. Facade along the Kutuzov Boulevard).

combination of the glazed staircase opened to a natural light and a lapidary rectangular façade used in the architectural composition of the library was actualized by Sobolev in the school extension design. As well as in the case of the library, Sobolev applied a minimal decorative technique in the design of the façade of the building, contrasting the white mass of the walls with the lower part of the volume graphically highlighted by a black facing. The carefulness towards the surrounding architectural fabric was genuinely highlighted by the interior design of the new extension. It was arranged in accordance with the layout of the Shulman's block creating a continuity between the old and the new.[140] The attentiveness to a surrounding natural environment was also a feature of Aalto design.

Fig. 11
Extension for a school by Boris Sobolev in Vyborg, Russia. 2016

Photo by Alexey Bogolepov
With permission of the author

[140] Lengrazhdanproekt Vyborg Branch Archive (Project documentation), f. П3, op. 758, d. 595/АС-2. (The city of Vyborg. Expansion of the School No. 11. Floor plans of the 2nd and 3rd floors).

Fig. 12
Alvar Aalto library in Vyborg, Russia 2014

Photo by Egor Rogalev
With permission of the author

However, not all the attempts to apply Aalto principles and technological solutions in Vyborg were successful. The lack of comparable construction materials and building techniques, most often limited budgets for project planning phase, different building norms (such as, for example, sanitary norms of insolation), requests for standardization and reduction of construction costs, made the full implementation of the principles of Finnish architecture quite problematic. For instance, Alexander Schver's idea to implement Aalto-liked ceiling windows with which he encountered while working on the restoration project of the library, in the new building of the local hospital, remained unimplemented. Although the city had enough copper to produce the base for the window lantern, no one can make it in a short period of time, due to the work required the involvement of a smith and handicraft. As it becomes evident from the original drawing of the project, the scheme of the lanterns planned for the hospital was structurally similar to the detail used in the 1930s which Schver encountered the same year while restoring the library.[141]

[141] Lengrazhdanproekt Vyborg Branch Archive (Project documentation), f. P4, op. 764, d. 622/AC-31. (Polyclinic in Vyborg. Glazing of ceiling openings).

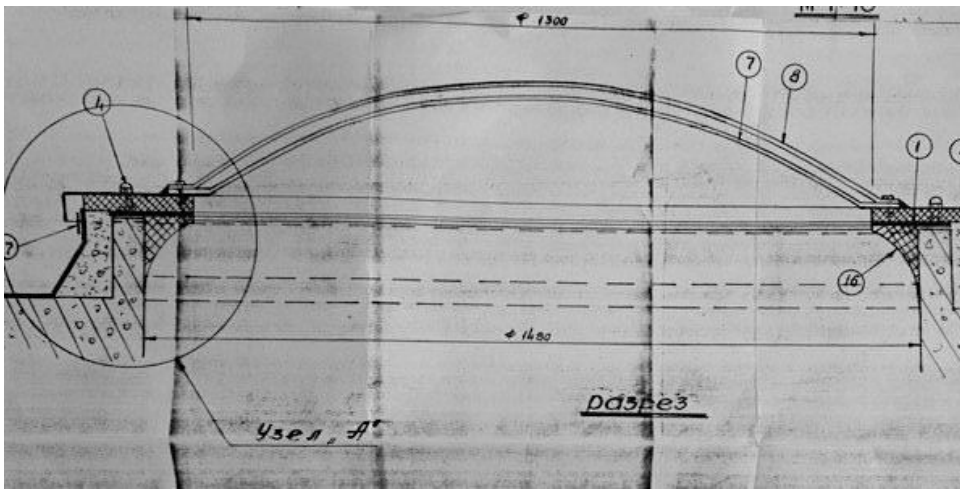

Fig. 13
Measurements of a ceiling window of the city (Aalto) library
Alexander Shver
1966

Author's copy of the original drawing from Lengrazhdanproekt archive

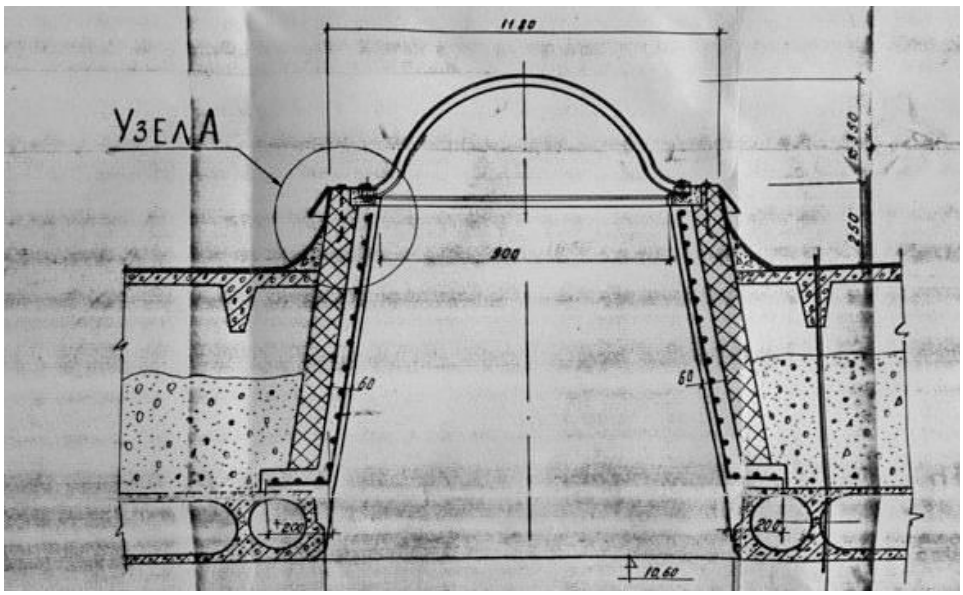

Fig. 14
Project of a ceiling window in the city polyclinic (unimplemented)
Alexander Shver
1966

Author's copy of the original drawing from Lengrazhdanproekt archive

The peculiarity of the architectural composition of the library in the narratives of the architects witnessing and participated in the development of Vyborg, as it was shown in this subchapter, intervened with the professional architectural discourses around mass housing modernization that shortened the creative opportunities of Vyborg architects. The architecture of the library in the imagination of some of the Lengrazhdanproekt's leading architects was perceived more like a critical argument against the "boring" program of the architectural modernization of the 1960s. The restoration project of Aalto library in Vyborg created an ambiguity in the practice of local Soviet architects: on the one hand, they lacked sufficient resources to complete the restoration of the building with compatible materials and technologies, on the other hand, claimed to introduce a

continuity with the 1930s construction techniques. It is still possible to trace the influence of some structural solutions of the Finnish functionalist architecture of the 1930s, as well as the principles addressed by Alvar Aalto during his lecture analysed in the section 2.3. However, such "borrowings" were often unsuccessful due to the different norms and regulations of the architectural activity in Vyborg. Overall, the encounter with Alvar Aalto library, as Vyborg's architecture in general, provided a creative cover and inspiration for Vyborg architects to learn from the Finnish architectural experience that was not available elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

3.3 Environmental factor in Vyborg architectural practice

Apart from the possibilities that were provided by the legal status of Vyborg as a "historical city," and the inspiring functional Finnish architecture of the 1930s, there was another factor that conditioned the encounter between the Soviet and Finnish architects in the borderland region. Although environmental conditions of the site are crucial in architectural practice, they were largely omitted in the prior analyses of Soviet architecture. In fact, the specific natural environment of the Baltic region became simultaneously a challenge and a unifying basis for Finnish and Soviet architects working in this region. The key argument of this thesis is that it is the non-human factors that were of importance for the architectural encounter in the borderland.

As well as in Finland, in Vyborg and the territories of Karelian Isthmus adjacent to it, Precambrian crystalline rocks and sediments comprised the geological structure of the territory which in some places formed outcrops on the surface in the form of rocks and hills. In some places to the North, the soil level rarely reached 100 meters, which led to the formation of lakes and marshes.[142] As it was said in one of the reports of the

[142]Tsentralny gosudarstvenny arkhiv nauchno-tekhnicheskoy dokumentatsii v Sankt-Peterburge (CGANTD) f. 393 (Corrections for the planning urban project of the Vyborg district. Volume 1., 1970), op. 32, d. 12-1, 16-26 (A description of the soil and climate of the region).

Lengrazhdanproekt, “all this introduces a unique, peculiar coloring in the local landscape, allocates the Karelian Isthmus to a specific natural zone.”[143] These observations were crucial for the architectural practice in the area, for it required an individual approach to design of the foundation of buildings. The complicated natural site, such as rocky hill or a boggy soil could become an argument for the Soviet architects in favor of the use of a singular project and not a building of mass type design.

Fig. 15
Rocks of Vyborg 2005

Photo by Sami Hyrskylahti. With permission of the author.

Vyborg’s location was particular in this regard. The city was situated in the lowland of the Baltic Shield, where rocks of the Early Proterozoic period reached the surface. As a result, granite sections were eroded in a form of hills and slopes. The height of the soil in some parts of the city changed every few meters. Such environmental conditions were especially typical for the Southern part of the city where the construction of mass housing neighborhood was ongoing. However, Lengrazhdanproekt’s Viktor Dmitriev was unhappy with the designs of the buildings of *micraraion* “A” erected in that area. Dmitriev criticized the project for the uncreative treatment of the existing natural relief:

[143] Ibid., 26.

> At this time, social development was deformed. It was adjusted to new housing standards. […] it is a disadvantage, by the way, of our local architects. Because in Vyborg we have a good relief, if you use the landscape competently, you could also create something good. And everything that was built there in the Southern district, for example, is just some kind of planned development and that's it. There was not, so to speak, the desire to create something architectural. Then I happened to be in Finland – there, too, I saw a massive housing construction. Of course, the Finns have already gone far in this respect. But the Lithuanians were at their level.[144]

The architecture of public and mass housing residential buildings in the Baltic Republics of the Soviet Union differed from practices in the rest of the country with a highest professional culture, a tactful combination of modern and historical buildings, and the desire to treat the existing natural site creatively. Such disctinctive features of the "Baltic school" were also recognized by contemporaneous architects. The formation of its own architectural school in the Baltics is a topic for a separate study. What is important in the context of Vyborg is that the new architecture of the Baltic republics served as an additional mediator between Finnish and Soviet (Vyborg) architectural practices.

As Dmitriev referred in his recollection, the challenge for all the architects working in the Baltic region – Finnish and Soviet (Vyborg and Lithuanian) architects was the same conditions, yet each treated the site differently. In Vyborg's southern part of the city where architects were allowed to erect buildings principally of the mass type design, the creative treatment of the landscape was the only opportunity to dilute the monotonous look of the prefabricated housing. Hence, for the architect working in Lendgrazhdanproekt, the border between the formal political entities not so evident if looking at the territory through the unifying lens of the natural landscape that needed a special architectural treatment. As Dmitriev pointed out, Finnish and Lithuanian architects also faced the challenges of the landscape and were more mature in coping with it than the planners of *micraraion* "A" in the Southern part of Vyborg. The same challenge was successfully accepted by the architects in Vilnius in the project of the new

[144] Viktor Dmitriev oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2015-11-25.

neighbourhood Lazdinai which Dmitriev encountered while travelling in the Baltic republics:

> At that time, Lithuania was really profound in the mass housing, in residential construction. Yes, they had two districts – Zhirmunai and Lazdinai. It was shown everywhere – so great! And there, in fact, was also a typical mass housing construction. But the mass housing that was agjusted to the landscape, the environment was created. When I came there end examined it, it was really healthy, really, really interesting. [145]

Lazdinai was designed by the Lithuanian architect Vytautas Edmundas Čekanauskas in the beginning of the 1970s. According to the research by Audrius Novickas, Čekanauskas was heavily interested by the variety of typologies of Alvar Aalto's design and even visited his studio in 1959 whitin the study trip to Finland. [146] In the project of Lazdinai neihbourhood Čekanauskas utilized the principles of cite-specific approach to natural environment that Aalto used in the project of the housing for workers of Sunila factory (already mentioned in the section 2.3). The Sunila project was implemented on a 40-meter hill with a significant change in altitude.[147] The building blocks were arranged in accordance with the elevation of the relief.

[145] Viktor Dmitriev oral history interview conducted by Ksenia Litvinenko in Vyborg, Russian Federation, 2015-11-25.

[146] Audrius Novickas, "Kritinė Erdvinė Kūryba Tiriant Sovietinio Laikotarpio Lietuvos Architektūrą," *CRITICAL SPATIAL PRACTICE IN THE RESEARCH OF SOVIET LITHUANIAN ARCHITECTURE.*, no. 73 (June 2014): 91–108.

[147] Central'nyj gosudarstvennyj arhiv literatury i iskusstva (CGALI) f. 341 (Transcript of the meeting of Leningrad architects with the Finnish architect-academician Alvar Aalto on the 14th of May 1962), op. 1, d. 606. (A verbatim report).

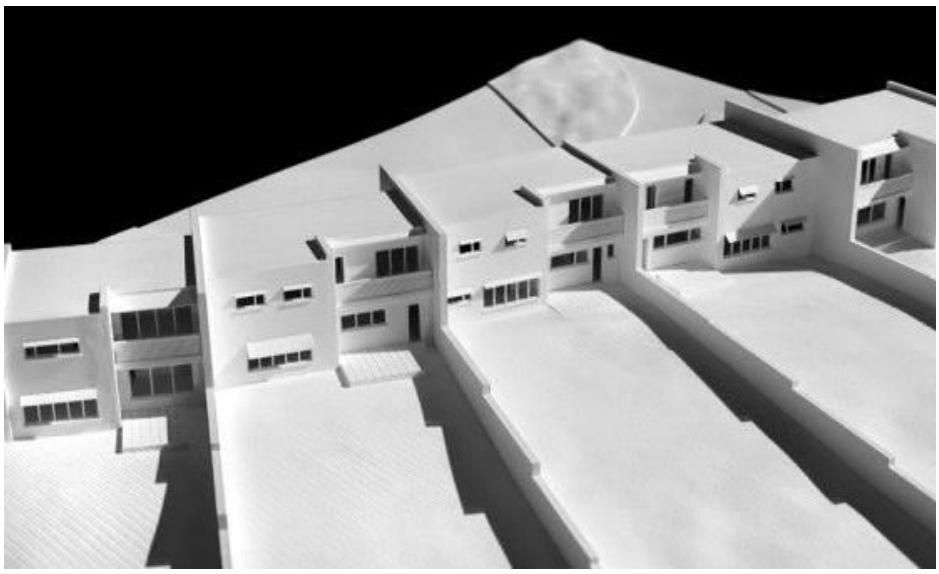

Fig. 16 Model of housing for workers of the Sumila pulp mill Alvar Aalto 1938

Photo from Pinterest, licenced use.

According to an explanatory note to the report on production and financial activities of the Vyborg branch of the Lengrazhdanproekt Institute for 1969, the principles of linking of prefabricated mass housing to the complex terrain were realized in the *microraion* "B" in Vyborg.[148] "B" was developed after the harsh critique received by the *microraion* "A" completed several years earlier. In the case of the new mass housing development the above mentioned principles of attentiveness to the natural environment were evident. For the first time in the Leningrad region, in a number of cases of the Vyborg *microraion* "B", large-panel apartment houses have been staged with a shift of sections in height to one floor in accordance to the changes in the relief.[149] The example of Lazdinai neighborhood set a high bar for the architects in Vyborg. Thus, the second large-scale urban development in the city, *microraion* "B", was made with corrections in accordance with the cite-specific principles.

This approach was used in another Lendrazhdanproekt's project in Vyborg – the recreational tourist center by Valentin Fogel who planned a complex on the rocky shore

[148] Tsentralny gosudarstvenny arkhiv nauchno-tekhnicheskoy dokumentatsii v Sankt-Peterburge (CGANTD) f. 393 (Explanatory note to the report on production and financial activities of the Vyborg branch of the Lengrazhdanproekt Institute,1969), op. 11, d. 106, 12 (A design of the tourist base of 670 places in Vyborg).
[149] Ibid.

of the Vyborg Gulf.[150] According to the concept of development of Vyborg approved at the session of the All-Union Communist Party in Leningrad in 1952, Vyborg needed to become a key town in the recreational system of Karelian Isthmus.[151] Accordingly, the new tourist center had to provide recreational facilities for 670 visitors of Vyborg. The southern part of the building was positioned on the hilly terrain that descended to the bay located next to it. The project assumed a strengthening of the basement of the wing and the careful use of the landscape without significant intervention to its natural composition. Such treatment of the landscape becomes distinctive if compared to the contemporaneous aspirations of the Soviet architects in Siberia and Far North that, as it was pointed out by Ekaterina Kalemeneva, on the contrary, were manifested as a urban conquering of the natural area.[152] In that case the buildings were positioned in the state of resistance to the harsh weather conditions (in line with the classic understanding of urban modernization coined by James Scott),[153] whereas in the case of Vyborg recreational complex, the architectural form was put into a continuity with the existing relief manifesting context-specific approach.

[150] Tsentralny gosudarstvenny arkhiv nauchno-tekhnicheskoy dokumentatsii v Sankt-Peterburge (CGANTD) f. 393 (Explanatory note to the report on production and financial activities of the Vyborg branch of the Lengrazhdanproekt Institute,1969), op. 11, d. 106, 19 (A design of the tourist base of 670 places in Vyborg).

[151] Katajala, *Meanings of an Urban Space*., 144.

[152] Kalemeneva Yekaterina Alekseyevna, "Sovetskaya Politika Osvoyeniya Kraynego Severa I Kritika Zhiznennykh Uslovy Arkticheskikh Gorodov V Narrativakh Khrushchevskogo Vremeni," Quaestio Rossica, 2017, https://publications.hse.ru/articles/204896652.

[153] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale University Press, 1998).

Fig. 17 Model of Vyborg tourist recreational center Valentin Fogel 1969

Central State Archive of Scientific and Technical Documentation of St. Petersburg

The project of the Fogel recreational complex remained, though, unimplemented. The construction site conditions were too challenging for the locally available building solutions. Ten years later Finnish construction company Perusyhtymä Oy was invited to implement the project of the hotel "Druzhba" (see section 2.3) in the similar environmental conditions. Thus, the challenging landscape conditions of the bay still remained inaccessible for the Vyborg construction companies, although local architects were able to propose and appreciate such projects. Environmental factors, to sum up, were an important ground for the circulation of the architectural ideas within the Baltic region. The encounter in the methods of site-specific architecture between Finnish and Soviet architects in Vyboeg occurred both directly and was mediated through the more technically advanced Lithuanian arhitects. Similar geological and landscape conditions in the region blurred the political boundaries between Finland and Soviet Union's Karelian Isthmus making the creation of a shared architectural rationale. The specific environmental conditions made architects think of the similar solutions, such as reinforced foundation, a-linear composition of housing blocks and the attentiveness to a surrounding nature. However, different state of development of building technologies set

the restrictions for the full implementation of these findings that allowed to realize them only partially or circumvent many of innovative approaches. That is why we can contemplate many innovative solutions of the local Soviet architectural thought only on the drawing paper.

Conclusion

In the current state of the research on a Soviet/socialist city, no one would agree that there could be one definition of this phenomenon. In her dissertation, Daria Bocharnikova showed that there were multiple synchronic versions of the socialist modernization project offered by Moscow-based architectural groups.[154] Kate Brown challenged a unique nature of a socialist urban setting by equating the structures and management principles of Soviet and American atomic cities showing their common genealogy.[155] In my research *Building Soviet Vyborg*, I traced the Soviet architectural modernization in the unique urban setting of Vyborg ceded to the Soviet Union from Finland during the Second World War. Focusing on the multiple actors involved in the production of the Vyborg built environment in the 1960s-80s, I came to the conclusion that in the case of the porous borderland, such conventionl divisions as "capitalist" and "socialist" lose their analytical potential, due to the fact that representatives of both systems were involved to the production of the built environment on the ceded territories of the Karelian Isthmus. Instead, such factors as infrastructures of cross-border exchange, natural environment, and local professional architectural discourse, come to the fore.

Architecture and architectural thought were defining features behind the creation of a borderland between the Soviet Union and Finland. The existence of both synchronic and diachronic encounters between the architectural communities of the two states made an impact on the urban development of Vyborg. Finnish construction companies and architects not only engaged in the modernization project of the borderland but also influenced the local architectural practice.

The researched revealed that the Soviet-Finnish encounter in the sphere of architecture received unique favors on the state level – the infrastructures of the study

[154] Bocharnikova, "Inventing Socialist Modern.", 32.
[155] Brown, *Plutopia*., 12.

trips to Finland, favorable international realtions between Finland and the Soviet Union, common goals in solving the housing problen and overcoming the consequesnces of the War, made Finnish architectural experience relevant for the Soviet architects who worked under the restrictive conditions of the mass housing modernization of the 1960s.

The shared natural conditions of the building sites of Finland and Karelian Isthmus, as well as the developing industry, challenged architects working on both sides of the borders with similar goals: the landscape inspired creative work with the complex composition of the building site invoking the search for new engineering solutions, whereas the industrial development created a request for a rapid construction of the housing and social infrastructure for the employees of the enterprises.

The intellectual transfer in the sphere of architectural thought was also enchanced by the closeness to the more technically advanced republics, as well as Finland, where some of the Lengrazhdanproekt employees travelled and encountered with the ongoing architectural innovations. With the relaxation of the buiding regulations in the late 1960s-1980s, the principles of contemporaneous Finnish architectural practices, as well as the legacy of the Finnish functionalist heritage of the 1930s were actualized in Vyborg by Soviet achitects and served as their “creative covers” providing more freedom in their professional practice. However, many projects of the Soviet architects that went “outside of the box” of the housing norms and restrictions remained unrealized, the specific thinking of the architectural goals and values was shaped in Vyborg architectural community under the influence of the regional factors that was characterized by continuities in both architectural professional goals and non-human factors, such as the landscape and the existing built space. The main restriction to such an exchange was the technological mismatch of Soviet construction to the ideas of Soviet architects, the explanation of which requires an additional study.

Looking at the level of links inside Vyborg architectural practice, it is hard to perceive the “socialist” and “capitalist” systems of producing the built environment exclusively as self-enclosed entities. Thus, in order to write the following history of Soviet architecture, one should take into account where this history takes place.

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