

## THE PLANS AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY IN BUDAPEST 1949-1956

"It is not true that the basic difference between the architecture of the class-ridden and our society is that while the former one represents, ours serves people. Let us compare the underground in Paris with the underground in Moscow. The Paris Metro is perfectly practical; there is nothing to be said about it from the point of view of functionalism. But what feelings does the Paris Metro inspire in the Parisian worker?... When he enters these underground stations which so perfectly respond to their functions, he feels their emptiness, their desolation, the despair occasioned by the cold utility of the Parisian Metro. And the Moscow Metro? With its architecture adorned with statues, with – dare I say it – its luxury, it creates for the worker going to work the feeling that in the Soviet Union it is a holiday even when it is not Sunday. Both are functional but the function is not the same."

József Révai, 1951<sup>1</sup>

**A**fter the communist take-over, which was completed in 1947-1948, the years that saw the new people's democracy emerge, the construction of the underground became a prestige investment and was on the way to be carried out. However, it is still a question whether or not the functions and the objectives were set taking the current and future needs into consideration when economic planning was made. It is worth noting that it was after the Hungarian Communist Party and the Socialdemocratic Party were forced to unite (12 June, 1948) that the authorities began to work out the first Five-year-plan based on the Soviet-type command economy as well as on the Three-year-plan that was claimed successful (1947-1950).

Having studied the documents available I realized that they do not cover certain aspects of the construction from the second half of 1948 to the end of 1949. Consequently, it is obvious that the construction was not seen as of outstanding importance from the point of view of public transport, city-planning or architecture. This period was the time when the artifact was subordinated to the authorities.

The Board of Public Works was abolished in February 1948, construction industry was nationalized, private architect studios ceased to operate and the first state design institutes were set up from the end of 1948 onwards. The very first one was IPARTERV, which designed industrial buildings.

In 1949 Ernő Gerő, the "bridge-builder", Minister of Transport, was appointed Finance Minister and then Secretary of State as well as president of the Supreme Economic Council. His successor in the position of the Minister of Transport was Lajos Bebrits. Construction and architecture, client and architect were integrated into the hierarchy of the state.

According to the overall plans made by the ÁÉTI, the State Institute for Architecture and Design for the development of Budapest the first underground railway line was still to be built along this route: Dósa György street – Rákóczi street – Southern Railway Station – Széll Kálmán Square.

### The Ideology of the Exemplar

The peak in the process of constructing the Moscow underground was reached by the completion of the so-called Grand Boulevard. The fourth section of it had been made

ready by the 70th birthday of Stalin (21 December, 1949), though it was opened to public only on 1 January, 1950. The design of its station on and below the ground was the most typical example of the Socialist Realism.

The Moscow underground influenced the construction of the underground in Budapest to a certain extent, but it served as an example concerning the ideology of city-planning rather than a model to be followed from the architectural point of view.

According to the ideology of that era a capitalist town is characterized by its anarchical growth reflecting the opposition of the classes as opposed to a socialist town, which dissolves the antagonistic contrasts of a capitalist town doing away with the differences between the inner-city and the suburbia, the quarters inhabited by the rich and the poor. The ways and means of eliminating these differences were set down as a theory: an essential architectural characteristic feature of a socialist town is that "it is of the same quality in each and every segment, no matter where you go".<sup>2</sup> In capitalist towns the hundreds of thousands of workers living in cheap flats in tenement houses on the outskirts of the town commute to their workplace every day, which takes them hours. So, though the rent they pay for the flat is low, they have to spend hours travelling, at the expense of their free time.

In a socialist town, however, the solution was thought to have been found: the fast underground reduces the time people have to spend travelling to their workplace.

The improvement of worker's living conditions this way was appropriate to demonstrate the concept of the 'caring socialism', which is a term used by Stalin.

In 1949 the Ministry of Transport commissioned the State Institute of Underground Architecture and Design to work out the plans. The actual construction, "which was encouraged and urged by our Party" began in spring of 1950. This fact was put down in the decree of the Council of Ministers published on 17 September, 1950.

### The Construction Works in the Related Documents of the Central Board of the Hungarian Democratic Party (MDP)

The documents of the Central Board do not reveal too much concerning the preparatory steps of the underground

construction. As regards the political aspects of the process we get a clear picture, even if some details are not dealt in depth. In spite of the fact that it was the second largest investment (the first was building Sztálinváros – Stalintown), and a significant percentage of the GDP was needed to cover the costs the Central Board behaved as an observer rather than taking part in the events.

After the initial velocity that characterized the beginning of the work, typical for the voluntarism of the era, the deadlines were modified, the financial resources were getting more and more limited. Although *planning* was a key-term in those years, the political leadership seemed to be lacking it. They often made ad hoc decisions instead of being systematic. As economic planning was influenced by politics, that is ideology, this investment could not be handled properly and be integrated into their Five-year-plan. So it stood no real chance of being feasible. According to their far-reaching plans the underground system – as the previous designs had it – would have been made of two diagonal (east-west, north-south) and a circular line connecting these. The first step would have been building the east-west line between the Népstadion (People's Stadium) and the Déli Pályaudvar (Southern Railway Station). By 1954 the section between the Stalin (Engels – Deák) square, until the end of 1955 the whole line should have been opened to the public.

The estimated costs were two billion Forints (September 1950). The Department of Public Finances proposed to increase the amount to be spent in 1951, so that the line could be completed as far as Kossuth Square by the end of 1954. The real reason for making this proposal was that building the mouth of a tunnel was thought to be easier under Kossuth Square than between Blaha Square and the Népstadion where the subsoil was of much worse quality. Working under unfavourable conditions would have meant an enormous workload for the inexperienced workers. The proposal contained another suggestion as well according to which the building of six stations is advised to be started instead of the planned three. The necessity of the latter instruction was supported by Soviet experts, who had found that it took not two but at least three years to complete one station. The new schedule was accepted. The underground station at Kossuth Square was to be finished by the middle of 1952 and at the end of the same year Stalin Square could have been used as an air-raid shelter. On 15 March, 1951 they decided that the two diagonal main lines should intersect under Stalin Square.

The next datum in the chronology is the report written by Zoltán Vas (Department of Public Finances) to the Secretariat in June, 1952. This report pointed out that the construction was lagging one year behind the schedule, it was only at the Déli Pályaudvar (Southern Railway Station) that works were half a year ahead of the plans because of more favourable subsoil conditions on the Buda side. The other reason for the delay was that the tubing (iron lining) imported from the Soviet Union had to be refined, which took time and cost 30 million Forints plus. Workers still did not have the appropriate tools e.g. a tunnelling shield, they applied mining methods in the construction, so they proceeded at a slow pace. The maximum progress made a day was one metre. Zoltán Vas forecast the total costs to amount to

2,700 million Forints and the work to be completed by 31 December, 1956. He also claimed that the line between Stalin Square and the Népstadion would be accomplished by 31 December, 1954. In its decree of 25 June the Secretariat accepted the current situation and the modifications.

To the best of our knowledge the matter of the underground construction was next raised at the meeting of the Political Committee on 19 August, 1953. At this meeting they found that the technical conditions necessary to open the line between Stalin Square and Népstadion in 1957 were satisfactory. By this time, 1,800 linear metres of double tunnel and 32% of the tunnels at the stations had been completed. No railway tunnel leading to Buda had been built but the stations had been ready in 19%. The Political Committee emphasised that the primary concern of the government led by Imre Nagy was to solve the housing problem, so a major reduction in the credit available for the construction of the underground was needed. At the same time the Committee ordered to build an additional 400 metres of double tunnel between Boráros Square and Népstadion. Otherwise priority should be given to the preservation of what had been done as well as the prevent water from breaking in.

It was also recorded that the foundation of the factory producing iron lining, which was extremely important, had been finished. According to an order 4,000 people should be directed to the building site by the end of 1953.

The Political Committee surveyed the process of the construction on 20 January 1954 and it accepted the new scheduling, which actually was one step back, with a supplementary remark: it must be ensured that being very enthusiastic, the workers do not do any harm "making unnecessary investments".

Examining the sources we can see that the authorities on the top were considering the political-ideological obligations of the company as thoroughly as sorting the problems of economic nature out. This was made possible by the party secretary of the Underground Building Company, who kept the Central Committee informed sending reports on the 'on-site' partymatters, the socialist work competition, the activity of the propagandists, the number of stakhanovists (the fastest, most productive workers). Although these reports contain information expressed in percentages on the work done, this information is not of much use. Besides the dates of opening the different sites of work we can trace the changes in the number of workers, since it was of primary importance to point out how successful the ideological activity was. Party-building was even more important than production itself. In the summer of 1952, when construction was in full swing, the workers, mostly from the country side, numbered more than 5,000. 646 of them were members of the party. Rarely do we find any reference to the problems that arose in the course of the construction. Some of these problems were that e.g. planning was lagging behind, the activity of the Design Institute should have been revised, earthworks were costly, so were the building materials. According to these reports, however, the cause of all the problems was the enemy (not specified any further), who was "undermining the company's strategy mainly as far as wages are concerned".

A specific aspect of the work was outlined in the party press titled 'Metro', which was the newspaper of the local party organisation. The 'Metro' was launched on 1 April, 1951 with a special edition, which was followed by the official first issue on 1 May, 1951.

The primary purpose of circulating a newspaper like this was to enhance the ideological training of the workers, although sometimes it contained important facts and data on the actual construction. These were very few in number, not to mention photographs, which were hardly ever published. The Moscow example however was shown to the public several times:

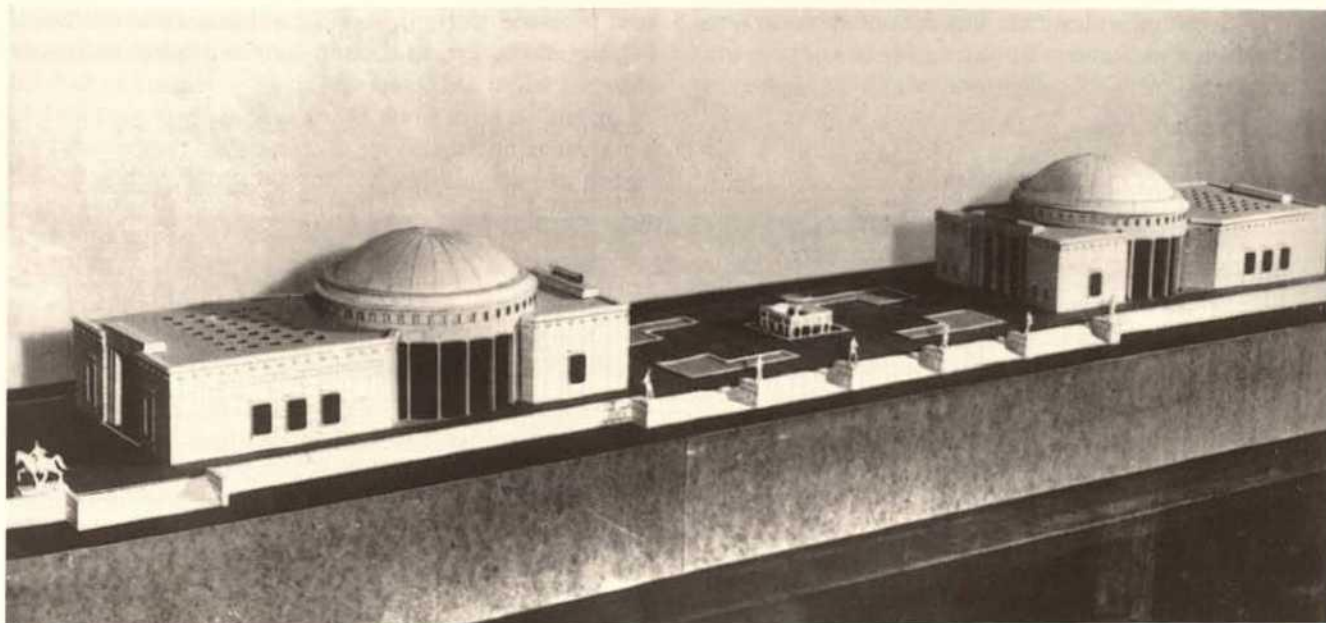
"The name of Stalin is echoed by every station of the Moscow underground" (21 December, 1951).

The means of stimulating people to work hard was urging them to read 'Szabad Nép' (Free People) regularly, but this newspaper just like the Metro hardly ever published facts.

actly the same as in Moscow. (The two platforms are in the middle, the rail tracks are at the two sides).

But above all it was the terminology and ideology that was followed: 'the pavilions at the entrances symbolise the superiority of the socialist work', etc. The attitude which determined the formation of the Moscow underground manifested not in the empire-like style of details but rather in the physical and spiritual inferiority of the individual, who was "devoured" by the huge building. In Budapest it would have been illustrative rather than demonstrative, the whole system being a bit more modest.

In the following sections I would like to analyse the plans of the stations along the East-West axis and in some cases I will also point out how these were carried out. In October, 1951 József Révai proposed to the Secretariat setting up a committee responsible for solving the architectural and artistic problems which are likely to arise during the construction. Although this proposal was accepted we have no further information regarding this committee's activity.



I. Nyíri, Stadion Station, model, 1950/51

## The Architectural Design of the Underground

*"Underground! – throughout the city  
and across the Danube.  
It is rushing from the old regime  
towards a better, brighter future."*

(Extract from a poem titled 'Underground' written by A. K., who worked at the central timber-depot, 1952)

The experience acquired and the methods applied while building the Moscow underground 'have become precious 'public property' in the countries of the Soviet bloc'.

As I have already pointed out this had manifested not in particular architectural prototypes to be followed, but in applying certain technical methods. Among many other things that were copied the arrangement of the platforms was ex-

## The Népstadion Station

The Népstadion was the only station architecturally completed in the period covered in this paper. There are two reasons for this. One of them was that the opening was to be held on 20 August, 1953, together with the opening ceremony of the Népstadion itself, so that the crowds visiting the sports events at Népstadion would be provided with proper public transport facilities. Since the completion of the underground by this date proved to be illusory the structure of the station could have served representative functions only. The other substantial reason was that at Népstadion there was no need to dig deep into the ground when constructing the station, which was planned to be close to the surface.

István Nyíri (1902-1955) started to design the station as early as 1950, probably even before the announcement of the government programme. We know a few dated

pages from the documents available, the most significant ones are the following: 'Sectional drawings and side views', 9-14 February, 1951. These documents contain the final layout with the sculptures and other works of art marked on them. The only thing they do not show is the fountain planned to be built between the two buildings in the ornate courtyard.

Concerning the construction process of the dual station with a dome we have the following information from the 'Metro', the newspaper mentioned before.

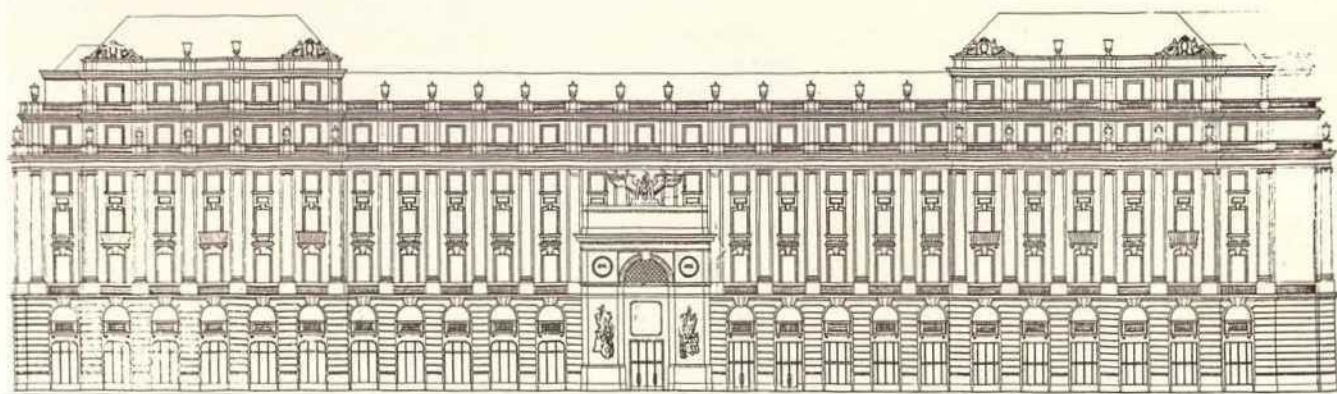
In October, 1951 the work was evaluated as "nearly completed". Later on "however", it turned out that even on 20 August, 1952 the workers had only promised to finish the dome on the Western side. The Eastern dome had already been ready. In the issue of 28 August, 1952 there was a photo illustrating the phase of work near completion. According to the article "the noble and solemn classicist structure" of the building generated or called for those works of art which were planned to be built in or around the station. The idea behind these sculptures, relieves, frescos and mosaics was to express the "joys and beauty of our life and freedom depicting scenes from the topic of sports and national defence".

This shows scenes from everyday life of the Hungarian Army. Two huge frescos were also planned to decorate the station. Aurél Bernáth and István Szőnyi won the assignment to paint these frescos, which were 100 square metres each and would have decorated the wall over the two landings in the inner staircase. Under the surface, on the pillars separating the rail tracks 18 mosaics by 9 artists would have been put (2,25 m x 2,25 m). Among these artists we can find Endre Domanovszky, Gyula Hincz, Géza Fónyi and György Kádár.

Our "working nation" was looking forward to the opening of the first underground station, which would have had such an uplifting artistic decoration. But all the expectations were in vain. Even the building was demolished, not to mention the decorations, when, later on, its successor was built, which was much more functional.

### Baross Square

From the point of view of city-planning the station to be built here was to emphasize the importance of the Keleti Pályaudvar (Eastern Railway Station) as a "gate" to the city



*L. Gádoros, Kossuth Square, elevation, 1951/52*

On the basis of our present knowledge it is not possible to justify the coherence of this programme and to claim that the details of this idea were worked out properly. The very existence of such a programme does not seem probable in spite of the fact that they outlined the purpose of those works of art, as I have pointed it out above.

In 1952 the newspaper informed its readers that two sculptors, Barna Buza and István Balázs were working on one of the four compositions (3 metres tall each) which were to be placed at the two sides of the entrance to the lounge. The lounge was to be covered with green marble. The composition was titled "The Statue of the Socialist National Defence". The activity of sculptors working on the decoration of the building was coordinated by Ferenc Medgyessy.

We also learned that the window frames would be made of red marble, and the pillars would be "dressed in Ionic-style red marble" in spring.

The 21-metre-long series of relieves titled 'The Guards of Peace', made by Sándor Ambrózi and Károly Stöckert, would be displayed around the architrave of the Western dome.

and at the same time it would have provided an answer to the problem of the square itself.

Long-range planning did not exclude the possibility of cutting through the run-down areas in the VII. district from the direction of Baross Square towards the city centre. Tenders were invited, six groups of architects participated in them. The announcement specified the programme and included a 'draftplan' which set down the layout (not known in details), and served as an 'instruction' concerning the task the architects were expected to solve. The arrangement of the escalators was given: they should be entered from the arrivals' hall of the railway station. (A fact to be taken into account was that the HÉV – the local railway – arrived at the Keleti Pu. at that time. The idea the building was meant to convey was the Association between the Workers and Peasants (farmers). As for the appearance of the building: the designs were divided into two groups.

The plans belonging to one of the groups are in harmony with the eclectic architectural style of the Keleti Pu. (Eastern Railway Station), the rest are different. The former were given preference by the judges. Most of the plans (for example the one by Béla Hegedűs) had the same shortcom-

ing: the passengers should have walked along passenger corridors which had interlocking design. This shortcoming was due to the fact that the requirements of the traffic were not specified in advance, even though this was the third time tenders have been invited by the Underground-building Company.

The other drawback of most plans, e.g. Ede Fekete's B-version, which would have taken up 49 thousand cubic metres of air, was that they would have made Kerepesi street narrower, and this would have been bound to cause traffic problems.

Another attribute of the plans was that they put emphasis on size: the larger the building, the better it is. András Ivánka and his colleagues, for instance – made room for the passengers by demolishing parts of the hall and placing the rails outside this hall (45,000 cubic metres). The board of judges labelled the façade as "eccentric", which with its "playful" silhouette and bright colours, as we can read it in the minutes, "is suitable to be on display at an exhibition but not at all does it match the enormous achievement the construction of the underground embodies".

Jenő Szendrői and László Lauber in their first-prize winning plan outlined a huge interior space by pulling down the hall of arrivals of Keleti Pu. According to the appraisal of their plan, the façade of the building to be constructed is very successful, "up-to-date in its details and at the same time it is integrated with the architectural style of the already existing building".

Antal Reischl and his colleagues also belonged to those in favour of demolishing the hall of arrivals to carry out their plans and have a space divided into three parts. They intended to erect a tower-like building above the escalators to serve as a museum. The 'intellectual' or rather ideological content was thought to be expressed by the figures of the worker and the peasant on the top of the building.

Tibor Weiner (second-prize winner) was not any different from the architects mentioned above as far as the enormous interior space is concerned, which could be built on the one condition that the hall of arrivals was pulled down. His plan, however, was realistic and easy to understand in handling the "ideological content of the underground". He applied the architecture of the Hungarian farmhouse, which usually had a portico. Although his idea of adapting the patterns of folk needlework onto the floor was not unanimously popular, it was highly appreciated by the judges.

### **Blaha Lujza Square – National Theatre**

Although we have no certain data concerning the decision on the final location of the building either from 1951/52 or 1956, when the issue was raised again, we know that there were some representative plans which intended to integrate the underground hall into the interior of the theatre building. Although it was only a minor detail as compared to the whole construction, the Central Leading Committee put it on the agenda as the proposal of the Ministry of Transport. Three versions were worked out.

According to the first one, the station on the surface would have been joined onto the front part of the National Theatre, and this would have been the place where the escalator arrives from under the ground. Experts laid it down

that this 'extension' would make the building of the theatre disproportionate. The second version proposed a separate building to be raised on the square. The disadvantage of this version was that a separate building would have divided the square into several streets. The third version intended to place the building on the corner of Rákóczi and Akácfa street or on a vacant plot of land in Akácfa street. This solution was found to be very costly.

Taking everything into account the final decision pointed out that while the first two versions were not acceptable for architectural reasons, neither were they appropriate from the point of view of city-planning, "Blaha Lujza Square was not a place of such a great importance that the question should be decided on the basis of the above-mentioned two criteria". (!) They decided in favour of the first version due to traffic conditions. The building of the National Theatre was erected in a way that was considered to disturb, therefore it was blown up in 1965.

As regards city-planning Gábor Preisich had the opinion that building Baross Square and Blaha Lujza Square, doing away with trams running along Rákóczi street, which is the main street leading into the city centre, and building in vacant plots would ensure that the outward appearance of the street meet its significance.

### **Stalin Square**

The first underground line running under the City Park had to join the East-West line, which was under construction, and the planned North-South line by means of an intermediate level. This was the primary consideration when planning the station at Stalin Square. Four groups of architects were invited to submit their plans. These four teams were led by Zoltán Farkasdy, Tibor Kiss, Gyula Rimanóczy and István Szabó.

From the point of view of city-planning the station at Deák Square (the name kept changing, as we can see) was of an outstanding importance because it was conceived of as the 'moving means' of establishing a socialist city centre. The three-level edifice (the hall on the surface, a middle level where the three lines intersect and the actual level of the railways down under the ground) was planned to be a part of the former Adria Insurance Company Headquarters. This meant redesigning the outside of this building. The team headed by Rimanóczy for instance designed towers onto the facade. "As the station is named after Stalin, the ideological content to be expressed should be inspired by him...", the description of the requirement said.

The evaluation of each plan found a common mistake in them. Considering the traffic the most practical solution would have been to direct the arrivals to the axis of the two middle-level halls by relocating the points where the entrances of the passage leading to the first line (the Millennium Railway running under the City Park) join the middle-level halls. The jury rewarded all the four teams, but the plans made by Farkasdy and his colleagues came the first. Consequently it was their plan that was developed further and was evaluated in October, 1953. The report said that as compared to their earlier stage the plans "had developed a lot", besides being monumental the "structure of the interior is relatively simple but unique with a very pleasant atmosphere reflecting optimism".

## Kossuth Square

The first task to be carried out during the construction of the underground was to set up the station in the centre of the quarter of government offices. The description of the tender (only three architects: Lajos Gáboros, Antal Károlyi, Pál Németh and their colleagues were asked to submit plans) specified the location of the station; it was to be built as a part of the office building planned to be constructed on the two vacant plots on the southern part of the square. Another requirement was that the escalators should arrive in the station hall. Ideologically speaking the station was to symbolize the Hungarian movement for freedom and the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic. The jury considered the underground part of the station the least successful. The criterion to judge the rest of the station by (the hall on the surface) was whether the station hall serves its function well enough, that is whether or not passengers can proceed fast and easily. As for the ideological content of the designs: Gáboros and his team were judged the best, since the motif of the triumphal arch in their plan was the most suitable form to symbolise the idea of "the triumphant Hungarian movement for freedom". This triumphal arch was to be constructed by doubling an eclectic building symmetrically along the main axis.

## Batthyány Square

There were no plans to build a separate station hall in 1952. The station would have been set up in the south-east section of an infirmary, formerly the convent of the Erzsébet order. This would have meant demolishing the part of the building stretching along the Danube.

The Executive Committee of the City Council chaired by Kálmán Pongrácz (the first and last working-class mayor, 1949-1950; then Head of the Council until 1958) had it twice on the agenda to discuss the problems, tasks which arose in connection with the construction of the underground. Some of these problems were e.g. the co-ordination of the traffic, the location of converter stations and so on. The Head of the Council emphasized "the aesthetic consideration and the problem of traffic" as two important principles. "The Executive Committee should take the stand that priority is to be given to traffic. The question of the historical monument can be discussed later with the National Centre of Museums and Historical Monuments (1949-1953), and if we cannot make a compromise the matter will be put on to the highest party forum. Making such a fuss is getting a bit boring. Our primary concern is the traffic, all the other questions are of secondary importance, at least as far as Batthyány Square is concerned (...). If the comrades are not confident enough to discuss the matter with Pogány and his colleagues (Frigyes Pogány, 1908-1976; architect, the head of the department responsible for the aesthetic aspect of city-planning as well as for the historical monuments), we will take the matter in our hands. If it is necessary we will use our power to solve this question..."

## Moszkva Square

The second most important complex after Deák Square was Moszkva Square-Széna Square as regards the view of the

city. They wanted to construct a station which in its appearance matches the significance of the place, which was looked at as "a gate to the city" from the direction of the Buda hills. They intended to build an up-to-date traffic junction and at the same time to design a building to close Mártírok street architecturally. The fourth objective was to integrate the buildings of a "large-scale cultural programme" into a plan which we do not have any further information on.

Our research seem to justify the fact that some sort of planning went on after 1953, when the construction was suspended.

In 1955 the UVATERV (Institute for Road and Railway Design) was ordered by the KPM (Ministry of Transport and Post) to come up with a study plan with the purpose of "making the underground stations at the Déli Pu. (Southern Railway Station) and the Moszkva Square as *safe* (author's italics E.P.) as the other stations along the line (east-west) on the Pest side". Among the documents on preparatory works revealed we can find a plan of inviting tenders dating from the first part of 1953.

At that time two escalators were planned to work, with the western one starting from Moszkva Square, and the other one, the eastern, from the northern side of Széna Square went on after 1953, when the construction was suspended. However, not even the exact location of the station hall was laid down, because there were no binding plans for urban planning in those days. The concept of the underground station was also redesigned: they decided in favour of columns. In the time of political turmoil this draft plan also emphasized the function of defence (1955). They did not fail to point out again that the architecture of the station hall on the ground, the façade "should express the enormous technical achievement represented by the construction of the underground station with aesthetic as well as architectural devices."

The centre of the building (designer: Vilmos Szórád) is a hall with a dome (its diameter: 17,6 m) which includes the upper part of the escalator. The passengers can proceed on the right hand side, there are no intersections. The structure of the hall, just like that of all the other stations, can be used as an air-raid shelter against the effects of 500 kg bombs. (!)

The sidewalls are two metres, the dome is 2.5 metres, the halls protecting from splinters are 1.5-2 metres thick. The extra costs of defence amounted to 6 million Forints, which accounted for 5% of all the money to be spent on defence purposes during the construction of the underground. The architects "however", had a suggestion: due to the disproportionate appearance of the building caused by the horizontal and vertical increase in size, it is strongly advisable that the station hall should have a light structure with large glass surfaces and if possible with a terraced arrangement.

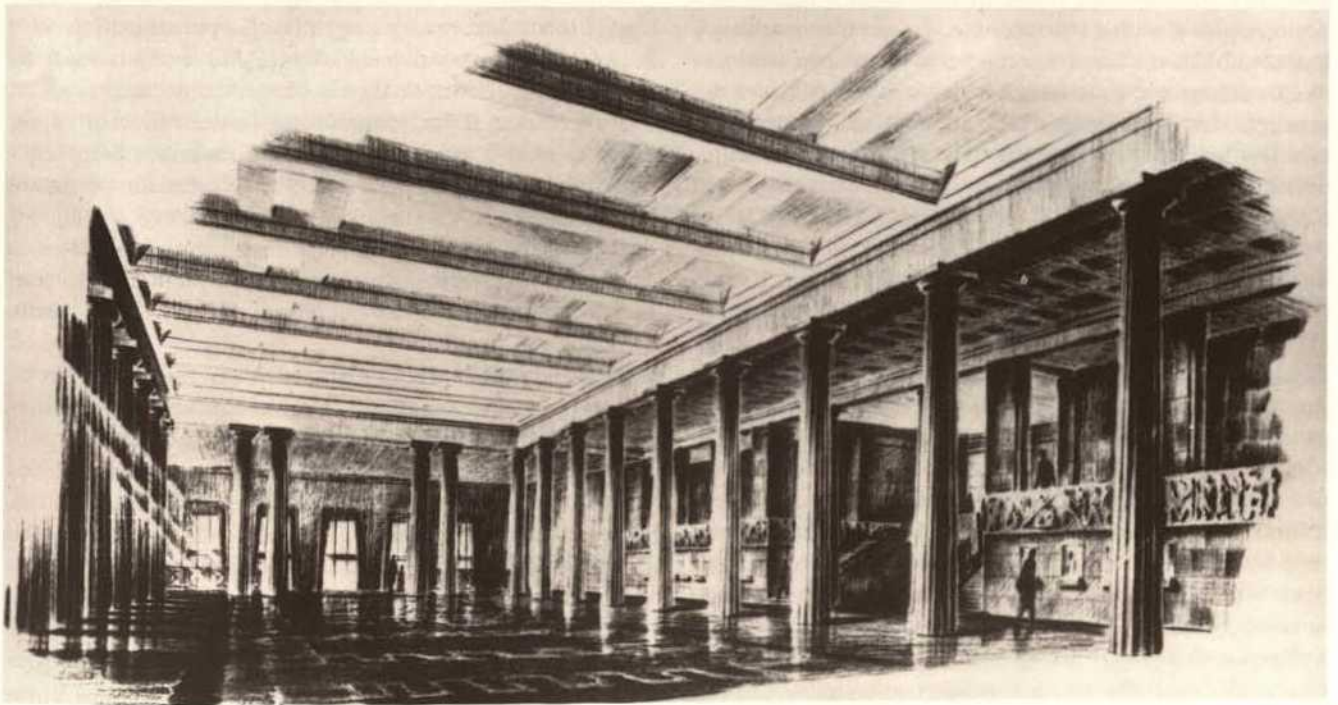
This draft plan was a special architectural representation of the thesis of view "the socialist content and the national form" dialectically. In this case the Gestaltungsprinzip, the principle introduced by Panofsky, manifested as follows: it was the function of the building (to protect people from bombs) that determined its form.

## A Déli – vasúti állomás The Southern Railway Station

The underground station to be built here was meant to be the first element of a modern railway complex. The system as such would have been the answer to the city-planning questions of the western side of Vérmező, to the improvement of the panoramic view from the Castle and to the traffic problems of Krisztina Boulevard and Endresz György Square. For the designs of the station the Underground Railway Company invited an open tender on behalf of the Ministry of Transport at the beginning of 1953. The basic information provided was concerning the location of the station hall on the surface. The railway service area was required to be placed in a frontal arrangement, to the south of the underground station hall, but forming an organic whole with it. The tender also contained the construction of an about 10-storey high hotel, but later this idea was dropped.

hotel. The way Boros and Gebhardt solved the task is worth of attention. They concentrated on the central characteristics and the horizontal dominance decorating the side facing the Castle with a quadriga.

In fact it is due to this tender that we know some pieces of Kamill Kismarty-Lechner's work. The importance of the plan lies in his endeavour to apply up-to-date methods, for example building shell vault, which can be traced in the vertical section of the station hall. This, however, was not in accordance with the defence function, which was dealt with when talking about Moszkva Square. It should be noted that the cube-shaped (!) station building with only a few entrances serving as an air-raid shelter was not an example to follow, as it ruins the view of the city, as it was pointed out in the draft study made by UVATERV in 1955. In spite of this Ernő Faludi in his draft plans applied the architectural methods and aesthetic criteria put down in the tender in 1953.



*E. Czigler, Southern Railway Station, interior view, 1953*

The jury decided to reward 3 plans and bought 5 from among the large number of tenders. Endre Czigler won the first prize. His plans met the requirements to build a monumental complex. "The underground station hall on the surface and the railway service areas emphasized the tremendous technical achievement [that] the building of the underground railway and the new Déli Pu. (Southern Railway St.) meant through aesthetic and artistic means". (Excerpt from the preparatory documents of the study-plan made in 1955)

In Endre Czigler's plan the main façade on Endresz György Square covers a large restaurant with a quasi-square layout (15 x 16 metres), behind this restaurant the rectangle-shaped, high-rise hotel was to be built (13 storeys). Further away an impressive, perpendicular colonnade in Doric style (11 x 34 metres) leads to the railway station. The underground station hall on the surface can be found under the restaurant, which can be entered from each side of the hotel complex. The majority was in favour of the high-rise

Summarizing all that has been written so far, it seems to be obvious that the construction of the underground and the era when it was attempted to be carried out can only be interpreted if considering them as a whole because they mutually determine as well as reflect each other. The underground railways is the offspring of a distorted age remained in torso.

### Footnotes

- 1 For a list of basic archival sources and secondary works see: 'Pavilon' (Budapest), 1991, No. 6, pp. 64-71; 'Budapesti Negyed' (Budapest), 1994, No. 5., pp. 25-47; *Építészet és tervezés Magyarországon – Architecture and Planning in Hungary 1945-1956* (ed. Endre Prakfalvi et al.), Exhibition Catalogue, Hungarian Museum of Architecture, Budapest 1992.
- 2 In this paper I can not go into details concerning the paradox in the problem of the homogeneity of the socialist town and the city-centre being the monumental formal and ideological centre of the town.