

The Bulletin of Technical Information. A Tale from the Golden Age ¹

Maria Mănescu

Ion Mincu Publishing House
edituraionmincu@yahoo.com

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Preamble

During the Communist regime in Romania the political milieu put pressure on the community of engineering and construction professionals and, implicitly, on architecture and town planning. The cultural influences of the Communist period, manifest or subliminal, touched not only people, but their homes, public spaces, urban voids and the city as a whole. The Socialist Realism of the 1950s, the cultural relaxation of the 1960s, the drastic restrictions of the “post-Stalinist Stalinism” of the 1970s, the re-Stalinisation of the 1980s, all these stages left their marks on the Romanian cities, still painfully visible.

Although some of the histories of those years have already been told, there are still untold tales about people who did their jobs modestly, in the shadow of the “great achievements” to which they contributed unconditionally. We speak about specialists in documentation, who seem to have disappeared, along with their profession, as collateral victims of the explosion of informational and documentary sources in the last decades.

The work of the specialists in documentation specialized in construction, architecture and town planning, has been a real support for the practicing architects of the period, whose access to documentation sources was limited, especially in the preliminary stages of the design process. For those contemporary architects and urban planners who are interested to better understand the evolution of their profession in this controversial moment of our recent history, publications specialized in documentation, neglected, ignored and forgotten on the dusty shelves of the unvisited libraries, do have a story to tell.

¹ The phrase “Golden Age” originates in Greek (Χρυσόν Γένος *Chryson Genos*). It was used in the Greek mythology and legends and refers to the first in a sequence of four, five or more Ages of Man, in which the Golden Age is first, followed in sequence by the Silver, Bronze, Heroic and Iron Age, namely the present, which is a period of decline. By extension, “Golden Age” denotes a period of primordial peace, harmony, stability and prosperity. In Romania, a radical extension of its meaning has been made by the Communist official propaganda when assigning it to the historical period when Nicolae Ceaușescu was the “beloved leader” of the Socialist Republic of Romania, between 1965 and 1989. The self-named “Golden Era of Communism” designated as such the period of fifteen years before 1989 in official terms, but underground comments took it over and used it as a pejorative to designate, on the contrary, the worst years of Communism. In order to emphasize the paradoxical situation exposed in this paper telling a tale about beginnings, declines and ends, I use this term in both senses: to praise a good evolution and to disparage a political context.

Socialist Realism versus Freedom of Expression

The Decree of 13 November 1952 of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party on the general plan of socialist reconstruction of the city of Bucharest heavily affected the architects' freedom of expression; in the eyes of Party proselytes, this freedom was only important for the elements serving the interests of imperialism" [...] and who were „enslaved to the foreign capital, despising the valuable artistic tradition of the Romanian people and who submissively embraced the Cubist houses in vogue in the capitalist countries of the West”, who disseminated „formalism and cosmopolitanism, specific ways of expressions of the bourgeoisie's ideology, but unknown and misunderstood by the common people”².

The total denial and misinterpretation of the interwar cultural synchronisation that brought Romania closer to Western civilisation and the effective break with the architectural and town planning development from before the wars, resulted in spreading a new kind of architecture which had to follow „the example set by Soviet architecture, the Socialist and the Communism-construction-era architecture, which originated and developed during the battle against cosmopolitanism and formalism of the decadent bourgeois culture, by following the «precious» recommendations of comrades Lenin and Stalin.”³ Architects had the momentous mission to design „buildings, great constructions and building complexes [...] meant to satisfy the unceasingly growing social and life needs of the workers”. At the same time, their creations were meant to be „works of art reflecting the conscience of the new, Socialist society.”⁴

The architectural creation subjected to the principles of Socialist Realism was meant to be the truthful image of the new reality in the Popular Republic of Romania and to help the formation of the *New Man*. The main idea was to be the “the realization of the Stalinist care-for-the-people principle by creating populated centres and Socialist cities”⁵. From that moment on, for a period of 15-20 years, the „general plans of systematisation”⁶ and socialist construction of the cities” were intended to use the “Soviet experience and know-how in constructing and reconstructing cities.”

Despite the “nationalisation” of the architecture profession and annihilation of liberal rights, the socialist realism in architecture that the authorities in Moscow imposed was to be ironically implemented and filtered by the same “four hundred architects who were active before the war and that the regime could not do without.”⁷ This fact moderated to a certain extent the devastating effects of this decision on the image of the Romanian cities.

2 A.N.I.C., the fund of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party. File no. 102/1952: 18; the Decision of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers Party and of the Council of Ministers of the Romanian Popular Republic on the Socialist construction and reconstruction of towns and on the organisation of activities in the field of architecture.

3 Ibid., 19.

4 Ibid., 20.

5 Ibid., 21.

6 The term of „systematisation” refers to the program of territorial planning carried out under Nicolae Ceaușescu's Communist regime (end of the 1960s till 1989). In 1974, *Act no. 58/1974 on the systematisation of the territory, of the urban and rural localities* was voted in by the Great National Assembly. The Act statuated that „Systematisation aims to ensure judicious organisation of the country territory, of the districts and communes, of the urban and rural localities, the functional zoning of land use, to set the buildings' height regime, the building density as well as the population density, the scaling of green and leisure spaces, the equipment with social-cultural facilities, with municipal technical works, with communication and transport routes, the preservation and improvement of the surrounding environment, the enhancement of historic and art monuments, of historic places, the increase of economic and social efficiency of investments and the continuous improvement of the working, living and resting conditions of the entire population” (excerpt from *Act no. 58/1974 on the systematisation of the territory, of the urban and rural localities* published in The Official Bulletin no. 135 / 1974, November 1st, accessed August 25, 2013, <http://www.legex.ro/Legea-58-1974-565.aspx>).

7 Ana Maria Zahariade, “Proiectul communist în beton – o istorie a profesiunii” [The Communist Project in Concrete – A History of Our Profession], in *Arhitectura în proiectul comunist. România 1944-1989* [Architecture in the Communist Project:

The institutionalisation of the political control on all levels of the architectural profession, from education to practice, from theory to design, and institutional leadership, destroyed any trace of concurrence of competencies and reversed the professional hierarchies. This state of facts led to an excessively centralized, hard to manage and highly restrictive control system in architecture and town planning. Yet, it is impossible to refrain from respecting certain touches of true professionalism invested in the endeavor to frame the new system, a dimension that is worth highlighting. Thus, *The Decree of 13 November 1952* established the *State Committee for Architecture and Constructions* (C.S.A.C.), directly subordinated to the *Council of Ministers*, through which a very centralised notification and authorisation procedure was to be implemented, along with its direct “levers”: the *Architecture and Systematisation Departments* affiliated to the *Popular Municipal Councils* (led by the cities’ Chief Architects), the *Architecture and Systematisation Direction* affiliated to the *Capital Popular Council*, the “*Proiect București*” Institute, the *Institute of City Planning and Public Dwellings* (I.S.P.R.O.R.), and the Union of Architects of Popular Republic of Romania (with the “Arhitectura R.P.R” magazine under the Union’s and C.S.A.C.’s aegis).

The period after the death of Stalin in 1953, gradually marked by a relative relaxation that history will remember as the “first thaw”⁸, did not really mean for the Romanian architects the unconditional widening of their freedom, as they hoped for, but rather the alignment to the “formulae of functionalist city and modern expression pre-digested by the Soviet scientific reflection”⁹.

The Technical Documentation for Constructions, Architecture, Systematisation. The Beginnings

The establishment of the *Direction of Technical Documentation and Information* and of the *Technical Documentation Center* (later renamed as *Center of Documentation for Constructions, Architecture and Systematisation* – C.D.C.A.S.) and the specialised library belonging to the State Committee for Architecture and Constructions was due to the imposed Soviet “scientific” approach, which requested full support of the activities of the design institutes through professional technical documentation and information.

Along with its specific activity focused on specialised technical documentation and information in constructions, architecture and systematisation, C.D.C.A.S. performed a remarkable editorial activity. The *Bulletin of Technical Information*, known by the architects and engineers of the time by the acronym “B.I.T.”, was the main editorial outcome, which almost became “the brand” of the Center. The first issue of the Bulletin was published in 1957. It would come out continuously and evolve constantly for two decades of Stalinism and “post-modern neo-Stalinism”¹⁰ (1957-1974), being elaborated and edited by the C.D.C.A.S. in collaboration with a large team of construction related specialists, mostly architects and engineers.

A contemporary, fresh study of the B.I.T.’s issues shows a sequence of transformations in structure, content, documentation sources and bulk of information; the sequence reflects

Romania 1944-1989], (Bucharest: Simetria, 2011), 141.

8 A phrase taking the title of a short story by Ilya Ehrenburg, see Vladimir Tismăneanu, “Dezghetul post-stalinist: promisiuni, amăgiri, deziluzii” [The Post-Stalinist Thaw: Promises, Illusions, Delusions], <http://www.contributors.ro/global-europa/dezghetul-post-stalinist-promisiuni-amagiri-deziluzii>, published May 3, 2013, accessed August 20, 2013.

9 Zahariade, *Arhitectura*, 141.

10 Zahariade, *Arhitectura*, 83.

unequivocally not only an impressive institutional effort to provide specialised documentation, but also the evolution of architecture and town planning in Romania in a controversial period, marked by paradoxical developments.

In order to have an accurate image of the scale of this institutional effort, we must remark that until 1957, the great majority of the design institutes (26) were located in Bucharest. At the end of 1957 “the regional design institutes are established, transformed in 1959 in *Systematisation, Architecture and Construction Departments* – D.S.A.P.C., organised under the umbrella of the regional popular councils; they granted high priority to systematisation of settlements, housing design, of social cultural or small industrial buildings in the respective areas. After 1968, following the administrative reorganisation and the reestablishment of the counties, each county was to have its own design institute”¹¹. These institutes would benefit from the C.D.C.A.S. specialised documentation and translation services, which would remain devoted and constant providers of local technical information thanks to the Bulletin.

The Bulletin of Technical Information. The Golden Era

In the beginning, during the whole year of 1957, B.I.T.¹² appeared under the aegis of the *State Committee for Architecture and Constructions* subordinated to the Council of Ministries (C.S.A.C. of C.M.), under the *Direction for Documentation and Technical Information*. The Bulletin was then an anthology of newsletters with a prevailing bibliographical character. The documentation sources were mostly Romanian and Russian and the rare Western titles referred to translations from English, French or German into Russian.

The structure of the Bulletin was simple. The technical information was synthesised in series of lists: lists of construction and architecture type-projects approved and sanctioned by the C.S.A.C. as reusable, lists of norms and normative, decrees of the C.M. and orders of the C.S.A.C. regarding the architecture and constructions sector, and notifications of bibliographical entries in the library of the C.S.A.C., namely Romanian or “foreign” (Russian) books and magazines, translations from Russian.

Before 1960, the Bulletin appears to have been published by the *Technical Documentation Center*, under the aegis of the *Ministry of Constructions and Constructions Materials*. The first issue of 1964 shows an independent publication under the sole aegis of the *Documentation Center for Constructions, Architecture and Systematisation*, the three reference fields being mentioned explicitly on the main cover.

At that moment the structure of the Bulletin was extended and the content was divided into two sections, respectively: “I. Informative Section” and “II. Bibliography Section”. Both sections contain categories of domains of interest represented by letters and numbers, as follows:

I. INFORMATIVE SECTION¹³

A. ACTS, DECREES, DECISIONS, ORDERS

B. NORMATIVE MATERIAL:

¹¹ Alexandru Panaitescu, *De la Casa Scântei la Casa Poporului. Patru decenii de arhitectură în București. 1945-1989* [From Casa Scântei to Casa Poporului. Four Decades of Architecture in Bucharest] (Bucharest: Simetria, 2012).

¹² The research for this article implied the consultation of the archive of the Bulletin of Technical Information hosted by the library of the C.D.C.A.S.

¹³ The translation of the content of the two sections tried to reproduce faithfully the original phrasing. The comments (in italics between brackets) that explain the content of categories are ours.

B1. Standards;

B2. Types

C. DOCUMENTARY ENTRIES:

C1. New books. Analytical and enunciative indexes for books and other similar bibliographical materials;

C2. Special issues of publications. Magazines entirely dedicated to plastic as construction material, to administrative and commercial buildings, to universities and higher technical schools;

C3. Translations made by the C.D.C.A.S. Bibliographic indexes for the translations made by the C.D.C.A.S.

C4. Documentation material elaborated by the C.D.C.A.S.: Current documentation; Documentation synthesis

D. PHOTOCINEMATOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL

Photos and documentary films entries in the photo/film libraries of the C.D.C.A.S on industrial buildings and constructions, dwellings, social-cultural buildings etc.

E. TECHNICAL-SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

E1. Execution (Execution projects listed and presented – comments, plans, schemes and images – by architects and engineers working in construction and assembling enterprises throughout the country)

E2. Researches, Studies - Documentation

E3. Design (Projects put into practice within the design institutes from all over the country, presented – comments, plans and images – by the architects-in-chief or engineers)

E4. Inventions – Innovations (Presentation of inventions or innovations in construction technology)

E5. Technical facts from beyond borders

F. CONGRESSES – CONFERENCES – EXHIBITIONS

II BIBLIOGRAPHY SECTION

Technical literature in the field of constructions, architecture and systematisation

Enunciative and analytical indexes from periodical publications elaborated by the Technical Documentation Centre in collaboration with the C.D.C.A.S. (see Fig. 2)

Special entries

During the year 1965, the structure of the “Bibliography Section” is enlarged in order to include the following themes: Works of general interest, Civil and industrial constructions, Systematisation. Architecture, Municipal techniques, Hydro technical constructions, Construction materials. Pre-Engineered products

The extension of the “Bibliography Section”, due to the expansion of the documentation basis beyond the Communist countries (Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Great Britain, the United States of America) is followed by the significant expansion of the “E5” heading “Technical facts from beyond borders” with examples of projects coming from Western countries, richly annotated

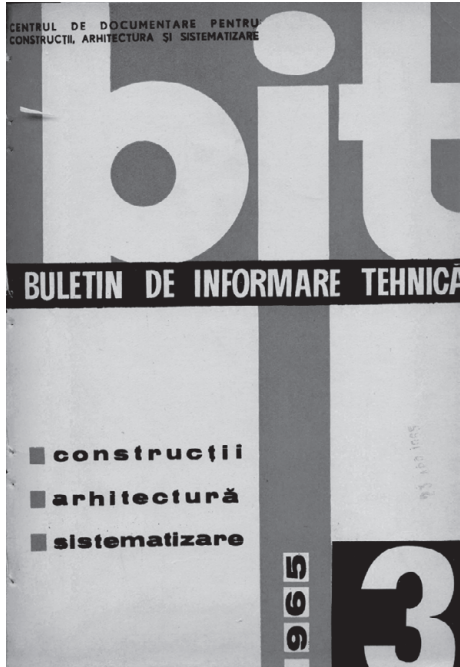


Fig.1. Cover of the 3rd issue of B.I.T. in 1965.

PUBLICAȚII EDITATE DE C.D.C.A.S. PENTRU ANUL 1965

Materialele documentare difuzate pe bază de abonament, cu plata anticipată

Denumirea materialului	Conținutul și modul de apariție	Costul
● Buletinul de informare tehnică (BIT)	Semnalări de materiale normative, bibliografice, foto-documentografice, documentare etc. în formatul amplas realizărilor tehnice deosebite din proiectare și execuție, asupra studiilor și cercetărilor elaborate etc.	lei 144 pe an Apare lunar
● Documentare curentă	Prezentări ale unor materiale documentare din realizările și din practica de proiectare și de execuție	
a/ Construcții și materiale de construcții	Apare săptămânal	lei 52 pe an
b/ Arhitectură și sistemizare	Apare săptămânal	lei 52 pe an
● Sintese documentare	Colageri de sintesă din materialele documentare existente la C.D.C.A.S., pentru un număr de teme arătate în tabelul ce s-a transmis unităților	lei 20 pentru fiecare titlu (teasă)
● Bibliografii deschise	Liste bibliografice puse la dispoziție în diferite teme. Se trimis în tranșe, pe măsura acumulării de noi titluri aparute	lei 4,50 pe an pentru fiecare teasă

Fig.2. Publications edited by the C.D.C.A.S. in 1965, "Documentation materials disseminated to subscribers with subscription anticipated payment", types of publications, content, and type of periodical, cost. Excluding the Bulletin of Technical Information, which is a monthly magazine, the other publications were: "Current Documentation" with two weekly periodicals – "Constructions and construction materials" and "Architecture and Systematisation"; "Documentation synthesis", occasional appearance on demand; "Open bibliographies" containing updated bibliographical lists on different topics, disseminated periodically in fascicles, according to the amount of entries gathered.

and illustrated. At the same time, a growing interest is given to translations from other languages than Russian made by the C.D.C.A.S. - the "C3" heading. The number of translations from English, French, German and Spanish into Romanian grows to such an extent that a systematic organisation of translations by themes is requested: General matters, History and theory of constructions and architecture, Territorial systematisation and town planning¹⁴, Buildings, Engineering constructions, Construction elements, Construction materials, Sanitary and technical equipment of buildings, Construction works technology, Economy of constructions, Additional translations that can be consulted in the Centre's library

The cultural openness of the moment is easy to trace from the evolution of the "F" heading „Congresses – Conferences – Exhibitions”. The 4th issue of B.I.T. in 1965 noted several international events that took place in France, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium and the United States of America, etc., to which Romanian architects were allowed to participate. This could not have been possible a few years before. The 6th issue in 1965 extensively presents the National

14 For the first time in the B.I.T.'s pages „systematisation” is no longer used as an umbrella term; differentiation is made between territorial planning and town planning.

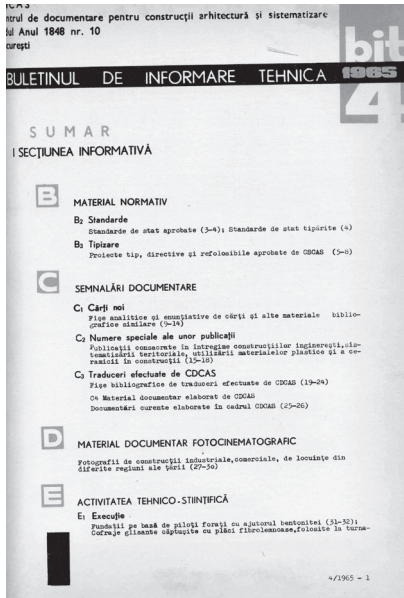


Fig.3. Summary of the 4th issue of B.I.T. in 1965 (2 images, pp. 1-2).

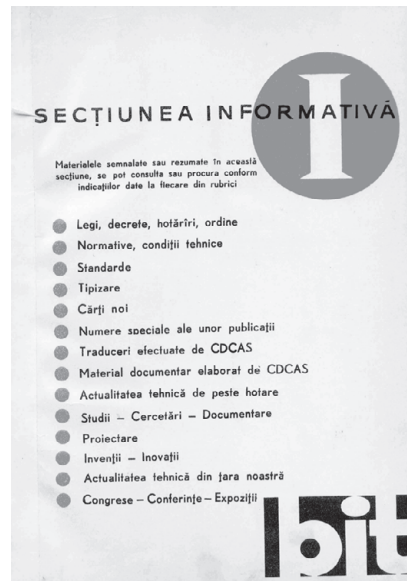
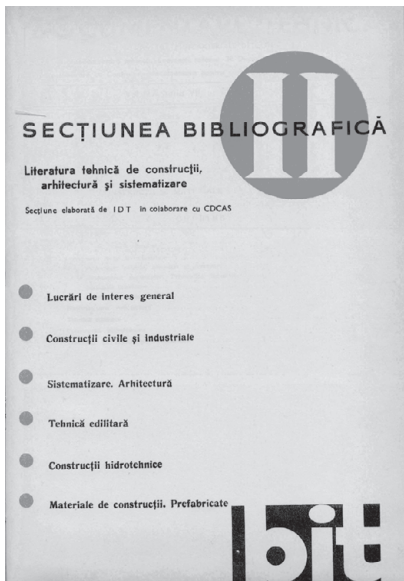
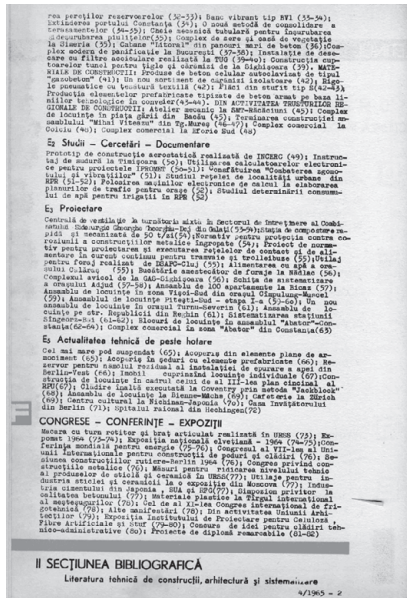


Fig.4. Summary of the Informative Section of the Bulletin.

Fig.5. Summary of the Bibliographic Section of the Bulletin.

Conference of the Union of Architects and the full-version of “The greeting words of the Central Committee of the Romanian Party of Workers, of the State and Ministry Councils” presented by comrade Gheorghe Apostol, by which “Architects are called to acquire and implement the most modern and advanced technical procedures, to use the most recent and adequate construction materials”. Further he said: “By appreciating with discernment the most remarkable experience and achievements **from all over the world**, our architecture must have a footprint of its own [...] [B]y intensely affirming a distinct physiognomy within the contemporary architecture it will make an original contribution to the **worldwide cultural enrichment**”¹⁵. The Exhibition on Austrian Architecture was also presented in this issue. The two-month long Exhibition was organised under the aegis of the *State Committee for Constructions, Architecture and Systematisation* and of the Union of Architects and took place in the “Ion Mincu” Institute of Architecture in Bucharest (the then Rector of the Institute was the architect Ascanio Damian). The event was part of the “cultural changes meant to intensify the relationship between the Republic of Austria and the Popular Republic of Romania and to contribute to the reciprocal change of ideas and experiences, to advertise the achievements of architects in both countries”¹⁶. The works exposed belonged to well known Austrian architects such as Otto Wagner, Joseph Olbrich or Adolf Loos, who had a crucial influence over the European modernism in architecture and town planning.

In the same issue two new headings appeared: “From the activity of the Union of Architects”, (briefly presenting the Films, Conferences, Discussions, Exhibitions, notifications of foreign groups of visitors, the calendar of annual events) and “Ion Mincu Institute of Architecture”, (briefly presenting comments, plans and images concerning the most remarkable diploma projects). Other issues of the same year 1965 feature architectural competitions and the winning projects.

The evolution of the Bulletin faithfully follows the beginning of (relative) openness and professional freedom that architects enjoyed after 1960, the short period of general liberalisation of life, of cultural relaxation and openness towards the Western culture, of professional effervescence and emulation of the years 1960-1970, when a lot of constructions have been erected over a short period of time, of which many were remarkable. We do not believe we are exaggerating in affirming that this evolution is due to some extent to the access of architects to a broader documentation and information basis. “The true rationalist culture of the dwelling was built then, in the design institutes for standard-projects [...] the millions of dwellings (flats) built after 1960 are almost similar to the ones in Western towns [...]; the design was based on the same town planning model and on similar typologies, regardless of the way they seeped into”¹⁷.

The Bulletin gradually built up its name and got the appreciation of its beneficiaries: day-by-day, the Technical Documentation Bulletin edited by the C.D.C.A.S. gains greater appreciation of the construction and designing enterprises. This is reflected by the frequent requests of supplementary data referring to the published information we are getting, as well as by the year-by-year increase of the print-run based on the growing subscription requests”. In the column “Technical propaganda”¹⁸ we see how the subscribers advertised the B.I.T. by posting copies of pages on the clipboard in the main hall of the enterprise. It was a quite daring decision, because these clipboards were compulsory in the main entrance halls of every institution during Communism and were meant to be used for displaying a kind of newsletters containing the most recent Communist Party’s acts or other “important things” happening in the Life of the Party.

15 B.I.T. 6 (1965): 72, B.I.T. Archive, C.D.C.A.S. library.

16 Panaitescu, *De la Casa Scântei*, 73: excerpt from the common speech of the Ambassador of Austria and Rector Ascanio Damian.

17 Zahariade, *Arhitectura*, 142.

18 B.I.T. 2 (1965): 22.

For Romanian architects, the first years of the 1970s were marked by “a relative balance between the «imposed form» and freedom of interpretation”¹⁹. In 1971, the political command cast once again its shadow across this fragile freedom: Ceaușescu publicly criticised the free town planning model practised by the Romanian architects and the way they understood to “disregard the traditional values and national specificity”²⁰. It comes as no surprise that for Ceaușescu this speech about tradition and specificity did not mean what the architects hoped for – a free reinterpretation of traditional elements, a new openness – but the opposite, an isolation, a closure inasmuch as dramatic and painful because it marked, practically, a total anachronistic return to an obsolete form of the Stalinist model even more drastic than the first one in the 1950s. This was called the post-Stalinist Stalinism.²¹

Constantly improved and enlarged for almost 20 years, the *Technical Documentation Bulletin* had become in the 1970s a high standard professional magazine, with periodical issues, useful and searched for by the specialists in the field. Its graphic design was still poor, but the layout had changed so that the Bulletin became a portfolio including 12 detachable documentation thematic notebooks, richly commented upon and containing detailed information, which was practical, handy, covering broad areas. The documentation notebooks were organized on various domains of interest, constantly adjusted according to the feedback from specialists’ demands: Urban and rural territorial systematisation²², Industrial and agricultural constructions, Housing construction, Engineering constructions, Social-cultural and administrative buildings, Installations for constructions, Communal municipal „householding”²³ (in collaboration with the specialised research and design I.S.P.G.C.), Organisation, planning and constructions economy. Improving the professional formation of the personnel working in constructions, Assembling installations and technological equipment, General design and execution matters, Construction materials, Characteristics and usage, Mechanisation of constructions.

Each of these domains was detailed in further four topics: National technical actuality, Foreign technical actuality, Documentation material from the C.D.C.A.S., (*Translations, current documentation, documentation synthesis, photographic or cinematographic documentation*), Open bibliographies, (*Bibliographical lists which can be detached from the notebooks and classified by topics in binders*).

Each of the documentary notebooks was edited by an individual editorial team, so that the entire portfolio gathered a group of almost 20 editors, architects, different types of engineers and economists.

19 Ibid., 143.

20 *Arhitectura* 2 (1971): excerpt from the “Opening speech of comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu at the 3rd Conference of the Union of Architects”.

21 Zahariade, *Arhitectura*, 143.

22 B.I.T. 2 (1974): The translation of the content of this issue tried to reproduce faithfully the original phrasing. The comments in italics between brackets explaining the content of categories are ours.

23 The etymology of the word „household” (*gospodar*) is Slavic (from *gospodin*), meaning a master-sovereign (especially a peasant) over his own property (the „house holding”, from *gospodărie*) and was used until 1949 as such. After the coming into power of the Communist regime, the meaning of the word was distorted and used in its collective denotation (because the individual was excluded). So, we can find it in different types of Communist agricultural collective cooperatives and, as inadequate as it may seem in this context, as an element of the term „communal municipal house holding”, meaning municipal / communal rural facilities.



Fig.6. Cover of the 2nd issue of the Bulletin in 1974.

Fig.7, 8, 9. Covers of three (from twelve) documentary notebooks, which composed the portfolio of the Bulletin.

The End of the Golden Era

The shock wave of the policy of re-Stalinisation of the country crossed over the field of constructions, architecture and town planning and, inevitably, hit the specific technical documentation. Even if B.I.T. was the only technical documentation and information bulletin in its field, it ceased its publication in 1974, in the acme of its existence, most probably due to economic reasons.

The C.D.C.A.S. outlived its bulletin by 20 years; it still continued its mission of documentation-information²⁴ by focusing on the elaboration of current documentation and documentation synthesis of a more limited and targeted use. It had no more periodical of its own until 1995 when, under the aegis of the *Ministry of Public Works and Territorial Planning*, it decided to re-publish the *Bulletin*. If in its heyday of the B.I.T., the information the bulletin provided was keenly expected and intensely used, after 1995, the new social and professional environment was not that welcoming. Though the B.I.T. benefitted by now from a larger and more valuable documentation basis than before²⁵, and published syntheses on required topics (systematised in databases, modernised and updated in accordance with the new informational technologies...), architects showed no real interest in the new series. Despite all efforts, the unequal concurrence with the digital media, the large availability of foreign professional magazines, the rejection of centralised documentation practices, and other phenomena buried the new initiative. The Bulletin heroically survived until 2003. All those years before its closing, the small but still enthusiastic editorial team tried to restore the main role that the B.I.T. had played as provider of documentation-information services, in spite of its constant funding shortage. In 2009, lacking demand and funds, the Centre itself was dissolved by governmental decision.²⁶

24 „The Center of Documentation for Constructions, Architecture, Town and Territorial Planning – C.D.C.A.S. Bucharest is a public institution subordinated to the Ministry of Transportation, Constructions and Tourism, and have the mission to manage, provide and turn to good account public scientific, technical, economical, statistical, juridical information in the fields of constructions, architecture, town and territorial planning [...] it has among its main attributions the organising, management and storing of scientific and technical documentation patrimony in the fields of constructions, architecture, town and territorial planning.

The C.D.C.A.S. is a specialised unit of information and documentation [...] and part of the National Information and Documentation System [...] within C.D.C.A.S. the specialised public library of the branch of constructions, architecture, town and territorial planning is organised and [...] is a part of the National System of Libraries.

The beneficiaries of the technical and scientific information managed by the C.D.C.A.S. are juridical persons (central and local administrations, inspector's offices for constructions, secondary and higher educational and research units in the field, economical agents, mass-media; libraries and other centers of information and documentation, patronal and union organisations, foundations), physical persons (specialists from all over the country in the field; students, didactic personnel and researchers in the field), institutions of information, documentation and research, foreign specialists." (Excerpt from the Government Decision nr. 412/2004 on the organisation and functioning of the Ministry of Transportation, Constructions and Tourism, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I no. 276 from March 30, 2004, with further modifications and completions, the Subtending Note for developing the documentary fund, the funding of the capital expenses and acquisition of the inventory objects necessary to the functioning of the specialised public library within the Center of Documentation for Constructions, Architecture, Town and Territorial Planning – C.D.C.A.S., Bucharest.

25 The entries of the library of the C.D.C.A.S. came at that time almost exclusively from the Western countries and included the most recent issues of the professional literature.

26 Decision nr. 1398 from November 18, 2009 on the establishment, organisation and functioning of the National Institute for Research and Development in the field of constructions, town planning and Sustainable Territorial Development URBAN-INCERC as a national institute of research and development, Romanian juridical person, coordinated by the Ministry of the Regional Development and Dwelling, by merging of the National Institute of Research and Development in Constructions and Constructions Economy – INCERC Bucharest with the National Institute of Research and Development for Town and Territorial Planning – URBANPROIECT Bucharest and with the National Center of Research and Development for Documentation in the field of Constructions, Architecture, Town and Territorial Planning – C.D.C.A.S., the last one being dissolved by law", published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I no. 816, 27.11.2009, http://www.gov.ro/nota-de-fundamentare-hg-nr-1398-18-11-2009__1a107578.html, http://www.dsclcx.ro/legislatie/2009/noiembrie2009/mo2009_816.htm#hg1398.

The library of the C.D.C.A.S., still exceptional on national scale, with its underestimated and poorly known documentary fund, is the sole survivor of this half-century of evolution. It remained the silent witness of the *golden age* of organized documentation in constructions, architecture and town planning, an epoch whose decline and end paradoxically proclaimed the beginning of the *Golden Age* of Romanian Communism.

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