

ICOMOS

international council on monuments and sites

Socialist Realism and Socialist Modernism. World Heritage Proposals from Central and Eastern Europe

Documentation of the European expert meeting of ICOMOS on the feasibility of an international serial nomination of 20th century monuments and sites in post-socialist countries for the UNESCO World Heritage List – Warsaw, 14th–15th of April 2013 – (ICOMOS – Journal of the German National Committee, vol. LVIII), Berlin 2013 (ISBN 978-3-930388-90-5)

With this publication the editors wish to take stock of a multi-national cooperation and publication project initiated by ICOMOS in 2010 and supported by ISC20C. Due to the ongoing threats to the architectural and horticultural heritage of the post-war decades everywhere in Europe, especially however to the architectural monuments and ensembles in the post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, ICOMOS Poland and ICOMOS Germany invited for an international exchange of experience on how to preserve the architectural heritage of the post-war period. Architectural monuments of the so-called Socialist Realism and Socialist Modernism were meant to be in the focus of these contributions.

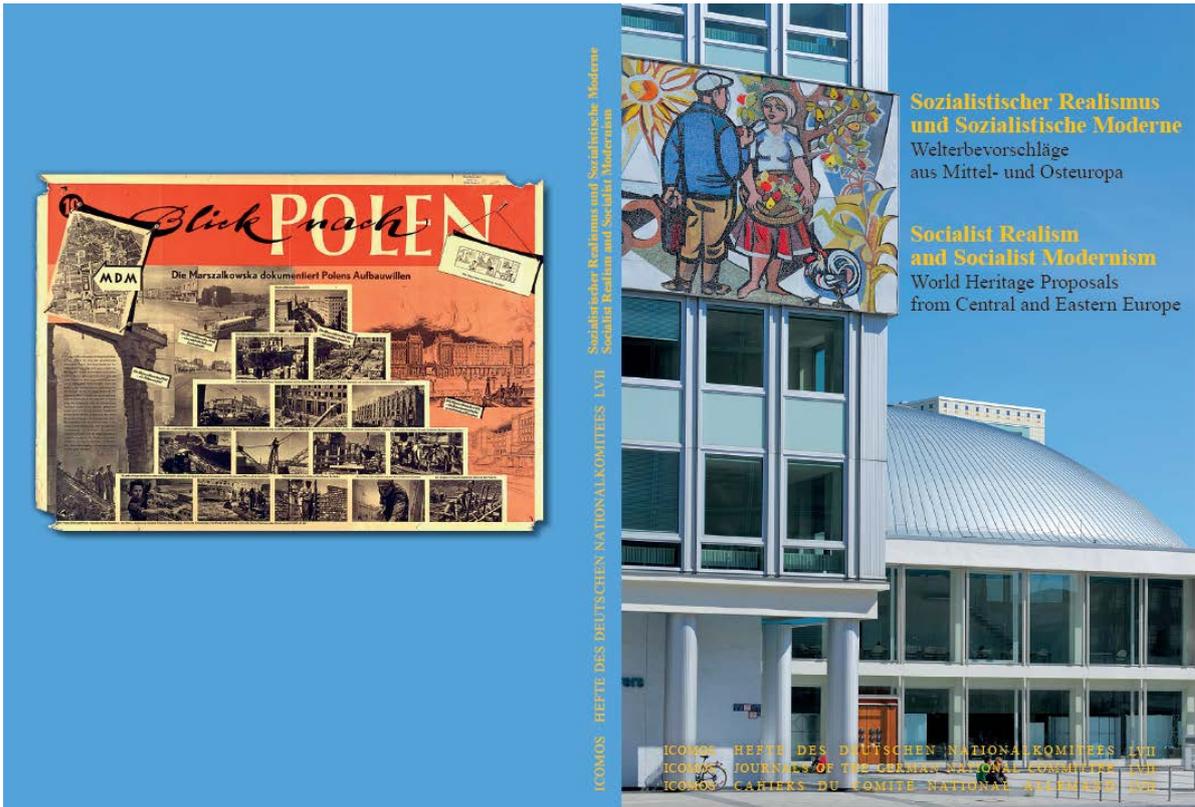
The announcement was met with positive response and the circle of speakers and people interested from neighbouring territories of the former Eastern Bloc. Experts from Armenia, Bulgaria, Germany, Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, the Ukraine and Belarus took part in conferences, seminars and workshops in Leipzig (2010, 2012), Berlin (2011), Krakow (2011), and Warsaw (2011, 2013) and made important contributions.

The present volume is the result of a workshop and expert meeting of Central and Eastern European National Committees of ICOMOS that took place in the Polish capital on invitation by the Warsaw conservation department on the International Monuments Day (18 April) 2013. The contributions compiled in this publication offer a variety of proposals from the multi-faceted heritage of Socialist Realism and Socialist Modernism which could be considered for a World Heritage nomination.

The International Scientific Committee of ICOMOS on 20th Century Heritage (ISC 20C) participating in the working meetings with its Vice Presidents Natalia Dushkina (Russia) and Nune Chilingaryan (Armenia) and with additional experts considers the initiative of European national committees of ICOMOS as an important contribution to the discussion about a geographically and thematically balanced World Heritage List and to closing gaps on the UNESCO list. Buildings from the socialist period characterise the architectural heritage of the 20th century in Eastern Europe and Eurasia dominated by the Soviet Union. They also represent an important facet of Modernism and of contemporary cultural identity on a global scale including socialist and post-socialist countries in Asia, Africa or Central and South America. Furthermore, with this new publication the International Scientific Committee of ICOMOS on 20th Century Heritage continues its mission to convey international criteria and standards for the conservation of 20th-century heritage, as laid down in the Madrid Document of 2011.

The publication combines contributions from countries of the former “Eastern Bloc” and opens up – by means of an international dialogue on the joint heritage of Socialist Realism – an additional option so far given little consideration: the options of transnational serial initiatives for the World Heritage nomination of 20th century heritage considered to be controversial and underrepresented on the UNESCO List. The intention of the initiators of this workshop was to present the variety of socialist heritage – its trends linked to realism, certain regions or to tradition just as much as its avant-garde, modern or rationalistic facets – as an independent and important contribution to the architectural history of the 20th century.

The monuments and sites from Poland, Germany, Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Romania and the Ukraine presented in this publication include urban ensembles, individual buildings, green areas, memorials as well as technological and industrial monuments. There are different options for combining them for transboundary and transnational serial nominations, which might also help advance the fundamental idea of the World Heritage Convention of 1972, namely to improve the understanding between peoples and countries. A respectful and, if necessary, distant position of the experts and the public aiming initially merely at safeguarding the historic evidence, depends substantially on today's self-concept of those contemporaries who are confronted with this heritage every day.



Above left and below: Marszalkowska District MDM Warsaw, Poland (credits: DSH Warsaw)

Above right: Berlin-Alexanderplatz, Germany (credits: Landesarchiv/Landesdenkmalamt Berlin)



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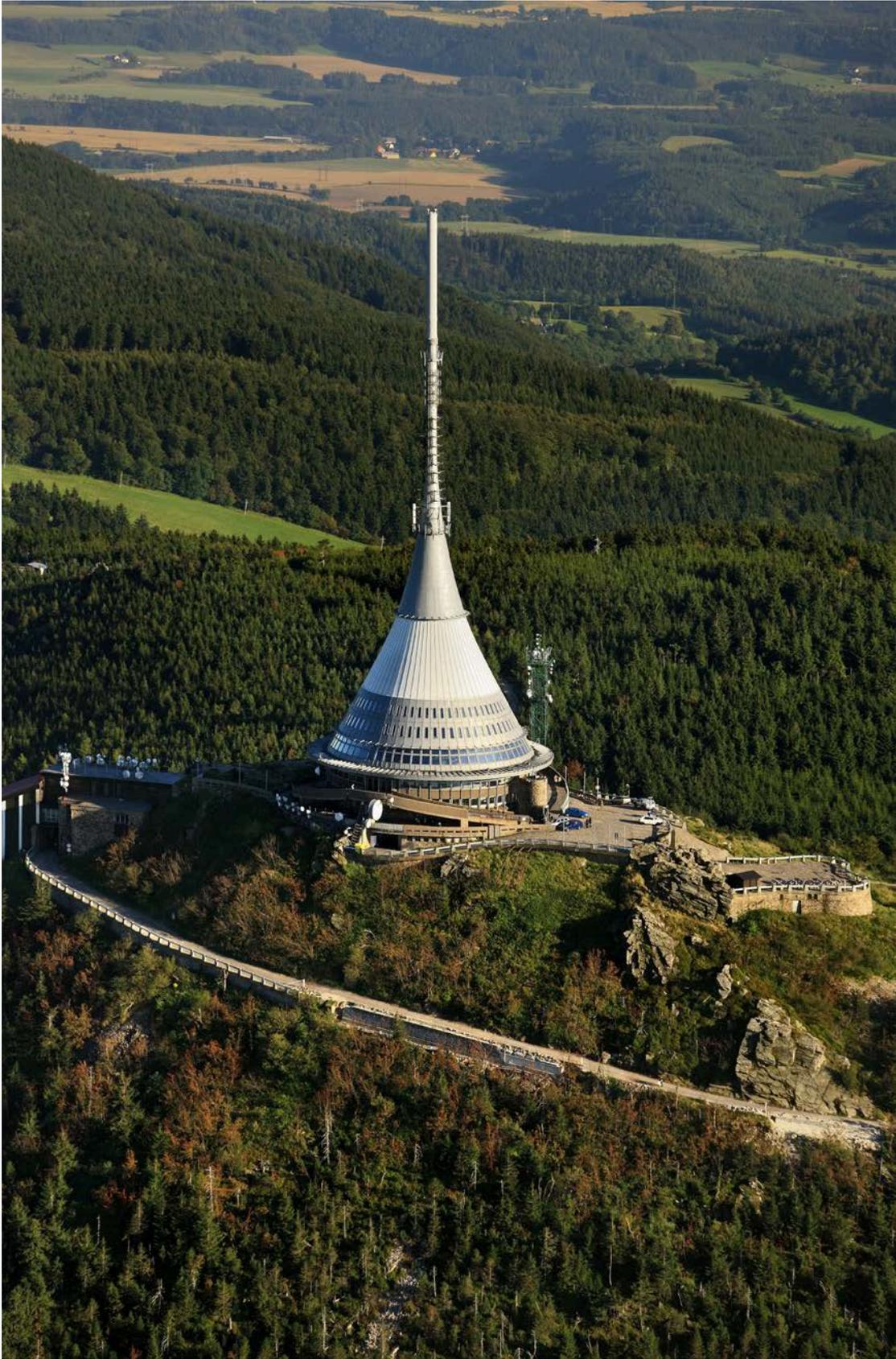
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Jested mountain-top hotel and television transmitter, Czech Republic (photo: Svacek Libor)