



POSTER PROMOTING
COOPERATIVE HOUSING
CONSTRUCTION AND MEMBERSHIP
IN HOUSING COOPERATIVES


PLAKÁT PROPAGUJÍCÍ
DRUŽSTEVNÍ BYTOVOU VÝSTAVBU
A VSTUPOVÁNÍ DO STAVEBNÍCH
BYTOVÝCH DRUŽSTEV

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On Cooperative Housing in Socialist Czechoslovakia, 1959 – 1970

Družstevní bydlení v socialistickém Československu, 1959 – 1970

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 <https://doi.org/10.31577/archandurb.2022.56.3-4.5>

V souvislosti s aktuální celoevropskou krizí bydlení, pro niž je klíčový nedostatek cenově dostupných bytů, se hledají alternativy, které by dokázaly tento nepříznivý trend zastavit. Mezi vlastnickým a soukromým nájemním bydlením se zmiňuje některá z forem kolektivního bydlení či bydlení družstevní. Tato forma bytové výstavby má v českých zemích více než stošedesátiletou tradici. Studie si klade za cíl otevřít otázku role a činnosti bytových družstev v jednotlivých etapách k další odborné diskusi a zasadit družstevní bytovou výstavbu do širšího historického kontextu.

Ačkoli nebylo poválečné Československo tolik poničeno uplynulým válečným konfliktem, řešilo stejný problém jako hůře postižené evropské země – nedostatek vhodných bytů pro své obyvatele. Tento trend měl vzestupnou tendenci, která byla evidentní v průběhu padesátých let. Od roku 1950 do roku 1961 představoval hrubý úbytek bytů 348 tisíc jednotek. Jednalo se o byty zbourané, o byty, které přestaly sloužit svému účelu, a byty, které jako samostatné jednotky zanikly, například sloučením s jiným bytem. Ve stejném období přibýlo zhruba 644 tisíc bytů ve všech typech výstavby – faktický počet dokončených bytů byl velice malý, pohyboval se mezi 75 a 86 tisíci bytů za rok.

K určitému průlomů začalo docházet na přelomu padesátých a šedesátých let, kdy byla zákonným opatřením obnovena družstevní bytová výstavba a do řešení „bytového problému“ tak bylo aktivně zapojeno i obyvatelstvo (viz níže). Tehdy se také otevřela debata o tom, jak mají architekti nechat zaznívat hlas veřejnosti při navrhování větších obytných celků, jak má vypadat dialog mezi tvůrci architektury a jejími uživateli a jak mají být poznatky odborníků (především architektů a sociologů) s veřejností sdíleny. Co obnovení družstevní bytové výstavby i otevření veřejné debaty předcházelo? V červnu roku 1958 slíbil na XI. sjezdu Komunistické strany Československa generální tajemník Antonín Novotný, že každý člověk, který je zapsaný v pořadníku žadatelů o byt, bude do roku 1962 bydlet. Slib byl následně ukotven v oficiálním stranickém dokumentu nazvaném „Usnesení k řešení bytové problematiky do roku 1970“, přijatém ústředním výborem Komunistické strany Československa. Usnesení slibovalo rychlý a efektivní rozvoj bytové výstavby a reagovalo tím na evidentní a neustále se prohlubující krizi bydlení – bytů bylo zkrátka málo a počet zájemců narůstal. Představitelé státu hledali cesty, jak problém řešit, a zároveň způsoby, jak do řešení problému aktivně zapojit obyvatelstvo. V dobovém kontextu plánovaného hospodářství se jako

nejvhodnější způsob jevílo navázání na dlouhou tradici družstevnictví, která v českých zemích trvala již od druhé poloviny 19. století. Tradice sice nebyla neměnná, ale procházela poměrně dynamickým vývojem, zásadním zlomem pak byl rok 1948. Šlo ale o fenomén, který byl dostatečně známý, rozvinutý a dalo se s ním v pozmeněné podobě počítat i v nových společenských a hospodářských souřadnicích. Proto byl přijat zákon o družstevní bytové výstavbě č. 27/1959 Sb., který umožnil vznik stavebních bytových družstev (SBD), která měla ve spolupráci s národními výbory jako nadřízenými a dozorujícími subjekty dosáhnout toho, „aby do výstavby bytů byly zapojeny nejširší masy pracujících“. Zákon také určoval, jak má družstvo vzniknout: „Stavební bytové družstvo si zřizují zaměstnanci podniku či jiné socialistické organizace anebo občané pro obvod určitých obcí nebo míst.“ Vedle nově vznikajících stavebních bytových družstev existovala ještě lidová bytová družstva (LBD), jejichž existenci upravoval dřívější zákon č. 53/1954 Sb., o lidových družstvech a družstevních organizacích. Z dosud existujících bytových družstev se stal pouhý správce bytového fondu, který postrádal možnost větších investic a samostatné výstavby. V polovině dekády získala SBD také jistou autonomii tím, že byla začleněna do gesce Ústřední rady družstev (ÚRD), centralizované instituce, která začala vznikat již v poválečném období a jejíž kompetence byly dosud velmi omezené. Právě nyní ale začíná ÚRD fungovat jako jistý metodický a organizační činitel, který podporuje vznik nových bytových družstev a pomáhá s legislativními a úvěrovými záležitostmi.

Příklad ÚRD jako centrální instituce, která zastřešovala družstevní hnutí v Československu, si na tomto místě zaslouží bližší pozornost. Potřeba vytvořit takovouto instituci byla naléhavě pociťována již bezprostředně po ukončení druhé světové války. Na přípravách její podoby se podíleli představitelé všech stávajících družstevních svazů a byla zřízena speciální komise, která měla za úkol připravit zákon o ÚRD. Ačkoli byl návrh tohoto zákona předán ministru ochrany práce a sociální péče již v srpnu 1945, k jeho schválení došlo až v červenci 1948, tedy v naprosto odlišných politických a společenských poměrech. Zákon č. 187/1948 Sb. přispěl k postupnému začlenění družstevní struktury do státního, centrálně plánovaného hospodářství. ÚRD se stala součástí Národní fronty Čechů a Slováků, tedy sdružení politických stran a dalších organizací, které bylo založeno po druhé světové válce a po únoru 1948 se stalo politickým nástrojem, jímž Komunistická strana Československa uplatňovala moc. Zákon ukládal ÚRD mimo jiné povinnost soustřeďovat

a organizovat činnost všech družstev, šířit družstevní zásady a pečovat o družstevní výchovu. ÚRD podléhala ministerstvu ochrany práce a sociální péče. Jejím prvním předsedou se stal Antonín Zmrhal (1882 – 1954), politik a dlouholetý pracovník družstevního hnutí, který se podílel na přípravě zákona o ÚRD, na kolektivizaci zemědělství a vzniku jednotných zemědělských družstev (JZD).

Myšlenka družstevnictví zjevně mezi obyvateli Československa silně rezonovala, protože již v polovině šedesátých let představoval počet družstevních bytů téměř polovinu z celového počtu postavených bytů a jejich množství stále narůstalo, do 30. května 1964 vzniklo 1 631 SBD se 167 611 členy. V pětiletce 1966 – 1970 družstevní výstavba dosáhla největšího, 56% podílu na celkové výstavbě bytů – měla být co nejvíce typizovaná, a tím pádem levná a měla se vztahovat jen na stavby vícepodlažních bytových domů s nejméně dvanácti byty, nikoli na rodinné domky. Z tohoto pravidla mohla být udělena výjimka, která určovala nižší počet bytů na jeden bytový dům, celkový počet ale nesměl klesnout pod čtyři bytové jednotky. Zápisy z jednání politického byra ústředního výboru KSČ z poloviny šedesátých let ale jasně hovoří o nedodržování tohoto pravidla a o nutnosti důsledně kontrolovat, aby nedocházelo k prolínání soukromého a družstevního vlastnictví. Otázka apropriace družstevního vlastnictví se ostatně nabízí k bližšímu prozkoumání v další fázi probíhajícího výzkumu.

Bytové družstevnictví se tak tehdy jednoznačně stalo jednou z páteří státní bytové politiky. Co měl tedy člověk podniknout, chtěl-li získat družstevní byt? A byl takový byt dostupnější než byt obecní, tehdejším jazykem komunální? Člověk vstupující do bytového družstva zaplatil členský podíl ve výši 40 % nákladů na výstavbu bytu, stát půjčil až 50 % finančních

prostředků formou zvýhodněného úvěru družstvu až na čtyřicet let s úrokovou sazbou 1 % a zbytek nákladů na výstavbu pak pokryl státním příspěvkem. Výše finančního podílu se tedy mohla v jednotlivých případech mírně odlišovat. Finanční příjmy stavebních bytových družstev byly tvořeny vklady jednotlivců, státním příspěvkem a bankovním úvěrem.

Jedním z prvních pražských sídlišť, na nichž se významnou měrou podílela stavební bytová družstva, bylo sídliště Petřiny, vybudované v letech 1959 – 1969 podle plánu Pražského projektového ústavu. Po dokončení tohoto celku zde bylo celkem přes čtyři tisíce bytů, z nichž téměř polovinu tvořily byty družstevní. Toto sídliště bývá v odborné literatuře vysoce hodnoceno pro své urbanistické kvality. Vzniklo v tzv. pionýrské fázi a bylo prvním velkým pražským sídlištěm, na němž se uplatnila nová celopanelová konstrukční soustava G 57. Urbanistickou koncepcí se přizpůsobilo okolní zástavbě a navazovalo na tradiční městské prvky. Páteří sídliště je ulice Na Petřinách, jež je ukončena budovou Ústavu makromolekulární chemie Akademie věd České republiky, který je nástupnickou institucí ústavu založeného v roce 1959 a vedeného významným českým vědcem Otto Wichterlem. Budova byla postavena v letech 1960 – 1964 podle návrhu architekta Karla Pragera. Zajímavostí tohoto sídliště byla profesní a sociální pestrost jeho nových obyvatel, kterých zde po ukončení výstavby žilo přes třináct tisíc. Vedle státních zaměstnanců, především vojáků a pracovníků ministerstva vnitra, zde bydlela řada drobných střadatelů, kterým se podařilo našetřit částku potřebnou k zaplacení podílu v bytovém družstvu.

Autorka svou studii poprvé vstupuje na dosud neprobádané pole a otevírá otázky, jimž se chce podrobněji věnovat v pokračujícím výzkumu.

In 1987 the samizdat bulletin *Informace o Chartě 77 (Infoch/Information on Charter 77)* published a relatively long article¹ analysing the dismal housing situation in Prague. The analysis was introduced by an open letter addressed to the Mayor of Prague, the prime ministers of the Czech Socialist Republic and of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (ČSSR), the president of the Federal Assembly of the ČSSR, and the president of the Czech National Council. The analysis itself appears to have drawn on data from the 1980 census, statistics from the national committees, housing cooperatives and other entities, and was grounded in an expert knowledge of the issue. The author has not yet been ascertained and it is doubtful whether it is indeed possible now to discover who penned the article, but this is not essential for the present purposes and goals. The *Infoch* article detailed the fundamental abuses associated with the then housing crisis – the lack of apartments, their high and ever-rising prices, corruption, machinations and illegal renovations. In the current climate of the local election campaign, to be held in early October of this year in the Czech Republic, the article makes for a very frustrating read. In retrospect, the “housing crisis” appears to be a leitmotif of our modern history, not only in recent times, since the socialist-era housing crisis referred not only to the simple lack of apartments suitable for long-term accommodation, but equally to the rising prices of real estate and rental housing. It has always been a challenge for state governance and political representatives to find a good solution, hence this study aims to highlight cooperatives, or cooperative housing, as a prospect that appears (or interest in is renewed) at historical moments of conflict and offers an (admittedly imperfect) way out of the crisis. This article is my first attempt to enter this yet unexplored field, with the intention of opening it up for further investigation and discussion.

The roots of housing cooperatives date back to the 19th century,¹ that is to the time of unregulated, Gründerzeit or “Gilded Age”, capitalism, when the most strongly affected social groups included workers, peasants, tradesmen, and other less propertied classes. Already during this era,



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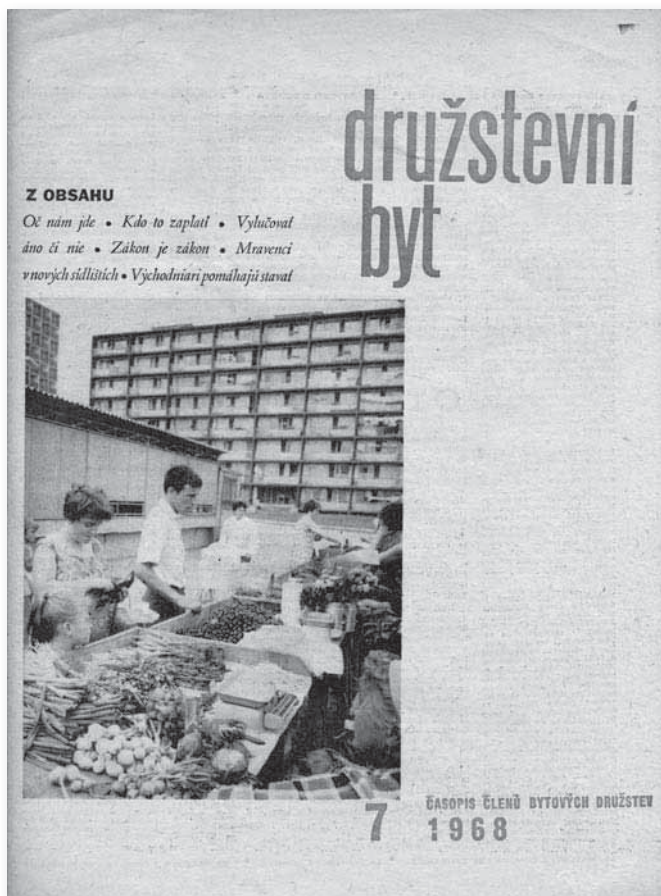
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several basic types of cooperatives began to be formed, some of which still exist today, albeit with slight modifications. Thus, we know there were production cooperatives, associating artisans and small producers; trade cooperatives among retail merchants; consumer groupings; credit institutions, securing small loans for their members on more favourable terms than those offered by other financial institutions; agricultural cooperatives, bringing together peasants in cooperatives mostly for non-production activities (storage, machinery, procurements, energy supply, etc.) and housing.³ The development of housing cooperatives in the 1880s and 1890s was due to increasing industrialisation in the Czech lands, which resulted in the large-scale migration of rural populations to the cities. Although housing cooperatives have undergone many changes since their beginnings, their rich and relatively long tradition clearly has taken root in the local, Czech social consciousness.

Housing cooperatives also experienced a boom in the newly established Czechoslovak Republic. For reasons of space, the history of older cooperatives can be addressed through references to the literature in the footnotes.⁴ Although the political, social and economic context changed in the post-war years, we can assume that until 1948 the three key values of cooperatives were the same, namely that they were voluntary, independent, and self-governing. From the very beginning of the cooperative movement, it was based not primarily on profit but on principles of self-help and the improvement of the economic situation of its members.⁵

Immediately following the end of the Second World War, the umbrella organisation of the Central Cooperative Council (ÚRD) was formed.⁶ Representatives of all the existing cooperative unions participated in the creation of this central institution: specifically, the representatives of the Union of Consumer Cooperatives, the Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, the General Cooperatives Union, and the Union of Housing Enterprises. All cooperative organisations followed a standardised model and were independent of political parties, with a voluntary membership



FRONT PAGE OF THE MONTHLY COOPERATIVE APARTMENT

TITULNÍ STRANA MĚSÍČNÍKU DRUŽSTEVNÍ BYT

Source Zdroj: private archive of the author

and democratically elected leadership. The agreement represented a consensus among the Social Democrats, the National Social Party and the Communists.⁷ A special commission was set up to prepare the legislative act for the establishment of the ÚRD. The proposal was submitted to the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare in August 1945, but it was not approved until July 1948, by which time the political and social context was very different. The reasons for the delay in passing the legislation were manifold, but it is certain that one of the reasons was the effort of the Communist Party to secure a sufficiently strong position in the institution, gradually dominate it and in this way prepare a strong basis for the future takeover of power in the state. Act no. 187/1948 Coll.⁸ contributed to the gradual integration of the cooperative structure into the state's centrally planned economy. The ÚRD became part of the National Front of Czechs and Slovaks, originally an association of political parties and other organisations founded after the Second World War, but after the Communist coup of February 1948, a political tool through which the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) exercised its power.⁹ Amongst other things, the law defined the ÚRD's duty to concentrate and organise the activities of all cooperatives, to disseminate cooperative principles, and to bear responsibility for cooperative education. Administratively, the ÚRD fell under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. Its first chairman was Antonín Zmrhal (1882–1954), a politician and long-term worker in the cooperative movement who had been involved in the preparation of the ÚRD Act, the collectivisation of agriculture, and the establishment of the United Agricultural Cooperatives (JZD).

Although the basic principles of the cooperative movement were significantly violated during the Communist dictatorship, the cooperatives, attempting to be economically independent despite the planned economy, can be considered as the only possible alternatives to the state sector at the time. However, this statement only applies to the later period, because in the early years of the Communist regime, despite the clear ideological and rhetorical support for the cooperatives in the public space, in reality they were restricted, especially housing cooperatives. The currency reform

FRONT PAGE OF THE MONTHLY
COOPERATIVE APARTMENT

TITULNÍ STRANA MĚSÍČNÍKU
DRUŽSTEVNÍ BYT

Source Zdroj: private archive of the
author



of 1953¹⁰, which significantly devalued members' deposits and building purchase advances, and the subsequent adoption of Act No. 53/1954 Coll.¹¹ on people's cooperatives and cooperative organisations essentially turned the existing cooperatives into the administrators of housing funds, without the authority to make large investments and commission independent construction. A new zoning principle was also introduced, which enabled the transfer of more than 25,000 apartments in Prague to one single cooperative, the People's Housing Cooperative (LBD), thus making it practically impossible to apply the original cooperative principles, according to which the cooperative is managed by its members.

Czechoslovakia, like other European countries in the post-war period, faced an acute housing shortage, a problem further exacerbated by the suppression of the activities of the housing cooperatives. Between 1950 and 1961, the gross loss amounted to 348,000 flats. These included apartments that were demolished, apartments that ceased to serve their purpose and apartments that disappeared as housing units (for example, by being combined with another apartment).¹² In the same period, approximately 644,000 apartments of all types of construction were added – yet the actual number of completed apartments was very small, ranging between 75,000 and 86,000 per year.¹³ By the end of the 1950s, it was already evident that the housing situation was critical. At the 11th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in June 1958, Antonín Novotný promised that by 1962 everyone on the housing waiting list would be given an apartment. This was, however, a promise impossible to fulfil, as the state did not have enough funds to accelerate the construction of state-owned apartments.¹⁴ It was during this time that the Act on Cooperative Housing Construction No. 27/1959 Coll.¹⁵ came into effect, which provided for the establishment of house building cooperatives (SBD): in cooperation with the national committees as a superior and supervisory entity, these bodies were to ensure “that the broadest masses of workers are involved in the construction of flats”. The law determined how a cooperative was to be formed: “a building housing cooperative is established by the employees of an enterprise or other socialist organisation, or by citizens of the

districts of certain municipalities or places.” The role of the national committees was to provide technical assistance with construction, to secure suitable land for building, and to procure the building materials.

This legal regulation meant the de facto renewal of cooperative housing construction; hence the year 1959 became an important milestone in the history of Czechoslovak cooperatives, although it is necessary to remember that cooperative housing construction was managed and supervised by the district national committees. However, in retrospect, a certain tension arose between the state guaranteeing the right and entitlement to housing, while the responsibility to fulfil this right was gradually transferred from the state to individuals and their families. This paradox was described in detail by sociologist Tomáš Hoření-Samec for the late socialist period,¹⁶ but its roots date back to previous decades and are closely related to cooperative housing construction.

The act was followed by a decree by the Ministry of Finance No. 94/1959¹⁷ on the financing, loan support and control of cooperatives and corporate construction. This decree guaranteed the possibility of receiving a financial contribution from the state based on the amount of the construction costs. After this legislative amendment, the Central Cooperative Council continued to provide systematic support to cooperatives and administer the LBD. In contrast with the interwar period, the construction of cooperatives was not intended to provide apartments for poor citizens, but rather for those who could afford a financial share in the construction costs and pay higher rents than in state-administered apartments (see below). The advantage was in being given an apartment earlier.

As the adoption of the law was motivated by the effort to surmount the housing crisis, a concerted effort was made to communicate its content to the public. On 5 March 1959, the “Resolution of the Central Committee of the KSČ to solve the housing crisis in the Czechoslovak Republic by 1970”¹⁸ was published in the press. The Resolution promised the construction of 1.2 million apartments by 1970 and in the following decade became a widely cited document. The ambitious plan was visually promoted: a series of posters were designed to communicate the benefits of cooperative construction to the citizens and the state support that they could rely on (see appendix).

The next step was the organisation of the First National Discussion on Housing, in which the Ministry of Construction, the Union of Architects of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the State Planning Commission all participated. The discussion was officially and publicly announced on 13 September 1960, with a total of over one thousand debates taking place. Short films were released (*Cities, Apartments, People* [1960]; *How We Will Live* [1961]) and an exhibition pavilion was installed in Prague’s Letná district called *Building the Future*, which in 1964 housed an exhibition entitled ‘Finishing Work Today and Tomorrow’. The various events associated with the First National Housing Discussion were attended by 100,000 people.¹⁹ By its nature, it was more a campaign than a real discussion, and its outputs were theoretically framed by the Research Institute of Construction and Architecture of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, the institutional base of Jiří Musil (1928–2012), perhaps the best-known Czech urban sociologist.

The campaign was a clear success: already by the mid-1960s, the number of cooperative apartments constituted almost half of the total apartments built and their numbers were constantly growing. By 30 May 1964, total of 1,631 SBDs with 167,611 members had been created. On this date, the SBDs were transferred to the ÚRD, but the national committees retained the power to plan the design and execution of all centralised construction. In the five-year period between 1966 and 1970, apartment built through cooperative construction constituted 56% of the total figure of completed apartments, the largest single amount. Cooperative construction was intended to be as standardised as possible, and thus cheap, and was supposed to apply exclusively to the construction of multi-storey apartment buildings with at least twelve apartments, not to family houses. An exception could be made from this rule through which a lower number of apartments could be allowed per building, but the total number was not permitted to fall below four housing units. However, the minutes of the meetings of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the KSČ from the mid-1960s clearly speak of non-compliance with this rule and of the need for strict control to avoid the mixing of private and cooperative ownership.²⁰

Nonetheless, the approach taken undoubtedly changed over the course of the 1960s. In the mid-1960s, the State Planning Commission drew attention to the stagnation of individual construction and, together with the Central Council of Cooperatives, passed legislation and created related credit conditions for the establishment of cooperatives for this kind of construction. After the completion of the apartments, the cooperatives, established for this purpose only, were supposed to be wound

down. This surprising shift was supported by Jiří Musil's sociological investigation, which concluded that: "the pressure of the urban way of life [...] logically creates a need to compensate for the emotional overload with the comforts of one's own house."²¹ As early as the beginning of the 1970s, the construction of family houses was allowed as an exception (row houses, cascading balcony apartment blocks, and atrium houses). The method used was individually performed (self-help) construction, and these purpose-founded cooperatives disappeared after the construction was completed. The construction itself was carried out by the cooperative members themselves, who were often the employees of *Stavoprojekt*, or construction companies. Even though this type of construction was also subject to a certain typification, the buildings did not look dull or uniform,²² and in some cases justifiably deserved the designation of above-standard constructions.²³ Thanks to self-help, cooperative constructions of this type significantly contributed to the search for new design shapes, innovative solutions and an emphasis on paying attention buildings and their surroundings.

Housing cooperatives had thus clearly become one of the backbones of the state housing policy. What, then, did one have to do if one wished to get a cooperative apartment? And was such an apartment more affordable than a municipal apartment, or as it was then called, a communal one? A person joining a housing cooperative paid a membership fee of 40% of the costs of building an apartment, while the state lent up to 50% of the funds in the form of preferential loans to the cooperative for up to forty years at a 1% interest rate, and then covered the rest of the construction costs with a state subsidy. The amount of the financial share that individuals had to bear could vary from case to case. However, cooperative members were significantly limited in their rights: if they moved out of the apartment, they were not entitled to the part of the loan they had repaid, and only received the residual value of their membership share. Although it may seem paradoxical today, the cooperative construction of this period concealed one injustice that was already obvious at the time: residents of state-owned flats did not have to make any investment in their housing and paid a very low, essentially symbolic sum, which did not even cover the repair and maintenance of the housing stock. Cooperative members, in consequence, had higher living expenses and in some cases even participated directly in the construction of their apartments (this form of participation was more prevalent in the Normalisation period). At the same time, however, they could create a different, more proprietary relationship with their homes, sometimes manifested by taking care of common areas and the adjacent greenery. The cooperative form of construction brought with it a number of financial and material benefits, but it also concealed a considerable burden on all members of the cooperative, who had to act collectively, balance personal requirements and resolve conflicts.

One of the first Prague housing estates in which the Building Housing Cooperatives (*Stavební bytová družstva*) were significantly involved was the Petřiny housing estate, built between 1959 and 1969 based on the plans of the Prague Project Institute by architects Vojtěch Mixa and Evžen Benda. When the estate was completed, it contained a total of over 4,000 apartments, almost half of which were cooperative apartments. Highly valued in the professional literature²⁴ for its urban qualities, this housing estate was created during the so-called pioneer phase and was the first large Prague construction project to use the new G-57 all-panel prefabrication system. The urban concept, adapted to the surrounding buildings and following traditional urban features, positions the main section of the estate on Na Petřinách Street, which ends with the building of the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences.²⁵

An interesting feature of this housing estate was the professional and social diversity of the over 13,000 new inhabitants who lived there after construction was completed. In addition to civil servants, mainly professional soldiers and employees of the Interior Ministry, there were also a number of "small savers", who had managed to save up the amount needed to pay for their share of the housing cooperative. The second group included, among others, Anna Blažíčková (*1933) with her husband, the literary scholar Přemysl Blažíček (1932 – 2002), as we learn incidentally from her autobiography²⁶: "Jiřina told me that she lives in Prague's Petřiny district and explained to me exactly how to apply to a housing cooperative. The entry costs a hundred [crowns], come to think of it, in the worst case scenario, we will lose just that. The Petřiny housing estate was the first of the panel houses in Prague. Low-rise houses far apart. [...] The view from the ninth floor however, meant the opportunity to see Divoká Šárka, with the entirety of the Central Bohemian Hills in the distance and Říp in the foreground, all in the palm of your hand. [...] The houses were not completed when we started out in Prague in 1963. [...] Each of us managed to save almost ten thousand [crowns] for housing,²⁶ it was almost a miracle that I managed to save so much money, because

from a starting salary of 1,050 crowns and then a few hundred more, I started to pay some almost immediately to the construction in Bechyně.”

It is worth noting that the recently released political prisoner Anastáz Jan Opasek (1913–1999), the former abbot of the Břevnov monastery, who had been sentenced to life in prison in a show trial in 1950, worked on the construction of the housing estate shortly after his receiving amnesty. He reflected on his professional career at the time as one of the few bricklayers working there:

“It was typical on construction sites at the time for there to be only a few bricklayers or construction workers and their relatives. I had an excellent foreman there who was a trained bricklayer [...], but even he [...] told me that he used to be in the police, but he was fired, so he returned to the construction industry. [...] There were whole gangs who were stealing material at night that was not available to private citizens. [...] At the annual meeting of the ROH [Revolutionary Trade Union movement], for example, they calmly announced that so many components of the heating appliances had been lost during the housing construction that they would be enough for an entire four-storey house. [...] Entire legends could be told about the shortcomings on the construction site. Once in Petřiny we worked in a house that was already finished, even inhabited. But the waste pipe did not work, there was no water to drain the toilets.”²⁷

The contemporary press aspired not only to promote and popularise the idea of cooperatives, but even permitted mild criticism of the state housing policy. On the pages of the pro-reformist *Reportér. Čtrnáctideník pro politiku, ekonomiku a kulturu* [Reporter: Fortnightly for Politics, Economy and Culture],²⁹ later a legend of journalism before the 1968 Soviet invasion, the topic was repeatedly addressed, for example by the journalist Miroslav Švehla. In one of his typically ironic articles,³⁰ he took stock of ten years of experience with the renewed cooperative constructions in Czechoslovakia. According to his data, the waiting time for apartments was getting longer, and lengthy waits could not be avoided even with cooperative constructions. However, waiting times were variable, depending on the regions: the shortest was in the north Moravian region (2 years), while the longest was in Prague, where it could reach up to eight to twelve years. Švehla saw the cause of the delays in the inflexibility of the planned economy and the “old system of management”.

Interestingly, the same author regularly contributed to the remarkable and now forgotten monthly magazine, *Družstevní byt. Měsíčník pro členy bytových družstev* [Cooperative apartment: Monthly Magazine for Members of the Housing Cooperatives], published from January 1966. The 1960s can rightly be considered as a period in which efforts emerged at reviving the true character of cooperatives as a unique phenomenon. At the time, the magazine not only sought to make cooperative construction appear more attractive, but also consciously made references to the past, to the long traditions of the cooperatives, as a model that can be productively followed in other situations and of which one can be proud. Printed in an A4 magazine format, this periodical contained ten pages and was relatively richly illustrated. It was divided into several regular sections. Each issue included an interview with an official of a state institution directly connected to the housing industry (for example, the State Planning Commission, the Ministry of Construction), or one of the members of the board of directors of a particular SBD, etc. A section with information on the legal minimum requirements for the members of the cooperatives was regularly included, along with a section entitled ‘Do you know your apartment?’, which focused on practical advice for repairing and maintaining various apartments. It was also possible to find reports on the activities of building cooperatives in neighbouring socialist states. Remarkably, the monthly continued to appear for almost thirty years, until 1995.

Despite the imperfections of the renewed cooperative housing construction, it is unquestionable that its restoration marked a breakthrough in the 1960s, which fundamentally changed the standards of living and the quality of housing for a large number of Czechoslovak citizens. The state apparatus approached the “housing issues” as part of the state’s social policy and in the following two decades of state socialism confirmed that cooperative construction formed an indispensable segment of the Czechoslovak economic system.

- 1 O bytech pro mladé lidi v Praze. 1987. *Infoch*, 10(3), pp. 1 – 10.
- 2 HUNČOVÁ, Magdalena. 2006. *Družstva a jejich role v tržní ekonomice*. Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, p. 68. The cradle of the cooperative is the town of Rochdale, near Manchester, UK, where the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers was founded in 1844 by 28 unemployed weavers. Their goal was to improve their living conditions through a purposeful association. The community, which essentially functioned as a consumer cooperative, defined the cooperative principles (the so-called Rochdale principles), which in a modified form survive up to this day. Among them is the principle of democracy: each member has one vote; anyone who makes the appropriate initial deposit can join the cooperative; and the principles of self-help and autonomy are essential for the cooperative's functioning. A reserve fund was created from the profits to reduce economic risks, and the remainder was distributed among the members of the cooperative.
- 3 SLAVÍČEK, Jan. 2017. *Ze světa podnikání do světa plánované distribuce. Proměny spotřebního družstevnictví v letech 1945 – 1956 na příkladu severních Čech*. Praha: Karolinum, 396 p. See mainly the works of SMRČKA, Ladislav. 1992. *Vývoj družstevnictví na území ČSFR*. Praha: Svěpomoc, 236 p.; JOHANISOVÁ, Naďa. 2014. *Ekonomičtí disidenti. Kapitoly z historie alternativního ekonomického myšlení*. Volary: Stehlík, 128 p.; NĚMCOVÁ, Lidmila and PRŮCHA, Václav. 1999. *K dějinám družstevnictví ve světě a v Československu*. Praha: Vysoká škola ekonomická, Národohospodářská fakulta, 44 p. In the current monothematic issue of the journal *Architecture & Urbanism* there are published studies focused on the topic of cooperative housing, NAGY Ágnes. 2022. The Condominium Idea in the First half of the 20th Century in Budapest, *Architektúra & urbanizmus*, 56(3 – 4), pp. 162 – 173 and HABERLANDOVÁ Katarína. 2022. Housing Cooperatives in Slovakia 1918 – 1969: the Case of Avion, *Architektúra & urbanizmus*, 56(3 – 4), pp. 174 – 185.
- 4 See mainly the works of Ladislav Smrčka (*Vývoj družstevnictví na území ČSFR*. Praha: Svěpomoc, 1992), Naďa Johanisová (*Ekonomičtí disidenti. Kapitoly z historie alternativního ekonomického myšlení*. Volary: Stehlík, 2014) and Lidmila Němcová (*K dějinám družstevnictví ve světě a v Československu*. Praha: Vysoká škola ekonomická, Národohospodářská fakulta, 1999, with Václav Průcha).
- 5 Slavíček, J., 2017, p. 28.
- 6 The current legal successor of the ÚRD is the Cooperative Association of the Czech Republic.
- 7 Smrčka, L., 1992, pp. 2 – 21.
- 8 Zákon o Ústřední radě družstev č. 187/1948 Sb. [online]. Available at: zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1948-187 (Accessed: 20 September 2022).
- 9 KAPLAN, Karel. 2012. *Národní fronta 1948-1960*. Praha: Academia, 912 p.
- 10 On the currency reform of 1953 see: JIRÁSEK, Zdeněk and ŠŮLA, Jaroslav. 1992. *Velká peněžní loupež v Československu aneb 50:1*. Praha: Svítání, 164 p.
- 11 Zákon o lidových družstvech a družstevních organizacích č. 53/1954 Sb. [online]. Available at: zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1954-53 (Accessed: 20 September 2022).
- 12 RÁKOSNÍK, Jakub, TOMES, Igor et al. 2012. *Sociální stát v Československu 1918 – 1992*. Praha: Auditorium, p. 296.
- 13 BLAŠKO, Štefan et al. 1989. *Bytová otázka v ČSSR a jej řešení*. Bratislava: Svěpomoc, p. 113.
- 14 Usnesení ÚV KSČ k řešení bytového problému v ČSSR do roku 1970. *Rudé právo*, 8 March 1959, pp. 3 – 4.
- 15 Zákon o družstevní bytové výstavbě č. 27/1959 Sb. [online]. Available at: zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1959-27 (Accessed: 20 September 2022).
- 16 HOŘENÍ-SAMEC, Tomáš, BALGOVÁ, Ivana and VACKOVÁ, Barbora. 2020. Svěpomocné bydlení v době pozdního socialismu: responsabilizace, ideologie a beton. *Studia etnologica Pragensia*, (1), pp. 58 – 77.
- 17 Vyhláška ministra financí o financování, úvěrování a kontrole družstevní a podnikové bytové výstavby [online]. Available at: www.beck-online.cz/bo/chapterview-document.seam?documentId=onrf6mjzgyyv6nbufuyaa (Accessed: 20 September 2022).
- 18 Bytová výstavba vyžaduje plnou podporu iniciativ pracujících. *Rudé právo*, 27 February 1959, p. 1.
- 19 MUSIL, Jiří and POLÁČKOVÁ, Hana (eds.). 1962. *První celostátní diskuse o bydlení*. Praha: Výzkumný ústav výstavby a architektury.
- 20 „Úkoly družstevní bytové výstavby ve čtvrtém pětiletém plánu a některé problémy spojené s jejich realizací“, 2 November 1966, fond Ústřední výbor Komunistické strany Československa 02/04, archivní jednotka (a.j.) 337, svazek (sv.) 253. Národní archiv ČR.
- 21 FABO, Peter, JANEČKOVÁ, Michaela, LEHKOŽIVOVÁ, Irena and NOVOTNÁ, Eva. 2020. *Karel Prager a Družstvo pro výstavbu rodinných domů s ateliéry*. Kostelec nad Černými lesy: Archiv výtvarného umění, 160 p.
- 22 See for example, the set of terraced houses built in Prague's Baba district from 1969 to 1972. For more information on family houses, see for example: KLÍMOVÁ, Barbora. 2011. *My jsme tím projektem žili. Stavba rodinného domu v období normalizace*. Praha: Zlatý řez, 139 p.
- 23 Fabo, P., Janečková, M., Lehkoživová, I. and Novotná, E., 2020, p. 138 and following.
- 24 NOVÝ, Otakar et al. 1971. *Architekti Praze*. Praha: Pražský projektový ústav; SKŘIVÁNKOVÁ, Lucie, ŠVÁCHA, Rostislav, NOVOTNÁ, Eva and JIRKALOVÁ, Karolína (eds.). 2017. *Paneláci 1. Padesát sídlišť v českých zemích*. Praha: Uměleckoprůmyslové museum, 464 p.; SKŘIVÁNKOVÁ, Lucie, ŠVÁCHA, Rostislav, KOUKALOVÁ, Martina and NOVOTNÁ, Eva (eds.). 2017. *Paneláci 2. Historie sídlišť v českých zemích 1945 – 1989*. Praha: Uměleckoprůmyslové museum, 352 p.
- 25 The Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences was founded in 1959, under the leadership of Otto Wichterle, who was director of the Institute for ten years. The building was built between 1960 and 1964, from the design of the architect Karl Prager.
- 26 BLAŽÍČKOVÁ, Anna. 2012. *Ted' něco ze života*. Praha: Triáda, pp. 327 – 328.
- 27 Ten thousand crowns then correspond to roughly 150,000 crowns today.
- 28 OPASEK, Jan Anastáz. 1992. *Dvanáct zastavení. Vzpomínky opata břevnovského kláštera*. Praha: Torst, pp. 264 – 270.
- 29 The Czech press as a source for understanding the perception of architecture is used in an inspiring way, for example by Rostislav Švácha, see: ŠVÁCHA, Rostislav. 2015. *Amateur Interpretations of Architecture, Individual Structures and Housing Estates in the Czech Daily Press, 1868 – 1989*. *Architektúra & Urbanizmus*, 49(1 – 2), pp. 1 – 25.
- 30 ŠVEHLA, Miroslav. 1968. *Nevíte o bytě?*. *Reportér*, 3(37), pp. 13 – 14.