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**BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNISM: THE UKRAINIAN
TRADITIONAL CONTEXT IN THE HERITAGE OF KHARKIV
ARCHITECTS OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 1920S
AND EARLY 1930S**

**UKRAIŃSKI TRADYCYJNY KONTEKST W SPUŚCIŹNIE
ARCHITEKTÓW CHARKOWSKICH DRUGIEJ POŁOWY LAT 20.
I POCZĄTKU LAT 30. XX W.**

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ABSTRACT

The use of Ukrainian traditional context by the representatives of Kharkiv architectural school in the 1920s and early 1930s is considered in the article. It was the competitive period between traditional and avant-garde architectural trends.

Key words: Ukrainian traditional context, traditionalism and avant-garde in architecture.

STRASZCZENIE

W artykule opisano wykorzystanie tradycyjnego ukraińskiego kontekstu przez przedstawicieli charkowskiej szkoły architektonicznej na przełomie lat 20. i 30. XX w., w okresie rywalizacji tradycyjnego i awangardowego kierunku w architekturze.

Słowa kluczowe: ukraiński tradycyjny kontekst, tradycjonalizm i awangarda w architekturze.

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of modern architecture continuity with historical national and regional stylistic trends arises because of the leveling of national identity in architecture against the background of globalization processes. To preserve the common values of old and new in Ukrainian architecture, it is necessary to highlight the creative approaches of representatives of Kharkiv architectural school of the 1st third of the 20th century who used Ukrainian traditional context for mapping Ukrainian identity in architecture during the rivalry between traditional and avant-garde stylistics.

The purpose of the article is to highlight the use of Ukrainian traditional context by the representatives of Kharkiv architectural school in the 1920s - early 1930s during the competitive period between traditional and avant-garde architectural trends.

This study examines national manifestations in the international currents of Kharkiv architecture of the 1920s-1930s from the Ukrainian all-pervasive traditional context point of view.

The study used such methods as analysis and systematization of scientific literature on researched topic, full-scale and graphic survey of researched objects, factual data collection and systematization of field surveys, design and iconographic analysis of the projects, comparative analysis of architectural and general scientific concepts for identifying main provisions that correspond to the direction of the study.

2. THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

In the 1940s-1950s the use of national stylistics in architecture was subjected to merciless criticism by Soviet researchers who saw "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism" in this type of architecture [13,14,20]. Aspects of confrontation and interaction of traditional and avant-garde architecture of the USSR in the 1920s were examined by S.O. Khan-Magomedov [10] and L.G. Vasilenko [21]. Rethinking the role of the heritage of Ukrainian architects - traditionalists is due to the scientific works of V.V. Chepelik. At the present stage, folk-style searches in Ukrainian architecture of the first decades of the 20th century are interpreted in different ways: as a national-romantic branch of Art Nouveau (Yu. V. Ivashko [9], B.I. Bozhinsky [2]); as a national style of the twentieth century (V.V. Chepelik [7]); as a national-romantic trend of historicism (V.E. Yasievich [24], S.N. Linda [12]); as manifestation of national romanticism (T.I. Antoshchuk [1]). European researchers evaluate such a phenomenon as romanticism, which in architecture was expressed through the artistic means of various trends of Art Nouveau and Art Deco. Reflection of national features in architecture is considered as a search for its national identity [23]. At the moment, the interpretation of the creative approaches of nationally oriented architects of the beginning of the 20th century, is controversial and requires further development.

3. STUDY MATERIALS

The compromise of the Ukrainian liberation movement of 1917-1921 was the formation of the Ukrainian SSR, which was formally declared in the international arena as a national republic inside the USSR, with a high degree of national-cultural and economic independence and some political autonomy.

In 1921-1932 architecture of the Ukrainian SSR, which was perceived by the leadership of the republic as one of the tools of ideology, was developing under conditions of rivalry between two directions: traditionalist and modernist.

The position of architects - innovators was announced by E.V. Kholostenko in 1927: "The characteristic features of modern architecture [...] are concluded in the use of more durable and convenient building materials [...] in the pursuit of scientific organization of the

construction process, its full mechanization, technical and social feasibility of the structure, which should also serve the production processes of a new consumer, in the pursuit of simple, qualitative, clear forms, freed from deliberate ornaments "[8, p.236].

Since the beginning of the XX century, the development of Ukrainian traditional trend in architecture was fueled by the results of historical and ethnographic studies that formed Ukrainian traditional context for the architects of this direction. For example, system of forms, techniques, signs and symbols, the use of which would clearly accentuate ethno-cultural belonging of architectural works.

The Ukrainization policy in the Ukrainian SSR in the 1920s contributed greatly to the further application of ethno-cultural and national forms and techniques in architecture. During the period of 1923-1933 they were reflected in the works of such Kharkiv architects as V.K. Trotsenko, P.Z. Krupko, S.V. Grigorieva, K.N. Zhukova, V.A. Estrovich and others.

The ideological center of these searches was the faculty of Architecture of Kharkiv Art College, whose teachers K.N. Zhukov and V.K. Trotsenko were members of the Ukrainian Division of Kharkiv Literary and Art Circle. This organization under creative guidance of S.I. Vasilkovsky was engaged in the development of modern nationally oriented Ukrainian architecture and preservation of the traditional cultural heritage of Ukrainian people. The Ukrainization of technical school also included the fulfillment of students' projects in "Ukrainian style", which led to resistance from students who advocated constructivism. [15]

Since the mid-1920's nationally oriented architects, under the pressure of avant-garde architecture supporters, who then expressed ideology of social reorganization in the USSR, moved away from the historical and ethnographic stylization towards accentuation of general principles of folk art: logic, simplicity, constructiveness, and economy [4, p.58]. New means of artistic expressiveness brought the works of traditionalists closer to avant-garde architecture.

A typical example of before mentioned is the work of V.K. Trotsenko. As noted by V.V. Chepelik " Trotsenko's creativity develops from traditionalism to rationalism in the 1920s. Considering the work of Trotsenko, one can come to the conclusion that he turned out to be an original master of architecture of the first decade of the Ukrainian SSR. It was during this period that he was the most fully able to achieve the organic unity of the national forms of architecture and the principles of rationalism" [6, p.16].

One of the most important works of Trotsenko was the Ukrainian pavilion at All-Russian agricultural and artisanal exhibition in 1923 in Moscow. In the general layout of the exhibition, he was given a place on the axis of the central parterre alley, with the condition of organizing an easy passage through the volume of the pavilion. Trotsenko's sketch project was chosen by jury of Ukrainian Exhibition Committee and entered Main Exhibition Committee for further development. The project was a new Ukrainian farm with exemplary residential and household buildings, made with ethnographic accuracy. However, based on the concept of the exhibition, the architect was required to combine these structures into one volume. The chief architect of the exhibition A.V. Schusev did not agree with the first draft of the pavilion, and recommended to involve vertical accents into the composition. As a result, a 2-storey pavilion with a high pitched roof was built [18, p.82-83]. (Fig.1)

The location of the pavilion and requirements for its style influenced its composition and forms. Put according to the task across the alley, the volume had a wide passage in the center. Two exhibition halls of the first floor adjoined the driveway, staircases that were entrances to the exhibition hall of the attic floor and a covered gallery for the exhibition and press sale. Clear planning and spatial structure of the pavilion was enclosed in a compact architectural volume, characterized by the simplicity of functionally and structurally conditioned forms. The high roof was accentuated by a triangular pediment with a plot painting on the tympanum, an expressive projection of the mansard wall with large

windows and a small asymmetrically located tower with a flagpole. The traditionalist image of the pavilion was limited by competitive requirements of rational expediency.

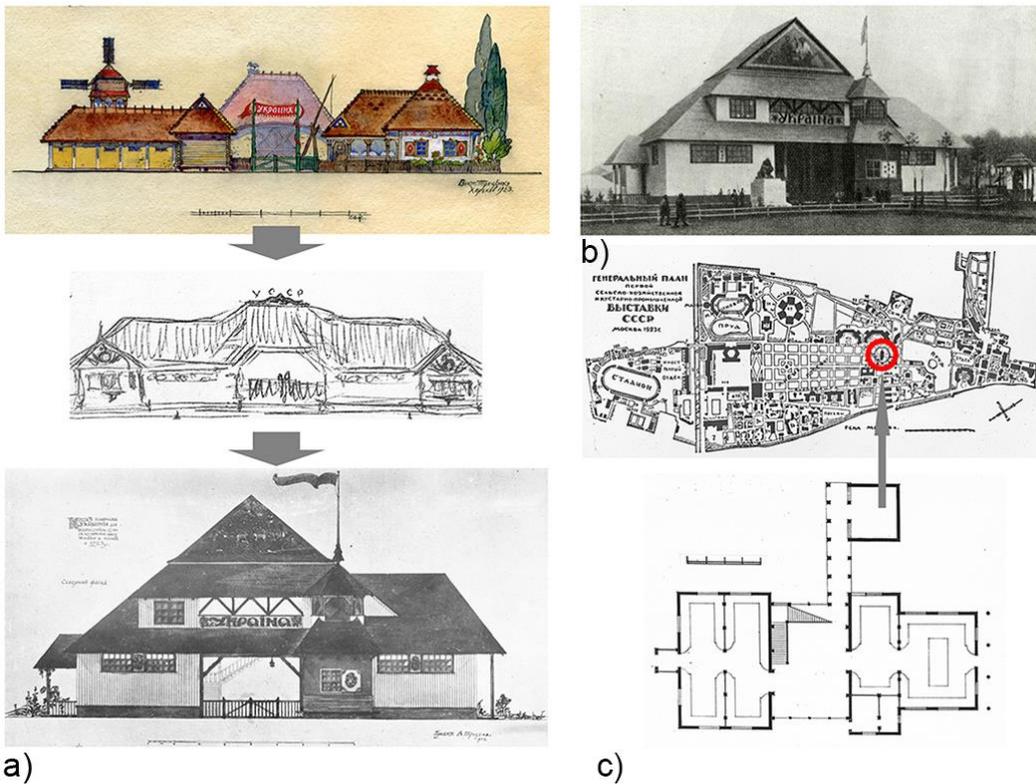


Fig. 1: Ukrainian Pavilion at the All-Russian Agricultural and Artisanal Exhibition in Moscow in 1923. Architect V.K. Trotsenko. a) Stages of volumetric-spatial solution development of the pavilion; b) General view c) Pavilion's plan and its place on the general layout of the exhibition. Source: [14]

V.V. Chepelik drew attention to the fact that "through the volume of the pavilion there was an alley that spatially permeated it, and spatiality at that time was preached by the functionalists as the most important manifestation of modernity. And then, in 1923, in the projects made by K.S. Melnikov and V.A. Schyko an alley wasn't open enough, and only in the pavilion with traditional forms it was completely realized" [6, p.16]. The pavilion was perceived very discreetly also by traditionalists because of the stinginess of the decor and formalism of the composition, and innovators because of the archaism of its forms.

It is interesting to consider unrealized competition project made by V.K. Trotsenko - Museum of M.M. Kotsyubinsky in Chernigov in 1926. Modernist interpretation of cubic volumes and plans was animated by the introduction of details referring to the Ukrainian folk architecture (the removal of the roof on the consoles, the drawing of the impost on the stained-glass window, which repeated the traditional ornament "gorodky") [5]. The breakdown of the wall surface into the quadra, the allocation of colored horizontal stripes on the facades refer this project to the model of the "Ukrainian style" - the building of Poltava zemstvo created by V.G. Krichevsky in 1909. (Fig.2)

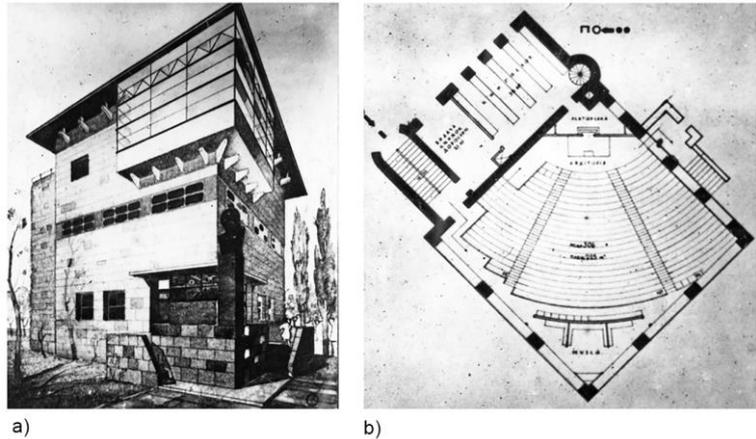


Fig. 2: Competition project of M.M. Kotsyubinsky Museum in Chernigov city, 1926. Architect V.K. Trotsenko. a) General view; b) A building's plan. Source: [18]

In the 1920s in the Ukrainian SSR, the most common new types of housing were individual and blocked houses. They were distinguished by a compact functional space-planning solution, expedient application of rational design schemes and new industrial building materials.

In 1923-1924, three new small settlements were built up in industrial enterprises in Kharkiv city. The projects were made by V.K. Trotsenko with the participation of P.Z. Krupko, I.K. Bogomolov, I.G. Taranova-Belozerova. Four-apartment two-story houses were blocked into two sections. The section consisted of two separate three-room apartments, arranged in two different layouts, but identical in composition. Means of artistic expressiveness, in English cottages' style of that time, were simultaneously consonant with the motifs of Ukrainian traditional architecture. In the picturesque image of residential buildings, the features of their planning and space-spatial structure, typical for Ukrainian folk architecture, were reflected: steep slopes of roofs with large drains, verandas, terraces and balconies. The surface of unplastered walls was enlivened with a few relief details: brick "lines" of inter-floor cornices, windowsills and lintels above the windows of the upper floor, wooden racks of canopies over the porches, which were decorated with motifs of Ukrainian carving. (Fig.3)



Fig. 3: Typical cottage of the working village in Kharkiv city, 1923. Architect V.K. Trotsenko with the participation of P.Z. Krupko, I.K. Bogomolov, I.G. Taranova-Belozerova. Source: [5]

Developing a new type of housing V.K. Trotsenko, together with the staff of the Ukrainian Art Museum that was ran under S.A. Taranushenko, explored the old Ukrainian huts of Kharkiv region, and in 1921 made a publication illustrated with the dimensional drawings [17].

V.K. Trotsenko used no longer specific forms of Ukrainian folk architecture, but its characteristic artistic techniques during designing the working villages of Donbass, Dnepropetrovsk, Krivoy Rog, etc. The image of these settlements reflects the characteristic features of the Ukrainian hut. They are traced in the overall configuration of architectural volumes, in the form of their high four-slope roofs, in the ratio of the height of the roof and the wall, in functionally determined techniques for processing the white background of a smooth wall with window openings. The houses with white walls and gable roofs that were drowning in the greenery, fenced with front gardens, clearly indicated a figurative prototype - a Ukrainian traditional village. Simultaneously, traditional techniques were combined with a modernist method of decorative isolation of concrete belts on the facades. (Fig.4)

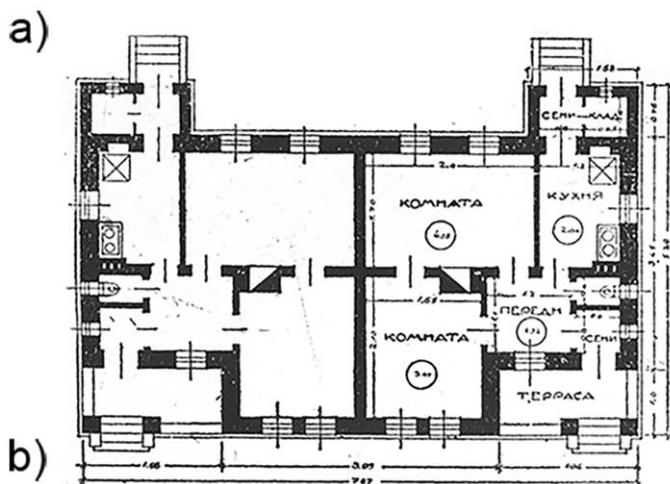


Fig. 4: Typical cottage of Frunze working village in Dnepropetrovsk city. Authors: B.K. Trotsenko, I.P. Miroshnichenko. a) General view; b) Plan. Source: [14]

Projects made by V.K. Trotsenko in the 1920s reflected his desire to work in the Ukrainian traditionalist spirit, while also taking into account the ideological and social demands of society, expressed in the aesthetics of innovative architecture. The architect's works

combine features of functional expediency, originality and connection with tradition, which was reflected in the use of pitched roofs, the decorated pediment of the pavilion "Ukraine", wooden details in folk style. Taking into account the social order, the traditionalist architect successfully mastered the techniques of using functionally appropriate forms. Also applying a comparative analysis of folk architecture VK. Trotsenko pointed out the similarity of features in the architecture of different regions, which are in similar natural and climatic conditions. According to the architect, in the presence of similar building materials and climate conditions, the logic of construction determined the similar nature of architectural forms and techniques [19].

In the late 1920's V.C. Trotsenko went on to the creative positions of constructivism. However, according to V.V. Chepelika "in innovative stylistic buildings, made by Trotsenko was neither the originality of the author's thinking nor his creative search. They were deprived of individual traits, and therefore became ordinary. The architect's personality dissolved in the mass of other constructivists. Trotsenko realized this, but he continued working in this style, feeling that otherwise he would not be allowed to work "[6, p. 16].

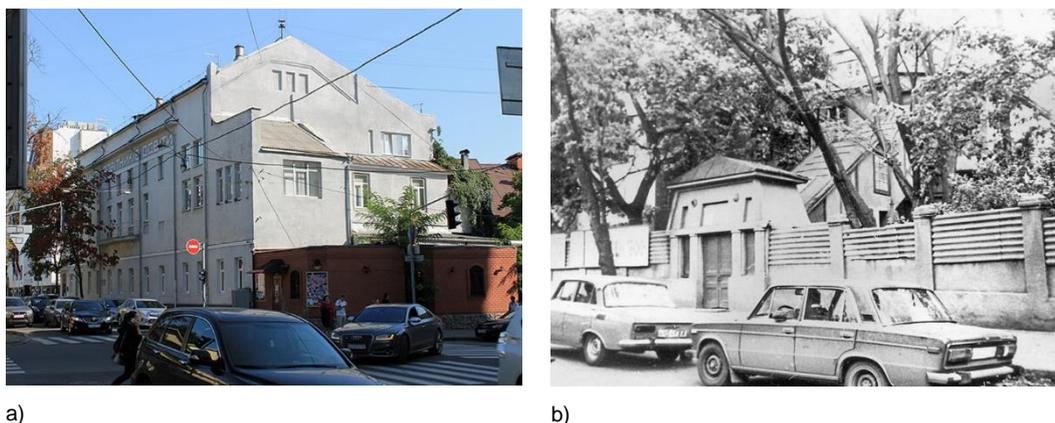
S.V. Grigoriev was a graduate of the architectural faculty of the Kharkiv Art Institute, who worked in these times in constructivism style and added features of Ukrainian originality to the facades of the houses designed by him: in the outlines of pediments, window frames and window bindings. Therefore, the stylized decor of the Ukrainian Baroque era was applied in the architecture of the apartment house on Chernyshevsky Str., 88 in Kharkiv. Four-storey building with a basement, elongated in plan, was erected in 1928. The main compositional method used for the facades was the alternation of protruding and deeper parts of the walls with vertical accents of staircase risalite that end with triangular and torn baroque pediments. The cut corner of the building is emphasized by a vertical line of stained-glass windows with stitches made in Ukrainian folk style. (Fig.5)



Fig. 5: Residential building on Chernyshevskaya Str, 88 in Kharkiv city, 1928 (completion of the floor in 1930s). Architect S.V. Grigoryev. a) old photos; b) modern photos.
Source: [144]

The architect-artist K.M. Zhukov, who was the master of the older generation, is known for his works in Ukrainian modern style. In 1925, he designed the House of Educators which was erected by superstructure and extension of the house made at the end of the XIX century. The facades of the building have simplified geometric shapes, the texture and color of the plaster indicate the receptions of constructivism, the cornice and relief inscription on the facade allow attributing the building to Art Deco style.

At the same time, trapezoidal crossbars and ceilings in the interior of the assembly hall and the portal of the porch-pavilion with a staircase, which led to the second floor (now lost), are modernized techniques of Ukrainian traditional architecture. (Fig.6)



a)

b)

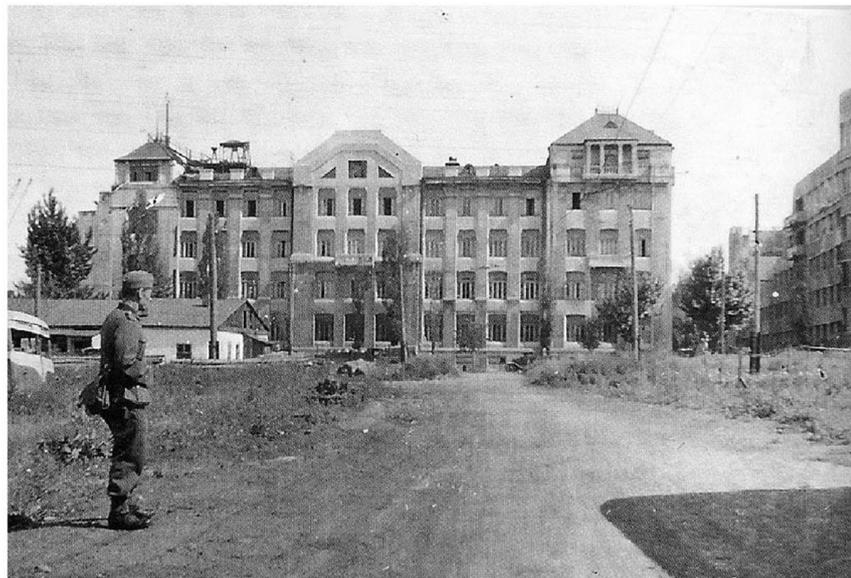
Fig. 6: "House of Educators" on Skrypnik Str, 14 in Kharkiv city, 1925. Architect K.N. Zhukov. a) A modern photo made by the author, b) – A photo made at the beginning of the XX c. [11]

Furthermore, the building of "People's Commissariat of Labor of the Ukrainian SSR" which was erected in 1927 on Mironositskaya Str., 1, in Kharkiv city attracts scholars' attention. It was made by an engineer P.V. Kushnarev (according to V.V. Chepelik - completion of the building of 1916 created by S.P. Timoshenko). The corner part is treated in the form of a tower-shaped rizalit with a hipped roof. The entrances to the buildings are underlined by portals and rezalits with trapezoidal endings, the windows of 3-4 floors also have trapezoidal completion, indicating a connection with the traditions of Ukrainian architecture, pilasters and concave crown cornice cause associations with the Ukrainian architecture of Hetman period (end of 17th –beginning of 18th century). Rational forms of the monumental building are large plastic, vertical rhythm of pilasters, contrasted with small glazing windows in the style of Ukrainian folk dwelling and archaic wedge-shaped cross-pieces of windows of 1-2 floors. (Fig.7)

The cases of confrontation between projects of the same object performed in both traditional and innovative directions are also known. Therefore, the initial draft of the House of Soviets in Tulchin city was drawn up in 1926 by Kharkiv architect N.N. Strandel in constructivism style [3], and then changed by the engineer Grodzovsky into Ukrainian traditional style. The volume-planning structure of the House of Soviets is reflected in its architectural volume, it is distinguished by its national peculiarity of artistic appearance. This uniqueness is introduced here with the techniques and forms, borrowed from the building of Poltava zemstvo. In the House of Soviets, the three-part division of the main facade is identical to the Poltava zemstvo, its central accent is in the central part, crowned by a four-slope roof with large overhangs on the brackets, a hexagonal shape of shallow niches, window and door openings, etc. However, the interpretation of these techniques and forms is different here, it is more graphic. It completely supplanted the Ukrainian folk motifs from the details and replaced them with a diverse combination of geometric shapes. (Fig.8)

On the contrary, the project of the theater in Uman developed by P.Z. Krupko in 1928 in Ukrainian style was criticized and was implemented in the forms of constructivism (Fig.9). The architect I.N. Zakov, the author of a number of publications in the architectural periodicals of the Ukrainian SSR of the 1930s, criticizing the theater project, wrote: "The building has nothing in common with the organic direction of the Ukrainian national style.

If the theater has national forms, then it does not bear the Soviet image. This building breathes with Gogol's provinciality; it resembles the so-called people's houses, which were created in the county cities of tsarist Russia. In Krupko's project individual Ukrainian design elements look like glued to the external image of the building. The entrance windows are created in the characteristic forms of Art Nouveau, while in the design of the dormer window tower the author tried to use elements of Ukrainian Church architecture: the pediments are made in pronounced Ukrainian baroque. Thus, we have Ukrainian elements, but from different eras, collected in one building" [25, p.18].

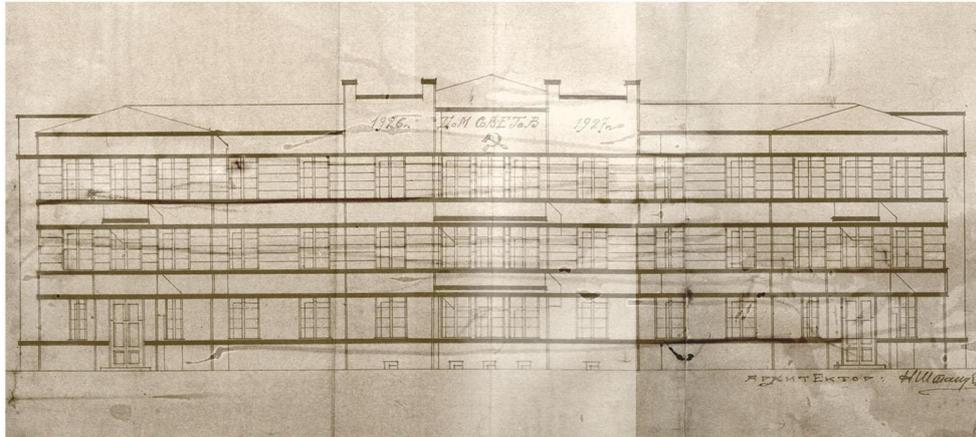


a)



b)

Fig. 7: "People's Commissariat of Labor of the Ukrainian SSR" on Mironositskaya Str, 1 in Kharkiv city, 1927. The author P.V. Kushnarev. a) the main fasade of the builging; b) general view. Source: A photo of 1941-1943. Private collection.



a)



b)

Fig. 8: "House of Soviets" in Tulchin, Vinnytsia region, 1926. a) - the project drawing, b) - implemented version. Source: a) – [3], b) – [14]

As noted V.V. Chepelik: "under the influence of social requirements of expediency and economy, the decor becomes rationalistic, the ornament disappears almost completely, majolica is not used, the metal-plastic is simplified, wood carving is implemented not very often. The main attention of architects was bind to the questions of function and tectonics, which was determined by the trends that derive from the constructivism that prevailed in those times" [7, p.16].

The use of the Ukrainian context, even on the avant-garde background, was subjected to merciless criticism from the avant-garde. So radically adjusted E.V. Kholostenko said: "The bourgeois stratum uses every opportunity to consolidate its ideological positions [...] we have a "revival" of the Ukrainian Baroque, a miserable modernism, sweetened by the left constructive phrase with the use of the so-called. "Ukrainian motifs," superficial styli-

zations for "new style" and just different eclectic works [...] New forms of Ukrainian Soviet architecture can not be created by borrowing ready-made forms from the past or through ethnographic enlightenment stylization. The path of creating new architecture is much more complicated. [...] A critical erasure of the entire heritage of the past and a synthetic understanding of the national and cultural characteristics of Ukrainian workers and peasants are necessary "[8, p.237].



a)



b)

Fig. 9: Theater in Uman, Cherkasy region. a) - the project drawing (1928), b) - implemented version. Source: a) – [25], b) – [22]

A weak voice in defense of nationally oriented architecture was the article written by M.I. Simikin, who noted the functional principles of the Ukrainian dwelling architecture, which were determined by the location of rooms, entrances, windows, chimneys, the distribution of windows to large-main and small-secondary, the use of angular windows in the out-

buildings which were signs of innovative architecture. Trapezoidal apertures were also justified by constructive expediency [18].

Architects-innovators, who won the creative debate, after 1932, were defeated by proponents of historical stylization as a result of the adoption by the USSR leadership a new ideological "academicism" attitude in cultural policy.

The official interest to folk-style forms in architecture resumed after the annexation of Western Ukraine to the Ukrainian SSR in 1939. The unification of Ukrainian lands into a single national republic inside the USSR should have confirmed the Ukrainian identity in architecture by external attributes. This caused the return of using national forms in architectural practice.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Against the background of the competition between traditional and avant-garde architectural trends, the architects K. Trotsenko, V.K. Krupko, S.V. Grigoriev consciously sought to bring a clear national identity to their works. This was reflected in the desire to use the Ukrainian traditional context in their architectural practice - a system of symbolic coordinates, which would clearly emphasize the national identity of the architectural work in minds of their contemporaries. Because of ideological pressure of modernist tendencies, then in early 1930s of historicism tendencies in the USSR architecture, the Ukrainian context was superimposing on the prevailing architectural trends. As a result, Kharkiv architecture was enriched by the fusion of constructivism and forms of Ukrainian baroque (House on Chernyshevsky Str., 88), Ukrainian folk architecture with Gothic and Renaissance forms (House "Red Bankovets" on Artema Str., 5). Moreover, popular on that time town-planning concept of "City-garden" was connected with Ukrainian traditional housing ideas (Houses of the workers settlements made by Trotsenko).

The search for national identity in the Ukrainian SSR architecture was associated with the formation of new types of buildings. Furthermore, attempts to develop new structures and materials created conditions for innovation. The development of new types of public buildings and the use of new materials and structures, together with the process of rethinking the decorative folk traditions, created a new basis for creativity of traditional architects. Because of changes in style preferences from historicism to modernism, Ukrainian traditional forms were transferred to a new stylistic background.

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