

Irina Chepkunova

Architectural Avant-garde in the Moscow Suburbs



Metal workers club in Kashira near Moscow, 1929–30, arch. specialists from departmental planning group



Club of the textile workers in Orechovo near Moscow, 1927–29, arch. J. Kornfeld



Metal workers club in Podolsk near Moscow, 1927–29, arch. I. Ivanov-Shits

Architectural professionals are familiar with various monuments of the Russian avant-garde in Moscow, including the Workers' Clubs from the 1920s such as the Rusakov Club by K. Melnikov, the Zil Palace of Culture by the Vesnin brothers, the Zuev Club by I. Golosov, among others. However, the clubs which were built in the Moscow suburbs in 1927–1930 have still not been evaluated by experts. At the end of 1920s, a new type of public building known as the "Workers' Club" was established, the design and construction of which was carried out in the Modern Movement style.

Archive documents provide information on the activities of the most significant Russian trade unions in the 1920s. In 1927 the Moscow Province Council of Trade Unions (MGSP) formed an integrated club construction programme suggesting the erection of 78 clubs over the next four years. Thirty clubs were to be built in Moscow and 48 in the Moscow suburbs with mainly trade unions carrying out these construction projects. The Trade Union

of Metal-Workers, the largest of these unions, constructed 14 of their Workers' Clubs in the Moscow province after they had initially declared they would build five.

Great architectural masters were involved in the design of suburban clubs including K. Melnikov who built a Club in Dulevo, V. Shchuko who completed his project in Egorievsk and I. Ivanov-Shitz who worked in Podolsk. Four small clubs (three of them now belong to the Moscow City) were erected according to L. Vesnin's typified project. Two more clubs, one in Orekhovo (now Orekhovo-Zuevo) and another one in Ramenskoe, were designed by Y. Kornfeld. Some buildings in the Moscow region were created by specialists from departmental planning groups, including the Club for Kashira GRES (State Regional Electric Power Plant), clubs for the Bachmanov and the Mytischchi plants as well as a club in Electrostal, among others. The land for suburban club construction was allotted during the period from 1927 to 1929, according to the plan of Moscow Province Council



Metal workers club in Egorevsk near Moscow, 1927–29, arch. V. Schuko



Club of the textile workers in Rostokino near Moscow, 1927–29, arch. L. Vesnin

of Trade Unions (MGSP). However, only 45 out of the Workers' Clubs from the original construction programme of 1927–1930 have survived to the present day. The cur-

rent state of these buildings in Moscow as well as in its suburbs may lead to the extinction of an entire section of architecture with its unique social designations and exceptionally original architectural and planning solutions. Some clubs are being demolished, while others are being rebuilt. Another factor is that some are converted to house new function and are then sold. Furthermore, this takes place despite the fact that many Moscow buildings are listed as long-standing architectural monuments. Currently many regional clubs, which continue to play a significant role in the lives of suburban cities and villages are not receiving sufficient financial support from their owners. Therefore it is very important to bring the attention of architectural historians to these buildings and to register them as «Monuments». It is necessary to continue the careful study of the architecture of the Workers' Clubs from the period 1927–1930. This will contribute towards conducting complex preservation treatment and the restoration of these buildings. The mass construction of Workers' Clubs in the Moscow suburbs was unique for Russian architecture. This is why this entire group of new public buildings, a system of differently sized elements mutually complementing each other, is in need of protection.

Bibliography

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