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The Democratic Role of City-Planning

by Hans Marti

City-Planning, as an integral part of regional and national planning, implies co-operation between the public and owners on construction projects and legislation covering architecture, engineering problems and landscaping. It consequently results in the creation of complexes which are in keeping with the main line of our development, our cultural values and the everyday functions of individual and community life. If we admit the fundamental principles of democracy, the question inevitably arises as to the significance of this collective co-operation. The sovereign people – the voters – rarely give evidence of taking any particular interest in voting on other matters than purely material ones. As a matter of fact, the fault lies less with voters than with the persons responsible for arousing public interest in civic matters, and most discussions are made the exclusive affair of experts or officials. That, however, is precisely the point at issue. Before a vote is held on matters of detail it is preferable to define the conception of "the new city" in clear terms (and its relationship to sociology, economics, hygiene, traffic problems, security, climate, etc.), to draft future laws especially for this purpose (not minor regulations but rather fundamental laws) and to make architects responsible for the construction of public buildings.

A preliminary phase will be necessary before any measures can be taken: the education of public opinion in this field with a view to showing voters how to know what they want. For this purpose words, whether spoken or in print, no longer suffice. A better plan would be to arrange guided tours, demonstrations with models, etc., followed by discussions in which all those attending, both men and women, can take an active part.

The "City of Tomorrow": The German Pavilion at the International Architectural Exhibition. Berlin 1957

by Karl Otto

This structure of steel covered with sailcloth is considered one of the most striking buildings at the Exhibition. The theme is an original one and it demonstrates present insufficiencies, the social structure of the world of tomorrow, hygienic conditions, future landscapes, traffic, living quarters, construction techniques and eight actual draft plans. The exhibit is the joint achievement of teams of architects, technical men and laymen specially consulted to ensure public interest (cf. preceding article, which goes to considerable lengths to develop this idea).

Alvar Aalto's Apartment House at the International Architectural Exhibition. Berlin 1957

This apartment house combines the community atmosphere and privacy in an admirable harmony. The entrance hall communicates with the two stairwells, both of which are pleasing to the eye. The main feature, however, is the apartments themselves, which number seventy-eight, each centred around the living-room. Some of them are graciously furnished with pieces designed by Aalto himself and other Finnish decorators.

Apartment House in Berlin (Hansa District), 1957

Architect: O. H. Senn FAS/SIA, Basle

The ground floor is taken up by an open hall, the entrance, a garage for bicycles and prams. The other three storeys and the attic floor, which contains three studio-apartments, comprise a total of sixteen apartments. Terrace on roof. Apartments fan out from stairwell. As the buildings in the immediate neighbourhood are low, the prismatic design of the apartment house makes it stand out as a distinctive unit.

Apartment-Towers in Altwyler, Berne

1956/57, architect: E. Helfer, E. Wirz, V. Somazzi, Berne

Third step in the construction of low-priced housing: these three apartment-towers have four one- to four-and-a-half-room apartments on each floor.

Apartment-Towers in Neuhaus (Berne)

1957/58, architect: E. Helfer, Berne

E. Helfer was entrusted with the planning of the buildings on this site which had changed ownership. He was inspired by plans drawn up by W. Kuenzi, which won first prize in a competition in 1954. Each of the

three twelve-storey apartment houses has forty-two apartments, and is composed of two distinct sections connected by the stairwell and the lift well.

De Luxe Apartment House in Rome

Architect: Ugo Luccichenti, Eng.

Located in an exclusive district, this building is designed in line with the sloping terrain on which it is constructed. Great care taken to preserve incomparable view. Exterior in light-blue and white.

The "Belsito" Apartments in Rome

Architect: Ugo Luccichenti, Eng.

Total of eight blocks having four to five floors, with separate entrances. Each staircase serves eight to ten apartments. Metal, green marble, rose-coloured spatter mortar on elevations. Attractive restaurant.

The Sculpture of Karl Geiser

by Arnold Rüdlinger

Geiser was twenty-three when he wrote his essay "Germany and Modern Art" (WERK, March and April, 1925) in which he draws away from the dominating tendencies of the time (he had returned from Berlin) and aspires to a living classicism of his own. Far from elevating the individual to a type, the art of Geiser embodies nevertheless a maximum of individuality, according to a principle reflecting his characteristic relationship under the sign of Eros to the model. From 1930 he went through a period of freely chosen subjects. However, in 1926 G. (at that time twenty-seven) won first prize in a competition for two monumental groups held by the Berne Lyceum. This brought on a series of commissions which constituted a source of almost unbearable conflicts for this perfectionist sculptor. After the completion of the Berne groups, there followed a long succession of studies. Only the "David" was cast (after twelve years of work), the outstanding creation of a very great sculptor.

Karl Geiser

by Ernst Morgenthaler

In this brief talk at the retrospective exhibition held in the Basle Kunsthalle on October 12, 1957, E. M. spoke of the protracted struggle which was the life of Karl Geiser, who was extremely exacting toward himself, so that it is easy to understand how the artist finally chose to put an end to his tribulations. "With the death of Karl Geiser Switzerland lost its greatest sculptor. All who knew him intimately lost even more."

Adolf Dietrich and the Law of Form

by Hans-Friedrich Geist

As a self-taught artist, A.D. is an authentic rustic and the only Swiss primitive painter comparable to the French "naïfs". H.-F. Geist suggests that the distinctive value of this artist lies neither in his innate naïveté nor in his subjects, but, as is the case with any artist (Schiller is judiciously cited on this subject), in the passion which drove him to integrate everything in his search for form. The fundamental truth of this statement is illustrated successively in such paintings as "Hound", "Still Life with Two Ducks" and "The Neighbour's Garden".