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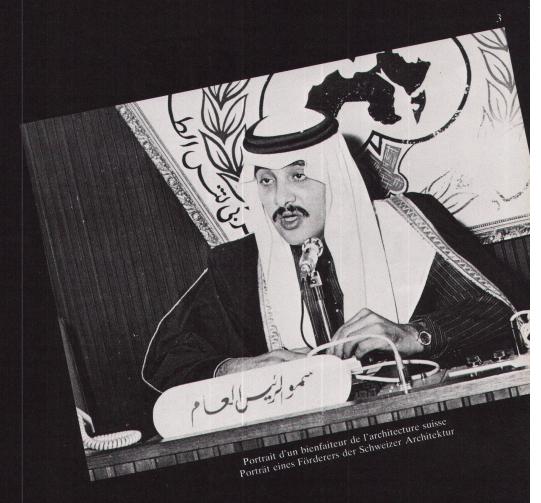PDF erstellt am: **21.09.2024**

In this issue

Two decades of meetings and conferences dedicated to the problems of development have at least generated one substantial result: the general acknowledgement of an ever encreasing gap between rich and poor countries. One thing has, by now, become obvious: science and technology cannot anymore be considered as neutral; they have entered the political realm.

As *Cyrus Mechkat* and *Costas Socratidis*, the guest editors of this issue, emphasize: in areas like education, nutrition, medical care, etc., it is now an accepted fact that it is impossible to satisfy the elementary needs of the large majority of people on the basis of standards and processes developed in the industrialized countries. And it is more and more frequently admitted that the same is true in the area of building. "How long will it be possible to export factories for the prefabrication of housing elements, to export container schools to all the Irans and Saudi Arabias of the world?"

There are various forms by which Swiss firms (contractors, engineering-firms, architects, planners, consultants, etc.) are actively involved in the Third World. The authors distinguish three main categories of operations: 1. *"Massive" interventions:* large engineering and planning operations (airports, nuclear power plants, highways, tunnels, dams, etc.); 2. *Architectural parachute jumps:* buildings of medium or small scale (apartment buildings, hotels, schools, or mere façade or interior decorations. 3. *Cooperation. Soft technologies:* a type of building activity in general limited to the area of housing, aimed at improving the conditions of life in squatter settlements or rural villages, etc.

Means and goals

A large number of organizations and institutions are actively engaged in the promotion of Swiss engineering, architecture and technological "kno how" in the Third World. We have asked them for a brief description of their goals and means. The three Swiss schools of architecture have also been asked to describe their policies in relation to an architecture for the Third World. In fact, all the schools concerned – EAUG, ETH-Lausanne and ETH-Zurich – are teaching a significant number of students from developing countries.

No more centralizing technologies

In his article entitled "No more centralizing technologies" *John F.C. Turner*, London, discusses the term "development" and the implications of its various definitions for the approach of Western "experts" to planning and building in the Third World. "Some still see development as a progress from poverty to richness through the transfer of industrial technology from the 'already' rich to the 'still' poor," Turner says. "Most who have heard about and have seen what is happening in the world now doubt this once general western view. Now some see under-development as a consequence of over-development, so that development is understood as a function of social justice as well as of material economy. (...) If poverty is understood as the obverse of wealth, then technology is not a benignly neutral factor but a highly political determinant of who decides and who gets what."

Portrait d'un bienfaiteur de l'architecture suisse
Porträt eines Förderers der Schweizer Architektur

Workshop – reports

In a series of workshop reports, various Swiss architects comment on their experiences in countries like Iran, Jordan, Uganda, Tunesia, Turkey, Mauretania and India. Professor *Alfred Roth*, Zurich, presents an office building in Beirut, Jordan, and discusses his interesting proposal for schools in Kuwait of which various examples were built. Also, he presents his project for an office building of the "Bahrein National Oil Company BANOCO".

Professor Justus Dahinden reminds us of what he calls the lessons of Africa for a modern architect. He then documents two large churches in Uganda and a house type ("bubble house") developed for a new town in Iran.

Alexander Henz gives an account of the story of the building of a Technical Highschool in Tunesia, while *Martin Sturm* and *Andreas Adam* present the activities of the Schweizerisches Katastrophenhilfskorps (SKH). Three examples – row houses in Monteaperta (Italy), built after the earthquake of 1976, a prototype for barns in Turkey and a new type of public building in a part of India constantly endangered by cyclones demonstrate a will to work systematically with local recources and soft technologies easily controllable by the inhabitants.

Mark Brunn then discribes the beginnings of a cooperative planning and building activity in an extremely poor squatter settlement of Mauretania, and Professor *Mehdi Kazemi* from Teheran offers a picture of "export-architecture" as it looks from the other side: the side of the "client" rather than the producer.

Pro memoria

In his article on "The Politics of the Open Hand" *S. von Moos* finally discusses the historical context and the political ideas which served as the basis for the creation of Chandigarh and its architecture.

In a last article *Cyrus Mechkat* draws his conclusions from the recent political events in Iran. "The history of the last few years has shown that face to face with the resistance of a people against the universalization of the Western way of life even the strongest armies are useless. The reflection on this phenomenon would be most fundamental for us technicians, specialists or other experts of construction and environment."