

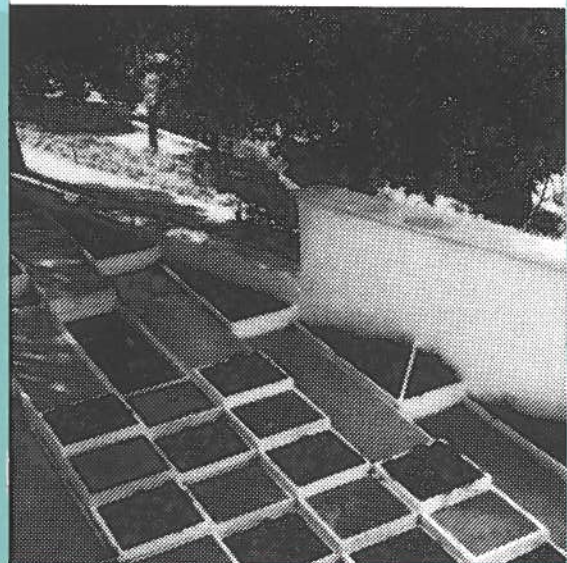
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international working-party for  
**documentation and conservation**  
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the  
**modern movement**

# Newsletter

**6**

**November 1991**



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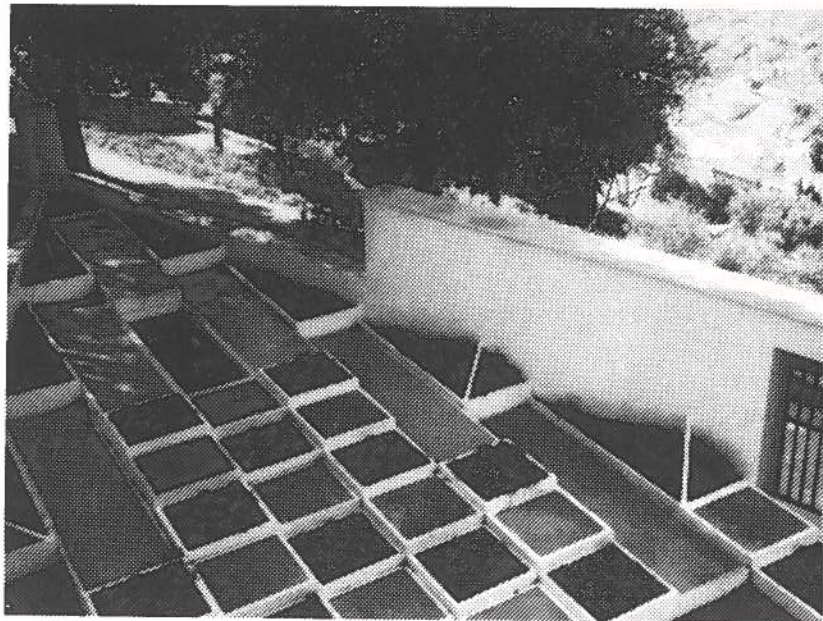
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# do \_ co \_ mo \_ mo \_

*Hubert-Jan Kubel.*

## **Newsletter 6**

**November 1991**



The cubist' garden that Guévrérian designed for the Villa Noailles in Hyères, France (Rob Mallet-Stevens, 1923). See essay on pages 55 - 59.

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In the 1920's and 30's the Modern Movement was an important international architectural development, especially in Europe. The cultural, economic and technical results of this movement are still noticeable today. Characteristic of this movement is among others that buildings were designed with a relatively short functional as well as technical life expectancy in mind. Therefore most of these buildings are in a bad condition at present, or they have been altered, sometimes beyond recognition. Due to their social and cultural value it is important to save some of these for the future, in one or another way.

**The International Working-party for the Documentation and Conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement** DOCOMOMO was initiated in 1988 by the University of Technology in Eindhoven, The Netherlands, further to a research project on how the preservation of these buildings can be obtained in a coherent and effective way. The foundation of the Working-party is meant to advance an effective inventory, documentation and preservation of the most important Modern Movement buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of that period. The aim of the Working-party is to come to a network for exchange of experience and know-how and to draw the attention of the general public to the significance of this part of the cultural heritage.

The initiative is directed to:

- those who are involved in policy-making (legislation, financing, management),
- those who are professionally interested in the protection of early modern buildings, sites and neighbourhoods (architects, urban designers, art-historians, critics) and
- those who are responsible for their actual restoration (researchers, technical specialists, consultants).

## FROM THE EDITOR

The historiography of the Modern Movement and its development could be viewed upon as a jig-saw puzzle, with many pieces still missing. It is not an easy one, since themes, forms and colours vary from part to part and also the individual pieces are sometimes irregular. Another challenging thing is, that we do not yet know its limitations, neither in time nor geography. We hope to fit in some of its pieces, by dedicating a substantial part of this issue to the history of Modern Movement architecture, with essays on Belgian architect Hoste (p. 44), on 'mediterraneity' (p. 51) as well as the Modern Movement in Indonesia and Brazil (p. 48 and 42).

A fascinating piece of the puzzle is certainly Mallet-Stevens' Villa Noailles in Hyères, restored in part by some of our members in France (p. 55). The aspects of technology put forward in that article, indicate the main importance of conservation and restoration technology. We hope to get more into that theme in our next issue and experts are invited to send in texts on that issue as well as case-studies.

Campaigning is becoming an important matter for DOCOMOMO. After the campaign for House De Beir in Belgium, also the campaign for Aalto's library in Viipuri, initiated by the Finnish Aalto Club, was supported. Recently, DOCOMOMO International launched a blitz-campaign to prevent the dispersion of an Eileen Gray interior (p. 9). Also in this issue, members are informed about the aims of a campaign in favour of the old terminal at Copenhagen Airport (p. 8).

A main campaign is presented in this Newsletter for **Narkomfin Flats in Moscow**, that is falling in ruins while immediate action is needed for its bare survival. Vladimir Rezvin and Irina Kokkinaki make their point on page 60. All members and **working parties are strongly requested for support** (see separate forms).

The DOCOMOMO network itself is still developing, with recent initiatives in Brazil and the USA and contacts being extended to Asia.

Our next issue is due for June 1992. Please note our deadline of May 1st 1992, after which no material can be accepted. Unfortunately we do not have the means for translations, so please send your texts in English.

Finally we would like to ask your cooperation to use our **complete address** when sending any correspondence to our office, as indicated on the back of all our printed matters. Leaving things out inevitably means delay. Also note our second and quicker fax connection + 31 - 40 - 43 42 48.

We hope you enjoy reading as much as we have had in making this Newsletter. Best wishes for 1992!

Wessel de Jonge, secretary DOCOMOMO International

### New director for DOCOMOMO Secretariat

Ernst van der Vecht has recently been appointed director of the DOCOMOMO International Secretariat. He is the successor of Arno Kolen and Berend van der Lans and will lead the office until December 31, 1992.

Ernst was born in Amsterdam on February 1 1969. He has studied architecture at the Delft Technical University for four years, until August 1991. He speaks English and understands German. His special interest in the Modern Movement is its innovative, idealistic and internationalist approach.



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## Soviet coup and DOCOMOMO

by Wessel de Jonge

Early morning August 19th the world was startled by the military coup in the Soviet Union. Many of us feared, that this would mean the end of democratic reforms and openness. The iron curtain was expected to go down again, and would have deprived our Soviet colleagues from international exchange and cooperation. Arriving in Leningrad on the same day for an official visit as secretary of DOCOMOMO International, I was welcomed by Boris Kirikov, deputy director of the Museum of History. Next morning DOCOMOMO USSR chairman Vladimir Rezin arrived from Moscow and we discussed the various scenarios for maintaining contacts between Soviet members and their colleagues abroad in view of the possible, unfavourable, chance of a successful contrarevolution.

Fortunately the putsch ended next day mainly due to the massive protests of the people that had continued over the days and nights, as well as the unyielding attitude of democratic forces in politics. Nevertheless the events affected Soviet society in the leap forward for democracy and reform as well as changes in the USSR's status quo. We like to congratulate our colleagues in the USSR with the happy outcome of these dramatic events.

### St. Petersburg

As a result of the coup and the following collapse of the Soviet system, it has been decided to drop the country's official name. Although there has been agreed upon a preliminary name, a definitive name will be adopted after agreement on the new state system and the participation of the various republics in a new union. Until a new name for the union will have been adopted, DOCOMOMO will refer to the union as USSR for practical reasons, although this is actually incorrect. Officially renamed cities, such as St. Petersburg, will of course be referred to using their new name.

### The Baltic states

Shortly after the coup, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania saw their independence confirmed by the Soviet government. The Baltic States were recognised by most countries and became members of the United Nations. DOCOMOMO since extended the already existing contacts with experts in these countries. Through the ICAM network we got in touch with the various architectural museums and we hope to report on Modern Movement architecture in the Baltic soon. Also, we hope to welcome new members and national working parties from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the near future.

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## Proposal for reconstruction of the Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau

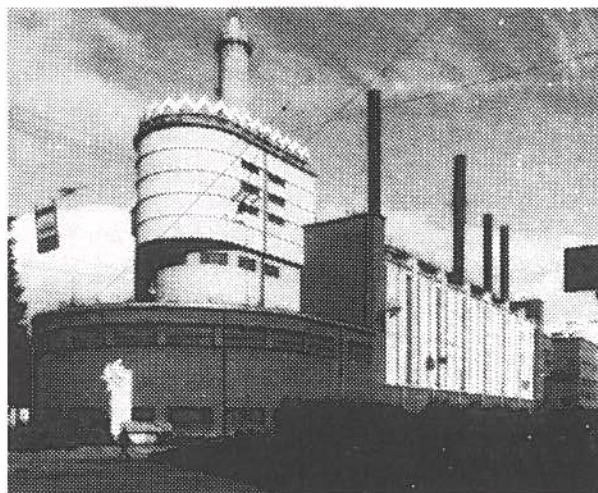
At the end of the 1867 Exhibition, a copy of the Palace of the Dey of Tunis found shelter in the Parc Montsouris in Paris. This year, it has been destroyed by fire. Until now, the City of Paris has not yet decided what should be done after this disaster. The identical reconstruction of the building will presumably be far too expensive. Also, the question should be put forward if such a measure is a suitable one.

The French Section of DOCOMOMO International, that is in favour of protection and conservation of buildings of the Modern Movement, has proposed to the Paris' Mayor Jacques Chirac, to reconstruct on the site the famous 'Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau', designed by Le Corbusier for the Exposition des Arts décoratifs in 1925.

The image of that building, emblematic for modernity, has in fact always been associated with trees in a park. The proposal, if accepted, will strengthen the exceptional position of Paris in the field of architectural culture. We are eagerly awaiting the response from the Municipality.

*From: Techniques & Architecture, 395 May 1991, p 34. Translated by the International Secretariat.*

A hardly known work of Erich Mendelsohn is the textile plant Krasnoje Snamja, designed for Leningrad in 1925. The original project consisted of a much larger factory for 8000 workers. (photo Wessel de Jonge)



## Hotel 'Belona' at Eforie

An exceptional example of MoMo architecture in Rumania

by *N. Lascu and D. Bernfeld*

In the Spring of 1991, a group of students from the École d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville visited Rumania in the context of a 'twinning' operation with the School of Architecture 'Ion Mincu' in Bucharest. In the course of this study trip, the group visited the 'Belona Hotel' at Eforie, 15 km south of Constanza.

Dating from the early 1930's, this hotel is one of the most important examples of the work of George Matei Cantacuzino (1899-1965), a significant figure in inter-War Rumania.

Built on the edge of the beach, the successive terraces of the hotel follow the profile of the 10 meters high cliff backing the sands. The strong rhythm of its horizontal lines, related to certain features of naval architecture, is suggesting the image of an oceanliner setting sail.

Work is now being done to counteract the effects on the structure of an uneven settlement of the sandy soil as well as to improve the amenities of the hotel. The fact that renovation of a building from this period is being carried out is in itself remarkable, since hardly any construction of the 1930's has been listed in Rumania.

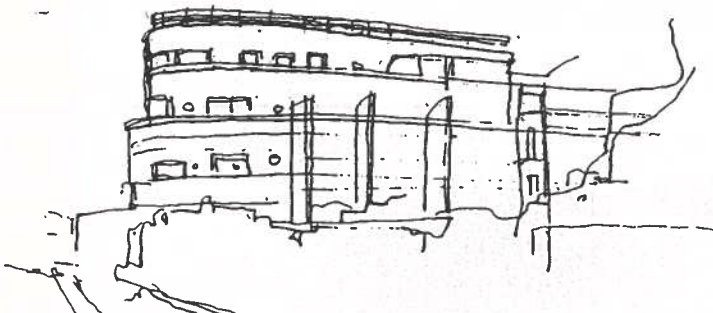
The hotel marks the southern limit of a group of villa's built by Cantacuzino, the northern limit being marked by a building for a sailing club designed by the great Rumanian architect Horia Creanga (1892- 1943).

This group of buildings constitutes a remarkable example of MoMo architecture and we hope to give more information on them in a more extensive article in a future DOCOMOMO Newsletter.

*See also: 'The modern architectural movement in Rumania' by Cornel Ghenciulescu, DOCOMOMO Conference Proceedings 1990, pp 145-148.N.*

*Lascu is an expert on modern architecture from Bucharest, Rumania.*

*Bergfeld is an architectural historian and member of DOCOMOMO Section Française.*



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## NEXT NEWSLETTER

**Do you want 600 colleagues and experts on MoMo architecture in Europe and the America's to know about your research or case? Are there new developments in conservation policy in your country? Do you need international support to save your favorite MoMo building? Send in your texts with pictures before May 1, 1992.**

At the DOCOMOMO Council meeting in Eindhoven delegates expressed their appreciation of the Newsletters. Main aims of the publication should be to inform members about eachothers activities and to publish requests for support for actions that are being undertaken in other countries. In doing so, the Newsletter should form a 'bridge' between the international conferences, that are to be organized every two years.

This general concept for the Newsletters requires activities from DOCOMOMO members. News and matters of present interest should be sent to the International Secretariat. These could be information on national policy concerning MoMo architecture, interesting cases, essays on recent research, technical developments etc., including pictures (will be returned). Also should be sent in reports on activities of your national DOCOMOMO working party and acts of meetings. On the basis of this information, we can compose a national DOCOMOMO report on your country as well.

**Newsletter 7 is planned for June.  
Deadline for that Issue is May 1, 1992,  
for texts and illustrations.**

## A price and a prize for the Van Nelle factories in Rotterdam

With a good sense for publicity, an agreement on the preservation of the Van Nelle factories (Brinkman and Van der Vlugt, 1926-29) has been signed on the 'Day of Architecture', June 30th 1991, between the municipality of Rotterdam and the owner of the complex.

### *Compiled by Wessel de Jonge*

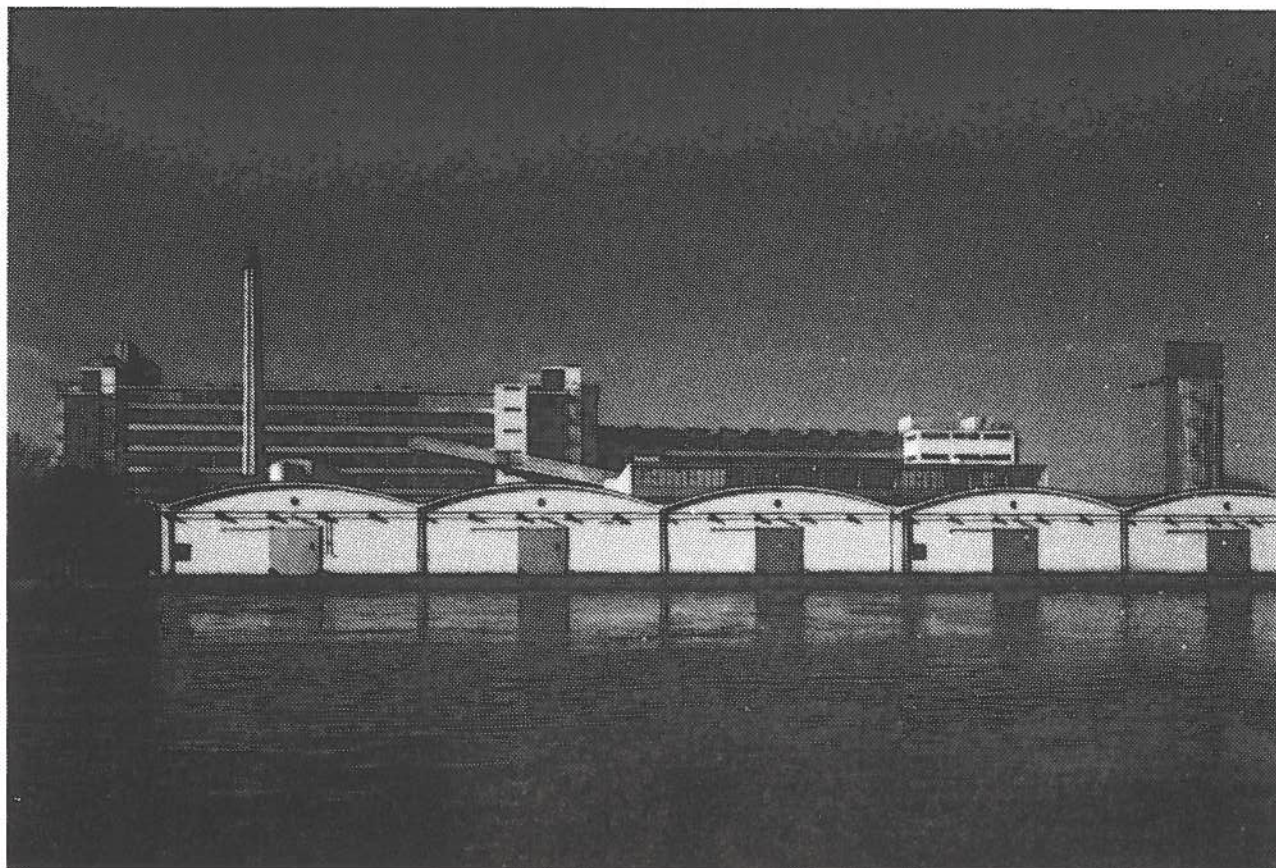
In recent years, a series of drastic changes in the system for conservation subsidies have been effectuated in the Netherlands. As a result of decentralization, today the cities themselves have the task to distribute subsidies over the various restoration projects within their boundaries. Yet at the same time, the budget as a whole has been reduced dramatically. This means, that for a city like Rotterdam, the amount of subsidies over the years to come will not even be sufficient for conservation of Van Nelle and two other main pieces of MoMo architecture in the city,

Bergpolderflats (Van Tijen, Brinkman and Van der Vlugt; 1932-34) and the Kiefhoek estate (J.J.P. Oud; 1925-30), let alone the range of other significant historic buildings. Similar problems are being faced by Hilversum, where the restoration of Dudok's Town Hall had to be stopped halfway, the Zonnestraal Sanatorium by Duiker is rapidly falling apart after the hospital left last June and the recently restored Gooiland Hotel now is for sale...

### **No state funding**

Rotterdam suffered from a somewhat poor image concerning Modern Movement preservation, mainly due to the demolition of several housing complexes of the former city architect J.J.P. Oud. With the agreement on Van Nelle as well as the expected restoration of both Bergpolderflats and Kiefhoek, a turningpoint seems to have been reached.

Rotterdam was well aware of the fact that state funding for restoration was not to be expected for a number of years. Even the special escape for financing large restoration projects, the national so-called 'giants fund', was not sufficient and a previous application by Rotterdam for all three MoMo 'giants' mentioned, later had to be restricted to Kiefhoek only. For the conservation of Bergpolderflats and Van Nelle, now other financing had to be arranged.



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### Agreement

The city agreed with Douwe Egberts, actual proprietor of Van Nelle, to grant one million guilders of the five and a half required for complete, mainly exterior, restoration. Elements of historic interest are subsidized from 15% up to 100% in the case of the conveyor-bridges, that are no longer of use to the company. The tearoom on the roof is already under restoration through previous arrangements. It is interesting to see that the lack of money can also have a positive effect on restoration. After a previous estimation of costs for replacing all steel-framed windows of the factories by contemporary facades turned out too high, further survey made clear that the original windows could be reused after thorough repairs and coating. Therefore, the critique after restoration of the office wing (with too heavy window sections) is not likely to be repeated this time.

### Rhine prize

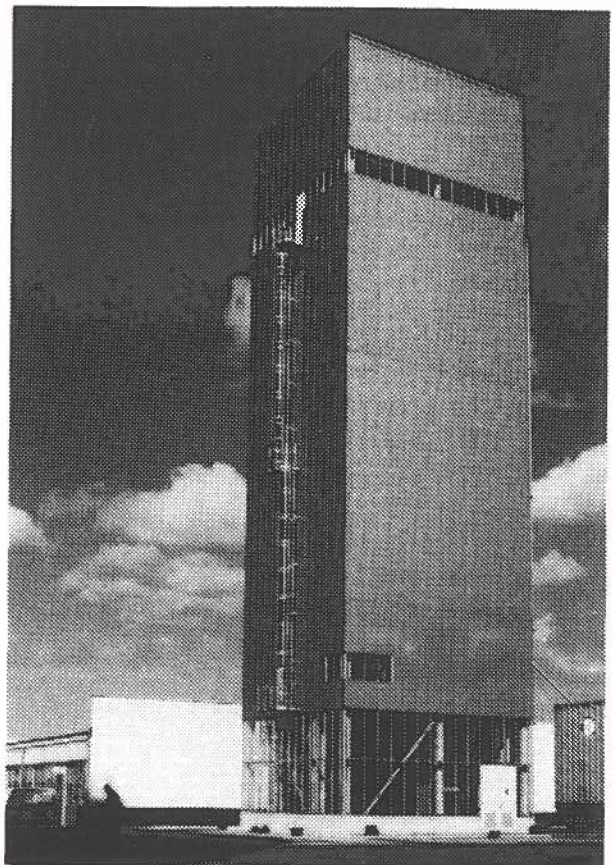
Recently, the complex has been extended with a silo for coffee, that has been newly designed by Meindert Booy of Van den Broek & Bakema Architects, the firm that is also in charge of the factories conservation. The design has been awarded with the 1991 Grand Prix Rhénan d'Architecture, a biannual prize for projects within a range of 75 kilometers both sides of the Rhine. The international jury, with two architects and an

entrepreneur from each country bounding the river, apparently took elements of continuity into account. Booy designed the extension of the factories in the tradition of the original complex by Brinkman and Van der Vlugt.

### New silo

The awarded building is based on a square of 9 to 9 meters and some 35 meters high. From the top down, it houses a distribution unit, the actual storage room and a weighing-machine. These individual functions have been made apparent by the alternation of closed and open parts in the elevations. The superstructure is made of steel, while added elements like emergency stairs are put up outside against the steel-clad facades. We like to congratulate our colleague with this international recognition for his design for a building in a sensitive historic context.

*Based on 'Archis' 1991-8, p. 6 and 'de Architect' 1991-7/8, p. 13.*



Left: Van Nelle factories, seen from the other side of the canal. The new silo, on the right, is quite in harmony with the original buildings from 1926-29. Right: the new silo, as designed by Meindert Booy.

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# Campaign for Laurentzen's Airterminal

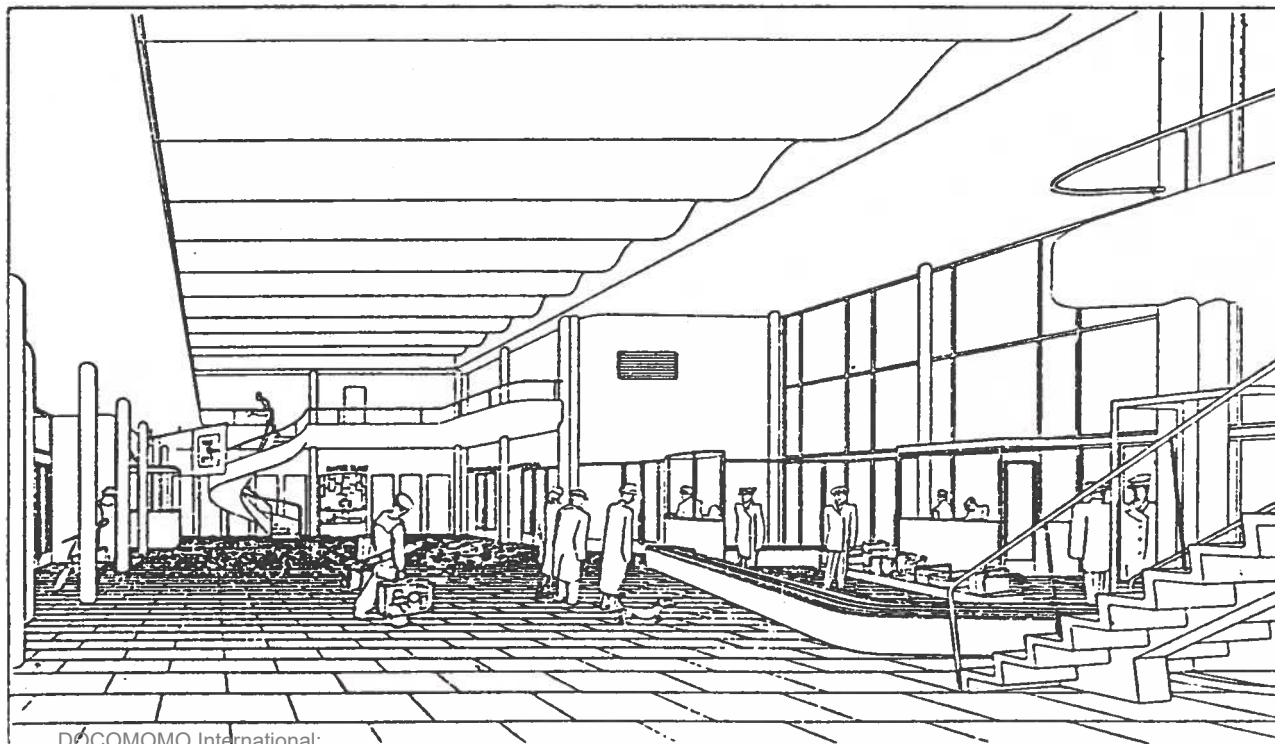
by Morten Lund

Do you have a couple of hours to kill between two flights at Copenhagen Airport? Then turn your back to the bar, leave the transithall and take a short walk across the parking lots to the old terminal from 1936. Designed by the renowned Danish architect Vilhelm Laurentzen, it is one of the best representatives from the heroic period of modern architecture we have in Europe and one of the few surviving airports from the era of aviation pioneers. The exterior shows only fragments of the original facade. Additions blur the impression. But try to get inside. Surprisingly the building opens itself in a big, bright and varied room, encircled by light balconies and unified under a characteristic undulating roof. The daylight enters by a double-high window in front. Modernism however, is a label too simple to stick to this building. Up here we like to think that the Nordic tradition is very present. As you look over the room from the balcony you feel the inheritance. The clear plan, the distinctive directed light from the large west window, softened by the blue light from the smaller window facing east, the emphasis on the details, the unpretentious expression and the high quality of materials that you can feel with your fingers; even the odour of the house reminds of Arne Jacobsen's and Gunnar Asplund's town halls in Aarhus and Gothenburg, monuments in Nordic architectural history. We know that Asplund was for both Jacobsen and Laurentzen a great

inspiration. They studied his works conscientiously as preparation for their own projects. Here it is important to remember, that it was the same Asplund who introduced modernism to Scandinavia through his white pavilions in the Stockholm Exhibition in 1930.

Yet, that same building, the old airport terminal from 1936, is threatened by demolition. The Scandinavian Airlines SAS plans a new terminal building on the same spot. Laurentzen's old one, that has not been in use for passengers for three decades, is in the way and has to disappear. Although the building has survived almost unharmed for so many years, thanks to devoted maintenance, it has been forgotten by the public, due to being out of function for so long. And it is no Town hall. Therefore the authorities have rejected a conservation recommendation thrice. The consideration for young architectural monuments is less than the respect for the aviation business. But who says it has to be either or? The old terminal could be integrated in the new airport structure if priorities were right. Or it could be moved 50 to 100 meters; sufficiently to be out of the way and safe. But both solutions cost money and who should pay? The building is public property. Therefore a public opinion in favour of preservation could have an effect on the decision makers. A demand for preservation should be linked to the conditions for starting the construction of the new SAS terminal. It is a billion dollar

Laurentzen's terminal, designed in 1936, is in danger of demolition. Two sections and a perspective show the dynamics of the building.



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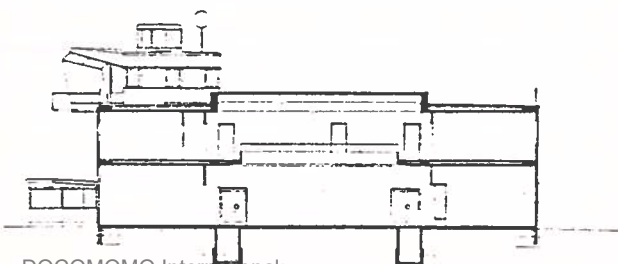
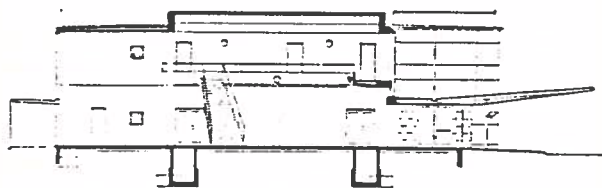
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project. In that perspective the additional costs will be negligible.

A growing group, counting people in key positions when it comes to conservation, has started an action to save Laurentzen's terminal. Our aim is to make the issue European and not exclusively Danish. It is our common heritage, a matter of uttermost importance in our turbulent new Europe with frontiers reopened after more than 50 years of darkness after nazism and stalinism. The heroic age of modernism was so abruptly stopped, just when our continent had opened to many people, thanks to industrialization and new means of transport. The result: booming trade and exchange of ideas. Therefore modernist architecture has become a symbol of progress and inspiration for citizens in Moscow, Barcelona, Stockholm, Paris, Berlin, Prague and many more cities. The heroic era of the 1920's and 30's is becoming a new starting point for our common new identity as Europeans.

Therefore the conservation of the old terminal is an issue we try to anchor in DOCOMOMO as well as Europa Nostra. We plan a European press-campaign and are preparing an exhibition with an English catalogue. So far we have got enormous response. It moves strings of resonance in people when they discover this period in architecture and perceive these buildings. Even if the time schedule is tight, we are very optimistic.

**Letters of support can be send to Morten Lund, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Kongens Nytorv 1, 1050 Copenhagen, Denmark, fax 45.33127598.**



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## Blitz-campaign for set of furniture by Eileen Gray

A startling message arrived at the DOCOMOMO offices in Eindhoven on October 10th, informing us about an auction at Sotheby's in Monaco set for October 13th, of furniture from Eileen Gray's villa E-1027 in Roquebrune, France.

An immediate campaign by fax was set up by the International Secretariat to mobilize the national working parties concerned. Despite the fact that time was extremely short, a series of communications started and seemed hopeful at first. Though, the auction took place as planned and efforts to avoid the collection being dispersed, appeared to have been in vain. Still, some positive results emerged in the possibility offered to DOCOMOMO to draft a complete register of locations of the pieces. Also, it has been a convincing demonstration of the abilities of the international DOCOMOMO network, that such a massive campaign could be realized within two days. We'll have to learn from it for the future.

*compiled by Wessel de Jonge*

Eileen Gray was among the leading interior designers of the Modern Movement, not as much with respect to the quantity of her works but rather for its quality. One of the villa's she built was the house E-1027, designed for Jean Badovici and herself in Roquebrune at the Mediterranean coast in France. All the lots in the Monaco auction were from that house, today owned by a Swiss businessman, and presumably all that was left of its moveable furniture.

Since Gray had not lived in the house for many years before she died, the set of furniture is likely to have been the most complete entity of house and furniture relating to Eileen Gray in existence. Therefore the DOCOMOMO campaign centered not only on the outstanding quality of the individual pieces, but mainly on the importance to keep the collection together or, if that would not be possible, to have the new owners registered so that future documentation and scientific research would have remained possible.

### **National working parties**

Alarmed by Swiss DOCOMOMO coordinator Ruggero Tropeano, the International Secretariat informed the Irish, French and British working parties by fax, with the request to take prompt action. Also, DOCOMOMO International sent faxes, including the above mentioned objections against the auction, to Sotheby's London and to the director of the French National Department for Conservation, with the request to do anything within their means to ensure possibilities for future scientific survey of the pieces in their coherence. The International Secretariat and the working parties involved have contacted several museums and collectors with the objective, to find someone interested in buying the complete set. British coordinator Christopher Dean informed the design department of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, noted for their fine collection of 20th Century furniture, including several pieces by Eileen Gray, as well as the Design Museum and private collectors. Neither of these were able to prepare serious bids on such a short notice. Lack of time also seemed the problem for some museums in the Netherlands informed by the International Secretariat. Also, it appeared that a number of museums in various countries had not been informed about the auction and were not in the possession of a catalogue.

### **Ireland**

Irish coordinator Shane O'Toole reported that, failing that the contents of E-1027 would not be dispersed, the Irish hoped that at least one item of this unique collection would be acquired for Eileen Gray's country of origin. Unfortunately, our 'blitz' came very late in the day and was not successful. The Irish group was in contact with the offices of the President and the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland on October 11th and also informed the National Museum of Ireland and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, as well as selected national journalists and architects' bodies. These initiatives led to a flurry of hopeful communications between several of these authorities, but it ultimately proved impossible for the National Museum to put together a suitable package on such a short term. John Teahan, keeper of the Arts and Industrial Division, confirmed that not even a catalogue of the auction had been received from Sotheby's. According to Teahan, the Museum is very much interested in pieces from Eileen Gray and trying to obtain them for many years already. Still, prices are a problem and the museum would welcome sponsors with respect to this. It is obvious that more time than the two days available is needed for preparing a bid with the help of sponsors. Contacts with several Irish private collectors were also inconclusive. 'We simply ran out of time' was the disappointed reaction of our colleagues.

### **Monaco auction**

The French National Museums pre-empted the sale of two items at the Monaco auction by buying one chair for \$ 73,300.-- and a dressing table for \$ 45,400.-- . Both items will now go to the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Five other lots, from the total of 29, were pre-empted as well. Two items were unsold, but the other 27 fetched the astonishing total of \$ 537,700.-- .

A leading French dealer was reported to have bought five lots, possibly with an exhibit in mind. One of the more important pieces, the famous round tubular metal table, was sold for over \$ 33,200.-- to a German museum, probably the Vitra Museum in Weil am Rhein, that is said to have bought some pieces. Niall Fallon in the Irish Times regrets that 'a wonderful opportunity has been lost to acquire her work for her country of origin'.

### **Register**

The proprietor of E-1027 had announced in advance to use the proceeds of the sale to restore the house. It is to be hoped that the villa, now in a state of decay, will indeed be restored in harmony with its historic character and that the auction might have had a kind of positive result in that respect. Still, it has to be taken into account that also the economic value of the house will increase through restoration and that E-1027 might thereby become an object of speculation in real estate. However, the DOCOMOMO campaign first and for all had been aimed at ensuring future documentation and research of the furniture in its coherence. It is not much of a difference if pieces are in exhibit in Dublin or Paris, if the collection was to be dispersed anyway.

Principally, Sotheby's does not give information on purchasers at all, due to protection of their clients privacy. Although it was not to be expected that a complete register of the location of the contents of E-1027 would be submitted by them, Sotheby's have replied to a written request of the Irish working party and have offered to facilitate DOCOMOMO International in compiling a register by forwarding related correspondence to the relevant purchasers. Also, Stephan Hecker and Christian Müller, authors of an extensive survey of Gray's works and E-1027 in particular, were permitted by Sotheby's to take measurements and pictures of the individual pieces. DOCOMOMO hopes to advance the production of a register on the villa's furniture made in the near future.

*Sources: The Irish Times, Saturday October 19, 1991, p 22; reports from the Swiss, British and Irish coordinators and first hand information from officials and experts involved. For more information on Eileen Gray and E-1027 see Architese 4-91, dedicated to her life and works.*

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# Architectural Museums: greater role in preservation?

ICAM 6 meeting in Stockholm,  
September 1-7, 1991

Architectural museums are aimed at the collection and documentation of information related to the history and development of architecture and urban planning. It is their intention to have these materials surveyed, classified and displayed in order to make this knowledge comprehensible and useful to others. Yet, the need to take a larger share in the development and protection of our built environment is felt more and more. During a recent meeting, hosted by the Swedish Museum of Architecture, the International Confederation of Architectural Museums ICAM centered on this issue. Wessel de Jonge reports on the conference, concentrating on those sessions related to DOCOMOMO's activities.

*by Wessel de Jonge*

ICAM was founded in 1979 in Helsinki as international non-governmental organization to foster links between all those institutions interested in the promotion of architecture. At their international meetings delegates generally deal with the structure and financing of the participating institutions, the international exchange and cooperation regarding scientific research and contemporary architecture, as well as practical issues such as the conservation, classification and display of drawings.

Some of the sessions of the Stockholm meeting were directly related to those more 'classic' ICAM themes. Most important of these for DOCOMOMO was the issue how architectural museums can reach a larger audience: MoMo architecture still suffers from relative unpopularity.

## **Larger audience**

Session's coordinator Jöran Lindvall of the Swedish Museum of Architecture opened by saying that these museums should not center too much on the professions. He identified as main concern to inform the public about how architects work and how people themselves can affect developments in the built environment. The traditional means, such as the mere display of hard-to-understand original drawings, do seldom



The excursion to the Slussen complex in Stockholm was one of the highlights of the interesting program, offered at the sixth international ICAM conference in Sweden. It includes a traffic complex with adjoining buildings, the Katarinahissen (elevator) and bridge-restaurant Gondolen. Designed in 1934, it reminds of most daring schemes of the Russian constructivism. (photo Wessel de Jonge)

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come up to these aims and Lindvall announced that the Swedish museum will dedicate itself to develop more appropriate methods to achieve this. As examples of how larger audiences could be interested, the activities of the Center for Danish Architecture and Building Export, explained upon by Bente Beedholm, and the program of The Architectural Foundation in Britain, introduced by Wilfred Wang, were put forward.

### **Display of architecture**

Two individual means for displaying architecture were highlighted.

Various categories of models, both as historical documents and as didactic mediums, were identified by Jürgen Zanker from Dortmund. An interesting aspect was the use of one-to-one models in history, the Stuttgart Weißenhofsiedlung being shown as main example.

A full session, coordinated by Lori Gross from Madrid, was dedicated to the use of audio-visual methods such as video, one of the particular efforts to reach a larger audience. Tim Bentons videos, made for the Open University in Great Britain, showed an elementary didactic approach of displaying architecture. His programs are based upon one's perception during an itinerary along a 'route architecturale', illustrated with some of Le Corbusier's works. A different approach was introduced by Barry Bergdoll, New York, with a video combining more loose images of the Pantheon in Paris with other scenes associated with it, the narrator being replaced by two specialists on the subject discussing about the building while going through it.

### **Impact for today's society**

The Brussels' Archives d'Architecture Moderne AAM put a variety of activities into a context of preserving the memory of architecture. Thereby, it succeeds in advancing the discussion on the preservation and reconstruction of the city.

Apart from the 'classic' program of architectural museums, AAM's activities range from publishing books directly linked to the museum's work and collection, but also theoretical works, monographs etcetera, edition of small guidebooks on Brussels' architecture, composition and presentation of exhibitions in cooperation with their partner The Architectural Foundation, participation in a federation concerned with the city, consultation of district committees on protection of historic buildings, participation in decision-making through a specific procedure of hearings as well as through their partnership in the Royal Commission of Monuments and Sites, and even promotion of traditional building materials through quality-costs survey, that among others resulted in a bestseller on Belgian marble.

As AAM's Anne van Loo put it herself, 'all these

activities may be seen far removed from the scientific mission of an architectural museum. I would therefore repeat that they are not (...) substitutes for our scientific mission or for our work of more international consequence. It is precisely on such work that the credibility of our association rests. But it is used and extended by inserting it in a practical and immediate way into the contemporary development of the city and, therefore, into a debate which (...) also affects the average citizen.'

The background to AAM's creation indeed were the resistance among citizens to Brussels' destruction as well as the questioning of an approach in architectural history. At first, it was therefore perceived of as a pressure group rather than an architectural museum. But with her overview of their activities today, the audience got convinced that for architectural museums in today's society, a lot can be learned from AAM.

### **Museums and landmark preservation**

According to ICAM's charter its members should attempt to raise as well as to protect the quality of the built environment. Wim de Wit from Chicago coordinated a session on 'architectural museums and landmark preservation'. Speakers agreed that the charter implies a role for ICAM in preserving historic buildings and neighbourhoods. But which one?

Both Ian Gow, with an introduction to the National Monuments Record of Scotland, and the duo Vladimir Rezvin/Karina Ter-Acopian from Moscow stressed the importance of the 'traditional' role of architectural museums. Gow made a strong point on minor buildings, often of little intrinsic interest, yet making a major contribution to the character of townscapes.

In Moscow, an important part of the Shushev Museums' collection consists of measured drawings of pre-revolutionary buildings. These have been made by Soviet architects between 1920 and 1934 and are essential for restoration work. Although both the overall disinterest and the difficult economic situation in Russia deprive 20th Century architecture from being restored, Rezvin takes much efforts in complementing the collection with measured drawings of significant 20th Century buildings (see article on Narkomfin elsewhere in this issue).

### **Modern versus antique?**

Riita Nikula from Helsinki put forward that the general attitude towards historic buildings is a determining factor in their preservation. The breakthrough of the Modern Movement meant a fairly decisive farewell to all history in Finland. In the 1960's finally this led to catastrophies, like replacing historic townscapes by over-dimensioned structures, as she illustrated with the

City Center complex in Helsinki. Nikula's daring question was, whether we are obliged to soon accept such buildings as historic landmarks as well, only because its designer Revell is renown. She identified these quickly changing values in appreciation as the 'real world (...) under the neatly arranged level of legislation, bureaucracy and proceedings' and plead for architectural museums to devote themselves to the education of the public in this respect.

A particular issue in Finland is the proposal to relieve the National Board of Antiquities from overburden by submitting the preservation of 20th Century architecture to the Finnish Museum of Architecture. According to Nikula, this would in practice imply a division between historic architecture, deserving preservation, and modern architecture, part of the ever changing contemporarity. Although she labels this as 'crazy', she admits at the same time that it is natural that modern architecture is generally judged more personally and with less secure information and that here lies a task for architectural museums to make things better.

Wim de Wit had invited me to explain on DOCOMOMO in view of our role in landmark preservation and to reflect on the issue if and how architectural museums should develop such activities. Independence, with our members merely being enthusiastic individuals, was put forward as one of the main reasons for DOCOMOMO's freedom of speech and action. Also, the interdisciplinary character adds to its prestige and makes that our protests, thus being supported with a diversity of arguments, are taken seriously. Finally, DOCOMOMO's financial independence is a great help.

Although I feel that museums should take an active part in preservation, a discussion among ICAM's members is needed to sort out opinions on this principle theme. I think that if these museums fail to take a principle point of view, may be even against their own financiers, they might loose their credibility and, with that, even sponsors as well.

#### **A new role**

John Harris from London stated that architectural museums should campaign for endangered buildings, since the increasing public interest in the built environment compells them to do so. The compromising situation this might lead to, was illustrated by raising the question how the Finnish museum reacted to Aalto's office block on Helsinki's waterfront, for which an important 19th Century building had to be demolished. He asked if such campaigns are not avoided because it can lead to confrontation.

But Harris identified another important influence on the decisions of architectural institutes in their MoMo-mindedness. Many of ICAM's members

were founded by MoMo architects, and architects still have dominance in their affairs. Referring to the Thirties Society in Britain as well as DOCOMOMO, Harris said that apparently the Modern Movement is not so modern anymore and that this alone should be a basis for architectural museums to get involved in preservation issues. He made clear that the museums must do so even if this would endanger their funding: in many countries there are no others operating in this field while, like in some East European states, commercial forces move in fast. But he concluded by stressing that ICAM should be 'obligated to the best of the past and cannot treat the Modern Movement as an isolated period in (...) history'. Participants agreed that architectural museums should not take over the role of conservation authorities, since the nature of these respective institutions is different in principle. They should remain independent, foster their expertise and make use of their important position in educating the public with respect to valuating architecture. Due to lack of time, the discussion on the issue of campaigning in favour of preservation against ones' own financiers, took place in the lobbies. It is to be hoped that in next meeting's program the theme will be included again and that it will encounter forceful discussion at that occasion.

#### **Asplund**

Preceded by a mini-seminar on Asplund, with contributions from Ulla Eliasson, Christina Engfors and Karin Winter, a tour of the Woodland Cemetery, designed with Lewerentz in 1916-40, stood out from the number of other interesting excursions. The visit to Slussen was another highlight, particularly for the number of participating DOCOMOMO members (see photo). Presided by Winfried Nerdinger from Munich and the various sessions adequately chaired by their coordinators, the sixth ICAM meeting has certainly been a successful event, at the occasion of which some challenging themes of actual importance could be put forward. However, it is to be hoped that the sometimes limited debate in Stockholm will continue over the years. I'm looking forward to ICAM 7.

*Wessel de Jonge is an architect and secretary of DOCOMOMO International*

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# The Bata Company

Czechoslovakian architecture and town planning in 1910 - 1950

Exhibition and symposium in Zlín

by Jan Sedlák

Besides Prague and Brno, Zlín was the third important centre of modern architecture in preWar Czechoslovakia, due to Thomas Bata's enterprises in that town. Bata wished to have his factories and towns modelled according to the English garden cities. In 1923, architect Gahura was appointed municipal architect of Zlín, seat of Bata's headquarters. He developed the basic structure for the town along a green lateral axis, including detached and semidetached housing and several public buildings in a basic 'modern' urban setting. With his collaborator Sehnal, he also designed a standardized system for reinforced concrete constructions, that was applied in all industrial and public buildings of the company after 1928. After the turn of the 1920's, a series of industrial towns were developed all over the world. Of the architects working for the company, Vladimír Karfík became best known abroad. After working with Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, he designed Bata's most important structures, such as Social House Hotels in Zlín and Batov, department stores with glass facades for Bratislava, Brno, Liberec and Amsterdam, as well as the first skyscraper in the country, the new 16 storey Company Headquarters.

In 1948, the town was renamed Gottwaldov, after the first Communist president of the country. After the 'velvet revolution' of December 1989, the town was given back its original name. Czechoslovakian DOCOMOMO Secretary Jan Sedlák reflects on the exhibition and the symposium on the Bata Shoe

Company, that recently took place in Zlín.

The state gallery at Zlín, in collaboration with the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Technical University in Prague and the municipal office at Zlín, opened in the Zlín House of Arts (officially the Memorial of Tomáš Bata) an exhibition 'The Bata Firm - Architecture and Town Planning 1910-1950' on the 12th September 1991. The author of the exhibition was Vladimír Slapeta, dean of the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Technical University in Prague and chairman of the Czechoslovak Federal DOCOMOMO Group. He also wrote the main treatise for the comprehensive catalogue and delivered a speech during the opening in which the prominent guest, Tomáš Bata from Toronto, also took part. The exhibition was initiated by two important anniversaries: the 110th anniversary of the birth of the chief architect of Zlín, Frantisek L. Gahura (1891-1958) and the 90th birthday of the leading architect of the Bata enterprise, Vladimír Karfík. Both participated in a decisive way in the architectural and urban appearance of Zlín between the two World Wars. The exhibition also evoked the work of other architects working at Zlín in the 1930's and 1940's: Miroslav Drofta, Vladimír Kubecka, Miroslav Lorenc, Antonín Vitek and Jirí Vozenilek. Towards the end of this year and in Spring of next year, the exhibition will be shown at the Gallery of Plastic Arts in Ostrava and Olomouc.

## Symposium

The Gallery of Zlín organized a symposium with the same topic on 24-25 September. Among the foreign guests were professor Helmut Trauzettel and professor Roland Ertl from the Technical Universities of Dresden and Linz. The proceedings were opened by professor Vladimír Karfík, the honorary chairman. Historians, scholars of fine arts, architects, graphic and plastic artists and also previous members of the technical staff of the Bata Company delivered about twenty papers which will



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be published within a few months. The architecture of Zlín was evaluated from various viewpoints and comparisons. Its uniqueness as a garden city was highly appreciated.

### Industrial Design

Attention was focused on the Zlín School of Arts (1939-1945) as well, founded by the Bata Company to train industrial designers in particular. Research in depth about Zlín revealed that it was the only entire constructivist town in the world. The symposium therefore suggested trends for further investigations and submitted some interpretations of its unique monuments of modern culture.

The initiator of the unusual development of Zlín, that changed from a provincial town into an industrial city within a quarter of a century, was the founder of the shoe company Tomáš Bata (1876-1932). He was a self-made man quite exceptional in the Czech lands at that time. The population of the town increased in the period between the two World Wars by tenfold. At the end of the 1930's the daily production of the Zlín plants reached almost 200,000 pairs of shoes, exported to more than 30 countries over three continents. In the 1930's, the concern exported capital too, which resulted in the growth of a number of new industrial towns of Bata branch establishments in a number of European and Asiatic countries.

The collaboration of Tomáš Bata with prominent architects began in the year 1909, when Jan Kotera designed a villa for him. Jan Kotera was one of the founders of modern Czech architecture. Among other famous architects, Le Corbusier

visited Zlín in the year 1935. He was member of a jury of an international competition for housing, and for T. Bata he designed a plan of the town and some structures which, because of high costs and other reasons, were not realized.

### Standardized building

The characteristic feature of Zlín architecture is the reinforced concrete framework of a uniform module (6.15x6.15m) with an infill of fairfaced brick as used in factory buildings.

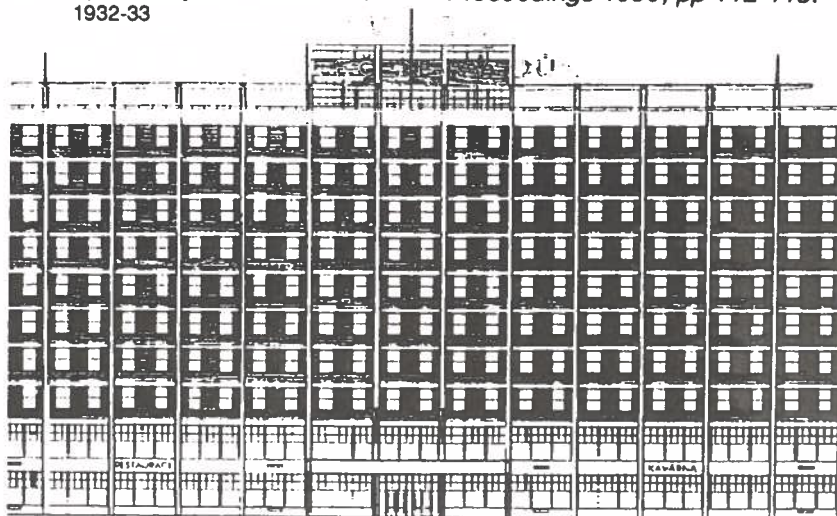
F.L. Gahura, V. Karfík and other Bata architects could apply this industrial method in an original way for public buildings, such as schools, boarding houses, hotels, hospitals, a cinema and even for a church. For his employees, Bata had constructed large amounts of two-storey houses in the setting of a garden town, that showed some unique aspects of the continuous development in the layout of small dwellings. For Czechoslovak standards, the architecture of Zlín was unequalled in standarization and industrialization. Planning, perfect organization of actual construction and specialization of construction labour were incomparable anywhere and enabled fast and cheap realization of a modern industrial town, which, in its time, must have seemed to be science fiction in concrete, glass, steel and red fairfaced brick.

The state Gallery at Zlín has been engaged in architecture only since 1987, so it is a new institution in this field in Czechoslovakia. The exhibition and the symposium, however, proved the programme to be worthwhile and authoritative.

*Jan Sedlák is the secretary of the Czechoslovak Group of DOCOMOMO.*

*Additional information on Bata can be found in 'Bata - a maecenas of modern architecture' by Vladimír Slapeta, DOCOMOMO Conference Proceedings 1990, pp 112-113.*

Left: two facades of Eric Svedlund's winning design for detached family houses from the International Housing Competition in Zlín.  
Bottom: Vladimír Karfík's Společenský Dum Hotel in Zlín, 1932-33



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# Hard time for Aalto's spirit

Functionalism - Utopia or the way forward?  
Fifth Alvar Aalto Symposium  
Jyväskylä, Finland, 16-18 August, 1991

by *Wessel de Jonge*

In Alvar Aalto's native town Jyväskylä some 250 architects, historians and students from all over the world gathered for three days, to discuss whether the principles of modern architecture are qualified to show a way out of what some critics see as a main crisis in international architecture as well as to help solving some of the immense problems our world is facing today.

Certainly these items are of great importance and actual interest. The meaning of the Modern Movement for contemporary architecture is (and is likely to remain for the years to come) a controversial theme. Yet, with only a few speakers centering on the theme and discussions limited to a mere half hour, many participants left the university auditorium, designed by Aalto himself, more confused than might have been expected.

## Way forward?

To have a conference subtitled 'Functionalism-Utopia or the way forward?', as the organizers had decided to do, is certainly daring in more than one respect. 'The architectural discussion seemed locked up by this theme like a rabbit in the lightbeams of a dashing car', as a critic put it afterwards.\*

'The position of architecture as part of the global system' was the context in which that theme was ambitiously presented in the announcements: 'in the situation we have today, when societies are undergoing immense changes, there is every reason to return to the roots of modern architecture, to discuss whether a critical reappraisal of original functionalist concepts could provide some answers to the manifold problems of our time.'

## Aalto's spirit

Every three years an Alvar Aalto Symposium is being organized by the local Aalto museum, the Finnish Architects Association, the Museum of Architecture in Helsinki, the Aalto Foundation and the Aalto Society, to 'keep alive the spirit of (his) work through discussing the artistic, social and technical problems of architecture': an intention that bears the risk of a concealing glorification of the master.

As one of the few, Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa really got into the themes of the symposium. His quotation of a text from 1930, in which Aalto stated that the functional method stuck

too much to technology, that functionalism was too much aimed at standardizing everyday life instead of surveying the needs of the human psyche, was not surprising. He identified functionalism as an over-simplification: architecture is not dealing with function and technology only, but aiming at society, at creating images fit for the spirit of the time. On the last day the British critic Colin St. John Wilson added to this a quotation from an Aalto statement of 1940 that 'not rationalism itself is wrong, but it was wrong that it did not went far enough'.

These hints to alienate Aalto from the international Modern Movement were taken further by his biographer Göran Schildt, who questioned whether Aalto should be regarded as a functionalist at all, based on a range of quotations dealing with inspiration as a determining aspect of architecture. Yet, such second thoughts in modern architecture are certainly not unique, as was clearly illustrated by some speakers referring to the many different viewpoints within the Modern Movement.

## Similar circumstances

Contextual analysis of historic architecture could help to solve the architectural problems of our time and various resemblances between the contexts of Modern Movement and contemporary architecture were identified. Pallasmaa mentioned the 'fin de siècle' atmosphere, that seems determining for the origins of the Modern Movement as well as the actual architectural crisis, where the recycling of images in the arts and the self-referentiality of current architecture were taken to indicate the end of art itself. Björn Linn from Sweden stated that by 1940, functionalism was so widespread that the introduction of other methods was unthinkable and that after modernism, as a style, the principles of the Modern Movement could not be abandoned even by the postmodernists.

Another obvious conformity are the political circumstances. Both Kristian Gullichsen and Pallasmaa referred to the recent changes in Europe after the collapse of the Marxist societies, that have resulted in great uncertainties as well as high-pitched expectations. Will the erasure of ideology again clear the way for a scientific, functional approach?

## Ecology and functionality

More down-to-earth were the observations referring to the connections between the functionalist ideology of economy in the use of materials as well as architectural expression and the current ecological situation. The issue of ecology, so typical for the Nordic cultures, was put forward in the announcements, among other things by bringing up the role of an architecture emphasizing continuity as a counterbalance to today's superficial consumerism.

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In her lecture on Erik Bryggman, Riita Nikula of the Finnish Museum of Architecture identified the shortage of materials after both World War I and II as a main reason for reverting to Modern Movement arrangements and technology after 1945. She indicated that, within the principles of the functional method and with the means and technology of the 1950's, a new functionalist vocabulary had been developed, thereby suggesting that this could be a valid solution for today as well.

Departing from Aalto's text previously mentioned, Pallasmaa tried to show a way out of the apocalyptical stage in contemporary arts and architecture he pictured before, by pleading for an ecological functionalism, that goes back to its basic principles by adopting forms and themes from nature. 'To make a new home for men', Mumford's wellknown statement, he used to illustrate his point.

### **Diversity**

The variety in approaches within the pre-War Modern Movement was shown by Vladimír Slapeta from Prague. He identified different social groups that gave commissions to Modern Movement architects, like the French cultural elite, the socialist' underclass in Germany and the young cultural intelligentsia of the middle-class in Czechoslovakia, and surveyed the effects this has had on architectural developments.

A range of themes and approaches even within the work of one architect was an interesting aspect of Nikula's lecture on Erik Bryggman. First working in a neo-classicist way, he introduced the Modern Movement in Finland in cooperation with his friend Aalto in the late 1920's, then shifting towards a very modest personal style, that combined elements of the functional method with a neo-classicist vocabulary. Maybe the critical approach towards modern architecture of both Bryggman and Aalto is more exemplifying for Finnish architecture than for their individual views. British architectural historian William Curtis even referred convincingly to Aalto's work as part of a tradition in going back to the principle method of answering basic human needs, instead of catching up with classic forms and concepts, even if this might lead to models that appear to be in resonance with history after all.

### **Younger generation**

Pallasmaa's remark about functionalism being an over-simplification seems to be valid when comparing the works of architect Balkrishna Doshi from India, Mexican Ricardo Legorreta and their colleague Karljosef Schattner, who connects the old and the new in his fascinating restorations of Baroque architecture in Eichstätt, Germany. The light, colourful and spacious villa's and luxurious

hotels shown by Legorreta produced a sharp contrast with the work of Doshi in Jaipur, that is strongly related to the local shortage of materials as well as the tradition of constructing ones own house. Although here the connection with the issue of ecology was striking, none of the participants reacted to this peculiar confrontation, not even when the connection between scarcity and functionalism was referred to again by Nikula the next day.

Also the representatives of the youngest generation illustrated the variety of viewpoints amongst contemporary architects, ranging from a somewhat outdated contextual approach of the Estonian Andres Siim to the Finnish duo Komonen and Heikkinen, who designed what is being called the first tangible expression of deconstructivism in Finland, the Heureka Science Center in Vantaa. Gudmundur Jonsson from Iceland showed a selection of his work, impressive in its relative modesty and careful detailing, and in doing so he pleaded for a functional approach that includes local aspects rather than international ones. With the presentation of current architecture, the issue of (neo-?) functionalism as 'a way forward' was in focus again for the last day, on which the critics got the floor.

### **Critical approach**

In the last resort they aroused some dormant questions and took efforts to discover the roots of what the symposium was supposed to be all about. Curtis bore the brunt by disputing the idea, that the recent ideological changes in European society marked a turning point in European culture. Today we find ourselves right in the centre of a dynamic modern tradition that is evolving everyday, of which the early masterpieces should now be considered history. Also Ignasi de Solà-Morales, identifying high-tech architecture in its intermediating role between technology and human needs as the latest chapter in the development of modern architecture, stressed the concept of its continuity. Implicitely, both Morales and Curtis indicated that 'functionalism' represents a bygone stage in modern architecture.

On this last day, American architect Steven Holl took up the gauntlet thrown down by Pallasmaa in his opening lecture. With the presentation of his City Edge project, he introduced the audience to a literal interpretation of Utopia, in its original meaning as 'no-place', given by Thomas Moore. Departing from the idea that architecture and urbanism should center on areas already struck by humanity, such as the periphery of the cities, he identified the city edges, boundaries of unspoiled nature, as the main architectural issue. Holl forcefully opposed the theme of the symposium by stating that 'functionalism' is not a usable notion and neither are postmodernism,

## EVENTS

The International Secretariat has been informed about the following events:

### **First DOCOMOMO-UK Symposium**

Architectural Association

London, UK

February 29th, 1992

inquiries: DOCOMOMO-UK

Christopher Dean

Shoreditch Studio

44-46 Scrutton Street

London EC2A 4HH

tel: (71) 377 2777

### **Seminar Conservation of Modern Movement architecture**

Aarhus School of Architecture

Aarhus, Denmark

Spring 1992

inquiries: DOCOMOMO-Denmark

Inge Mette Kirkeby

Architektskolen i Aarhus

Nørreport 20

8000 Aarhus C

tel: (06) 130822

### **First DOCOMOMO Italy Symposium**

Il Università di Roma, Tor Vergata, Italy

Spring 1992

inquiries: DOCOMOMO Italy

Maristella Casciato,

Carla Saggioro

Il Univerità di Roma, Tor Vergata

Faculty of engineering

Via Emanuale Carnavale

00173 Rome

tel: (06) 72594 577

fax: (06) 72594 586

### **Second International DOCOMOMO Conference**

Bauhaus Dessau, Germany

16 - 19 September, 1992.

inquiries: DOCOMOMO Conference

Secretariat

see pp.25,26 for more

information.

deconstructivism or neo-functionalism. A debate on -isms without involving phenomenology, is not the issue. Opposite the general atmosphere of disorientation, moralizing ecologism and loyalty to Aalto's organic concepts, Holl put his provoking and down-to-earth idea of 'negative capability': an attitude of facing negative aspects of today's society and transforming these perceptions into a creative inspiration.

### **Debate**

During the discussion, again it became clear that 'functionalism', in most Nordic cultures being synonymous with Modern Movement (e.g. the functional method and way of thinking), in English is conceived of as a style. Of course Holl was just as right to reject the re-introduction of a style as an answer to current circumstances, as the organizing committee in its sincerity to survey the merits of modern architectural concepts to that same aim. This confusion of tongues made the debate roving on a sea of architectonic notions and connotations. A participant from the audience was right to conclude, that the symposium should have dealt with 'a', not 'the' way forward and that looking to the future is more fruitful than centering on a limited period of the recent past.

Summarizing one could say, that the versatile theme was largely restricted to what had been presented as main aim of this series of symposiums, e.g. to keep alive the spirit of Alvar Aalto, and not much more than that. If not for Curtis, Holl and De Solà-Morales, who avoided this limited point of view, that spirit might have been given up after all.

*Wessel de Jonge is an architect and secretary of DOCOMOMO International.*

\*Hans van Dijk in Archis 10-91, who helped me getting some things straight.

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# Modern Architecture in Slovakia, 1920's and 30's

## International Symposium, Piestany, 21-26 October 1991

By *Stefan Slachta*

Turning back to the forgotten architecture and the forgotten architects of the 1920's and 30's, was a tacid subtitle of the international symposium devoted to Slovak architecture of the period between the two Wars, taking place in the spa Piestany, 21-26 October 1991, organized by the Association of Architects of Slovakia and by the Slovak section of DOCOMOMO.

Slovak architects have prepared the symposium with the intention to present the outstanding results of modern avantgarde architecture in Slovakia, and, above all, to call attention to the interrupted architectonic development caused by the second World War and followed by decades of communist power, during which this architecture was regarded as decadent and capitalist. This is the main reason why this architecture was rejected and gradually forgotten and whiped out.

### International audience

Piestany, approx. 90 km North of the Slovak capital Bratislava, is well known as a spa resort with valuable historical (especially Art Nouveau) buildings. But right in the 1930's, Piestany has begun to flourish. There is a large number of functionalist architectonic objects from this period, including such remarkable ones as the Colonnade Bridge by E. Bellus, sanatoriums designed by F. Weinwurm, A. Slatinsky, J. Meranc, numerous villas, various swimmingpools, and others. The statement of Israeli participant, D. Guggenheim,

that the excursions had given him the feeling of a tour through a museum for modern architecture, proved the proper choice of the place for a symposium.

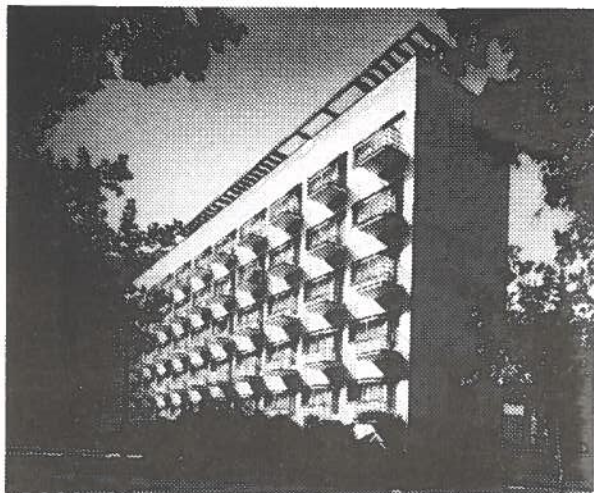
Architects from the United States, England, Scotland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Estonia, Rumenia, Mongolia, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Austria and Czecho-Slovakia took part in the symposium, where 19 papers were presented in the course of two days as well as a large number of contributions to the discussion. On the one hand, examples of modern architecture in various countries were presented and on the other hand, theoretical problems were approached.

A contribution of dr. I. Mojzisoová, on the Arts-and-Crafts School (SUR), which was in Bratislava from 1928-1939, has met a remarkable reception. The lecture of prof. R. Benson from the University of Miami on American criticism of European modernism in 1920-30, the lecture of David Guggenheim 'Bauhaus and Israeli architecture', 'Constructivism in Charkov' presented by the Ukrainian B. Safransky, the lecture of Jane Pawitt from England on 'English modernism' and other lectures have been highly esteemed by the participants of the symposium.

### Exhibition and excursions

As a part of the symposium, an exhibition was organized on the present state of approx. 60 selected examples of modern Slovak architecture. American, English and Scottish architects present, showed their interest in its re-installation. However, we would like to present it especially at the Second International Conference of DOCOMOMO in Dessau next year.

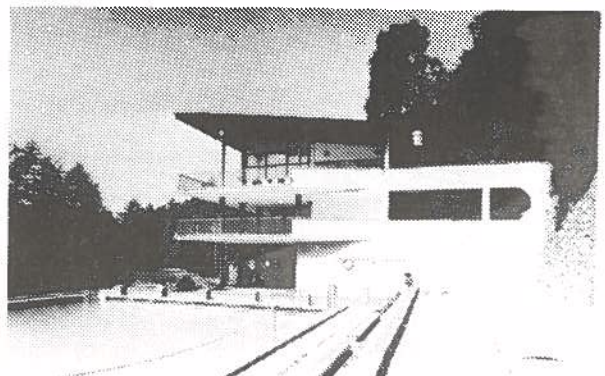
Several excursions had been planned within the programme. On the third day, the participants have visited the so called 'Zlín architecture' on site, where they met one of its representatives, prof. V. Karfík. They also had the opportunity to



Left: Kurhaus 'Machnác' in

Trenčianske Teplice, designed by Jaromir Krejcar in 1931-32.

Right: Bohuslav Fuchs' Green Frog Spa from 1931-32, side facade



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get through the famous private office of Bata, situated in the lift (!) of the 17-storeyed administrative building, which was the main seat of the firm in the 1930's (see article elsewhere). The visit to the spa Luhacovice and to the General M.R. Stefánik's Grave-Mound has elucidated the work of Jurkovic, one of the most important personalities of 20th Century Slovak architecture. The excursion in Bratislava presented the works of architects A. Balán, J. Grossman, M. Harminc, F. Weinwurm, J. Tvarozek, A. Skutecky and E. Bellus. A final two-day excursion was arranged through the Slovak towns Trenčín, Trenčianske Teplice, Zilina, Ruzomberok, Vysoké Tatry, Svit, Banská Bystrica, Sliac. The succes of the excursion was enhanced by every fine Autumn weather.

### Revival and restoration

The significance of the symposium was also rooted in the promotion of the present strong tendency to neo-functionalism in Slovak architecture. Particularly, the young architects demonstrated their desire to link-up to its interrupted development. The functionalist traditions are very strong in Czecho-Slovakia and that is why architects, restoring the relations between architecture and society, are directed towards these traditions. The proplems of protection and especially restoring

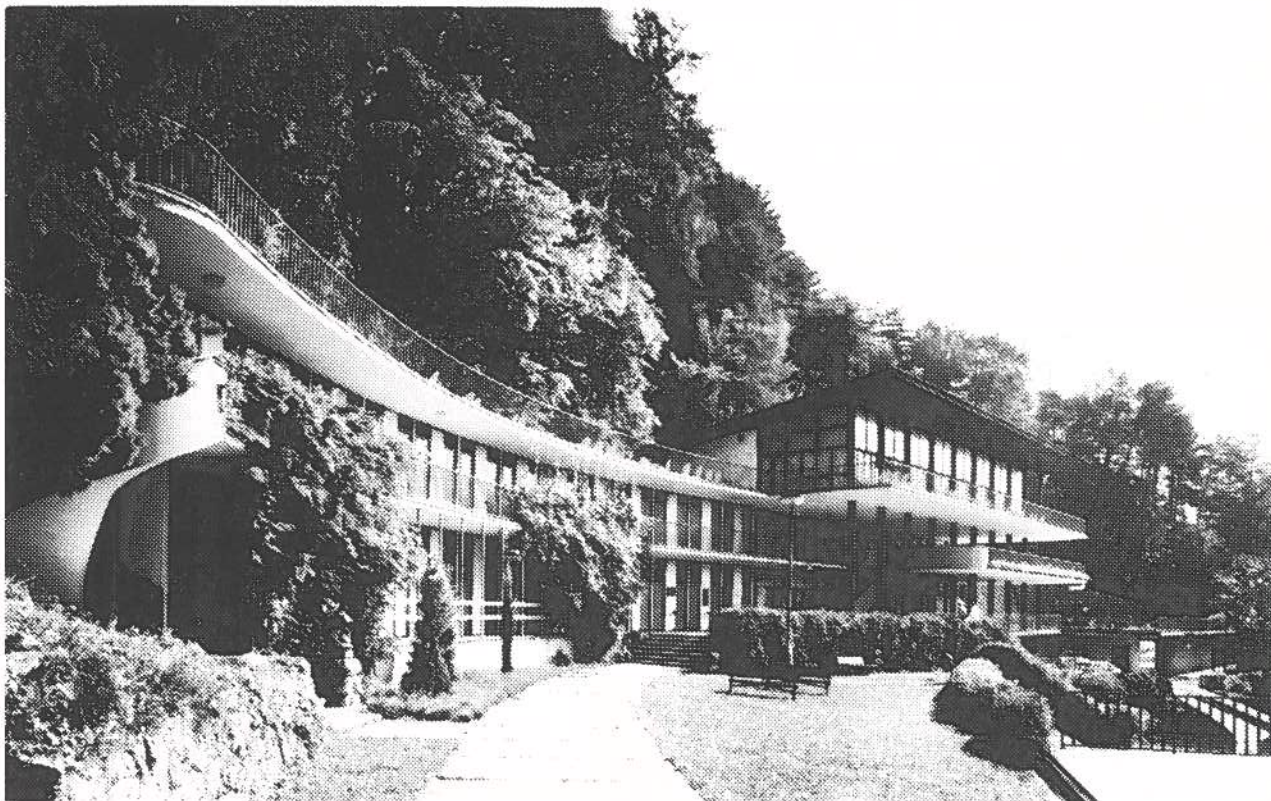
methods for modern architectural landmarks, were also discussed. Trough respecting the new use of these objects, we cannot leave them to have their architectural values, details, constructions, etc. liquidated. Information on the work of the Slovak DOCOMOMO section and the preparations for the Second Conference in Dessau have met a positive response. American and Estonian architects have shown their interest in cooperation.

### Another symposium

Also next year's symposium programme was discussed. It will be devoted to one or two of the architectonic personalities of Slovak architecture from the period between the Wars. This intention was supported by the majority of the participants. A meeting on the mutual architectonic relations in the Danubian region is also planned. There is no doubt that the symposium has proved the right choice of the theme, as well as the usefulness and the reason of such meetings. But, above all, Slovak architecture was presented for the first time in this way and to such an extent. The comment of our foreign colleagues have proved, that Slovakia is rich in architectonic values, which can be presented to the world.

*Stefan Slachta is vice president of DOCOMOMO Czecho-Slovakia*

Main facade of the Spa Zelená Zaba (Green Frog) in the Slovak town Trenčianske Teplice, designed by Bohuslav Fuchs in 1931-32



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## Canonical work on French Modern Architecture

'L'Architecture en France, une histoire critique 1918-1950; architecture, culture, modernité'; by Gérard Monnier, Paris, Philippe Sers Éditeur, 1990, 482 pages, ISBN 2904057 471.

by Geert Bekaert

Modern architecture has produced its own historiography. Only insiders have access to it. Even if efforts were made to implicate general (cultural) history, these started from the same introvert principle resulting in, as Monnier puts it, slogans taking the place of ideas. At the time, the Netherlands architectural historian Auke van der Woud already pleaded for a 'despecialisation' of architectural history (see Archis 12, 1986, pp 2,3) but so far this has had no results yet.

Gérard Monnier\* is the first one to approach modern architecture in France -some chauvinism isn't foreign to him here- as a common historical phenomenon, that is not to be reduced to the institutional identity of the International Style or the Bauhaus. He wants to dispose of the nominalism that rules the history of modern architecture. Not everybody is appreciating this, as can be learned from the critique by François Chaslin in l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui nr. 274, 1991, p 48. With a 'materialistic serenity' Monnier describes the

complex reality of French architecture from 1918 to 1950, from one postWar context to another.

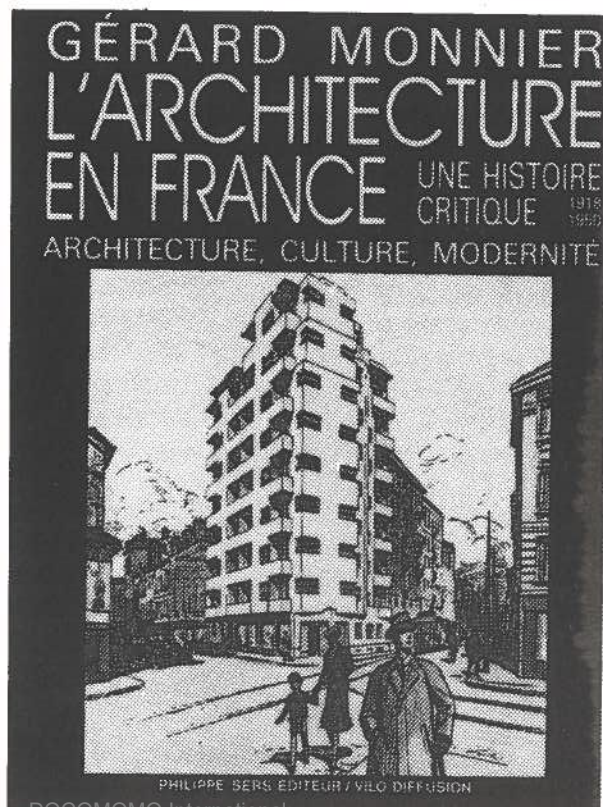
The four parts of his explanation follow a certain chronological line but are marked by their themes in the first place, thereby overlapping each other in time.

The first part concentrates on the connections of architecture with the world of the arts in the 1920's. Here, the world of the arts should be taken to its full extent, in which the new clients and the new public played as great a part as the architects and artists themselves. Central issue in this period are the decorative arts, with as pinnacles the 1925 exhibition and Le Corbusiers publication *L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui* as well as the design of the Villa Noailles at Hyères by Robert Mallet-Stevens (see essay elsewhere in this Newsletter).

In the second part, architecture's fascination with the 'machinistic' culture in the period 1920-40 is being analysed from the introduction of new programs for traffic, industry, healthcare, sports and social housing. The third part gives a picture of the connections between architecture and new forms of information, the 'mise-en-scène' of the product, the publicity, the graphic and photographic presentation of architecture in periodicals and books and the influence this had on education.

The last part is dedicated to the resistance that these architectonic innovations excited in the years of crisis and war 1930-50. It is here that the restrained role of the national and local authorities, mentioned several times in the book, is spotlighted. Following an analysis of the modernity as well as a description of the rise of regionalism in the 1930's, this part concludes with a reference to the new forms of modernity emerging around 1950.

Certainly, this brief summary does not show to full advantage the extraordinary richness of information, neither the clear structure of its presentation. Monnier does not preconceive anything. He doesn't try to prove anything. He merely shows. With incredible accuracy he presents factual data, the known and the unknown. He draws from municipal archives, that had rarely been included in historical analyses, just as from professional publications. He includes exhibitions as well as literary documents. But most remarkable is the calm, accurate and precise wording. Here, architectural history acquires as it were a scientific constitution. His history Monnier calls, following and referring to as well as declining Kenneth Framptons' work, critical. His critical point of view however does not imply a review of modern architecture from external criteria, yet he wants to dispose of the distortions in the image of it, to show it in its historic reality. Towards the end of his survey, Monnier himself strikingly summarizes his intentions: 'To give back the contents and the expectations to this cultural history of architecture, to give a more objective



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understanding of its reality and complexity, that was the stake, not to initiate a process of rehabilitation. It will be clear that this does not exclude an indispensable sympathy for this period, that, after 1930, has been a cruel one. It supposes a serene attitude towards these men and women, that not only have dedicated themselves to the expert side of the profession, but also have paid the price for their 'progressive ideals'. Without prudence, courtesy or delicacy one cannot enter in that history, where, under the cultural episodes, something like a tragedy is hidden.'

*Prof. Geert Bekaert is editor in chief of the Netherlands architectural periodical Archis and member of the DOCOMOMO Consultative Council. This review has previously been published in Archis 8, 1991.*

*\*Gérard Monnier is chairman of DOCOMOMO Section Française.*

## Swiss Rationalist architecture

'Architecture de la Raison; la Suisse des années vingt et trente'; Isabelle Charollais and Bruno Marchand, editors; Presse Polytechniques et Universitaires Romandes, 1991, 250 pages, 21x25 cm, 200 illustrations, ISBN 2-88074-217-X.

### Announcement by the editors\*

The documentation of Modern Movement architecture is one of the main interests of DOCOMOMO. Every now and then, an important survey is being published, that adds a new part to the jig-saw puzzle of the history of international modern architecture. This summer, an interesting exhibition at the Institut de Théorie de l'Histoire de l'Architecture de l'École Polytechnique de Lausanne and the ETH Zürich, showed the Modern Movement in Switzerland, disclosing many new facts and ideas. In connection with the exhibition, the book 'Architecture de la Raison; la Suisse des années vingt et trente' has been published by Isabelle Charollais and Bruno Marchand. All texts are in French.

The publication gives an overview of different aspects of 'rationalism' in Switzerland in the 1920's and 30's. It includes essays by a range of esteemed experts, with the objective to determine in a critical way the position of modern architecture in interWar Switzerland in connection with the international avantgarde at the one hand and the

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social, economical and political diversity of Switzerland at the other.

Here, rationalism is taken to its full extent, including its productive, social, hygienic, technical and academic elements. The attitudes of the rationalist movement in that period were indeed varied within the context of the commonly agreed programmes and aims. This was largely due to the diversity that is such a fundamental characteristic of the country, simultaneously including realism and pragmatism, as well as the autonomy of its regions and different cultural origins.

The book contains the following essays: Directions and limitations of rationalist architecture in Switzerland in the 1920-30's, Jean-Marc Lamunière; Auguste Choisy and his heritage amongst the rationalists, Alberto Abriani; The tradition of the *Neues Bauen* movement, Martin Steinmann; 1919-1939: socio-economic context and architectural debate, Michel Nemeč; Construction of schools in the 1920-30's. Rational effectiveness of new programmes, Patrick Mestelan; Industrial architecture and rationalism, Bernard Cachet; Institutional housing types, Gilles Barbey; Cité Vieussieux (1928-32) and the building at Route Frontenex 53-57 (1933-34) in Geneva, Isabelle Charollais and Bruno Marchand; The Geneva masterplan of Marice Brailard, Philippe Gfeller; Hannes Meyer's childrens home in Mülliswil (1936-39), Jean-Claude Ludi.

Despite the profoundness of its contents, the editors themselves indicate that the publication should not be seen as an exhaustive monography on the subject, neither with respect to history nor concerning architectural theory. The essays rather represent the disclose of a debate that doubtlessly will continue, nourished by future research and publications.

*\*Text composed by the International Secretariat, based on leaflet of the publisher in French and announcement of the exhibition in German.*

Les Tilleuls in Geneva, by Maurice Brailard, 1930



## Weißenhofsiedlung 1927

Richard Pommer and Christian Otto;  
Chicago University Press 1991, 304 pp,  
ISBN 0 226 67515 7 74 75

Already a lot has been written about the Weißenhofsiedlung. Pommer and Otto, American architectural historians, decided to publish their extensive survey on the famous estate in Stuttgart anyway and we might be happy they did. The authors start with a comprehensive overview of the political and historical context. The notion 'Modern Movement' is obligatorily questioned, as no serious critic can avoid to do so since Tafuri and others demonstrated the diversity of its representatives. Still Pommer and Otto succeed in bringing up some new points of view, related to the birth and the aims of the estate, the selection of architects and the brief they were given as well as the similarities and differences between them.

The most interesting of their conclusions is, that the political polarization within the architectural profession was the most far reaching result of the feign unity that was thought to be proven with the Weißenhofsiedlung. Many illustrations have been included on various buildings during construction and the original exhibition as well as after renovation. The authors preferred to show original drawings of the individual buildings, in contrast with Karin Kirsch's reference work, that included redrawn plans to facilitate comparing the various concepts for housing that were demonstrated in Stuttgart. Although the original drawings are sometimes difficult to read, they certainly stress the diversity between the various designers.

*Based on 'de Architect' 1991-10, p. 145.*

## Soviet Avantgarde

For the first time on such a scale, arts of the Soviet avantgarde will be shown in the West early next year. The Frankfurter Kunsthalle Schirn, the New York Guggenheim Museum and the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg cooperate in this project, aiming at an extensive overview of the utopian Russian movement in the arts from 1915 to 1932. The exhibition will open on February 29, 1992, in Frankfurt and will travel to New York, Moscow and St. Petersburg afterwards. The exhibition is as extensive as the Soviet avantgarde itself. Apart from paintings, sculpture and drawings from the period, also included are industrial design, posters, photography, cinema, ceramics and architecture. Centering on the theme 'Great Utopia', more than 700 examples of avantgarde art will be exhibited in Frankfurt, with works of El Lissitzky, Suetin, Popova, Stepanova, Rodchenko, Malevich and Kandinsky.

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## EXHIBITIONS

The International Secretariat has been informed about the following exhibitions:

**Marcel Lods (1891-1978)**  
**Architectural Photographs**  
Centre Georges Pompidou  
Galerie de dessins d'architecture du CCI  
Paris, France  
2 October 1991- 6 January 1992

**Iakov Chernikov, Original Drawings**  
8 Merrion Square,  
Dublin, Ireland  
7 November 1991 - opening

**Erik Bryggman 1891-1955, architect**  
Turku Provincial Museum  
Turku, Finland  
22 November 1991-31 March 1992

**Cubism in Prague**  
Städtische Kunsthalle  
Düsseldorf, Germany  
28 September - 20 November 1992

**New Movement in the Netherlands 1924-36**  
Museum for the History of St. Petersburg  
Department at Krasnogo flota nab.  
St. Petersburg, Russia  
15 December 1991-January 1992

**Shushev Museum for Architecture**  
Moscow, Russia  
January 1992

**Prague, Brno, Bratislava**  
Czechoslovakia  
March-June 1992

**National Department for Conservation OMF**  
Budapest, Hungary  
July-August 1992

**Soviet Avantgarde**  
Frankfurter Kunsthalle Schirn  
Frankfurt, Germany  
29 February 1992 - opening  
Afterwards in New York, Moscow and  
St. Petersburg; see elsewhere for details.



## Video Van Nelle factories

Rotterdam 1917-32

25 minutes b/w documentary;  
by Anna Abrahams, Jan Frederik de  
Groot, Vincent Verwey;  
ISBN (English): 90 73980 02 X,  
ISBN (Dutch): 90 73980 01 1.

*announcement by the editor*

'Far away in the polder something new is happening. Four glass walls are rising perpendicularly out of the meadows. An aquarium for prehistoric fishes? A laboratory for breeding the new man, a chemically created homunculus? Around the glass bell whirl the fantastic thoughts of wairy train travellers, who, when arriving at Rotterdam, behold the building-site of the Van Nelle factories...' (Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant, 1928)

'Building the Van Nelle factories' tells how in Rotterdam, between 1917 and 1932, the Van Nelle factories came into existence. Most of the footage used in the documentary was shot during the construction of the factories. The original, highly inflammable nitrate film stock had been lying around in a storage room of the factories for sixty years. It was never edited.

The factories, designed by the office of Brinkman & Van der Vlugt, are one of the first examples of modern architecture. They are one of the few Dutch designs no historical architectural survey fails to mention.

The main character of the documentary is Kees van der Leeuw. At the time he was a partner of the Van Nelle company. He gave the assignment to build the factories and was deeply involved in the designing and construction of the building. He also gave instructions to film the images that are now used in 'Building the Van Nelle Factories'. Kees van der Leeuw was a highly inspired person with a strong belief in progress, without whom the factories would never have become the architectural pinnacle they are.

*The documentary can be ordered from:  
Rongwrong, Dusartstraat 12 sous, 1072 HR  
Amsterdam, the Netherlands*

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## Video Mies van der Rohe

Michael Blackwood productions inc., New York, 1986 / Ernst Klett Verlag GmbH, Stuttgart, 1987; Michael Blackwood, director. ISBN 3 12 760420-3

*by Egbert Koster*

The architectural video 'Mies van der Rohe' can best be described as a filmed biography. Of course Mies' designs play a main part, yet the central issue is the life and the way of thinking of the charismatic protagonist himself. Flashes of interviews with Mies are being alternated with numerous additions, interpretations, anecdotes and experiences from a number of illustrious architects and critics, such as Phillip Johnson, Fritz Neumeyer, Arthur Drexler, Robert Stern, John Hejduk, Peter Eisenman, Julius Posener and Robert Venturi.

It is true, that a videoportrait, due to its nature, will never give as much information in contents, as a written biography can. Yet, this disadvantage is well surpassed by the great sense of authenticity, directness and expressiveness of these (partly historic) shots and personal comments. To see and hear Mies for a few minutes, the most deliberate way in which he formulates his oracular statements, clarify a lot more of the motives behind his designs than ten interpretations at third hand ever will. Moreover, it is fascinating to see a celebrity who died 22 years ago and to hear him explain posthumously on his revolutionary design for a glass skyscraper from 1919.

Fortunately, Mies speaks German in most of the historic material in the German edition of the tape, whereas the (more expensive) American edition has been dubbed over in English.

One of the surprising aspects of the video is, that the hilarious discription by Tom Wolfe in 'From Bauhaus to our house' of the worshipping accorded to Gropius and Mies van der Rohe in the USA, apparently was ~~not~~ that exaggerated as his somewhat overdone style would suggest. The comments by students and former colleges of Mies van der Rohe ('White God nr. 2', as Wolfe calls him) make clear that he was actually seen as a kind of messiah of the True Belief.

It is an exemplary video portrait. The only regrettable thing is, that by spotlighting Mies' personality, his works remain more in the background.

*Egbert Koster is an architectural critic. Review previously published in 'de Architect' 10-91.  
Video can be ordered from: Taurus Film und Video GmbH, Betastraße 1, 8043 Unterföhring, Germany.*

# Call for papers

## Second International DOCOMOMO Conference Bauhaus Dessau, Germany, 16-18 September 1992

The German DOCOMOMO Group is pleased to invite all interested to participate in the Second International DOCOMOMO Conference on September 16-18, 1992, at the Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany. A Post Conference Tour is scheduled for Saturday September 19, 1991. The conference will be held under the patronage of UNESCO and under the auspices of Mrs. Catherine Lalumière, Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

Since the first conference in the Netherlands, many national working parties have been established, stimulated by the DOCOMOMO Statement and the general impulses of the UNESCO World Decade for Cultural Development. These national groups are composed of historians, researchers, consultants, conservation officials, critics, financial and technical experts, architects and urban designers, and operate in their countries to advance documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement. DOCOMOMO keeps up contacts with experts all over Europe, as well as in North and South America. Until now, national DOCOMOMO working parties have been officially established in sixteen countries, being Argentina, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the USSR. DOCOMOMO is represented in Austria, Brazil, Canada, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and the USA.

The conference is not only directed to members of national DOCOMOMO working parties, but all those interested in the subject are welcome and are invited to submit a paper.

### Themes

Contrary to the first international meeting, at the occasion of which the whole field of DOCOMOMO's concern had to be presented and discussed, this conference will concentrate on a few specific themes of actual importance. The selected themes represent issues that have appeared to be of main and actual concern to most national working parties over the last years. Based on the general and fundamental information of the first conference with respect to the themes conservation and technology, policy/economy and architectural history, the central issues of the second conference will be

- 1 neighbourhood and functional concept,
- 2 buildings and the contribution of experimental building to aspects of construction, function and building physics, related to actual conservation and restoration work,
- 3 documentation and publication of Modern Movement architecture as well as its roots and influence as part of architectural development,

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- 4 presentation of the national DOCOMOMO registers of Modern Movement architecture. These issues will be represented by main reports in the plenary session, by short contributions to the working sessions and in following round table discussions.

The various national groups are invited to present at the conference the results of the 1991-'92 DOCOMOMO Plan of Action that have been achieved in their country, in particular with respect to the national register of Modern Movement architecture. It is thought of prime importance to give the national groups an opportunity to present their work of the last two years with respect to their experiences and working results, particularly concerning the national registers, the information of the general public and activities aimed at the preservation and safeguarding of the Modern Movement heritage in the participating countries. National representatives will be called upon to show general views, problems and solutions. At the end of the Conference a General Council meeting will be held. Here the national representatives will agree on the next plan of action and on the host country for the Third International DOCOMOMO Conference.

### **Submitting abstracts**

Experts wishing to contribute an essay for the Proceedings or to present a contribution (paper, case study or poster) at the Conference are kindly invited to submit a detailed abstract, relating to one of the conference themes. The abstract should be typewritten in English and should not exceed two A4 sheets.

Two copies of the abstract must be delivered at **DOCOMOMO International, the Netherlands, before February 1st, 1992**. The following information must be given on the top sheet:

- Name and full address of the author including telephone, fax and telex
- Title of paper, case study or poster (max. 60 letters)
- Theme related to the abstract (1, 2, 3 or 4)

Authors will be informed about the acceptance of the proposed contribution March 1992. Full papers, case studies and posters should be prepared May 1st 1992, and will be reviewed for final acceptance. Complete manuscripts are due at the conference. More information will be part of the final invitation, April 1992.

The official language will be English. On special request the author, contributions can be presented in German or French, for which simultaneous translation will be provided.

### **Conference proceedings**

The Conference Proceedings will contain full English texts of all papers, case studies and posters that were accepted for presentation as well as accepted essays on one of the conference general themes. The proceedings will be published after the conference and are included in the Conference Fee.

### **Post Conference Tour**

The Post Conference Tour is planned for Saturday September 19, 1992. The tour will include visits of the Bauhaus buildings in Dessau (Meisterhäuser by Gropius, Arbeitsamt by Gropius, Kornhaus by Baetke and Fieger, the Steel House by Mücke, the Törten Siedlung and the 'Konsum' building by Gropius' studio, the galleryflats by Hannes Meyer), as well as the famous Wörlitz park and the Modern Movement neighbourhoods in Magdeburg.

The Post Conference Tour Fee is not included in the Conference Fee and is for account of the participants.

### **Accommodation**

The participants will be accommodated in the hostels of the Bauhaus and in hotels in Dessau and direct environs. Costs for travelling, boarding and lodging are for account of the participants. Due to the restricted capacity of the Bauhaus the amount of participants will be limited to 200-250.

### **Registration**

Registration for the conference will be possible after the mailing of the Final Program and registration forms for conference and lodging in April 1992.

### **Conference Fees**

The Conference Fee for participants is DM 700,- . Conference Fee for participants includes:

- Final Conference Program and Book of Abstracts;
- Luncheon and dinner on September 16, 1992;
- Luncheon on September 17, 1992;
- Luncheon and dinner on September 18, 1992;
- Cultural Program;
- Refreshments during the breaks;
- Conference Proceedings, to be mailed after the conference.

The Post Conference Tour is not included.

Guests of honour, invited officials in charge and representatives of the press are without fees. Special fees for students and others will be set at a later date.

### **Time schedule and publicity plan**

Further announcements and information will be published in the DOCOMOMO Newsletters according to the following schedule:

- Newsletter 6 (November 1991): Official Announcement and Call for Papers.
- Final Program, including registration forms for conference and lodging, mailed April 1992.
- Newsletter 7 (June 1992): repeat Final Program and registration forms.

### **Dates**

- Second International DOCOMOMO Conference:  
Wednesday Sept. 16 - Friday Sept. 18, 1992
- Second DOCOMOMO Council Meeting:  
Friday September 18, 1992
- Post Conference Tour:  
Saturday September 19, 1992.

### **Address**

Abstracts should be sent to:

DOCOMOMO International  
Eindhoven University of Technology  
BPU Postvak 8  
P.O. Box 513  
5600 MB Eindhoven  
The Netherlands  
tel. 31-40-472433  
fax. 31-40-452432  
fax. 31-40-434248  
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téléc : 204461 Paris  
270602 Paris  
téléfax : 45.67.16.90

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10 OCT 1991

Dear Professor Hubert-Jan Henket,

We were most interested to learn from you and Dr. Wolfgang Paul about the second international DOCOMOMO Conference which is to be convened from 16 to 18 September 1992 in the Bauhaus in Dessau.

The activities of Docomomo are indeed of great reference to the Cultural Heritage Programme of UNESCO since they aim at protecting and preserving Modern Movement Architecture, which constitutes a particularly significant part of the cultural heritage of our century.

Given the importance of the themes of the second conference, its international character and the support of the authorities of Germany as host country, I am pleased to inform you that the Director-General most willingly grants UNESCO's patronage to this meeting.

Wishing you every success for the conference, I am,

Your sincerely,

Henri Lopes  
Assistant Director-General for Culture

Professor Hubert-Jan Henket  
Chairman DOCOMOMO International  
Eindhoven University of Technology  
BRB Postvak 8  
P.O. Box 513  
5600 MB Eindhoven  
The Netherlands

The first DOCOMOMO Conference has been organized under patronage of the Hungarian and the Netherlands UNESCO Commissions, which proved a great help in organizing that event. Today, the Executive Committee is proud to announce that, after request by the organizers, the Director-General of UNESCO has granted the patronage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to the Second International DOCOMOMO Conference. We like to thank mr. Henri Lopes, Assistant Director-General for Culture, for his kind letter.

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## Conference Proceedings

First International DOCOMOMO Conference  
September 12 - 15, 1990; Eindhoven, the  
Netherlands

A full report of the first meeting of the independent and international DOCOMOMO network.

- 326 pages in English
- 73 authors from 16 European countries
- all 51 contributions presented at the conference
- plus 10 extra essays on various subjects
- an introduction to the aims and structure of DOCOMOMO
- approx. 250 photos, drawings and maps.

The Conference Proceedings can be ordered at the costprice of dfl. 89,- plus forwarding and transfer costs. Students can order for reduced price of dfl. 45,- plus forwarding and transfer costs, upon recievement of a photocopy of valid studentcard. The edition is limited.

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P.O. Box 513  
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## National Reports

Based on received information from the various countries, the following national reports could be included. We will be glad to receive any information on documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement in the participating countries, as well as news on your national DOCOMOMO working party before 1st May 1992. A selection of sent in information will be published in Newsletter 7, due for June 1992.

### Argentina: increase of activities

The Argentine DOCOMOMO Working party has increased its activities, centering on three themes. Now that the inventory of 1920-50's architecture in Buenos Aires has been partially covered in previous work, the updating of that register as well as extending the survey to other cities is a main item. Especially outside the Capital, the concern for MoMo architecture is very little and it is here that these buildings run the highest risk.

The Center for Urban and Rural Conservation of the University of Buenos Aires is organizing two joint programs as part of its curricula for 1991-92, that are supported by the Argentine DOCOMOMO Working party. One of the programs consists of a special training for conservation of rationalist buildings, while the other is an advanced research program concerning technical, historical and other studies of the period.

The third main item of the group is to link their efforts to the activities of other governmental as well as non-governmental organizations in the field of restoration and conservation, that are involved in policies concerning the Fifth Centenary of the Discovery of the Americas in 1992. The Argentine group has been represented in both executive meetings in Spain in February and August, where the main lines for future actions in Latin America were drawn, including the aspects of contemporary architecture.

*(Report: Argentine coordinator Mabel Scarone)*

### Belgium: research, books and education of the public

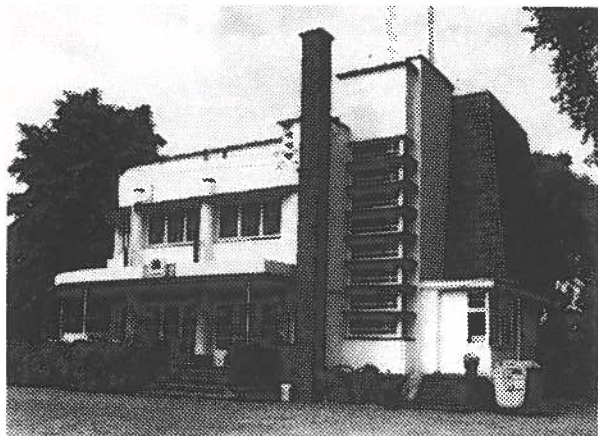
A major annual event in Belgium is the so-called 'Open Monumentendag', this year organized on September, 15. Several buildings, which are normally not open to the public, are then accessible. Modern Movement architecture has never been a special focus of the 'Open

Monumentendag' even though, as again this year, several monuments (or potential monuments) of modern architecture were put in its program. In Flanders about ten buildings of the 1920's and 1930's - moreover not all of them strictly belonging to the Modern Movement - were included, a.o. the newspaper printshop 'Het Licht' in Ghent (1930) by Fernand and Maxime Brunfaut, and the famous early modern church in Zonnebeke (1921-1924) by Huib Hoste, with stained glass windows designed by Hoste himself, very much influenced by his previous contacts with De Stijl and Theo van Doesburg (see article on the Dr. De Beir-house in Knokke). A thesis on stained glass, designed by Huib Hoste and Edward van Steenberghe, was prepared by Emanuelle Groenen (under the direction of Luc Verpoest) and recently presented at the Art History Institute of the University of Leuven.

The program of the 'Open Monumentendag' in the Brussels region was more extensively focussing on the modern patrimony of the Belgian Capital, a.o. the splendid 'Withuis' (White House) (1926-1928) in Jette on which Belgian DOCOMOMO member Linda van Santvoort published an article in a special 'Open Monumentendag'-issue of the periodical M&L, Monumenten & Landschappen. Attention was also called to the suburban headquarters in Brussels, which were, in the early 1920's, very important for the development of modern architecture in Belgium; a.o. La Cité Moderne in Sint-Agatha-Berchem (Van der Swaelmen, Bourgeois, 1922-1925) was part of the program.

Recently another volume was published of the series 'Bouwen door de eeuwen heen in Vlaanderen', a systematic inventory of monuments and sites in Flanders, prepared by the Administration of Monuments and Sites of the Flemish Government. Volume 29 deals with the

Café-restaurant De Leie in Astene, Belgium, designed by E. de Nil in 1933 - 34.



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mainly rural region of the canton of Deinze, along the Leie river, South-West of the city of Ghent, including the very fashionable residential areas of Deurle and Sint-Martens-Latem (the birth-place of Flemish expressionism, more particularly the so-called School of Latem). As in previous volumes of this series, MoMo architecture is again systematically listed, a.o. a range of private houses by Neerman, Esselinck and others, the 'Café-Restaurant De Leie' in Astene by E. De Nil (1933-1934) and, undoubtedly works of major importance, the clinic of dr. Martens (1932, unfortunately transformed in 1983) and his 'Villa Landing' (1933-1934) in Astene by Henri Van de Velde.

*(Report: Belgian coordinator Luc Verpoest)*

### **Brazil: establishment of a working party expected soon**

Recently, some experts on the conservation of MoMo architecture and urban design decided to survey possibilities to establish a Brazilian DOCOMOMO Working party. Also, a plan of action for the next year has already been discussed. The first result of their work is an article on the architect Gregori Warchavchik, considered pioneer of the Modern Movement in their country, that is published elsewhere in this issue. Preliminary coordination for the group is taken care of by Anna Beatriz Galvão from Salvador de Bahia (see list of working parties for full address).

The first Brazilian example of MoMo architecture, Warchavchik's residence in São Paulo, is badly damaged. In 1984 the architect's heirs decided to have the building pulled down. People of the neighbourhood as well as some intellectuals started a campaign in favour of the villa and it was only thanks to this, that its demolition could be prevented. The campaign acquired a lot of publicity, that helped to include the building in the list of Brazilian Heritage. Nevertheless, after almost eight years the Warchavchik residence remains abandoned. The family moved out and the government does not have the possibility to buy it. Since the 1984 initiative, an official association of neighbourhood volunteers is looking after the villa. We will ask this association to report on their experiences in the next Newsletter.

We also would like to notify, that the 8th Specialisation Course for Conservation and Restoration of Historic Monuments CECRE will take place next year at the University of Bahia in Salvador. The course is being organized under patronage of UNESCO and Brazilian Heritage. At the next CECRE coordination meeting in

October 1991, DOCOMOMO Brazil will propose to include an announcement on our work as well as an item on MoMo architectural conservation in the course' programme.

*(Report: provisional Brazilian coordinator Anna Beatriz Galvão)*

The International Secretariat is looking forward to hear more about DOCOMOMO activities in Brazil soon and wishes our colleagues lots of success in the future.

### **Canada: cooperation with existing structures**

Up to now, first contacts have been established with many associations in conservation throughout Canada. Nevertheless, one task of setting up a formal entity dealing with the preservation of modern monuments, or rather recent heritage, remains to be accomplished. Should that entity be a separate one, or should it grow within existing structures? The question is real, since we already have a huge number of such associations in Canada and as a new one may be threatened by lack of resources.

ICOMOS Canada - the Canadian Committee of the International Council of Monuments and Sites - is one of them and may well serve as a foster organization to stir up interest for DOCOMOMO, in association with the Society for the Study for Architecture in Canada (SSAC). This duo of existing resources could support both the DO (documentation with SSAC) and CO (conservation with ICOMOS). ICOMOS Canada, as part of its mandate, develops a humanistic and professional approach to conservation; one that does not only deal with a particular period nor style of civilization. Its next annual meeting will be held in Ottawa to sort out a partnership between Heritage and Environment milieux. A better understanding of values of all cultural resources (old and recent, white or native) is part of the agenda.

Seminars on the philosophy and technology of the conservation of modern heritage were organized within the meeting of the Association for Preserving Technology in Montréal in 1990, raising a great interest among conservationists from all over North America. Communication lines also exist with conservation officials in the US and South America (Mexico, Puerto Rico, Brazil) to share information and develop civilized approaches to the conservation of a heritage too many people consider too young to fit their "Old World" definitions of the cultural landscape.

**We also seek cooperations to organize seminars**

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on practical challenges of preserving buildings made with the newest technology at their time (which too often proved to be the shortest lasting) so that their architectural character is not lost through impulsive and radical renovations.

In conclusion, three main action lines prevail for DOCOMOMO in Canada: association with existing structures; expansion of conservation practices to recent structures; development of applicable approaches, methods and tools to preserve this heritage as part of our cultural landscape.

*(Report: provisional Canadian coordinator Dinu Bumbaru)*

### **Czechoslovakia: symposiums on Modern Movement architecture**

A significant activity of the Czechoslovakian working party in the last months has been the extensive study of the influence of the initiatives of the Bata Shoemaking Company on Czechoslovakian urban planning and architecture of the 1920-30's, during a symposium and an exhibition at Zlín last September.

Another conference on 20th Century architecture took place in Bratislava from October 21 to 25, organized by the Association of Architects of Slovakia and the Slovak Section of DOCOMOMO. Main theme of this event was avantgarde architecture of the 1920's and 30's in Slovakia and several days of interesting excursions, to Zlín, Trenčín, Teplice, Žilina, Svit and other places, had been added to the program. Also, a preliminary register of 46 objects MoMo architecture in Slovakia was presented in an exhibition. Reports on both conferences can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter.

*(Report: Czechoslovakian coordinator Jan Sedlák)*

### **Denmark: first meeting next Spring**

DOCOMOMO Denmark dedicated much of its energy to supporting the campaign in favour of the Copenhagen Airport terminal from 1936 by Laurentzen (see elsewhere in this issue). Also, the appeal to restore the Viipuri library of Alvar Aalto met full agreement from the Danish participants.

The biannual meeting of FORUM, a group of conservation architects that graduated from the Conservation Department of the Aarhus School of Architecture, took place in September. FORUM expressed its support for the DOCOMOMO

programme and decided to take the initiative to organize a seminar on the conservation of Modern Movement architecture. This one day seminar is scheduled for next Spring at the Aarhus School of Architecture.

*(Report: Danish coordinator Inge Mette Kirkeby)*

#### **Finland: campaign for Aalto's Viipuri Library**

An extensive survey on Tapiola, the famous suburb of Helsinki, that has been a prototype of 1950's urban design, has been completed recently. Author Timo Tuomi plans to publish the results in an architectural guidebook on short term, for the occasion of which an exhibition will be prepared. We hope to publish a summarizing article in the next Newsletter.

This summer, a campaign was started for the library in Viipuri, today Vyborg in the USSR, that Alvar Aalto designed in 1930-35. Repeatedly, the building has falsely been reported as being destructed during the last War. However, the building did survive, but is in a poor technical condition at the moment. Many elements and details characteristic for his work, here were used by Aalto for the first time.

The campaign was started by the Alvar Aalto Club, a group of architects who have worked with him in the past. A large scale international distribution of pre-printed appeal forms, in which the Soviet authorities are being requested to start renovation in a way that preserves its original architectural and technical quality as well as its original use, resulted in a massive response. DOCOMOMO supported the campaign with an official letter from the Executive Committee as well as by redirecting the appeal to all national working parties. Most national groups, including the USSR Working party, reacted to the request by returning the appeal signed by its members.

Sergei Kravchenko, architect in Vyborg, has extensively surveyed and documented the building over the years. An article on Aalto's library by mr. Kravchenko will be published in our next issue, at the occasion of which we hope to report on actual results of the campaign as well.

The exhibition on Erik Bryggman, announced in our last issue, closed at the Finnish Museum for Architecture on October 27. The exhibition displayed an impressive amount of original drawings and scale models as well as contemporary photo's of Bryggman's works. Among the first Modern Movement architects in Finland (together with his friend Aalto), he developed a highly personal style, shifting from

functionalism to a more moderate modernism in later years. The exhibited material, compiled and surveyed by Riita Nikula, gave a bright picture of Bryggman's intriguing career and highlighted several so far fairly unknown buildings. Hannele Grönlund's skillfull design of the exhibition itself, that was guiding and playfull at the same time, certainly proved a great help to get the message across. We hope to include a critique on the catalogue in our next issue. The exhibition will be shown in Stockholm until March 31, 1992. (see Exhibitions)

*(Report composed by the International Secretariat)*

#### **Hungary: politics affect the profession**

The changes in Hungarian politics and economy are being reflected in professional life. In the Spring of 1991, the former 'Union of Hungarian Architects' (MÉSZ) turned to the 'Chamber and Association of Hungarian Architects' (MÉKSZ). The changes mean more than the formal one letter (in abbr.), but the actual function and rights will have to be confirmed by the 'Chamber Law', some time in 1992. The main activities of the professional sphere now have become part of the field covered by the new Ministry for the Environment and Regional Policy.

There are changes in the field of protection of monuments as well. The 'Budapest Inspectorate' (BMF), which was a department of the Budapest City Council will be added to the 'National Institute of Historic Monuments' (OMF) from the 1st of January 1992.

The State and the Hungarian society have made a lot of efforts to return to a normal, traditional way of development, after a four and a half decade of forced ideas. A lot of work will have to be done, including necessary decisions and diappointments, but we are optimistic about the future. The political struggles (like the still unsolved Expo) will play an important role, but we trust in the real interest of our politicians. The profession has to face these challenges. We hope that historical traditions and the geographical situation of Hungary will bring better conditions for us, the architects as well, within a few years.

Meanwhile, the Hungarian DOCOMOMO Working party is preparing the national record of Modern Movement architecture, to be presented at the Dessau Conference next September. A list of 46 projects, that are actually protected, is already compiled.

*(Report: Hungarian coordinator Tamás Pintér)*

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## **Ireland: Inventory campaign on Modern Movement architecture**

There was very little contemporary publication of Modern Movement architecture in Ireland, and so the preliminary (but major) task facing the Irish DOCOMOMO Working party is to identify and catalogue the legacy of that period. Only then can a true assessment of the 20th Century heritage be undertaken. We have created a standardised inventory form for the use in compiling information on Irish MoMo architecture. Our form is a modified version of the Netherlands Monuments Inventory Project (MIP) form, and is based on information kindly provided by Dr. Marieke Kuipers, Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg in the Netherlands. One suggestion: it seems to us there could be considerable benefit for all DOCOMOMO working parties adopting similar inventory forms. Is there any reason why the MIP form should not become the basis for an international DOCOMOMO inventory form ?

We are currently compiling preliminary lists of buildings, based on nominations from individual working party members. These will be supplemented by specific localised knowledge during a second phase of our inventory activity, involving an appeal to all members of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland.

In our next report we will refer in some detail to Sean Rothery's major new reference work, "Ireland and the New Architecture, 1900-1940", which was officially launched during September by the President of Ireland, Mary Robinson.

Finally, we are pleased to inform you of an exhibition of original works by Iakov Chernikhov, which will open at 8 Merrion Square on 7 November 1991.

*(Report: Irish coordinator Shane O'Toole)*

## **Italy: three Buildings of Razionalismo In Rome**

The Italian DOCOMOMO Working party is proceeding its activities concerning the documentation and preservation of Modern Movement buildings and urban design. Different groups are making efforts to achieve the results desired.

In the months to come, the Italian DOCOMOMO group will dedicate much of its researches to three buildings of the 1930's in Rome. The School of Mathematics at the Città Universitaria by Gio Ponti is certainly among the most important modern buildings in Rome, just as two of the GIL-buildings

(Gioventù Italiana del Littorio; youthclubs for sports and social development from the fascist era), one at Trastevere by Luigi Moretti, the other designed by Gaetano Minucci for Monte Sacro. All three buildings will need a detailed study before any program of restoration can be formulated. The Italian Working party hopes to report on all three cases in future issues of the DOCOMOMO Newsletter.

Further to the highly interesting conference "Il Modo di Costruire' (the method of construction)\*, organized at the Tor Vergata University of Rome in June 1988, another seminar, subtitled '150 years of construction in Rome' and covering the 19th and 20th Centuries, has been set for November 13-15 by the same university. A most interesting part of the program certainly is the discussion on the restoration of 'the modern' on the last day. We hope to report on the seminar in our next Newsletter.

\*see 'Il Modo di Costruire; Atti del Seminario Internazionale', Maristella Casciato, Stefania Moruati, C. Paola Scavizzi, editors; Rome, EdilStampa, 1990.

*(Report: Italian coordinator Maristella Casciato)*

## **The Netherlands: elementary discussion and pragmatic action**

In the last Newsletter you have been informed about the preparation of the DOCOMOMO-NL actionplan 1991-1992. The limits with regard to the content and the activities of the Netherlands working party have been determined after a long and intensive discussion.

The premises for the actions to be undertaken by the Netherlands DOCOMOMO working party are:

- 1 The modern movement can be seen as a spiritual movement as well as a way of designing. The characteristic idea of this movement is the striving for individual development and social improvement. The assimilation of these ideas can be recognized in architecture and in the arts. In the Netherlands' architecture this particularly finds its expression in 'Het Nieuwe Bouwen'.

- 2 In the field of architecture and urban design these ideas find expression in a design attitude, that combines social concern with a rational and technological approach. The design is characterized by an expressive functionalism and economy in construction and detail, integrating rational and emotional working methods.

- 3 Although the period of "Het Nieuwe Bouwen" seems to coincide with the interbellum, a survey of its architecture should include the modern (in the above mentioned sense of the word) tendencies in

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the decades before and its influences on the architecture after the second World War

4 The working party wishes to draw up an inventory of Modern Movement architecture and urban design in the Netherlands. The emphasis is on the architectural and urban heritage of "Het Nieuwe Bouwen".

In that respect the individual designing attitude of the architect/townplanner is regarded to be a much more important guideline than the architectural features.

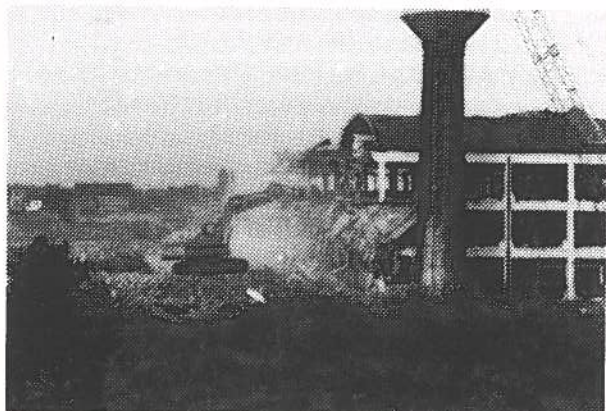
5 The Netherlands working party also has the objective to survey possibilities and necessary conditions for conservation of the built and ideological heritage of the Modern Movement, as a document resp. source of inspiration.

The members of DOCOMOMO International are invited to react to the above mentioned startingpoints. If you disagree or wish to react to the above mentioned remarks, please do not hesitate to respond; the international dialogue should not be limited to bi-annual conferences!

The Netherlands working party has now made a



The Wiebenga buildings on the Céramique site during demolition, October 1991. (photos by Guyonne van der Velden)



start with drawing up Modern Movement register. The results will be processed by means of a computer database and will be presented at the Second International DOCOMOMO Conference in Dessau, September 1992.

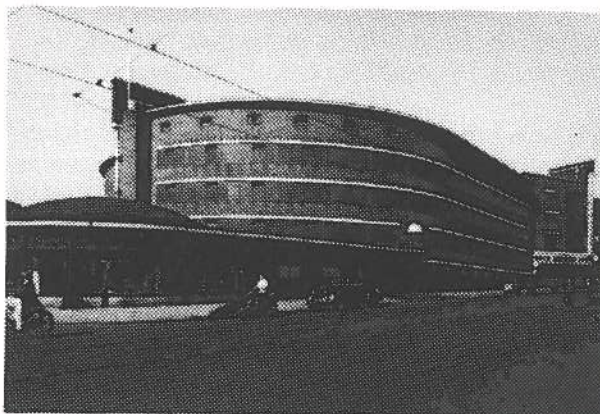
The working party has been extended with Jan Bernard Vercauteren, architect from Maastricht and (temporarily) with Anita Blom, conservation officer in Roermond. Anita will advise in setting up the DOCOMOMO-NL database.

We regret to have to report that the case of the Céramique plant in Maastricht (Wiebenga building), that you have been informed about in the last Newsletter, has been lost. The WIAM working party in Maastricht, that initiated the campaign to safeguard the Wiebenga building, had earlier agreed with only partial protection under the Monuments Act. This means that only 60 m of the structure is now legally protected, while the rest may be demolished, corresponding to the wish of the municipality.

Due to mutual arrangement between the WIAM, the municipality of Maastricht and the Netherlands Department for Conservation, the Wiebenga building has recently been demolished in part.

However, the Netherlands working party has also achieved a success! Our attention has been drawn to the planned demolition of a primary school by G.Th. Rietveld in Badhoevedorp (near Amsterdam). An appeal made by the vice chairman of the Netherlands working party to the City Council, together with the actions of a local pressure group proved to be successful: the municipality has cancelled the demolition plan and will first survey possibilities for preservation. It will be rather difficult, however, to find a suitable new function for the building.

The restoration of the Torengarage generated much discussion in the Netherlands. (contemporary photo; archives, City of Den Haag, Dept. R&O)



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In The Hague the restoration of the Torengarage (architect Greve, 1930) has been completed. There has been a lot of discussion about the replacement of the original wired glass by coated perforated steel. An informative brochure about the restoration can be obtained from the municipality of the Hague, Bureau Monumentenzorg (conservation office), PO box 80.000, 2508 GA the Hague, the Netherlands.

In the next newsletter we will report about the restoration of the Nirwana apartmentbuilding in the Hague (architect Duiker and Wiebenga, 1930) and about a research project in Hilversum, that is aimed at an integrated planning approach, giving equal attention to spatial as well as economic development and cultural identity.

*(Report: the Netherlands secretary Rob Docter)*

### **Poland: some remarks about Modern Movement architecture**

Polish modernist architecture found itself in a specific situation due to the changes following the end of World War II and, more recently, in connection with the political transformation of the 90's.

Over a period of 40 years building mainly new housing estates and dealing exclusively with old historical complexes, has left the whole sector of preWar architectural achievements outside the sphere of our interests. Unrestored, but also unaltered, this architecture has been subjected to the damaging impact of time, remaining to a large extent unimpaired by its original character. Currently, in the majority of Polish cities dominate rapid and chaotic activities, aiming at adapting the existing architectural structure to new needs. This refers particularly to the buildings recovered from the state by private owners. The latter ones seem to have an increasing awareness of ownership which unfortunately is not generally accompanied by appropriate aesthetic values. The wish to gain profits quickly in order to make up for the years when they were unable to dispose of their property freely, caused that many proprietors now aim at using this architectural substance to the maximum, most often failing to understand that, by doing so, they destroy unique architectural values.

In Kraków, the city which did not experience much destruction during the War and where the interWar architectural and property structure has remained more or less intact, the above mentioned process is particularly noticeable and has taken on quite frightening proportions.

In a situation where the ongoing changes concern even historic buildings protected by law, the fear that the process of alterations, extensions and

'modernizations' will destroy also the most valuable modernist buildings, seems to be well grounded. For the above mentioned buildings, which are on the whole in a very good condition, this creates considerable possibilities for functional and spatial changes. The latter ones are not without influence on the original architectural shape of the buildings in question. For instance, more and more one comes across attempts to obtain room area by adding another storey or taking out windows in the attics which changes the proportions of the once carefully designed facades entirely. Equal transformations are taking place on the ground floors, where in place of preWar shops (often preserved with their original fittings) are replaced by anachronistic interiors. It is the more worrying and sad that these changes are taking place in the city center, in top-class, well-preserved buildings.

Another problem was created by the shifting of Polish borders following World War II and the appearance of buildings of German origin in our country. This concerns particularly the so-called Western Territories with Wrocław and Szczecin as the main cities. In accordance with the existing legislation, the former owners of the buildings and complexes situated there are not allowed to dispose of them as they wish, since the current users decide about their use. Lack of financial resources for building activities and proper maintenance throughout the 40 year period after the War caused that these grey and neglected buildings have survived unaltered. Thanks to this, for instance Wrocław now is a huge open air museum for modernist architecture.

An excellent opportunity to return to the original beauty of the buildings designed by such architects as Poelzig, Berg, Mendelssohn or Sharoen is now created by the Foundation Max Berg, set up in 1990. Main aim of the Foundation is to advance that no valuable MoMo building will be lost during these real estate transactions and economic transformations.

The activity of the Polish Section of DOCOMOMO was initiated at a time of immense economic difficulties in Poland. The efforts of the enthusiasts grouped in the Polish Section focus at present on two main aspects, that do not require big financial resources. The first is the creation of a databank containing information about MoMo buildings in Poland, as well as about research papers relating to this period in architecture. The second, equally important goal is to make propaganda for the DOCOMOMO objectives. With the Netherlands founders, we share the opinion that arousing an awareness of the value of this architecture and the need to preserve its most

valuable examples in unaltered form, is the fundamental prerequisite of its success. The main principles of the DOCOMOMO movement have been presented on Polish radio and TV several times. Among others, the problems of modernist architecture in Poland were discussed by prof. O. Czermer, director of the National Museum of Architecture in Wrocław, prof. A.K. Olszowski, chairman of the Polish DOCOMOMO Section and prof. A. Kadluczka, vice-chairman of the Polish DOCOMOMO Section. Two lectures in the Kraków branch of the Association of Polish Architects proved that there is a considerable interest in this period of architecture and not only among professionals.

*(Report: Polish DOCOMOMO Secretariat)*

### **Portugal: Interest In DOCOMOMO**

The Portuguese Association of Architects, legal representative of all architects in that country, expressed its interest in representation in the DOCOMOMO network.

Mr. Pedro Bandão, president of the Directory Council of the South Region, informed us that the Association is promoting the documentation and conservation of the heritage of the Modern Movement in Portugal and that there is considerable interest in knowing more about our activities.

The International Secretariat has been invited to contact the Association to survey participation of Portugal in DOCOMOMO, which in the mean time has been done.

*(Report composed by the International Secretariat)*

### **Sweden: advancing public and professional awareness**

The Modern Movement in architecture and town planning has been very consequently carried out in Sweden, especially concerning its working methods and social aspects. The big breakthrough for the new movement here was at the great Stockholm Exhibition in 1930. Housing was a central issue for many of those early Modern Movement architects in Sweden and we have a large amount of housing areas of this period, all more or less threatened by insensible changes.

The Swedish DOCOMOMO group concentrates on the first decade of Modern Movement architecture, i.e. the late 1920's till 1940. The heritage from this period we regard as the most threatened at the very moment. We want to extend the period of interest when we have had more time and will

have gained more knowledge about the objects. We now try to locate the objects of interest by writing to the local authorities and by recalling the objects and areas which we personally find important. We also plan a little book on 'What is Modern Movement?', in which we want to show Swedish examples and what is typical in its architecture, to make people dealing with those buildings aware of what to take care of.

We are also preparing a symposium for next year to gather conservation officers, town-architects and other people in the profession dealing with developments, to make them aware of the values and characteristics of this architecture, its value and characteristics and how to save it. Also we are also enlarging our group with people in other parts of Sweden and are now about 25 members.

*(Report: Swedish coordinator Eva Rudberg)*

### **Switzerland: action for Bata Colony at Moehlin**

Last year the news of a possible selling of the Bata Colony in Moehlin, Kanton of Aargau, arrived to the Swiss DOCOMOMO members. Aim of the intended transaction was to make a new speculative development at the site.

A letter of protest and in favour of preservation of the Colony was distributed to several architects and other persons interested. A provisional protection of the site by the Swiss Department for Conservation (Heimatschutz) could be arranged on short term.

Next, two schools of architecture started themes for their students that included analysis of the site and proposals for new buildings and functions in harmony with the historic aspects, for instance with respect to the density of the development. Felix Kuhn of the Technical School of Muttensz, near Basel, introduced an architectural course on a small scale, while Ruggero Tropeano of the ETH in Zürich presented a theme that deals with the urban scale of the area. Through these means, our Swiss colleagues hope to attract the interest of a larger community for the Bata Colony at Moehlin.

*(Report: provisional Swiss coordinator Ruggero Tropeano)*

### **United Kingdom: DOCOMOMO registered as charitable organization**

DOCOMOMO-UK is now a registered as a Charitable Organisation, No 1003997, for Educational Purposes. Invitations for membership have been made through the press. Schools of

architecture, libraries and local authority conservation officers will all be circulated with the new brochure giving details of DOCOMOMO and will include an application form. Membership is open to all who support the aims of DOCOMOMO, but it is generally expected that most applications will be from professionals.

Membership benefits will include receiving two issues of the International Newsletter and two issues of the National Newsletter each year. Invitations will be made for the bi-annual UK Symposium for which there will be a limited number of places available for our overseas colleagues. A limited number of invitations will be made for the bi-annual International Conference. Members will also be invited to the annual DOCOMOMO-UK lecture.

The first UK Symposium has been arranged at the Architectural Association, London for the 29th February 1992, which will coincide with the travelling exhibition on the problems and solutions of Modern Movement conservation. This will be held at the Building Centre, London, and will be opened on the 12th February 1992 by Lord Palumbo. Full details will be issued in December.

Progress is being made on the compilation of the National Register of Modern Movement architecture and we are seeking the cooperation of all the local authorities who have a responsibility for conservation.

Case studies have taken up much time of the group. Application is being made for the up-grading of Wells Coates' Lawn Road flats to Grade 1 in national listing. Problems of ownership, conservation and administration have yet to be resolved.

Contributions are being made to the debate on the future of the South Bank Concert Halls and Hayward Gallery. Our secretary, James Dunnet, has given much evidence to encourage the National Trust to acquire the house of Ernö Goldfinger at Willow Road, Hampstead. This will be the first modern house the Trust is to take responsibility for. It is hoped that much of the distinguished collection of modern art and furniture will be retained in the house.

Some changes occurred in the UK Working party. Eitan Karol resigned from the group, while David Allford joined it. Gavin Stamp has been replaced by Alan Powers as representative from the Thirties Society.

*(Report: UK coordinator Christopher Dean)*

## **USA: an initiative for DOCOMOMO**

During a recent visit to New York, DOCOMOMO chairman Hubert Jan Henket discussed with Kenneth Frampton of Columbia University the possible establishment of a working party in the USA. Frampton will sound opinions within the professions to survey interest for such an initiative. Colleagues in the USA who are interested in participating in DOCOMOMO are kindly requested to contact Kenneth Frampton at Columbia University, Avery Hall, 116th Street, 10027 New York, USA.

The Italian architectural magazine DOMUS dedicated a main article in their October issue to the works of Richard Neutra, including a map of Los Angeles indicating his works in that city.

*(Report composed by the International Secretariat)*

## **Soviet Union: exhibitions and publications**

On September 13th, 1991, another session of DOCOMOMO USSR took place in Moscow. The participants of the meeting were informed about the ICAM conference in Stockholm of September 1991. At the meeting, the problems of organizing a symposium on methods of conservation and restoration of the architectural heritage of the first third of the 20th Century were discussed.

The Soviet group has planned several publications as well as a special series of articles on the preservation of Modern Movement architecture.

In 1992 we will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of both Ginzburg and Iofan, esteemed architects of the Modern Movement in the USSR. The Shushev Museum of Architecture is preparing exhibitions on the works of both architects in cooperation with DOCOMOMO next year.

Again, the national working party has been extended. We were happy to accept as new members Mrs. Maria Makagonova of the Museum of the History of St. Petersburg and architect A.P. Gozak from Moscow, editor of the periodical 'USSR Architecture'.

Please note that, due to renaming of some streets in Moscow, our address has been changed (see list of working parties).

*(Report: USSR coordinator Vladimir Rezvin)*

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More information on members of the national working parties and associated members can be obtained from the International Secretariat of DOCOMOMO

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# Warchavchik and Modern Movement architecture in Brazil

When discussing the work of architect Gregori Warchavchik, one is led to the origins of modernism in Brazil. Generally speaking, the Modern Movement in Brazilian architecture featured two opposing trends: one was decidedly internationalist and denied constructive elements of traditional Brazilian architecture, whereas the other favoured integration of such traditional features into rationalist principles.

Warchavchik's works must be seen as an indispensable stage in the development of the Modern Movement architecture in Brazilian architecture.

by *Anna Beatriz Galvão*

The first trend is linked to Gregori Warchavchik (1896 - 1975), a Russian architect established in São Paulo since the 1920's. His work is of utmost importance to understand modern architecture in Brazil. Warchavchik was born in Odessa and there he started to study architecture. These studies were interrupted by the 1917 revolution. He emigrated to Italy, where he graduated in 1920 at the Instituto Superiore di Belle Arti in Rome. In Rome he worked for two years as an assistant to architect Marcello Piacentini. In 1923, Warchavchik was engaged by Cia. Construtora de Santos, at the time one of Brazil's major construction companies, and came to São Paulo. Although teaching in Europe was still academic in nature, Warchavchik brought a different view to Brazil. Indeed at the time of his studies, a revolution in architectural thought had occurred throughout Europe. First in Russia, where the first manifestos of constructivism were launched prior to 1917, at a time when Warchavchik started his studies. In

Rome he became familiar with the new concepts of Le Corbusier who was then leading a group of architects considered controversial in European intellectual circles. Although Warchavchik was not directly involved, he followed these discussions through articles in the magazine *L'Esprit Nouveau* and Le Corbusier's book *Vers une Architecture*.

## Eclecticism

In São Paulo, the Russian painter Lasar Segall introduced him to the work of Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus which were to influence all his future work. In those days, there was a significant time lag between debate in Europe and Brazil. In this country, eclecticism still ruled and determined the growth of Brazilian cities. As regards São Paulo, one may state that eclectic mansions still impressed architects and the general public. At

Warchavchik's own house in São Paulo, designed in 1927.



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that time, neo-colonial design, a nationalistic trend towards a rebirth of Brazil's Portuguese heritage in architecture, still was a major innovation, even though it represented a purely formalistic style. However, in 1922, a group of artists and intellectuals in sympathy with modernist ideas organised the 'Week of Modern Art', an event that was to influence some segments of local culture. Although there was no immediate impact on architecture, the atmosphere became favourable to the introduction of new ideas. These circumstances allowed Warchavchik to start playing a role in Brazilian architecture. His manifesto, 'Futurism', first of its kind in Brazil, was published on June 14, 1925, in 'Il Piccolo', the newspaper of São Paulo's Italian Colony. A Portuguese version of this manifesto, under the title 'About Modern Architecture', appeared in the Rio de Janeiro newspaper 'Correio de Manhã' on December 1, 1925. Rino Levi, a Brazilian studying architecture in Rome, concerned with the dissemination of these new principles, wrote a letter to the newspaper 'O Estado de São Paulo', discussing this subject, which was published on October 15, 1925. Although these articles brought no tangible results, the fact that two of Brazil's major dailies published them was a significant sign of change.

#### **Water reservoir**

Warchavchik's first attempt to put the ideas of his manifesto into practice, was the construction of his own residence at Rua Santa Cruz, started in 1927 and completed in 1928. The architect had to face a series of problems: the municipal authorities censured the design of the facade, lack of industrialized materials, etc. Indeed, this project differed greatly from architecture then practised. Once completed, in spite of such difficulties, this residence had a significant impact on public opinion. In any case, Warchavchik succeeded in transmitting the message of a new and modern architecture, even if it scandalized part of the public. The residence was widely discussed in the press and even ridiculed as a 'water reservoir'. In due course, the much-discussed residence at Rua Santa Cruz became an outstanding advertisement for the architect's work. Warchavchik was further backed by the originators of the 1922 'Week of Modern Art' and several influential politicians. This led to the new commissions in which the architect was mainly concerned with putting into practice the principles of his manifesto. This trend intensified after the First International Congress of Modern Architecture held at Le Sarraz, which prompted Warchavchik to engage in an intensive campaign promoting internationalism in architecture. Regional elements were to be discarded. Faith in the principles of functionalism was further strengthened when Warchavchik met Le Corbusier in 1929, during the

latter's stay in São Paulo. Le Corbusier, upon viewing Warchavchik's work, was surprised to find modern architecture in Brazil and immediately wrote Sigfried Giedion, secretary general of CIAM, to tell what he had seen and suggesting that Warchavchik be nominated delegate for Latin America.

#### **International style**

Although it proved impossible to fully incorporate the internationalist principle and trends into his work actually executed (Brazil was still mostly an agricultural country at that time) Warchavchik was one of the few architects in Brazil to actively defend and disseminate such principles. To a certain extent he succeeded in his extensive amount of work and thus became an outstanding example of the international style in Brazil. This trend clearly shows in work executed after the Rua Santa Cruz residence. One should put forward another residence at Rua Itapolis in which, in 1930, Warchavchik decided to hold a 'modernist' exhibition, featuring works by São Paulo's top artists of the day, furniture designed by Warchavchik and objects ordered from the Bauhaus. The purpose was to provide a perfect example of modern architecture and matching interior decoration. The exhibition opened in March, 1930, proved a great success and consecrated this building as a definitive example of 'the modern residence'. Impressed by Warchavchik's work, Lucio Costa, who then had recently become director of the Rio de Janeiro School of Fine Arts, invited him to take part in reviewing the teaching of architecture. Although this review only lasted from April to November 1931, it did influence students at that time.

#### **Regionalism and modern architecture**

The second trend, referred to earlier, i.e. regionalism, led by Lucio Costa, originates in the Rio de Janeiro experiment. This school provided a new impulse for modern Brazilian architecture and was to overshadow other, more limited and different movements in other parts of the country, including the works of Warchavchik himself, whose importance within Brazilian architecture declined. Anyhow and notwithstanding the criticism on Warchavchik's unyielding internationalist stance, there can be no doubt that he represented a necessary stage in overcoming the then prevailing academic architecture. Indeed, he blazed the trail then followed by modern architecture in Brazil as represented by Lucio Costa's team, directly influenced by Le Corbusier.

*Anna Beatriz Galvão is an architect at the Mastercourse in Conservation and Restoration, Faculty of Architecture of the University of Bahia, Salvador BA, Brazil.*

# The House Dr. De Beir in Knokke, Belgium (Huib Hoste, 1924)

Huib Hoste (1881-1957) represents, with a.o. Henri Van der Velde, Victor Bourgeois, Louis Van der Swaelmen, Gaston Eysselinck, Leon Stynen, Jean Jules Eggericx, Louis Herman De Koninck etc., the Modern Movement in Belgium. This recognition of Hoste's importance for the development of modern architecture in Belgium is due to the originality of his work. Pierre Putteman states that 'in Belgium Huib Hoste was the representative of a specific form of the international style, adding at the same time something national to his architecture. All his work clearly illustrates this duality, which was for other architects a true conflict.'<sup>1</sup>. About Hoste's projects of the 1920's Marcel Smets writes 'that notwithstanding Hoste's conviction that "an international style of universal significance will emerge, for which all local, regional or national expressions shall cede", in the end he generates in this period of an explicitly individual (Flemish ?) character.'<sup>2</sup>. This is even true in a certain sense for the work of his so called 'international period', in the 1930's, to begin with the house in Zele (1931): 'Against manifestations of a growing tendency towards a regional (and national) character in architecture, Huib Hoste suggests that "even an international architecture will lead one to presume in one way or another the nationality of the architect"(...) He even speaks about a typically Flemish approach of the New Objectivity (...), a sort of local interpretation of universally valid principles. In his opinion, a national architecture should indeed be architecture before anything else'<sup>3</sup>.

by Luc Verpoest

The very original duality which characterizes the work of Hoste can certainly be explained through his background: on one hand, the traditionalism of Charles de Wulf and Adolf Duclos, his teachers in Bruges, and the neo-gothic rationalism, according to E.E. Viollet-le Duc, of Louis Cloquet, whose courses he took at the University of Ghent at the turn of the Century; on the other hand, just before and during the first World War, his confrontation with contemporary architecture in the Netherlands -the work of H.P. Berlage, K.P.C. de Bazel, W. Kromhout, the Amsterdam School - and ultimately, with the earliest fundamentals of modern architecture, through Rob van 't Hoff, Theo van Doesburg. De Stijl. As Marcel Smets writes, Hoste 'witnesses (in the Netherlands) the discussions in which the international style had its origins'. Smets quotes Henri Van der Velde: 'Those of the younger generation, whom the war circumstances threw over the Moerdijk, presented themselves as the apostles of a new architectural expression, of a radically rational conception and of an effort towards the generalization of a common language'<sup>4</sup>.

## International style in the 1930's

It was only in 1927 that Huib Hoste got acquainted with modern architecture as really built, more particularly with the work of a.o. Le Corbusier, Gropius and Mies van der Rohe at the Werkbund exhibition in Stuttgart. At the foundation in 1928 in La Sarraz of the *Congres Internationaux d' Architecture Moderne*, Hoste was one of the founding members. In the same year Hoste set up the monthly review *Opbouwen*, 'a remarkable controversialist paper which during its five years of

publication (with Hoste as editor) achieved, as no other magazine, to diffuse and defend in Flanders the continuously renewing and evolving ideas in Architecture'<sup>5</sup>. In 1932 Huib Hoste was invited by Le Corbusier to collaborate on the competition project for the *Linkeroever* (the Left Bank of the Schelde) in Antwerp. It is only then that Hoste really became 'an unconditional propagator' of the CIAM-theories<sup>6</sup>. The international orientation of Huib Hoste and the international recognition of his own contribution in the late 1920's and early 1930's is also clearly shown in contemporary publications, reviewing for the first time then a state-of-the-art in modern architecture, including work by Hoste: L. Hilberseimer's *Internationale Architektur* (1928), *Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeiten* by G.A. Platz (1930) and Alberto Sartoris *Gli elementi dell' architetture funzionale* (1932).

## The early modernism of Huib Hoste in the 20's

Only at the very end of the 1920's Huib Hoste is going to be a part of the international movement of modern architecture. His early modernist work, before 1927, seems therefore all the more remarkable and significant, certainly one reason for carefully preserving this early witness of his 'recherche patiente', patiently seeking a contemporary architecture of his own. In this period, Hoste independently succeeded in developing a very peculiar form of modern architecture: 'The important thing is that Hoste, far from any external influence, further elaborated the theoretical principles of De Stijl, he brought with him from the Netherlands (back to Belgium, after the first World War). The ideas behind what he built in that immediate postWar period are absolutely original

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(foreign examples were hardly available). These experiences -a sort of training- further influenced his further development from 1927 on, in contact with the international style. They are the foundations of his very personal interpretation of it'.<sup>7</sup>

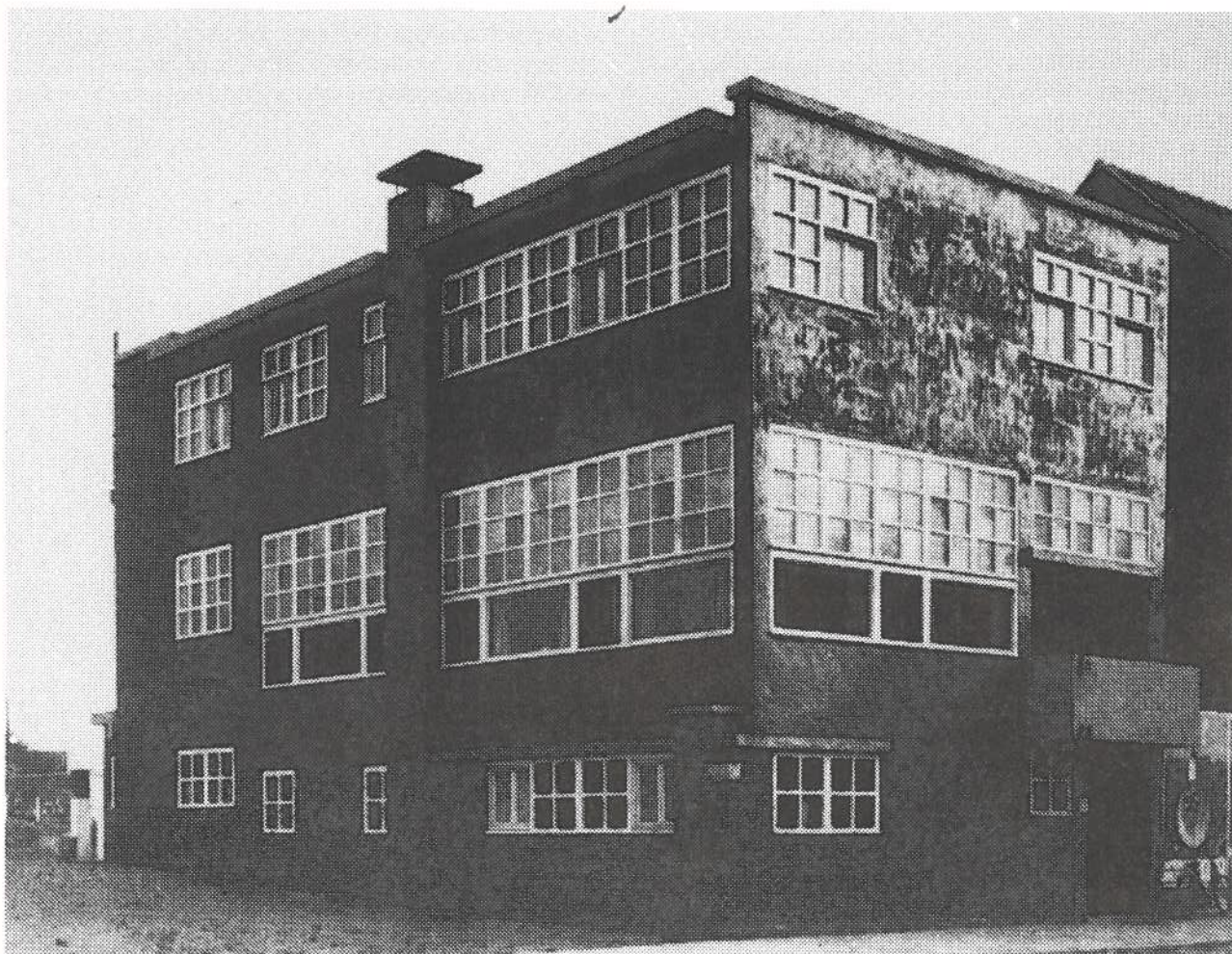
#### **Publications and works**

In the same period Hoste published in several avantgarde magazines as *Ter Waarheid*, *De Driehoek* and *Bouwkunde*. Marcel Smets described Hoste's office in Bruges in the 1920's as '... a small progressive island within a reactionary milieu.(...)His home is the meeting place for almost all progressives in the country. His works as well as his writings are seen as characteristic for a new age'<sup>8</sup> In 1922 and 1923 Hoste organized, with the painter Jozef Peeters, three congresses on modern art. At the second congress, in Antwerp in 1922, *De Stijl*-members Victor Huszar and Robert van 't Hoff gave lectures. At the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris in 1925 -with Le Corbusier's *Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau* and the Soviet pavillon of Konstantin Melnikov - the

*Bureau-fumoir* by Hoste and the painter Victor Servranckx was awarded a prize. Hoste's work was regularly published in foreign magazines such as *Bauwelt* (Berlin 1922), *L'Effort Moderne* (Paris,1924), *L'Architecture* (Paris,1924), in an article of Hannes Meier in *Das Werk* (Zürich,1925) and by Emile Henveaux in *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst* (Berlin,1925) as well as in *L'Art Vivant* (Paris,1926).<sup>9</sup>

In the first half of the 1920's, some of Hoste's important, if not the most significant projects were built. They are, with contemporary work of Victor Bourgeois and Louis-Herman de Koninck, the earliest examples of a modernist architecture in Belgium: the garden quarters *Klein Rusland* in Zelzate, near Ghent (1921-1923) and, in collaboration with A. Pompe, P. Rubbers and J.F. Hoeben, *Kappelveld* in *Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe*, near Brussels (1922-1926), both with a site-plan by Louis van der Swaelmen<sup>10</sup>, and finally, the house for dr. De Beir in *Knokke* (1924), which was seen as 'his best achievement of this period'<sup>11</sup>. It was through dr. De Beir that Hoste was already asked in 1916 to design a memorial for Amersfoort

House Dr. De Beir in Knokke,  
that Huib Hoste designed in  
1924



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(the Netherlands), the so-called Belgenmonument, in collaboration with Louis Van der Swaelmen and the sculptors Hildo Krop and François Gos.

### **A modern house by the sea.**

'The ground-plans of the house dr. De Beir are surprisingly well organized (...). Hoste incorporates the different functions in a pure, geometric volume. The facade of the ground-floor is covered with terracotta-tiles so creating a visual separation between service rooms (on the ground floor) and dwelling rooms (on the second and third floors). The house seems to stand on a socle, as separated from the ground. This is (at least in the original condition of the building) even emphasized by the colour-scheme: the terracotta-tiles below look like a continuation of the surrounding dunes, contrasting strongly with the black surface of the upper part of the facade. The formalist volumes of the corner element apparently link both parts of the facade. The predominant impression is of one volume, but on the other hand the main mass rather seems to be composed of surfaces, with projecting secondary volumes. Where the surfaces meet on the level of the roof, they are intentionally separated from each other. The surfaces themselves are subdivided by windows with white-painted frames. Even though the white frames vividly contrasted with the black facade, the windows still look like smaller planes in a larger one. Each facade has been reduced to a composition of planes, creating only a third dimension through supplementary volume-elements. As such this illustrates how Hoste interpreted in a particular way the principles of De Stijl<sup>12</sup>. The house dr. De Beir in Knokke is an important moment in the evolution of Huib Hoste, being a first syntaxis of his search for a personal contribution to the development of modern architecture

### **The Importance of being modern**

In contemporary criticism noticeably much attention was paid to this remarkable performance, a.o. in the already mentioned article by Henri van de Velde on 'L'architecture moderne en Belgique' in L'Art Vivant<sup>13</sup> and in an article by architect Gaston Eysselinck in Hoste's 'Opbouwen'<sup>14</sup>. In an issue on 'L'habitation privé en Belgique' (private housing in Belgium), the Belgian magazine Le Document published plans and photos of the house dr. De Beir, together with work of a.o. Gaston Brunfaut, Victor Bourgeois and Jacques Obozinski. The introduction by E. Taelemans, apparently inspired by Adolf Loos, characterizes Hoste's work as an architecture of Reason and Sentiment: 'The savage covers everything he finds with ornament. The civilized man distinguishes himself from the savage by not having tattooed his face. It is thus possible to measure the intensity of civilization of the people by the degree of simplicity

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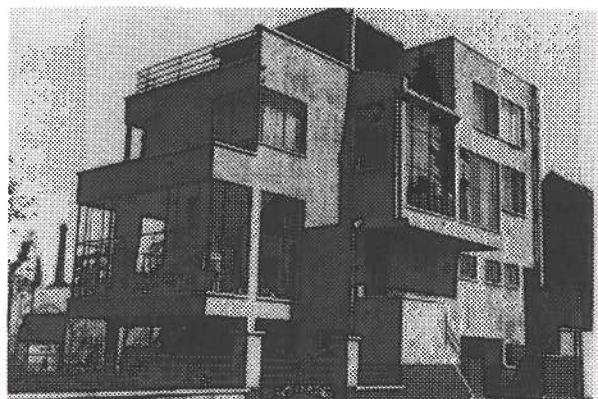
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of the objects used (...). We don't have artisans anymore with the decorative power they had in bygone days. But we have engineers, mechanics and airplane-pilots (...). The emotive forms of the New Spirit have to be looked for in human activities remaining far from decorative intentions. The real architectural work comes close to the sublime and doesn't support any intrusion or superficial forms (...). This doesn't mean that the modern house should have a rebarbative appearance: its conception shall be rational, but harmonious'.<sup>15</sup> In the catalogue 'Antoine Pompe et l'effort moderne en Belgique, 1890-1940', K.N. Elnó wrote that 'the houses and villa's (designed by Huib Hoste) continue to be witnesses of a tectonic sensibility which since then only rarely came to light in Belgium. It is a rationally considered architecture, an unmannered and purposeful, but also unusually balanced, harmonious art of building, entirely free of any geometric or functionalist aestheticism which outsmarted so many modernist (...). Huib Hoste was able to set off the absolute radicalism of modern building by experiencing cultural triviality, based on national character and folk mentality and on a specific attitude towards nature,... and to make modern building to take root. That is how he created modern architecture which was obviously linked to the great traditions of craftsmanship, to wisdom and joy of life. We may hope that once one will place this fine work, which is as dignified as it is without pretention, in a European context and then will probably understand how much richer

House in Zele, designed by Hoste in 1931.  
Right: competition entry for Antwerp, 1933



and more authentic it is than many famous exploits<sup>16</sup>. The recent listing of the house as a historic monument (by Ministerial Decree of April 17, 1991), on which was already reported in the previous DOCOMOMO Newsletter<sup>17</sup>, can be seen as an important step to its definite preservation and to a general revalorization of Huib Hoste's work as a whole.

*Luc Verpoest of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Dept. ASRO, is coordinator of DOCOMOMO in Belgium.*

*Article previously published in Monumenten en Landschappen, X (1991), nr.2, pp. 44-48.*

1 Pierre Puttemans, *Moderne Bouwkunst in België*, Brussels, 1975, p.143.

2 Marcel Smets, *Huib Hoste, voorvechter van een nieuwe architectuur*, Brussels, 1972, p.49. Smets quotes Huib Hoste, 'Bouwkunst en de moderne samenleving', in: *Ter Waarheid*, I (1921), nr.2 (February).

3 Marcel Smets, 1972, pp.54-55. Smets quotes Huib Hoste, 'Stand der architectuur 1', in *Opbouwen*, III (1933), nr.1 (March).

4 Henri van der Velde, 'L'architecture moderne en Belgique', in: *L'Art Vivant*, III (1927), nr.67 (October.1)(Quoted in: Marcel Smets, 'Huib Hoste en de Nederlandse architectuur', in: *Tijdschrift voor Architectuur en Beeldende Kunsten*, XXXVIII (1971), nr.12 (June); J. vander Perren, *Architectuur en meubels van Huib Hoste (1881-1975)*, Ghent, 1980; Marc Dubois, 'Invloed van de architectuur van W.M. Dudok in Vlaanderen', in: M. Cramer, H. van Grieken and H. Pronk, *W.M. Dudok 1884-1974*, Amsterdam, 1981, pp.40-52.

5 Marcel Smets, 1972, p.20, where he quotes the editorial in: *Opbouwen*, III (1933), nr.1 (March, 15).

6 *Ibid*, pp.110 and 71

7 *Ibid*, p.49. Smets emphasizes that 'the first building of Hoste's 'international period', the house in Zele (1931), seems to indicate that, in his development towards the international Style, he was very much influenced by the Parisian period of Van Doesburg', more particularly by the 'maison d'artiste' he designed with Cornelis van Eesteren in 1930(*ibid.*, p.110).

8 *Ibid.*, pp.17-18; see also the bibliography of Huib Hoste by Marcel Smets (*ibid.*,pp.163-170).

9 A.Behne, 'Belgische Modernisten', in *Bauwelt*, (1924), nr.4; *L'Effort Moderne*, (1924), (July); P. Lavollee, 'Le Monument Belge d'Amersfoort', in: *L'Architecture*, 37 (1924), nr.16 (Aug., 25); H. Meyer, 'Junge Kunst in Belgien', in: *Das Werk*, (1925), (Sept.); E. Henvaux, 'Ausgeführte Arbeiten modernistischer Architekten in Brussel und Umgebung', in: *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst*, (1926), nr.4 (April); J. Mesnil, 'L'architecture moderne en Belgique', in: *L'Art Vivant*, (1926), (Jan.)(bibliographic references from M. Smets, 1972, p.171).

10 For the history of garden-cities and quarters in Belgium, see: Marcel Smets, *De ontwikkeling van de tuinvijkgedachte in België: een overzicht van de Belgische volkswoningbouw, 1830-1930*, Brussels/Liege, 1977; H. Stynen, *Louis Van der Swaelmen (1883-1929), bezieler van de moderne beweging in België*, Brussels/Liege, 1979

11 Marcel Smets, 1972, p.104.

12 *Ibid*, pp. 105 and 107. In the same year (1924) G. Rietveld built the Schröder-house in Utrecht, 'the most poetic and inventive realization of the principles of De Stijl' (G. Fanelli, *Moderne architectuur in Nederland 1900-1940, 's-Gravenhage*, 1978, p.135). A comparative study of both houses could clarify the originality of Hoste's interpretation of the principles of De Stijl.

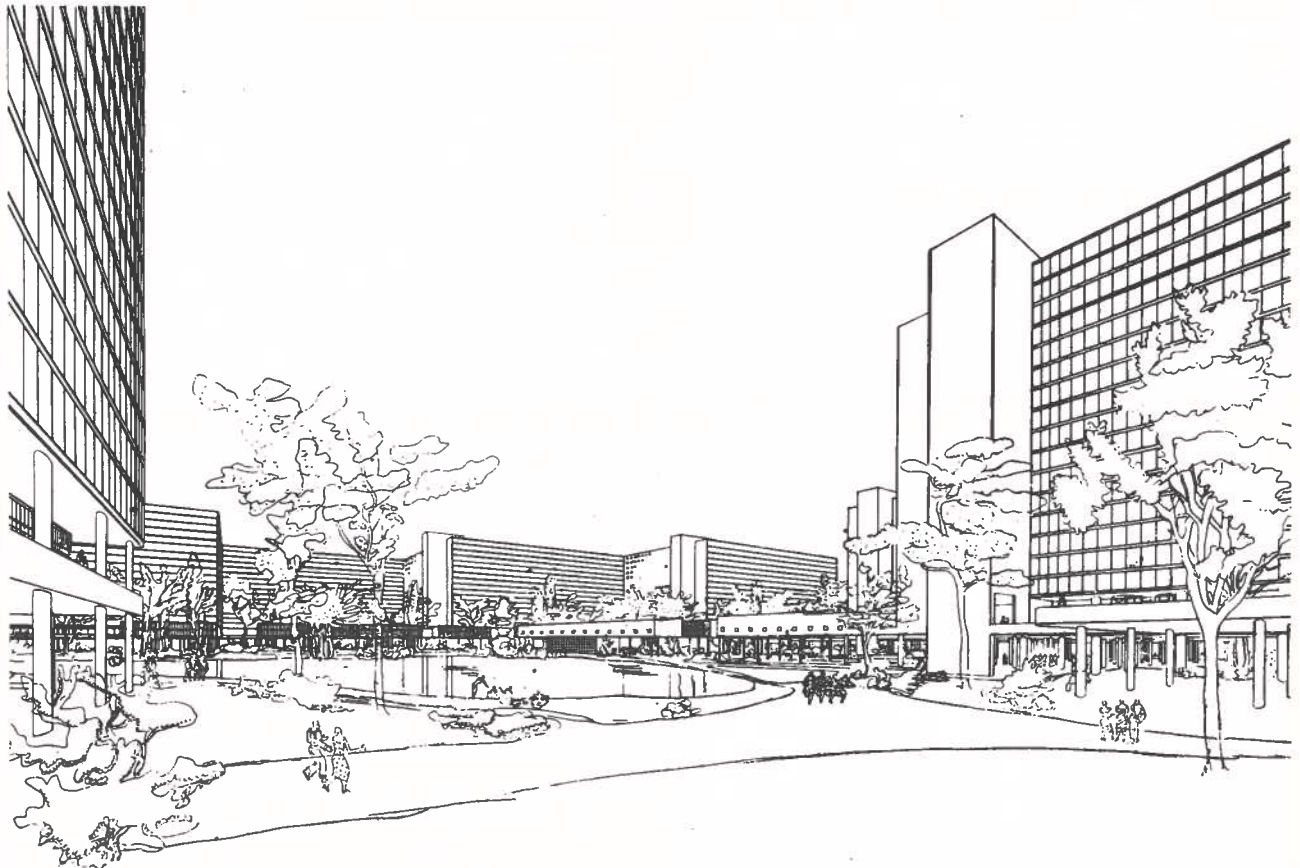
13 *Cfr. supra*.

14 Gaston Eysselinck, 'Hapert er iets?', in: *Opbouwen*, IV (1934), nr.10 (June)

15 E. Taelmans, 'L'habitation privée en Belgique', in: *Le Document*, (1930), nr.70.

16 K.N. Eln, 'Vlaanderen 1900-40', in: *Antoine Pompe et l'effort moderne en Belgique 1890-1940*, Brussels, 1969, pp.72-76.

17 DOCOMOMO-Newsletter (1991), 5 (June), p. 18



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# Modern Movement in Medan, Indonesia

## An important role in urban developments, 1920's -30's

In Indonesia, the heritage of the Modern Movement in architecture is of intriguing diversity. Not only do the functions of the buildings range from private villas to public buildings, from sport facilities to luxurious hotels, also the designs themselves show a mixture of avantgarde modernism, art deco, Amsterdam School and tropical vernacular. An important element in the inheritance of the Modern Movement is also its role in urban developments, where a number of cities, such as Bandung, Surabaya and Medan has been extended in the 1920's and 1930's.

In 1987 the Indonesian and the Netherlands Associations of Architects, IAI and BNA, joint forces in a research and registration program concerning these architectural developments in preWar Indonesia. In 1988 this resulted in the seminar 'Change and Heritage in Indonesian cities' in Jakarta, followed in 1989 by a registration campaign in Bandung. Now, a programme is developed for Medan. Also a researchgroup CNO/ARSI has been established, in order to stimulate survey and activities with respect to architecture and urban development in Indonesia.

For his leading role in these joint projects and his merits in the field of conservation in Indonesia, Cor Passchier was appointed as the first foreign honorary member of the IAI on September 14, 1991. Here, he introduces the Medan project to our readers.

*By Cor Passchier*

In the 17th Century, the establishment of a Dutch colony in Indonesia, brought a penetration of Western culture in the archipelago. Dutch merchants founded Batavia (nowadays Jakarta, the Capital of Indonesia); they dug canals and built their houses like they were used to in Amsterdam. In the 18th and 19th Centuries, a development in architecture can be identified which is more reflecting to the tropical climate and vernacular Indonesian architecture.

In the first two decades of our Century, Western influences in architecture intensified again.

### **A changing society**

In that period, there was an increase in migration from Europe and the construction trade was really growing fast. Also, the first construction companies were established soon and architects arrived from the Netherlands. The need for housing as well as administration-, trade-, and shopbuildings, etc. in the booming townships was hard to solve.

The old colonial structure of the Dutch Indies changed into a modern society and so did its architecture. Architecture in the new City-developments owed a great deal from Western



C.P. Wolff Schoemaker 1918 - 1920, Trade Fair Hall in Bandung, influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright.

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sources, both in conception and in expression. But comparing the development of architecture in the archipelago with that of the Netherlands shows both similarities and differences.

The architectural debate in the former Dutch Indies began around Worldwar I. One agreed on rejecting the eclectic architecture (the so-called colonial style) which was still very popular in the beginning of this Century.

The architectural debate first of all was influenced by the rise of the Modern Movement in the Western world. Yet, it was not only focussed on developments in Holland; also architecture in the USA was a subject of serious interest. However, modern developments in architecture in the Dutch Indies were rather delayed as compared to Western Europe. For instance examples of 'De Stijl' architecture in Indonesia are hard to find. Very important is the work of Charles P. Wolff Schoemaker. In 1918 he designed the 'Trade Fair Hall' in Bandung (West Java), which is strongly influenced by the work of Frank Lloyd Wright.

The city of Bandung is very interesting for several reasons. It extended like a boomtown, from a village at the beginning of the Century to the third town of preWar Indonesia in 1940. It can be nominated as a laboratory of modern architecture in Indonesia. A first serious survey and documentation of the architectural heritage has been done in 1989.

What can be learned from Indonesian vernacular architecture? How to handle the concepts of a modern Western movement in a (colonial) Asiatic society? These questions were central issues in the architecture debate and today we can find examples of the different answers that were given to these questions. Nevertheless, designers of the Modern Movement took their chances, particularly in new town enlargements and the private sector.

Rivelle Theater in Bandung,  
designer unknown, late 1930's.

### **Common research**

Over the last five years, there is a growing cooperation between Indonesian and Dutch architects concerning common interest in the field of research on architectural history, particularly on the island Java.

In 1987 the Indonesian and Dutch Associations of Architects (IAI and BNA) signed an agreement to cooperate in organizing the seminar 'Change and Heritage in Indonesian cities' in 1988. They intend to organize a Summerschool on the architectural and urban heritage in Medan in 1992.

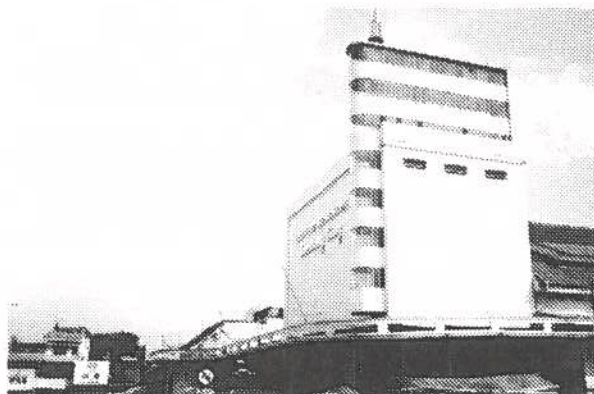
### **Medan**

Medan is the Capital of North Sumatra, and houses about 2.100.000 inhabitants. It is the biggest City of the island Sumatra.

The town celebrated its 400th Anniversary in 1990 but the modern town development started around the last quarter of the 19th Century. For more than 100 years Medan was the exportcentre of agricultural products from the great estates. In the areas around Medan one will find large tobacco, rubber and palm-oil estates. Through this, Medan became the most important City outside the island of Java.

Among the oldest buildings of Medan one can count the old government palace (1886, nowadays a discotheque), the palace of the Sultan of Deli (1888) and the great Mosque, which dates from 1906. The central area around the Merdeka Park was developed in the first quarter of the 20th Century and now functions as the natural hart of the city.

Until Worldwar I, the architecture of Medan had strong connections with the eclectic style in former British colonies as Malaysia, that was more near than the governmental centre of Batavia, 1400 km from Medan.



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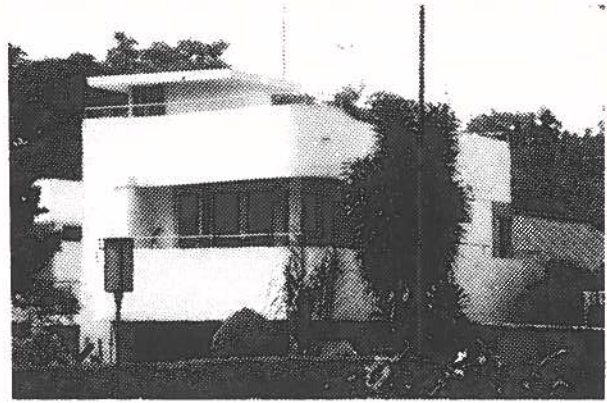
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### **Practical contribution**

Like all Indonesian cities there are examples of Modern Movement architecture to be found in Medan and it is important to recognize and document these buildings.

Nowadays, Medan is an expanding city with all the problems that come along with that. The proposed workshop wants to draw attention to the tremendous qualities in the architecture and urban environment in Medan. The Summerschool intends to contribute to the discussion on this subject by organizing a workshop in which also a practical contribution will be delivered by organizing a fieldsurvey to investigate the cultural-historical, architectural and environmental qualities of Medan.

*More information on Indonesian Modern Movement architecture can be found in 'Urban conservation in Indonesia', Ronald Gill, DOCOMOMO Conference Proceedings, 1990, pp 218-221*



Villa in Bandung, designed by A.F. Aalbers in 1937.

The DENIS bank, designed for Bandung by A.F. Aalbers in 1935.



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# Greek architecture between two Wars

## Rationalism, mediterraneity and autochthonous tradition

The problem of 'mediterraneity' has repeatedly occupied South European historians who have marked out common morphological roots in the architectural works of the period between the Wars, that is works which directly refer to the popular architectural heritage of the countries that surround the Mediterranean Sea. This is not an evaluation or posteriori. Rationalist architects of these countries, who accepted that the social and political principles of the Central European movement were of principle importance, at the same time affirmed that from the morphological and typological point of view, many of those principles were included in their own popular architecture. Also of prime importance was the fact that, having used as a source of inspiration the autochthonous heritage, they would be able to give authority and originality to their new design proposals.

by *Andrea Giacumacatos*

J.L.Sert writes:

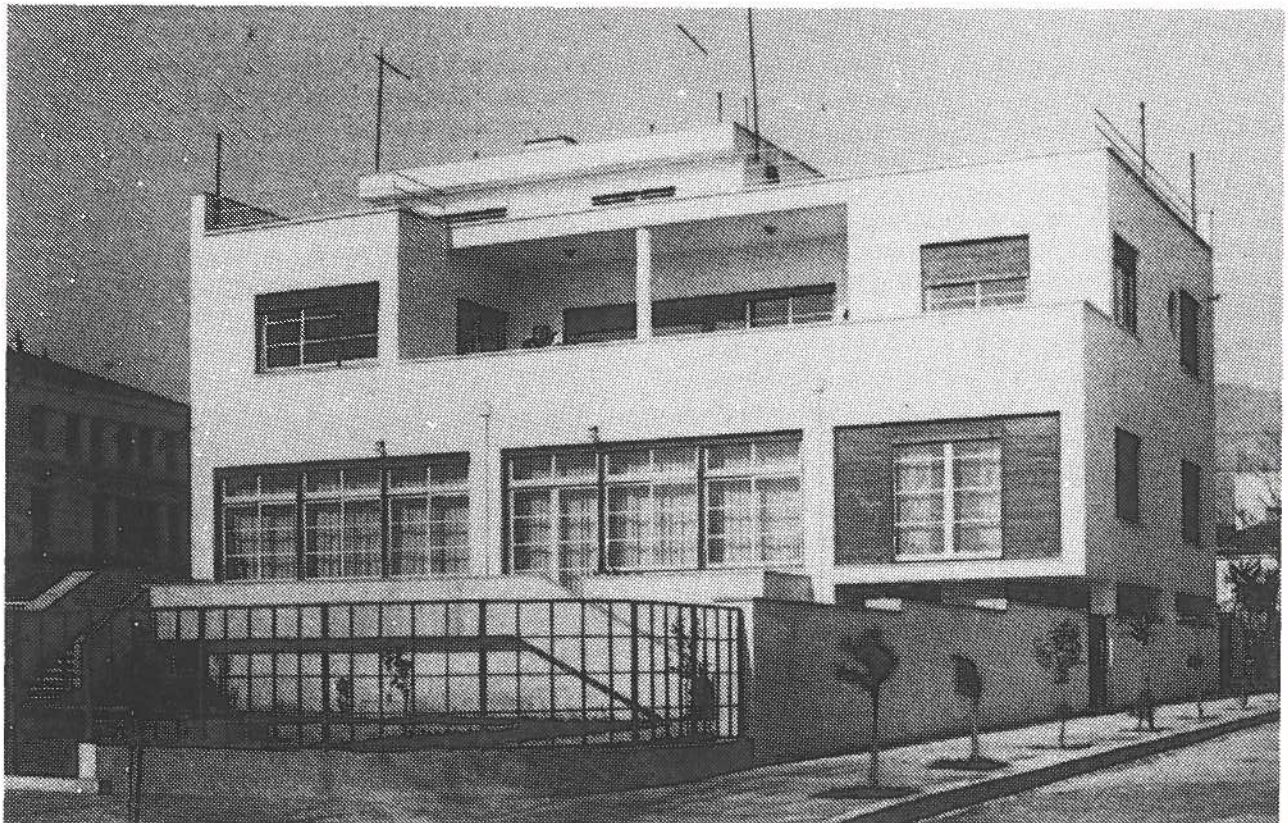
'In the popular or folk architecture of Egypt, the Greek islands, Italy, the North African coast, the Eastern and Southern shores of Spain, Majorca, Ibiza, etc. -all countries originally deriving from the same civilisation- we find similar building types, constructed on strictly rational premises. From their kindred civilization, way of life, customs and climate conditions, standard building solutions were repeated through the centuries, reflecting their primary human needs. The chief characteristics of this architecture are its elements: doors, windows, patios, porches, etc. -all on a human scale and all completely devoid of

superfluous decorative motifs or artifices. Even when a given detail can be interpreted as decoration, it is an offshoot of an entire building process and there is always a rational basis which reinforces it.'<sup>1</sup>

### Italy

Among Italian architects as well, 'mediterraneity' is a central subject whose controversiality culminated mainly between 1930 and 1935. Naturally,

Kutsinas House, Volos  
(Thessalia), designed by N.  
Mitsakis, 1934.

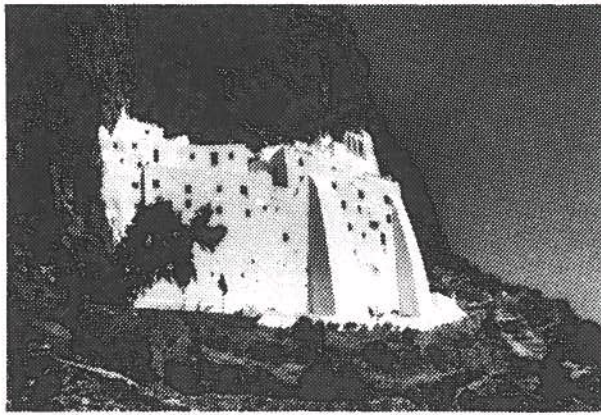


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Left: the Chozoviotissa Monastery, Isle of Amorgos, 11th Century.

Right: Imvriotis House by P. Tzelepis, 1933 - 37.

Far right: Villa at Glyfada, Athens, by S. Papadakis, 1932 - 33.

objections were not absent and 'Latinità' which is synonymous with 'Mediterraneità', was considered a category usurped from fascism and a bridge between nationalism and important architectural culture. The principle vehicle of mediterraneity was the review *Quadrante* which propounded positions such as 'Mediterranean is equal to Greece, to the neoplatonism of the purist aesthetics and to Le Corbusier of *L'Esprit Nouveau*'<sup>2</sup> Peressutti wrote: '[it is] architecture with white walls, right angled or squared, horizontal or vertical; architecture of forms and voids, of colours and pure elements, of geometry and proportions...Geometry that speaks, architecture with walls whose transparency generates a life, a song. Here, there are the characteristics of Mediterranean architecture, of Mediterranean spirit ...A heritage that, once discovered by Gropius, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, was disguised as a novelty of northern origin, as an invention of the 20th Century'<sup>3</sup>

#### Guiding star

Axioms such as 'purism-Grecism-mediterraneity' or 'Greece-Mediterranean-Magna Grecia' are ideological axes proposed by important representatives of Italian architecture (Terragni, Bardi, Figini, Pollini) and according to the testimony of C. Belli, 'The topic of mediterraneity and Grecism during the period of rationalist architecture (...) has been our guiding star. We soon discovered that a swim in the Mediterranean Sea could give us back values submerged by gothic suprapositions and by academic fantasies'<sup>4</sup>

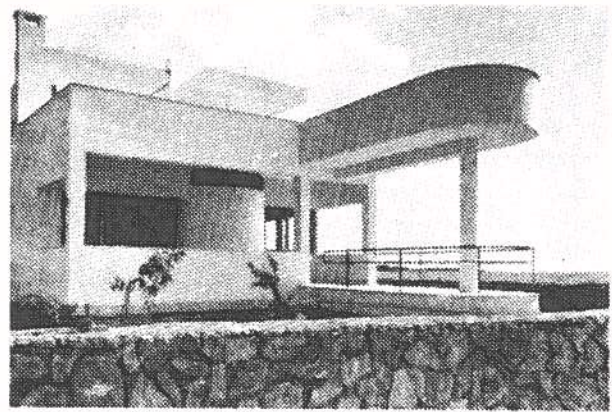
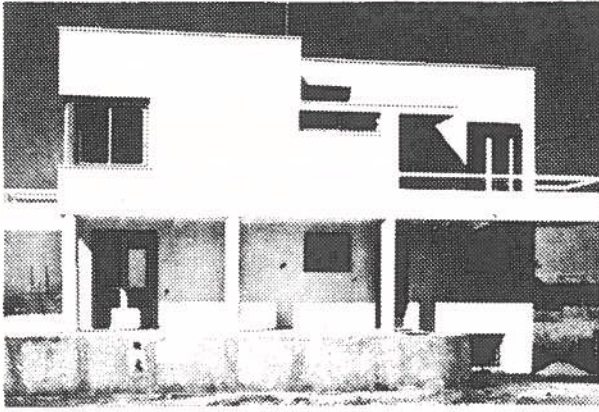
#### Spain

Also in A.C., the most important of the Spanish architectural publications, mediterraneity is proposed as one of the main theses of modern architects. We can read in the pages of A.C. articles such as 'Mediterranean Popular Architecture' and 'The Mediterranean roots of modern architecture' and find the following

characteristic passages: 'On Greek islands we can find the same small houses like those of the Catalan Costa Brava where fishermen keep their boats. The same spirit distinguishes the constructions of Ibiza and those of Megara, Mykonos and Ios'. The author continues: 'So, why has modern architecture been called Germanic?' and concludes that 'Modern architecture, technically, is mostly a discovery of the Northern countries, but spiritually it is Mediterranean architecture without a style which effectively influences the new architecture. Modern architecture is a return to pure, traditional forms of the Mediterranean. This is a new victory of the Latin Sea!'<sup>5</sup>. However, it is a fact that in spite of these Mediterranean exaltations, probably the only European architect that has been directly influenced, was Le Corbusier, who visited Greece in 1911 (during the famous trip through Eastern Europe)<sup>6</sup> and unreservedly admired both the classical and insular Greek architecture. 22 Years later, a still impressed Le Corbusier expressed his continuing admiration during the CIAM IV in Athens.

#### Vernacular and antique

In Greece, a pioneer and leading proponent of the values of vernacular architecture was Dimitri Pikionis (1887-1967) who expressed his ideas much earlier than his South European colleagues. Returning to Greece in 1912, after completing his studies in Munich and Paris, he discovered the 'light and brightness of Attica', the contrast between shadow and light and the white and pure volumes of vernacular architecture. During the same period, influenced by the neo-platonic philosophy of I. Theodorakopoulos, he visited Eleusis, 'site of spirit' and symbol of classical antiquity, in Search of a new way to approach the antique spirit. In the following years he introduced the new generation of Greek architects to the values of autochthonous vernacular architecture and his innovating spirit propelled the students of



the School of Architecture in Athens (founded in 1917), to propose his candidacy for professorship in 1923. In 1921 he had already visited the island of Egina with P. Karantinos and K. Panayotakos, two of his students and future rationalists of the 1930's, with the purpose of studying the local vernacular architecture and especially the famous Rodakis' house, in Search of the continuity of the spirit of the classical tradition through vernacular production. It must be underlined that during the congress of 1933, Greek architects, who had comprehended gradually and not without reservations, the values of their own architectural heritage, proposed these same values with passion to their well-known foreign colleagues most of whom were having their first real contact with it as they believed it was the only real significant autochthonous creation to be promoted.

### Greece

Another leading figure advocating the Mediterranean character of modern architecture is Karantinos, who as late as in 1954 published articles such as 'Main characteristics of modern architecture in the Mediterranean and particularly in Greece'<sup>7</sup> and 'How could a modern Greek architecture exist'<sup>8</sup>. But foreign critiques as well, when referring to modern Greek architecture, almost always emphasize its Mediterranean character. Noteworthy is the very significant number of foreign articles, especially after 1930, dedicated to modern Greek architecture.

H. Lauterbach, for example, wrote: 'Greek architects are in a fortunate relationship to the constructive traditions of the islands in the Aegean Sea. They consider tradition as a generative factor, not a convention.'<sup>9</sup>

Greece, however, with its own spiritual peculiarities, forces us to search for the motive force that formulated the new architecture between the Wars in the autochthonous factors of evolution of the local culture, particularly since 1910. Greek culture since the beginning of the Century was not

monothetic, was not linear, cannot be determined according to a well defined evolution, is not identified with certain aesthetic tendencies and is not dominated by a unique artistic manifesto or a single movement of ideas. The nation tried to define its cultural identity and, apart from the creation of important artistic works, another kind of process occurred much more important in discovering its identity. That process was the recognition of the limits, the definition of artistic values and the hierarchical order of the sources of inspiration of these artistic products. Modern Greek civilization still surveys its past, recent and distant and tries to define tendencies and periods to which it can refer and use again in a creative manner. It is a civilization with many traditions and simultaneously (somewhat paradoxically) without tradition. An emblematic example of the controversy regarding the problem of identity is the linguistic question which has been a national question and an expression of political and cultural antithesis of two dominant tendencies of the time: on the one hand conservative classicism and on the other progressive populism, both of which were identified with the common aim of national integration.

### Zachos and neoHellenism

Concerning architecture, a parallel dilemma exists between neo-classicism (and partially eclecticism during the period 1890-1930) and the local, neo-byzantine, macedonian and insular vernacular tradition. It is true, however, that in the cultural climate of reexamination, mainly of byzantine and popular civilization, there were such intellectuals as P. Ghiannopoulos and pedagogues as Glinos, Delmouzos, Imvriotis and Triantafyllidis, literary men such as Psicharis, Palamas and Papadiamantis, composers such as Kalomiris and architects such as Zachos, a main figure of the prehistory of the modern Greek movement.

Aristotelis Zachos (1872-1939) can be defined as an eclectic architect, but his position is absolutely

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comprehended by his desire to oppose the 'pseudo-neoclassical' Greek architecture with the spirit of the autochthonous, byzantine and macedonian tradition, interpreted through new techniques. His work, falling in chronological terms between eclecticism and modernism, expressed his anxious and passionate Search for the quintessence of the neoHellenic spirit and consequently for a 'true', that is to say, contemporary art and architecture, which would be placed more in the Balkan cultural community than in the European one.<sup>10</sup>

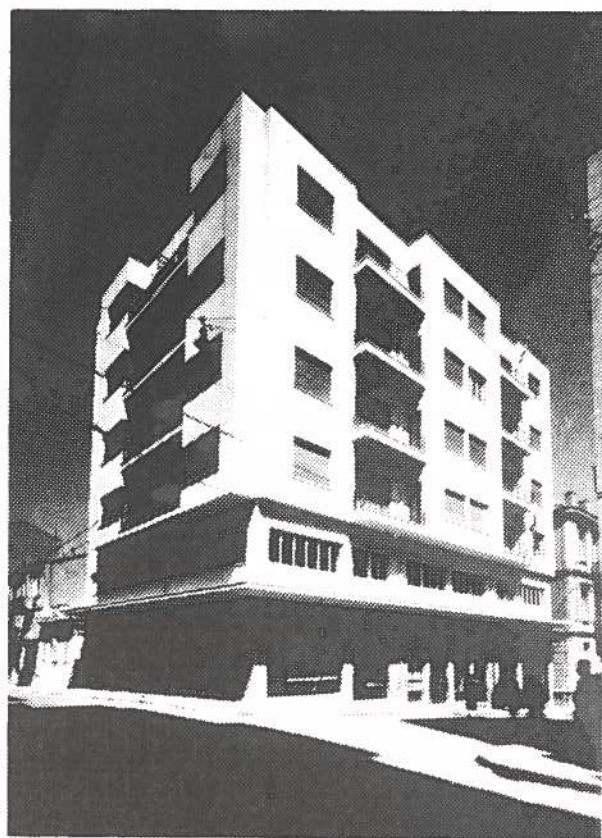
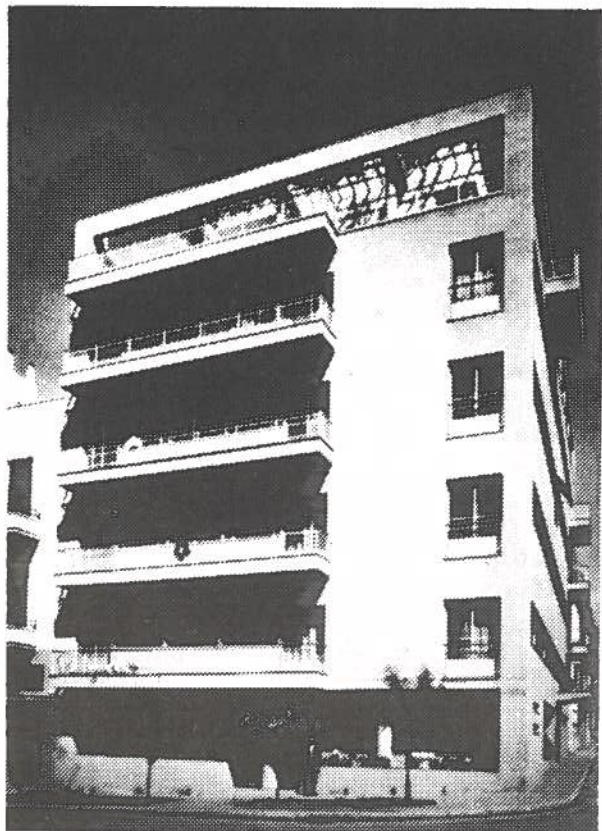
All expressions of the neoHellenic intelligentsia encompass a real 'new spirit' that predominated over all sectors of the Greek society, that was socially backward, yet susceptible to progressive reformations which, more importantly, even affected some of its public institutions. Until 1936 this was a new spirit that coincided chronologically with the new European movements, but for Greece it meant a revision of spiritual values and an anxious Search by its intellectuals ready to embody, with the innovative and progressive ideology of every autochthonous or foreign cultural current, the true meaning of the neohellenic identity.

*Dr Andrea Giacumacatos is participating in the Ph.D. programme of Saloniki University and coordinator of DOCOMOMO Greece*

#### Notes:

- 1 J.L. Sert, *Mediterranean architecture*, Boston 1975, pp. 11-12
- 2 S. Danesi, 'Aporie dell' architettura italiana in periodo fascista. Mediterranea e purismo', S. Danesi-L. Patetta(ed.), *Il razionalismo e l'architettura in Italia durante il fascismo*, Venice 1976, pp. 21-28
- 3 E. Peressutti, 'Architettura mediterranea', *Quadrante*, n. 21, Jan. 1935
- 4 *Il razionalismo...*, op.cit., p.25
- 5 A.C., V(1935 n.18), pp. 31-36
- 6 See G. Gresleri, *Le Corbusier, Viaggio in Oriente*, Venice 1984
- 7 Paper presented at the IUIA Conference of the Eastern Mediterranean Countries (1954) in Athens
- 8 Newspaper *Vradyni*, 30.6.1954. See also A. Giacumacatos, 'The writings of P. Karantinos and Le Corbusier', *Architecture in Greece*, XXI(1987), pp. 138-141
- 9 H. Lauterbach, 'Notizen von einer Reise in Griechenland', *Die Form*, VII(1932 n.11), pp. 336-348
- 10 The first article-manifesto appeared in Greek language on the rediscovery of vernacular architecture is signed by A. Zachos: 'popular architecture', *O Kallitechnis*, August 1911, pp. 185-186. D. Pikionis publishes his first article on the same subject 14 years later: 'Our folk art and ourselves', *Filiki Eteria*, I(1925 n.4), pp. 145-148. See also A. Giacumacatos, 'Our folk art, Dimitris Pikionis and the fallacy of modern Greek architecture', *Architecture in Greece*, XXI(1987), pp. 17-19; by the same author, 'A. Zachos and the Greek tradition', *Architecture in Greece*, XXV(1991), pp. 30-31.

Apartmentblocks in Athens by T.Valentis and P. Michailidis, 1933 (left) and by K. Panayotakos, 1936 - 37 (right).



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# Reflections of the Golden Age

Restoration and design project for two villa's by Mallet-Stevens

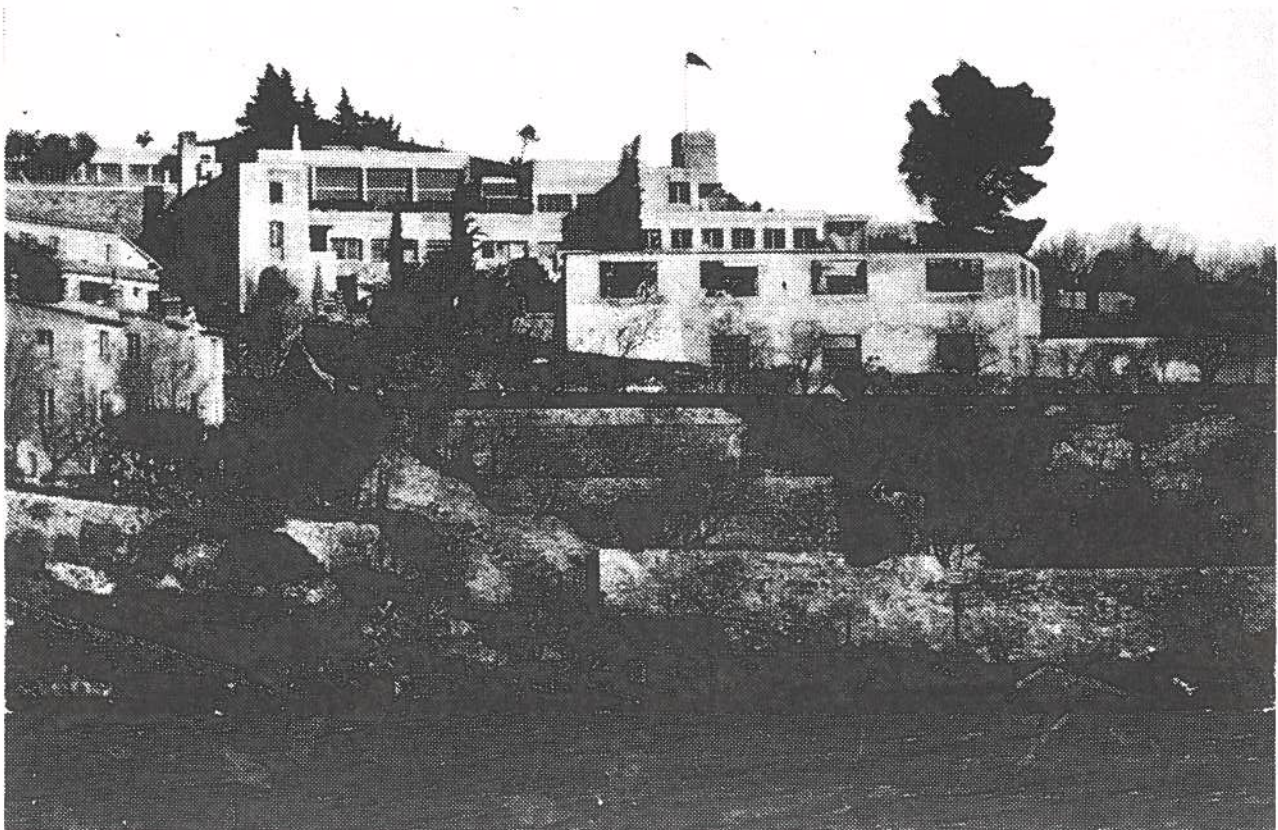
There are two characteristic sides to the Modern Movement's research into residential architecture: the social residential unit and the detached family house. The aim of the first was numbers: a minimal, standardized, economic housing unit, produced using industrialized methods. The second, denying methods and designed for financially better-off clients, expressed an architecture of quality, an experimental research as a response to new needs, with its radical redefinition of traditional design elements.

Some twenty years after Christian Gimonet's project for transforming the La Roche and Jeanneret houses into the Le Corbusier Foundation, the recent restoration of the Noailles house and the deplorable condition of the Cavrois house have put new fuel on the fire in France, restarting the debate about how to reuse modern residential architecture and about the urgency and conditions of restoration projects in this field.

In 1923 a celebrated patron of the arts, Viscount Noailles, commissioned the young Parisian architect Rob Mallet-Stevens (1886-1945) to build his holiday home at Hyères, at the Cote d'Azur. In 1932, the same architect built a luxurious house for a rich family of textile industrialists in Croix, in France's industrial northern region. These are the two most important examples of Mallet-Stevens' residential architecture, two works which have been compared by the succession of recent events.

*by Aline Leroy*

Villa Noailles in its original splendour (contemporary photograph).



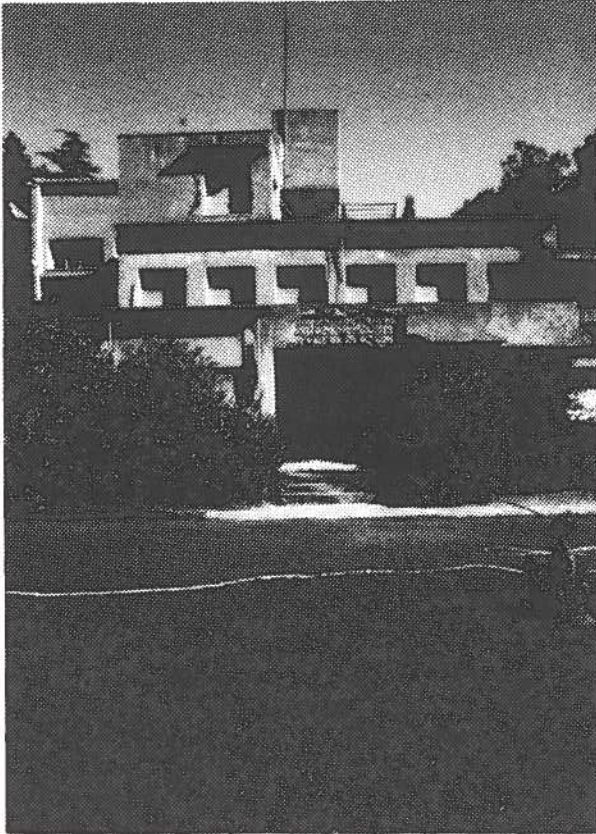
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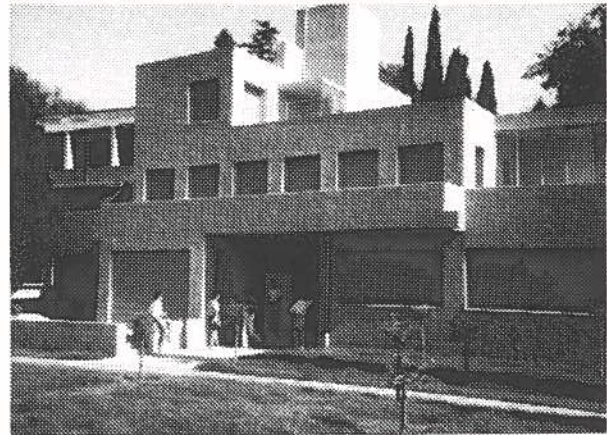




For a decade or so, the Noailles house was the scene of the most important moments of French society and intellectual life, an irreplaceable witness to the Roaring Twenties and to the survey of the artists of the international avantgarde, one of the key sites of the history of 20th Century taste. The Noailles family received famous guests there (the Giacometti brothers, Henri Laurens, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, Igor Markevitch...) encouraging meetings and the development of international artistic expression. In 1926, Man Ray used it as a location for shooting his film *The mysteries of the castle of Dé*, while Luis Bunuel studied the script of *The Golden Age* there. The quality of the heritage of the cultural life that took place in the villa between the Wars is doubtlessly one of the reasons for the restoration of the house.

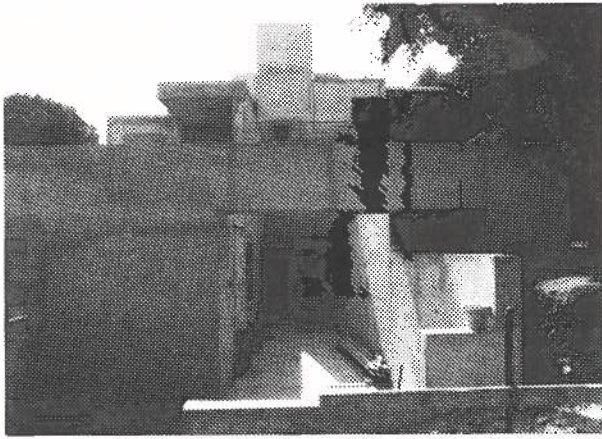
### Contradictions

The Noailles house has always been attributed a minor role in the history of modern architecture, so an in-depth historical reinterpretation is necessary, both in order to add elements of critical knowledge and to establish the foundations for the project for restoring and reutilising the house. In fact the villa is considered more as a starting point in Mallet-Stevens' brief career, more as one of the examples of elegant, refined architecture of the 1920's and 1930's, than a neoplastic masterpiece in the history of contemporary architecture. As the



The elevation facing the terraces before (left) and after restoration (top). The main entrance during (right) and after restoration (far right).

architecture of transition, it is also true that the building carries a sizeable number of contradictions with it. The villa is set at a distance from any form of theoretical exemplification. Its central nucleus is the expression of traditional functions, without any attempt of describing the typology of the layout. 'Because of his programmatic neutrality, Mallet-Stevens moved away from the intellectual avantgarde of the purist and neo-plastical movement', as K. Frampton has quite correctly written. It is a heterogeneous project, marked by a proliferation of spaces (on a floor plan of more than 2,000 m), built in stages between 1924 and 1933, but only controlled by Mallet-Stevens during the first period (after the construction of the central nucleus, the Viscount's study, called the pink drawing room, the small house, the swimming pool, the gymnasium, the squash court, the pavilion, the cubist garden by Guévrékian...). The house is an object that grew in layers, from its origin through its developments. From the beginning Mallet-Stevens tended to refuse to give the house the appearance of an autonomous object. More than a villa, he gave the complex the aspect of a small village: he restored existing buildings and doubled the possible levels of interpretation of the perspectives and volumes as though multiplying them. The way he treated the curtain wall around the garden-cum-piazza as a facade is a typical example. His attitude towards the landscape is one of



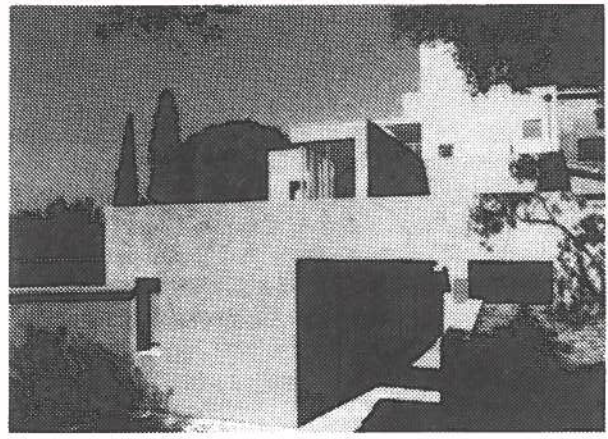
camouflage, without any attempt at ostentation or even differentiation: the paint colours blend with the colours of the earth, the base of the building is ample and broad, well-rooted to the ground. The house establishes a respectful relationship of dialogue with the surroundings as they existed before it came on the scene: it approaches the ruins without demolishing them, re-uses the large vaulted cellars of an ancient Cistercian monastery as an integral part of the house, transforming them into a large reception room, it re-uses old farm houses on the property as guest houses for the villa.

#### **Fruit of disagreements**

The design also highlights Mallet-Stevens' total indifference towards modern innovative construction techniques. His formal choices are completely independent of the technique he used to translate them into being. His research of materials is more aimed at finishes than structural parts. The mechanisation of certain fittings and the presence of particular pieces of equipment (foldaway fixtures, hygrometers, barometers, an astrolabe, a sextant...) are the only signs of confidence in 20th Century progress. But the choice of these gadgets can also be interpreted easily as a simple sign of sensitivity to the aesthetics of machinery.

The Noailles house is a joint rather than an individual achievement, the fruit of strong disagreements between the client and the architect, between the declared needs of modernity, 'of utility and profitability' of the former and the latter's architectural obsessions. The result is a design full of contradictions, mirroring a period when criteria and lifestyles were on the change. We find ourselves wondering whether the only thing that was missing between the Viscount's ideas and Mallet-Stevens architectural design was a written programme, an analysis of the clients requirements, or quite simply the experience of modern country house living.

In conclusion, this house is a fragmentary



achievement, where Mallet-Stevens created interiors with a relatively neutral, unreal architectural structure to act as a support for the complementary work of craftsmen, artists, and interior designers: the 'small flower room', by Theo van Doesburg, the open air room with a suspended bed, by Pierre Chareau, the glazing in the study and the staircase, by the glass master Louis Barillet, the bas-relief by Henri Laurens, clocks by Francis Jourdin, the furnishings by Djo Bourgeois, the guest room by Sybold van Ravesteyn and also outdoors, the garden by Guévrékian, the sculpture by Jacques Lipchitz...

#### **Decay**

The Viscountess Noailles lived in the house until she died, after which it was sold to the town of Hyères in 1973. But while the well-maintained gardens were open to public, the unused villa became focus of political, economical and cultural interest and was left to decay until 1989, despite the fact that its facades and roofs were listed in the Supplementary Inventory of Historical Monuments in 1975, later complemented with the interiors in 1987.

In 1985, architects Cecile Briolle, Claude Marro and Jacques Repiquet drew up a project for reutilising the villa as an 'International Centre for Meetings and Creation'. The proposal did not come from the owners, but from the architects themselves, as their conclusion to a study, where an analysis of the spaces and their layout demonstrated the need of a programme of complementary activities around a common theme that would bring the site back to its original vocation. The specific characteristics of the inhabitable spaces make any passage to a new use very complex: only a light, multi-faceted programme can blend in with the typology of the habitat.

#### **Pragmatic approach**

The reutilisation project, which provides for meeting rooms, study spaces, a restaurant, a

museum and spaces for temporary exhibitions, is based on two types of work: restoring the central buildings to their original condition and a global restructuring of the service spaces, adding some new volumes in the remaining spaces. The heterogeneous nature of the spaces is used as a design element. In the 'quality' spaces, the aim of the architectural design is to 'transmit culture': time is immobilised and the main house is kept and transformed into a museum, open to the public. On the other hand the plan is to make some radical changes in the service spaces, to adapt them to new requirements and a new life. All together the project does not descend from specific theories of restoration, but is regulated by selective criteria based on an in-depth historical study of the architectural body as a whole.

Because of the state of decay of the villa when they began their labours, the careful work of Briolle, Repiquet and Marro in the first section, covering the central part of the house, is almost more of a 'superficial' reconstruction than preservation work. They have restored the fixtures in wood and iron, the ingenious mechanisms of the windows and foldaway locks, the heaters, sanitary fittings and taps. They had to replace the sliding windows in the open air room by Pierre Chareau, the glazed ceiling in the pink drawing room, Jourdain's clocks and the brass doorhandles that Mallet-Stevens designed himself. They

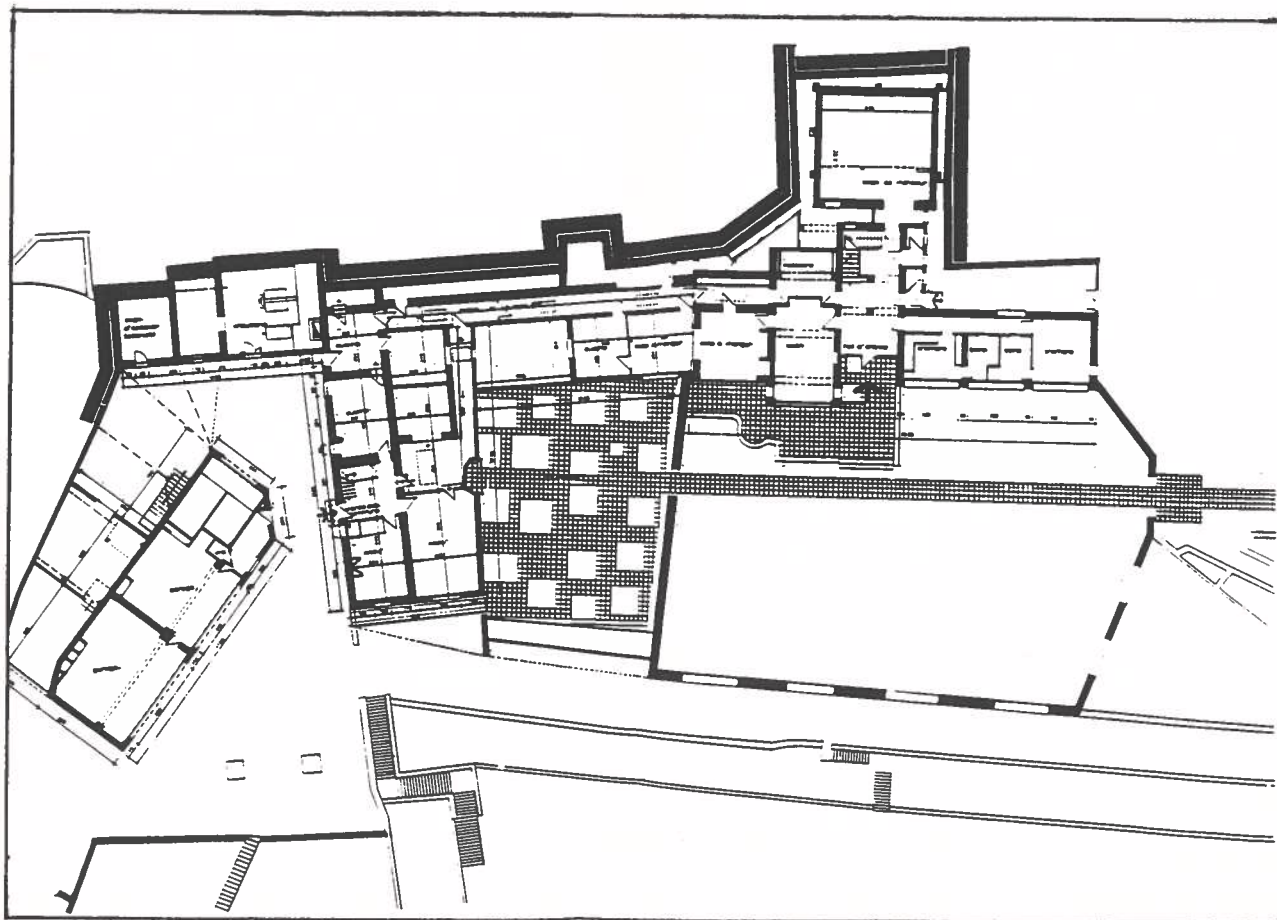
consolidated the under-sills of the windows, replaced the waterproofing in the roof terraces and redid the outer paintwork.

#### Interiour reconstruction

The badly damaged floors, made in terrazzolith, a coloured material in paste, cast in situ and very popular during the twenties because of its qualities (easy maintenance, hygiene, acoustic absorbence...) have been recast identical to the original on the basis of samples taken from the site and analysed. In the park behind the villa, the beautiful cubist garden designed by Guévrékian has been laid out anew, using the gardeners' recollections, photographs, original drawings and measurements made on site as a basis. This reconstruction is crucial for gardening culture, as this vegetable miniature is one of the extremely rare cubist gardens that was the model for many copies all over the world.

The conclusion of the work was marked by a cultural event set in the old vaulted rooms of the basement floor: a small exhibition about 1930's style furnishing, entitled 'Noailles et les modernes- Les traces d'un style' (Noailles and the modernists-

Reconstructed plan by Briolle, Repiquet and Marro, who made a plan for reuse of the Villa Noailles.



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the traces of a style), a symbolic event for the reopening ceremony of the Noailles house, after more than 15 years of abandon. But the villa's ultimate destination is still uncertain. The town of Hyères is hesitant: a Design Museum or an International Meeting Centre, a Foundation for Contemporary Art or a Mallet-Stevens Foundation?

#### **Cavrois house**

Build in 1931-32 in Croix, in the suburbs of Lille, the Cavrois house is an ambitious residence in the grand European tradition of bourgeois residential architecture. With its outer appearance and cladding in light colored brickwork inspired by the Dudok's Town Hall in Hilversum, the Netherlands, the Cavrois house is the work of maturity par excellence, the positive synthesis of Mallet-Stevens' experience in Hyères and Mésey, the all-encompassing where architecture, interiors and landscapes were all designed by Mallet-Stevens. Inhabited until the mid 1980's, then stripped of its furnishings, which were sold at Sotheby's in 1987, the house was later sold as a part of a much broader development plan intended to take place

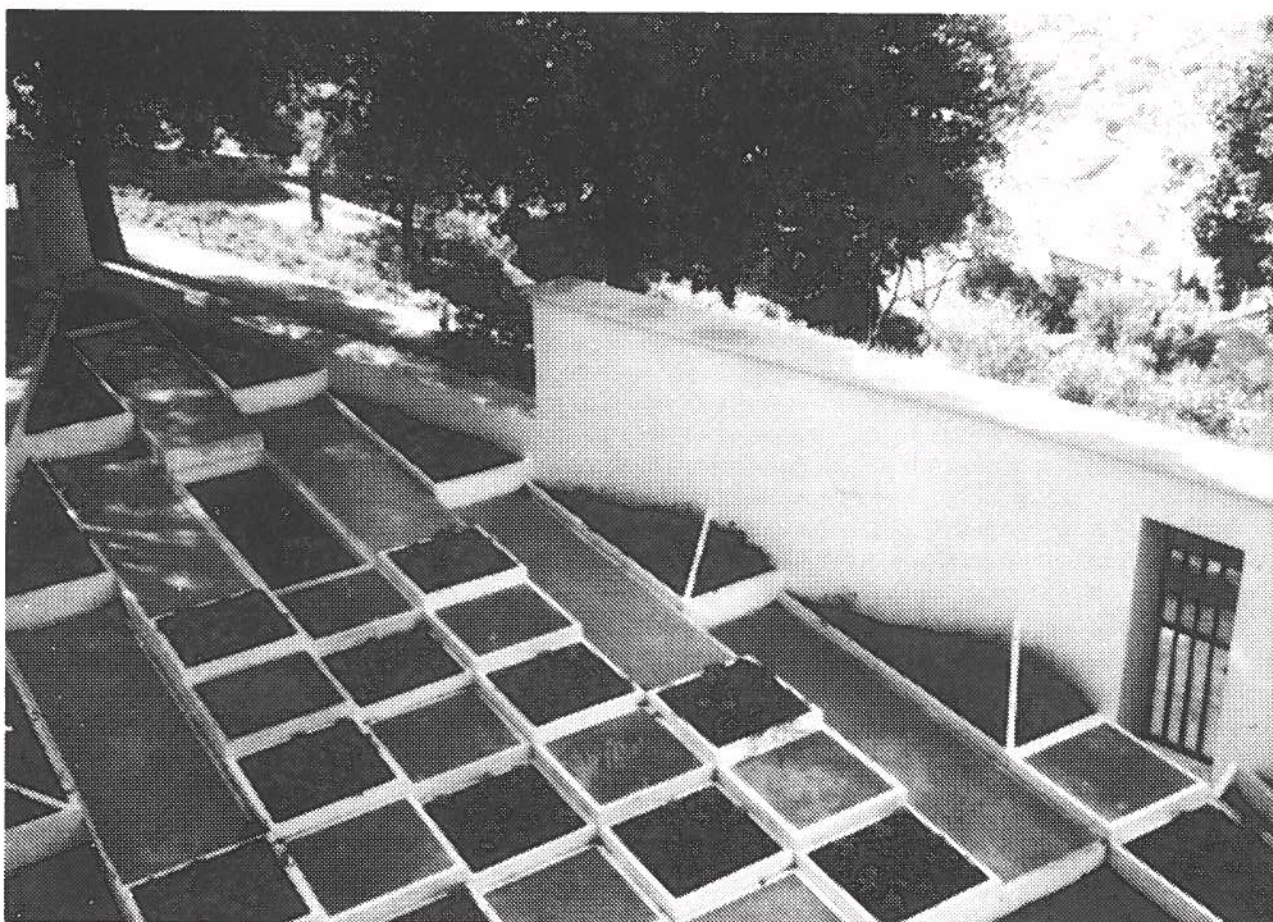
on the Cavrois land. Its demolition was planned. Now, despite rather late administrative protection measures, the villa is a pitiful ruin, deprived of all its finishes. Thus its fate is by no means clear, although the house is actually already in an irreversible state of decay.

#### **Restore and rebuild**

Noailles and Cavrois: these two exemples are particularly significant, as their dramatic story is shared by the majority of modern architecture. 'Dynastic' diatribes only worsen the fact that these homes are unsuitable for contemporary lifestyles, that they are very expensive to maintain and that they gradually lose value, until they are eventually sold and later abandoned. Gradual decay attacks the integrity of these architectural works. It is high time we take notice of this situation, as the protection of the 20th Century's architectural heritage also depends on these circumstances. Faced with the ruins of the Modern Movement, we no longer have the option of preservation projects, being the only guarantee that the authenticity of the original will be protected. The only thing we can do now is to restore and rebuild.

The cubist' garden designed by Guévrékian for the Noailles family.

*Aline Leroy is editor of the Italian architectural periodical Area. This article has previously been published in Area 4, 1991.*



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# Campaign for Narkomfin

1928 - Prototype of communal housing in Moscow  
threatened by total deterioration

Next year, the 100th Anniversary of the great Russian architect Moisei Ginzburg will be celebrated with an exhibition, composed by the Schushev Museum for Architecture. At the same time, his most significant work, Narkomfin Flats in Moscow, designed with I. Milinis in 1928, is almost in ruins.

Narkomfin Flats are a rare prototype of communal housing, developed by the Association of Contemporary Architects OSA. This group set itself to the task of formulating the necessary programs and type forms for an emerging Socialist society. One of their prime concerns was the issue of communal housing and the creation of appropriate social units. The activities of OSA led to the development of the so-called Stroikem Units, one of which was adopted by Ginzburg for Narkomfin Flats. Ginzburg was very well aware of the fact, that this entirely new way of life could not be dictated by a built form. At the time he wrote: 'We must provide for the possibility of a gradual, natural transition to communal utilization in a number of different areas. (...) We considered it absolutely necessary to incorporate certain features that would stimulate the transition to a socially superior mode of life, stimulate but not dictate.'

Offering a range of facilities, collective housing was seen as a way of liberating the people, especially women, who were enslaved by housekeeping, as well as justification of reducing the size of individual flats in response to the immense housing shortage in the young Soviet Union. 'Unfortunately, not enough of these communal houses were built and the few that were put up created a disastrous reaction. Whereas an extended family could move into an expropriated bourgeois apartment and not be too overcrowded, when they inhabited the closely-packaged spaces of the communal house, it became a 'behavioural sink'- to use the bourgeois metaphor of condemnation. The social problems emerging from this, made people reject functionalism and communal living for being inhumane and too materialistic' as Charles Jencks writes in his history of modern architecture. Yet, this type of housing is one of the most innovative and interesting projects of the 1920's, an inspiration to many European social housing schemes including Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation, and therefore of extreme historic value regarding the heritage of the Modern Movement in architecture and urban design. The Narkomfin Flats were an ingenious solution to a housing crisis and are still very well acceptable as studio units.

Today, the building is in a disastrous condition, that requires an immediate and thorough restoration. Unfortunately, our colleagues in the Soviet Union so far have had no success in attracting the authorities' attention for this serious matter. Although we are well aware of the current priorities of the USSR authorities, Narkomfin Flats are too important to allow further deterioration.

Now, Narkomfin Flats are largely abandoned and are in fact available for a new use, that is in harmony with its historic character. Sponsors will be most welcome to consider the funding of necessary reconstruction of the building and can be offered in return a long term renting contract. The building is quite suitable as studios, a hotel or, for instance, boarding facilities for foreign company employees or diplomats.

**DOCOMOMO Working parties as well as individual members are strongly requested to express their great concern with respect to Ginzburg's masterpiece by using the separately enclosed form.**

**Please have these forms signed by as many as possible and send them to the International Secretariat of DOCOMOMO, TUE /BPU postvak 8, P.O. box 513, 5600 MB Eindhoven, the Netherlands.**

**DOCOMOMO will direct the received forms to the proper authorities in the Soviet Union, being Nikolaj N. Gubenko, USSR Minister of Culture, to Dmitri S. Lichacev, President USSR Cultural Fund, and to that Fund's Councillor, Raisa Gorbachov.**

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## History of Narkomfin Flats and the problems of their restoration

by Irina Kokkinaki

In 1992, we will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Moisei Ginzburg (1892-1946), one of the leaders of the constructivist Union of Contemporary Architects 'OSA' and co-editor of the magazine 'Contemporary Architecture'. He was an active supporter of the functional method in architecture and tried to connect early Russian constructivism of the mid 1920's, with as main protagonists V. Tatlin and A. Vesnin, with West-European functionalism.

### Design principles

The apartment building on Novinski Boulevard in Moscow is the most prominent and well-known of Ginzburg's works, that he designed in 1928 with I. Milinis. The building has been very highly estimated by international architectural authorities. It has been widely published and has become one of the leading examples of the architectural movement of the 1920's. In it, the designer has implemented some of his theoretical ideas and experimental projects, which can be summarized as:

- social ideas about a predominating community, resulting in an absolute form of the commune and 'industrialisation of the living process',
- planning principles concerning functional zoning and rational types of housing units,
- compositional starting points based on the 'five principles' of Le Corbusier,
- application of modern construction methods and building materials (reinforced concrete frame-construction with cantilevering beams etc.).

The main idea of the project was to create a new social and spatial organism ('social condensator of the epoch', as Ginzburg called it), including in one complex individual flats and a well-developed system of communal services.

### Project

The first project included four blocks: a dwelling block, a communal block, connected with the first one, a kindergarten and a 'service yard', including garage, laundry and other facilities. It has been realized only partly.

The dwelling block is a rectangular building of 82,5x10,15m, with a staircase at each end and two corridors as 'horizontal arteries' on the second and

South facade of Narkomfin Flats in its actual state of decay. On the roof the penthouse and solarium.

## Original construction and actual condition of Narkomfin Flats

by Vladimir Rezvin

After the visual inspection of the Narkomfin housing complex even a nonprofessional could see, that this architectural landmark is in a critical condition. Several times, attempts of detailed inspection have been made to determine the condition of the various parts of the complex, but neither of these has been done to the end. In the Spring of 1990, the Union of Soviet Architects, USSR-main financial supporter, the Schushev Museum of Architecture and the Soviet DOCOMOMO Working party, took the initiative to call upon a team of specialists, which, for the first time, accomplished the complete inspection of the building and its actual condition. The same group also projected a plan for restoration\*, which has been approved officially by the Soviet authorities.

### Inspection

The inspection has confirmed that the building, and especially the dwelling block, is close to ruins and that the worsed presuppositions of the professionals unfortunately already had come true. For the first time, the loadbearing constructions of

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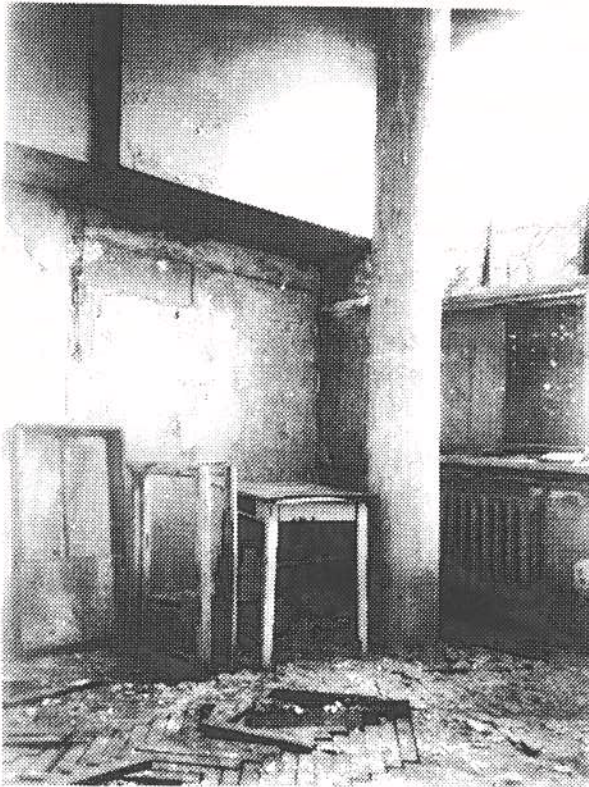


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the fifth floor. The whole building is placed on 'pilotis', circular columns of 2,5m high, and has a flat roof. The inner structure of the building and the combination of housing units shows in its elevations.

The spatial solution is based on the contrast between spaces of 5m high with double-height windows, others of 3,6m high and one-and-a-half-height windows and finally the other rooms with a familiar height of 2,3m, and windows of a more current size, with the horizontal corridors connecting all the flats of the building.

#### Diversity of flats

There are three types of flats in the building: eight big duplex units (type K) situated on the third and fourth floors in the middle part of the building; 32 small flats (type F) on higher floors and several individual flats in the left and right ends of the building (type 2F). Apart from these standard apartments, a hostel and a private flat were projected in a small volume on the roof.

Type K flats, with an entrance from the open gallery of the third floor, consist of a double high living room of 25m<sup>2</sup>, with an orientation towards the West, with an adjacent room and a kitchen of 4,3m<sup>2</sup> and two bedrooms of approx. 20m<sup>2</sup> and 12m<sup>2</sup>, with built-in wardrobes, bathroom and lavatory, all 2,3m high and connected with the living room by an inner staircase.

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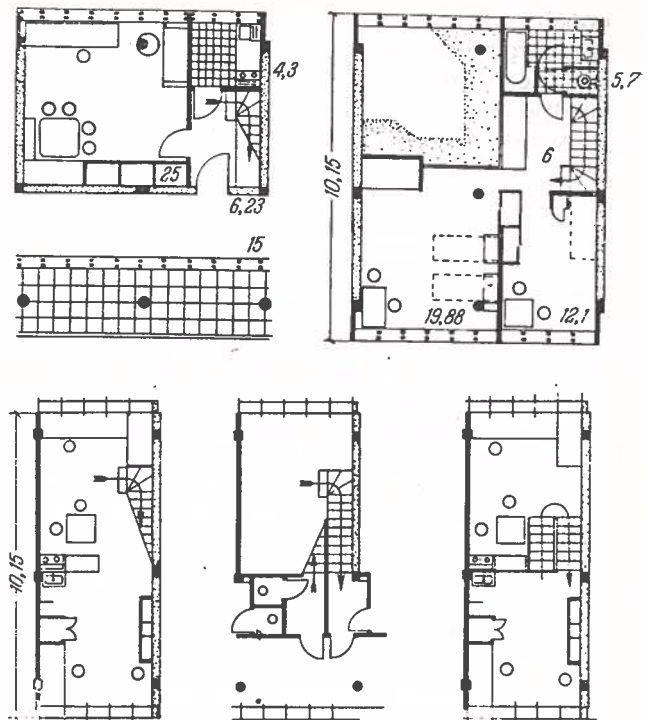
Type F flats, situated two by two along the gallery of the sixth floor, consist on a 3,6m high living room with West-orientated, one-and-a-half-height windows, with a small kitchen block and bedroom, connected with a shower, a lavatory and a built-in wardrobe.

This arrangement created a very expressive effect in the composition of the two longitudinal elevations: the one facing east with ribbon windows and the other one showing a complicated rhythm of windows of various heights.

#### Narkomfin

The flats at Novinski Boulevard were built for the staff of the Ministry of Finance (Narkomfin) of the RSFSR. The chief of this institution, N. Milutin, was known as a scholar specialized in city-planning. He had written the book 'Sotsgorod' (Socialist City) and he was an active supporter of new architectural ideas. The private penthouse was designed for him as an individual house connected with the hostel block on the roof, forming some kind of 'upper deck structure'. This flat is a small light-and-space masterpiece of functionalism. His family has lived in this flat until the early 1980's, when his daughter emigrated to the USA. Due to this, the original interiors were well preserved and these might appear very valuable for restoration of the whole building.

Left and far left: two interiors of the building showing its ruinous condition. (left photo by Raymond van den Broek)  
Right: the plans of the flats type F (bottom) and K (top).



### Colour

Ginzburg gave much attention to the application of colour in the interiors. He used a special system of colouring that he had invented together with Bauhaus artists Shepper and Borhert, who worked in the USSR at that time. Two colour schemes have been used in Narkomfin, one cool, the other warm, but both of a very gentle character. When walls were greyish or green-greyish, ceilings would be of a light blue colour (Braunsweig), but when walls were light-yellow (lemon), ceilings would be light-ochre. However, in some of the bigger flats, colours were more contrasting. Colour schemes of public spaces, staircases and corridors, were used not only as part of a composition, but they served communicational purposes as well. For example, the two by two arranged doors on the 6th floor gallery, giving access to the two split-level F type flats, were alternately painted black and white. Standard doors inside the flats were painted white, while windowposts were left natural oak.

### Communal block

The cubic volume of the four-storey communal block measures 10,5x10x11,7m and is located adjacent to the dwelling block. Its north elevation

consists entirely of steelframed vitraglass. The block contains two double-high halls. One of them was planned as a sports-hall, while the other was thought to be used as a library and a big dining room.

At first, the communal block was used as a kindergarten, but a public kitchen for all inhabitants of the house was also included from the start. Later on, this part of the building has been refurbished for some industrial purposes. But also radical changes took place regarding the entire building. Especially during the War and because of the housing shortages, flats sizes were to be reduced. Even small flats were split in two by a newly constructed partitionwall. Also, flats were built under the dwelling block in the previously open ground floor area, which until then connected two parts of a still existing park.

### Future restoration?

All this, including innumerable changes in the interior design (changes in floor-arrangements, covering walls with paper, painting of window posts etc.) and the ruinous condition of the building, can be retrieved. For professional restorators, there will be no difficulty to reconstruct and restore all these ascetic materials of the

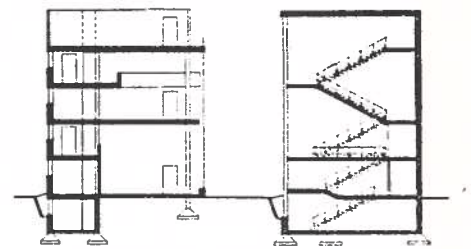
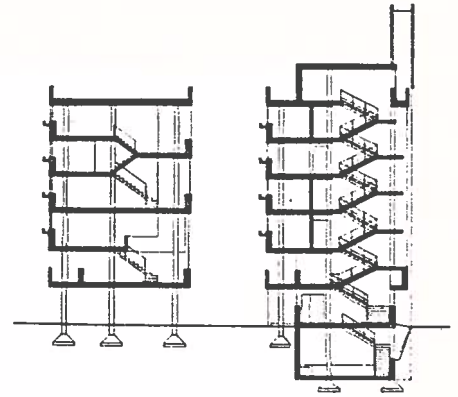


epoch.

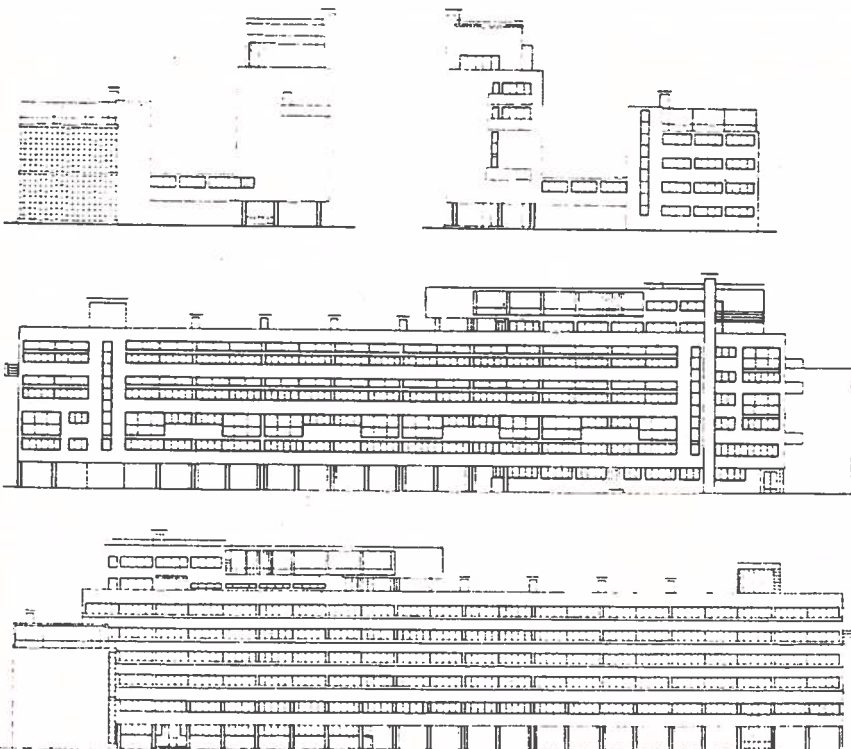
Ginzburg's son, architect V.M. Ginzburg, has a good conception of different variants of use for the building, that are based on its full restoration and renovation.

Today, Narkomfin are partly occupied by offices and partly inhabited by 25 families, that live in very bad conditions. The Executive Committee of the Krasnopresnenski District, that is in possession of the building, has some problems in clearing off the building from all inhabitants, a measure that is necessary for actual restoration. The building is under state supervision. But in spite of all efforts of different professional and non-governmental organizations, there is no succes in finding a commisioner for its restoration, that has enough money as well as enough understanding of the historical value of this extraordinary building. International organizations might be very helpfull in saving Narkomfin as masterpiece of constructivism.

*Dr. Irina Kokkinaki is architectural historian and researcher at the Institute of Architectural and Urbanistic Theory VNIITAG in Moscow.*



From top down, left to right:  
two sections of the dwelling  
block; two sections of the  
communal block; North-,  
South-, West- and Eastfacades.



Right page:  
Two details of the East facade,  
showing dramatic damage.  
Plaster is freezing off and  
wooden windowframes are  
totally rotten.

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(continued from page 61)

the dwelling block and the communal block were inspected, a work undertaken by the structural engineers of the Mosgorgeotrest\*\* institution. At the same time, and that is of great importance, thanks to the efforts of architects of the Spezproectrestauratzia\*\* institute, a complete set of newly measured drawings could be produced, which are now kept in the archives of the Schushev Museum of Architecture in Moscow. In addition to this, all materials connected with design and construction of the building have been documented and collected at one place. In case of a future reconstruction of Narkomfin Flats, all these materials will serve as a basis for its scientific restoration.

These basic data, which allowed us to judge the physical condition of the building, could be summarized as follows.

#### Foundation

As a basis for the main columns of the loadbearing structure, foundations of solid reinforced concrete had been used, that rest on firm ground some meters below level. In the beginning of the 1960's,

these had been inspected for the first time. Regular checks confirmed the satisfactory condition of them. The absence of deformation marks at the basis of the framework, proved in practice the structural safety of the building. As mentioned in the article by Irina Kokkinaki, the originally open area between the pilotis on the ground level, have been filled in with brickwork later. The foundations for these walls have been layed with broken brick and cement mortar. Under the communal block a basement has been made of concrete, that is in good condition.

#### Frame

The frame of the building is made of reinforced concrete. It consists of a system of columns, beams and brackets.

Square columns measure 25x25cm, while round ones have a diameter of 35cm. They are positioned in three rows in longitudinal direction: two along the sides and one in the central area. The longitudinal module is 375-385cm, while a module of 350-450cm is used in the other direction.

The outer columns have brackets bearing outer walls for heat insulation. The columns are



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connected by a system of reinforced concrete beams. Heavy beams of 30x34 and 30x25cm are supplemented by lighter ones of 30x10cm, with between them 60cm center to center.

The unusual layout of the plan and the various heights preconditioned the relatively complex and multi-elemented superstructure of the building.

The reinforced concrete floorslabs accomplish a firm monolith structure with the other elements of the frame. In some rooms there are inserted pieces made of slag concrete blocks, with cement mortar and fibrolite floor finishes. In the corridors and some other areas, a floorcovering of oak has been chosen.

All the reinforced concrete elements of the framework are still in satisfactory condition.

### Partitions and facades

External and internal walls are layed of 'Krestianin' blocks, hollow blocks of fine slag concrete with iron reinforcement. The walls are finished with plaster.

The interior partitions are made of the same blocks and 5 cm fibrolite board.

The condition of most walls, especially the exterior ones, is alarming, since the slag concrete blocks are falling apart and need complete replacement. The design of the windows shows, like most elements of the complex, the originality of the

architect's intentions. They are constructed of solid oak and are sliding on rollers in special channels. For better sealing, special devices are made from canvas and felt.

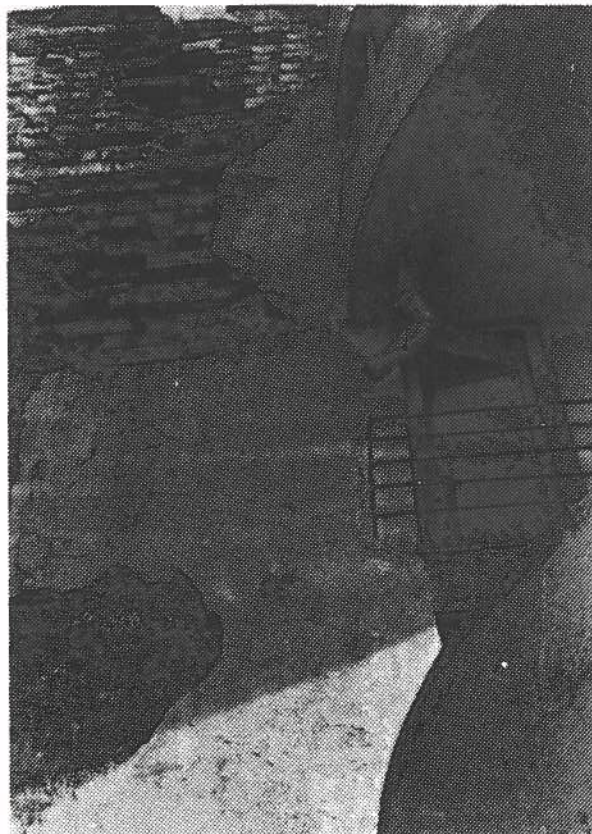
Some windows, that were not intended to be opened, have been made of reinforced concrete and are now relatively sound.

Subsequently, many of the wooden windows were reconstructed by the inhabitants, but some of the remaining original fragments are in good condition and will allow the recreation of the original windows.

### Service systems

The disastrous condition of the service systems (the author uses the notion 'network', by which he seems to refer more specifically to the water-supply and the heating system - the editor) has been one of the main reasons for the bad state of Narkomfin Flats.

Today, all these systems are out of order, because for decades there has been neither maintenance nor repairs or replacements. Most threatening is the water itself, which is constantly escaping damaged pipes and gathers in the basement. Reconstruction of the building will require unconditional and full replacement of these service systems.



Left: a detail of the Southfacade. Apart from the plaster, also the infill of soft hollow slag-concrete blocks is deteriorated.  
(photo by Berend van der Lans)

Right: the communal block with added storey in timber.  
Far right: the Westfacade with its various dimensions of windows.

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### Solarium

The solarium is located on the flat roof of the dwelling block and was designed by the architects as a place for relax and sightseeing and to enjoy the flower beds.

The roofing of the main building is severely damaged. Grass growing from the cracks advances further deconstruction of the roofing. All metal elements are heavily corroded. The winding staircase to the upper level of the solarium has completely vanished.

### Communal services

The communal block has been largely rebuilt soon after completion. As a result, its original functions were closed and the dining hall and the gymnasium, both with two tiers of windows, were done away with. Instead of the verandah of the summer cafe, a new storey in wood was added, that changed the block's appearance dramatically. The frame and roofs of the communal block are in a satisfactory condition.

### Future for Narkomfln Flats

At present, this outstanding architectural work, which is located in the centre of Moscow, makes a very bad impression. The careful attempts to attract the attention of the

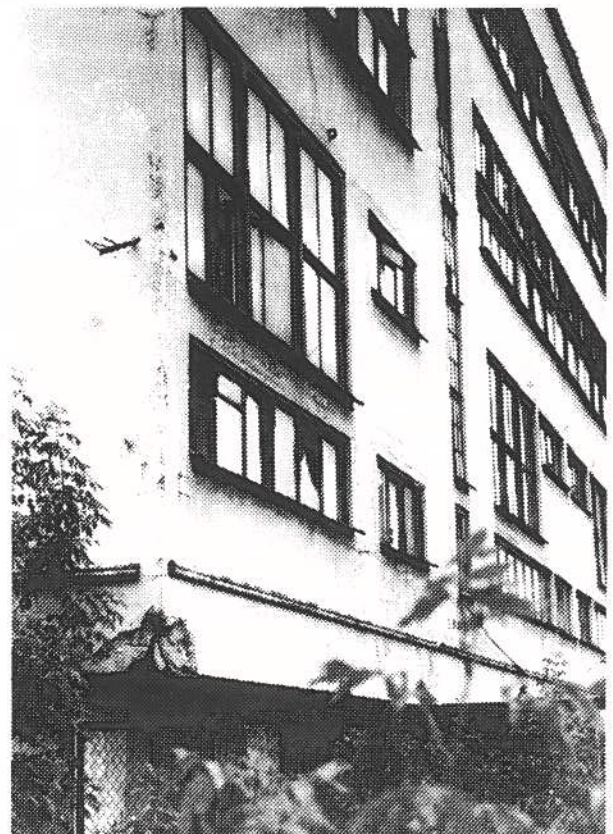
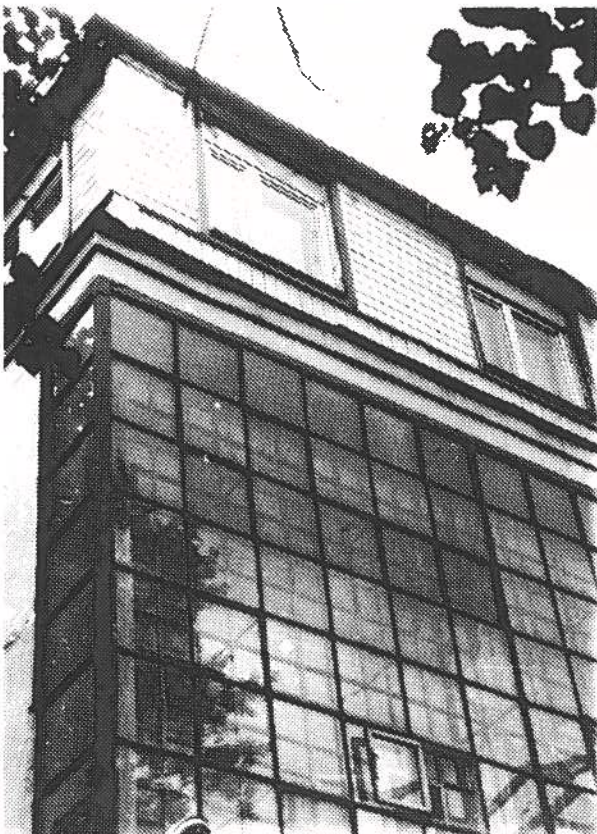
proper institutions for financing of restoration works, so far have had no results.

Obviously, international efforts for the salvation of this historic architectural landmark is necessary. It is certainly not unrealistic to consider the possibility of attracting a sponsor or funding institution for the necessary reconstruction and restoration of the building, offering in return the use of the building on the basis of a long term renting contract.

*Vladimir Rezin is director of the Schushev State Museum for Architecture in Moscow and chairman of DOCOMOMO USSR.*

\* The authors of the restoration project are the head of the team V. Ginzburg, son of the original designer, consultant V. Rezin, the architects A. Studenikin, M. Chegodaev and A. Merkulov, the engineer P. Rafelson and the art historian R. Krupnova.

\*\* Typical abbreviations in Russian for various State institutions, here referring to research institutions and studio's for architectural restoration projects, also often referred to as 'shops' or 'workshops'.

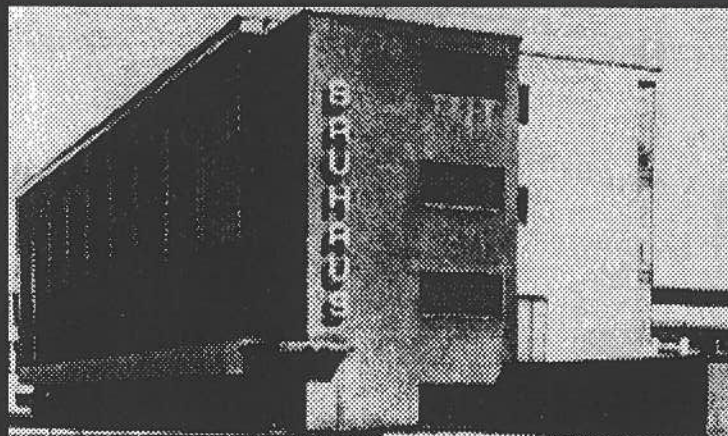


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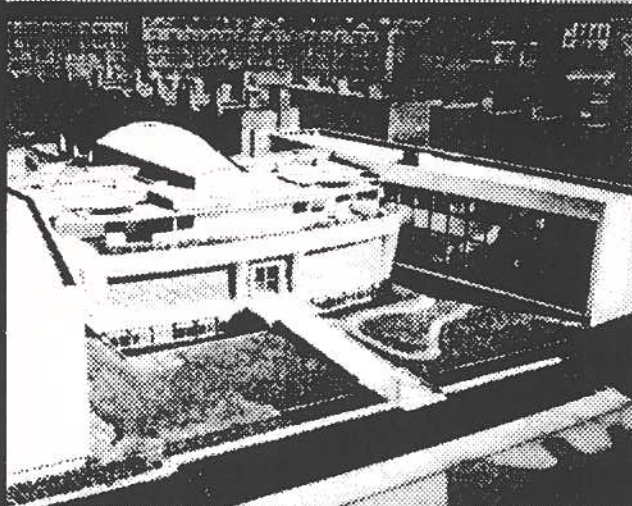
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BAUHAUS, DESSAU - WALTER GROPIUS 1926

CATALYST OF THE

MODERN MOVEMENT

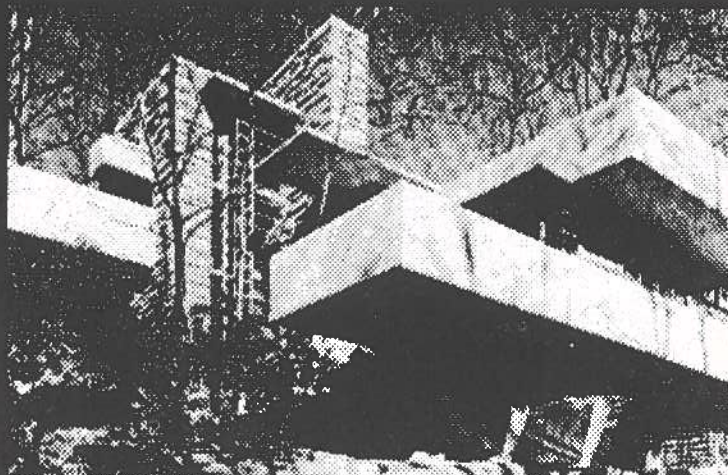


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# Appeal for Narkomfin Flats Moscow

prototype of communal housing threatened by total deterioration

Next year, the 100th Anniversary of the great Russian architect Moisei Ginzburg will be celebrated. At the same time, his most significant work, Narkomfin Flats in Moscow, designed with I. Milinis in 1928, is almost in ruins.

Narkomfin Flats are a rare prototype of communal housing, developed by the Association of Contemporary Architects OSA, that set itself to the task of formulating the necessary programs and type forms for an emerging new society. One of their prime concerns was the issue of communal housing and the creation of appropriate social units, one of which was adopted by Ginzburg for Narkomfin Flats. Today, the building is one of the very few remaining examples of communal housing in the world. Moreover, Narkomfin Flats is one of the most important 20th Century buildings, that has been and still is an inspiration for many European social housing scheme's (including Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation) and therefore of enormous historic value regarding the heritage of the Modern Movement in architecture and urban design. It is included in all canonical works on international modern architecture. Despite its alarming condition today, recent research by Soviet experts proves that the preservation and restoration of the building is still possible.

**We, the individuals and institutions that have signed this appeal,**

- being aware of the importance of the Modern Movement in architecture as an essential part of the social and cultural heritage, as well as of the importance of historic continuity, in which Narkomfin Flats is an indispensable element,
- being aware of the sufficient authenticity of the existing building to allow a responsible restoration, of adequate documentation already being made as well as recent research carried out by Soviet experts, that proves possibilities for proper restoration,
- being aware of the various previous initiatives in favour of preservation, protection and maintenance of the building, that however remained without result until today,
- being aware of the building now standing largely abandoned, yet offering an ingenious solution for housing that is still useful as studio units or other contemporary functions,
- despite being aware of the current economic priorities in the USSR,

**demand recognition of Narkomfin Flats as an elementary international landmark and require all necessary measures to ensure its protection and restoration in a way that preserves its original architectural, physical and social qualities.**

name	institution	signature
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(turn page for additional signatures)

Please copy this form if needed. Return forms with signatures of individuals and/or institutions to: **DOCOMOMO International, the Netherlands (see back for full address and fax).** Forms will be forwarded to relevant authorities in the USSR (USSR Minister of Culture, President USSR Cultural Fund and Riassa Gorbachov, councillor of the USSR Cultural Fund) by the DOCOMOMO International Secretariat. We thank you for your support for this important matter.

