

Editorial

The current issue of the ICOMOS Report on Monuments and Sites in Danger (Heritage at Risk 2007) covers for the first time a specific geographical topic. While the past issues of the annual and bi-annual ICOMOS reports Heritage at Risk have presented world-wide documentations comprising all periods, which also applies to the first H@R Special on Underwater Cultural Heritage at Risk: Managing Natural and Human Impacts from 2006, the sixth volume of Heritage at Risk is dedicated exclusively to the heritage of the 20th century and to the geographical main focus on Russia and the former Soviet Republics. A first approach to this topic and early initiator of this current edition was the case study „Russia – 20th-Century Heritage“ in Heritage at Risk 2002/03, presented by Natalia Dushkina on behalf of the Russian ICOMOS Committee.¹ It focussed on Soviet avant-garde architecture in Moscow. These highly prominent but also highly threatened monuments of the Modern Movement urgently demand public and professional attention.

For many years, ICOMOS members and committees have been concerned with the protection, conservation, management and presentation of more recent forms of cultural heritage that bear witness to intellectual, social, technological or artistic evolutions. In 2001, ICOMOS launched the one-year Montreal Action Plan focussing on 20th-century heritage. ICOMOS seminars held in Helsinki in 1995 in cooperation with UNESCO (World Heritage Center) and ICCROM and in Mexico City in 1996, and the Survey Questionnaire to National and International Scientific Committees in 2001/2002 marked further steps forward in international communication and cooperation. The conference in Helsinki in 2001 on Preserving Post-War Modernism in City Centers and the Makkaratolo case study concentrated primarily on the recent heritage of the second half of the 20th century. And on the occasion of the International Day for Monuments and Sites on 18 April 2002 ICOMOS encouraged national and international committees and members to organise activities in order to identify 20th-Century buildings, gardens, works of art or design, structures, cities or sites.

In 2005 ICOMOS finally constituted an International Scientific Committee on 20th-Century Heritage (ISC 20) under the chairmanship of Sheridan Burke and Christiane Schmuckle-Mollard. As proposed by this International Scientific Committee, the 15th General Assembly of ICOMOS, which took place in Xi'an/China in October 2005, pointed at the outstanding contribution of Russian modernism to 20th-century heritage, but also at the threats and deterioration which are currently affecting many places of unique international significance in Russia. The ICOMOS General Assembly resolved to “urge the rele-

vant national and professional organizations to act with urgency to safeguard their protection and prevent their loss. Necessary actions include survey and assessment, protective planning measures and innovative conservation approaches, to secure their future.”

The articles and case studies of the publication in hand are for the most part based on contributions and presentations of the international conference Heritage at Risk – Preservation of 20th-Century Architecture and World Heritage, organised by public and scientific institutions in Russia and by international partner organisations in cooperation with ICOMOS on the occasion of the International Day for Monuments and Sites (Moscow, 17–20 April 2006). Most of the articles have been chosen from the 136 conference reports presented in Moscow² or from the conference publication³. The conference passed the general Moscow Declaration on the Preservation of 20th-Century Cultural Heritage as well as a special Resolution on Konstantin Melnikov’s House and Collection, thus highlighting the international significance of many famous monuments of Soviet avant-garde architecture and its architectural counterparts from the Stalinist years, but at the same time pointing at the huge dangers threatening the heritage of the 20th century in eastern Europe.

On the Russian side the international meeting Heritage at Risk – Preservation of 20th-Century Architecture and World Heritage was conceived and coordinated foremost by the Moscow Government, the Russian Academy of Architecture and Building Sciences, the Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography, the Moscow Committee for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage and the Moscow Committee on Architecture and Town-Planning; in addition it was supported by many other national institutions. A special input was given by the Zuev Workers’ club, the A.V. Schusev Museum of Architecture (MUAR), the Moscow Union of Architects and the Moscow Architectural Institute (MArchI) in hosting the conference and by

¹ Cf. Dushkina, Natalia: *Russia – 20th-Century Heritage, in: Heritage at Risk. ICOMOS World Report 2002/2003 on Monuments and Sites in Danger. München 2002, pp. 177–181*

² Cf. Kudryavtsev, Alexander, Dushkina, Natalia (eds): *Preservation of 20th Century Architecture and World Heritage. Moscow, 17–20 April, 2006. Proceedings of the Scientific Conference. Abstract Collection. Moscow 2006*

³ Cf. Kudryavtsev, Alexander, Dushkina Natalia (eds): *20th Century. Preservation of Cultural Heritage. Moscow 2006*

the Technical University of Berlin as foreign co-organizer in addition it was supported by many other national institutions. As foreign contributors and supporters the World Monuments Fund (WMF), the International Working Party for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement (DOCOMOMO International) and the International Union of Architects (UIA) participated in the conference to convey international experience and scientific progress in the field of conservation of 20th-century heritage buildings and urban ensembles. The editors have to thank most sincerely the International Conference Organising Committee as well as the chair and members of the International Conference Scientific Committee, notably the President of the Russian Academy of Architecture and Building Sciences and the President of the Moscow Architectural Institute, Prof. Alexander Kudryavtsev, as well as Natalia Dushkina, Professor at the Moscow Architectural Institute and founding member of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on 20th-Century Heritage. She and her network of colleagues from Moscow and all over the world became heart and soul of the project. General partner and generous main sponsor of the conference was the Capital Group.

An additional thematic intention of this *Heritage at Risk Special* is to outline mutual influences and international interactions between Russian or Soviet architecture and urban planning especially in Europe. Priority was given to the very close and intensive Russian-German working contacts between World War I and World War II and during the early post-war period. This *Heritage at Risk* edition also presents preliminary results of the current research project *The Architecture of Russian Constructivism (Moscow 1920–34). Building Materials, Building Construction and Preservation of Buildings*, which is being carried out under Dr. Anke Zalivako's guidance at the Technical University of Berlin and sponsored by the German Research Community (DFG). Furthermore, the results of the "Heritage Conservation Dialogue on Avant-Garde Architecture" are considered in this publication, as

they have emerged in the context of the town-twinning of Moscow and Berlin since 2004.

First of all the present publication outlines the endangered heritage of the 20th century on the territory of the former Soviet Union, especially the legacy of avant-garde architecture and the Modern Movement in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but also significant monuments in the Ukraine and other former Soviet Republics. In addition, this documentation offers a survey of best practice projects started successfully by state-aided or non-governmental initiatives to save threatened monuments of 20th-century architecture, including external aids and international networks. Comparative studies of UNESCO World Heritage sites and World Heritage nominations in Germany complete the selection of case studies. In accordance with the recommendations of the Moscow Declaration on the Preservation of 20th-Century Cultural Heritage mentioned above these examples encourage to include in the national World Heritage Tentative List "the outstanding structures of the Russian 20th-Century architecture such as Narkomfin House by M. Ginzburg, Rusakov and Kauchuk Clubs and own House by K. Melnikov, Commune House by I. Nikolaev, Radio Tower by V. Shukhov, Mayakovskaya metro station by A. Dushkin ... (and) to work out a programme of international cooperation in the field of historical and architectural investigations, protection and conservation of the 20th-Century Heritage, as well as to launch CIS transnational projects aimed at including of the outstanding Avant-garde monuments into the World Heritage List."

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