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Rudolf Frič in the Context of the Interwar Urbanization of Bratislava's Eastern Suburbs[*]

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The former eastern edge of Bratislava – the area neighbouring St Andrew's Cemetery – first underwent significant urbanization through modern urban regulation in the 1930s, this it had been preceded by attempts based on plans by Victor Bernárdt in 1905 and by the Technical Division in 1906. The 1930s regulation included the creation of transverse and longitudinal urban axes – Cintorínska Street (*ulica*) and Lazaretská Street – with modern multifunctional residential buildings that offered administrative and commercial services. At the intersection of the two axes, the building of Slovenská Grafia – the original Slovak printing house – was built according to a design of the builder Rudolf Frič. Together with Frič's other buildings, today these buildings represent the most comprehensive segment of interwar redevelopment in this area, as the entire interwar redevelopment of both the axes has never been completed. At the same time, they serve as confirmation of a contemporary practice in which regulatory plans were intentionally tailored to fit the interests of developers and project architects who were directly represented in the city's regulatory bodies. In this study case, they were tailored to the interests of Rudolf Frič, who intervened in an intentional change of the regulation of both Cintorínska and Lazaretská.

Keywords: Urban regulation; Interwar urbanization; Bratislava's suburbs; Rudolf Frič; Slovenská grafia.

Introduction

After the formation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, Bratislava became the political, cultural and social centre of the Slovak part of the republic. Whereas delayed industrialization meant that from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards it was workers and the associated lower middle class that moved to the urban periphery, in the 1920s and 1930s it was the upper middle class of Czechoslovak civil servants, officers and intelligentsia that migrated to these places en masse. This modern society, which was undergoing emancipation at the time, required the formation of a modern urban structure.[1] Rapid urban development and demographic growth, coupled with social and economic changes, necessitated modern urban planning regulations for the expanding city centre and its urbanizing periphery. Most notably, the dynamically changing structure and demands of the population in conjunction with the political and cultural

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1 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Premeny obrazu mesta*, 129–142.

ambitions of the changing governmental regimes of the twentieth century resulted in ever-changing regulatory plans and their piecemeal execution. The process of interwar urbanization expanded on the urban planning foundations of the Bratislava suburbs from the second half of the nineteenth century, which only significantly manifested itself in the urban mass after the republic was established. The predominantly single-storey and sprawling urban structure of craftsmen's workshops, manufacturing sites and workers' houses was gradually urbanized through modern multi-storey buildings in the expanding urban centre, based on newly adopted urban plans and regulations.

Since the collapse of the monarchy, the city had had several planning regulations either accepted[2] or drawn up by its technical department.[3] However, the new socio-political situation in Czechoslovakia called for its own nationally defined plans.[4] It was argued that the preceding plan, namely Palóczi's one, was "just an unproven project and no longer matching the new, changed conditions of the city".[5] More than objectively, the problem was either the slight sympathy of the new generation of architects to the city's monarchist past or their reserved attitude to the planning and construction of the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[6] Eventually, the physical parameters of the city and the objective requirements of contemporary urban planning independently led to similar solutions.[7] At the same time, what persisted was the city council's practice of haphazardly deciding on construction plans based on the arguments of city councillors in situations where those councillors lobbied for the partial interests of the developer participating in the construction process.[8] This practice eventually manifested itself in the interwar regulation and redevelopment of Cintorínska Street and Lazaretská Street in the former eastern suburbs (Fig. 1).[9] Their design might have been intentionally adapted to the architectural and business interests of Rudolf Frič (1887–1975), who served as a member of the regulatory board, the construction committee and the city council, while also conducting business as a construction entrepreneur.

2 Neither the regulatory plans that the royal councillor and construction commissioner of the Hungarian State Railways Viktor Bernárdt (1840–1923) drafted in 1905 nor the ones that were prepared by the founder of modern urban planning in the Kingdom of Hungary Antal Palóczi (1849–1927) between 1907 and 1917 were accepted as binding documents by the city council. Despite this, they did provide the basic urban planning framework for the first half of the twentieth century. See: MORAVČÍKOVÁ – LOVRA – PASTOREKOVÁ, *Red or Blue?* 37–41.

3 The technical department drew up the plan in 1906. See: MORAVČÍKOVÁ – LOVRA – PASTOREKOVÁ, *Red or Blue?* 36–37; LOVRA, *A modern városrendezés kezdetei Pozsonyban*, 71–86.

4 BALÁN, *Otázka viac ako naliehavá*, 4.

5 GROSSMANN, *Sanace starého města v Bratislavě*, 219.

6 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Bratislava (Un)planned City*, 92.

7 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Premeny obrazu mesta*, 129–142.

8 MENCL, *Ako sme začínali*, 39.

9 In Slovak, Cintorínska ulica and Lazaretská ulica. Here and hereafter street names including the generic *ulica* given in English with normal English capitalization.

Figure 1: Bratislava (then Preßburg) city map, 1882. The urbanizing former eastern suburb boundary and compositional axis forming its urban regulation. Source: Bratislava City Archives, Collection of Maps and Plans, No. 1045.

The Urban Regulation of Bratislava and the Eastern Suburbs

Along the main road to Trnava (today's Špitálska Street) and east of the city walls is where the so-called Osada neighbourhood developed from the thirteenth century onwards, later becoming Predmestie svätého Vavrinca (The Suburb of St Lawrence). The character of this area was defined by the city hospital, an infirmary with a cemetery to the east, and the stonemasons' workshops that followed.[10] This clash between the everyday bustle of craftsmanship and the sepulchral nature of the cemetery gave the locality a contrasting identity, which it retained until the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Specifically, the traditional stonemasons' workshops at the start of Špitálska Street shaped and gave name to Kamenné námestie (Stone Square), the main, albeit rather small urban space opposite the hospital. With the demolition of the city walls at the end of the eighteenth century, the area's urban plan stabilized and it was partially linked with the city centre. Immediately next to the city centre, a relatively compact urban block formed, defined by Špitálska, Dunajská and Rajská together with Tržné námestie (Market Square).[11] The compact built-up area consisting of two- and three-storey terraced houses adapted to the original narrow and deep plots

10 One of the stonemason families – the Rumpelmayers – also included the architect Friedrich Rumpelmayer, a representative of nineteenth-century *rundbogenstil* and historicism, author of the Blumenthal church (1885–1888). LUKÁČOVÁ – POHANIČOVÁ, *Rozmanité 19. storočie*, 160.

11 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Bratislava (Un)planned City*, 215.

of the craftsmen's houses. Špitálska developed into a key radial road for the future eastern expansion of the city. Kamenné námestie was organically connected with the newly created Tržné námestie (today's Námestie Slovenského národného povstania – the Slovak National Uprising Square), transforming it into a centre of craftsmanship and trade in the area. The urban space of the square and street was dominated by the classicist-rebuilt hospital and Church of St Ladislaus (1830–1831).[12]

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, as the inner city expanded, the craftsmen's workshops moved to the east and the whole block was gradually transformed into a commercial and residential neighbourhood.[13] The buildings gradually expanded along Špitálska Street and eastwards to the infirmary and as far as the edge of St Andrew's Cemetery. In the direction from Rajská Street towards the cemetery, the area gradually became less dense, turning into single-storey buildings with craftsmen's workshops and undeveloped warehouse space. As the city centre continued to expand, this area began to urbanize as well, culminating in the city's interwar regulatory plans. According to these plans, the entire former eastern suburb, i.e. the block defined by Špitálska, Dunajská, St Andrew's Cemetery and Tržné námestie was to become an integral part of the Bratislava city centre.

In the Context of Comprehensive City Planning and Regulation

The interwar regulatory plans for the expansion of the Bratislava city centre came in response to the contemporary situation and the consequences of the rapid and uncoordinated construction boom at the turn of the century. This boom had not been the result of planned urbanization, even though the city had already had its first regulatory plans,[14] a construction statute[15] and a technical department responsible for construction management. The statute had been adopted by the county authority in 1872 and was binding for all construction entrepreneurs and investors. Its sections contained both general and specific binding regulations. Although the statute defined individual regulations, it did not offer a comprehensive urban planning strategy for city development. Moreover, for larger construction projects, decisions were not made by the technical department that followed the construction statute, but rather by the city council itself, which made decisions based on the partial interests of specific projects and investors. The need to free the whole process from partial interests and the absence of a comprehensive urban vision had proven to be unsustainable at the start of the twentieth century, which had led to the attempt of the city's first regulatory

12 The classicist building with four wings consisting of a hospital and church was designed by the Bratislava-based architect Ignatz Feigler Sr (1791–1847) after the demolition of the original buildings in 1830. See: POHANIČOVÁ – BUDAY, *Storočie Feiglerovcov*, 98–99.

13 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Bratislava (Un)planned City*, 215.

14 Some historians believe that a proposal by Franz Anton Hillebrandt (1719–1797), the chief court architect in Vienna, can be considered the city's first regulatory plan. Following the demolition of the inner-city walls, the plan was designed to unite the inner city with its suburbs, to lay out new streets and building lines in the area of the former suburbs, and to create a series of urban spaces in place of the former walls. However, Hillebrandt's plan did not influence the overall concept or scale of the city; it was only partially implemented in the south by creating the space and buildings of today's Hviezdoslavo námestie and in the east by establishing today's Štúrova Street. He left a more distinctive mark on the city with his unique Baroque urbanism in the northern suburbs, dominated by the Grassalkovich Palace and the forked urban axes (Štefánikova Street and Banskobystrická Street). See: WAGNER, Franz A. *Hillebrandt a jeho staviteľská činnosť na Slovensku*, 29–30.

15 LUKÁČOVÁ – POHANIČOVÁ, *Rozmanité 19. storočie*, 101.

plan.[16] The plans were supposed to be prepared by the city's technical department and based on the construction statute valid at the time. They were meant to reflect all the important themes of contemporary planning, namely vision and regulation, hygienic and safety principles, the systematization of transport into urban radial and ring roads, contemporary forms of development, the creation of public and green spaces, the relationship between planning and keeping the local unique identity, and the economic dimension of planning. The final version dated 1906 under the city's chief engineer Július Laubner (1854 – 1918), planned the city to be spread along the existing and widened city radials – e.g. Špitálska Street – and the peripheries to be urbanized in a right-angled grid system. The prevailing stress on traffic was reflected in the newly planned streets conceived as right-angled – e. g. Cintorínska Street – which would effectively connect the extant main road system (Fig. 2).[17]

Figure 2: Július Laubner and Technical Department, Regulation Plan, 1906. Newly designed and regulated streets and a water canal outlined in the city plan of 1882. Source: Bratislava City Archives, Collection of Maps and Plans, No. 1045.

16 Among the first ones was the plan drawn up as early as 1849–1850, prepared by the chief architect of Szeged, Miklós Halácsi (1799–1869). Halácsi's plan depicted the existing urban structure and outlined the future network of blocks and streets, assuming major development in an easterly direction. However, it was not a regulatory plan in its true sense, rather just a schematic framework. See: GAŠPAREC, *Urbanistický rozvoj*, 39–48.

17 MORAVČÍKOVÁ – LOVRA – PASTOREKOVÁ, *Red or Blue?* 36–37.

Neither the first regulatory plans prepared by the technical department at the turn of the century nor the plan of the royal councillor Victor Bernárdt (1840–1923)[18] were approved by the city council. In his comprehensive regulatory plan for the city, Antal Palóczi (1849–1927)[19] introduced the first systematic changes that also affected the discussed eastern area. In its complexity, the plan was primarily a response to the rapid industrialization of the city since the mid-nineteenth century,[20] the subsequent expansion of the city along the main radial roads (axes) and the urbanization of the former suburbs, residential and civic construction, and the dynamic development of transport infrastructure. The most distinctive element planned was the urban axis along the route of today's Mlynské Nivy, connecting Hodžovo námestie (Hodža's Square, located to the north of the urban core) with the development area to the east. In the context of the urbanizing eastern suburbs, this axis would pass along the southern edge of St Andrew's Cemetery. The proposal also anticipated the growing importance of the Špitálska radial, which expanded into a representative city boulevard extending to a similarly modernized Štúrova Street.[21] The uninterrupted boulevard was to be lined with taller blocks of eclectic and historicist civic and residential buildings that would represent the city's cultural and economic prosperity. Palóczi's proposal was submitted to the city council for approval in 1917, but it was never officially approved nor implemented on a large scale.[22] Until the dissolution of the monarchy, the city focused on the development of peripheral industrial districts and the associated residential buildings (predominantly for workers), while the city centre and its immediate surroundings remained stabilized. Ultimately, the problem of successful planning lay in the fundamental problems that pervaded: the delayed response to contemporary trends in urban planning, the lack of respect for adopted regulations and the accommodation of the partial interests of construction investors.[23]

A change in the city planning priorities and paradigm first came about in the 1920s, after the First Czechoslovak Republic was established. Amidst the cultural, social and political changes of this era, there was a general reluctance towards drawing on the previous urban planning concepts and plans from the time of the monarchy. Modern architects, namely Jiří Grossmann (1882–1957) and Alois Balán (1891–1960), who came to the city with new visions, criticized the facts that the plans were outdated and the city lacked a coordinated approach to making regulatory decisions. The young Czech

18 Although it was never adopted, Bernárdt's plan did influence the city's future development strategies. In the context of the eastern suburbs, he proposed the transformation of Štúrova Street into a 37-metre-wide avenue, which was supposed to become one of the city's main axes. See: MORAVČÍKOVÁ – LOVRA – PASTOREKOVÁ, *Red or Blue?* 37–38; LOVRA, *A modern városrendezés kezdetei Pozsonyban*, 71–86.

19 Antal Palóczi was a Budapest-based architect and urban planner, considered to be the founder of modern urbanism and urban planning in the Kingdom of Hungary. In addition to important buildings, he designed a number of regulatory plans for Hungarian cities, including the development and regulatory plan of Bratislava (1907–1917). See: LOVRA, The Forgotten Urbanist Antal Paloczi, 212–223.

20 Due to its intensive industrialization, by the end of the nineteenth century, Bratislava became the most industrial city in Upper Hungary. See: BENYOVSZKY, *Belle Époque*, 11; HALLON, *Industrializácia Slovenska 1918–1938*, 89.

21 By the end of the nineteenth century, only two city boulevards had formed in Bratislava. While the former eastern suburb gave rise to Štúrova, which connected Tržné námestie with the Danube waterfront and the Franz Joseph Bridge (today's Old Bridge), the northern suburb gave rise to Štefánikova, which connected the steam train station (today's main railway station) with the city centre along the road leading to Brno.

22 MORAVČÍKOVÁ – LOVRA – PASTOREKOVÁ, *Red or Blue?* 41.

23 KIBITZ, *Fragmente von der Woche*, 6.

architect Jiří Grossmann criticized the city for being urbanized in accordance with Palóczi's plan, which he considered "only an unapproved project no longer suited to the current, changed conditions of the city".[24] He added that construction involved "sad compromises in the form of partial modifications, which may satisfy an immediate need, but will at one point be a great detriment to the whole".[25] Expert criticism mainly focused on the lack of planned development in transport and social residential infrastructure, while also focusing on the enforcement of the decisions in force. However, the reasons for this primarily stemmed from the political need to present the identity of the emancipating Czechoslovak nation through new architecture and urban planning. Despite the general criticism, the framework concept of Palóczi's plan was partially implemented both in the comprehensive city plans and in the partial regulatory plans of individual city districts. Yet these were based on new urban planning concepts that did not build on Palóczi's plans. Palóczi's plan was implemented indirectly because the new concepts, however mutually exclusive they might have been, were all based on the objective predispositions and determining factors of the city, leading to identical key principles and solutions. That could be related to the simple fact that all the plans were most determined by the historically existing city radials merging the city centre with the peripheries along which the city structure would naturally grow. Moreover, other basic demands such as enlarging the city centre prevailingly eastward, segregating the industrial zone in the south and southeastern periphery, and urbanizing the city vineyards and meadows on the western slopes more or less on garden city principles were all generally accepted and implanted in the plans. It actually happened despite the political, administrative and methodological changes that came about throughout the entire twentieth century.

The Regulatory Board

After the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the Government Commissariat for Monument Protection in Slovakia, led by the architect Dušan Jurkovič (1868–1947),[26] took the initiative in the urban regulation of Bratislava.[27] In the case of Bratislava, the commissariat aimed to incorporate monument protection into the city's regulatory plan and establish a city regulatory board. The regulatory board was intended to act as an expert advisory body to the city council at all stages of city planning and regulation. It would be tasked with developing comprehensive and partial regulatory plans and submitting them to the city council for approval. The board's statutes were approved by the city councillors in December 1923, establishing it under the name of the Regulatory and Art Committee for the City of Bratislava and the Municipalities of Petržalka and Karlova Ves[28] (hereinafter referred to as the city's "regulatory board" or "regulatory committee"). The regulatory board worked closely with the city's construction committee. It reviewed almost all construction plans in the city, balancing the pressure of investors with public interests. In reality, however, individual members of both

24 GROSSMANN, *Sanace starého města v Bratislavě*, 219.

25 Ibidem.

26 BOŘUTOVÁ, *Architekt Dušan Samuel Jurkovič*, 199–201.

27 Ibidem.

28 ANON. 1, *Ochrana stavebných pamiatok v meste*, 3–4.

the regulatory board[29] and the construction committee often directly or indirectly supported the investor whose construction plan they were reviewing.[30] In some cases, the investor was both a member of one of the two committees and a city councillor, i.e. a member of the council that was in charge of the final approval of the regulatory plan. In the 1930s, as the eastern suburbs were undergoing modern urbanization, the builder Rudolf Frič intervened in this way in the regulation of Lazaretská Street and Cintorínska Street.

Regulatory Plan for the Eastern Suburbs: Expanding the City Centre

The greatest change in the regulatory planning of Bratislava resulted from the change of the city's status from a provincial industrial centre in Upper Hungary[31] to the capital of the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia (1918). The related development of new state institutions – administrative, economic, cultural and educational – together with rapid immigration required a comprehensive regulatory plan for the city's development. In contrast to the previous period, when the outer city was partially developed through the construction of industrial districts and workers' colonies,[32] in the 1920s attention turned to the development of the inner city and the comprehensive idea of a modern metropolis. One of the first comprehensive interwar plans for the development of the city and the expansion of its centre was drawn up (1920–1924) and published (1926)[33] by Alois Balán (1891–1960) and Jiří Grossmann[34] under the title A Regulatory Study of Greater Bratislava (Fig. 3). The part of the plan devoted to the expansion of the city centre envisaged the urbanization of the former suburbs on the outer perimeter of the demolished city walls, similarly to the earlier plans.[35] In the 1920s, it was the eastern suburbs that had the greatest potential. Unlike the northern and western edges of the city, which were already urbanized and structurally stabilized through housing blocks in the late nineteenth century, the eastern area remained sparsely developed and remained an urban periphery. The deep built-up area, mostly consisting of single-storey buildings, was based on the original narrow plots still present there. As a result of this context, the expansion of the city centre to include this area essentially amounted to its complete redevelopment, the creation of new street spaces and the construction

29 The regulatory board included almost all prominent architects and builders in its ranks: Alois Balán, Emil Belluš, Jiří Grossmann, Jindřich Merganc, Andreas Szőnyi, Klement Šilinger, Juraj Tvarožek, Franz Wimmer and Friedrich Weinwurm, among others. See: MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Bratislava (Un)planned City*, 94.

30 MENCL, *Ako sme začínali*, 31.

31 The rapid industrialization and construction activity in Bratislava in the last decades of the nineteenth century was triggered by the economic boom after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. See: LUKÁČOVÁ – POHANIČOVÁ, *Rozmanité 19. storočie*, 100.

32 As industrial plants were constructed with the backing of financially strong investors, it was possible to build sites with good urban planning and comprehensive designs. Comprehensively designed workers' colonies were also built in connection with these industrial plants. See: LUKÁČOVÁ – POHANIČOVÁ, *Rozmanité 19. storočie*, 101.

33 BALÁN – GROSSMANN, *Regulační studie Velké Bratislavy*, 40.

34 In the 1920s, both of them were among the most vigorous advocates of institutionalized urban planning. See: ŠČEPÁNOVÁ, *Veľká Bratislava architektov*, 88–102.

35 Compared to most Slovak towns, where the medieval walls were only demolished and redeveloped in the second half of the nineteenth century, thus preserving their medieval town plans, in Bratislava the city walls were demolished between 1775 and 1778 during the reign of Maria Theresa. The dismantling of the city walls enabled the original suburbs to urbanize more quickly, allowing for the easier implementation of new forms of urban planning. See: LUKÁČOVÁ – POHANIČOVÁ, *Rozmanité 19. storočie*, 101.

of modern buildings with a residential and commercial function. Balán and Grossmann drew on the principles of modern urban planning with an emphasis on transportation-related, functional and hygienic solutions. Despite positive responses from experts, the city councillors did not approve the study, so the city lacked a valid regulatory plan until the end of the 1930s. As a result, regulation continued to be limited to partial regulatory and development plans for individual areas, leaving room to prioritize the interests of specific developers. The city councillors were only constrained by the old building statute that had been in force since 1872. Its general wording allowed the councillors to make rather arbitrary decisions and thus send all partial regulatory plans back to the regulatory commission for reworking. The urbanization of the eastern suburbs carried on in the same vein, as its partial regulatory plans from the mid-1930s were based on Balán and Grossmann's study and Frič's business priorities.

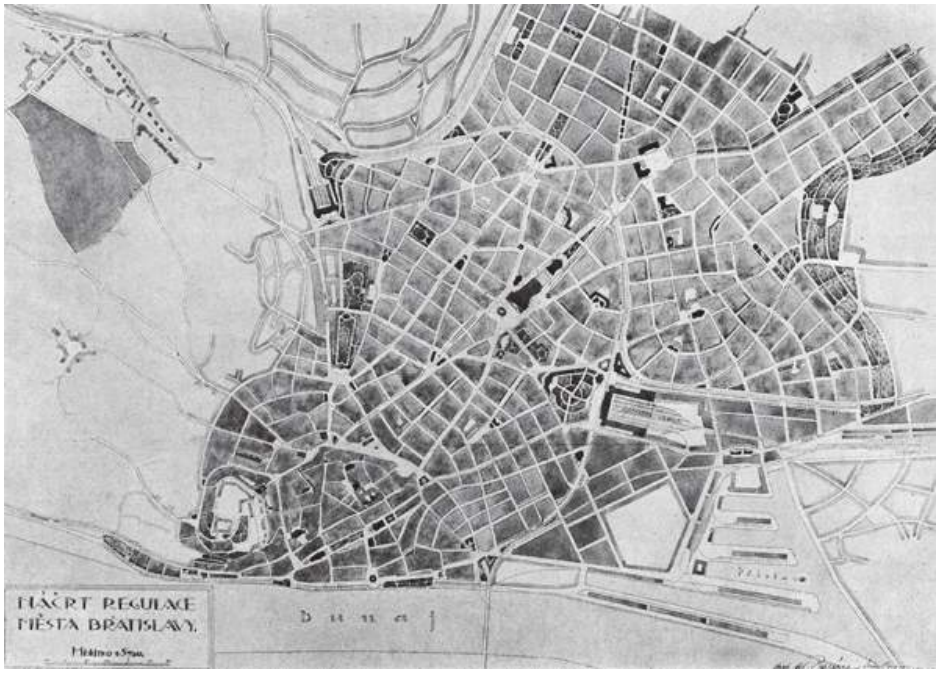

Figure 3: Alois Balán and Jiří Grossmann, Regulatory Study of Greater Bratislava, 1920–1924. Source: BALÁN, Alois – GROSSMANN, Jiří. Regulační studie Velké Bratislavy. In: *Architekt SIA*, 1926, vol. 25, no. 1, p. 25.

As part of the eastward expansion of the city centre, the study proposed the demolition of the disjointed single-storey buildings east of the intersection of Štúrova Street and Námestie republiky (Republic Square, today's Námestie Slovenské národného povstania), i.e. the block between Špitálska, Ulica 29. Augusta, Dunajská, and Námestie republiky, while also proposing new streets to be laid out in the area. Only the contours of the block itself were to be preserved. A newly laid out street (today's Cintorínska

Street) was intended to divide the block lengthwise, improving traffic connections and removing the unsanitary deep and narrow courtyards. These were problematic due to inadequate lighting and air circulation. In combination with the low social standards of this area, these factors frequently resulted in social diseases.[36] The modern standards of hygiene that Balán and Grossmann relied on were based on the nascent principles of modern urban planning and the state's social policy. Those principles were namely the decongestion of the city centre, augmentation of the peripheries' density, enlargement of the means of circulation and increasement in the number of parks and other public spaces – all to be presented by Le Corbusier in his urban proposal of The Radiant City (1922).[37] However, rather than a direct influence, that could be related to then general nascent standards. Contrary to Le Corbusier, Balán and Grossmann reflected the existing urban scale and applied the more traditional urban structure of closed blocks. The social policy was most reflected in the state's legislative and financial support of social residential construction[38] which chosen localization directly influenced the urban structure and its planning. The new socio-hygienic standard of the neighbourhood was reflective not only of the aforementioned contemporary trends but also of its elevation to become a part of the city centre. The regulated building height was to be set at four or five storeys, with substantially taller commercial and civic buildings located in exposed corners. In the early 1930s, the city's regulatory board commissioned scenario studies. The final regulatory and development plan was adopted by the city council in 1932 (Fig. 4).[39] To improve conditions related to light and hygiene, the new buildings were to be constructed exclusively without courtyard wings. The height regulation was set at 15 to 21 metres, specifically 21 metres for Kamenné námestie, Špitálska, and Dunajská, 18 metres for Lazaretská and Cintorínska and 15 metres for the perpendicular Rajská. The heights of the buildings were thus intended to match the urban hierarchy of the streets themselves. The area was zoned for tenement houses, along with associated commercial spaces, offices and other public services. A substantial change in urban space and mobility was to be introduced by widening existing streets and creating new transverse and longitudinal urban axes. The longitudinal axis was designed to use an extension and redevelopment of Lazaretská to connect Štefánikova with the Danube waterfront. Meanwhile, the transverse axis was planned to emerge by extending Cintorínska to connect St Andrew's Cemetery in the east with the city centre in the west.

36 FALISOVÁ, *Medzivojnové Slovensko z pohľadu zdravotného a sociálneho*, 377–382.

37 The plan was first presented in 1924 and published in 1933 by Le Corbusier. See: LE CORBUSIER, *Ville Radieuse*, 1933.

38 OSYKOVÁ, *Legislatívne riešenia bytovej krízy*, 152–165.

39 Zápisnica zo zasadnutia mestského zastupiteľského zboru, dňa 25. a 28. 4. 1932, č. 204/52638/stav. II. 1932. Regulačný a zastavovací predpis územia ohraničeného Špitálskou, Lazaretskou, Dunajskou a Námestím Republiky [Minutes of the city council meetings of 25 and 28 April 1932, No. 204/52638/stav. II. 1932. Regulatory and development code of the area delimited by Špitálska, Lazaretská, Dunajská and Námestie republiky]. Bratislava City Archives, file No. 124.

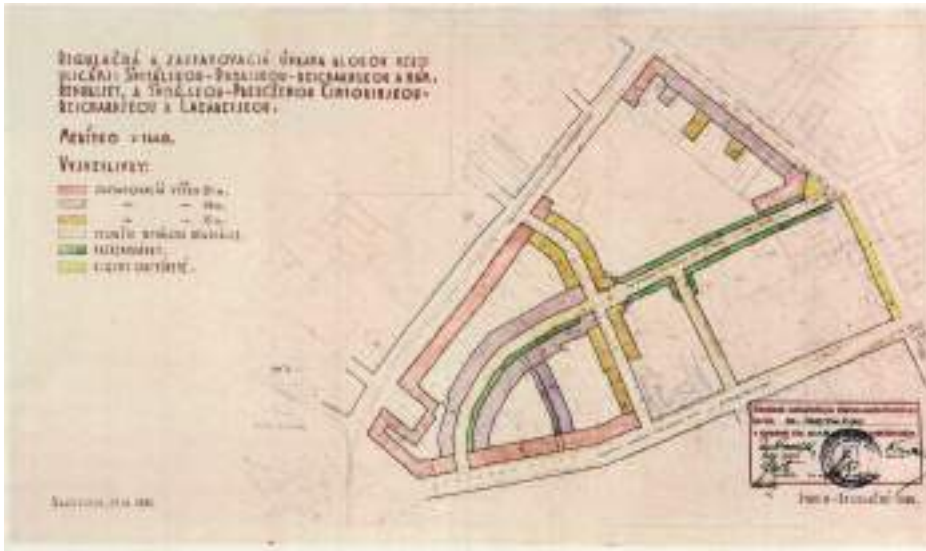

Figure 4: The Regulatory Board, Regulatory and development plan of the area delimited by Špitálska, Lazaretská, Dunajská and Námestie republiky, 1933. Source: Bratislava City Archives.

The regulation was detailed in the area of Kamenné námestie and its surroundings, namely the side of the square between Špitálska, Dunajská, Rajská and Námestie republiky,[40] but it was rather vague to the east of Rajská. Only the building height and the street profile of Lazaretská and the newly laid out Cintorínska were specified in more detail. In the rest, the regulation only defined the contours of the block. Cintorínska was supposed to have front gardens, while the corner where it meets Lazaretská was supposed to be chamfered. Lazaretská was supposed to be widened to 21 metres, but this was only done in the section from Špitálska to the new intersection with Cintorínska. Beyond the intersection, the expansion was prevented by the preservation of the local children's hospital. To this day, the hospital building along with other relics of the original nineteenth-century buildings prevent the continuous extension of the street up to Justiho Rad (today's Dostojevského Rad). Similarly, the buildings of the Hurban Barracks present an obstacle that prevents the street from connecting to today's Kollárovo námestie (Kollár's Square) in the north. Yet the city regulation anticipated an uninterrupted urban axis leading from the Danube Fair in the south to Štefánikova in the north. Thus, the urban axis would pass through today's Spojná, Námestie slobody (Freedom Square), Jánska, Dobrovského, Lazaretská and the Eurovea

40 The amended regulatory and development study only prescribed the block with Kamenné námestie in detail, which is where the new Cintorínska Street was to lead. See: Zápisnica zo zasadnutia mestského zastupiteľského zboru, dňa 26. 2. 1934, č. 93/13641/stav. II. 1934. Doplnenie a čiastkové pozmenenie regulačného a zastavovacieho predpisu bloku ohraničeného Špitálskou, Lazaretskou, Dunajskou a Námestím Republiky [Minutes of the city council meetings of 26 February 1934, No. 93/13641/stav. II. 1934. Supplementation and partial modification of the regulatory and development regulations of the block delimited by Špitálska, Lazaretská, Dunajská, and Námestie republiky]. Bratislava City Archives, file No. 124.

mall (Fig. 1). It was only implemented partially, with the construction of the prescribed 21-metres-wide Dobrovského[41] and a short section of Lazaretská. According to the post-war plans of the urban planner Emanuel Hruška (1906–1989), a transverse green axis was supposed to run parallel to it, merging St Andrew's Cemetery and the Medical Garden into a public park.[42] The green composition axis would connect parks and public spaces from the main railway station, through the gardens of the current Government Office, Námestie slobody, the Medical Garden and St Andrew's Cemetery, all the way to a park planned at the site of the former industrial district by the Danube – today's Sky Park.[43] Antal Palóczi had already come up with a similar vision,[44] but the idea was never materialized due to frequent political and social changes. At the only completed section of Lazaretská between Špitálska and Cintorínska, Frič contributed with three buildings: tenement houses at No. 2 and 4 Lazaretská and the Slovenská Grafia building. It was the Slovenská Grafia building that opened Cintorínska towards the centre, creating a view of the cathedral and the castle, while also forming a new intersection with Lazaretská. It was the first and only building that reflected the prescribed form of Cintorínska, namely its prescribed building height and street profile with front gardens.

Implementation of the Regulatory Plan

After the final adoption of the regulatory and development plan in 1932,[45] the block was redeveloped in the 1930s and 1940s, albeit in a piecemeal fashion. Thanks to its less dense single-storey buildings, the part of the block east of Rajská started to be redeveloped to a modern standard earlier than the relatively compact western part around Kamenné námestie. The reconstruction was hampered by the existing narrow plots of land, the insistent pressure to preserve the infirmary and children's hospital on Lazaretská and the Svätopluk Barracks, which occupied almost the entire inner block between Špitálska, Cintorínska, Lazaretská and Rajská streets. The regulation found its most comprehensive application on a short stretch of Lazaretská, between Špitálska and Cintorínska, and at the opening of Cintorínska itself. This partial implementation of the regulation is manifested by the Slovenská Grafia building (1935–1937)[46] and Frič's tenement houses (1936),[47] as well as František Krupka's police headquarters (1922)[48] and Rudolf Machota's tenement house (1931),[49] which came before the regulation. The ongoing redevelopment was interrupted by the war and the bombing of the Danube District, which was right next to the targeted Apollo refinery. Until the 1960s, this area still saw a confrontation between the remnants of the original

41 ID No. 2951, box 285–286, yr. 1927, fo. Office of the Chief Architect, Bratislava City Archives.

42 HRUŠKA, *Problémy súčasného urbanizmu*, 320.

43 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Bratislava (Un)planned City*, 366–367.

44 PALÓCZI, *Pozsonyi szabad király város szabályozásárol*, p. 15.

45 Zápisnica zo zasadnutia mestského zastupiteľského zboru, dňa 25. a 28. 4. 1932, č. 204/52638/stav. II. 1932. Regulačný a zastavovací predpis územia ohraničeného Špitálskou, Lazaretskou, Dunajskou a Námestím Republiky [Minutes of the city council meetings of 25 and 28 April 1932, No. 204/52638/stav. II. 1932. Regulatory and development code of the area delimited by Špitálska, Lazaretská, Dunajská and Námestie republiky]. Bratislava City Archives, file No. 124.

46 ID No. 3207, box 329, yr. 1920–1938, fu. Office of the Chief Architect, Bratislava City Archives.

47 ID No. 3210, box 330, yr. 1924–1949, fu. Office of the Chief Architect, Bratislava City Archives.

48 FOLTYN, *Slovenská architektúra a česká avantgarda*, 51–53.

49 ID No. 3211, box 330, yr. 1921–1944, fo. Office of the Chief Architect, Bratislava City Archives.

nineteenth-century suburban buildings and modern six-storey buildings constructed in accordance with contemporary regulations.

The western half of the block around Kamenné námestie was only redeveloped in the late 1960s. A new urban regulation was created,[50] aiming to build on the interwar plans for the expansion of the city centre. However, the newly designed urban plan departed from the interwar concept of block development. Instead, it drew on the contemporary modernist concept of standalone buildings with distinctive architecture. Similarly, this area was supposed to transform from a combined residential and civic function to an exclusively commercial function with a citywide significance. The concept of functional segregation was also part of the modernist urban planning paradigm. According to the modernist concept, the entire block was to be redeveloped, which implied that the original and partially completed interwar buildings would have to be demolished.[51] The idea of the Špitálska radial road was also revived, proposing a street lined with architecturally significant standalone buildings. The entire block between Špitálska, Dunajská, Rajská and Námestie republiky was redeveloped with the standalone Prior department store – a commercial and social complex designed by Ivan Matušík (1968).[52] The Prior complex was to be followed by a monoblock building for governmental ministries (Matušík, 1965–1970) built on the plot of land vacated after the demolition of the Svätopluk Barracks. The plan was to achieve a "comprehensive functional, organizational, material-spatial and operational restructuring of the historical urban essence,"[53] i.e. to transform the area into a modern urban centre in line with the principles of contemporary urban planning. The eastward spread of this concept was prevented by the compactly executed interwar reconstruction of Lazaretská and its corner with Cintorínska. It was there that the early interwar ideas of a modern city centre were brought to life most consistently.

The new interwar vision of this area was first brought to life by the police headquarters (1922) designed by František Krupka (1885–1963). Krupka drew on early regulatory studies, namely Balan and Grossmann's Regulatory Study of Greater Bratislava and their idea of expanding both the city centre and this area. The five-storey monoblock at the street corner formed the foundation for the volume of the modernizing Špitálska and Lazaretská. The elevated mass of the building's corner with a monumental attic accentuated its new position in the urban plan, namely at the intersection of two important urban axes. Rondocubist architecture reflected the early architecture of interwar Bratislava.[54] Rondocubism emerged in the early years of the new republic with the aim of materializing a Czechoslovak national identity in architecture, thus breaking away from the historicist trends of the monarchy and their architectural semantics. In Bratislava and the Slovak region as a whole, rondocubism almost exclusively manifested itself in the architectural form of facades, with massive geometric elements and traditional three-colour design.[55] Krupka's police headquarters

50 The so-called Bratislava Development Plan was drawn up by the studio of the State Planning Institute under the direction of Milan Hladký. See: BEŇUŠKA, *Bratislava, hlavné mesto Slovenska*, 19.

51 CHORVÁTH, *K súťaži na Kamenné námestie*, 220.

52 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Moderná architektúra v čase a predpoklady jej udržateľnosti*, 181–196.

53 ALEXY, *Zo starého mesta sa rodí centrum*, 18.

54 FOLTYN, *Slovenská architektúra a česká avantgarda*, 51–53.

55 Rondocubism was traditionally represented by state institutions, most notably the Bank of the Czechoslovak Legions, whose Bratislava branch on Štúrova (1929) was designed by Frič. Rondocubism was especially typical

is the first and only piece of rondocubist architecture in the eastern development area of the city centre, and it marks the beginning of its interwar regulation.

After the quick decline of rondocubism, the opposite corner saw the construction of the purist commercial/residential house of Rudolf Machota (1931), an entrepreneur and owner of the brick factory in Šenkvice. The house was later known under the name Tatran Bednár. The six-storey building was built by the Bratislava-based builder Emil Brüll according to the design of architects Július Sporzon and Ľudovít Kořínek.[56] The building reflected the principles of the adopted regulation. After Špitálska was widened to 21 metres and Lazaretská Street to 18 metres, the section of the street that could be built on was reduced, which was compensated by the height increase to 21 metres, which amounted to 6 storeys with a superstructure. The remaining buildings were to be 18 metres tall. After the street corner had been fully built up, a narrow courtyard was left inside the plot for a courtyard balcony, which the town refused to allow for sanitary and social reasons. Despite the objections, a modified conventional concept was eventually implemented, with rooms facing the street and service areas facing the courtyard balcony. In accordance with the regulation, the corner is accentuated analogously to the police headquarters, specifically by elevating the building's mass by one storey and interrupting the crowning cornice. Unlike Krupka, Sporzon and Kořínek had already adopted a modern purist aesthetic with an emphasis on the plasticity of the main mass rather than décor. They preferred a utilitarian layout and a progressive reinforced concrete skeleton, which is structurally economical and spatially variable, especially on the ground floor. The glass-fronted ground floor with its famous Machota stationery shop epitomized the vision of a modernized multifunctional neighbourhood.

for the early work of young Czech architects, who supported the idea of a new Czechoslovak identity. They included Alois Balán and Jiří Grossmann, Vojtěch Šebor, Klement Šilinger and Jiří Merganc. The work and biographies of these architects and their social role in interwar Slovakia are presented in a monograph by Matúš Dulla and others. See: DULLA, *Zapomenutá generace*.

56 Brüll had a conservative academic education from the Royal Polytechnic in Budapest, influenced by eclectic architecture. After a short stint as an architect, he quickly switched to construction and business, initially in partnership with Emanuel Lebovics. Between 1922 and 1938, he worked as a construction entrepreneur in Bratislava, specifically in the urbanizing Danube District and the castle hill area. See: BORECKÁ, *Notes on the Bratislava Activities*, 104–109.

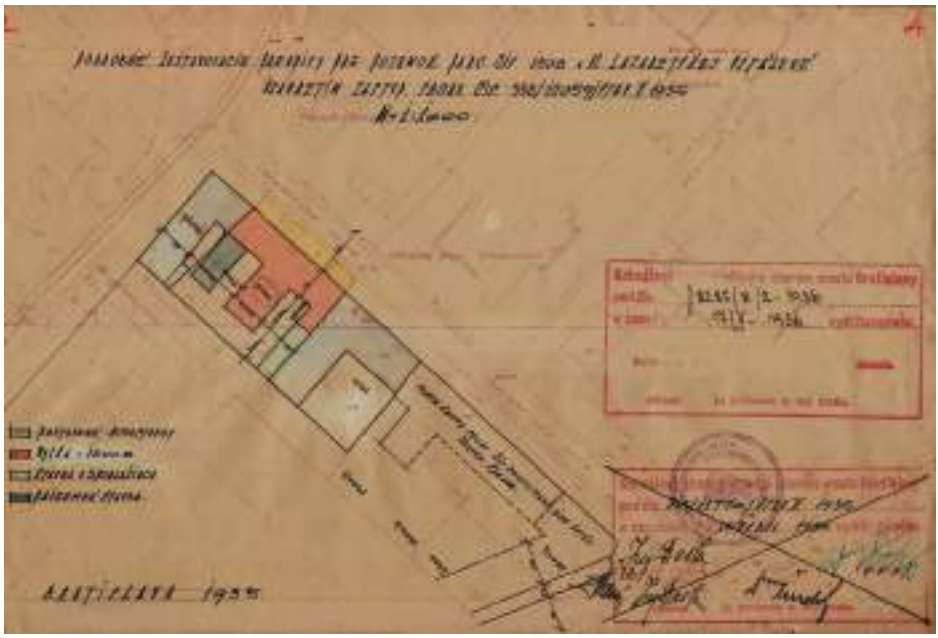

Figure 5: Regulatory plan of Lazaretská adapted to Frič's project allowing courtyard wings to be built and the street wing to be higher, 1935. Source: Bratislava City Archives, Office of the Chief Architect, box 330, ID No. 3210.

The regulation of Lazaretská was preceded by a comprehensive redevelopment of the block north of Špitálska, in the vicinity of the Hurban Barracks (today's Slovak Design Museum). In line with its functional genius loci, most of the block was occupied by manufacturing buildings and construction yards together with a steam sawmill owned by the entrepreneur Moritz Sprinzl. The disjointed and deep built-up area mainly consisting of single-storey agricultural buildings was to give way to a new north–south axis of the expanding centre, running along Spojná, Námestie slobody, Jánska and Lazaretská all the way to the Danube waterfront. Thus, this area focusing on manufacturing was cut through by the newly regulated Dobrovského,[57] which served as the northern continuation of Lazaretská. The new section houses for the police cooperative were designed by Otmar Klimeš (1928). These simple section houses with staircases and no elevators provided apartments with one to four bedrooms. Their construction, along with the urbanization of the suburbs, was crucial in addressing the interwar population growth and the need for improved living conditions for the lower middle class. The five-storey buildings are accentuated with six-storey buildings at street corners. The notion of accentuating the corner by adding one extra storey repeats itself on all the buildings at the modernized intersection. The new buildings at Dobrovského together with the section of Lazaretská formed the most stable part of

57 Josef Dobrovský (17 August 1753 – 6 January 1829) was a Czech philologist, historian, founder of Slavic studies and representative of the Enlightenment.

the planned urban axis between Štefánikova and the Danube. Despite this, especially due to the preservation of the Hurban Barracks in the north, the planned axis was never completed.

Investor Interests in the Regulatory Process

Before the adoption of the regulatory and development plan, Frič bought a pair of single-storey buildings to the left of Rudolf Machota's new building (Fig. 6). Subsequent regulations adopted by the regulatory board prescribed that buildings in this area should be 18 metres tall and 15 metres deep. They also removed courtyard wings to improve air circulation and access to natural light in apartments.[58] Nevertheless, at the end of 1934, Frič submitted an architectural plan for a multifunctional tenement house with deep courtyard wings, violating the regulation that was in force. The regulatory board, where Frič was a direct member at the time, subsequently approved a change in the regulation.[59] A more detailed development plan was adopted, allowing a partial height increase by one storey from 18 to 21 metres, as well as the construction of courtyard wings on Frič's plot (Fig. 5). The adopted changes were intended as compensation for the need to forfeit a portion of the property that allowed the street to be widened. However, these changes primarily focused on partial motives, namely increasing the proportion of built-up areas to optimize the investor's expenses, which in this case was Frič. Archived documentation shows that the regulation changes and detailed development plan of March 1935 were only created in response to an architectural proposal from October 1934. This proves that the urban plan adapted to the architectural (i.e. business) plan. The success of Frič's construction business also lay in his extensive social and political involvement: "For a time, he was a member of the Bratislava city council, a long-time member of the Bratislava regulatory board, spent one term as a member of the State Trade Council in Prague, and was a founder of the Society of Builders in Bratislava, where he served as chairman until 1938."[60] This may imply that Frič was involved in and could influence regulatory processes not just at Lazaretská but also in other architectural and urban planning projects where he served as a project architect, construction contractor or investor.

The building permit granted to Frič on 23 November 1934 reflected the concessions that had been made, but it still required the project to be modified. The built-up part of the parcel was reduced, and the establishment of an ice cream shop and manufacturing workshops was denied. At the same time, there was a requirement to retain the local garden restaurant on the ground floor.[61] However, the new architecture and the new manager brought about a change in the clientele and identity of the restaurant, which became a popular spot for Bratislava-based actors and filmmakers gathering around Paľo Bielik.[62]

58 "Regulačná a zastavovacia úprava blokov medzi ulicami: Špitálskou – Dunajskou – Richardskou a Nám. Republiky a Špitálskou – predĺženou Cintorínskou – Reichardskou a Lazaretskou." See: MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Bratislava (Un)planned City*, 217–220.

59 Approved by the Bratislava city council on 18 March 1935. See: ID No. 3210, box 330, yr. 1924–1949, p. 219, Office of the Chief Architect, Bratislava City Archives.

60 KOVAŘÍK, *Náš jubilant*, 25.

61 Before the redevelopment of the original building, the garden restaurant was called U Tříšků, later U Nosků or Slovenská reštaurácia, known mainly as Detvan, Poľovnícka reštaurácia and U dvoch levov.

62 Frič also had acquaintances and friends from this community, demonstrating his social and cultural involvement in interwar Bratislava. Every Tuesday and Friday, the restaurant hosted evenings revolving around

Figure 6: Original nineteenth-century ground-floor buildings preceding Frič's project to the left of Rudolf Machota's new building, Lazaretská, 1934. Source: Bratislava City Archives, Collection of photos and postcards, No. 04426.

The Social Dimension of Urban Regulations: Modern Housing and Rudolf Frič

Frič's tenement houses were not just an investment plan by a construction entrepreneur but also a deliberate way of supporting the social policies of the city and the state. Since the establishment of the republic, Bratislava had been plagued with a lack of suitable housing. Unlike traditional European population centres and despite the significant demographic growth in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, Bratislava did not have sufficient housing stock in this period.[63] Moreover, most of the housing built at the turn of the century consisted of either private tenement houses around Štefánikova in the northwest and Štúrova in the east, or workers' colonies associated with industrial plants. As a result, housing was either less affordable or, in the case of the workers' colonies, brought about complete existential dependence on the employer. One of the priorities of interwar urbanization was state- and city-supported public and private housing construction. It can be considered the first culmination of Bratislava's housing stock and the focal point of the urban environment itself.

the traditional meals of *halušky* and potato pancakes (known as *haruľa* in Slovak). On Sundays and holidays, tea was served at five o'clock. See: The private archive of Elena Fričová, personal estate of Rudolf Frič.

63 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Bratislava (Un)planned City*, 73.

With the establishment of the republic, Bratislava became the seat of the Slovak regional administration and the associated state institutions. Their establishment and the immigration of the Czechoslovak middle class and intelligentsia – civil servants, teachers, and army officers – brought about a significant socio-demographic change in the city.[64] The situation necessitated the improvement of social standards and the construction of modern residential buildings and urban complexes that would stabilize the inner city structure and urbanize the outer city along urban radial roads.[65] In contrast to the workers' colonies, which were built according to the personal motivations of industrialists, interwar construction directly relied on the social policy of the state and the accompanying legislation. Newly adopted legislation established standards and legally binding conditions in architecture, urban planning and social matters. For the first time, the city had a unified and binding model for high-quality and affordable social housing.[66]

The social policy and residential construction were specifically supported by the Construction Industry Act No. 45/1930,[67] which – under certain conditions – provided the developer with a state guarantee for mortgage loans, property tax relief for 15 to 25 years, or relief from other fees. The tax relief was limited to small and very small apartments, as well as single-family houses with a living area of up to 80 m^2. The period of construction was also limited to a maximum of 1 year. Through these measures, the law was intended to make basic social housing more financially accessible. The law primarily supported municipalities, private developers and companies, as well as construction cooperatives – a relatively new model of affordable housing.[68] Housing cooperatives and social housing are actually closely connected to Frič's early work. After arriving in Bratislava, Frič and Pavel Varsík (1891–1939)[69] directly contributed to establishing a branch of the Bank of the Czechoslovak Legions (also known as Legiobanka), which – as the foundation of the Slovak banking industry – consolidated the Slovak economy.[70] One of the bank's key agendas was the establishment of businesses and cooperatives, which fell under the direct responsibility of the industrial department managed by Frič. The cooperatives established in this way formed the basis of the social policy of the bank and its affiliated institutions.[71] In the mid-1930s, the law motivated Frič to build his own social and rental apartment buildings on Lazaretská, the urbanizing Račianska radial road, Hlavná Street in the Koliba area, and Novohradská Street. The tenement houses on Lazaretská in particular had a significant impact on the regulatory process governing the expansion of the city centre.

64 HABERLANDOVÁ, *Bývanie v centre a na perifériI*, 106.

65 MORAVČÍKOVÁ, *Bratislava (Un)planned City*, 597.

66 KIAČEK, *Contribution of Rudolf Frič to the Social Architecture of Interwar Czechoslovakia*, 47.

67 Zákon č. 45/1930 Sb., o stavebním ruchu. In: ASPI. Wolters Kluwer. Accessed: 9 September 2024. Available at: https://www.aspi.sk/products/lawText/1/4991/1/2/zakon-c-45-1930-sb-o-stavebnim-ruchu/zakon-c-45-1930-sb-o-stavebnim-ruchu.

68 HABERLANDOVÁ, *Housing Cooperatives in Slovakia*, 175. Although the establishment of cooperatives had already been allowed since 1875 in line with sections 223–257 of article XXXVII/1875 of the Hungarian Commercial Law, in Slovakia it was only substantially applied during the new socio-political model of the First Czechoslovak Republic. Ibidem, 178.

69 Pavel Varsík, a member of the Czechoslovak Legion and a banker, was the first director of the Bratislava branch of the so-called "Legiobanka". For more details see: ČAPLOVIČ, *Pavel Varsík*, 639–642.

70 KHÝN, *Ing. Rudolf Frič a Legiobanka*, 16–18.

71 KIAČEK, *Contribution of Rudolf Frič to the Social Architecture of Interwar Czechoslovakia*, 48.

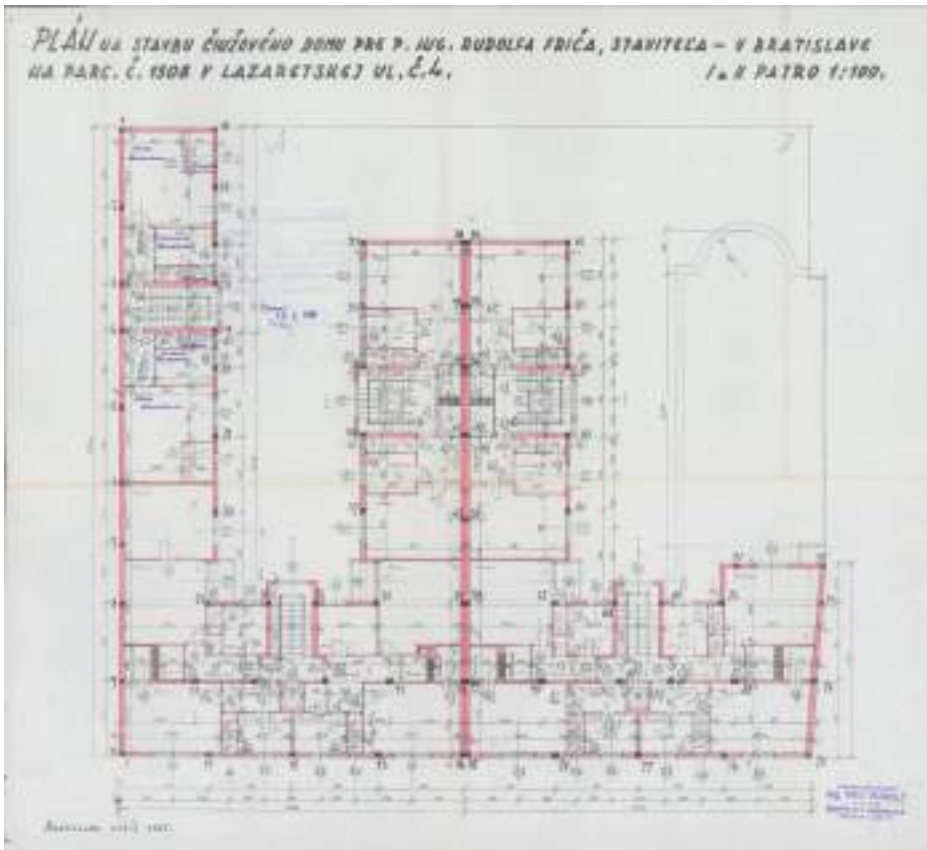

Figure 7: Rudolf Frič, Frič's tenement houses, 2–4 Lazaretská, 1935. First-floor plan. The adapted regulation allowed flats to be built in deep courtyard wings. Source: Bratislava City Archives, Office of the Chief Architect, box 330, ID No. 3210.

Thanks to the adapted regulation, they have a fragmented shape overall, where four deep courtyard wings emerge perpendicularly from the compact mass of the street wing (Fig. 7). The choice of suitable proportions has succeeded in allowing more natural light to reach the courtyard-facing apartments and make the most of the plot's features (Fig. 8). The higher housing standard of mostly single-bedroom apartments was achieved by compact internal staircases, generous sanitary facilities, central heating and full electrification including an electric stove. The load-bearing system of the building's frame allowed apartments to be flexibly combined into larger units. The additional merging of smaller apartments into larger ones made it possible to bypass the law that exclusively supported the construction of small social housing.

In line with the regulation, the ground floor includes public amenities and administrative spaces. The ground floor is dominated by a restaurant, a shop called Furian "Mliekareň – kolonial – delicates", a pawnshop, and the Riemer stationery shop

with a large underground warehouse. Riemer also supplied paper to the largest Slovak printing houses: the neighbouring Slovenská Grafia and later Neografia in Martin. The top floor features communal laundry rooms and community roof terraces, dedicated to sunbathing and leisure activities in the spirit of modern times and healthy living.

In the second half of the 1930s, the possibility of a carpet bomb air raid became a real threat in the area. This was due to the relative proximity of the industrial district located by the Danube. However, there is no evidence this threat would be taken into account when the Lazaretská regulation plan was amended. On the other hand, at that time, Frič was already building a series of military fortifications close to the border in Petržalka, so he directly applied his experience with material technology and construction when building his tenement houses. According to Ján Slabihoud, the load-bearing structure with a reinforced concrete skeleton and ribbed ceilings was designed to withstand the effect of a light to medium-weight aerial bomb.[72]

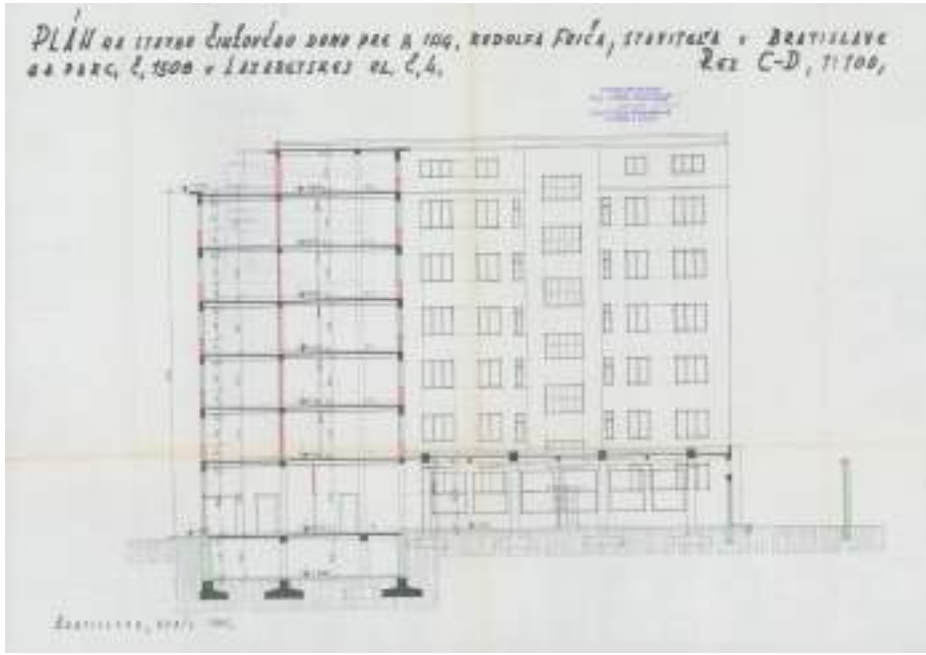

Figure 8: Rudolf Frič, Frič's tenement houses, 2–4 Lazaretská, 1935. Cross section through the restaurant wing reduced to one-level height. Source: Bratislava City Archives, Office of the Chief Architect, box 330, ID No. 3210.

Referencing the local artisanal tradition, the building uses quality crafted details and fine materials, namely dry-scratched brizolit plaster, shallow bossage, bush-hammered terrazzo, opaxit glass fillings and ceramic staircase tiles. Inside, the most

72 The private archive of Elena Fričová, personal estate of Rudolf Frič.

elaborate interior in terms of craftsmanship and materials is the restaurant with its marble carpet tiling, which mimics the tectonics of the reinforced concrete coffered ceiling.[73]

The project of Frič's tenement houses drew on the modern urban regulation of interwar Bratislava and successfully responded to the social policy of the city and the state. At the same time, however, it demonstrates how the project architect, investor, regulatory board member and city councillor all in one person tailored the urbanization of the city to fit his own needs.

The Social Significance of the New Urban Axis and Street Corner: Slovenská Grafia

In addition to the extension of Lazaretská, one of the key decisions of the adopted regulation was extending Cintorínska westward towards the city centre. The street was designed to be 21 metres wide with deep front gardens, the building height was defined at 18 metres, with 21-metre-tall buildings at corners. The new street profile, typical for the modernized Danube District, referenced the former flowerbeds and orchards of the eastern suburbs.[74] The western extension of the street required partial demolition of the existing terraced houses. An obstacle was presented by the ground-floor wing of the children's hospital, which had served as the seat of Slovenská Grafia – the first Slovak printing house – since 1921.[75]

Slovenská Grafia was established in Bratislava on 30 July 1921 as the first domestic printing house in Slovakia, resulting from the need for cultural and political consolidation in the emerging state of Czechoslovakia.[76] By establishing its own printing house, the state acquired a promotional medium that could be controlled. [77] It printed works and graphic products that developed and promoted a national and state identity.[78] Slovenská Grafia offered comprehensive printing, publishing and design services. It promoted itself as a graphic arts institute, a typesetting institute, a bookbinding

73 The complete description of the situation is based on field research, Matúš Kiaček, October 2023.

74 South of this area lay the Danube District (Ferdinandovo mesto, "Ferdinand's Town", known as Ferdinandstadt in German and Nándorváros in Hungarian), which urbanized with traditional blocks and a grid street plan from the end of the nineteenth century until the first half of the twentieth century. Within the urban fabric of Bratislava, the Danube District is characterized by wider street profiles with front gardens, which is a reference to the former agricultural areas of the Grössling garden bed. See: HABERLANDOVÁ, *Dunajská štvrť v Bratislave*, 14–20. Frič built two more cooperative apartment houses in the Danube District: an apartment house for the staff of the Slovak National Theatre on Klemensova (Jindřich Merganc, 1922) and an apartment house for the DŽOS agricultural cooperative on Gajova (Josef Nowotný, 1934). See: KIAČEK, *Contribution of Rudolf Frič to the Social Architecture of Interwar Czechoslovakia*, 52.

75 ID No. 3207, box 329, yr. 1920–1938, fu. Office of the Chief Architect, Bratislava City Archives.

76 A major contributor to the establishment of Slovenská Grafia was Milan Hodža (1878–1944), a member of the ruling Agrarian Party and later the first Slovak prime minister of Czechoslovakia. He obtained a state permit for the Slovenská Grafia joint-stock company on 30 April 1921, became the first chairman of its board of directors, and owned 25% of the shares, while 50% of the shares were owned by the American-Slovak Bank, whose building in Topoľčany was designed by Frič (1930). See: SLOVENSKÁ GRAFIA, *100 rokov nepretržitej polygrafickej výroby*, unnumbered.

77 A similar story resulted in the establishment of Legiografia – the printing house of the Czechoslovak Legion. The building in Bratislava was designed by Frič's company. See: The private archive of Elena Fričová, personal estate of Rudolf Frič.

78 Among other publications, Slovenská Grafia printed *Nový Svet* (New World, 1926–1945), an illustrated social magazine published on a weekly basis that was widespread among the intelligentsia. See: FEDOR, *Bibliografia periodík na Slovensku*, 393.

factory, a commercial book manufacturer, a publishing house and a design house.[79] The institution focused on book printing, intaglio printing, lithography, offset printing, rotary printing and stereotyping. It was also the first printing house in Slovakia to introduce colour printing. From 1927 onwards, it also published its own graphics-oriented monthly magazine called *Slovenská grafia*, which focused on the advancement of book printing and the promotion of artistic printing.[80] The magazine was edited by Antonín Hořejš, a teacher at the School of Arts and Crafts, Karol Jaroň,[81] director of Slovenská Grafia and founder of the School of Arts and Crafts and the Linografia printing house. Its graphic design was created by the artist Ľudovít Fulla. The quality and importance of the magazine are both evidenced by the names of its respected contributors, such as the typographer and graphic designer Jan Tschichold, the art theoretician and historian Bedřich Václavek, Jan Rybák, the architect Adolf Loos, and others.

Figure 9: Jaroslav Libánský, the original building of Slovenská grafia, Lazaretská, 1934. Part of the building demolished to cut Cintorínska through it. Source: Bratislava City Archives, Collection of photos and postcards, No. 04430.

79 ID No. UP-P 3280/8. [online] "Ľudovít Fulla a Karol Jaroň. Slovenská grafia: časopis venovaný povzneseniu kníhtlače a propagácii krásnej tlače, 1929, vol. 3, No. 3." Slovenská národná galéria. Accessed: 13 May 2024: https://www.webumenia.sk/dielo/SVK:SNG.UP-P_3280-8.

80 ID No. UP-P 3280/8. [online] "Ľudovít Fulla a Karol Jaroň. Slovenská grafia : časopis venovaný povzneseniu kníhtlače a propagácii krásnej tlače, 1929, vol. 3, No. 3." Slovenská národná galéria. Accessed: 13 May 2024: https://www.webumenia.sk/dielo/SVK:SNG.UP-P_3280-8.

81 STRÝČKOVÁ, "Jej rodinu nútene vysťahovali z Bratislavy: Rodičia museli odísť z vily do bývalého kurína, domov sa už nikdy nevrátili", In: *Denník N*, [online], 2022. Accessed: 27 December 2023. https://dennikn.sk/2708165/jej-rodinu-nutene-vystahovali-z-bratislavy-rodicia-museli-odist-z-vily-do-byvaleho-kurina-domov-sa-uz-nikdy-nevratili/.

Between 1930 and 1942, Slovenská Grafia also printed the first professional magazine in Slovakia dedicated to architecture and civil engineering. It was titled *Slovenský staviteľ: revue architektúry a staviteľského umenia* (Slovak Builder: A Journal of Architecture and the Art of Construction).[82] It was published by the Organizational Union of the Community of Builders in Slovakia, which Frič chaired until the rise of nationalist pressure and the establishment of the independent Slovak State. Frič was instrumental in founding both the organization and the journal itself.[83] The end of the magazine came as a result of the political and social situation and was linked to the downsizing of Slovenská Grafia, whose agenda was gradually handed over to the newly founded and politically more reliable Neografia in Martin. In addition to its agenda, Neografia also acquired key figures from Slovenská Grafia: Josef Vlček, an expert on the airbrush technique; Jozef Cincík, known for finalizing the graphic design of postage stamps; and František Vršecký, who served as the director of the company.[84]

The original printing house was created by adapting the ground-floor wing of the children's hospital on Lazaretská[85] according to the plans of the Prague architect Jaroslav Libánský (1921).[86] The wing was part of a continuous row of buildings terminating Cintorínska in a perpendicular line. The situation escalated with the adoption of regulations in 1931, which mandated that Cintorínska should cut through the existing buildings (Fig. 9). As a result, part of the Slovenská Grafia building was demolished and its operation had to downsize to a level that was no longer sustainable. For operational and urban planning reasons, it became apparent that Slovenská Grafia needed a new building.

Rudolf Frič was entrusted with the design and construction of the modern printing house. The detailed development regulation (1935) definitively prescribed how the entire section of Lazaretská from Špitálska to the new intersection with Cintorínska was to be built. As a corner building, Slovenská Grafia was supposed to be 21 metres tall throughout its entirety and rounded at the corner. It became the first building on the newly paved Cintorínska, and the only building adhering to its prescribed profile with front gardens. Its urban position was quite representative – the urban axis of Cintorínska connected the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross at St Andrew's Cemetery in the east with St Martin's Cathedral and Bratislava Castle in the west. A possible view of the castle was already anticipated in the project, depicted in a contemporary visualization

82 This was a monthly magazine focusing on architecture and urban planning, its main audience consisting of people with trade licenses in construction, members of the construction industry and authorities looking for contractors. It published studies, plans, technical news, patent alerts, legal regulations, literature and even supplements focusing on projects. The magazine ceased publication in 1942, allegedly due to a ban on printing. The 13th and final volume was published as a graphic supplement to the *Slovenské technické obzory* (Slovak Technical Horizons) magazine, which was printed by the competing Neografia in Martin. See: Slovenský staviteľ. In: KIPSOVÁ, *Bibliografia slovenských a inorečových novín a časopisov*.

83 HARMAN, *Od štyridsiatky do šesťdesiatky*, 13–15.

84 LONGAUER, "Za Slovenského štátu ho zatajovali, uznávaný výtvarník bol totiž Čech", In: *Denník N*, [online], 2015. Accessed: 15 May 2024. https://dennikn.sk/96504/za-slovenskeho-statu-ho-zatajovali-uznavany-vytvarnik-bol-totiz-cech/.

85 ID No. 3207, box 329, yr. 1920–1938, fu. Office of the Chief Architect, Bratislava City Archives.

86 Jaroslav Libánský (1894–1926), a Prague-based architect and builder who had received his construction license in 1900, and the builder Antonín Bellada (1881–1936) were responsible for the reconstruction of the Union printing house on *Svobodova* in Prague (1936). The original project by František Zvěřina was completed by a company called Nekvasil (1906–1907). The progressive reinforced concrete construction of Hennebique-style ceilings and columns was among the first of its kind in Prague. With sections of 4×6.9 m, it was effective at carrying high operational loads. See: ANON. 2, *Stavba tiskárny české grafické akc. společnosti Unie v Praze*, 31–32.

retouched in the studio of Slovenská Grafia (Fig. 10).[87] The view of two iconic city buildings was complemented by the multifunctional high-rise building commissioned by the butcher Manderla, colloquially known as "Manderlák", which was designed by the architects Christian Ludwig, Emerich Spitzer and Augustín Danielis (1933–1935). It has not been confirmed whether the position of this first Slovak "skyscraper" on the corner of Námestie republiky was also chosen with regard to the axial view from the new street. In the 1960s, the view of the castle was obscured by the high-rise building of the Kyjev Hotel (1960–1973) by Ivan Matušík.

Figure 10: Rudolf Frič, Slovenská grafia, 8 Cintorínska, 1935. Contemporary visualization with airbrush technique. Source: SLABIHOUD, *25 rokov stavebného podnikania*, 63.

In accordance with the city regulation (1931) and the detailed development plan (1935), the construction of the new Slovenská Grafia building began with the obtaining of a demolition and building permit (1935). For operational and construction reasons, the construction was carried out in stages between 1935 and 1937.[88] The phasing and functional segregation of the sections is reflected in the different architecture and tectonics of the facades. The most prominent is the production section, which creates a new urban corner at the meeting point of Lazaretská and Cintorínska. The rounded corner and restrained tectonics of the facade are reminiscent of the purist design of Vojtěch Šebor's boarding house and dormitory, constructed by Frič

87 SLABIHOUD, *25 rokov stavebného podnikania*, 63.

88 ID No. 3207, box 329, yr. 1920–1938, fu. Office of the Chief Architect, Bratislava City Archives.

near the main railway station at the corner of Jelenia and Železničiarska (1930).[89] The industrial character is shaped by the regular tectonics of shallow pilasters and segmented horizontal windows.[90] From a compositional perspective, the corner is accentuated by the gradation and transfer of the horizontal movement of the street into the static verticality of the pilasters. The main entrance in the axis of the corner is accentuated by a high lintel with scenic stone reliefs by Ladislav Majerský,[91] depicting basic scenes of work: graphic designers behind a desk, a typesetter, a rotary press operator, a man with bookbinder's scissors and a package carrier.[92] On both sides, embossed inscriptions read *Slovenská grafia*. The adjacent residential section forms a compositional transition between the more robust corner and the urban scale of the rest of the building.[93] The five-storey administrative and commercial section is built at a lower height of 18 metres. The purist facade with the monotonous rhythm of its windows has a balanced compositional gravity and a pleasant scale. In comparison to the facade of the production wing, it is more perforated and has a more approachable urban scale. In this way, it balanced the urban centre of the industrial and residential/civic architecture of this neighbourhood, which was undergoing modern urbanization (Fig. 13).

89 ANON. 3, *Slobodáreň a nocľaháreň v Bratislave*, 26–28; KIAČEK, *Contribution of Rudolf Frič to the Social Architecture of Interwar Czechoslovakia*, 47–59.

90 The steel windows with tilt opening were supplied by the Doležal & Těhník company from Prostějov. See: ID No. 3207, box 329, yr. 1920–1938, p. 219. Office of the Chief Architect, Bratislava City Archives.

91 The sandstone reliefs have not been preserved in situ – they have been transferred to the lobby of today's Slovenská Grafia building on *Pekná cesta* in Bratislava.

92 ID No. P1149. [online] "Ladislav Majerský. Náčrt pre reliéfnu výzdobu pre Slovenskú grafiu", Slovenská národná galéria. Accessed: 10 May 2024: https://www.webumenia.sk/dielo/SVK:SNG.P_1149.

93 ID No. 3207, box 329, yr. 1920–1938, fu. Office of the Chief Architect, Bratislava City Archives.

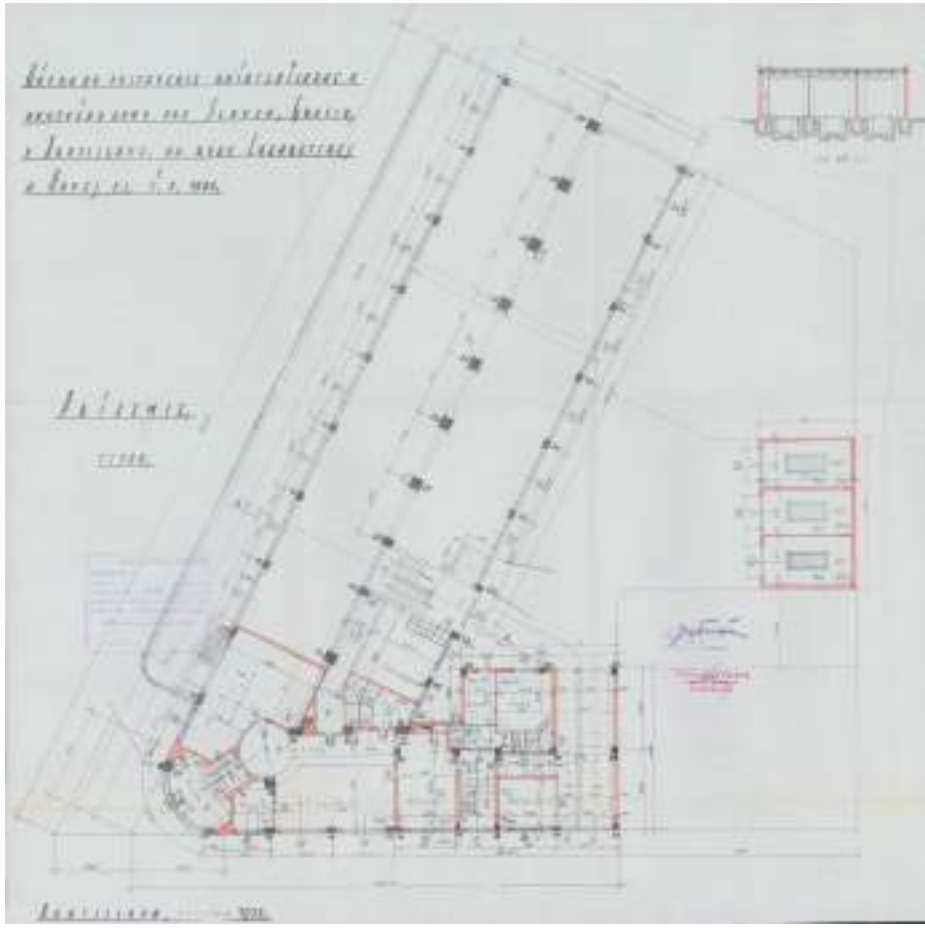

Figure 11: Rudolf Frič, Slovenská grafia, 8 Cintorínska, 1935. Ground-floor plan with a circular entrance lobby inserted into the corner. Source: Bratislava City Archives, Office of the Chief Architect, box 329, ID No. 3207.

An interesting interior space is the circular lobby inserted into the corner (Fig. 11). The lobby provides access to the accounting and calculation offices, while the majority of the wing on Cintorínska is occupied by the open space above the basement workshop. The basement houses the stereotyping room and the most advanced part of the local printing process – a rotary printer that was first introduced to Slovakia by Slovenská Grafia. Standard printing took place on the first floor, where Slovenská Grafia was the first printing house in Slovakia to introduce colour printing by printing a colour publication for Matica Slovenská in 1935. Intaglio printing was introduced here in 1936,

while in 1938 the innovative offset printing method was launched.[94] The studio on the second floor was used to create final designs and templates for posters, brochures, books, book illustrations, various commissioned prints and especially stamps. František Vršecký, the director of Slovenská Grafia, approached the Czech artist Josef Vlček (active in Slovenská Grafia between 1937 and 1942) and asked him to lead the studio. Vlček was the only one in Slovakia to specialize in the airbrush technique, characterized by smooth surfaces and subtle transitions. With its introduction in the studio, Slovenská Grafia established a unique identity for itself within Slovakia. Vlček retouched and finalized graphic designs by Martin Benka and Ladislav Majerský, and especially the graphic designs of postage stamps and trademarks by Jozef Cincík. The best known of these is a series of eight postage stamps commemorating the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Slovak State, which includes motifs from Slovak national mythology. The series, entitled *Kniežatá* (The Princes), was designed by Cincík, while Vlček redrew his designs with great detail using the airbrush technique.[95] Opposite the studio, the lobby is divided by a glass partition into a street-facing section for manual typesetting and a courtyard-facing section for machine-assisted typesetting.[96] The third floor houses the bookbinding room, where printed materials are bound, trimmed, hole-punched or gilded, and then stored and shipped.

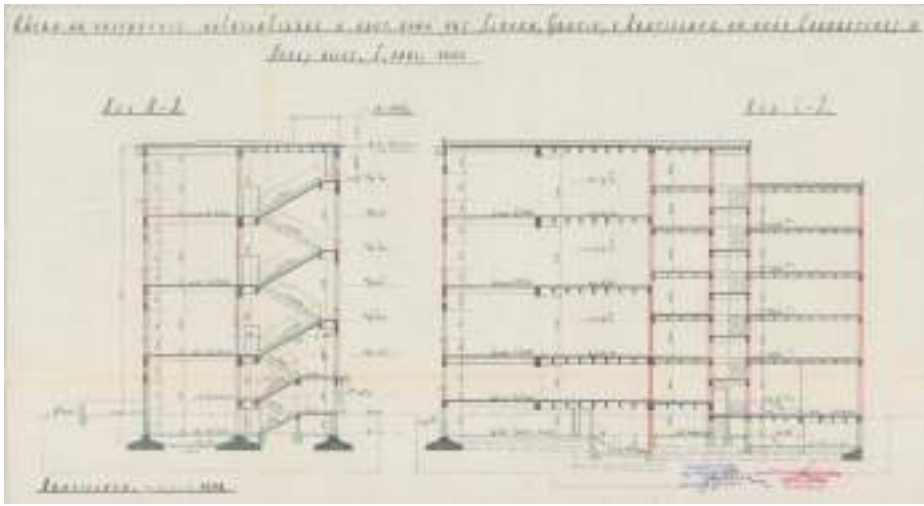

Figure 12: Rudolf Frič, Slovenská grafia, 8 Cintorínska, 1935. Cross section with the vertically variable space conditions. Source: Bratislava City Archives, Office of the Chief Architect, box 329, ID No. 3207.

94 SLOVENSKÁ GRAFIA, *100 rokov nepretržitej polygrafickej výroby*, unnumbered.

95 LONGAUER, "Za Slovenského štátu ho zatajovali, uznávaný výtvarník bol totiž Čech", Denník N, [online], 2015. Accessed: 15 May 2024. https://dennikn.sk/96504/za-slovenskeho-statu-ho-zatajovali-uznavany-vytvarnik-bol-totiz-cech/.

96 This was because manual typesetting using tweezers required an extreme level of precision and excellent lighting conditions.

On Lazaretská, the corner wing continues with a residential section with social housing for employees. It retains a height of 21 metres, albeit with more floors. The last five-storey administrative/commercial section has a lower height of 18 metres. The commercial ground floor houses a shop owned by Slovenská Grafia called U nás and a bookshop run by the Komenský publishing and literary company. The upper floors house the printing house offices, which have a cellular layout, while the basement is used for warehousing. In the original building permit, the offices were indicated as apartments so that Slovenská Grafia could make use of tax relief offered for building small-scale social housing. Once the building had received its final approval along with the tax relief, the apartments were converted back into offices, which was not at all an uncommon tactic for circumventing the law.

The reinforced concrete skeleton can be seen in the variable spatial arrangement of individual facilities. For the production wing, a basic structural module of 5.5 × 5.5 × 5.5 metres was used (Fig. 12). The cubic module, at the time typical for American industrial architecture, was equally variable in its space in all directions: transversely, longitudinally and vertically. Frič likely adopted this concept from Vladimír Karfík (1901–1996), whose designs he used to build the manufacturing facilities of Baťa's shoe factories in Zlín (1930–1933).[97] However, the versatility of the module is undermined by various eccentricities and the need to adapt it to a particular position within the city.

Figure 13: Merged elevation of the stable segment of Lazaretská accepting the regulated height of 18 m in the middle, 21 m at the corners and 24 m on perpendicular Špitálska. Slovenská grafia, Rudolf Frič's tenement house, Rudolf Machota's tenement house. Source: Bratislava City Archives, Office of the Chief Architect, box 330, ID No. 3210; box 329, ID No. 3207; box 330, ID No. 3211.

Conclusion

Although Bratislava could make use of regulatory plans by Antal Palóczi and Victor Bernárdt as early as the beginning of the twentieth century, in the interwar period the city was still being urbanized in line with partial regulatory plans adopted by the city's regulatory board and construction committee. Their decisions often accommodated the partial interests of developers, who were often directly represented in both bodies. This resulted in regulatory plans being tailored to the specific requirements of the builders in question. This has been proven by archival research and research into the architectural history of the interwar urbanization

97 KARFÍK, *Vzpomínky*, 226.

occurring at the former eastern suburb adjacent to St Andrew's Cemetery. The city regulation, which included the creation of a transverse and longitudinal urban axis – today's Lazaretská and Cintorínska – along with modern multifunctional buildings, was developed under the influence of Rudolf Frič: a construction entrepreneur, project architect and member of both the regulatory board and the construction committee. At the intersection of the two axes, the plan successfully integrated the industrial and commercial building of Slovenská Grafia – the original Slovak printing house – and, together with other buildings, created the most comprehensive segment of interwar redevelopment in this area. While his project of tenement houses influenced the city regulation, he did identify with its principles and ideas. This is evidenced by the fact that together with the Slovenská Grafia building and Rudolf Machota's tenement house they form the most stable segment of the city block (Fig. 13). Moreover, through the quality of its architectural and artisanal detail, the project preserves original local craftsmanship and integrates it with progressive architectural structures and the social policy of interwar Bratislava. The latter successfully promoted the construction of social housing to improve living standards in the context of major interwar immigration. An important role in the urbanization of this area was played by the Slovenská Grafia building. It finds itself at the intersection of a vibrant square and the city's infirmaries, against the backdrop of St Andrew's Cemetery. From an urban planning perspective, it cuts through *Cintorínska* towards the centre, opening a view between the towers of St Martin's Cathedral, the castle, and the Church of the Holy Cross at St Andrew's Cemetery, thus also compositionally integrating the expanding city centre with its core. Additionally, it also rehabilitates the local craft tradition through rotary printing, which follows the long-established legacy of stonemasonry, physically manifested in the corner relief by Ladislav Majerský. However, it does so with progressive manufacturing technology and a modern architectural aesthetic that allows it to blend harmoniously with the contemporary fabric of the modernized block. Through his buildings, Frič undoubtedly contributed to the interwar form and urbanization of Lazaretská Street and Cintorínska *Street*, despite intentional changes to the principles of the urban regulation valid at the time.

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