

5
Boîte Postale pour le developpement de l'Habitat (B.P.H.)
Post Box for the development of the Habitat (B.P.H.)
Briefkasten für die Entwicklung von Habitat (B.P.H.)

27th of January 1961.

The remark contained in the document Giedion distributed, stating that it was Team X who desired to maintain the name C.I.A.M., is not based on the facts. In order to avoid further misunderstanding I should add the following to what I wrote previously concerning the above document.

It was during a small meeting held in La Sarraz in 1956 to discuss the possibility of reorganising C.I.A.M., that I advised those present (in answer to a question posed by Giedion as to whether the name C.I.A.M. should be maintained) not to give up the name until those who desire to work together in one form or another had made a clear decision. It seemed to me that the problem of the name was hardly relevant at the moment since the basic problem was to discuss whether contact should continue at all and if so in what form it should do so.

It became quite clear during the Otterlo-meeting in 1959 that the most effective way to tackle the problems we are concerned with around 1960 would be to work individually as well as in small informal groups. Team X should be regarded as one of these groups. Perhaps others will follow.

Team X feels that confrontation with other groups should they exist, in order to compare work and ideas could be very fruitful.

The idea of the postbox was generally accepted in Otterlo in order to facilitate contact between those who desire contact. It constitutes a functional focal point for communication and avoids the pitfalls of a formal and static organisation.

The principle of dynamic informality, it should be stressed, is fundamental to Team X's conception of a creative group desiring to tackle the problems relevant to architecture and urbanism at this moment.

This no doubt reflects a different moral attitude, different not only with regard to our changed task as such, but also with regard to the way individuals can best penetrate together the changed problems the task implies.

In the light of the above the unanimous decision made at Otterlo (it appears that some agreed half-heartedly, even grudgingly) to carry on activity without the name C.I.A.M. was both reasonable and natural.

Whether C.I.A.M. as such wishes to continue or not is a question those concerned with C.I.A.M. must decide for themselves: a lot of misunderstanding has already resulted from their failure to do so.

Our decision to use the name C.I.A.M. no more does not bear directly on the question of C.I.A.M.'s existence. I wish to make this very clear.

Some further misunderstanding may arise from the statement "the moral function of architectural expression has to be introduced", contained in the pink postboxletter of 27-12-1960.

I received a letter from Gropius in which he rejects this statement contesting "that social responsibility was ever dominantly in C.I.A.M. present as everybody can see from the publications".

Apart from the fact that "social responsibility" and the "morality of architectural expression" are by no means the same thing, the difference is very significant, since the former is contained in the latter, the latter not in the former. I cannot agree with Gropius that the social responsibility of which he speaks was "ever" alive in the C.I.A.M.-movement. Postwar C.I.A.M. proved that this was not so.

After discussing this with Van Eyck I should like to reply as follows: The social responsibility which characterized the activities of C.I.A.M.'s first years, formed its specific morality, but faded as the years went on. After the war it became more apparent at each congress that what had characterized C.I.A.M. in the beginning was all but lost. This fact was reflected in C.I.A.M.'s static institutional form; in its arbitrary and inadequate commissions and method of study; in the nature of human relationship at the actual congresses; as well as in the professional activities of many individual members at home.

At the same time it must be stated that C.I.A.M.'s "social responsibility" and basic principles, perhaps valid in 1929, are no longer sufficiently valid to-day.

1960 - 2000

The extensions of our towns made after 1945 and also our newtowns are based on principles which were also formulated in C.I.A.M.

So if we are critical many of us are critical about own thoughts.

Consequently this criticism is more or less selfcriticism, in order to find a better approach for the period still separating us from the year 2000 which is our immediate future.

These extensions mainly were made for the anonymous client (housing for the great number, le plus grand nombre, soziale Wohnungsbauten).

They are built for that part of the population which in the middle ages lived under one roof with master or apprentice, or was housed in dwellings that have long since disappeared. In the 19th century permanent houses for this part of the population came into being (mechanical slums).

The change in the social pattern since the 19th century is mainly based on the extension of everybody's right to be responsible for his own way of life by means of an open society.

The evolution of our technical capacity has proved that in our times production and distribution can be effectuated in such a way that everybody is able to assert this right, under the condition that he is willing to be responsible for the contribution he can make by means of this changed social pattern.

Each man's attitude towards life will strongly be defined by the balance of these new rights and responsibilities and vice-versa. The expression

(Gestaltung) of this attitude could nowhere be manifested so clearly as in our new cities.

Why are we critical about them ?

We know that change of our social structure will only make sense if it gives more chance to more people for having a personal (free) way of life and this will have to be visualised by our housing.

But what would the archeologist find if our cities to-morrow should be buried under ashes (like once Pompei was by the Vesuvius) and should be excavated in the year 2000? Could the ruins of our housing for the great number convince the archeologist that this age was the age of more freedom for everybody?

We will have to find another way of housing for the anonymous client if we desire the forms built for him to communicate with the same strength as the atrium cities do which were excavated from the Vesuvius-ashes.

The beginning of our century led us to believe that we should have to analyse by intellect in order to find motives for form. This flush, however, brought about the emptiness of our houses and streets; empty as form and flowing over with technic.

In spite of this failure we believe our time to be more significant than these empty quarters express. Likewise we believe that we can build with greater variety and more relationships in powerful structures which can inform about even more than the atriumcities covered with Vesuvius-ashes did.

We feel ourselves sufficiently related to the first half of this century to be able to recognise the decisive character of the years around 1960 indicating that now we have to find out how to act better in the years separating us from the year 2000.

At any rate we wish to prevent the exportation of the methods now used for the actual development of human settlements in Western Europe to Africa and Asia.

We believe in an architecture which can express human feelings of all kinds; also of the anonymous client.

To be alone, to be together, with technic, without technic, under the trees, over the trees, on a hill or in a valley, to be child, to be old, above and below, soft and hard.

There is no hierarchy.

It is the simultaneous participation in all things on earth and in the universe engaging and bewildering us in such a way that it makes us sure that the actual structure of our present dwellings and workshops is inadequate.

Some questions we have to answer:

1. How can we find motives for the grouping of houses, justified by our social patterns.
2. How should the structure of factories be so that by this structure all those working there can know that they are responsible for the end product; ultimately for the total enterprise.

3. How can we by means of total architecture (which is urbanism) express that people like to be alone and also like to belong to something.

These questions perhaps can only be answered by becoming full architects again giving shape to those things which architecture alone can make tangible.

Then (as before) architecture will regain its natural function by visualising spatially what cannot be expressed by other means.

We are now bored by our urban districts because they are petrified information about what we are telling each others already day by day in other terms.

Our urban districts could surprise and stimulate again if only the hidden potential of our new social structure (the open society) were to be expressed by building for the anonymous client.

The architect would again be indispensable and architecture could be a function realising everybody's right to full life.

Oskar Hansen Warsawa	the open form in architecture - the art of the Great number	1-1-'61	we had been drawn together by Doubt. May be that we supplant it with Faith and we shall then become Revolutionist.
Philip Thiel Kamakura - Japan	a program for research and education for architectural and urban space	Dec. '60	a number of suggestions (illustrat- ed) made for the improvement of the spatial education of architects
Eduard Sekler Cambridge	wrote a brief sum- mary in relation to the critical letter circulat- ed by him about Otterlo	20-1-'61	Sekler will still send this sum- mary to Postbox and proposes to start work on the positive com- mitment of our calling and not to bother with anything else which might detract.
Gropius Cambridge	about pink Post- boxletter	9-1-'61	see yellow Postboxletter
Giedion Zürich	about pink Post- boxletter	6-1-'61	see yellow Postboxletter
Franco Albini Milano	likes to stay in contact with work of Team X	23-1-'61	-

BAKEMA
Posthoornstraat 12 B
Rotterdam - Holland.