

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

8

13-12-1961.

name of author	subject	date	main points
nom d'auteur	sujet	date	points essentiels
Name des Auteurs	Subjekt	Datum	wichtigste Punkte
77. Oskar Hansen, Warszawa	Otterlo II meeting September 1962	September 1961	) They like to promote an Otterlo II-meeting. ) ) )
78. Sandy Wilson, Cambridge		July 1961	
79. A. Wogenscky, Paris		September 1961	
80. J.A. Coderch, Barcelona		September 1961	
81. St. Wewerka, Köln		October 1961	) <u>Polonyi Budapest</u> )
82. Tang Hung-wai, Hongkong	New address		
83. Kurokawa, Tokio	"Metabolism" proposed method for creation	September 1961	Denotative method and Connotative Method "Architectural Space" and "Urban Space". "Connotative method" starts from forming a conception of the total image of city (or society). Theory for creation realized in "connotative method" will progress as same cycle as "denotative method". The problem between "architecture" and "city" is nothing but the problem between "disorder" and "order". l'équipe Miquel recherchait un ensemble salle-scène ne formant qu'un volume, sans solution de continuité, sans rideau, sans cadre de scène et sans machinerie.
84. L. Miquel, Alger	Centre Albert Camus	September 1961	Priant une cotisation se montant à 10 dollars par an (J'ai répondu par lettre comme copie suivante).
85. L'Unesco, Paris	Trésorier	September 1961	Die Raumstadt ist eine Science fiction des Urbanismus, die heute schon verwirklicht werden könnte. Wir haben grössere technischen und materiellen Möglichkeiten als jemals eine Zeit hatte. Wir haben keine Ziele. Die Gotik baute die Kathedrale, wir bauen Häuschen mit Garten.
86. Eckhard Schulze-Fielitz, Essen	Raumstrukturen	November 1961	See postboxletter 7.
87. Tom J. Holzbog, London	Situationist Architecture	November 1961	

88. Sekler, der Josefsplatz November  
Wien in Wien - eine 1961  
stadtmorphologi-  
sche Studie

Morphologie, wie der Begriff im folgen-  
den verstanden werden soll, beschäftigt  
sich mit Form als Ergebnis eines Ent-  
stehungsvorgangs, dessen Gesetzmäßig-  
keiten aufgedeckt werden sollen, soweit  
dies überhaupt möglich ist. Form wird  
hier nicht als etwas aufgefasst, was man  
an sich, in Isolierung, betrachten kann,  
wie es der "Formalist" tut. Vielmehr  
sollen Gestaltqualitäten in ihren  
größeren strukturellen Zusammenhängen  
aufgezeigt und als Ergebnisse von Be-  
dingungen erfasst werden, die von  
zweierlei Art sein können: solche, die  
von außen her den Entstehungsvorgang  
beeinflussen und solche, die durch  
seine eigene innere Logik hervorgerufen  
werden. Morphologie sucht also Prinzi-  
pien der Formgestaltung und des Form-  
lebens klarzustellen, nicht aber Anwei-  
sungen formaler Natur zu geben. Sie  
tastet in keiner Weise die Integrität  
der letztlich dem begrifflichen Denken  
unzugänglichen Bereiche des schöpferi-  
schen Gestaltens und Beurteilens von  
Formen an, aber sie hofft, klärend und  
bereichernd einen Beitrag zur Freile-  
gung und Vertiefung dieser Bereiche lie-  
fern zu können.

89. J.L. Vêret, projet de la September  
Paris CECA 1961  
90. Anselevicius Multiple- November  
Maki, Michaeli- residential 1961  
das, Montgomery, buildings -  
Robert, project for  
St. Louis San Francisco  
91. Coderc, October  
Barcelona 1961

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IT IS NOT GENIUSES THAT WE NEED NOW  
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In writing this it is neither my intention nor desire to join the ranks of those who delight in talking and theorising about architecture. But I have had to state my views and have therefore felt obliged to submit, in all humility, the following.

An old and famous American architect (if my memory serves me well), said to another who was much younger and was asking for his advice: "Open wide your eyes and look; it is much easier than you think". He also said to him: "Behind every building that you see there is a man that you don't see". A man, he said. He did not mention whether he was an architect or not.

No, I do not think that it is a genius that we need at this time. Genius is an occurrence that is an Act of God, a goal not an end. Nor do we need High Priests or dubious Prophets of Architecture, or great doctrinaires. There is something of a living tradition that is still within our reach, and also many ancient moral doctrines concerning our trade or profession (and I use these terms in their best traditional sense) of architect and ourselves. We need to take advantage of what little there is left of the constructive tradition, and, above all, the moral tradition in



this epoch when the most beautiful of our words have lost their real meaning.

We need thousands and thousands of architects to think less about "Architecture", money, or the cities of the year 2000 etc. and more of their trade as architects. Let them work tied by a leg so that they cannot stray too far from the earth in which they have their roots or from the men they know best; let them always clutch a firm foundation based on dedication, good will and honour.

I am convinced that any present-day architect moderately endowed and developed or formed who is able to understand this, is easily capable of producing truly living work. This is, for me, the most important, more important than any consideration or end which should apparently take precedence.

I believe that it is from works that may vary vastly in all aspects, carried out with a sound knowledge of the fundamentals and also great conscientiousness, without worrying about the final result (which fortunately, anyway, escapes us and is not an end, but a consequence) that an authentic, live new tradition will be born.

To bring this about I believe that we must first rid ourselves of many ideas which appear clear but are false, of many hollow words, and work, each and every one of us, with that good will that is translated into one's own work and teaching rather than with a mere concentration on doctrinairism. I think that the best teaching is that which teaches our trade; teaches us to work with great faith; or, in short, that which teaches us to be architects, knowing, at the same time, as we must, that we can all make mistakes. It is also the example of working, continuously watching in order not to confuse human frailty, the right to be mistaken (a cloak which if wrongly used can cover a multitude of sins), with inconstancy of will, immorality or the cold calculation of the climber or "getter-on".

If one imagines society as a sort of pyramid, with the better, finer and less populous parts at the peak, then working down to the base we come to the masses, or, shall we say, the least cultured. If we imagine the cultured aristocracy to be about half way, then we can say that there is spiritual enrichment upwards, towards the peak, by deeds and to a lesser extent, words, and there is an opposite movement downwards towards the base, consisting of respect for and imitation of this aristocracy (that to-day practically does not exist, drowned for the most part, in materialism and the philosophy of success). In Spain, my parents used to tell me, a gentleman, an aristocrat, is the person who finds himself unable to do certain things which even the law, the Church and the majority approve of or permit. We must all, every one of us, individually constitute a new aristocracy. This is an urgent problem, so urgent that it must be tackled at once. We must begin soon and then go slowly. The main thing is to begin to work and then, and only then, can we talk about it.

We must pit ourselves against money, against the vanity of success, against excess of property or earnings, against inconstancy and haste, and against the lack of spiritual life or conscience; we must put instead dedication, craftsmanship, good will, time, the bread we need for every day, and above all, love, which is acceptance and giving, not possession and domination -, all these must be taken hold of and clung to, for these are the true values.

Seeing and knowing more or less profoundly the works or forms (the exterior signs of spiritual richness) of the great masters is considered to be culture or architectural formation. The same means of classification are applied to our craft or profession as are used (exterior signs of economic richness) in our materialistic society. And then we lament or complain because there are no great architects under 60, because the majority of architects are bad, because the new urbanization is anti-human, because our ancient cities, towns and villages are destroyed, and houses and towns are built like film-sets along the length of our beautiful Mediterranean coasts.



It is strange that so much is said and published about the exterior signs of the Great Masters (truly very valuable signs) and that their moral value is hardly mentioned. May it not also be considered curious that people write and talk of their weakness and frailty as an attractive oddity or a tit-bit for gossip or just as being mistaken, and at the same time conceal as a forbidden subject or as an anecdote their attitude to life or to their work ?

Is it also not curious that here we have Gaudi, very near to us (I myself know persons who have worked with him) and so much is said of his work and so little of his moral position or his dedication ?

It is still more curious to contrast between the great value placed on Gaudi's work and the silence or ignorance that exists on the moral position or attitude presented by Gaudi to the problem of architecture. The former, that is, Gaudi's work, is beyond our reach to do, and the latter, which is Gaudi's approach to his work, is something which we can all do, or at least attempt. We cannot reach his Genius, but we must emulate his devotion and work. And every architect can do it easily if he wishes. We must concentrate on the things we can do, and not on what we cannot.

Almost the same thing happens with the Great Masters of our time; their works are admired, or rather, the shapes of their works and nothing else; there is no attempt to go deeper and discover what there is within, that is to say, the most valuable, which is exactly what we are able to reach, understand and practice. Of course, it is clear that this means accepting our own limitations; but this is not done, because nearly all architects are only interested in financial gain, or to be a Le Corbusier, and this very often, in the same year that they finish their architectural studies. There is an architect here who, shortly after leaving his school of architecture, published a form or manifesto on costly paper, after having designed a chair, if it can be called such.

The real spiritual culture of our profession has always belonged to a few. The circumstances that enable nearly anyone to have the possibility of access to this culture is the heritage of all, and is one that is not generally taken. Neither unfortunately do we accept cultural behaviour which should be obligatory and in the consciousness of us all.

In ancient times architects had a certain solid support. Many things existed that were accepted by the majority as good or, at any rate, inevitable, and the organization of society, as much in its social problems as in its economic, religious or political ones evolved slowly. On the other hand, there was more dedication, less pride and a living tradition in which to take refuge. With all their defects the upper classes had a clear idea of their duty, and rarely did they fail to choose the best architects, and so spiritual culture was naturally propagated. The cities and towns grew like plants, in different forms but slowly and full of the common life. Seldom was there sloth, improvisation or any irresponsibility. Works of all sorts were created which had a human value seldom found to-day. Sometimes, but not often, there were severe problems of development or construction to overcome, fortunately without the feeling, that we cannot avoid now, (except for the immediate future) that the evolution of society was difficult to forecast.

Nowadays, the ruling classes have lost their sense of mission, and all, the aristocracy of the blue-blooded, as well as that of money, of intelligence, of the Churches and of politics, the Press etc., with only a few exceptions, merely serve to contribute decisively to the chaos of present-day architecture by their uselessness, their money-grabbing souls, their love of power and lack of any sort of consideration of their responsibilities.

But the conditions on which we have to base our work vary continuously. There are religious, moral, social and economic problems, together with those of teaching, and, in this modern world, possibly the most important, sources of energy, which can all



play a part in changing, unsuspectingly, the face and structure of our society (some brutal changes whose meanings are lost to us are also possible). All these different problems can impede honourable long-range planning.

As I have repeated above, we have no clear live constructional tradition, a tradition which is essential to the majority of us. That which has so far been carried out, which has, of course, in certain cases, been a great deal, is not, in our profession sufficient to light the necessary path for the great majority of architects working in the world to-day. In the best cases the solution is looked for in formalism or a rigorous application of method or routine and the topic of the great and old masters of modern architecture, leaving out their spirit, their circumstances, and above all carefully hiding with magnificent words our great irresponsibility (which is often only lack of thought), ambition and inconstancy. It is ingenuous to think, as is thought, that the ideal and the practise of our profession may be condensed into slogans such as the sun, light, air, greenness, social architecture and so many others. A formalistic base, dogmatic, above all if it is only partial, is in itself bad, save in exceptional and catastrophic occasions. From all this it may be deduced that, in my opinion, among the different paths that each thinking architect will choose to follow there must be something in common, something which must be in all of us; and here I return to the beginning of what I have written; this I have done without wishing to give anybody a lesson, but only with a profound and sincere conviction.

J.A. Coderch, Architect.  
Barcelona, August 1961.

Copy letter to:

Unesco,  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural  
Organization,  
Mr. P. Bertrand,  
Place de Fontenoy,  
Paris - 7 - LA FRANCE -

BPH/36254/Ba/HB.

12th of December 1961.

Dear Sirs,

I often get questions about international contact in the field of architectural-planning research as it was done till 1959 in the International Congresses for modern architecture (C.I.A.M.).

Till sofar it became clear that CIAM ended its activity in Otterlo 1959. A report-book called "C.I.A.M."59 in Otterlo" about this has been published in July 1961 by Karl Krämer Verlag, Rotebühlstrasse 40, Stuttgart, West-Germany.

At page 10 and 221 you can find that for those, who like to keep in contact about architectural-planning research problems, there has been established the:

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at the address: Posthoornstraat 12b, Rotterdam, Holland.

The contact existing in C.I.A.M. since 1955 among persons working in a group called Team X was consolidated in July 1961 at London. At the moment the members of this group are:

responsible : Candilis, Paris - P. Smithson, London,  
coordinator : Bakema, Rotterdam,  
participants : Erskine, Stockholm - Van Eyck, Amsterdam - Grung, Oslo -  
Voelcker, Staplehurst - Woods, Paris - A. Smithson, London -  
Soltan, Warsaw.

The aim has been described in enclosed circular and can be summarised as follows:

"The aim is to develop architecture-planning sofar that to build also means  
to build towards the community-structure".

Till sofar in the Post Box I got no information about other groups working since the  
end of the organisation called C.I.A.M.

I hope that this information answers your questions.

(was signed) J.B. Bakema.

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