

The Bitter Gifts of Progress: Russian Revolution, "Barrackization" of Living Space and the Poverty of Experience.

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Abstract

Year 2017 marks centenary of Russian Revolution that greatly affected development of twentieth century's aesthetic and political thought both in Russia and abroad. Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 ultimately transformed young state's living space with the help of architectural Avant-garde that passionately supported ideas of liberation from Imperial ruins in the name of Progress. Revolution, Progress and Avant-garde were synonymous then, calling to move forward towards future. That move meant fast and reckless drive away from the past, divorce with heritage, experience and history.

The land fertilized by Russian Revolution attracted many thinkers to observe it in action, to witness immediate achievements of Progress. One of those greatest minds was Walter Benjamin, who stayed in Moscow in the fall and winter of 1926-27 and whose later concept of new barbarism and poverty of experience put critique on modernity and progress.

Guided by Benjamin's observations of post-revolutionary Russia I think on the paths of Avand-Garde during reformation of the urban living space inspired by the faith in ideological and technological Progress. Post-revolutionary Russia is a great example to reflect on how Progress, when seen as drive to the future and escape from the past meets its own end and finds itself stuck on the ruins of modernity.

Keywords: Russian Revolution, Avant-garde, progress, living space, W. Benjamin.