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**(Non)Heritage. The Problem with reception of socialist architecture in post-socialist Bulgaria.**

The quest for identity in the global context is an incessant process for the peripheral Bulgarian culture. Curious superimposing of multiple centres during the Cold War has determined development of particular architectural critical regionalism in Bulgaria, which is even more intriguing when analyzed in view of the clash between local and global. The situation is further complicated when overlaid with the political factor of communist ideology.

We can define Bulgarian totalitarian culture as self-sufficient. For the better part of the second half of XXth century it has been based on a system of conventions which have created safe and comfortable environment fairly isolated from external alternatives. But a change occurred in the 70s when centrally altered cultural priorities led to a new project of international export. As a result the manipulative policies of mass socialist culture have been mixed with the desire to control the impact of global civilization. Local culture in general and local architectural tradition in particular have been exploited by combining skilled interpretation of national characteristics with the expression tools of late modernity.

Ironically, Bulgarian socialist culture, despite its formal affiliation to the „totalitarian half“ of Europe, has felt closer to the “nontotalitarian”, regional alternatives of Modernism. All iconic examples of Bulgarian architecture after the Second World War have been created exactly in this spirit.

Change of authorities after the end of Communism has deprived architecture of its ideological background and of the formal public approval. As a result, for a long period of time (over 20 years), Bulgarian society has been unable to form consciousness of the value of the architectural heritage of Socialism. Lack of such consciousness sets that legacy at risk and lack of public consensus leads to no courage in public authorities to impose formal protection.

Society is left to be the decisionmaker and it still cannot formulate its unambiguous position. Therefore at present Bulgarian Socialist architecture resides in the intermediate state between emotional denial and nostalgic glorification, which equally interfere with its impartial acceptance as cultural heritage.

This abstract presents two linked researches which have the ambition to cover theoretically the dubious field of Bulgarian socialist architecture (1945-1989). Aneta Vasileva is studying the history of Bulgarian architecture of the period, its temporal

adequacy and its response to the external cultural influences which have managed to infiltrate through the stiff political "shell" of Communism. Both relations to the other socialist cultures within the Eastern block and to the cultures outside the "Iron curtain" are subject to research. Emilia Kaleva is using this analysis to evaluate the socialist architecture as cultural heritage and to answer to the question why and how to preserve and protect it.