

NEW CHALLENGES FOR SOCIALIST VILLAGES

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¹ The first researcher to explore the topic of Czechoslovak collectivized architectural practice was American historian Kimberly Elman Zarecor. Her dissertation was published under the title *Manufacturing the Socialist Modernity* (2011), in Czech *Utváření socialistické modernity: bydlení v Československu v letech 1945–1960 (Creating Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1960)*. 2015. Further information on the Stavoprojekt organization: TÓTHOVÁ Lucia M. – ULLMANNOVÁ Klára, The Ambition for Centralized Control, Architecture and Urbanism 59, 2025, no. 1–2, pp. 140–155.

² Act 121/1948 on Nationalization in Construction. The law affected companies that exceeded 50 employees at any time since 1946 (even temporarily). Kimberly Elman Zarecor (cited document) shows that the nationalization of design practice was initiated by the architects themselves.

³ BAPS was founded in 1934 as a "federation" of five architectural associations and quickly resumed its activities in 1945. For more on the cooperation of architects with central authorities, see: Starý Oldřich, Spolupráce architektů na výstavbě státu (Cooperation of Architects in the Construction of the State). *Architektura ČSR* V, 1945, no. 1, p. 2; sine, BAPS proposal for defining the scope of the Ministry of Technology and the organization of its individual departments. *Architektura ČSR* VII, no. 3, p. 67; Zarecor Kimberly Elman, Manufacturing the Socialist Modernity: Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1960. 2015, pp. 45–53.

⁴ ULLMANNOVÁ Klára – BRŮHOVÁ Klára – TÓTHOVÁ Lucia, Projekt jako obrobek, Stavoprojekt 1948–1953 / Praxe, 2025, p. 95 (manuscript in print); NOVÝ Otakar, Nová organizační projekční práce, *Architektura ČSR* VIII, no. 1, 1949, pp. 53–56.

⁵ "Klofáčova reforma" 1919–1935, initiated by the Land Acquisition Act No. 215/1919 Coll., aimed to expropriate large estates and redistribute land to small farmers, alleviate social inequalities, stabilize settlement, and strengthen the national character of the regions.

ABSTRACT: The following text deals with the concept of villages and rural areas in the work of architects in Czechoslovakia after World War II. The Soviet influence, and growing left-wing preferences led into Communist Party take-over in 1948. The nationalization progressed since 1945 also affected the construction industry and architectural practice after 1948, when construction companies and subsequently architectural studios were nationalized. However, a number of left-wing architects participated in the organization of the state through BAPS, a bloc of progressive architectural associations, and in the reorganization of architectural practice into the state design enterprise Stavoprojekt. At that time, construction and architecture became an important part of the national economy and its planning. The socialization of the countryside and the collectivization of agricultural work brought a number of new tasks for architecture. The text provides an overview of architectural thinking about the countryside and its modernization in Czechoslovakia in the interwar period, and especially in the early 1950s, presenting significant phenomena of the time, such as regional planning, typification, and an emphasis on regional character.

KEYWORDS: Stavoprojekt; Collectivization; Rural urbanism; Architecture of the 1950s; Villages; Typification; Regional planning; Regional character

INTRODUCTION

This text was inspired by a research project focusing on Czechoslovak architecture in the early 1950s. The research project, entitled Stavoprojekt 1948–1953. Collectivization of Design Activities and Its Imprint on the Memory of the Czech Landscape and Cities (DH23P03OVV004) is being carried out at the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Technical University in Prague in cooperation with the National Archives, which administers the archival funds of the Stavoprojekt headquarters from 1948–1953 (NAD 1182 Československé stavební závody n. p. Stavoprojekt, Prague). This collection provides a wealth of remarkable information concerning the organization of state design activities during the pivotal and formative period of 1948–1953. However, the picture of the institution and its activities painted by the preserved archival documents in the aforementioned collection is quite fragmented and requires careful supplementation with published contemporary texts, the context of general history (political, economic, and cultural), and the findings of numerous researchers. In accordance with them, it must be stated that despite the obvious historical milestones (World War II, the restoration of the Czechoslovak state, and the political coup of 1948), the continuity of Stavoprojekt's work with the themes and developments of the interwar period is considerable and is confirmed by this contribution, which focuses on the issue of the countryside in post-war architectural practice.

STAVOPROJEKT AS AN INSTITUTION

Stavoprojekt¹ as an institution was established in September 1948 as the design department of Československé stavební závody (Czechoslovak Construction Works). This company was the result of the second wave of nationalization, when, after the largest companies, nationalization also affected much smaller firms.² The collective design organization largely represented the realization of the visions of left-wing architects, visions whose roots dated back to the 1930s. Through BAPS – the Block of Progressive Architectural Associations – architects had been significantly involved in the organization and management of the state since the beginning of the restored Czechoslovakia. With their expertise and technocracy, they intervened in many areas, especially in the sphere of national economic planning, and with their advisory voices they even intervened in the sphere of lawmaking.³

The main mission of Stavoprojekt was to secure the

demanding tasks of the economic plan in terms of design. Architectural work thus became one of the centrally planned items, which is why an organizational model inspired by factory production was adopted for it. The successful management of the Baťa company became the nominal model. Architect Jiří Voženílek, who had recently taken over from Vladimír Karfík as head of the nationalized Baťa design office in Zlín⁴, was appointed to lead the new organization. As in the Baťa concern, "production centers" were established in Stavoprojekt, which fulfilled production tasks according to plan and were subordinate to the central headquarters in Prague. The company operated nationwide, with regional centers – design studios and engineering offices – which could also work on contracts in other regions. In addition to the regional centers, specialized workplaces with nationwide coverage were also established, namely the Study and Standardization Institute in Prague and the Institute for Spatial Planning in Brno. Their task was to document and research, synthesize knowledge, and prepare materials for "production." The latter institution was of particular importance for rural and village issues within Stavoprojekt, as we shall see later. During its first years of existence, Stavoprojekt underwent partial organizational changes, eventually being transformed into decentralized enterprises in 1953. This led to the creation of regional centers, State Institutes for Urban and Rural Development, and other specialized project organizations.

Even from this very brief description of Stavoprojekt's organization, it is clear that there was a deep connection to previous developments and continuity in many areas, including personnel. Only gradually, due to political events, did further restructuring take place and new cadres come to power, often already fully forged in the new regime. But even they did not always stand completely outside the discourse of their predecessors and related to their work, albeit sometimes through negation and denial.

INTEREST IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

If we want to examine the development of the countryside after the Second World War, we must undoubtedly mention the period of the First Republic. It was then that the situation in the countryside first became a significant issue due to the land reform⁵, which had resulted in social transformation and technological progress. For a long time, the countryside was of little interest to architects, but the period of national awakening, with its folklore and ethnographic studies,

focused on national character, well embodied in traditional folk architecture. For many modern architects, the countryside represented an environment for transformation, albeit partly influenced by Howard's idea of garden cities⁶. However, land reform slowed down the exodus of the population to the cities and strengthened the awareness of rural identity, while also slightly improving the economic situation. Influenced by these movements, a number of beautification and enlightenment societies emerged, with the aim of improving the backward countryside.⁷

With the certainty of inevitable development in future, the countryside slowly began to become an architectural theme, or rather a theme of architecture, urban planning and engineering. As early as the late 1920s and 1930s, therefore, in connection with land reform, emerged the calls for the management of rural settlement development and the need to draw up regulatory plans for small villages, following the example of large cities. The complexity of this issue gradually became apparent for the first time, due to the necessary broader view of the agricultural landscape and with reflection on the holistic theories of the time, as well as, for example, the idea of adjustments for more efficient land use (arondation). With inspiration from abroad, the answer was regional planning, i.e. the planning of larger territorial units, based on broad analysis (which are, in fact, the principles later formulated in the Athens Charter), whose agenda remained relevant throughout the 20th century.

CARE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE HEALTH AND THE REGIONALIST MOVEMENT

The first systematic attention to rural areas was paid by experts from the Masaryk Academy of Labour (MAP). It was established in 1920 as an expert advisory institution for the economic development of the republic with technical fields, but also economics and sociology, which complemented the activities of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts. From 1922, urban planner Vladimír Zákrejs⁸ worked at the Institute for Urban Planning, where he laid the initial foundations for regional planning. He was a pioneer of the idea of Greater Prague and the author of many successful regulatory plans. He made long-term, but futile, efforts to obtain spatial planning documents, the so-called 'national plan' for the entire state, and to include spatial planning in building legislation. His colleagues, such as Alois Mikušovic and Emanuel Hruška, continued to develop the discipline of spatial and regional planning⁹ at MAP. The academy's agile activity had a relatively significant impact in the young republic, which was further enhanced by the newly published magazine *Stavba měst a obcí venkovských* (Construction of Towns and Rural Communities) from 1927, which extensively promoted regionalist ideas. In 1932, the first comprehensive methodology for the creation of development plans was published, edited by Josef Karel Říha and Otakar Fierlinger¹⁰, with contributions from a number of experts in various fields, under the title *Město a úpravovací plán* (The City and the Development Plan), even though there was still no binding legislation obliging municipalities (except Prague and its surroundings) to draw up plans. It was Josef Karel Říha who devoted the most attention to rural issues, and we will mention his activities later.

Alois Mikušovic came to the issue of rural areas through urban planning, while searching for a regulatory plan for the capital city of Prague¹¹. He considered the problems of overpopulation and unhealthy urban environments and, like Zákrejs, explored the possibilities of de-urbanisation and a more even distribution of population, production and other functions. He thus came to the conclusion that the plan for each settlement should be addressed in a directive manner, but in the context of its wider surroundings, what we would today call an agglomeration, and based on a sound

analysis of its connections. He soon had the opportunity to put this concept of the city into practice as vice-chairman of the Protectorate Planning Commission for Prague and its surroundings, which viewed the city as a single entity with an extensive surrounding area. These principles are once again strongly emphasised today, for example in the integration of transport and other services in agglomeration zones.

The most prominent figure in Czech regionalism, however, was the architect Emanuel Hruška. He also worked at the MAP (Masaryk Academy of Work), but later also with Bohuslav Fuchs and Jiří Kumpošt at the Brno Provincial Planning Institute. Hruška's concept of spatial planning found inspiration not only in the theses of Le Corbusier and the Athens Charter, Miljutin's linear city, but also in the central place theory (Zentralorte) of Walter Christaller, and the "organic" landscape planning of Alwin Seifert. Seifert was famous as a nature conservationist and, among other things, advocated, just like Hruška, for the harmonious integration of human creations (infrastructure and settlements) into the landscape organism.¹² In his concept of regionalism, Hruška did not hesitate, for the benefit of a higher interest (the plan), to resort to quite totalitarian methods, such as large-scale expropriation, population transfers, or controlled land use, and in this, he anticipated the near future. In addition to promoting the central settlement system (which will be discussed later), he also believed in the necessity of a transition to cooperative agriculture and collective work, which, in his opinion, were the only things that could help overcome the crisis of the countryside.¹³ At the same time, however, he defended natural and historical monuments, the character of the landscape, and also demanded the picturesqueness of rural villages and allowed for the preservation of traditional building forms in cases where the ideal (function-derived) contemporary form had not yet been found. "Therefore, since the present age is not yet able to create a new form, only fragments and attempts—we protect our old village as a whole and in detail where it has remained a predominantly undisturbed whole."¹⁴ While the approaches just mentioned had the potential for development in the following years, the striking concept of the habitable landscape by Ladislav Žák (published in full only in 1947) was subjected to harsh criticism from his contemporaries due to its idealism. Although Žák also worked with a zoning method and advocated for collective housing, for example, and the ideal goal of society was to be a specific form of socialism (pannaturalist socialism), his vision of "well-being" was not based on ensuring abundance but on limiting consumption. His criticism of economism and pragmatic interventions into the landscape was therefore in direct conflict with the emerging ideology. Ladislav Žák, similar to Hruška and many others, also came to appreciate traditional forms of rural buildings and settlements that adapt to the landscape from which they originated through their urbanism, form, and the materials used. In doing so, they remain faithful to the appropriateness of their purpose, without being able to be surpassed in this respect by contemporary forms appropriate to current needs.

Moravian capitals also became important centres for regionalist thinking. In Brno, this was through the Municipal Building Office, Masaryk's Academy of Labour, the Brno University of Technology, and later the Provincial Study and Planning Institute. In connection with the creation of Greater Brno (1919), Jindřich Kumpošt and Bohuslav Fuchs explored the possibilities for modifying the Brno region. In 1933, they won a competition for the regulation of the city of Brno with a project that also included a landscape plan. They later summarised their ideas in the publication *Cesta k hospodářské obnově Československa* (The Path to Economic Revival of Czechoslovakia, 1935). They believed that high-quality planning, especially of transport networks and distribution centres, could lead to econom-

⁶ A document by British stenographer Ebenezer Howard from the turn of the century was first published in Czech in the 1920s (1924), although its principles were commonly known and applied long before that, for example by Jan Kotěra.

⁷ See, for example, RÝPAR Vít, *Východiska proměn hodnoty venkovského prostředí ve 20. století* [The Origins of Changes in the Value of the Rural Environment in the 20th Century], Proměny hodnoty architektonického díla v čase, Prague 2016, 64-86.

⁸ Vladimír Zákrejs (1880-1948), protector of monuments and nature, member of the domestic council of the Club for Old Prague. In 1922, he contributed significantly to the founding of the aforementioned MAP Institute and was a long-time promoter and creator of regulatory plans. He had been involved in regulatory plans since the beginning of the century, working in Czechia and Moravia, and also as a professor at the Brno University of Technology. On the national plan, see: Zákrejs Vladimír, *Vědecké základy stavby měst*, Stavba, 1922, vol. 1, pp. 6-11; Dostálík Jan, *Organic Modernity: Environmentally Friendly Trends in Czechoslovak Urbanism and Spatial Planning (1918-1968)*. Dissertation, Brno University of Technology 2016.

⁹ The ideas of regional planning as a tool of state interventionism developed significantly in the West and subsequently also in the Soviet Union. The formulation of the principle of broad spatial planning and preliminary analysis was already heard at the first CIAM congress in La Sarraz (1928) and later became part of the Athens Charter. More PRAŽANOVÁ Eva, *Czech Urban Planning 1938-1948: Regionalism and the Activities of the Provincial Study and Planning Institute in Brno*, dissertation, Brno VUT, 2015; MALINOVÁ Sandra, *Regional Planning in Czechoslovakia in the 1930s and 1940s*, diploma thesis, Prague KTF, 2013;

¹⁰ Otakar Fierlinger (1888-1941) worked in Moravia at the beginning of his career, and from 1919 at the Ministry of Public Works, where he was appointed head of the department for urban planning and construction in 1934. He was also a member of the International Federation for Housing and Urban Development in London, thanks to which he was able to convey information about foreign trends in urbanism and related fields to the Czech public. He devoted himself mainly to gardening and landscaping, and in 1938 he managed to publish the book *Zahrada a obydlí* (Garden and Dwelling), but unfortunately he died in 1941.

¹¹ In 1920, in connection with the creation of Greater Prague, the State Regulatory Commission was established with the mission of developing a unified regulatory plan for Greater Prague and its surroundings. This initiative was also the starting point for a number of other cities and had an impact on rural development. MIKUŠOVIC Alois, *Od pražského plánu k plánování pražského území*, Stavba. XIII, 1934-35, vol. 13, pp. 155-156.

¹² DVOŘÁKOVÁ Dita, *Česká debata o regionálním plánování 1945-1948. Architecture & Urbanism* LI, 2017, no. 3-4, pp. 144-161.

¹³ E.g. HRUŠKA Emanuel (1944)

¹⁴ HRUŠKA Emanuel, (1945), p. 39.

¹⁵ PRAŽANOVÁ (2015).

¹⁶ MAŠLÁN Pavel, Agriculture of the Baťa Company, in: Čapka František et al. ed., *Economic History of Moravia and Silesia: Selected Chapters from the 20th Century*. Brno, 2016, pp. 36-48.

¹⁷ Active members included, for example, Professor Theodor Petřík of the Czech Technical University (head of the Institute of Agricultural Construction), Alois Mikuškovič, later vice-chairman of the Protectorate Planning Commission for Prague and its surroundings, Otto Fierlinger, a pioneer of urban planning in small municipalities, garden and landscape architect, and architect and urban planner Josef Karel Říha.

¹⁸ ŘÍHA Josef Karel, ed., *Vesnice, plána a plán (Village, Land, and Plan)*. Prague: Library of Rural Health Care, 1937.

¹⁹ SINE, *Úprava vesnic (Village Development)*: an excerpt from works honored with awards and purchased in a literary competition held by the Czech Technical Academy, Prague, 1941.

²⁰ 288/1941 Coll. Government Regulation of June 26, 1941 on the procurement of plans for the location (modification) of municipalities and on its financial support

²¹ MACHOŇ Ladislav – SUCHARDA Stanislav, *Regionalism in the competition for regional building types*, *Architecture III*, 1941, pp. 32-33.

²² HRUŠKA Emanuel, *Competition entry from the competition for regional types of folk architecture, Architecture: combined magazines Stavba, Stavitel, Styl III*, 1941, p. 32.

²³ More DVOŘÁKOVÁ Dita, *Regional Planning as an Instrument of the Welfare State*. In: Guzik Hubert et. al. ed., *Architecture in Transition*, Prague 2019, 122-151.

²⁴ ŠUBRTOVÁ Anna, Ladislav Machoň's Regulatory Plan for Litomyšl (1946-1948), or A Collective Vision of a New City, *Zprávy památkové péče LCCV* 2016, pp. 603-609.

²⁵ MÜLLEROVÁ Augusta, *Brigade of Architects for the Reconstruction of the Benešov Region*, *Architektura ČSR V*, 1945/1946, p. 156; IDEM, *Planning for the Reconstruction of the Benešov and Sedlčany Regions Complete*, *Architektura ČSR VI*, 1947, no. 4, p. 101 ff.

²⁶ The Hradec Program contained nearly two dozen measures proposed in the spring of 1947 by the Communist Party for the Ministry of Agriculture. In addition to the legal right to own up to 50 hectares of agricultural land, it also included a uniform agricultural tax, insurance for independent farmers, agricultural credit, support for machine stations and cooperatives, etc. Act No. 46/1948 Coll., on new land reform (permanent adjustment of ownership of agricultural and forest land). The act brought about the completion of confiscations and redistribution of land among small farmers, with property transfers and immediate registration of new owners.

²⁷ The free sale of surpluses promised by the Hradec program was not permitted, but it proceeded steadily.

²⁸ Act No. 55/1947 Coll., On Assistance to Farmers in Implementing the Agricultural Production Plan, supplemented by Act No. 132/1948. Among other things, it imposed an obligation to cultivate land or make it available for agricultural purposes, as well as an obligation to provide/ lend labor or mechanization for such work.

²⁹ Ministry of Information, Eduard Outrata, *Progress in the Implementation of the Economic Plan for the First Quarter of 1948*, pp. 65-74. Klement Gottwald, Forward, *Not a Step Back!* 1948, pp. 75-77. Karel Jech and Antonín Václavů, *Some Problems of Czechoslovak Agriculture in 1944-1948*, in: LACINA Vratislav (ed.), *The Czechoslovak Revolution in 1944-1948: Collection of Contributions from the Conference of Historians on the 20th Anniversary of the Liberation of Czechoslovakia*. Prague, Academia 1966, pp. 233-247. It is stated that agriculture lost up to 400,000 workers compared to the pre-war situation.

ic prosperity for the whole country and become the basis for combining economic and demographic needs with the natural and historical values of the territory. They applied the functionalist principle of preliminary analysis of the territory and used progressive visualisation with cartodiagrams to capture the relationships between different elements. The presentation of their comprehensive synthetic method met with international success in 1947 at the first post-war CIAM conference in Bridgewater.¹⁵

The Zlín region was subjected to even more detailed research. Based on this, Fuchs, Kumpošt, and Karel Zapletal drew up a detailed regional plan. This study inspired the development of an economic planning concept for the entire Czechoslovak Republic, which Jan Antonín Baťa and a team of architects from the company's office published under the title "Building a State for 40,000,000 People" (1938). The authors proposed an extensive transport network, including a motorway from Cheb to Velký Bočkov, and emphasized the need for comprehensive technological progress and complex reforms, directed by the state administration. As a postscript to the Zlín case, it should be noted that after the nationalization of Baťa's companies, the technocratic management of the region continued. Jiří Voženílek took over as head of the former Baťa design office and continued to develop the program of decentralization of belt cities. Even in agriculture, a policy of massive technical rationalization, automation, and large-scale production was pursued, with the use of artificial fertilizers and massive interventions in the landscape.¹⁶

FOR PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The Society for Rural Revitalization¹⁷ was associated with Masaryk's Academy of Labor, primarily in the person of Josef Karel Říha, but also others. The goal set was comprehensive improvement of the rural situation in practice. Since its founding in 1928, the society has organized annual educational events (Rural Health Week, always with a specific theme), published educational and methodological brochures, and organized lectures and exhibitions. The most successful of these was the 1936 exhibition Village – Land – Plan, organized by Josef Karel Říha, among others, promoting the planned development of the territory and the modification of municipalities with the help of regulatory plans.¹⁸ The aim was to popularize and promote regional planning as a new urban planning technique that would guide the development of entire regions, based on natural landscape units and in accordance with the national economic plan. Another important aspect was the management of settlement and the designation of areas where construction was not permitted, and the resulting infrastructure development plan, which was summarized in key studies by Josef K. Říha, *Village, Land, and Plan*, and Alois Mikuškovič, *The Influence of Cities on Rural Areas*. The campaign culminated in the jubilee year of 1938 with a competition for the improvement of villages, sponsored by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture. The society's activities were terminated by the occupation, and the agenda under development was handed over to the Czech Provincial Headquarters of Municipalities, which promised to continue it.¹⁹

Despite all efforts, it was not possible to modernize building legislation during the existence of the free state, which changed to a certain extent only under the Protectorate administration, with the law on the acquisition of location plans/development plans.²⁰ Although the issue of planning was understood somewhat more narrowly in this law, it vindicated the long-term efforts, and the methodology of territorial research, which had been refined over many years, could be, and as we shall see, it was, only an advantage in the years to come.

REGIONAL BUILDING TYPES COMPETITION

Regionalism, both today and in the past, is often perceived in a narrower sense as the study of the form appearance of architecture (culture) in a given area. This understanding was also reflected in a widely publicized competition launched in 1940 by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The competition program, meticulously prepared by a committee of experts, aimed to obtain designs and ideas for a wide range of regional building types for the countryside. The goal was to create architectural designs that would respect the traditional rural character and prevent the introduction of ill-conceived urban elements into the landscape.

With a few exceptions, the competition did not produce the expected results. Despite the well-formulated building program, most of the competitors gave up on untested types (municipal buildings, village cinemas, etc.) and chose the seemingly easier path of farmhouses of various sizes. However, as Ladislav Machoň and Stanislav Sucharda²¹ summarized, many of the submitted designs focused only on formal appearance instead of engaging in a deeper analysis of the social and economic structures of the countryside. This is one of the reasons why the reviewers highlighted the contribution of Emanuel Hruška, who approached the competition as a comprehensive regionalist study. Using the example of villages in the Sázava River basin, he showed that urban planning solutions must be based on a detailed survey of the entire region, involving various experts (engineers, sociologists, historians, etc.). His methodology emphasized a "from the whole to the detail" approach, and according to the inscription, its goal was to "identify the actual construction needs" of the selected location.²²

POST-WAR DEVELOPMENT AND LANDSCAPE PLANNING

The year 1945 did not represent a fundamental turning point for regional planning in Czechoslovakia; the post-war situation brought new tasks and opportunities for its development.²³ The social and economic transformation, which included the transition to central economic planning, resonated with the long-term plans of architects. They perceived regional planning as an indispensable tool for the reconstruction of war-torn areas and their future social reform. Society's interest in the countryside was also strengthened by books that had not been published during the war, such as Karel Honzík's *Tvorba životního stylu* (The Creation of a Lifestyle), as well as nationally watched projects such as the reconstruction of Lidice and Ležáky.

Brno remained the center of further expert development, where the Provincial Study and Planning Institute (ZSPÚ) had been operating since 1945. Emanuel Hruška, who headed the newly established planning department, sought to create a long-term economic and territorial plan for Moravia and Silesia. This plan was to serve as a basis for nationwide planning, and Hruška tried to push through the creation of a unified state organization for regional planning, unfortunately unsuccessfully.

Similar efforts were made by the Prague Zemský národní výbor (State National Committee), or rather its department for spatial planning led by architect Ladislav Machoň. Machoň's vision was based on the comprehensive modernization of the affected regions. His specific approach was to apply democratic procedures. Using the method of "responsive planning," he wanted to involve local residents in the decision-making process through questionnaire surveys and other means.²⁴

Years of previous methodological work finally paid off after 1946. One of the first legislative measures, the Building Restoration Act (86/1946), made subsidies to

municipalities conditional on the existence of adjustment plans, which led to increased demand for the work of urban planners. Thanks in part to Machoň's work at the ZNV, the central authority provided a special subsidy for the acquisition of planning documents for the extensive area of Benešov and Sedlčany, a displaced and devastated former SS training area. Under the leadership of Augusta Müllerová, a group of architects from BAPS took on this collective task, and architects thus became involved in the restoration of the state on a large scale for the first time. Within a single year, a comprehensive set of analytical studies and master plans for nearly two hundred municipalities and settlements was created, which also contributed significantly to the formulation of legislation and methodology for spatial planning (legal anchoring and content of master plans).²⁵ In the vast majority of cases, however, the architects took a very radical approach in their elaborations, with a large proportion of demolition and replacement construction, which was difficult to implement in the post-war shortage. The large volume of proposed new buildings was probably never realized anywhere, and in some cases, such as in the village of Zvírotice, the plans were soon redone, this time under the direction of Stavoprojekt.

INTERMEZZO: COLLECTIVIZATION

In 1948, the ongoing agricultural reforms gave no indication of further developments. The Hradec program²⁶ of Agriculture Minister Julius Šuriš outlined the agricultural policy for the coming years and apparently counted on the continued preservation of small-scale farming. The new land reform limited land ownership to a maximum of 50 hectares; land above this area was purchased by the state and distributed among other farmers through the Land Fund or allocated to state farms. In agriculture, the wartime system of compulsory levies remained in place for two years²⁷, with the state supporting mechanization and mechanization cooperatives²⁸ and establishing state machine and tractor stations (STS). As in other sectors, the goal in agriculture was to maximize the mobilization of labor and the use of all available resources. Despite all efforts, however, the results were unsatisfactory and lagged behind pre-war performance. Shortcomings in crop production also limited livestock production in the long term, the level of mechanization remained low, and this was compounded by devastating droughts in the 1946 and 1947 seasons. Agriculture also suffered from a long-term shortage of labor, which had largely been transferred to heavy industry and construction.²⁹ According to Jiří Pernes³⁰, the transformation of the Czech countryside, which had in fact begun during the First Republic, generated a new class of rural proletariat in the post-war period and a peculiar state of agricultural socialism, which the leaders of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia considered a good basis for the "specific path of Czechoslovakia to socialism." It was only further political developments, primarily the rift between Tito and Stalin, that ended Stalin's tolerance for "national deviations," and Soviet-style socialization began to be harshly enforced in most countries of the Soviet bloc. In Czechoslovakia, this meant the declaration of the collectivization of agriculture, for which the Communist Party chose the form of unified agricultural cooperatives, precisely because of the long-standing (dating back to the 1870s) historical tradition.³¹ Collectivization was supposed to kick-start the transition to large-scale production. In the first step, the JZD was to absorb all existing agricultural cooperatives, including their property and membership base, and at the same time, a campaign was launched to recruit all farmers who had been farming independently until then, who, by joining the cooperative, would hand over their property – land, livestock, and machinery – to a common fund. Neither the law on agricultural cooperatives³² nor the model statutes stipulated that these should be production cooperatives based on the

Soviet model, with complete collective management and production. In the early years in Czechoslovakia, cooperatives of the so-called 1st and 2nd types prevailed, where a large degree of private ownership and work was retained, with shared machinery and peak seasonal work.³³ From 1951, however, the lower types of cooperatives were no longer tolerated, and only the two higher types, with consolidated land and joint production, prevailed. The process of collectivization, despite the initial ideas of the KSC leadership, proceeded very unevenly. After initial success, especially in the border regions, and the establishment of almost 4,000 agricultural cooperatives during the first year, further development met with indifference and resistance. The harsh enforcement of socialization, with many violent practices, was aimed mainly at family farmers. They were labeled as the seed of capitalist elements in the countryside and were to be suppressed as a class.³⁴ The violent phase of collectivization from 1951 to 1953 took place against the backdrop of an intensified atmosphere of political trials, a shortage of basic foodstuffs and goods on both the regulated and free markets, caused by an outflow of investment and workers to heavy industry.³⁵ The crisis affecting the whole of society culminated in the final year of the first Czechoslovak five-year plan with the deaths of J. V. Stalin and Klement Gottwald, which was topped off by monetary reform. The campaign against the wealthy kulaks in the villages resulted in the eviction of 4,000 families³⁶ and was only stopped by the intervention of President Zápotocký in August 1953.³⁷ The improvement of the situation in agriculture in the socialist sector became the topic of the autumn meetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, where, among other things, it was decided to provide immediate subsidies for the purchase of machinery, seeds, and fertilizers, as well as to slow down the process of collectivization and provide overall long-term support for agriculture in the coming period.

NEW CHALLENGES OF THE SOCIALIST VILLAGE AND AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The gradual structural transformation of the countryside and the transition to socialist large-scale production naturally created a need for new building solutions, whether for the production sector or for providing social amenities in villages, in line with the doctrine of eliminating the differences between the countryside and the city. The technical aspects of individual production facilities were a long-term focus of specialized architectural studios, the Ministry of Agriculture's development department (Agroprojekt), and the Study and Standardization Institute of Stavoprojekt (STÚ)³⁸. However, a new issue was the operational organization and developmental perspectives of large agricultural complexes and their integration into the existing rural settlements. These specific aspects of rural spatial planning and village urbanism had long been overlooked by professional circles, and were only marginally touched upon by the works of Josef Karel Říha and Emanuel Hruška. However, Hruška moved to Slovakia in 1948, and the Provincial Study and Planning Institute in Brno was abolished in 1950. Its agenda was to a certain extent taken over by the Institute of Architecture and Spatial Planning of Stavoprojekt (ÚAÚP).³⁹

„THE GREEN BOOKS"⁴⁰

The newly established Stavoprojekt workplace, located in Brno "due to a long-standing urban planning tradition," was tasked with solving complex urban problems and synthesizing them for the needs of the design centers on the front line of plan fulfillment. –Handbooks,

³⁰ PERNES Jiří, *Specifická cesta KSC k socialismu* (The Specific Path of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to Socialism), *Soudobé dějiny* (Contemporary History), 2016, 1–2, pp. 12–52. Pernes demonstrates that the idea of a specific Czechoslovak path to socialism did indeed guide domestic development at the highest levels of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia for a short period in 1946–1947. However, the deterioration of the international political situation quickly put an end to this development and replaced it with the sharp enforcement of a transformation to a Soviet-style socialist system.

³¹ Although the JZD were established with reference to §157 of the May Constitution on people's cooperatives, they did not meet the basic parameters of cooperativism formulated therein, i.e. legal subjectivity, voluntariness, and shareholding.

³² Act No. 69/1949 Coll., *On Unified Agricultural Cooperatives. And Implementing Act No. 75/1949 Coll.*

³³ In cooperatives of the second type, crop production was shared, and land was often consolidated; in types III and IV, crop and livestock production were shared, with remuneration varying according to the size of the share invested (ad III), or regardless of the initial investment, only for the work performed (ad IV). Václav Průcha et al., *Economic and Social History of Czechoslovakia 1918–1992*, Part II, 2009, pp. 358–359.

³⁴ JECH Karel, *The Twilight of the Peasantry 1945–1960*, 2001. Common repressive measures against the so-called village rich included disproportionate increases in levies, forced sale of machinery, relocation to less fertile land... and finally criminal penalties and forced labor, displacement of entire families or family members of the affected farmer.

³⁵ The loss of labor from agriculture during the five-year plan is reported to be up to 34%. Kopejtková Drahomíra, *The Beginnings of Socialist Cooperatives in Czechoslovakia 1948–1953*, 1987, p. 37 ff.

³⁶ PERNES Jiří, *Kolektivizace zemědělství v Československu v letech 1948–1960* (The Collectivization of Agriculture in Czechoslovakia in 1948–1960), *Fórum Historiae*, 2016, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 5–34.

³⁷ Zápotocký's speech at the opening of the Klíčov Dam also touched on the disintegration of some collective farms, which was probably caused by both the pressure during their creation and the burden caused by the currency reform. Kopejtková writes about the disintegration of 7% of collective farms between June 1953 and June 1954, and a reduction in the number of participating farms by almost 25%. KOPEJTKOVÁ, Drahomíra, (1987). *Počátky socialistického zemědělského družstevnictví v Československu, 1948–1953: studie o budování JZD se zvláštním zřetelem na situaci v pražských příměstských okresech* (Vol. 6). Academia.

³⁸ The article *Agricultural Buildings* by Jan Zikmund in the publication *Stavoprojekt 1948–53/Praxe*, Prague 2025 (in print) describes the vicissitudes of the standardization of agricultural buildings, which after 1948 suffered from drastic restrictions on prescribed budgets and material composition. Such restrictions, hand in hand with indiscipline in implementation and use, ultimately led to the significant degradation of agricultural buildings and the emergence of bleak and unhealthy large-scale livestock farming complexes, which in many places remain an ecological burden to this day, awaiting regularization.

³⁹ For more on the Institute of Spatial Planning (later VUVA) and its history, see ZÁČKOVÁ Markéta, *History and Activities of the Urban Planning Department of the Research Institute of Construction and Architecture in Brno*, dissertation, Brno University of Technology, 2014.

⁴⁰ According to Markéta Záčková, this term was an internal designation for a series of methodological aids, which will be discussed further below.

⁴¹ Ing. Arch. Věra Vyšinková-Sládečková, Ing. Arch. Jiří Krčál, Dagmar Matoušková, Josef Melenovský, are only mentioned in the imprint of one of the publications; Evžen Škarda held the position of head of the entire spatial planning group, and external consultations within the framework of the task were provided by Prof. Jaroslav Vaněček from the Czech Technical University in Prague, Ing. Bedřich Košatka from the Ministry of Agriculture, and specialists from other Stavoprojekt centers.

⁴² VIKLICKÝ Aleš, *Urbanistické problémy vesnice a zemědělské krajiny* (Urban Planning Problems of Villages and Agricultural Landscapes), Brno 1952, preface.

⁴³ VIKLICKÝ Aleš, et al. *Urbanistické směrnice pro venkovské sídliště* (Urban Planning Guidelines for Rural Settlements), preliminary draft for comment, Brno, 1951.

⁴⁴ VIKLICKÝ Aleš, *Urbanistické problémy vesnice a zemědělské krajiny*, Doplněk, díl II, Brno 1954.

⁴⁵ See, for example, the failure of the Slovak HUKO construction project.

⁴⁶ Act No. 84/1958 Coll. on Spatial Planning, §5.

urban guidelines, and methodologies were published in the book series of internal publications, "Collection of Original Works by Scientific Workers of ÚAÚP," and distributed to the reference libraries of workplaces in all regions. The institute covered a wide range of fundamental topics, from the economics of city construction, through the amenities of settlements, principles of zoning and function distribution, communication networks, urban compositions, settlement structures, to issues of ecology and history. Thanks to the prescribed study of foreign sources, many of these topics and proposed solutions appeared in the Czech environment for the very first time, and often well in advance of practical application.

VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS AND PRODUCTION UNITS

A study task for the "preparation of the socialist reconstruction and development of the countryside" was to be based on the study of Soviet sources and was entrusted to Aleš Viklický and his team⁴¹ within the aforementioned institute. Although the research method is not described in detail, the authors apparently drew from extensive research of domestic and foreign texts, as well as from consultations with practitioners, users, and experts from other institutes (technical and agricultural) and fields (e.g., sociology, medicine and hygiene, animal husbandry and agronomy, transport specialists, historians, conservationists, ethnographers, etc.). A methodological guide⁴² for widespread practical use was to be formulated by applying Soviet methods to specific domestic conditions. The initial survey of the technical condition and amenities of our rural settlements reached conclusions that differed little from the findings obtained in the 1930s during J. K. Říha's survey. Up to 30% of the buildings showed significant dilapidation and other defects preventing proper use. Overcrowding of rural dwellings was a common phenomenon, while on the other hand, it was rather rare for villages to have a water supply or a covered communal sewage system. Serious hygienic deficiencies accompanied both dwellings and agricultural buildings, and a higher level of village amenities (sports fields, community centers, distribution points) were mostly yet to be established. The team estimated the necessary cost to improve the worst deficiencies in housing alone at 8.5 billion per region. To obtain funds for the sanitation of villages, the introduction of a socialist economy, and thus an increase in production, was expected to be very helpful in the long term (as Hruška had already proposed).

The transformed method of farming was seen as the first step towards raising the standard of living in the countryside. The introduction of socialist production changed the traditional distribution of functions in the village. Previously, farming was directly connected to the dwelling. By relocating it, a spatial reserve was created within the homestead for adapting, adding to, or otherwise modifying the dwelling, and with it, an opportunity to improve the living standard, for example by installing a bathroom. From the perspective of the entire village, this brought a demand for a qualitative transformation of shared space and infrastructure. The collective farm was then located in a suitable position within the village's cadastre, which allowed for a significantly better hygienic solution and enough space for all necessary functions, handling areas, and the possibility of future development. In this way, zoning was applied within the village. A production sphere and a social-residential sphere were created, which could thus develop in connection with each other without causing too much mutual disturbance. The authors meticulously prepared tables⁴³ of the required civic amenities and production area capacities for various agricultural operations (stables, runs, machine garages, feed preparation areas, warehouses, etc.). They addressed the composition of the settlement, its

silhouette and placement in the landscape, aspects of water and energy supply, transport, and the economics of the spatial arrangement of the village. Due to great interest, the authors dedicated a special supplementary part of their handbook to production units⁴⁴, their assemblies, and examples of their connection to village settlements. In this section, they formulated principles for connecting production complexes to villages, their economic transport links, the ergonomic layout of individual operations within the complex, and suitable sizes of managed areas, necessary melioration or hygienic measures, and so on.

By far the most significant contribution of this work, however, is the application of the method of district planning and the system of municipal centers (although the names of some possible predecessors in these considerations were not mentioned anywhere). Full-fledged municipal planning in terms of production and amenities must be based on broader territorial considerations and research. The economic situation will undoubtedly not allow for the distribution of all necessary services to the smallest municipalities, so it is necessary to categorize settlements in each territorial unit and select a center for the concentration of services and higher amenities from the given group of municipalities, which will also be available to associated municipalities. A broader territorial balance can also be extremely advantageous in the distribution of the socialist production sector, as individual cooperatives can share some higher-level operations according to local conditions or advantageously link their production in the production chain (linking plant and animal production, etc.).

The process of forward planning for larger territorial units was not fundamentally new in our country, but its implementation in practice had long been neglected, resulting in considerable economic losses.⁴⁵ After widespread criticism of the lack of district plans at the first conference of the Union of Architects in 1953, a specialized institute for district planning, Terplan, was established at the State Planning Commission the following year. However, district plans were not confirmed as part of the hierarchy of planning documents until the Spatial Planning Act was passed in the late 1950s.⁴⁶ The system of municipal centers, proposed by Brno urban planners as an alternative to the Soviet Agrorods, was only established by Act No. 283/1971. However, the principle of natural catchment areas and high settlement density had largely replaced this system in the previous period.

REGIONAL CHARACTER

In an effort to comprehensively address the issue of rural settlements, the authors of the methodology did not neglect the aesthetic level of settlements. As the main principles for their formation, they emphasized above all a clear center with a gathering function (including the calculation of the necessary area per inhabitant), a backbone communication system, and the silhouette of the settlement, always composed with regard to harmonious integration into the landscape. They did not shy away from the possible redevelopment of so-called secondary buildings, which disrupt the structure or operation of the settlement due to their location, or buildings that are too dilapidated to be repaired for economic reasons. In such cases, when applying replacement construction, they emphasized the importance of preserving the characteristic structure of the village's buildings – the street network, as well as the grouping of buildings and their orientation. This also affected the use of standardized buildings, specifically the so-called JZD houses.

JZD houses, or standard houses for agricultural residents, were designed by the State Standardization Institute and included in the STÚ standardization compendium under the designation T72/52. The existence of a single type of agricultural house therefore pro-

voked criticism, as this type with a clearly prescribed orientation could not be adapted to the diverse characteristic regional variations in the layouts of villages, some of which require gable orientation of buildings, others longitudinal orientation, etc. "Housing estates, which are characterized by longitudinal continuous development in relation to the streets, would be spatially disrupted by the use of this type," Aleš Viklický summarized the whole problem.⁴⁷

Out of the need to preserve the characteristic regional features of rural settlements and individual buildings, an ambitious research project of regional studies was gradually developed at the Brno office of urban planners VÚVA, with the aim of documenting and categorizing the types of spatial formation and traditional artistic composition of villages in all regions, including capturing the types of individual houses and characteristic decorative elements. "A detailed and complete documentary picture of the structure and character of our villages in each area in terms of spatial and traditional artistic composition and individual folk buildings will enable the definition of detailed principles for the typification of folk buildings from an urban and compositional point of view, and the derivation of principles for the composition and architectural design of complexes and individual buildings in villages in individual areas." Although this ambitious program apparently remained unfinished, even the introductory study *Basic Issues of the Urban Structure of Villages in Bohemia and Moravia*⁴⁸ represents a remarkable collection of documentation of vernacular architecture, and the established taxonomy of spatial types of rural settlements remains valid to this day. In the discourse of the time, the somewhat outdated idealization of folk architecture in socialist realism takes on factual content here, and the authors made no secret of their belief that their work would serve as a basis and aid for urban planners and the typification institute. They themselves attempted to propose some "regional modifications" to the standard buildings, or suitable ways of integrating them into the organism of the traditional village. "It is only a matter of handling the type sensitively and with flexibility. The entire space of the village must be taken into account, respecting the spaces and existing buildings. It is not possible to use the type mechanically, stereotypically, and without changes. From the whole movement to create a type of folk house (both here and abroad), we can clearly see that the failure resulted precisely from the rigidity of the composition and the rigidity of the formal essence."⁴⁹

TYPIFICATION SUPPLEMENT

Just for the sake of interest, it should be noted that Viklický's criticism captured only a momentary state of affairs. A more nuanced perception of regional specifics was apparently more common in society in the early 1950s, perhaps thanks to the "national aspect" of socialist realism,⁵⁰ and at the end of 1951, the State Typification Institute developed a whole range of regional variants of farmhouses, specifically T 73/52 South Bohemian, type T 74ab/52 Moravian-Slavonian longitudinal/gabled, and T75/52 Pojizerský, as well as types for central and eastern Slovakia. After several years, architect Augusta Müllerová returned to rural issues at the STÚ, enriching the collection of functional types with designs that were easy to implement in practice, such as decorations for gables corresponding to the types for the South Bohemian variant.⁵¹

CONCLUSION

Probably the only complete example of a newly built village from the 1950s in Czechia is the village of Zvírotice by Hana Pešková, Jiří Kándl, and Jiří Stašek, which proves that the urbanism of (small) villages is key to their character, a lesson that still holds true today,

when villages are once again facing an invasion of secondary (standardized) construction.

⁴⁷ VIKLICKÝ Aleš et al. (1953), p. 217 ff.

⁴⁸ MÁČEL Otakar et al., *Základní problematika urbanismu vesnice*, Brno 1954.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 211.

⁵⁰ For example, criticism of the transfer of foreign regional characteristics across the country, such as the South Bohemian Renaissance style used in buildings in the Ostrava region.

⁵¹ Typizační sborník 1952, doplňky a opravy (Typification Compendium 1952: additions and corrections), 1953. Augusta Müllerová's contribution was not limited to the decoration, however. The Moravian-Slavonian type was designed by a Brno-based studio, probably Ing. Zdeněk Lázníčka; no details have yet been found for the other variants.

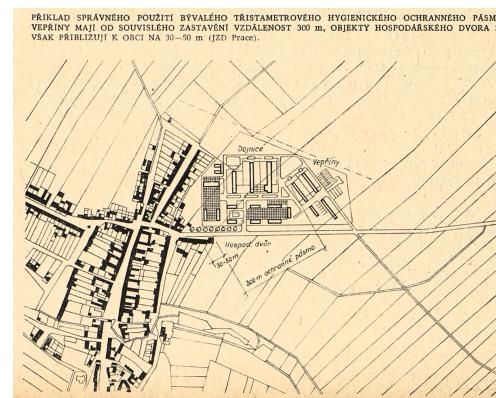


Fig. 1.: Proper location of production units in relation to existing settlements, Aleš Viklický, 1953, The 300-meter protective zone around settlements initially led to the construction of agricultural facilities too far from villages, resulting in unnecessary costs. (Source: VOŽENÍLEK Jiří, VÚVA (1957), *Stavba měst a vesnic: urbanistická příručka*, s. 521)

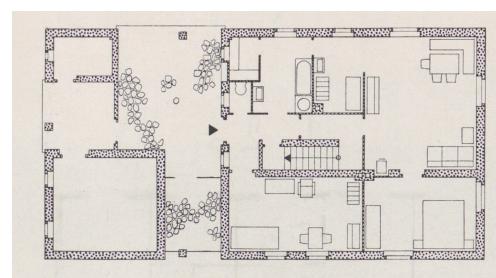
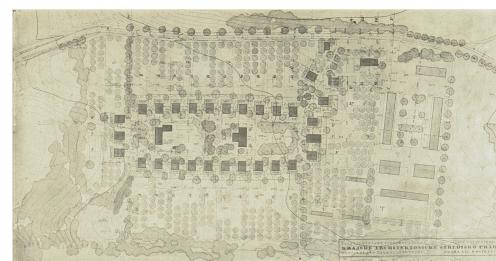


Fig. 2. – 4: Zvírotice. An example of a replacement village.

Hana Pešková, Jaroslav Kándl, in collaboration with Jiří Stašek, 1951–1954. Architects first dealt with the settlement of Zvírotice in the central Vltava River basin as part of a planning brigade in 1947 (Richard Ferdinand Podzemný, Václav Hilský, Antonín Tenzer, and Bohumil Holý), when they planned to establish a new village due to the rising water level of the Slap Dam. However, the new construction was carried out according to completely new plans. An interesting attempt at innovation in the layout of apartments with utility rooms did not prove entirely successful in practice, and the rigid urban planning was also criticized. On the other hand, the picturesque appearance of the houses received positive feedback. (Source: *Architecture of Czechoslovakia VIII*, 1954, no. 1, p. 8; VOŽENÍLEK Jiří (1958), *Bydlení v Československu: přehled bytové výstavby od roku 1945*, s. 84)

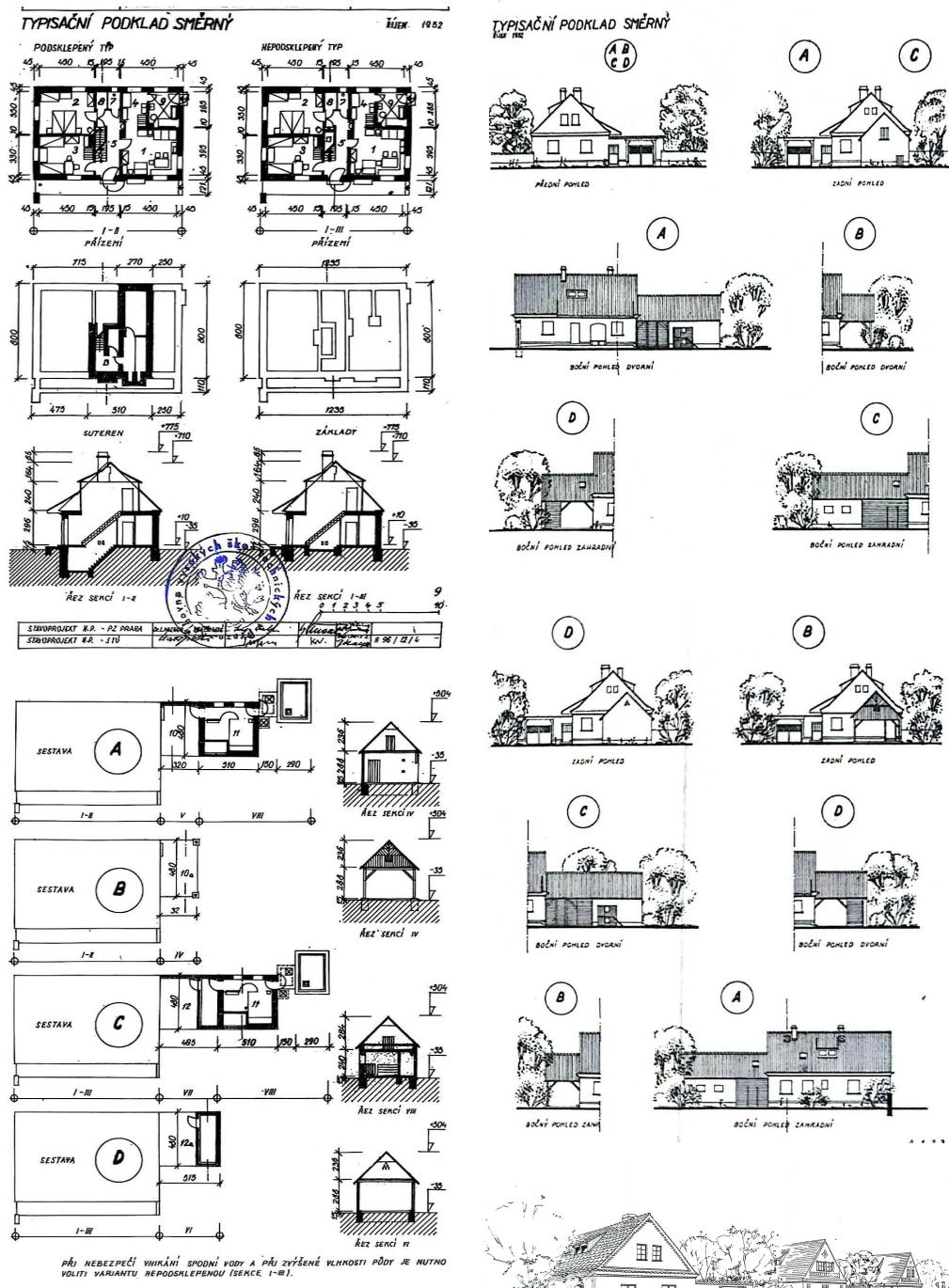
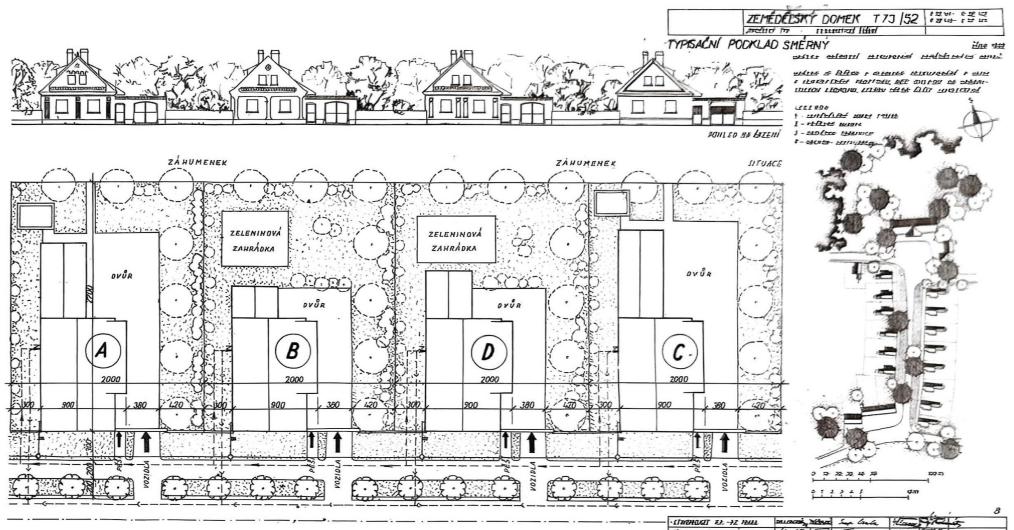


Fig. 5. – 8.: Typizační podklady pro výstavbu vesnic. Farmers house (JZD-house) T 73/52, Jihočeský typ. (Source: Typizační sborník 1952: doplňky a opravy. Praha: Státní nakladatelství technické literatury, 1953.)



| HODNĚNÍ | SESTAVA | ÚČEL HÝSTNOSTI | POLETT HÝSTNOSTI | PLOCHA N°2 | | SOUZPĚT |
|---------|-----------|------------------------------------|------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | | | | PLOCHA | POLOUČNOST | |
| 1 | A B C D | OBYTNÝ POKOJ | 1 | 17,51 | | |
| 2 | A B C D | LOŽNICE | 1 | 19,75 | | |
| 3 | A B C D | LOŽNICE - VÝHINEK | 1 | 14,57 | | |
| 4 | A B C D | KUCHYŇSKÝ KOUT | 1 | 5,97 | | |
| 5 | A B C D | PŘEDPSÍN | 1 | 7,79 | | |
| 6 | A' B C D | SCHODY | 1 | 2,82 | | |
| 7 | A B C D | ZÁCHOD | 1 | 1,45 | | |
| 8 | A B C D | SPOŽÍ | 1 | 1,33 | | |
| 9 | A B C D | HOSPODÁŘSKÁ KUCHYNĚ - KOUPELNA | 1 | 6,21 | | |
| 10 | A - - | KÓLNA SERCE V | 1 | 4,76 | | |
| 11 | - B - - | KÚMÁ SERCE V | 1 | 4,60 | | |
| 12 | A - - C - | HOSPODÁŘSKÉ PŘÍLÚŠEKETVÍ - SERCE V | 2 | 16,49 | | |
| 13 | - - C - | ROZDĚLENÁ KÓLNA SERCE V | 1 | 21,44 | | |
| 14 | - - D | ROZDĚLENÁ KÓLNA SERCE V | 1 | 22,4 | | |
| | | | | 47,63 | 25,56 | 31,27 13,03 |
| | A | | | 47,63 | 25,56 | 16,89 10,03 |
| | C | | | 47,63 | 25,56 | 34,03 2,46 |
| | D | | | 47,63 | 25,56 | 22,4 2,46 |

| HODNĚNÍ | SESTAVA | POLETT | PLOCHA N°2 | | SOUZPĚT |
|---------|-----------|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| | | | PLOCHA | POLOUČNOST | |
| 1 | A B C D | POKLOVÝ KAMÍNA | 1 | CLUB, NEBO | |
| 2 | A B C D | * | 1 | PIER | |
| 3,4 | A B C D | SPORTÁK UHELNÝ | 2 | | |
| 4 | A B C D | DŘEZ HODVOLNÝ | 1 | | |
| 5 | A B C D | PRAMENÍK | 1 | | |
| 7 | A B C D | KLOSETOVÁ MÍSA SE SPLACH. ZAŘÍZENÍM | 1 | | |
| 8 | A B C D | POLICE DO SPLÍZE | 1 | | |
| 9 | A B C D | VANNA VOLNÁ | 1 | | |
| 9 | A B C D | UNYVADLO FAYANCOVÉ | 1 | | |
| 9 | A B C D | KAMÍNA „BUTTER F“ | 1 | | |
| II | A - - C - | ŽAB KAMÍNOVÝ | 2 | | |

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