

PRE-WAR “SLABS” AND COLD WAR POLITICS

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THE MYTH OF THE “SLAB”

Sigfried Giedion's famous textbook *Space, Time and Architecture* first appeared in 1941. While the short chapter on Rockefeller Center in New York no longer qualifies as the last word on the complex, it is all the more interesting as a gauge for Modernism's fascination with the dynamics of visual perception and the power of abstract form. Browsing through the book, one can't help stumbling over “Slabs”, “slablike blocks”, “slablike units” and “planes”. That the concepts belong to the “constituent facts” of modernity that form the book's backbone becomes clear in the section entitled “Construction and Aesthetics: Slab and Plane”, and perhaps even more emblematic in a spread of Giedion's slightly later book *Architektur und Gemeinschaft* (*Architecture, You and Me*, 1956/58 respectively; Fig. 3). The genealogy of the term is given towards the end of *Space, Time and Architecture*, in the short chapter in “The Civic Center: Rockefeller Center, 1934-39”, where Giedion quotes the 1939 New York City Guide's description of Raymond Hood's Daily Mail Building: “Its huge, broad, flat north and south fronts, its almost unbroken mass and thinness”, features that according to this Guide impelled observers to nickname that building as “the Slab”. –In fact, we know better: it was as early as March 6, 1931, that the New York Times referred to the R.C.A. building as a “slab”, even though at that time it only existed in model form. “This slab stands on its site like an immense upturned rectangle, a form impossible of realization in any other period”, Giedion continues, now referring to the R.C.A. Building as built. He quotes Hood's “functionalist” derivation of the form as a simple result of the determination to offer “adequate light and air to all parts of the building”. And he writes: “The result –an immense slab born out of mathematical calculations for utilizing ground and space to be best advantage– is a form proper to our age. Employing the same basic element as that used by the cubist painter in his hovering planes or by an engineer like Maillart in building bridges out of concrete slabs, “the skyscraper slab form is as significant and expressive of its period as the monolithic obelisk of Egypt and the Gothic cathedral tower for their periods”, Giedion writes.

Then follows a rather surprising section on the optical effects of “Bigness”: “The walls of the R.C.A. Building rise up unbroken eight hundred sixty feet. In such a dimension the architectural form, when it is not spoiled by details inappropriate to the large scale, is not of decisive importance”, he states. “Its strength and power are expressed in curtain walls, whose windows are reduced to mere grooves like ribbing in the texture of a fabric”. The description appears to anticipate the transformation of the massive piers of the R.C.A. Building into, indeed, the “curtain wall” of Lever House or even the Seagram's Building, except that at the time of writing, neither of the two existed.

Approaching Rockefeller Center from Fifth Avenue, one enters a narrow symmetrical enclosure framed by two massive six-storey blocks on the left and the right and confronts the edge of the central R.C.A. Building as a steeply rising, adventurously slender tower –reminding one of a cathedral (see Fig. 3, lower right). Granted that the classicist overall concept of the complex as a whole interested Giedion no more than the “gothicism” of Hood's stepped tower that dominates the plaza. There was no way a complex like Rockefeller Center could be grasped from “a single viewpoint”, he argues, rationalizing the way the passer by will experience the space by walking through it. A collage made of views seen in temporal sequence illustrates the idea, and the “speed photograph of a golf strike” by William Edgerton places the operation into the context of cubo-futuristic visuality. As if by chance, the bird's-eye view that reveals the “open” composition of the windmill-like grouping of the buildings appears to echo this scenario of subjective perceptions. It is due to the non-hierarchical “openness” thus revealed that the contemporary city found a “new order”, based on “the radically new form” developed in response to the unusual height of contemporary office buildings and its effects on the inner organization, i.e.: the “Slab”. Theo van Doesburg's famous study of interrelated vertical and horizontal surfaces, made c.1920 –an anticipated stenogram of the modernist city made of slabs –is only one step away (Fig. 3).

Of Course the Slab had been a “blind passenger” of the Functional City ever since the 1920's, as virtually any project from that period can demonstrate; nor is the RCA Building with its massive façade the first International Style office skyscraper on American soil (that distinction famously goes to the almost contemporary PSFS Building in Philadelphia). More often than not, in their proposals for Berlin –a city that will be key to my following notes– Hilberseimer and Mies actually envisioned slabs. As is well known, innovative research in that field was paralyzed since the mid-1930's

in Europe, so when the combination of “Slab” and “Plaza” re-appeared on the European horizon after 1940 it was indeed via the United States that this occurred –plus, of course, via Brazil. Note that, this happened even before 1945, certainly so in the United States: Whereas Europe began to be confronted with the challenges of reconstruction, America struggled with its slums and its increasingly de-populated City Centers. In this situation, the combination of Slab and Plaza appeared like one way of restoring “urbanity” to the Inner Cities.

Rockefeller Center continued to be the emblematic reference point in that context. Note that by 1951, when CIAM caught on to this subject (the proceedings of CIAM 8 appeared in print one year after the respective Congress in book form, as *The Heart of the City: The Humanization of Urban Life*), architects like Edmund Bacon, Kahn and Stonorov in Philadelphia, Sert and Wiener in South America, but also Edward Durrell-Stone in New York had already shown the way (Fig. 2). Not to mention the Ministry of Education and Health in Rio de Janeiro by Lucio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer and others (including Le Corbusier), the “most beautiful government building in the Western world” (Philip Goodwin). It is in this context that Giedion's invocations of the Agora of Priene, the Forum of Pompeii, or finally the Campidoglio in Rome as models towards the “Humanization of the City” in the name of the “rights of the pedestrian” began to model the way a younger generation of architects conceptualized the “Humanization of Urban Life”. That these humanistic invocations ended up greatly mystifying the processes by which inner cities after 1945 were opened up to shopping (often at the expense of the inhabitants that may have survived the exodus of the middle class towards the suburbs) is another story, as I hope will become clear below.

THE MONUMENTALITY OF THE MATCHBOX

In the 1950s the matchbox was still a universal household item and a passenger in every smoker's pocket. Thus when Edmund Goldzamt described the recently completed UN Secretariat in New York as “stretched like a sky-high matchbox on extended foundations” and when Hans Schmidt insisted “dass ein Hochhaus noch etwas anderes sein könnte als eine aufgestellte Zündholzschachtel mit n Bürogehossen” everybody knew what they meant. East of the Iron Curtain such comments reflect an official consensus regarding architecture in the West. In its 1954 January issue, the Soviet magazine *Arkhitektura SSSR* found “contemporary architecture in the capitalist countries” to be obsessed with a new American fashion, the “slab block”. The UN Building and the Lever House in New York, the US Embassy in Havana, and the Ministry of Education in Rio were the buildings listed (among others) as models for this “functionalism for the rich” (Fig. 4; 6; 7): All were seen as synonymous with American cultural decline, due, not least to that country's fixation on business and military supremacy on the world stage. For those who might not have gotten the point, the author added: “At the time when contemporary architecture of the Western Countries has no aesthetic forms of its own and resorts to the repetition of the uniform template of European and American functionalism, Soviet architecture is enriching itself with new forms (...based on the task) of maximally satisfying the growing requirements of the entire population”.

What debunked this postwar “crisis” of capitalism was the alleged “cheapness” of its products, resulting from the imperatives of the military build-up. Cost-efficiency and expediency, indeed: the “militarization” imposed on construction, appeared about to be ruining architecture altogether. To these Eastern Block critics, slabs, i.e. the stacking of a maximum number of identical floors, one on top of the other, appeared as the ideal building form for a society under “strain”, mainly for being time-saving in design and relatively cheap to build, and for promising fast returns with a minimum of capital investment. Therefore (following this logic): if the UN Secretariat was built in the form of a slab, it was because cost efficiency was the supreme imperative in the center of New York, where land property is most expensive –even under the conditions of the proverbial Rockefeller check by which the site had become available in the first hand.

Norman Mailer's “empty television screen”....

By the mid-1960s, however, not long after the slab-formula had been successfully exported to Brazil (and, by the way, to the Soviet bloc; Fig. 5), thus significantly changing the conditions of its reception behind the Iron Curtain, economic expediency re-surfaced as an argument in the war against “slabs” –except that, by that time, the criticism was mostly American. It started with Norman Mailer. “Dead as an empty television screen”, such “mere boxes” are nothing but an image of thumpness and greed, Mailer stated. Rationalization is here revealed as having but one goal –to allow to build cheaply and thus to catch up for the exorbitant costs involved in the purchase of a site, in taxes, in marketing, in publicity, not to mention what Mailer calls the “dollar-anemia” caused by the arms-race and by taxation. “In

this context the formulas of modern architecture have triumphed”, Mailer writes, “and her bastards –those new office skyscrapers– have triumphed everywhere”. The best reason is, so he goes on, “that modern architecture offers a pretext to a large real-estate operator to stick up a skyscraper at a fraction of the money it should cost, so helps him to conceal the criminal fact that we are given a stricken building, a denuded, aseptic, unfinished work, stripped of ornament, origins, prejudices, not even a peaked roof or spire to engage the heavens (...etc.)”. And he continues in view of what he refers to as the “prison phantasies of urban renewal” and more specifically of Lyndon B. Johnson’s vision of the “Great Society” and his call to use the next 40 years in order “to re-build from scratch the City in the United States”: “The mind recoils from the thought of an America rebuilt completely in the shape of those blank skyscrapers forty stories high, their walls dead as an empty television screen, their form as interesting as a box of cleansing tissue propped on end”.

...and Vincent Scully’s “American Nightmare”

Modern architecture has often been described as an evolutionary process that parallels an implied progressive dynamic of modern society at large. By the mid 1960s however, and in the light of discussions like those just referred to, some historian-critics began to re-conceptualize the legacy of modernism according to a rather melodramatic, if not frankly apocalyptic register, castigating the uniformity and “monotony” of corporate architecture either as a tragic degeneration of a design ethos that was no longer adequate to the needs of business, or, depending on the viewpoint, as the fatal result of modernism’s pact with business. Vincent Scully was no doubt the most authoritative voice among the latter group. In 1963, he vigorously challenged Mailer’s unqualified dismissal of modernism; a few months later he turned to ranting ever more forcefully at today’s “Motorized Megalopolis” that he saw proliferating all over America –as nothing short of “America’s Architectural Nightmare”. Soon after, and with the help of an ominous reversal of what one would expect to be the normal cycle of “Life” and “Death”, Jane Jacobs’ set the tone even more clearly with her famous *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1966). In *American Architecture and Urbanism*, Scully later re-calibrated Mailer’s blow against modern architecture in somewhat more serene terms by describing Lever House (most likely the trigger for Mailer’s harangue; Fig. 6) as a “typical Bauhaus object: freestanding, shiny, weightless, asymmetrical, and fundamentally non-urban. It both cut a serious hole in Park Avenue as a street and created an unusable Plaza of its own”.

As the writings of Mailer and Scully seem to indicate, the maladies of modernism, be they real or merely alleged: bigness, formal blandness, semantic silence, expressive nullity, boredom (or any other quality suggestive of metaphysical disgust) are most impressively invoked and anathemized when they occur in slabs. Even though its underlying design philosophy tends to drain traditional notions of representation and symbolism, “the slab” thus turned out to become a projection surface for multifarious shared notions regarding form, space, progress, or power, thereby generating a tension field of semantic expectation that could easily compete with the communicative potential of any inherited form of architectural “symbolism”. Seen in such a perspective, Mailer’s notion of the slab as “empty television screen” may turn out to be more poignant than Mailer himself suspected.

SMOKE SIGNALS IN THE COLD WAR

There is hardly a more hilarious rebuttal of Mailer’s and many more serious critics’ prejudice on the semantic “silence” of the slab than Charles Luckman’s account of the story of Lever House. At first sight, the slab may have appeared to be the self-evident solution in terms of structural economy or the provision of elegant, maximum lit office space. In terms of rent yields, however, it must have looked like an absurdity in one of the most expensive locations worldwide, especially so since it came in combination with an open plaza, as the board members didn’t fail to remark (see Fig. 6).

Lever House and the “Humanation of Cities”

In the world of consumer goods, “symbolic value” is most aggressively marketed when the price is high. Similarly, in architecture, “meaning” and “symbolism” tend to become an issue when there is a contradiction that needs to be bridged between the planned structure and the costs involved. In these circumstances, there is a special need for convincing. Lever House is a good example in this context. To assuage the understandable skepticism of his board members, Charles Luckman, the president of Lever, and himself an architect, argued that open space at the foot of the building that would result from the sacrificed office space would make people feel “part of Lever”. The plaza would contribute a “very human feeling” on the level of the street to the transparent and polished surface of the curtain-wall façade, the purity of which

symbolized of the soap company. Luckman “wanted the entire ground floor at Park Avenue left open so that people could walk in and feel part of Lever; so that there might be a very human feeling at the ground level to contrast with the kind of slick and gleaming tower which I felt would properly reflex a soap company”. Apart from the positive effects on Lever’s “image”, Luckmann argued, all this would promote what he called the “humanation of cities”. For people need “freedom of space” to dedicate themselves to the “pursuit of happiness” in a life of freedom, Luckman pursued.

Luckman was clever enough not to submit a project himself, but to assign the task to one of the promising younger architectural firms in New York, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. In order to define the best position for the slab, SOM used a model that allowed to examine its visual effect in various positions along Park Avenue. In such a way, the elementary stereometrics of the box form promised to make the building a unique sculptural presence in the city. The visibility studies appear ultimately to have convinced Lever to massively invest in the symbolic function of its headquarters. As Luckman’s diatribes suggest, the neuroses of McCarthyism didn’t stop at architecture’s doorstep. Not content to provide a striking trademark for the company, the chairman even wanted the building to be seen as a symbol of “American values” in the face of the malignancies of socialism and communism.

Power and Ambivalence

Luckman’s Cold War fantasies about “American values” in the face of the “malignancies of socialism” would be a mere curiosity if they were not so directly related to events in Europe, and more specifically in Berlin. In 1949, the year of the West German currency reform and of the creation of the German Democratic Republic as an autonomous state (DDR –not least in response to NATO’s massive nuclear armament), the Cold War was about to become a primary fact of life in that city, and an inevitable and permanent subject of conversation –including also of conversation about architecture. Slabs and ruins turn out to have been a highly suggestive constellation in this context.

For decades, the ruin of Berlin’s Gedächtnis-Kirche (Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church) alongside its crystalline substitute by Egon Eiermann has played its ambivalent role as tourist logo and mysterious symbol of the city’s perseverance in the Cold War (Fig. 8). That nobody knows for sure what the combination of old and new exactly represents is part of the magic: the phoenix-like rise of the new from the debris of the old? Mourning and soul-searching regarding German responsibility in the war? Or merely nostalgia for former national glory, romanticized in terms of ruin aesthetics? Considering the endless complications involved in the project’s realization, the complex should perhaps rather be seen as emblematic for the difficulties of reaching a compromise when it comes to public representation in democracy. Seen in this way, it is precisely the diffuse nature of its messages, combined with the plastic power of the sign as such (for Alexander Calder, the church ruin was “perhaps the greatest abstract sculpture in the world”) that make the Memorial Church the built paragon of the “New Monumentality”.

In its simplicity, Eiermann’s new church encapsulates the mystery of the complex: it gives it a poetic, even a spiritual dimension. Yet the slab-shaped office building and hotel behind the church, though banal in comparison, is certainly more of a marker than the elegant church could ever be. Like thesis and antithesis, the ruin and the slab characterize the physiognomy of the place while also, in fact, marking out two extremes within the range of possibilities in architectural signification at hand in the early post-war years. The one form seems to refer dialectically to the other: Towering over and framing the church ruin at the same time, the office building forms a paradoxical alter ego to the Gedächtniskirche, even recreating its toppled tower cross in the form of a colossal Mercedes star.

While the slab-shaped Hotel building was thus seen in Berlin as an “exclamation point of free enterprise”, the complex as a whole was described as “the most important commercial project of the post-war period on our continent” –in fact, the “first response to New York’s famous Rockefeller-Center”, as *Der Tagesspiegel* reported on the opening day. So as to fit the convention of post war “International Style”, and unlike the UN Secretariat in New York with its walled-up short ends (see Figs.4; 5), the slab is here fully glazed like Lever House, a building that Helmut Hentrich, the leading architect of the Center, studied closely during his 1954 trip to New York. Note that Gordon Bunshaft, the designer of Lever House, later played a key role in consulting for the glamorous “three-slab”-Thyssen Building in Düsseldorf (designed by Hentrich, Petschnigg & Partner, HPP). When Karl-Heinz Pepper looked out for an architect for his Berlin project, Hentrich, Petschnigg & Partner thus were the obvious choice.

As to the small open air rink attached to the air-conditioned “ladies’ shopping paradise”, it was presented at the time as the European counterpart to the skating rink at Rockefeller Center, whereas the shopping center, whose small open court could not really compete with either the Rockefeller Center’s nor the Lever House’s main attraction, its open plaza, was subsequently marketed as an adaptation of the shopping arcades of Bern. While the comparison with such “models” makes the Europa Center look rather paltry, it also reminds us, that in order to acquire its “civic” aura, the office slab as a type needs to be combined with a “plaza”.

MORE EAST-WESTERN SMOKE SIGNALS

The decision to build the Europa-Center fell “a few days after the Wall was built”. The project, realized in the extremely short time between 1961 and 1963, thus was charged with politics from its very inception. For years to come, it played a “key role in the press” as a beacon of the West in the face of the Wall. 80 meters high, making it the highest office building in Berlin (two meters higher than the somewhat older Springer tower to which I will return below), the Center unmistakably laid claim to centrality within the city –contrasting sharply in that respect with the earlier buildings on Breitscheidplatz.

Matchboxes can be used to send smoke signals or even result in a dangerous fire. When the publisher Axel Springer decided to move his company headquarters from Hamburg to Berlin and to build an office tower in the old newspaper district of Kochstraße, right on the sector border, his intention to use architecture to send a political signal was instantly clear to everybody. It is not worth building “high rises for newspapers without an idea that is greater than ourselves. An idea, that means: freedom for all Germans in one fatherland with the legal capital of Berlin in the midst of a Europe at peace”. The Springer building, 78 meters high, built 1959-1962 at a right angle to Kochstrasse, shimmering festively with its golden aluminum coating, was to be understood as a “scream against the wind”, indeed a “powerful architectural exclamation point (...) of the belief that Berlin and Germany would soon (...) be reunited”. The location directly on the sector border provided the necessary visibility to this program and Müller and Sobotka’s architecture even gave it a somewhat sleazy appearance of luxury.

Just two years after construction, the sector border was sealed off by the Wall. Countless photographs document the situation, among them a picture taken by Rem Koolhaas in 1971 that shows the Springer Building towering in the evening twilight over the wall. In the mid 1960s, Oskar Kokoschka had captured the desolation of East Berlin from the commanding perspective of Axel Springer’s penthouse in a painting. In the area just beyond the wall, reconstruction had in fact hardly begun. As a result, the Springer building, with its neon sign installed on the roof in 1963, could be seen from a great distance day and night. Even from Berlin-Mitte! At about the same time, yet another neon sign blinking towards the east was installed on the nearby GSW Tower (built in 1958), this one being directly fed with propaganda by the West Berlin Senate. In the Ministry for State Security of the GDR, this caused for considerable nervousness: at any event, Albert Norden, the secretary of the Central Committee for Agitation and Propaganda, had a report prepared on how to limit the effect of this double enemy act. The proposals made included blocking the view of the writing with the help of screens or making the signs illegible by shining light on them.

To put an end to the problem, East Berlin seemed to have no other choice than to block the devil of capitalist office buildings with the Beelzebub of socialist housing, which, due to central planning in the East also succeeded. Soon enough –in the 1980s– both the office buildings at Kochstrasse and the nearby housing blocks at Leipziger Strasse were caught up by the then fashionable critique of functionalism –but by the year 2000, a younger generation of architects finally began to view the buildings that marked the “high rise war” in the 1950s and those that tried to neutralize it after 1970 as part of a coherent urban landscape (Fig. 9).

5). GDR: “Overtaking without Catching Up”

In the 1950s the inner-German border was still passable, at least for large parts of the population. Interestingly, that condition appears to have forced the two systems into a dramatic logic of paragone. That was the time when the contrast between the systems reached its climax, with East Berlin’s Stalinallee and West Berlin’s new Hansa Viertel marking the span between the “extremes”. By 1961, however, the situation was about to change in unexpected ways: as, due to the Wall, the overwhelming majority of Berlin residents were no longer in the position of experiencing “live” the contrast between “here” and “there”, the architectural and planning cultures in both states were about to move considerably closer –except, of course, as far as the fundamentals of land ownership in the center are concerned. By the standards of 1920s “Fordism”, the DDR itself became “Americanized” – and much more

thoroughly so than ever occurred in the West (or in America, for that matter); moreover, since socialist land reform made implementing modern planning goals in the city centers possible to an extent that was unthinkable under Capitalism, this “Americanization” infiltrated the inner cities to an unprecedented degree.

“Socialist” Re-cyclings of Rockefeller Center

This turned out to be Hermann Henselmann’s moment. After pleasing the regime with the triumphalist mise-en-scène at the service of the “national tradition” at Strausberger Platz and Frankfurter Tor, he now returned to architectural modernism, of which he had so emphatically declared himself a proponent in the first months and years after 1945. It comes as no surprise that the West’s lead in this realm suffered from significant structural lacks in his eyes. Writing about rebuilding of the Zoo area in the 1950s, everything was going wrong and could “easily turn into a tragedy”, he insists: high rises are placed randomly and without adequate space along existing streets, while banks, insurance companies, and business headquarters “that should be located in the city center” were placed in the realm of Breitscheidplatz, etc.. At least, it was clear what kind of sins needed to be avoided in planning Berlin-Mitte!

The slab-shaped office building began conquering the East at about the same time it conquered the West. Since when it came to “overtaking without catching up”, it was the U.S. that provided the criteria, the process can be understood as a kind of parallel recycling of international high-rise modernism under different premises –granted that, when Gerhard Kosel, president of the Deutsche Bauakademie, proposed his “central building” in Berlin Mitte (with 150 meters, it would have been almost twice the size of Europa-Center), he surely had in mind one of the projects for the never-realized Soviet Palace in Moscow. In East Berlin as well as in the West, Rockefeller Center is an obvious reference, though, as the present example suggests, the reception follows slightly different codes on either side of the Iron Curtain: Where the “International Style” is in command, it is primarily the “Slab” of the RCA Building that fascinates, tendentially transfigured into more or less purified prisms and grouped in “free”, asymmetrical arrangements, whereas Kosel’s project, it is the way the slab (or rather: the tower) emerges from the symmetrical, “Beaux-Arts” layout of the Plaza. While the arrangement of a rhomboid forecourt lined by colonnades at the foot of the office tower facing Lustgarten resonates with the recently dethroned imperatives of the “national tradition” (or, however successfully, with Schinkels nearby “Altes Museum”), it owes its conceptual key to Rockefeller Center (see Fig. 3).

Gerhard Kosel’s project for the “Zentrales Gebäude” remained unbuilt. Berlin’s head architect at the time, Hermann Henselmann, rejected the plan as a “leveling of the art of building”. To propose an office building as a monument to socialism is a “serious mistake”, he argued. Such might be possible for a “capitalist downtown”, but not for a “socialist city center”. It is perhaps no coincidence that Henselmann’s counter proposal in the form of a “German Pantheon” (“Pantheon der Deutschen”) on Alexanderplatz recalls the Congress Rotunda in a famous project Gropius in collaboration with Belluschi, Stubbins and others had proposed for Boston a few years previously, in 1953. In the Boston Back Bay Center, an elegant, lentil-shaped slab resting on high stilts would have formed the core of the project. A large hall covered by a flat vaulted roof would have been linked to the slab by way of a system of asymmetrically grouped, rather narrow squares and promenades. Note that when Prudential, the giant among American insurance companies, decided to move to Boston in 1957 and to establish its headquarters on the location of the proposed Center, Luckman, who had become the company’s architect, subjected the large superblock to a much simpler overall plan (Prudential Center was built from 1957–1965), thus paralleling almost step by step the design revisions his socialist colleague Gerhard Kosel was about to apply to his proposed “Central Building” in East Berlin (Fig. 10). Both harked back to rather absolutist models of architectural composition, granted that, while Luckman created a quasi palatial, perfectly symmetrical two-winged freestanding stairway connecting the wide open plaza to street level, Kosel simplified the volumetrics of his tower and added two lower side wings that form a forecourt closed off by a colonnade reflected in a plateau d’eau at its base (1959).

Hermann Henselmann and Artistic Autonomy

Subsequently, even Henselmann began to entertain the idea of a “Stadtkrone” in the form of an office skyscraper. He did so all the more seriously, as the just completed and widely publicized government center complex in Brasilia, designed by Oscar Niemeyer (1957–1960; see Fig. 5), seemed to offer a particularly promising model in that context. Long before Brasilia, Niemeyer, the Communist star architect, had already played a decisive part in the planning of the UN Secretariat Building. No wonder that he soon became a living myth in the GDR. What better model could there be for any attempt to finally checkmate West Berlin’s uncoordinated efforts to control

the cityscape by ways of slabs than the twin towers of Brasilia's Capitol Complex? Alas, the Brazilian temptation and Henselmann's dream of an East Berlin city crown remained just a brief flash in the pan.

Instead, the Brazilian spark spread to his most important project for the city center: the Haus des Lehrers (Building of the Teacher) on Alexanderplatz (1961–1964; Fig. 11). Ten years before, Henselmann had used an architectural idiom based on the Baroque and on the historicism of the Wilhelminian era in order to rather glamorously satisfy the national leadership's desire for magnificence. The result was Frankfurter Tor in the East of Stalinallee and Strausberger Platz as its preliminary western end. This time the ambition was to connect the recently completed western end of the grand boulevard and Alexanderplatz to international modernism. Gendarmenmarkt with its two majestic domes from the era of Friedrich the Great, the classicism of the Schinkel era, and the architecture of the new Moscow had been the points of reference for Henselmann's earlier projects. Now the models were Brasilia's National Congress and New York's Seagram Building. For GDR architecture, an age of frenetic internationalization had begun, as in other Eastern bloc countries, too. Typically, the attention was often emphatically directed beyond the Federal Republic –including incidentally the Netherlands and Switzerland.

In comparison to Brasilia, Henselmann's elegant coupling of an office slab cum library with a domed hall remains a miniature, however. The nearby muscular buildings by Peter Behrens that frame the entrance to Alexanderplatz from the West make Haus des Lehrers appear almost delicate. At the height of the library floors, the slab is decorated with a mural of socialist-heroic content –an idea borrowed from Mexico City's University Campus (Fig. 12). Inspired by the Byzantine mosaics of Basilica Sant'Apollinare in Classe (and perhaps also by Fernand Léger), Walter Womacka created a rather schoolbook-like didactic broadsheet covering part of the lower third of the slab. Henselmann went along with the idea, thus accepting that the pathos of the Miesian curtain wall was now reduced to the role of a mere backdrop for "art. As it was built, the Haus des Lehrers remained unique in East Berlin. Slightly out of scale considering the context and idiosyncratic with its curious illustrated body-belt, not to mention the playfully ornamental interior of the plenary hall, it points to a symptomatic break in the architectural culture of the GDR. Fighting for the right to artistic autonomy could mean questioning the rationalization of construction and vice-versa. "We have to build better, faster, and more cheaply than capitalism can", Bruno Flierl, speaking more or less on behalf of the Deutsche Bauakademie, summed up the tasks of GDR architecture in 1960. In the terms of the period, this could only be achieved by typification. Meanwhile, the "star architects", a breed not only known in the West, tried to call in a certain degree of autonomy with respect to the administration's logic of "merciless norming and typification" (Henselmann) in the realm of residential construction. The "social buildings" ("Gesellschaftsbauten") in the urban centers at least offered some promising escapes in this context. Scharoun, Mies, Le Corbusier –or indeed Niemeyer– had shown the way.

In any case, once Kosel's proposals for a "central building" were given up, the leadership turned to Henselmann: his Haus des Lehrers is, besides Television Tower, the outstanding example in this context. Although itself based on a strict logic of modular seriality, it wants to be seen as a critique of the frenzy of universal typification that Henselmann considered "distressing enough". Not surprisingly, the Bauakademie complained that the building should not have been realized as an individualized design, but rather based on one of the customarily used systems of prefabrication so as to reduce costs. Henselmann later responded with the tautological, yet objectively plausible argument, that prefabrication was not worthwhile for individual projects.

BRUNO TAUT: THE FACULTY BUILDING IN ANKARA AND THE VILLA KATSURA IN KYOTO. THE IDEA OF ARCHITECTURE IN THE CONCERT OF CULTURES

Manfred Speidel

The German architect Bruno Taut, 1880-1938, is well known as architect of the large Berlin housing estates of the 1920ies, like the Horse-shoe complex, in 1932 he worked for one year in Moskow and designed large hotels, which have not been built. In 1933 he escaped from Nazi-Germany to Japan, where he stayed for three-and-a half years. (Fig. 1) One of the two architectural objects he could built there was a suite of three rooms for a weekendhouse in Atami, west of Tokyo, where one was a Japanese room.

Bruno Taut and his wife Erica left Japan on October 15. 1936 by ship. The trip took them to Korea, Mukden (Manjoulia), and Peking, from there to Chita (USSR) where they mounted the Transsiberian Railway for Moscow, then went south to Odessa until they arrived on November 10. in Istanbul.

From Chita till Istanbul the route was actually the same backwards as that of their way to Japan in March 1933 which started from Berlin, to escape Nazi menace. Due to the unforeseen trip from Germany to Japan Taut had visited Zürich, Paris, Marseille, by ship he came to Napoli, passed Athens before he arrived in Odessa to take the train to Moscow. He experienced classic architecture in Greece and osmanic in Konstantinoples, and realised the problems of modernization and modern architecture in Russia, Turkey and Japan, that means, Taut surely gained an architectural world-view which he finally compiled in Japan to a big theoretical work, the "Architekturüberlegungen" "Thoughts on Architecture" which he extended to the "Architekturlehre", "Teaching Architecture" and (Fig. 2) got translated into Turkish as "Mimari Bilgisi" which was to be the script for the students at the Academy of Istanbul who attended his lectures in 1937 and 1938. Unfortunately it was printed only by end of 1938 and came out just two weeks after Taut's death on December 24. in 1938. He died at the age of only 58 years.

Taut opened in his text the horizon for a global view. He included all eminent works of world architecture which he had experienced since then: for him it became obvious, that each of the great cultures had fulfilled a special "task" when analysed under the aspects of Technic, of Structure and of Function.

For example, Classical Grecian architecture he sees as mastership in technics in the sense of treating stone-material and realising refinement of details; the same mastership in technics and refined aesthetics he finds in Japanese wooden buildings, and the Japanese house in general he appreciates for its solutions to manage the hot and humid summer-climate by movable walls and the possibilities for total opening. Gothic architecture has been superior in structural aspects, in the same way as the Turkish one with masterpieces of huge stone structures, vaultings and cupolas. The variety and hierarchy of functional aspects could best be studied with the complex of buildings and gardens at the Katsura Villa in Kyoto. (Fig. 3)

Taut appointed to each culture an important contribution to world architecture relative to other cultures. He replaced nationalistic interpretations of cultural superiority for the idea of every culture's unique contribution to a "world heritage", as we would say today. I would like to call it the creation of a "concert of cultures".

When Taut arrived on November 10. 1936 in Istanbul already a contract had been worked out and his work started immediately the next day, November 11. at the Academy in Istanbul and at the architectural office of the Ministry of Culture. Only three weeks later, on December 1., he was commissioned to make a new design for the Institute of Language, History and Geography at Ankara University, as the most important and representative, as well as programmatic building for Kemal Atatürk's "New Turkey". (Fig. 4)

Besides that he had to build schools in Ankara and some provinces. For school buildings Taut had experience while in Germany, for example the highschool at Senftenberg, South of Berlin. He actually could apply a similar typology, when he designed the school in Trabzon, where he adjusted the large window-openings on the south side to the hot climate by inserting shadow roofs, whos upper side could as well reflect light to the ceiling inside. (Fig. 5)

The intermediate shadow roof he already had developed in Japan for the Villa Okura in Tokyo in 1935 to deal with the hot and humid climate there. (Fig. 6). Taut was pride to have broken the modernist and formalistic white box of the Corbusier-Cubism which the architect Kume had chosen. Actually this was Tauts only architectural intervention during his stay in Japan besides the design of interiors. Independently from this he produced about 250 daily objects and furniture with traditional craftsmanship in provincial workshops.

For the university building in Ankara Taut had no fixed solution at hand.

After four years of abstinence from substantial building design in Japan Taut was excited to develop a concept of architecture in the context of that culture he was working for, and which was –of course– different from Germany or Japan but included his experiences in these countries.

When the book Mimari Bilgisi could be called Taut's theoretical legacy, namely the embracing of world architecture in a theory of relativity, the Literature Institute of Ankara University was to be an example of Taut's understanding of the position of an important public building in the social and cultural context to enable it to become also a contribution "to the world as a whole" as he required from any good architecture.

"Now, what matters is the prove of my present comprehension of architecture", Taut wrote on 6.11.1937 to architect Kurata in Tokyo.

Having this in mind we are nevertheless somehow in trouble when we have to judge Taut's Faculty Building for Language, Literature and Geography. (Fig. 4, 7–12)

With about 140 meters length along the Atatürk Boulevard, six stories high, its little depth and little gradation the building appears like a slim city wall which frames the new university campus. The main wing consists of a middle, slightly projecting part and two side-risalites of half of its length in symmetry with an additional wing extending to the left to form a L-shaped block that marks one corner of the university campus.

The middle risalite again is symmetrically tripartite. (Fig. 7) Above the regular distribution of square windows on the plain facade rises a broad, slightly curved gable which interrupts the dominant horizontal cornice of the flat roof. This gable is like a shield that presents the motto and keyword of Atatürk's cultural efforts (which read in English): "The real leader in life is knowledge". (The design of the letters is from Taut.) The prominent facade seems to stand quite unstable on top of two rounded walls on the groundfloor. Like huge mouthpieces they cut into the entrance facade and guide the people into the building and further to the university campus hill behind. It serves as a kind of gate to the campus.

From a compositional point of view, the symmetric front is thus brutally transversed by the entrance porch with an extended roof that covers also the protruding foyer of the auditorium, and continues as a composition of lower blocks for the auditorium and subordinated rooms towards the boulevard. (Fig. 8)

The porch itself with only one voluminous column at the open corner seems to indicate a diagonal direction of movements from the public space to the passage and into the inner hall.

The walls of the auditorium are rounded as well to smooth the moving in the foyer, (Fig. 9) and the stairway up to the gallery of the auditorium follows and starts with the whirl of a baluster-spiral as if to invite for a dance. (Fig. 10) On the opposite side of the hall the main stairway to the upper lecture halls starts with steps that turn slightly towards the diagonal approach of the hall and Taut intended to insert a cavelike "organic" sculpture under the stairs which would support the swinging lines upwards. It was to contain a fountain with a curved bench as a point of rest amidst the flow of moving people. (Fig. 11) This latter had not yet been built.

On the outside, we may wonder about the abrupt end of the building to the right. (Fig. 12) It looks as if there would have been intended a later extension of the building, where just a half column points to a transition in the corner. Or may be Taut liked the asymmetric appearance? We do not know.

Taut's concern to express multiple and smooth movements in and around the building on the street and ground level contradicts from the point of composition with the symmetric outer form of the middle wing which in itself has asymmetric parts as well: the undecorated columns to the left, and the different windows for the upper auditorium to the right.

But we may ask from where the unusual composition may have come to Taut's mind. Was it the complexity of functions, the internal life of the university combined with the duty to provide public lectures as a requirement from Atatürk's motto for educating the masses in the modern Turkey?

As far as I see Taut before he went to Japan used a much more consistent way to combine a symmetrical facade with an asymmetric body as for the headquarters of a worker's Union in Berlin. Above the main entrance in the middle he added there a kind of bay window for the director's rooms without interrupting the horizontal flow of the structure. (Haus des Deutschen Verkehrslandes, Berlin 1927–32) The Moscow Intourist Hotel design, 1932, was a much more balanced composition of huge vertical masses and one horizontal complex that completed the block.

You may be surprised that I propose the crude composition of Ankara to be an outcome of Taut's analysis of the Japanese princely Villa Katsura in Kyoto which was built during the 17. century. (Fig. 3, 13–17)

Taut visited the villa on his second day in Japan, the 4. May 1933. Being surprised by the straightness of its simple looking design, the mixture of formal symmetric parts and an informal total composition of the buildings and their relations to the wide garden. The Katsura villa consists of three connected buildings, so-called shoin-style houses. The oldest and main building is the Old Shoin (1617), the building where the noble guests were received and from where they started the parties into the garden with boating on the lake while reading poetry. (Fig. 3) It has a hipped roof with a large gable which faces the well designed lake-and-island garden. The prominent, slightly convex curved gable of the Old Shoin, ornated with the family crest, works as a symbol of dignity and representation to which the two attached houses to the left, the Middle Shoin and the so-called New Palace subordinate themselves by stepping back successively and –being turned by 90°– showing their eaves to create an informal asymmetric sequence of all parts.

Underneath the symmetrical gable and the eaves of the hipped roof the rooms are arranged asymmetrically which is indicated by the irregular sequence of the outer pillars framing the open veranda and supporting the roof. We may call the symmetry "soft" or "weak" in so far as it concerns just the roof and is effaced under the roof. The asymmetry of the posts looks somehow quite "natural".

In addition the terrace of the moon-viewing platform, an ephemeric wooden structure, is set completely outside the roof in front of the open veranda and built aside from the axis. From here the full moon in autumn reflected in the pond could be enjoyed. (Fig. 13)

The facade of the veranda ends to the right with a piece of wall that covers stone steps down to the garden, so the composition of the facade gives a spatial flow to the movement on the veranda. (Fig. 14) From the elevated veranda starts a group of rough stones to step into the garden which continue with irregular stepping stones for walking ways radiating from it to reach their destinations at the pond or into the garden directly. The criss-crossing of the irregular stepping stones and their crossing of the straight, paved path which tangentially passes from the entrance court to the island of one of the tea-pavillons, together make a kind of functional form of diagonal movements which may have well been necessary on the muddy ground especially after rains.

The irregularity of the criss-crossing walkways in front of the Old Shoin building Taut does interpret as an indication of a free and enlightened society. (Fig. 15) He writes on an analytical sketch in 1934: "WHY does no line of the house continue to the garden? Because each element: house, water, boat landing-place, tree, stone has its own life. It only looks for good relations, like a good society". In another text to Katsura he concludes: "We can imagine that with such a naturalness of forms also the life, the behavior of the people and the relations between them must have been a matter of course and natural as well".

It must be emphasized that this "naturalness" is arranged around that building which Taut sees as having the function of representation of the society symbolized by the dominating symmetric roof, a kind of contradiction, since it housed members of a feudal, i.e. a hierarchically ordered society, and the type of shoin-building itself manifests a feudal hierarchy.

On the other hand the two side wings for living look quite austere on their outsides and face no designed garden, but just a simple lawn with no direct access to it. They are built on pilotis because of periodically overflowing of the land. (Fig. 16)

The most striking similarity between Katsura and the university building in Ankara is the combination of the function of representation dominating the upper part of the facade with that of a naturalness of movements guided by architectural parts on the ground level.

The symmetry of the university facade may be called "soft" or "weak" –as well– because it is articulated mainly by the change of the window-forms from the flat middle wing to the side-wings supported only by thin lines where the side parts retract slightly. (Fig. 7)

The motive of elevating the facade by adding a shield with inscriptions above the main entrance may have been taken from entrance portals of Turkish mosques. But the dominance of the curved gable could well be compared to that of Katsura where the family crest as symbol takes the position similar to Atatürk's words.

The informal arrangement on the groundfloor we may now read, according to Taut's Katsura interpretation, as a statement for a society of free and enlightened individuals.

The courage to combine dignity of symmetry of the facade with the asymmetrical layout for actual life and movement on ground level, Taut –I am sure– has gained from his thorough observation of the Villa Katsura in Kyoto. (Fig. 13 and 8)

The regularly displayed large square windows of the middle facade of the Language Institute, which make a neutral grid, formally intermediate between the symmetric gable and the composition of cubes in front of the entrance to the building, as does –I would say– the grid and the module of the sliding doors at the Katsura-veranda because they determine the pillars which support the roof.

This short analysis may not satisfy the requirements for a proof. But what is interesting for me is, that Taut obviously had a concept of architectural arrangements in mind in the transfer from one into another culture, and not a style.

He proved to have an ability to derive abstract concepts from the experienced architectural reality whose discovery he had been excited from.

I think he had developed four guidelines by studying the architecture of different cultures: First. He liked a heterogeneity of composition which actually would neither satisfy the modernists nor the traditionalists. Since the time when he became architect of the

German Gardencity Society in 1913, but especially when he was townplanner of the city of Magdeburg from 1921 till 1924 Taut had practiced a way of not insisting on formal principles of style but to find for each project or of each of its diverse parts an “essential” or say, charactersitic, i. e. functional form. Taut defended his view of , principles without principle’ in 1923 when he in public lectures had to explain to his audience his rather disparate and inhomogeneous designs for Magdeburg. He used as an example his unbuilt project “Stadt Köln”, a hotel and office building in Magdeburg, which is something like an assemblage of differently designed building parts, which contain office rooms, hotel rooms, apartments and shops unified at the rounded corner by the thin, projecting circular roof and the big letters on top. (Fig. 18)

As a reference he quoted a few sentences from Okakura Kakuzo’s Book of Tea, which was originally written in 1906 and published in German translation in 1919 which Taut consulted. Okakura writes:

The dynamic nature of their (the Taoistic and Zennistic (added by Taut)) philosophy laid more stress upon the process through which perfection was sought than upon perfection itself. True beauty could be discovered only by one who mentally completed the incomplete. The virility of life and art lay in its possibilities for growth... Uniformity of design was considered as fatal to the freshness of imagination.

Importance of the process and anti-uniformity were the two ideas Taut took and practiced from Okakura’s essay.

The second line may be his idea of a hierarchy of buildings according to their functions and status in society and the city community, to define a proper place for a project in the context of that society. It is a concept Taut already formulated in 1920, and he believed ot have found it realised at Katsura Villa in Japan. He characterizes three functions in Katsura: “The entire arrangement..., followed always elastically in all its divisions the purpose which each one of the parts as well as the whole had to accomplish, the aim being that of common or normal utility of simple living, or the necessity of dignified representation, or that of lofty, philosophical spirituality [at the teahouse Shokintei with a very fine landscape garden. M.S.]. And the great mystery was that all three purposes had been united into a whole and their boundaries had been effaced”. (Fig. 16, 3, 17) Taut was convinced such three-stepped functions: every-day use, representation and highest artistic sprituality, were all necessary for a cultivated human society. Actually in 1920 he listed more than 10 steps from the simple hut at the bottom up to the highest of an architecture as pure art, with the only function to be beautiful. In Katsura teahouse and teaceremony marked the highest position.

The third line in Taut’s architectural concept, would be the idea of an equality of the different cultures, a concept which he completed in his book *Architekturlehre*. A variation of this idea was, that the difference in architectural solutions for the same functions, such as the farmhouses, could be derived from their different geographical and climatic conditions. Taut draws an image of a ‘ Zeppelin’ Airplane flying around the world while going through a metamorphosis from oblong to circle and changing its directions from horizontal to vertical. It was Taut’s manifest against any kind of a uniform “international style”. (Fig. 19)

The fourth line would be the use of architectural elements from local tradition carefully applied not to become romantic or stylish.

With little time in Turkey and being unfamiliar with the language Taut’s understanding of Turkish culture and history of course could never have been as deep as that of the Japanese culture. It was in a way quite superficial.

In Ankara Taut applied some elements of national tradition. The stone-material of the facade came from a local quarry. The fine profilings of window-piers to modify the square form, and the “Turkish”-Byzantine masonry with thin bricklayers alternating with local stone on the left extending wing –the non-representative part– are references to traditional Turkish architecture. The side-facade ends with a column-relief –a Turkish motive– but then changes without pathos at the corner into a simple plastered wall, abolishing any romantic or monumental attitude, actually a traditional German detail, which indicates the stone masonry to be a rather thin mask. (Fig. 12) And that would mean the traditional Turkish facade would just be a beautiful and elegant dress: a real taboo in modernism! Actually Taut’s building has later been understood to have initiated the Second National Style in Turkey.

Tokugen Mihara, Taut’s assistant in Japan, remarked that Taut seemed to have kept images of Western and Oriental culture on dispose in his heart in Japan while designing objects for daily use like this cigarette-box from wood and Japanese laquer reminding an Oriental dome. (Fig. 20) Mihara was convinced that “Taut’s spiritual homeland and his deep love was actually not Japan, but the Near East, from which he was emotionally moved. Japan came later into his mind”.

The house Taut built for himself in 1938 at Ortaköy in Istanbul was seen as Turkish by the Japanese and as Japanese by the Turkish. Taut had added again the shadow roof for the huge glass walls but covered the roof with Turkish tiles. (Fig. 21)

Mihara concluded: “The house is located on the European side of the Bosphorus. It seems to look yearning over to Asia –from Europe...”.

NEWS FROM SPAIN AS SEEN FROM ITALY

Valerio Paolo Mosco

The debt that the Spanish architecture owes to the Italian one has often been a subject of discussion. From the fifties to the eighties, generations of Spanish architects trained themselves by examining the projects of architects such as Luigi Moretti, Ignazio Gardella, Franco Albini and Aldo Rossi and by reading Zevi and Tafuri, as well as magazines such as *Casabella*, *Domus* and *Lotus*. This fact has been reasserted repeatedly by Oriol Bohigas and especially by Rafael Moneo who wrote, “I remember that the Italian books were our gateway to modern architecture. The texts by Bruno Zevi and Giulio Carlo Argan, which we read thanks to some Argentinian translations, have to be mentioned, given the influence they had on us. Zevi made us dream of an architecture that reached the fullness of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, whereas Argan made us dream of the promised paradise of the avant-gardes. The panorama described by the Italian critics brought us into a world that was over our boundaries, and gave us an outlook on architecture considerably different from the one we had in our country which, given the situation, might have been considered as insular”. These observations by Moneo should give us pause. After the Second World War, the Italian architecture, almost as in an attempt to distance itself from the fascist regime, entered an eclectic season, in which the language of the Modern Movement was manipulated, occasionally with some audacity. These manipulations produced some syncretic works, elitist and popular, simultaneously rigorous and eccentric, that consciously or unconsciously attempted to make peace with history, an attempt that characterized the postmodern season. An eclecticism and syncretism typical of a latecomer country, one that entered modernity late and that, because of it, organized its own resources in a heterodox manner by experimenting with new modes of expression, which resulted in considerable breaks from the canons of advanced modernity. Indeed, it is exactly this syncretic eclecticism, contradictory yet thriving, that attracted the Spanish architects of the generation of Moneo and of the previous one, as they perceived it as an alternative to the modernist orthodoxy that, until a short time before with GATEPAC and JosepLluís Sert, characterized the Spanish architecture. Hence, the renewed relation with history shown by the Italians attracted the Spanish during these years. With regard to that, Moneo noted that “The ambition to use history as the foundation for architectural knowledge was a revelation for me. It was an interesting time for studies on the history of architecture ... an architecture that was aware of how its own evolution occurred and that, consequently, was respectful of the past, thus becoming a methodological alternative to the purist rigorism of the Modern Movement”. So, history as a method, as an antidote to superficial professionalism and as an instrument to keep urban planning and architecture together, a message that came from Italy in different ways and with different implications: on the one hand the history of Bruno Zevi, practical, adaptable to the contemporary time and not self-congratulatory, on the other hand the history of Manfredo Tafuri, philological and focused on reconstructing the conditions in which a work was conceived and realized.

What might be defined as the separation from Italy, or at least as a reduction of the Spanish dependence on Italy, began during the first years of the seventies. Starting from 1969, the political and social situation in Italy got progressively worse: the radicalism that, at the end of the sixties, was the expression of a desire to voice the needs of a profoundly changed society began transforming into political disputes, aimed at overthrowing the post-war political balances. Consequently, the image of Italy as perceived from Spain changed completely. Indeed, Moneo wrote “Italy stopped being the paradise that fascinated us and become a true ideological battleground”. Pier Vittorio Aureli, reminiscing of these years, noted that two most successful expressions of the Italian architecture of that age, the radical Supertudio and Archizoom and Giorgio Grassi’s and Aldo Rossi’s *Tendenza*, were two alternatives of the diaspora of the Italian Left of these years which, after having conquered the hegemony on national culture, split between, on the one hand, laborusim and unionism and the orthodoxy still connected to the Communist Party on the other. The shared belief that architecture was to testify the commitment to overthrowing the system and to be a message against the bourgeois individualism was the glue that kept everything together. The case of Manfredo Tafuri, the most authoritative critic of that period, is paradigmatic. While Zevi had always operated in a reformist context, Tafuri, initially

following Lukács and then Barthes, radicalized his thought. The result is what will be called a critique of ideology, that is, an action that was to go beyond language to gather the political and social elements that, according to the Marxist Tafuri, stir society and above all class struggle from below. Ignasi de Solà-Morales, one of the most attentive and acute commentators of Tafuri, understood the contribution of Tafuri's critique to opening new horizons in the evaluation of an architectural work, but he also understood –as Zevi before him– that through Tafuri, an exasperated critical deconstruction turned into an increasingly sterile aggressive nihilism. Indeed, Morales wrote that “with Tafuri, the separation between the practice of architecture and the practice of critique becomes an axiom: morality was to be guaranteed by independence from practice (...) but the disappearance of militant critique, replaced by radical critique and the specialization of branches such as history of architecture eventually led this culture to detach from the actual transformation phenomena”. Although Moreno admired Tafuri, he spent some even harsher words as he wrote “therefore, the scornful judgments Tafuri reserved to the attempts of those architects who were fighting to achieve personal forms of expression are hardly surprising: they always fell for the traps laid for them by the power-that-be and consequently talking about architecture almost did not make any sense. The role of the critic was therefore that of unveiling that predicament, rather than singing the praises of the architects at the service of power. Architecture, as understood by the previous critics, was no longer of interest. That was tantamount to announcing its imminent disappearance”.

In less than ten years, the ideological conflict became so exacerbated a desire to find a diversion started spreading in the Italian society, a desire to exorcize the ideology of conflict and to replace it with an opposite one, that of *losir*, of the flaunted entertainment. Paolo Portoghesi, who cleverly understood the depth of the ongoing change, consecrated postmodern hedonism by curating a show aptly named “The presence of the past” in 1980. From that moment onward a generation of architects, that until recently had been busy implementing some more or less radical political intentions, began designing by increasingly exasperating an historicist formalism that finds its privileged place of expression in the practice of drawing, almost forgetting the practice of building, perceived the latter as inferior to the artistic one. “With the Tide Ebbing of its Success” is the title of an article wrote at the end of the eighties by Franco Purini, in which he briefly summarized the postmodern era, whose ebbing left national architecture exhausted, stunned by the fast metamorphosis of radical commitment into an equally radical hedonism. The prevailing feeling in Italy during these years –and not only with regard to matters related to architecture– was that of having gone too far, in an area in which ideological prejudices first and then narcissism undermined once and for all the blooming eclecticism, one that thrived on complexity and contradictions, which characterized the Italian architecture and that fascinated Bohigas and Moneo. The price paid for what, on reflection, appears to be a real case of *cupio dissolvi*, was twofold: on the one hand, the disappearance of that technical wisdom, that mastery that characterized the works of Gardella, Moretti, Albini, Valle and, on the other hand, the problems encountered in capitalizing the subsequent theoretical effort.

At the turn of the eighties, some of the works made by Spanish architects started being published in Italy. The prologue can be found in the Biennale curated by Portoghesi, as among the many works that exalted the presence of the past in a somehow superficial manner, Tusquets's and Clotet's villa in Pantelleria (1975) –an isle in the extreme south of Italy– stood out. The villa is one of the most fascinating projects seen at a successful Biennale, which had very few valid projects, though. Tusquets and Clotet certainly evoke history with their naked columns towering toward the sky and actually, they even tell us how to look at it –with the eyes of romantic artists enamoured of ruins–, yet their villa is characterized by some soundness, some attention to tectonics that was far from the scenographic exhalations supported by Portoghesi. This tectonic soundness, which is proof of a desire to resist reducing architecture to an image is the element that, at the turn of eighties, characterized the works of Cruz, Viaplana and Piñon, Lapeña and Torres and Moneo: these are some moderately postmodern works, sober and linear, more attentive to finding their own place in their context than to exalting their own appearance. Works that, generally speaking, are characterized by a practical reasonableness that is able to intervene where the Italians seemed to have failed, namely in urban planning. The new Barcelona that was getting ready to host the 1992 Olympics was perceived by the Italian architects as a model to imitate. Bohigas and a large number of architects who followed him abandoned any radicalism and started working on a series of attentive minor interventions: their attention is often focused on external public spaces, the ones that were forgotten by the city architecture supported by the Italian architects. Not only did the results start to be appreciated, they were also envied as they showed a realism that was more frequently invoked than pursued by the Italian architects, and they were also proof of the capacity of modern language to communicate better that

postmodern historicism. The fact that the Italian architects, from the beginning of the nineties, turned their back to iconic postmodernism, is also due to the lesson that comes from Spain and it is no accident that the competition for the new Palazzo del Cinema of Venice in 1991 was won by Rafael Moneo, who prevailed over Carlo Aymonino, Aldo Rossi and Mario Botta, who suddenly appeared to have grown old, thus becoming memories of a waning era.

Two Spanish works of the second half of the eighties and an architect of the following decade struck the imagination of an otherwise stalling Italian architecture. The first one is Rafael Moneo's Merida Museum, in which the principle of repeating large Roman masonry infrastructures is adopted with a certain veracity, without any scenographic pretense. The lateral fronts, together with a sequence of masonry bastions, configure an almost anonymous façade, devoid of any scenographic pretense and the internal fair-face concrete floors made sure this work would not slip into historicist redundancy, by proposing a wise mediation between ancient and modern construction. The second one is Juan Navarro Baldeweg's Palace of Congresses and Exhibitions of Castilla y León in Salamanca (1985-1992), a work that, at first sight, might be considered entirely “Italian”. Indeed, in Salamanca we find again the attention to the pre-existing environmental elements theorized by Ernesto Nathan Rogers, as well as the notion of establishing a dialogue with the historical context through the sober minimalism of Giorgio Grassi; by examining both the arrangement of the two volumes and the manner in which they define the calibrated internal square contained between them, we can find evidence of that attention in the manner in which these buildings blend their presence with the orography and the open spaces, theorized by Vittorio Gregotti with a precision that is inversely proportional to the capacity of achieving it. These two works by Moneo and Baldeweg are indebted to the Italian architecture, but they might also be understood as subtle critique to it, with regard to two key matters. The first one is inherent in the character of Italians, namely their tendency to spectacularize everything, to elevate theatre as the ideal set for their actions. During the fifties, with the irreverent causticity the distinguished him, Leo Longanesi stated that “our stations are only useful to those who are not departing and to those who wish to see them in a postcard: [those stations] are great sceneries, great civic trophies for our State. Our post offices, our government buildings, our banks, our hotels are merely theatrical scenes. Styles are fading away: baroque in concrete, then floral, then rational: embellishments are changing, columns and capitals are disappearing, the windows are first contracting then expanding; concrete and glass are appearing, ornate is disappearing and the polished marble of rational logic is shining, but the reign of theatrical scenes nonetheless survives”. Let us consider, for instance, two works such as Aldo Rossi's Il Palazzo in Fukoka and Giorgio Grassi's Theatre of Sagunto: these two works perfectly exemplify the aforementioned statement by Longanesi, according to which everything is sacrificed in order to configure some theatrical scenes that, by the way, are very fascinating. A sacrifice that reaches a paradoxical peak in Rossi's building, whose main façade is devoid of any opening, in order to make it as monumental as possible. The second characteristic of the Italian architecture –especially the one of the seventies– that the Spanish architects studiously avoided importing is its didactic –if not didascal– character, almost an ideology according to which any work has to be a paradigmatic, materialized expression of its underlying theoretical concepts. Let us consider, for instance, Vittorio Gregotti, one of the most paradigmatic and pedagogic Italian architects, and let us compare one of his works, such as the Bicocca in Milan, with a Spanish building that was built just a few years later and that owes a lot to his urban theories, namely Rafael Moneo's and Manuel de Solà-Morales's building in the Avenida Diagonal. While Gregotti's work is more similar to a model of architecture than to a true architecture –a choice that necessarily makes it look schematic– Moneo and Solà-Morales did not wish their work in the Diagonal to become a paradigmatic building, but if anything, an emblematic one. Although its urban impact is not lesser than the one of the Bicocca, the block in the Diagonal is definitely not a diagram transposed into a building: indeed, the rear side of that block seems to articulate its presence by toning down the iconic impact of its main front through an organicism that seems inspired by Alvar Aalto, an architect that –as it is well known– considerably influenced the Spanish architecture. The quality of construction is also evidently different in these two buildings, a difference that deeply embarrassed the Italian architects of the nineties, so much so that the generations that came after the nineties attempted to remediate that embarrassment by focusing on construction and, in an attempt to do that, they took inspiration from the works of some Spanish architects such as Abalos and Herreros, Carlos Ferrater, Vázquez Consuegra, Francisco Mangado, Mansilla and Tuñón.

The Spanish architecture of the eighties and of the first years of the nineties, as seen from Italy, is convincing, but it is not particularly seducing, or at least not until the works of Enric Miralles and Carmen Pinós were published. A new generation of architects attracted by the theories of Koolhaas, by the iconic impact of Nouvel, by the refinement of Herzog and de Meuron and by the hyper-modernism of Hadid, entrusted themselves to the disinhibition of Miralles and Pinós. Let us consider a 1994 project by Aldo Aymonino and a coeval project by ABDR: in both cases, one can sense the attraction for that patchwork of technologies and materials that Miralles and Pinós brought to a paroxysm reminiscent of some of the extreme works of the Catalan Modernism. Their influence is even more evident in one of the most convincing Italian project of these years, namely the Church that Carmen Andriani designed for Rome in 1994, whose layout appears to be the theatre of a conflict between open and close forms, aulic architecture and the vernacular one, attention to large scales and attention to particulars, all of which are conflicts that seem to nourish the architecture of the Catalan architect. Italians also see in Miralles the traces of a modern tradition that is less stiff, more empirical and narrative, more suitable to the new times, namely that of Coderch, Moretti, Leonardo Ricci, Alejandro de la Sota, Gardella and of Fisac, a tradition founded on a non-orthodox modern that continues to tie Italy and Spain deeply. That is not all. Italians also see in Miralles a new urban model. While according to Carlo Aymonino, Aldo Rossi, Vittorio Gregotti and others the urban model is the model of the historical city, whose laws have to be studied both scientifically through typological analysis and artistically through analogy, in the works of Miralles the peripheral city is the new model, marked by fragments of constructions, by large infrastructures and by orographical signs. In essence, for a very short while, the Italian architects identified in Miralles a Mediterranean route to deconstructivism, capable to find, thanks to its iconic force, new expressions to old issues. Some other Spanish architects did not influence the ongoing debate in Italy directly, yet their works present some manifest analogies with some Italian projects. Let us consider the case of Alberto Campo Baeza's well-known Casa Guerrero (2003/2005). It is characterized by an absolutely minimal architecture, designed on a suprematist scheme with some analogies with the hyper-minimal architecture of groups such as Dogma or Baukuh that in the last few years –and in open opposition to the deconstructivist dissipation of forms and signs– has shown an extreme expressive rigor. Yet, that analogy cannot be found in the Caja de Granada Savings Bank (2000/2001), another very well-known work by Baeza, in which the architect designed an architecture characterized by a considerable visual impact without renouncing –as many Italian architects tend to do– the internal space which, on the contrary, is exalted as if it were forged by a primordial act of foundation, thus evoking a bare, ancestral tectonic, similar to the one used by Antón García-Abril –another Spanish architect very appreciated in Italy– who turned bare tectonics into an unmistakable style. Yet, although these architects have a large following in Italy, they do not seem to be exerting a significant influence over the Italian architecture, as it is still scarcely tectonic and, alas, scarcely inclined to create captivating internal spaces.

The influence of Spanish architecture over the Italian one has waned during the last decade, but many Spanish designers are still very appreciated in Italy: José María Sánchez García, Antón García-Abril, Studio Selgas-Cano and RCR are well-known and regularly published, but presently the Italian architecture seems to have taken, with some degree of approximation, some different paths informed by two main currents: architects such as Cino Zucchi, Labics, 5+1aa, Botticini Associati, Archea, C+S and others, who favor an elegantly sober modernism, clear and compact, very composed, although devoid of particular accelerations, belong to the first one. The second current is more radical and keeps together the absolutist architecture that we saw in Dogma and Baukuh and the work of architects such as Paolo Zermani and Renato Rizzi. Between these two main currents there are multiple various experiences that, once again, are proof of the innate eclecticism of our architecture, the eclecticism that we keep on sharing with Spain.

MATTER AND MEMORY. TRANSFORMATIONS IN LUIS BARRAGÁN'S OEUVRE

Carlos Labarta Aizpún

After a few early years working in the Guadalajara of his birth, Barragán seized a dream opportunity and relocated to Spain's capital city in 1935. In Madrid he embarked on a productive and successful career, designing multi-dwelling units for private developers for 5 years. During that time, further to what he had learnt in his travels across Europe, Barragán saw in modern architecture a catalogue of precise postulates with a reproducible vocabulary. All the buildings he authored in that period indisputably drew from modernist precepts. Nonetheless, like other modern

architects, including Le Corbusier himself, Barragán experienced the desolation of white abstraction, of inert and repetitive matter: precise and effective perhaps, but unable to engage with the spiritual values nesting in the deep recesses of the architect's memory.

Around 1940 Barragán decided to break with architectural practice. In so doing he redefined it beyond the stylistic limits that had been his reference until then. The source for that redefinition was the encounter with gardens as the material and object of design, along with the strong attraction exerted on the architect by that specific type of matter. The return to stone, wood or traditional rendering arose not only out of a need to evoke his own experience, but of a desire to conjure up in these materials the memory and nostalgia of other cultures. The El Pedregal gardens and adjacent Prieto House, built in 1945-1950, constituted a veritable laboratory where Barragán, deploying a materially dense architecture, spawned beauty by uniting landscape and aesthetic expression. In a word, the architect aspired to use matter to express humanity's emotional link with nature, its ultimate haven.

With his oeuvre, Barragán blurred the boundaries between technical and humanistic concerns, sensing in every element, every object, the spiritual reasons for building. As in the Capuchin Convent at Tlalpan (1952-1955) and the Gilardi House at Mexico City (1976), with that blurring matter also participates in continuity. Such continuity, converted in his architecture into spatial succession, elicits the feel of a close-knit, changing and uninterrupted sequence. The resulting sleekness is the origin of the joyful, still delight in a work that needs mouldable materials to create that effect. All that together associates memory with the experience of materials. Inherited matter contributes to the generation of timeless and universal architecture, which portrays it not portrayed as the opposite of the spirit but rather, paradoxically, as the vehicle for its expansion.

THE AWAKENING OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE ON MEDITERRANEAN SHORES: DEBATE AND CONTROVERSY IN THE ITALIAN AND SPANISH CONTEXTS

Pedro Miguel Jiménez Vicario, Micaela Antonucci

In the period studied (1920-1940), Italian and Spanish journals raised awareness of international architectural movements. Encouraging the dissemination of modern architecture in their respective environs, they became a key to its consolidation. The journals at issue include *Architettura e Arti Decorative*, founded in 1921 and later renamed *Architettura* (*Organo ufficiale del sindacato degli architetti*), headed by Marcello Piacentini; *Quadrante*, with Pier Maria Bardi and Massimo Bontempelli at the helm (1933-1936); *Casabella*, managed by Edoardo Persico and Giuseppe Pagano; and *Domus*, founded in 1928 and run by Gio Ponti until the nineteen forties. In Spain, works authored by May, Taut, Gropius, Schumacher and others were published in any number of journals, such as *Arquitectura*, *Órgano de la Sociedad Central de Arquitectos*, *Cortijos y Rascacielos*, *D'Ací i d'Allá*, *La Gaceta de les Arts*, *AC* and *Documentos de actividad contemporánea*.

The importance attached by these media to vernacular Mediterranean architecture, in connection in Italy with the debate around Mediterranean culture and in Spain with the national context, sheds light on the impact of the subject on architectural practice, irrespective of the positions adopted by the various journals and the opinions defended by their columnists. As a result of a revisionist approach to the Modernist Movement, a good deal of literature has appeared in recent decades on the development of modern architecture in the Mediterranean context. Drawing from those studies and focusing in particular on documentary sources, the primary aim of this article is to establish the role played by vernacular Mediterranean architecture in the appearance and unfolding of modern architecture in Mediterranean regions through a comparison of developments in Spain and Italy.

FÉRRIZ AND CABRERO: LESSONS FROM AN UNKNOWN AND PARADIGMATIC COLLABORATION BETWEEN A PHOTOGRAPHER AND AN ARCHITECT

Iñaki Bergera, Cristina Jiménez

With few exceptions, it is not possible to date collaborations between Asís Cabrero (1912-2005) and a photographer other than Jesús García Ferriz (1900-1988). Similarly, there are only few and isolated works proving that Ferriz made photo reports of other architects' work. This dual situation points out a unique case study, barely known and unexplored up to date, and of a great theoretical relevance to delve into the intricacies of the marriage architecture & photography. This situation

becomes even more exceptional due to the existence of paper prints from the architect's own archive—kept at the General Archive of the University of Navarra—as well as the availability of the photographer's original negatives. The close and loyal working relationship between Cabrero and Ferriz represent, in the context of modern Spanish architecture, a unique case of complete trust and complicity between an architect and his photographer. Although there are other relevant examples—such as Coderch and Català-Roca or Fernández del Amo and Kindel—none of them proved to have such an exclusive relationship. This fact can be proved not only by the available data and the different hypothesis that might be formulated, but also by the case study described in this text, which provides a rigorous and critic analysis of the unpublished material showing how the architect's project and idea is described and graphically documented through Ferriz's photography. We therefore address, under a new reciprocal practice among the actors in the process, the synergies between architecture and photography that endorse and support a particular status coherent with the role played by the image of architecture in its growth and media, historiographical and disciplinary transmission. As opposed to Asís Cabrero, who has already been recognized as a leading figure of modern Spanish architecture, the photographic work made by the Ferriz family has scarcely up to date been revealed in the field of Spanish photographic community of the 20th Century and has never been recognized as example of professionalism and technical expertise in the course of their long term career. In this text the outcomes of this relationship will be explored not only based on technical and aesthetic qualities, but also on the analysis of the rigor and coherence of their respective attitudes and their professional skills.

JOSÉ SOTERAS MAURI AND LORENZO GARCÍA-BARBÓN: THREE (SPACES) UNDER ROOF

Ignacio López Alonso

José Soteras Mauri and Lorenzo García-Barbón played a privileged role in the hierarchy of the Barcelona architectural scene in the 50's and 60's. They both developed a prolific work, mostly omitted by the specialized post-francoist critics. Their public designs were mainly characterized by the expressive use of structural elements. Thus, this form generative system settles back the typological questions. It has been selected three public building works, all three were characterized by the relation in between statics, geometry and interior space.

The first case of study, the XXXV Eucharistic Congress Major Altar was developed in Barcelona in 1952. This design starts a new structural experimentation process based on counterweights and tensor systems. The second case is the Barcelona Municipal Sports Arena (1954-1955). It was solved through a triple articulated arch system. This structural and spatial system was pragmatically developed to solve the tight construction schedule. Meanwhile, they were developing together with Francisco Mitjans the Camp Nou tribune canopy. Its structure was again characterized by a counterbalance and tensors static system. On his own, Soteras designed the San Pio X Church in the Congreso Eucarístico neighbourhood in Barcelona. This spin off work explores a nerved vault structure. Final case of study is Madrid Sports Arena (1955-1960). It was built together again by Soteras and García-Barbón. This work combines all the previous structural systems, tensors, counterweights and arches. Thus, it could be detected a structural solution process of continuity and change. In an austere economic period, this defines an evolutionary sequence where form and statics geometry intertwine in a new spatial richness.

MARTORELL, BOHIGAS AND MACKAY'S SCHOOL BUILDING ARCHITECTURE: THE CONCENTRATED MODEL AS AN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Isabel Durá Gúrpide

The Martorell, Bohigas and Mackay work has been characterized by social involvement and education has been one of their main interests. Their school buildings have always attended to educational progress and have primarily reflected the transformation that school typology experienced in 50s and 60s. These architects took an active part in the school building revision by means of their designs and articles. Their work showed their wide knowledge about school buildings and also their critical, non-conformist and visionary nature.

Since the beginning of XX Century, the Barcelona council had been in the vanguard of education in Europe. Their borough council did an important research work in

education and founded open-air schools, summer educative centres and comprehensive schools. After Spanish Civil War, the municipal school control was transfer to the Francoist administration and educational politics were changed. However, some teachers removed from the public education founded private institutions to continue with the progressive pedagogy. Martorell, Bohigas y Mackay built some of these school buildings, which became an international reference model.

According to that, the present research analyses the school work of the Catalonian office in order to establish their characteristics and contribution to the school building progress. With this purpose, their work has been put into context and their school buildings and articles have been examined. In addition, the school work of these architects has been connected with the school buildings of the international vanguard. In short, the article expects to reveal the Martorell, Bohigas and Mackay contribution to the important transformation that school building underwent in 50s and 60s.

THE SAILOR AND SUN. JØRN UTZON'S HOUSES AND WINTER SOLSTICE

Miguel Ángel Rupérez Escribano

The naval world was present in Utzon's life from his childhood, not only for being born in a country in which the most distant point from the coast is sixty kilometres away and in which almost every family has a boat to sail at leisure time, but also because he lived so close to his father's engineering profession, and the shipyard boisterous atmosphere. The way he pays attention to sun and horizon is inevitable as the sailor he was. This is the reason why Utzon looks curiously to the place in a broad way, looking for relations between place and architecture. Architecture was one of his passions, maybe the most powerful, but only one more. Architecture channelled the other concerns about navigation, nature, cosmos... His well known travels around the world to Mexico, USA, Morocco, Middle East and Japan, contribute to his knowledge about the importance of the place in architecture, as well as knowing cultures adaptation mechanism to the specific environment, for instance this is the case of Morocco desert cities: "But all the building complexes that have really inspired me—the desert cities in Morocco, for example—have been pushed into position in relation to the place, and in relation to the sun. Then they take on the character that the old cities or Greek temples have" Jørn Utzon.

The sun as a place element, that hasn't been researched the Utzon's projects, is a transcendent element in his houses. His two houses in Spain, and several built in Denmark, are oriented in an accurate way in relation to the sun. This paper explores the relationship between Jørn Utzon and the sun, through his vocation as a sailor.

WORKERS' UNIVERSITIES DESIGNED BY LUIS LAORGA AND JOSÉ THE MODULE AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY

Pablo Basterra Ederra

Between 1952 and 1976 a total of 21 vocational training institutions, known as workers' universities, were built in Spain for workers' children. These institutions, along with workers' villages, constituted the most ambitious projects for compounds implemented in Spain (and Europe) in the twentieth century, in terms both of built area and the quality of the proposals involved.

This article briefly describes the endeavour in general and subsequently focuses on the four workers' universities, of which only three were actually built, designed by architects Luis Laorga and José López Zanón, for Corunna, Madrid, Huesca and Cáceres. Whilst a wide variety of approaches were adopted by the architects who authored the 21 workers' universities built in Spain, Laorga and López Zanón's hold particular interest due to the indivisible link between programme, form and construction.

Laorga and López Zanón's rigorous and pioneering study of the module as the key element in their designs stands out against the backdrop of the complete freedom afforded all the architects who authored these compounds. From the outset these two architects associated the conceit with the idea that informed the design, thereby contributing to the development of Spain's incipient precasting and prefabrication industries.

Their ongoing pursuit of renewal is visible in the move from the fishbone enlargement at Corunna to the classroom-courtyard module used at Huesca and Cáceres and the concrete 'mushroom' devised for Madrid. That attitude was instrumental in

broadening the variety of architectural schools that attempted to elbow their way into contemporary Spanish architecture, indisputably consolidating its late twentieth century brilliance.

PRE-MODERNIST FIGURATIONS: ADOLF LOOS AND ISADORA DUNCAN

Manuel Ferrer Sala

The study focuses on the presence of Greek fragments in the work of Adolf Loos and Isadora Duncan based on the same admiration of the antiquity.

The hypothesis that the study proposes is to demonstrate that the presence of the pre-modern in Adolf Loos and Isadora Duncan are based on Greek recuperation from a careful reading of "The birth of the tragedy in the spirit of the music", one of the best known texts by Friedrich Nietzsche, whose first edition appears in Leipzig, in 1872. Following the programme of Nietzsche, that contemplates the updating of values of the Greek art, Isadora Duncan and Adolf Loos don't try so much to imitate forms of the past but to make figures emerge that can, again, conform the present. Both authors have in this free reading of what is pre-modern, a basic condition for proposing the foundational recuperation in their respective artistic fields.