

MARTIN
KOHLRAUSCH

BROKERS
MODERNITY



EAST CENTRAL
EUROPE
AND THE RISE
OF MODERNIST
ARCHITECTS,
1910—1950

LEUVEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Note on Translation

Translations are, by their nature, a form of compromise and when using sources from a range of languages the respective compromises are sometimes painful. In order to keep this book readable original names from languages other than English were only used or added for organizations, journals etc. and for specific terms that are hard to translate into English. Part of the compromise also applied to personal names. In a Polish context Helena Syrkus would be referred to as Helena Syrkusowa, and Barbara Brukalska and Stanisław Brukalski, if addressed as a couple, would be named Brukalscy. In order to avoid confusion this book uses Syrkus – as was done, e.g. in the CIAM context – and the male form Brukalski is used to refer to both ‘Brukalscy’.

Translations from languages other than English are my own unless otherwise noted.

Abbreviations

AA	<i>L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui</i>
AiB	<i>Architektura i Budownictwo</i> (Architecture and Building)
AEM	<i>Académie Européenne Méditerranée</i>
AM	<i>Svenskt arkitektur- och designcentrum</i> (Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design, Museum of Architecture)
APW	<i>Archiwum Państwowe m. st. Warszawy</i> (State Archive Warsaw)
a.r.	<i>artyści rewolucyjni, awangarda rzeczywista</i> (revolutionary artists or real avant-garde)
BA	<i>Bauhaus-Archiv</i>
BKG	<i>Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego</i> (National Development Bank)
BOS	<i>Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy</i> (Office for the Reconstruction of Warsaw)
CIAM	<i>Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne</i>
CICI	<i>Commission internationale de coopération intellectuelle</i>
CAE	Committee of Architectural Experts
CIRPAC	<i>Comité International pour la Réalisation du Problème Architectural Contemporain</i>
CIWF	<i>Centralny Instytut Wychowania Fizycznego</i> (Central Institute for Physical Exercises)
COP	<i>Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy</i> (Central Industrial District)
CPIA	<i>Comité Permanent International des Architectes</i>
DOM	<i>Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie</i> (House, housing estate, apartment)
EEST	<i>van Eesteren papers</i>
ETH	<i>Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zurich</i> (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich)
FP	Forbát papers
gta	<i>Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur</i>
IFHTP	International Federation for Housing and Town Planning
IVW	<i>Internationaler Verband für Wohnungswesen</i> (International Federation for Housing)

KI	<i>Konstruktivistische Internationale</i> (Constructivist Internationale)
LNA	League of Nations Archives
MA	<i>Muzeum Architektury</i> , Wrocław
MARS	Modern Architectural Research Group
NAI	Netherlands Architecture Institute (Het Nieuwe Instituut), Rotterdam
OGD	<i>Organizacja Gospodarstwa Domowego</i> (Organisation for Domestic Economy)
PAU	<i>Pracownia Architektoniczno-Urbanistyczna</i> (Architectural-urbanistic workshop)
PeWuKa	<i>Powszechna Wystawa Krajowa w Poznaniu</i> (the General National Exhibition held in Poznań)
PFM	<i>Państwowy Fundusz Mieszkaniowy</i> (National Housing Fund)
PZA	<i>Powszechny Zjazd Architektów</i> (General Convention of Architects)
RIA	<i>Reunion International d'Architectes</i>
SAP	<i>Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich</i> (Association of Polish Architects)
SARP	<i>Stowarzyszenie Architektów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej</i> (Association of Architects of the Republic of Poland)
SPB	<i>Stołeczne Przedsiębiorstwo Budowlane</i> (Building Operation of the Capital City)
SP	Helena Syrkus papers
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Association
TOR	<i>Towarzystwo Osiedli Robotniczych</i> (Association for Workers' Settlements)
TRM	<i>Towarzystwo Reformy Mieszkaniowej</i> (Society of Housing Reform)
TRZW	<i>Towarzystwo Rozwoju Ziemi Wschodnich</i> (Agency for the Development of the Eastern Territories)
TUP	<i>Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich</i> (Association of Polish Town Planners)
TUR	<i>Towarzystwo Uniwersytetu Robotniczego</i> (Association for Workers' University)
UIA	Union of International Associations
VKhUTEMAS	<i>Vysshiy Khudozhestvenno-Tekhnicheskiiye Masterskiye</i> (Higher Art and Technical Studios)
WGA	Walter-Gropius-Archiv
WSM	<i>Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa</i> (Warsaw Housing Cooperative)
WUT	<i>Politechnika Warszawska</i> (Warsaw University of Technology)
WZM	<i>Warszawski Zespół Miejski</i> (Town-complex Warsaw)
ZUS	<i>Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych</i> (The Social Insurance Institution)
ZRSS	<i>Związek Robotniczych Stowarzyszeń Spółdzielczych</i> (Federation of Workers' Cooperatives)

Introduction

Brokers of Modernity

*I've reason to believe that what I find
Is gonna change the face of human kind
And all these years before well I was blind
That's my conclusion
Cause I'm the architect*

(dEUS, The Architect)

In 1925 a rare type of building made its appearance in the literary world: a house entirely constructed of glass, prefabricated yet individualized, light but stable, flat-roofed but with walls which changed colour according to the surrounding landscape. The cavity walls allowed for the movement of water – warm in winter-time and cold in summer-time – which generated a comfortable indoor temperature while the presence of vents ensured the movement of fresh air. The circulating water also guaranteed continuous cleansing of walls and floors. Even the furniture, also made out of glass, underwent this continuous cleansing ritual: These houses of glass “spread like the plague once people found out about it. Who would want to live in a decaying, mouldy wooden sty eaten away by dry rot, or in a hovel that’s a breeding ground for rheumatism, tuberculosis and scarlet fever [...]?”¹

This rhetorical question is asked by one of the protagonists in Stefan Żeromski’s 1925 novel *Przedwiośnie* (The Coming Spring). Żeromski was one of the most influential Polish writers of that era. Although this was his last novel, it was the first novel of significance to use the new Polish state as its central theme. In the first chapter the protagonist’s father tells his son – both returning from civil-war Russia to Poland – the fantastic story of a relative. This cousin allegedly started constructing houses

of glass immediately after the First World War, using sand from coastal dunes and electrical energy generated by the sea in ingenious factories. The glass houses then set off a deep social transformation. Urban standards became the norm in rural areas as a result of the cleanliness of the glass walls and water enforced on the inhabitants who were former farmers. Further still, “the old cities, those fearful banes of the old civilization”, will start to disappear, supplanted by a new kind of garden city along “the tracks of electrified trains”. This vision culminated in workers’ apartment buildings in Warsaw becoming “more comfortable, healthier, cleaner, and more beautiful than the most fanciful palaces of the aristocracy”.²

Inspired by the architect Jan Koszyc-Witkiewicz, the image of the glass house served Żeromski in a twofold way. On the one hand the houses of glass symbolized raising workers and farmers to a higher standard of hygiene, culture and education. On the other hand this ‘invention’ served as an antidote to communist tendencies represented in the novel by the son. Wise reform based on science and technology is contrasted against crude revolt and the power of innovative architecture is presented as the key to building a better society. “Engineer” Baryka, the cousin and master brain behind the comprehensive project, creates a social environment which helps end class differences and facilitates moving on from the ills of the 19th century: social deprivation, illnesses and germ-infested dwellings. Unsurprisingly, his factories, where the houses are produced, are organized as co-operatives and informed by scientific principles.³

The glass houses represent a future which made sense in an environment lacking any of the improvements these houses promised. Further, the glass houses speak to the expectations projected on architects turned engineers as builders of far more than a few walls covered by a façade. Three features of Żeromski’s literary picture were to become typical of the role modernist architects came to play in Interwar Europe. First, the notion of a *tabula rasa*, which would allow for the implementation of radically new solutions. Second, the decisive role of architects in reforming society and, finally, the stress placed on technology and science, including enlightened but potentially coercive forms of engaging with workers and tenants.

As Żeromski’s novel and his image of the glass house suggest, and as this study will argue, these features found particular expression in East Central Europe, and Poland specifically. By focusing on developments in this region a sharper picture emerges of the impact of the rise of modernist architects on societies throughout Europe. Żeromski’s vision, presented at the very moment when far-reaching social housing schemes were developed in Poland, strongly influenced the imagination of those involved in the Polish movement for housing reform.⁴ The metaphor ‘houses of

glass' was used in Poland in a manner which referenced discourses on hygiene, planning, and social reform in general. The image of the glass house should, therefore, be understood in a much wider context – as should the changing role of modernist architects. Providing answers to the housing crisis and to the ongoing evolution of cities turned into a central problem for Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, the newly formed states in East Central Europe. This was a question which determined their internal and external legitimacy and thus was a question of the highest social and political order. As Żeromski indirectly establishes, it was also a question which determined successful navigation between Soviet Communism and a West that was too remote to simply emulate.

Examples of buildings which in any way resembled Żeromski's houses of glass in Poland were scarce and fewer in number than in the Netherlands or Germany, countries which are well-known as frontrunners of architectural modernism. The many striking manifestations of 'glass modernism' in Czechoslovakia, most famously the *Villa Tugendhat*, nuances the picture for the wider region somewhat. Yet, the important point to be made here is a different one. There are no streets named after *maisons de verre*, glass houses, or *gläserne Häuser* in Germany, the Netherlands, in France, Belgium or Great Britain for that matter. In the vicinity of Warsaw, however, the feminist and socialite Irena Krzywicka had an avant-garde house named *Szklany Dom* (House of Glass), built for herself in 1928 and even today a street in Warsaw is adorned with that name.⁵ In fact, the glass house had a life of its own in Poland. In the 1930s the housing co-operative *Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa* (Warsaw Housing Cooperative, WSM) set up a self-help organization for its tenants under the name of *Szklane Domy* and one of its settlements had its own theatre named after Żeromski.⁶

As these examples suggest, the metaphor and imagery evoked by Żeromski very obviously struck a chord in Poland. Yet, the houses of glass are also a revealing expression of transnational exchange. The image echoed Bruno Taut's expressionist concepts as presented in his *Glashaus* for the 1914 *Werkbund* exhibition in Germany and his seminal text *Stadtkrone* of 1919, and more generally the *Gläserne Kette* (Glass Chain) association of architects.⁷ In 1927 Pierre Chareau and Bernard Bijvoet started building the striking *Maison de Verre* in Paris whilst Ludwig Mies van der Rohe began his Barcelona Pavilion in 1929, to name just a few obvious connections.⁸ The poet and architectural critic Paul Scheerbart published a fully-fledged vision called *Glasarchitektur* in 1914, a utopian text in which glass houses occupied a central place. Both in its details – the ventilators, the furniture made of glass – as in the scope of social expectations – glass as the remedy to social conflict

and hatred – Scheerbart predated Żeromski and must be seen as the latter's main inspiration.⁹

The dynamics of intellectual exchange will have a prominent place in this book. Yet, the interesting point about Żeromski's vision is not that ideas 'travelled' as such. The relevance of Żeromski's vision for this study lies in how he connects the aspirations of the new Polish state to the promise of rational and visionary 'social' architecture. The aesthetics of glass architecture which loom large with Scheerbarth and are central to Taut's expressionist designs do not bother Żeromski much. His is a concrete utopia connecting the seashore acquired by the new Polish state as part of the 'corridor', thus a politically charged territory, with the allure of technology and the idolisation of the genius engineer-architect who will achieve no less than a great leap into the future.¹⁰ The desolate, plague-stricken countryside, caught in century-long stasis, will be awakened by a new kind of architecture. The themes of 19th century early urbanist thinking – new street layouts or facades – are no longer so relevant. What is now relevant is the transformative potential of architecture understood as a tool for changing society, modernizing the country, and entering the promised realm of modernity.

This book starts with the transformative picture of the glass house and the way it is connected to a triangle of architects, society and a particular region at a particular historical moment. By so doing this book seeks to provide an answer to the question of why it was obvious for Żeromski to express his political and social vision in architectural terms – and why so many of his contemporaries found this convincing. Part of the answer is the theme of this book – the rise of a group which is rarely researched as such: modernist architects.

The cohort of architects born around 1900, who were trained in the new technologies including glass, developed a new idea of what their profession should be like and what its goals should be. Seeing themselves as modernist architects meant not only building in a modern way, that is using the latest technologies, but also radically extending the reach of what architecture should cover – not just society, but also culture and politics. This was certainly not true for all architects entering the field in the 1920s, and it was also certainly not limited to Żeromski's Poland. Further, as Żeromski's glass houses illustrate, the new architectural aspirations could only develop against the backdrop of changing societal expectations.

It is the latter aspect, as this book will argue, which turns modernist architects into a key group of the seminal changes of the first half of the 20th century in Europe. The promise of redemption encapsulated in glass houses was not convincing to everyone. Yet, the notion that a new holistic approach to building, based on techno-

logical progress and new scientific insights, could bring about vast improvement and cure the ills of the 19th century was widely shared. This belief points to the rise of technocratic ideas and the technocratic movement, which modernist architects were a part of, after the First World War.¹¹ This said, Żeromski's houses of glass with their enforced transparency and deep interference in individuals' lives also epitomize the darker side of technocracy and, in a wider sense, the modern project. Extreme rationalization, as was famously argued by Zygmunt Bauman, was also one of the paths which led to the Nazi death camps and, as Marius Turda has contended, was closely tied to eugenics.¹² Further, the issue of prefabricated mass housing as envisioned in the 1920s (not only by Żeromski) also calls into question its long-term legacies in communist housing projects.

The question of how to build and of how building was connected to societal change was one of the crucial themes of the first half of the 20th century in Europe. Yet, Żeromski's image of the glass house is more complex. The image renders the architect as more than just simply caught between the advantages and disadvantages of hyper-rational modernization. Here the engineer-architect features as an executor of deep, transformative change, proving himself by rising to the challenge of nation-building. In this, very obviously, the engineer-architect was also subject to the transformative project of modernity and the ruptures which accompanied the politics of modernization.

After the First World War this experience was probably more dynamic and this promise more convincing in the region roughly defined as East Central Europe than in any other part of Europe.¹³ Here, with Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, new states saw the light of the day or, as in the case of Hungary, a state was radically reshaped. All three states were successors to the empires which had crumbled during the war. Given the situation of extreme economic challenges and political turmoil, these states almost by definition had to take on the challenge of modernization and attempt to harvest the fruits which modernization promised.

It was the scope of the East Central European crisis that allowed modernist architects to achieve cultural, political and social relevance. What could be described as the modernist architects' rise to new relevance was, however, much more than a simple equation of demand and supply, of societal needs and answers as provided by architects. Modernist architects, in the form of new professionals and socially-charged figures, only emerged during the very process in question, when they both shouldered expectations of change and shaped them at the same time. Modernist architects must thus be understood as a complex product of projections

trussed in a profession which was attaining new weight. The figure of the modernist architect must be understood as a dynamic configuration.

In his book *ABC* the Polish writer and Nobel Prize laureate Czesław Miłosz introduces ‘centre-periphery’ as a central category.¹⁴ Here, Miłosz, while confirming the relevance of the geographical divide spelled out earlier, also reflects on his own existence as an artist in a predefined asymmetry. This asymmetry is important on various levels to this study, starting with where it positions itself in historiography and existing scholarship. The history of modernist architecture has mostly – with the exception of the Soviet Union – been written with a western focus. Modernism in the East was only ‘discovered’, with some important exceptions, after the fall of the Berlin wall – filling a blank spot on the map of modernism and supplementing important aspects to the history of art of modernism.¹⁵

The broad scope of this book means that it relies on various strands of literature, some of which have been very dynamic in recent years and cannot be outlined here. This literature ranges from history in the narrower sense to the history of art and architecture, urban history, and the history of technology and experts, but also includes cultural output such as novels and films.¹⁶ Due to its diverse nature this literature will be introduced in the individual chapters. However, some key aspects and trends in the literature and some crucial works must be mentioned here, the more so as the way modernist architecture features in research today is part of the very story being told here. This is also true for the asymmetries in assigning architectural relevance which developed in the 1920s and 1930.¹⁷ An important case in point is the extreme focus placed, until recently, on the short-lived *Bauhaus* in Weimar Germany. This attention can also be explained by the fact that leading *Bauhäusler* left for the US before the Second World War and thus entered American academia. The latter, after the war, became the central arena wherein architectural importance was defined and assigned.¹⁸ This tendency was already emerging in the 1920s and was somewhat deliberately brought about, for example, in Sigfried Giedion’s attempts to streamline and ‘purify’ the modernist movement by confining it to an elite of the “seven lamps of architecture”.¹⁹ The tendency was furthered by the influential works of Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Nicolas Pevsner of 1932 and 1936 respectively.²⁰

In recent years there have been numerous attempts to ‘even out’ this picture, by assigning East Central Europe a place in the history of modernism.²¹ These publications, often based on exhibitions, succeeded in showing the relevance, originality, and scope of avant-garde movements in East Central Europe which far exceeded just copying or adopting western trends.²² To a degree, this is also true for modernist architecture, an important part of these avant-garde movements.²³ There are,

however, three important limitations to the respective literature. There are next to no historically informed studies on modernist architects as groups or networks for the region.²⁴ Moreover, biographies of those architects central to this study are extremely scarce and there is very little research on the social impact and interaction with society and politics of these architects.²⁵

With a view to the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM), the last two decades have seen impressive new research, without which this book could not have been written. The works by Eric Mumford and Kees Somer on the CIAM as an organisation deserve particular mention.²⁶ Moreover, in 2014 the *Atlas of the Functional City*, an extremely rich collection delivering far more than a mere account of the most well-known CIAM congress of 1933, considerably expanded and deepened our understanding of that organisation.²⁷

Many of the sources used for this study have so far received little attention. This book relies heavily on the correspondence of those architects from East Central Europe who were active in the CIAM and the written documentation of their engagement with this organisation. This includes, in part, correspondence directly relating to CIAM matters and, particularly from the mid-1930s onwards, correspondence stemming from the friendships and close relationships which had evolved between members of the CIAM, confirming the shared cause of modernism. For reasons explained in detail in chapters 1 and 3 the Polish case will be given particular attention, as the Polish group was by far the most active of the Eastern CIAM groups. As a result of the extreme suffering endured by both the city of Warsaw as well as most Polish CIAM members during the German occupation of the Second World War and the ensuing destruction of archives, source material on the Polish group is, however, scattered and uneven for the different architects involved.²⁸

The perceived peripheral status of the region of East Central Europe – continuously reflected by politicians as well as by modernist architects – formed the framework which allowed both to enter into an informal modernizing alliance.²⁹ For the architects in question, however, their identification with modernism entailed more comprehensive goals, including those of personal emancipation, than for, say, a Dutch modernist architect. This book regards this point as vital to a better understanding of the implications of the modernist project. If we shift the attention from matters of style and aesthetics to the social impact and social dependencies of modernist architects, the regions where these impacts and dependences were particularly pronounced, where modernization was particularly invasive, almost logically move centre stage. The relevance of the questions this book seeks to answer is not confined to East Central Europe, and these questions do not even initially point

to this region, though. By choosing the case of East Central Europe this book primarily seeks to gain a closer understanding of the rise of modernist architects and its associated implications. This also includes the relevant question famously ridiculed by Tom Wolfe as “From Bauhaus to our House”, namely under which communicative conditions were modernist architects believed?³⁰

This book does not embrace the assumption of a western model of modernization to which then, almost logically, the East had to adapt.³¹ Yet, this book acknowledges that such assumptions existed and as such had an impact. The whole idea of modernization was always charged with an East-West asymmetry, which in East Central Europe was intensified by an idea of modernity more or less loosely linked with the notion of Europe and civilization and thus also intensely reflected.³² This reflection, in turn, should be seen as part and parcel of modernity.

Why Modernist Architects?

Architects are influenced by the fluid nature of their skill which shifted between the arts and technology. Although matters of style and built manifestations of architectural designs cannot and will not be ignored, of course, they are not central considerations here. The focus rests on modernist architects as part of a group. In this, this book distinguishes itself in two important ways from the majority of the existing literature in the field.³³

First, historians of art and architecture are mostly interested in matters of style where aesthetic merits and innovative potential are the most important categories. It might be said, without doing justice to all those studies, that those architects who either did not fit into the category of outstanding artist – such as, for example, Mies van der Rohe – or into a category dealing with general innovation, such as Constructivism, tended to be ignored, though there are noteworthy exceptions even for the region under scrutiny here.³⁴

Second, when architects are academically treated as individuals this tends to be in a biographical perspective, featuring those architects who shaped the cannon. To be sure, relevant works have long moved beyond ‘hero-worshipping’ and have made very significant attempts to understand architects, and modernist architects specifically, as much more than ‘mere’ builders. The self-fashioning of these architects in a mediated modern world has recently found increasing attention, particularly as regards the seminal figure of Le Corbusier.³⁵

Focusing on modernist architects as a group allows us to better understand these architects’ motivations in pursuing the course of modernism beyond the limitations

of one biography. More importantly, it allows us to make sense of the personal dimension of what can be understood as the rise of architects to new social, cultural and political relevance. We can study the effect of social and political change, and in particular political ruptures, on the lives of modernist architects, whose work was so closely linked with social modernity and the modernizing state and who were symbolically charged as epitomes of modernity and modernization. The biographical level thus brings into the picture the massive ruptures that were decisive for Europe's history in the first half of the 20th century, including changing citizenships, exile, forced migration, and genocide.

Thus, this book is able to provide a broader picture of and assess in greater depth how the identification with modernist architecture was expressed, and lived, and the price that came with it. Moving beyond the level of one biography is more than a matter of enlarging the sample. Belonging to a group – which, of course, was always an imaginary group – confirmed the relevance of their new cause to its members. This book will show how the formation of a movement beyond borders helped to strengthen modernist architects' relevance and standing at home in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. Focusing on a group allows also for, as phrased convincingly by Madeleine Herren, the challenging of narratives which are too closely linked to a simplified notion of political change: "They [networks] do not tie in closely either with the evolution of institutions or with relations between persons; they neither are the product of an evolutionary process of modernization nor can they be assigned to a pragmatic conception of politics."³⁶

Evident as the need to study architects as a group is, undertaking a group study is not easy. It is nearly impossible to apportion equal attention to dozens of architects, not least due to the often scarce sources. The need to limit the group of architects under study in a practical way is one, though not the most important, reason why this book concentrates on those architects who were members of the CIAM. The CIAM, as will be explained in chapter 3, was a unique way of organizing architects around a shared cause – modernism – and stressing the added value of internationalism.

Not much attention has been paid to the fact that the CIAM was particularly successful in East Central Europe. This book will investigate why this was no coincidence while not losing sight of the ongoing asymmetries between East and West, which the CIAM only partially overcame. In this way this study will also contribute to a better understanding of the relevance of the CIAM as such. Using the CIAM as a framework naturally explains why architects from the Soviet Union, who of course played a key part in the rise of modernist architecture, are not part

of the study. Although, as will also be discussed here, the Soviet Union played an important role for CIAM architects as a projection screen of new urbanist opportunities and as a concrete space of action, Soviet architects were barely involved in the organisation – mostly for political reasons.

With this in mind, the book will concentrate on those modernist architects from East Central Europe who were most committed to the CIAM. The book will frequently refer to Szymon and Helena Syrkus. Szymon Syrkus was arguably one of the leading pre-Second World War modernist architects in Europe and the fact that today he is hardly acknowledged as such speaks to the aforementioned asymmetries in the historiography of modernism. A number of other relevant members of the CIAM came from the Polish group *Praesens*. Architects such as Bohdan Lachert, Józef Szanajca, Barbara and Stanisław Brukalski, and Roman Piotrowski will also feature throughout this book. As will be discussed in chapter 3 the link between the Czechoslovak architects and the CIAM – despite the enormous role modernist architecture played in this country – was problematic. Apart from the likes of František Kalivoda, therefore, Czech architects remain largely out of the picture, although the country itself does not. In Hungary Farkas Molnár and Fred Forbát fit the selection criteria. Forbát, who left a rich estate of papers and was a highly sensitive observer, will be referred to frequently. This selection implies that the results of this study more strongly reflect the Polish development than the development in Hungary or Czechoslovakia. Yet, this study's purpose is not to give an all-encompassing account of architects in the region, but to use the mentioned examples in order to arrive at a clearer understanding of what drove the rise of modernist architects generally, even beyond the region in question.

Talking about modernist architects as a group raises the question of whether they belonged to the same generation. Most of the architects mentioned were born around the turn of the century – Forbát in 1897, Piotrowski in 1895, Lachert in 1900, Szanajca in 1902, Barbara Brukalska in 1899 and Helena Syrkus in 1900. Stanisław Brukalski and Szymon Syrkus, both born in 1894, were slightly older while František Kalivoda, who was active in the CIAM in the second half of the 1930s, was born in 1913, making him much younger. The strong representation of the cohort born around 1900 separates this group from Walter Gropius (1883) and Le Corbusier (1887), who had been the leading figures in the CIAM before the Second World War. The architects born after 1900 belonged to a generation which was strongly influenced by the new technologies they encountered in their training, as well as by the idea of planning.³⁷

Most of the architects at the core of this book started their training during and right after the First World War and began their – rapidly advancing – professional careers in the first decade after the war. This was a time of state building, the rise of radical avant-garde cultures and intense debates on the place of experts *vis-à-vis* state and society. The use of the term ‘brokers’ in the book’s title stresses these links. The idea of brokers is intended to evoke a group at the interface of state and society, a group which negotiated modernity from a central position as a new reality and a desirable goal. Modernist architects succeeded in positioning themselves as brokers of what modernity should mean between their profession and society, between the local environment – the city, but also the nation state – in which they worked and an overarching international scene of modernist architects. The term broker also stresses the communicative aspect as well as the active role architects played in what chapter 2 will describe as a process of self-empowerment.

This study acts on the assumption of a rise of modernist architects to new positions of influence and relevance and is set to analyse and demonstrate this rise. Tzvetan Todorov has remarked that during Europe’s Interwar period architecture attained the role of “the total art that could transform everyone’s life”.³⁸ In focussing on this process the specificities of the profession of architects must not be forgotten. The associations related to the term ‘rise’ do certainly not fully capture the experience of this profession in the 20th century. Two tensions which were characteristic of the profession deserve particular attention:

The first tension is captured in the novel *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand – along with an awkward ideological programme. This tension refers to the conditions of precariat and demiurge as possible forms of existence in one architect, as expressed in the literary figure of Howard Roark. Given that architects were dependent on sponsors in order to realize their designs – and this was particularly true for the long controversial modernists, such as Roark – they ran a greater risk of being condemned to inactivity than most other professionals. However, the literary figure of Roark can also serve as an example of the architect as demiurge. The demiurgic character inherent in the architectural profession was particularly pronounced in modernist architects when they made claims of being able to transform society.³⁹

The second tension is connected to the first. Not only dependent on sponsors for any kind of work at all and in particular for pushing through designs which exceeded the scope of the single building, architects were also much more dependent on politics than most other professions. In somewhat of an overstatement of the point one could compare this with Albert Speer’s career between Hitler’s *Reichskanzlei* and the Spandau prison, or the many Soviet architects who were at the

height of their careers around 1930 and eventually ended up perishing in Stalin's purges a few years later. Architects, probably more so than other professionals, clung to the illusion that they could steer their engagement with politics in the direction they wanted – an example of overestimating one's own capabilities, as well-captured in the lines of dEUS at the start of this introduction.

It is beyond the scope of this book to determine what role personal vanity played in all this. The relevant point is rather – as is particularly true for modernist architects – that architects were almost sought out by society as epitomes of modernity.⁴⁰ Modernist architects responded to this need in a double avant-garde way – with the striking avant-garde solutions connected to modernist realisations in architecture, but also to new, avant-garde forms of organizing themselves and communicating.⁴¹ These categories will thus have a central place in this book.

Before turning to the book's layout, a key term which has already been used several times requires clarification. The group focused on here is referred to by the term modernist architects thus introducing the element of modernism as an aesthetic identifier and as a distinct process.

Modernist Architects and Modernity

The terms modernity and modernism share both a long history and the fact that they are highly controversial. This is due to their comparative vagueness and because they are heavily normatively charged. Often, rather than being seen as an open-ended process which did not necessarily end positively, modernity has been linked to democratic and emancipatory effects.⁴² Despite these concerns the most important reason why this study still employs the term modernist architects is that it offers not only an analytical category, but is an essential part of the very story this book intends to tell. Although this is certainly not a sufficiently clear distinction it is telling and relevant that the architects themselves used the terms modern or modernist to describe the particular group they belonged to and to characterize the novelty of their approach. The CIAM carried the designation "modern" in its name as did several respective national groups, such as the Polish journal *Praesens: kwartalnik modernistów*. This signalled much more than just the simple need to denominate oneself. By using the term 'modern' architects were linking themselves to the wider concept of modernity as an international phenomenon and the dynamics of modernization. In so doing they reflected their own position geographically and temporally much more intensely than had been the case for other, older strands of architects – who were in any case typified by a less pronounced and less messianic group identity.

Modernist architects embraced the idea that something radically new had begun of which they were part and which could no longer be integrated into older narratives.⁴³ Reflexivity has often been described as a hallmark of modernity, and not only by those sociologists diagnosing a “reflexive modernity” in post-Second World War Europe.⁴⁴ With a clear notion of what progress would look like and how it should be brought about, modernist architects reflected what modernity could and should be. As will be described in chapter 2, these architects not only contributed to clarifying the idea of modernity, but also put their own movement on the map in a self-reflected way.

Membership of the group of modernist architects could be defined as adherence to Le Corbusier’s famous five points of architecture but this would hardly reflect the dynamics of the new movement.⁴⁵ In a less rigid manner one could characterize the new approach of modernism as assigning a central place to the principles of “unity, order, purity”. These went hand in hand with a new concept of space which was now, unlike previously, regarded as mouldable.⁴⁶ Yet, this would ignore the much wider and more important engagement of modernist architects with the many strands of modernity – and the contradictions inherent in it.⁴⁷ Modernist architecture was always also an intellectual endeavour, neatly summarized by one of its main advocates, Sigfried Giedion, as “the invention of a new tradition”.⁴⁸ Complete departure from tradition was what Marcel Breuer established as the common denominator of the modern movement.⁴⁹

It was typical of modernist architects to engage in the process of social and economic change and the rise of new technologies – in response to the challenges arising from this change or bringing about change themselves. The modernist movement was much more characterized by both social engagement and the notion of being able to shape societies and generating improvement than mere matters of style. Further, in reflecting modernity, taking part in its production and thus also ‘inventing’ themselves as a group, modernist architects can again be described as brokers of modernity. This meant that modernist architects were part of the very dynamic of modernity, captured in Karl Marx’s famous line “All that is solid melts into air” from the *Communist Manifesto*, later used as the title of Marshall Berman’s classic study on the experience of modernity.⁵⁰

The term modernization captures this dynamic, and links society’s expectations of architects and the profession’s own aspirations with the state.⁵¹ This link, as chapter 1 will show, was particularly expressed in East Central Europe. Key ingredients of modernization such as science, technology, rationalisation and efficiency were all central terms of what modernist architecture promised to achieve. This promise, it

will be argued here, held a strong potential in a region which partly was, and partly perceived itself as, backward *vis-à-vis* an often highly idealised West and where the past had a largely negative connotation.⁵²

The question of just how universal modernity and modernism actually are was controversially debated in recent years.⁵³ In this book the relevance of the East Central European case in a wider historiography of modernist architects is not believed to particularly lie in a specific pathway to modernity as expressed in Shmuel Eisenstadt's concept of "Multiple Maternities".⁵⁴ What is instead striking, as far as this region is concerned, is the enormously intense and reflected engagement of modernist architects with examples from abroad.⁵⁵ This in particular did not mean a critical renunciation of a modernism perceived as western.

In line with the main strand of the relevant literature this study assumes that "high modernity" set in during the late 19th century, an era of unprecedented upheaval lasting roughly from the 1880s to the 1960s.⁵⁶ The technical and scientific modernization of urban space became an essential part of high modernity and was increasingly reflected as such.⁵⁷ This time frame of high modernity should be understood as an "open process of transformative dynamism".⁵⁸ The period was strongly impacted by political disruptions, which also derived from attempts to find political answers to problems posed by modernity thus politicising these answers. Modernist architecture also formed one of these answers, albeit a highly disputed one.

Thematic and Temporal Structures

If we assume that modernist architects rose to meet new opportunities of social influence we must then also assume that a decline followed the inevitable peak. Indeed, this process could also be described as a parabola which began just before the First World War, ascended during the two decades after the war, and then faded out in the two decades after the Second World War. This parabola thus, certainly not coincidentally, more or less follows the age described as high modernity, that is, the period of the 1890s to 1960s. This book chronologically begins at a slightly later point and ends about a decade earlier. The narrative starts with the First World War, and ends in the year 1948. These caesura follow two seminal political developments or events, impacting the question under scrutiny here. In 1918 the new East Central European states emerged – all of which, of course, had an important and very distinct pre-history. In 1948 the consolidation of communist regimes and the introduction of the doctrine of Socialist Realism largely marked the end of the international exchange, which was part and parcel of interwar modernism.⁵⁹ The six

chapters organizing the argument and narrative of this book follow, *grosso modo*, a chronological structure and integrate this structure with thematic approaches. Each chapter, while focusing on East Central Europe, tackles questions extending far beyond the region in question.

The first chapter, *Modernity in Eastern Europe – East European Modernism?*, sets the scene by detailing the specific connection between modernism and modernization in East Central Europe during and after the First World War. The region is described as a projection screen of radical socio-political change and the enormous possibilities which accompanied planning and modernization. The chapter discusses the basis for such fantasies against the background of the economic crisis and recovery of the region and the emergence of new states after 1918. For these states modernization was imperative and the project of modernism in many respects provided an answer to their complex problems and was key to gaining political legitimacy. In this framework modernist architects could successfully claim to hold a new status.

Chapter 2 introduces *Architects as Experts of the Social*. Largely dealing with the period of 1916 to 1925, the chapter analyses how architects both laid claim to new tasks and became a focal point of societal expectations, how this turned modernist architects into experts of far more than ‘mere’ building and how this translated into new forms of educating architects. These architects represent a new phenotype, mixing modernism in one’s own personal life with a new conception of one’s professional identity and the self-empowerment as ‘social planners’. The second part of the chapter highlights the main themes of change, namely the rise of scientific urbanism, the allure of the machine and the triangle of rationalization, planning and technocracy as ‘background’ ideologies which modernist architects embraced and contributed to.

Chapter 3, *Organizing new Architectural Goals*, has its focal point in the second half of the 1920s and discusses new post-First World War forms of architects’ organizations with particular reference to the CIAM. The chapter treats the CIAM as a new type of organization, concerned with establishing architects as key players in a yet to be defined relationship between experts and politics. The implications of this change are spelt out by using the example of the Polish CIAM group. Shifting attention to the rarely studied CIAM-Ost the chapter assesses the relevance of these findings in a wider framework covering East Central Europe and beyond.

Chapter 4, *Communicating Social Change through Architecture*, will study how architects changed their method of communicating with the wider world by producing new types of architecture books, journals and exhibitions, ranging roughly

from 1925 to 1935. Modernist architects' strategic use of various forms of media, including the role of visual shorthand to phrase social problems, is investigated here. This chapter serves to grasp the tension between internationalist convictions and national aspirations which characterized both the professional and private lives of the architects in question. Coalescing the national and international levels reveals the enormous tensions these architect-experts experienced, a theme central to the next chapter.

Chapter 5, *Materializing the International Agenda: Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, takes up the main problems of the earlier chapters in the concrete example of the Polish capital Warsaw in the early 1930s. The chapter shows how the various modernizing agendas of Poland's central government, the city council of Warsaw, and the CIAM programme all merged for a brief period. Discussing the example of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, the only concrete plan for a so-called functional city developed within the framework of the CIAM, the chapter links seemingly lofty internationalism and very concrete problems on the ground. *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, which had a considerable impact both on planning in Warsaw and on the international debate, serves as a case in point to demonstrate how architects managed to position themselves in the driver's seat at a time when the urban crisis became a national issue. As this chapter shows, the planning benefited both the CIAM (in urgent need of concrete application cases) and the Polish architects on the spot, who could exploit the organization's international clout in their dealing with politics at home.

Chapter 6, *Under Pressure: Modernist Architects and the Rise of Political Extremes*, addresses covert planning in Warsaw during the Second World War and the reconstruction in the wake of the establishment of communist regimes for the period 1936 to 1948. The chapter focuses on how architectural expertise increasingly became part of politics, forcing architects to take a position *vis-à-vis* the ideological struggles permeating East Central Europe before, during and after the Second World War. The chapter addresses the leeway architects had through their command of critical expertise, and the pressures exerted on these architects for the very same reason by using the example of Szymon Syrkus, who spent three years in Auschwitz. The final question posed is how architects employed the catastrophe of the war to push through radical plans during the short window of opportunity which opened in 1945 and closed in 1948.

To answer this question and the questions of the previous chapter, this book will first turn to the concrete space of analysis and the question of why it was here that modernist architects found such fertile ground.

1. Modernity in Eastern Europe - East European Modernism?

In 1934 Universal studios released the film *The Black Cat*, directed by Edgar Ulmer, an Austro-American. The film, the first to co-star Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi, belonged to the horror genre and was a considerable success in the United States. Karloff and Lugosi were not playing Frankenstein and Dracula, however, but a fictional celebrity Austrian architect named Hjalmar Poelzig and a Hungarian psychiatrist named Vitus Werdegast instead. Moreover, the film was not set in the usual dark Transylvanian castle but rather in a hyper-modernist villa erected on what, according to the film, were the foundations of the giant fortress 'Maramaros', built during the time of the First World War and situated in rural Hungary.¹ Here the character of Werdegast seeks to settle an old score dating back to the war. Thus, not only is this private war between two men merged with the wider war, but the modernist building also becomes both a setting and an allegory: "A masterpiece of construction, built upon the ruins of the masterpiece of destruction", in the words of Werdegast as he confronts Poelzig, the latter having served as the war-time commander of the fortress.²

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1. Film *The Black Cat*. Poelzig's modernist villa above the war cemetery

Of course, this is a popular, commercial film with its own dramaturgy derived from its genre. That said, the tropes evoked are far from coincidental. It was no coincidence that the director Ulmer referred to the period when he shot the film as his *Bauhaus*-period, having designed the foyer of the modernist villa himself. Ulmer's biographer attributes the modernist dimension of the film with an "almost documentary quality".³ The film, it is safe to say, captured important trends of its time. This book studies modernist architects as embodiments of the condition of high modernism. Three themes central to the film inform this book and the choice of its geographical setting. All three aspects are central to this study while the latter two inform the choice of its setting.

First, there is the theme of the personae of the celebrity architect, characterized by its specific relation to his or her oeuvre. The personae features in the film in a binary way through lead actor Karloff and the reference to the famous Weimar Republic architect Hans Poelzig.⁴ The fictional Hjalmar Poelzig blatantly personifies 'the modern' in his expressionist behaviour, while Karloff's matter-of-fact acting contrasts starkly with the way in which Lugosi/Werdegast represent the ways of the past.

Second, Karloff/Poelzig, always addressed as “engineer”, embodies the theme of the architect as the great creator not only in his capacity as engineer but also as creator of the aesthetics of his portentous villa. As an engineer-architect who is surrounded by the signifiers of a modern, almost futuristic, lifestyle Poelzig not only represents the prototypical modern man but also a creator of modernity. The film grippingly plays out the degree of coercion inherent in modernist architecture: “a nice, cosy, unpretentious insane asylum”, as one of the characters calls Poelzig’s villa. This effect is emphasized by quick changes of scene between the rational and scientific, on the one hand, and the irrational and unsettling – including Satanic practices and corpses kept in bunker-like cellars reminiscent of the Bluebeard tale – on the other hand. Modernist architecture serves here to portray an attempt to overcome the horrors of the war through clarity and technology but at the same time symbolizes the uncontrolled forces of modernity – and also the disillusionment that followed some ten years of modernist building.

Finally, it is telling how the film, without ado, ties modernist architecture to the catastrophe of the First World War – here in a gloomily painted and geographically fixed yet abstract East European theatre of war: “the greatest graveyard in the world” as the film has it. For this purpose Ulmer merges the eastern theatre of war with the fictitious fortress ‘Maramaros’, the modernist imagery, and the clash of the old and the modern.⁵ Destruction as the precondition for radical innovation will be a recurrent theme of this book.

As suggestive as the contrast between dark, muddy killing-fields, dotted with crosses, and the bright hyper-modernist villa towering over these fields is – does concrete space really matter in this opposition? For director Ulmer what counted was the set of associations connected to an East European space of crisis: world war battles of which little was known to the western public, the chaos and dramatic impact of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, languages and cultures hard to digest for cinema visitors in the United States and thus conveying a sense of the mysterious. Yet, for Ulmer, born in what had been the Austrian town of Olmütz (which became part of Czechoslovakia in 1918), a more concrete reality of this space did matter, as revealed in his US-based career as a specialist in films on East European minorities. In the Soviet Union some of the most striking achievements of modernist architecture pioneered a development which was only partially taken up in the West later. Czechoslovakian examples of the modern movement, foremost the *Villa Tugendhat* near Brno, became early icons of the new global architecture.⁶ On a trip to Prague in 1927 Le Corbusier noted in his diary, that “Le mouvement architectural tchécoslovaque mérite, à l’heure actuelle, la plus grande attention”.⁷ It was no

coincidence that Tomáš Masaryk, the first president of the newly founded Czechoslovakia, called post-1918 Europe a “laboratory built over the great graveyard of the World War”.⁸

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2. Villa Tugendhat near Brno (current view)

Historians of art and architecture have increasingly come to pay attention to the manifestations of modernism in the East since the end of communist rule there.⁹ How exactly could a radical modernism thrive or at least attain a specific significance in a region regarded as rather backward in many ways? Before spelling out potential answers to this question in the following five chapters, two dimensions necessary to comprehend the relevance of what is to follow need to be emphasized. We must look at the Western imagery of the ‘East’ in the period under scrutiny. Moreover, we must, with a focus on the particularly telling example of Poland, look at the material situation, the material basis for architecture in the region under scrutiny. This will be done with particular reference to how far this situation was a pre-condition for the possibility of what will be referred to as a ‘social turn’ in architecture and of the rise of the ‘social architect’. Both, the imagery of the East and the concrete challenges on the ground, most apparent in the cities, need to be taken into account and to be considered jointly.

The European East – Sketches of a Projection screen

Due to more than 40 years of Cold War it has largely been forgotten – or never fully realized – how formative the Eastern perspective has been for the arts and for architecture in the first half of the 20th century.¹⁰ Recent publications have emphasized the manifold co-operations between Eastern and Western architects, for example, as happened in the framework of the *Bauhaus* movement.¹¹ Of similar importance was the inspiration Western architects took from experienced or imagined eastern examples.

These imaginations can be categorized into three groups: Firstly, in the German discourse, with a long tradition dating back to the 19th century, the East featured as a region to be colonized, and as a mouldable entity awaiting the confrontation with Western or a specifically German efficiency.¹² Secondly, examples of genuinely Eastern architecture particularly in Russia, but also further east, were considered to express a more direct link to the local populations and thus to provide stimuli for spiritual renewal. Thirdly, in a political vein, the Russian revolution served as inspiration to charge architecture with a social mission and to emphasize architecture's capacity to change society.¹³ In this reading the East turned into "a symbol for the social principle".¹⁴

These different strands of thought were all combined within the idea of the East as a region similar to a 'tabula rasa', for example when the association of avant-garde German architects *Gläserne Kette* declared in 1920 "Russia, tabula rasa, should now demonstrate a new building on new ground".¹⁵ What has pointedly been described as a 'suburb of Europe' became a projection screen to be contrasted with Western European 'civilization' or to be shaped by this very civilization.¹⁶ The most prominent of Europe's modernist architects, the Swiss-French Le Corbusier, also followed the lure of the East. In 1911 Le Corbusier embarked on a "Journey to the East", which in many respects shaped the personality and architectural style of this founding father of modern architecture.¹⁷ The diary he kept during his journey elicits an at times idealized space, untouched by the negative aspects of European civilization – "invading and dirty 'Europeanization'" which yielded incomparable pieces of genuine art as a true expression of the people.¹⁸ At the same time Le Corbusier both presupposes the existence of a given space he refers to as 'the East' while he himself contributes to defining and filling in this almost mythical space.¹⁹ Alfred Döblin, author of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and, like Le Corbusier, a herald of modernism, dismissed the 'European' writers in Warsaw and hailed the power of the true people

in a land allegedly largely untouched by the West.²⁰ Austrian writer Joseph Roth, who travelled through Poland and Russia extensively in the 1920s, perceived the European East as an “unheard of space of social experiment” in which the project of modernity was itself at play.²¹

For a short moment in history, East Central Europe, the region Masaryk called “New Europe”, appeared to be the most promising of the world’s depressed areas – not despite but because of its weak economic situation.²² Stein Rokkan has referred to the “opportunity structures” which can emerge in peripheral regions. Yet, he also alerts us to the generally stronger influence from outside, from the centre, as being characteristic of peripheral regions.²³ Both aspects characterize the place of East Central Europe in the wider European context in the period in question. In a telling way, for example, the Polish region of Galicia became imagined as a space of economic development opportunities.²⁴ But we should also be aware of the tendency of German economists, in particular, to project the power of planning, and to perceive East Central Europe and South East Europe as spaces to be opened up by superior organization from the centre outwards.²⁵ For this book it is particularly relevant that the notion of developing regions was part and parcel of a contemporary discourse. This discourse was phrased using the concepts of catching up, living up to one’s potential, or even turning local disadvantages into advantages by leapfrogging into the future through planning.²⁶ All such ideas shared the assumption that it would be possible to repeat Western advances in modernization in a time-delayed manner in the East. And all these assumptions referred to and accepted a framework of desirable modernization and of modernity as a goal. At the same time the ‘New Man’ who loomed large in many cultural concepts at the time took on a much more concrete shape in the East. In the event all new states relied on creating new citizens to bring their vision of modern states and societies to life.²⁷

East Central Europe - A Space of Crisis?

What exactly would such a space of opportunities look like? Where were its borders and how should one deal with its enormous disparities? For the reasons given in the introduction this study does not include Russia and the Soviet Union. Rather, being aware of the countless difficulties and pitfalls of defining a closely-knit geographic space, this study uses the catch-all term Central Europe, not to be mistaken with the tainted concept of ‘Mitteleuropa’.²⁸

The countries of Central Europe, Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary shared cultural traditions, partially resulting from the imperial structures of, and long-standing networks in education, university itineraries, exchange of experts etc. All of these countries shared an imperial legacy of the three great European landed empires (German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian). The ensuing dual impact of major border shifts and a fundamental change in political system was absent, for example, in the Netherlands or Belgium, the latter of course being heavily affected by the First World War. Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary as nation states all emerged from former imperial entities. As such the countries of this region shared some important characteristics, which also distinguished them from Western Europe. At the same time it must be clear that the perceptions of East Central Europe and East Europe, in particular, assumed strongly loaded constructions and that shared characteristics should not deflect from very substantial differences between these countries.²⁹ While Hungary lost its status as an imperial power in 1918, Poland and Czechoslovakia emerged out of national movements confronting the pre-war empires. And while Czechoslovakia developed a comparatively very successful democracy, Hungary experienced several waves of authoritarianism and Poland's nascent democracy was supplanted by a semi-dictatorial regime in 1926. These differences could be further emphasized for these countries' economic situations and the social structures. The Bohemian lands were one of the leading industrial regions globally while large parts of Hungary and Poland remained agricultural until the war.

Nevertheless, what has been said about East Europe as a space of opportunities holds particularly true for these three countries, commonly, as in this study, referred to as East Central Europe.³⁰ Focusing on the eastern part of Central Europe, and especially on Poland, is in no way intended as an exclusive approach. Obviously, examples from countries like the Netherlands serve as an important point of reference and exchange while at the same time the states of Yugoslavia and Romania, as well as the Baltic states, in many respects reveal similar patterns to the examples central here. Equally obviously, Germany, as the western part of Central Europe, has to remain in the picture, not only as the country with a deep legacy of its pre-1918 status, but also as the most radical inspiration for modernist solutions and then, after 1933, the most radical threat to such solutions.

Moreover, a geographic region is always also to a certain degree a constructed entity – in our case also constructed by the modernist architects in question. As chapter 3 will show architects from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia stressed the commonalities of their situation – *vis-à-vis* western partners or among them-

selves. Literature has emphasized the extensive exchange of the different avant-garde groups within the region. This exchange sometimes required an emphasis on belonging to the West, while at other times the emphasis was on the differences from the West. Tellingly, the literature discusses the region in question both under the header of Central Europe³¹ and Eastern Europe.³²

The challenges which confronted the region of East Central Europe become particularly apparent if we take a closer look at the example of Poland. When Herbert Hoover, later president of the US, commented on the Polish situation after the First World War, a situation he knew well due to his role as head of the American Relief Administration, in August 1919, he painted a gloomy picture:³³

As a result of seven invasions by different armies the country has largely been denuded of buildings. [...], there has been a total breakdown of the economic cycle. In addition to the destruction and robbery which accompanied the repeated invasion of rival armies, these areas have been, of course, through a cauldron of Bolshevik revolution and the intellectual classes either fled from the country or to a considerable extent were imprisoned.³⁴

In contrast to Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland or Scandinavia, the core countries of the more radical, socially-oriented strand of modernist architecture, the region of East Central Europe suffered massive destruction during the First World War. Moreover, recent studies have rightly stressed that the war did not end in East Central Europe in November 1918, but continued for years in extremely bloody struggles for nothing less than national survival.³⁵ The material losses are estimated at some 2,000,000 buildings in the territory of the later Second Polish Republic between 1914 and 1921, including 6,000 schools. Poland lost 4.5 percent of its population, which was a higher percentage than all the western belligerent countries.³⁶ In towns in eastern Poland like Bug up to 70 percent of the buildings had been destroyed. These figures have to be seen against the background of an already comparatively weak infrastructural development and a process of urbanization which, in comparison with Western countries, set in much later. In 1931 in Poland's eastern territories, known as *kresy*, less than 15 percent of the population lived in towns and only one percent was industrially employed.³⁷

Moreover, there were significant indirect consequences of the war.³⁸ The re-integration of the territories previously governed by the partition powers had to be achieved both in political-administrative and in economic terms. This process was extremely complicated by the fact that the territories formerly belonging to the

German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires not only had different administrative structures and diverse regulations applying to all areas of life, but also extremely divergent economic and social levels of development.³⁹ These challenges had to be addressed by a central state which itself was under construction and subject to fierce internal political conflicts and challenges from abroad, in particular the former partition powers of Germany and Russia. The latter was mirrored by the highly politicized question of national minorities facing not only the Polish Second Republic but also Czechoslovakia. The minority question aggravated the social tensions which marred the Polish state and society anyway. Modernization, which began after the war, highlighted the existing structural problems of the region. The two core issues were the unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities, and the question of ethnic diversity in the post-imperial realm of a newly conceived nation state.⁴⁰

In terms of town planning and architecture these structural conditions and challenges found expression in the phenomenon of new cities. Very few new cities had been planned from scratch in 19th century Europe.⁴¹ Against the background of the aforementioned challenges, there was a certain structural logic in that two of the most interesting examples of new cities outside the Soviet Union were built in Poland during the interwar years.⁴² Gdynia and the coastal region⁴³ and Stalowa Wola in the *Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy* (COP),⁴⁴ Poland's newly built central industrial complex, were not primarily examples of innovative urban planning and avant-garde architecture – though some remarkable buildings were erected. The two places rather testify to the overriding importance of strategic and political considerations in the development of the country. Gdynia provided access to the Baltic Sea, and thus world trade, without relying on German harbours or the Free City of Danzig. As the Polish “gateway to the world” it was of significant symbolic relevance even exceeding its growing economic status.⁴⁵ Within a few years the former village of Gdynia was transformed into a medium-sized city, fulfilling a key role in the partially-planned national economy. Stalowa Wola and the COP both demonstrate Poland's comparatively very well developed regional planning capacities and also the first steps of national planning. The COP, which for military reasons was built as remotely as possible from the country's borders, was intended to deliver an economic – and consequently also social – quantum leap for the crisis-ridden country.

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3. Port of Gdynia, a symbol of the achievements of the Second Polish Republic

Both examples may also be seen as “enclaves of modernity” which Andrzej Szczerski identified as typical of the region in question.⁴⁶ Significantly, the state funded the lion’s share of the COP investment and the COP formed the largest part of the state’s investment budget as the central project of the second half the 1930’s. Moreover, the whole project could only function within a wider framework of national planning, for which the key figure was Minister of the Treasury Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski – an almost unique figure on a European-wide scale.⁴⁷ Kwiatkowski, who was also instrumental in the development of Gdynia and was a member of several governments until the Second World War, personified the technocratic dimension that was so strong in the earlier phase of the authoritarian Sanacja-government.

Kwiatkowski thus also represented the more efficient, and perhaps positive, side of Sanacja. The regime comprised both socialist ideas from the left and aspects of the nationalist agenda of the right. The government’s name of ‘Sanacja’ (sanation, healing) acknowledged the underlying logic of planned social improvements.⁴⁸ Following Józef Piłsudski’s coup d’état of May 1926 a nationalist programme was merged with a whole array of technocratic schemes and approaches. It was no coincidence that Piłsudski was referred to as “Budowniczy Ojczyzny”, the builder of the fatherland, using terminology that also carried a double meaning in Polish and signalled the identification of politics with modernization.

Seemingly neutral regional and later national planning accordingly underwent a remarkable development in Poland, particularly in the 1930s. Regional planning fulfilled a double function there much more clearly than it did in Western countries. Planning was meant not only to address specific economic problems but also

to tackle the manifold challenges deriving from the legacy of the partition period.⁴⁹ This was particularly evident in the largely backwards eastern *kresy*. Here the Sanacja politician Aleksander Prystor established the *Towarzystwo Rozwoju Ziemi Wschodnich* (Agency for the Development of the Eastern Territories, TRZW).⁵⁰ While the Second Polish Republic achieved some remarkable successes in terms of stabilizing the economy, fighting inflation and building up a functioning infrastructure, the general economic situation remained extremely challenging and the state retained a dominant role – in part due to weakly-developed private companies.⁵¹ The strong role of the state was motivated ‘negatively’ in the sense that there was little private investment. This drove the state in East Central Europe to become involved in sectors in which it played a comparatively weaker role in the West – including housing.⁵²

Within this framework the state was largely the only actor able to provide the capital, manpower and expertise required to at least try to deal with the overly evident problems. This was also true for the housing sector which in many ways reflected the difficult economic situation and was, by any standard, politically the most sensitive of all problems.⁵³ Poland experienced one of the worst housing situations in Europe, characterized by an extreme lack of small, affordable flats and an equally extreme overcrowding of flats, particularly in the urban centres. In 1938 an estimated 65% of the urban population lived in one-room apartments.⁵⁴ In the contemporary discussions of the 1920s and 1930s the country’s housing situation even received considerable attention outside Poland.⁵⁵ Tellingly, both those who defended and supported the young Polish state and those who questioned the state’s legitimacy framed the achievements in and failures to tackle the crisis politically and saw them as a test case for the Polish state.⁵⁶ Both external and internal commentators agreed that the situation was dire. In 1934, even after some measures had borne fruit, modernist architect Roman Feliński still asserted that given the demographic development of Poland the building capacity of the country had to be doubled over the next 30 years.⁵⁷ Commentators also agreed – primarily due to the lack of private investment and an initially comparatively weak co-operative movement – that the state was the only actor capable of turning the situation around. A survey of the *Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa* (Warsaw Housing Cooperative, WSM) by the housing reformer Teodor Toeplitz, undertaken in 1935 when the situation had already eased, revealed that the average number of persons living in a one-room flat in Warsaw was 3.7, compared to 2.1 in Berlin and even lower numbers in other European capital cities.⁵⁸ That housing became a political problem and increasingly perceived as a responsibility of the state was a European-wide phenomenon after

1900.⁵⁹ The constitution of the Weimar Republic included a right to decent housing.⁶⁰ Still, it is striking that the Polish state, in enacting a law in 1920 to establish a national housing fund to provide for hygienic and affordable housing, assumed and accepted this role with remarkable commitment despite its extremely strained resources. This was further developed during the Sanacja regime, particularly through the direct intervention of the central state in the housing situation in Warsaw and by using the WSM.⁶¹

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4. Statistic for the dire housing situation in Warsaw and Poland in comparison with Western Europe. The graph stresses the overcrowding of single room flats (below)

The Post-Monarchic State and the Legacy of the War

The newly drawn post-First World War borders in East Central Europe contributed toward the formation of a strong state. By establishing new administrative agencies such as the Ministry for the Former Prussian Province in Poznań, under direct control of the central state, the Polish state attempted to deal with matters usually entrusted to local authorities in western countries which had either been unaffected or less affected by the impacts of the war.⁶²

The Czechoslovakian state and the new Hungarian state were confronted with similar tasks of integrating new territories or – in the case of Hungary – compensating for the loss of territories and rearranging respective infrastructures. Often the new nation state (this was certainly the case with Poland) acted by directly continuing the machinations of a strong central state. Large parts of the territories which formed Poland after 1918 had been the shatter zones of various empires before 1918. They thus already required considerable intervention and investment on the part of the central state.

This link was also to be found in urbanism, where the central state, on many occasions, absorbed responsibilities which in the Western states would have been handled by municipalities. This was not only a matter of concrete local problems of such a scale that they threatened the core social provisions (such as housing), but also a matter of political legitimacy.⁶³ While the rapid 19th century urban development in Western Europe was mostly a consequence of economic growth, much of the expansion of the Polish cities took place in times of uncertainty and crisis after the collapse of the three empires. Where an affluent bourgeoisie was lacking, the state had to invest into the future of its metropolitan cities.⁶⁴ As the case of Sanacja shows, economic and social modernization relied heavily on the state and these policies were often driven by the modern ideologies of socialism and nationalism. These ideologies also had to fill a political vacuum which emerged after the experience of the double disruption a new political system and new state borders that accompanied the end of the empires – themselves marked by a constant competition for best solutions.⁶⁵ Not only were loyalties to the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and German state structures fractured in 1918 but also the at times substantial dynastic loyalties.⁶⁶

What could be referred to as post-monarchic states emerged in the three states of East Central Europe, as well as in Austria and Germany – but not in France, the United Kingdom and Belgium all similarly heavily affected by the First World War. The post-monarchic state had to reconfigure political loyalty in a drastic way following centuries of dynastic rule. The dynasties of the Hohenzollerns, Habsburgs, and Romanovs had, up to 1918, retained a much stronger position than most dynasties in the West and had, especially during the four years of armed conflict, demanded the supreme loyalty of their subjects.

In the capitals of the new post-monarchic, post-imperial states, from Prague to Vienna, and Budapest to Berlin, governments had to prove that they could outperform the empires they succeeded.⁶⁷ Following the post-First World War demobilization, these states had to rebuild structures in what sometimes resembled a vacuum

when compared to Western Europe.⁶⁸ Significantly, not only were traffic arteries and administrative elites lacking in the new states, but political legitimacy was also in short supply.

The newly emerging states had to build their own elites and institutions – particularly to gain legitimacy grounded in efficiency – thus making them highly dependent on expert knowledge.⁶⁹ In line with the technocratic conceptions prevalent across Europe, Hungarian, Czech, or Polish engineers claimed to be able to offer a neutral force around which effective government could be centred. Due to the all-defining imperative of modernization, such ideas gained more credibility in these states and thus had a higher impact.⁷⁰ The example of the new Polish state, lacking its own technical elites in any substantial number, illustrates this well. During the First World War, Polish engineers effectively aligned their cause with that of the nation.⁷¹ These engineers believed that their expertise could resolve any social problems which arose to impede the future advances of the newly established nation. Hence, engineers should occupy key positions in the higher administration. This led to the view that the training of engineers should receive particular attention, not just in terms of technical knowledge, but also with a regard to the skills necessary for the formation of a democratic society.⁷² Engineer Albín Bašus, in Czechoslovakia, proposed that technical education be formalized to produce “organizers” and “leaders” needed to shape a modern nation. Even more radical ideas could be found in Hungary, the so-called utopia for engineers.⁷³ The professional organizations of engineers argued that only the expertise of engineers would be able to overcome the social differences of society and, in particular, the problems of party politics.⁷⁴

The extreme need for state legitimacy in fields such as health and housing translated into new possibilities and challenges for the respective experts in these areas.⁷⁵ “National engineering” offered enormous opportunities, but those who rose to new prominence also had to realize that it became more and more necessary to decide where their loyalties lay. The flipside of this process was an increase in constraints and coercion for technical experts who aligned themselves more closely than before with certain political regimes. Tellingly, Polish engineers demanded that no foreign specialists should take qualified positions in the administration.⁷⁶ Thus, in an extreme way, the disruption of 1918 in central Europe highlights a development that predates it – the engagement of experts in the nation-building process.

Equally clearly, the post-1918 situation presented post-monarchic states with enormous pressures to perform. Throughout Europe, but particularly in post-monarchic states, the interwar period led to new reflections on what the state had to achieve and guarantee for its citizens. In the Weimar Republic, also a former empire and constantly compared with its predecessor Imperial Germany, legal scholars went to great lengths to grasp this change. A concept that remained influential until today was developed by Ernst Forsthoff, who coined the terms *Leistungsverwaltung* and *Daseinsvorsorge*, which could loosely be translated as public service. Forsthoff, later infamous for his links to the Nazi regime, managed to aptly grasp a new dimension of state activity. The state, in Forsthoff's eyes, had to respond to the fact that the individual was, on the one hand, confined to ever smaller spheres of life while, on the other hand, commanded ever more opportunities to reach out via technological means. For this reason the individual became dependent on state-sponsored services. For Forsthoff, the place where the state had to prove itself was in urban space. Here, it was overly apparent that the individual could no longer rely on the traditional protections in place to safeguard countryside life. In the city, the individual was dependent on provisions supplied by a more abstract entity, usually the state: gas, water, electricity, sewerage, and means of transport.⁷⁷

While this is not the place to discuss the more far-reaching values and limits of Forsthoff's conceptual framework, his observations are certainly helpful in understanding the seminal changes taking place in the European city after 1900, as the state in its various capacities began increasingly to interfere in the lives of its citizens. This also holds true if we contrast Forsthoff's paradigm with the post-1918 urban reality of large parts of East Central Europe. In 1918 Bruno Taut, one of the foremost modernist architects and thinkers of the Weimar Republic, observed with reference to this region and Russia: "The misery of the cities makes all achievements of a western, European civilization appear ludicrous." The agrarian and the settlement questions would be the touchstone for any success of the revolutionary movements of 1918.⁷⁸ Indeed, political legitimacy in the East Central European region came to depend increasingly on the successful modernization of urban space and on providing efficient services to the rapidly expanding urban population.

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5. School of Political Science, designed by B. Lachert and J. Szanajca

In Poland, as in most states in East Central Europe, health-ministries came into being right after the war, much earlier than in the West.⁷⁹ An office for housing was already attached to this ministry in 1919, and housing was legally defined as a responsibility of the state. The state began to engage in hygiene, schooling, health, sports in a way that it had never done before.⁸⁰ Sports was symbolically represented in Warsaw's strikingly modern new sport-grounds *Centralny Instytut Wychowania Fizycznego* (Central Institute for Physical Exercises, CIWF), since 1935 named after Piłsudski, attracting enormous contemporary attention.⁸¹

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6. CIWF, Warsaw, designed by E. Norwerth

Forsthoff's analysis is particularly pertinent for the four years of the First World War. It is also telling that the influential French legal scholar Léon Duguit reconsidered his definition of the state during the war. He now emphasized the state as provider of public services, where public services actually legitimized the state.⁸² The First World War was transformative for the role of the state: one of the most broadly accepted lessons to be drawn from it across Europe, was the need for central planning with the state in the driver's seat. Both the right and left political camps regarded the war economy as a key to winning and losing a war. Provided the right lessons were learned, wartime planning also appeared to be a key to building successful economies and societies in the post-war world.⁸³ The rise of the idea of planning and manifold technocratic notions almost always included the state in the picture.⁸⁴

As Charles Maier has stressed in his classic study on the subject, stabilization was the overarching goal of Western European societies after the First World War. The bourgeoisie had to admit new groups into the process of political negotiations. Corporatism served as a means to achieve this without questioning the general social and political order.⁸⁵ It was foremost Patrick Geddes who reflected the impact of the war on cities. Geddes, and others, hoped that the war could serve as a catalyst to turn cities into spaces of reform and societal renewal. For Geddes it went without saying that the reconstruction of a city had to achieve more than the mere reestablishment of the old order. His doctrine of 'civic reconstruction' envisaged a spiritual renewal.⁸⁶ Historians of architecture have debated as to how far reconstruction in the narrower sense, that is, in particular the reconstruction of vast landscapes in western Belgium and northern France, including a number of small and medium-sized towns, lived up to such demands. For Belgium the relevant literature stressed the rather traditional character of architectural reconstruction and the lack of innovative, more radical urban planning. In Belgium the state also took on a completely new role in urban affairs in the context of reconstruction, which was hardly surprising given the scale of the destruction. The *Dienst der Verwoeste Gewesten* (Department for War-Ravaged Areas) in Belgium is a particular example of the new, pervasive impact of the state in the urban framework.⁸⁷

The devastating and also transformative impact of the First World War on Western European society is well understood today. However, while many would still associate the Somme, Verdun and Flanders, Louvain, and Reims with catastrophic destruction, it was actually in Central Europe that societies underwent the deepest large-scale transformation.⁸⁸ Not only were far larger regions affected in that area, but more civilians died, and more buildings were destroyed than in the West.

Further, borders were moved, large groups of populations were exchanged, new countries emerged, and capitals re-established. While concrete urbanistic measures will be discussed in the following chapters, we need to first ask how far this constellation incurred a specific experience of modernization and modernity and in how far modernism came to play a specific role in the region dealt with here.

Eastern Modernity

James Scott stated, in his landmark study *Seeing Like a State*, that “it would have been hard not to have been a modernist of some stripe at the end of the nineteenth century in the West”.⁸⁹ There are some reasons to extend this statement, arguing that it would have been even harder, at least for the young and thriving generation, not to be a modernist in the three decennia after 1900 in Central and Eastern Europe. “The novel is taken up in Poland more eagerly than in other countries” the Dutch critic of architecture Theo van Doesburg noted in 1931.⁹⁰ Modernization became an imperative after 1918 for the new states in East Central Europe. This was true in the narrower sense of the term modernization, that is, improvement of the economy, infrastructure and public services. Yet, this was also true for the imperative of building truly modern societies, societies living up to ‘European’ and ‘American’ standards – or what the standards branded as European and American were thought to look like. Finally, the advances in the latter also had to be signalled to the outside world through an ostensibly modernist programme which was, due to its visual clout, foremost a building programme. In recent years historians of art have increasingly paid attention to this phenomenon.⁹¹ A number of regionally defined studies have highlighted both the enormous geographic scope but also the richness of examples of modernist building throughout the region of East Central Europe⁹² and the wider region.⁹³ Certain elements of an East European modernism have become part of the very conception of what is modern – for example works of Russian constructivists.⁹⁴ Of course, and this is true for architecture in particular, choosing modernist solutions for buildings, monuments and the like was often dictated by certain practical requirements and the expected cost-efficiency of standardized and rationalized proposals. Yet, a closer look at significant buildings or tendencies in the arts reveals that the newly founded states used a modernist style as internationally convertible currency in order to gain attention and recognition, building on developments which had already started during First World War.⁹⁵ The modernist vessel-like curved buildings of Poland’s aspiring and rapidly growing new port of Gdynia or the ostensible modernist style of many buildings in Warsaw can

equally be traced in Brno, in Prague or, further east of the region focused on here, in the Lithuanian capital of Kaunas.⁹⁶

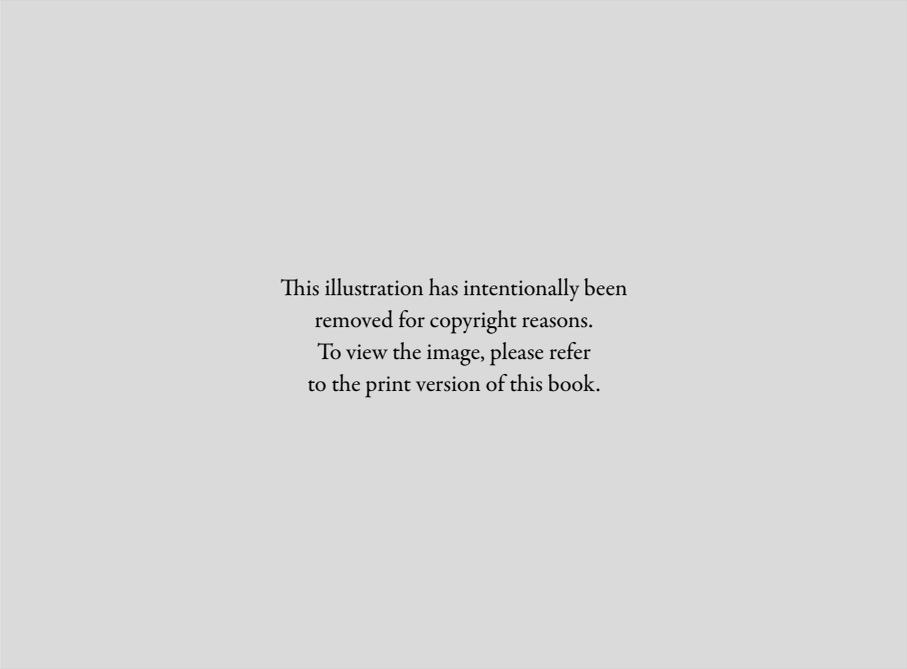
Official buildings in these places, and many others in the region, built in the modernist style tried to proclaim universal values of clarity and transparency and to thus wrest these states away from the periphery on Europe's mental map. It remains debatable as to how far an outright 'nationalization of modernism' took place.⁹⁷ After all, almost all attempts to legitimize the new states in East Central Europe visually combined traditional and innovative elements.⁹⁸ The question of how far the often original mixture of traditional styles – which demonstrated centuries of national history – and international styles – which proclaimed their membership of the family of modern nations – constitutes a style of its own must remain open here. It is, however, important to note the decisive role the state played in the 'politics of art' and in charging art and architecture with political meaning. The latter was also due to these states' often iconoclastic attempts to distance themselves from their former German, Russian and Austro-Hungarian hegemonic powers. This tendency is most vividly revealed in the 1920s' destruction of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Warsaw, a building perceived as a symbol of Russian domination and oppression.⁹⁹ Doubtless, this motivation contributed to a more radical and pronounced choice of architectural solutions particularly, as Beate Störtkuhl has shown, in the disputed borderlands between Poland and Germany.¹⁰⁰

This book thus embraces the notion of a specific Eastern modernism, which, however, should not simply be understood as a style but has to be placed in a specific social and political context. Using the concept of an Eastern modernism helps to explain the intriguing phenomenon of how the region's shortcomings – actual or perceived – provided a particularly fertile ground for modernism. In the same way that modern architects depended on the state in the absence of bourgeois clients, the new states also depended on such experts of modernism to establish the image, but also social infrastructure, they needed so desperately.¹⁰¹

Further, the states of the region – the three states of East Central Europe in particular, but this generally also holds true for the Baltic states, Yugoslavia and Romania – all embarked on an undeclared race.¹⁰² The competition and multi-layered 'politics of comparison' this entailed did not only, and not even mainly, occur at a state level, but also at a city level. In the capital cities the competitive representation of the city merged with that of the state.¹⁰³ The imagined scale of modernization not only applied in comparisons between Eastern and Western Europe, but also between the East Central European states and cities.¹⁰⁴ Nathaniel Wood's description of the Polish city of Cracow's self-invention as a modern city clearly references the

European ideal but does not fully fit the terms of ‘catch-up’ modernization. Wood instead emphasizes the “inter-urban matrix” in which Cracowians positioned themselves in a self-assured way in a European framework.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, certainly in the case of Cracow, the city did not significantly lag behind in terms of urban infrastructure in comparison with many other Central and also Western European cities. What differentiated its development was rather its regional characteristics. The example of Cracow alludes to the important fact that the fusion of modernization and legitimation of the new state did not start with the foundation of the new states – in Poland’s case on 11 November 1918. Concrete plans for a remodelled Warsaw, foreseen as the old-new capital, had already been made during the First World War. These plans were based on the Polish tradition of ‘organic work’ which emphasized the imperative of economic modernization during the partition period.¹⁰⁶ The prominence given early on to government buildings also reflects the preeminent need to quickly build previously unrequired government structures as such, and to provide buildings for them.¹⁰⁷

Of course, we need to contextualize and nuance the pronounced modern image of the newly created states in East Central Europe.¹⁰⁸ The new states produced top-level representative buildings in a more neoclassic style,¹⁰⁹ sometimes with elements reminiscent of examples built during the *razionalismo* era of the fascist period.¹¹⁰ This style best served the need to fulfil both the demand for a certain monumentalism but also the impression of being ahead of its time (including the standards for interior architecture). In Poland, where the new state could only draw on a few representative buildings in its new capital Warsaw, this trend is clearly discernible.¹¹¹ A striking number of the respective buildings can be classified, however, as “constructivist” or “functionalist” monumentalism.¹¹² Yet, there are also noteworthy examples of explicit modernism used for the most arcane architectural representations of the new state. Stanisław Brukalski (1894-1967), one of the foremost and most radical representatives of the modern movement in Poland, designed the seat for the Polish General Staff, still existant today.¹¹³ Another prominent example is the functionalist-modernist interior design of the summer residence built for the President of the Second Polish Republic.¹¹⁴ The same logic guided Polish representations at the interwar World Exhibitions and the Polish contribution to the *Triennale* of 1933 in Milan.¹¹⁵ These examples testify to the attractiveness of a “państwowy modernizm” (state modernism) and how it extended to the authoritarian government in power in Poland.¹¹⁶



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7. Collage of recent architectural designs from Poland for the Triennale 1933, Milan

That even – or particularly – cities like Vilnius or Lvov were given a new modern look in Poland's backwards eastern territories indicates that a link existed between the modernizing state and the embracement of modernism. Numerous public buildings in this region, mostly sponsored by public institutions such as the *Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych* (The Social Insurance Institution, ZUS) or the fund for *Towarzystwo Osiedli Robotniczych* (Association for Workers' Settlements, TOR), sported a decisively modernist exterior.¹¹⁷

These aspiring, and subsequently new, nation states' determination to gain legitimacy also informed national exhibitions and their representation at international exhibitions.¹¹⁸ For Poland the *Powszechna Wystawa Krajowa w Poznaniu* (the General National Exhibition held in Poznań, PeWuKa), provides a telling example.¹¹⁹ Poznań was an economically thriving city, but equally important was its symbolic meaning as the most important city of the formerly Prussian-German provinces which now formed the western territories of Poland. During its Prussian-German period the city had been the site of lavish building schemes of 'German' architec-

ture, culminating in the *Kaiserschloss*.¹²⁰ This legacy gave an additional edge to the new state's struggle to present its achievements in technology, infrastructure and architecture in the best possible light. This also helps to explain the fine and internationally renowned examples of functionalist architecture exposed in Poznań.¹²¹

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8. Artificial Fertilizer pavilion by S. Syrkus and Electrolux pavilion by S. and B. Brukalski. PeWuKa Poznań 1929

This link between modernism and the aspiring new state was certainly not limited to Poland.¹²² Czechoslovakia, in particular Brno, might even be regarded as a more striking case with regard to aesthetic audacity and the number of examples.¹²³ Architecture here was dominated by the overarching “effort to shake off the influences of monumental Austrian or German building cultures”.¹²⁴ It was no coincidence that one of the foremost examples of functionalist architecture in Europe, Josef Kranz's *Café Era* applied Dutch *De Stijl* principles while using the Czech national colours of blue, white, and red. The architect Jan Kotěra, a key figure for the emerging modernist movement in Czechoslovakia, built a National House in Prostějov (1905-1907) in a rationalist, albeit not yet modernist, style.¹²⁵ In Prague the monumental steel and concrete Trade Fair Palace, ceremonially inaugurated in September 1928 on occasion of the 10th anniversary of the new state, merged functionalist design with the ambitions of the republic.¹²⁶ These are examples of “the modern” attaining the role as a national brand in Czechoslovakia.¹²⁷

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9. Trade Fair Palace, Prague and staircase Café Era, Brno, both current views

The “language of rationalism” offered particularly fitting forms of expressions for the needs of East Central Europe as Anthony Alofsin has pointed out. The style enjoyed a generally broader spectrum of manifestations than in the West, but Alofsin also stressed that the modernizing message of rationalism apparently matched the aspirations of, for example, the Czech national movement particularly well.¹²⁸ The town of Zlín in Moravia, Czechoslovakia, could even be regarded as the most consistent application of the functionalist idea in architecture throughout Europe.

The central government clearly understood the significance of these building policies. In an address to the mayor of Brno, Tomáš Masaryk, Czechoslovakia’s first president and in many respects the ‘founding father’ of the nation, emphasized:

it is right and I appreciate the fact that you are demonstrating in this place the great tasks facing the new Brno [...]. The new administrators of Brno will discover how a modern large city develops and where this development is heading. In a word, you must make Brno an international city, but this international quality, as you say, does not depend on quantity but on quality. You face great social and national tasks, as you already explained before I came to your city. With all my heart I wish you success in the solution of your tasks [...]. I assure you that I am really interested in the prosperity of Brno and that I will always do everything in my power to cooperate with your efforts.¹²⁹

Though Czechoslovakia – and Brno – in many respects fared better, in terms of industrial development, than the other states in the region, the dynamics at play are characteristic for the whole region. This is not only true for the national tension informing the embracing of modern solutions by the new state of Czechoslovakia. As the example of Brno shows the city had to counter extreme pressures and challenges which followed the rupture of 1918. In response, “Greater Brno” was formed out of 23 suburban communities where far-reaching modern plans by young architects at the beginning of their careers were implemented.¹³⁰ A concept of “maximum economy”, placing efficiency centre-stage, was meant to answer the problems of the new status of the city in a narrowly confined nation state in place of a vast empire, the ensuing influx of immigrants and the exchange of elites.¹³¹

Conclusion

It is only at first glance paradoxical that this imperative of modernization occurred in a situation which could be described as a “crisis of modernization”.¹³² What makes the example of East Central Europe so significant is that the ratio between negative and positive aspects of modernization tended much more towards the latter than was the case in Western Europe. Projecting his high expectations with regard to the role architecture could play in the East, Bruno Taut dreamt of the spirit of an avant-garde which acted “in an eastern sense activity-oriented”.¹³³ What Taut hinted at was that, more so than in the West, the discourse on modernization in East Central Europe contained a visionary dimension and a utopian moment. The anticipation of things to come, the imagination of leap-frogging into a better future, merging national aspiration and the potential of modernization was much more pronounced in this region. Before this link will be analysed in greater depth it is finally necessary to critically consider three terms which have already been mentioned in this text: modernity, modernization and modernism.

The terms modernity and modernization, in particular, have been criticized due to their overtones of an alleged Western standard against which other regions are measured and which does not take account of different paths and models of modernization.¹³⁴ It is important to note, however, that the architects who are in the centre of this study had a rather clear notion of ‘European modernity’. The Western path served as model – albeit sometimes intentionally employed to overcome opposition at home.¹³⁵ Modernism, the third crucial term here, could be described as a specific style of architecture and urban planning. This style or movement, as some architects would rather have it, evolved during the first half of the 20th century and became an

influential transnational phenomenon.¹³⁶ While it is hard – though not impossible – to prove connections between modernist art and rationalized technology, this is strikingly different for modernist architecture. Modernity and architecture were almost intrinsically linked.¹³⁷ Aesthetic and technological developments and decisions often coincided. Modernist architects often construed themselves not only as builders, but also as harbingers and producers of modern conditions and as modern men and women themselves. Their aesthetic innovation would in many cases not have worked without technological modernization and often even not with social conditions changing along the lines we understand as modern features.¹³⁸

The terms modernity and modernization were relevant for the modernist architects in East Central Europe because they implicitly and explicitly reflected the assumption that one was part of a dynamic of ‘catching-up’. Modernism, on the contrary, signalled the aspiration, and often enough also the actual situation, of being part of a wider movement which stretched beyond borders. In this framework those who were confronted with particular challenges of modernization might even transform this into an advantageous position. Charles Maier’s observation, that the promise of technology was particularly strong where deep fissures existed, fits into this picture.¹³⁹ At the same time, embracing technological modernization became an imperative for the state.¹⁴⁰

The latter also had lasting consequences for architecture in its modernist, technology-based variant. With important qualifications we may say that modernist architecture was particularly effective where the state acted as ‘sponsor’, where the state to a certain degree adopted modernism for economic-technological or more symbolic reasons.¹⁴¹ The partial alliance of modernist architects and the modernizing state sketched above is an expression of this link. At the same time it is no contradiction that while the goal of modernity was imperative, the process of modernization was extremely conflictual and crisis-ridden. This also contributed to modernist architects becoming central, albeit controversial, figures in societal discourse and social imagination. We should not forget that the coexistence between architects who perceived themselves to be modern and the state – in particular in East Central Europe – was not always an easy one. The later prominent László Moholy-Nagy, Marcel Breuer, Fred Forbát and Farkas Molnár all left Hungary briefly after the First World War and only Molnár returned for a longer period.

This chapter took a closer look at the scenery so vividly evoked in the film *The Black Cat*. It considered the East Central European war territories, the way they were impacted by the First World War, the characterizing tension between backwardness and modernity featuring in *The Black Cat* and the role modernization

and modernism came to play in the new states of the region striving to become truly modern. This chapter also at times noted what the problems analysed meant for urbanism and architecture, questions which will be treated with greater detail in the remaining five chapters. The following chapter will, in accordance with the visual logic of *The Black Cat*, turn to the moment so dramatically staged by Ulmer when 'Engineer Poelzig', the embodiment of the modernist architect, enters the scene.

2.

Architects as Experts of the Social: A new Type entering the European Scene

Most visitors to the Melnikov house in Moscow are probably surprised by what they see. Not only is the famous piece of architecture, erected between 1927 and 1929 by Russian architect Konstantin Melnikov, hard to spot behind fences but what remains visible is in a rather deplorable state. Further, visitors are confronted with another striking feature of this house known for its avant-garde architecture. It has, of course, long been common to note architects' names on the buildings they have erected, or to refer to an architect's workshop in some other visible way. Melnikov took things to the extreme: the inscription "Konstantin Melnikov architect" runs along the whole façade of his residence and workplace, atop the enormous window which takes up almost the entire front of the house.

Melnikov's confident statement can be seen to reflect three important changes in the architectural profession:

First, the Melnikov house was one of the prime examples of 'signature' houses of the 1920s from the outset.¹ Thanks to the mass media certain houses attained iconic status in the transnational framework of what came to be known as the modern movement or International Style. We may assume that such buildings were conceived with a view to their signature-character and even their 'communicability'.

Second, such buildings represented their creators and in some cases also turned him or her into a trademark in a way that was unfamiliar to older architectural styles and only emerged in the 20th century. Similarly, each building testifies to the visibility of a single architect based on her or his outstanding creativity as demonstrated by breaking the rules of the art instead of applying them.² Each building embodies the linking of a new vision of architecture with the zeitgeist and the promise that architecture could bring about radical social change. And, of course, it was no co-

incidence that the radically modernist statement Melnikov made was possible in the country and city which was most affected by the social and political upheaval in Eastern and Central Europe which followed the First World War.

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Third, the dramatic positioning of the word “architect” on the front of the building should, finally, also be read as signalling self-empowerment and an expression of the broadening spectrum of the architectural profession. Melnikov himself rethought the scope of architecture and embarked on new forms of buildings, including a number of remarkable large-scale garages. The same was true for many other modernist architects who aspired to use their expertise in newly emerging domains or those which had not been seen as pertaining to the architectural remit just a few decades earlier. This process soon went far beyond building in the narrower sense.

Tellingly, and confirming the above three points, Melnikov used his status as an outstandingly original and creative architect to exercise a degree of independence which, even in the more liberal Soviet Union of the 1920s, was highly unusual. Indeed, this was one of the reasons he was able to build his famous house in central Moscow where almost no one else was allowed to erect private houses.³ The architect Melnikov, who designed Lenin’s sarcophagus, fulfilled an important political function as expert of innovation in the built environment for the new regime. The example of Melnikov thus demonstrates a link which is central to this chapter and this book as a whole: the public dimension of architects and the connection between experts and political legitimacy. These need to be seen as two sides of the same coin.

This chapter will analyse this link by first asking how far architects should be seen as experts and how that characteristic enhances our understanding of the changes described. The chapter will then look at how architectural training reflected these architects’ new status as experts. Finally, the chapter will ask how the image of architects changed and what this tells us about the new scope of the profession, the way architects thought, and which topics they used to enter the wider cultural, social and political debates. In so doing this chapter will also establish the time-frame of this study, from before the First World War until just after the Second World War. Based on the assumption that modernist architects, in a narrower sense, emerged during this period, this chapter argues that this group lifted the profession to a new prominence in a number of fields not necessarily related with the building trade.

New Tasks for Architects

To understand the deep transformation of at least parts of the architectural profession it helps to see modernist architects not primarily as builders but as experts. At first glance architects might seem to be a less than obvious example of experts. They might rather be labelled as artists, belonging to the realm of style rather than to the

realm of social change and technology which is generally associated with experts. However, this assumption neglects the deep transformation that the architectural profession underwent over the last 150 years. Referring to architects as experts conveys the techno-scientific dimension which became so central to that profession in the 20th century. For large parts of the profession in Central Europe change was limited and reduced to the application of new building technologies and attempts to – also legally – secure one’s status as a profession. Yet, for a significant part of the group, the transformation not only involved professionalization, but also entailed inroads into a vast array of problems in the fields of hygiene, planning, efficiency and many others.⁴

The architectural profession has a pedigree stretching back centuries and some recent publications have highlighted its continuity throughout the ages.⁵ Yet, with good reason, the second part of the 19th century can be seen as a turning point for the profession. At that time two competing models of higher education had emerged: the *beaux-arts* tradition versus the architecture taught in the rapidly expanding technical universities. Town planning only emerged as a discipline in its own right, with a decisively scientific outlook, after 1900.

The changing position of the architect was already perceived as a critical point in the late 19th century. The new need to share work along with competition from engineers and other specialists now entering the building trade challenged the role of architects – as did the new definition of the relationship between architecture and art. After the First World War, the profession was confronted with a threefold challenge: reconstruction in the wider sense, a strongly felt need to make sense of the catastrophe of the war and the deep change it incurred, and, finally, the extreme effects of the world economic crisis which affected the profession both in its daily work and also on a very personal level. In Germany around 90 percent of architects were unemployed around 1930; in other countries, including those in East Central Europe, the situation did not differ greatly.⁶

Yet, the wider architectural framework had now changed, at least in Central Europe. In Germany and the new states of East Central Europe the post-monarchical state needed to prove its political legitimacy, not least through its technical and social efficiency, as has been shown in the previous chapter. For the new architects this resounded strongly. Architecture critic Adolf Behne remarked in the 1920s that “the architect is today easily more hygienic than the hygienist, more sociological than the sociologist, more statistical than the statistician and biological than the biologist”.⁷ Behne thus hinted at a tendency which could both be qualified as quests from an ever more complex society, looking for experts of the social in the

critical cross-section domain of housing and urban space, and equally as the successful self-empowerment of architects that was encountered in this period.⁸ Fritz Schumacher claimed in the 1930s that the architect was intervening into questions which *per se* are beyond his artistic sphere. The architect's thinking, Schumacher concluded, was broadening and he was embracing the "territory of social problems, economic problems and technical problems."⁹ Schumacher, one of a number of architects who became town-planners and shaped the urban outlook of Hamburg before and after the First World War, embodied this transformation himself.¹⁰

This transformational link was most expressed in the new states of East Central Europe, not in terms of the number of houses built but in the manner in which the political, social and cultural impetus of modernization via architecture and urbanism were entwined. Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia were all confronted with a unique mix of challenged political legitimacy, the need to build new economies, and a serious housing crisis. These challenges converged in the old-new capitals of these new states, with Warsaw being the most telling example. Unsurprisingly, Polish experts on urban matters would constantly stress both the "impairments" of the Russian legacy of the city, as well as opportunities deriving from what was evoked as an almost *tabula-rasa* situation in order to gain support for their schemes and recommend themselves as nation-builders in the wider sense of the word.

The Swiss architect and temporary head of the *Bauhaus* Hannes Meyer summarized the complex mix of architects' new ambitions and the new expectations as to what they could achieve: "The architect – formerly an artist, nowadays an organizer."¹¹ Of course, such claims do not necessarily describe a new reality, and the progressive interwar architects notoriously overrated the transformative social potential of new building technologies. Yet, it is equally clear – albeit largely because many politicians shared the architects' optimistic assumptions that they were experts of social problems – that architects did come to play a critical role in newly emerging planning bodies. This was impressively embodied by Ernst May as *Stadtbaurat* of Frankfurt and his sweeping and encompassing *Neues Frankfurt* programme.¹² With regard to the numbers of architects involved, other examples such as the Bureau of the London County Council or the planning body of the city of Warsaw, which employed several hundreds of architects and engineers, were even more remarkable and testify to the central role architects attained in planning in general.

Before taking a closer look at what the expert status of architects entailed, how architectural training changed and increasingly contributed to this status and how this led – at least for a certain group of architects – to a new type, a new *personae* of architects, two general characteristics of the profession need to be stressed:

First, there was the extraordinary dependence on sponsors, which set architects apart in comparison to other professions. With the exception of film-directors there is probably no other group equally dependent on sponsors to push through projects. Architects, who often envisaged themselves as demiurges capable of changing the world, constantly oscillated between high-flying plans and being condemned to inaction in practical terms. At the same time the chance to realize plans was highly dependent on being able to adapt oneself to the variable wishes of awarding authorities. Even when architects succeeded in winning a commission, larger projects were particularly reliant on a high degree of stability for a long period to see the project through to its conclusion. With industrialization and an increasingly complex economic, juridical, technical and social context as regards building, this became even more urgent. The period under question saw the rise of new collective bodies of the welfare state and a new degree of municipal activity in the housing sector, to which architects had not only to adapt but which also offered them important new opportunities. But this period also saw a complete change in many states in the nature of the public contractor as a result of the rise of authoritarian regimes. The latter offered huge new opportunities for architects as building became central to their legitimation strategy and as, at least in theory, these regimes offered possibilities to push through large-scale and long-term projects which would have been far harder to realize in democracies.¹³ Yet, unlike previously, these regimes demanded a degree of loyalty, even ideologically. This was another reason that the tension between precarious status and demiurge aspirations, always typical of the architectural profession, was much more pronounced after the First World War.

Further, while viewing architects as experts contributes towards a better understanding of the course which a significant part of the profession took, we cannot fully grasp architects and the new chances they seized without taking the aesthetic dimension of their plans and buildings into account. This aesthetic dimension always stood at odds with the technical and engineering side of the profession.¹⁴ As the technological side of the profession increasingly gained importance in the inter-war period, this tension became more clearly felt. The progressivist constructivist painter Franz Wilhelm Seiwert remarked in 1931 that the architect had “turned into an emblem of planning thought (*planerisches Denken*) aimed at building and thus into a symbol of progress through modern technology”.¹⁵

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Seiwert's observation points to three important changes.

First, the new cultural significance awarded to architects caused by changes in mass media, in particular the rise of photography and film, perfectly illustrated the new actual or expected possibilities of modernist building and housing. Some important and influential architects responded to this change by developing a new habitus and even turning themselves into a brand, personifying the projected social expectations.

Second, an accelerated professionalization and specialization emerged which went hand in hand with a massive broadening of the scope of architects who were increasingly becoming experts of comprehensive social tasks. Architects connected successfully to the thriving hygiene movement and the wider concept which approached urban space under newly conceived scientific auspices. Architecture became more than ever, as Dutch architect Heinrich Petrus Berlage had it, "the social art par excellence".¹⁶ This also implied that architecture supported and profited from the profound social mobilization of the time as well as the social differentiation of modern societies. Modernist architects planned both new forms of individualism and – this does not need to be a contradiction – new forms of collectivity.

Third, architects underwent what could be labelled a double technification, both directly and indirectly. It was direct through the new technologies at their disposal, such as large glass surfaces and reinforced concrete, both spectacularly used in skyscrapers. Indirectly technification occurred in the wider sense of social engineering, inspired by new technical possibilities and the imagined and real new opportunities to solve the housing problem with all its social implications. Here statistics and new sociological approaches to understand urban society also played an important role.

The new discipline of urbanism, only developed around 1900, became an expression of these new opportunities offered by the rise of statistics, sociology, planning and technology and new societal demands for improved urban space.¹⁷ Yet, this discipline had partially evolved in response to the forceful self-empowerment of architects who successfully threw themselves into the thriving discourse of planning, defined the problems which were to be solved, and marketed themselves as experts for all matters urban. With all the caution needed in treating such generic results, this trend is very clearly reflected when looking at how often the term architect or architects was used in publications in the 19th and 20th centuries. Between the end of the First World War and the mid-1920s the term was more than 60 percent more likely to show up in publications than before the war. The term urbanism, which was hardly used before the First World War, had gradually become more common after 1918 but, between 1927 and 1933, it became five times more used

than before the war.¹⁸ The first town planners, albeit frequently lacking a clear job specification, were often architects, confirming their claims to be extending beyond building proper. Berlage worked on an extension plan for Amsterdam, Le Corbusier made his name with his radical urban design for Paris, and Fritz Schumacher's track record in Hamburg made him a role model for the new job profile.¹⁹

The most important reason for the new social clout of architects was the serious nature and also more urgent discussion of the problem of housing after the First World War.²⁰ As explained in chapter 1, the housing question had turned into a field of action for the post-monarchic state. Housing was now much more clearly framed as a social problem which would have immense negative consequences if left unresolved and, at the same time, was a task for a new kind of expert.²¹ Meanwhile, the housing problem was clearly connected to the architects' uncontested expertise in building. The theme allowed architects to profile themselves as engineers of social problems while still clearly distinguishing themselves from engineers or social scientists, such as statisticians who were able to analyse problems but rarely had the skills and tools required to solve them.²²

Architects and the Rise of the Modern Expert

The transformation of architects into broad-ranging experts was part of a much wider process, namely the rise of technical experts dating from around 1850. Tellingly, the term expert only became widespread in the nineteenth century, reflecting a new reality. At that point gaining formal qualifications became a pervasive phenomenon. Indeed, the availability of increasingly complex technical and scientific knowledge gave rise to a discernible group which could bargain with the state and society, whilst international exchange became a ubiquitous phenomenon throughout Europe and beyond.²³

Moreover, the term expert came to reflect the performative aspects so central to architects. They relied on communicative processes and symbolic acts, and the interchange between actively striving for a new position and expectations of the state or society, to a greater degree than other professions.²⁴ Experts act within a triangle comprising academic qualifications, the mediated public sphere, and the state (that is, government and administration).²⁵ Formal qualifications do not suffice, particularly for the public acceptance of experts. Public standing played a key role in one's own professional authority, particularly with regard to architects. Further, linking up with the dynamics described in chapter 1, experts not only enabled state expansion but also depended on state expansion. Experts often framed the prob-

lems required to be solved by politics and administration. The relationship between experts and the nation, that is, the question of loyalty and the identification of experts and national progress, was not always congruent with state activity. The more the state relied on experts, and thus enhanced its position, the stronger the political imperative to control experts.²⁶

As regards the architects in East Central Europe, and Poland in particular, it is essential to recall that the territories within which they acted had, until 1918, been part of the landed empires dominating the region. To the new experts these empires were also empires of opportunities. The infrastructures that held the empires together, along with large new technological projects, dams and traffic arteries that formed their new power resources, significantly increased the autonomy of experts as the empires' dependence on these experts grew. This created surprising degrees of mobility for those committed to solving the empires' technological challenges.²⁷ The empires also offered extensive structures for professional training in exchange for loyalty.²⁸

This is why the rupture of 1918, the fading of empires, and the emergence of new nation states had such an impact on experts in East Central Europe.²⁹ Experts in the region underwent the process described as territorialisation, that is, the process of new forms of political control facilitated by technological progress, which, as historian Charles Maier argues, started around 1850, in a two-pronged manner:³⁰ first, they became attuned to the needs of the empires which were all undergoing, with more or less success, a rapid and often forced modernization in the decennia before the First World War. Thereafter, they became key players in the building of new nation states after 1918. This rupture, along with many other necessary adaptations, forced experts, if they had not already done so in the preceding years, to realign their loyalties. They had to turn into experts of the post-imperial and post-monarchical state.³¹

When Baltazar Brukalski, son of the famous and influential architect couple Stanisław and Barbara Brukalski, looked back on his parents' lives he stressed that they saw their architectural profession as an expression of their social mission and culmination of Poland's newly acquired independence.³² 'National engineering' offered enormous opportunities, but the experts also had to realize that it became more and more necessary to decide where their loyalties lay, beyond their mere professional identity. The flipside of this process entailed increasing constraints and coercion for technical experts who aligned themselves more closely than before with certain political regimes.³³

With the establishment of new states, or at least new political systems like those in Germany and Austria, technical experts were clearly in a critical position in those fields where those states needed to prove their ability to solve post-war problems. This was even more the case where military defeat and social crisis coincided or where the war, even where the results were perceived to be positive, had changed the political regime and brought about completely new political entities. In an extreme way, the rupture of 1918 in Central Europe highlights the engagement of experts in the nation-building process. We find this link in the self-empowerment of experts in Hungary's "engineer utopia" as in the general claims by technical elites that, after the planning and technological advances made during the First World War, it was incumbent upon them to take over power.³⁴

Such notions involved professional protectionism, for example, in demanding that no foreign specialists should take qualified positions in the administration that could be filled by native experts, or trying to prevent state intervention in what was perceived as the deserved rights of one's group. However, such technical experts were scarce. In Poland they were mainly to be found in the formerly Austrian territory, where the relevant training had been easier to secure for Poles. In 1931 it was estimated that there were only 25,000 technicians and engineers in a country of some 32 million inhabitants, as a result of the restrictive policy of the partition powers that lasted until the end of the First World War. Only about 10,000 of these had graduated.³⁵ Having spent almost the entire second industrial revolution, that is the rise of science and new production methods in the decades before the First World War, lacking important training facilities, the new Polish state relied mainly on two sources, along with the small technical elite trained before 1918. The government's attempt to encourage the return of Polish experts from Western Europe and the USA had only limited success.³⁶

Thus the newly-trained experts in East Central Europe had to fill a vacuum in a double sense. They had to fill positions now vacated by people who had more or less been forced to retreat to Russia, Germany and Austria. Further, these experts also had to fill the vacuum of political legitimacy left by the collapsing empires and confronting the new nation states. In this sense we should also treat these experts as an elite whose narrower professional identity often – not always – entailed a certain social and even political function.

Building, in all its facets, was of key importance to the new state – from representing the new nation to constructing houses for the many who were now symbolically enshrined in the new nation and deserving of its care – and architects became textbook examples of this new elite. In Poland architects also had to fill a vacuum

left by constraints imposed on professional upward mobility, in particular in the Russian partition territories. The striking example of the newly built city of Gdynia, where there were only eight architects to oversee the construction of 600 buildings, is a telling case in point.³⁷

At least equally important was the second vacuum, these new states' lack of legitimacy. The moment a new Polish state became potentially viable in 1916, architects projected themselves as new experts of state building. Already in 1915 architect Tadeusz Zielinski termed reconstruction as the mission of the nation yet to come into being. Both architects and society, Zielinski demanded, had to understand the role of art in shaping the nation. No other art carried a responsibility comparable to architecture, he argued.³⁸ Of course, every professional group wanted to shape this situation of historical rupture in their favour. But against the background of the development which has been explained in chapter 1, architects now had a much higher chance of being accepted in such a prominent position or even of being sought after and finally pushed into such a position – or of profiting from positions which only gradually became available. The rapid career rise of Roman Feliński, who was born in 1886 and trained at the architecture department of the Polytechnic School of Lviv, demonstrates this link between demand and supply. Feliński, who very early on proposed all-inclusive solutions to tackle the notorious backwardness of towns and villages in Eastern Poland, quickly secured a leading role in the Ministry of Public Works after Polish independence.³⁹ His new style of planning was directly linked to the war-time destruction of some 150 small towns and 1500 villages in Galicia as much as the newly-built town of Gdynia.⁴⁰

Training Modern Architects

It is, however, not sufficient to study the demand of newly emerging nation states and the challenges they faced in their new capital cities. We also need to look at the supply side, at how the architectural profession changed, how this was reflected in their training, and just how far the underlying process prepared architects to fill in the role of experts sketched above. In this respect, Feliński was rather the exception to the rule, or formulated differently, an intermediary figure between those architects trained in the traditional way and a younger generation whose training directly reflected the needs of the new nation state.

In 1907 Karl Scheffler, one of the most influential critics of architecture of the early 20th century, published his study *Der Architect* as a series of “socio-psychological monographs”, edited by the philosopher Martin Buber. Scheffler grasped

how, in the years before the First World War, different lines in the development of the profession had crossed and arrived at a junction. At this critical moment in the profession's history architects were entering into manifold new domains just as the very fundamentals of their profession were being threatened. According to Scheffler, the many new needs arising from the emergence of big cities and industry were decisive in terms of the profession's development. During an extremely brief period architects had been confronted with new demands to solve problems of planning, mobility and housing the masses. It was no longer the traditional private sponsor who determined progress, instead it was "the impersonal economic idea". Another new element was that architects had to anticipate the future in everything they did.⁴¹ Two seminal changes were at the bottom of the development which Scheffler sketched – the rapidly expanding role of technology and, partially connected, the emergence of the field of urbanism.

These developments went much further and deeper than what could more narrowly be described as professionalization and which also characterized other professions.⁴² Architects also tried to standardize diplomas and to set up professional organizations, ideally with internal legislation. They further tried to limit access to the profession and to protect the professional title of architect. Like other professions, architects strove to gain autonomy *vis-à-vis* the state and society.⁴³ However, the focus on professionalization should not obscure that various and partially competing models remained in place for a long time. As regards education, training with an exceptional personality stayed characteristically important for architects, reflecting the artistic aspect of the profession.⁴⁴ It was not coincidence that the three leading figures of the modernist movement, Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, had all trained with the same architect and designer – Peter Behrens.⁴⁵

As in the engineering disciplines, in general, the drafting cultures in architecture began to change and became more distinct – including along national lines – and increasingly began to take new technological opportunities into account. An ever more standardized and academically taught drafting technique served the intention of keeping vocationally trained draftsmen out of the profession.⁴⁶ Technology began to play an ever bigger role in the education of architects.⁴⁷ As part of this process architectural education – while taking on board new engineering techniques – also split from construction engineering, which turned into an academic discipline in its own right.⁴⁸ The two academic professions of architect and construction engineer became the formal expression of the long-standing "sibling rivalry" between architects and engineers in the 20th century.⁴⁹ While this trend suggested that architects would, in the long run, rather work in bigger units, the ideal of the free-

lance architect remained intact and remained the predominant model in Central Europe.

When emphasizing the effect of professionalization one should not forget, however, that until well into the 20th century a variety of educational paths, including vocational schools, led into the profession. The educational record of even the best known modernist architects, who were so proud of their technical versatility, was strikingly poor. Walter Gropius withdrew from his studies without a degree. Le Corbusier only attended a vocational school for watch-engraving. The Dutch pioneer of modernist architecture J.J.P. Oud studied at a range of vocational handicraft schools. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe made his way into the profession as the son of a building contractor without special training. Some have judged Mies to be the architect of the century, yet he never studied architecture and, aged 72, he was asked by the U.S. authorities to amend his lack of proper qualifications when finishing the famous Seagram Building in New York.⁵⁰ Gerrit Rietveld's schooling consisted of furniture-making lessons from his father, while Theo van Doesburg's education entailed theatre classes.⁵¹ These examples highlight that, well into the 20th century, informal education and practical experience still remained important resources. Moreover, these examples show how other factors such as symbolic capital or vision helped in attaining expert status.

In comparison with other liberal professions like doctors or lawyers, the emergence of architects working independently occurred very late. It was only by the end of the 19th century that a group, distinct from the architects working for the government, and those busy in the building trade as craftsmen or entrepreneurs, appeared in Central Europe and quickly took the lead in new trends in the profession. Competition with architects employed by the state, whilst dominating the private sector, remained a key issue throughout the first half of the 20th century.⁵² Free architects did of course profit from the growth of the building sector from the late-19th century onwards, and could thus increasingly give self-assured voice to their demands and visions.⁵³

The new context of the profession which Scheffler had sketched out only ushered in new training institutions after the First World War. The most famous were the *Bauhaus*, established in Weimar in 1919 and the *VKhUTEMAS* in the young Soviet Union, both of which conceived the training of architects as part of the social experiment of the Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union respectively.⁵⁴

For the questions asked here, and for the specific group of modernist architects central to this study, the classic aspects of professionalization are less enlightening. The emergence of this particular formation is more convincingly to be grasped in

terms of technification – and the respective changes in education. The new importance of the engineering side of architecture went much further than the command of new techniques, such as reinforced concrete. The need to command technical knowledge stressed the scientific aspect of architecture at the expense of the architect's identity as artist. With this changing self-perception the modernist architects' pretence to offer solutions to problems exceeding building in the narrower sense also grew.⁵⁵

This trend also informed the development of the profession in East Central Europe, as the Polish example clearly shows. However, there were some noteworthy specifics which help to explain why the promise of technology attained such a prominence here. The transformation of architects went hand in hand with the regulating effort first of the empires in East Central Europe and then of the newly emerging nation states. To a greater degree than in Western Europe this process was intertwined with a reconfiguration of elites. It was in part due to a traditionally weak bourgeoisie that architects, just like other free professions, were quick – and somewhat successful – to declare that their own struggle for autonomy lay in the national interest of the newly emerging states, of which they aspired to become elites.⁵⁶

Both the pronounced elite function of architects in Poland and the specifics of their training *vis-à-vis* Western European countries are reflected in what became the foremost institution of training architects in Poland in the 20th century, Warsaw University of Technology (WUT). The setting up of the WUT in 1915, and its department of architecture, as well as its pre-history, all form cases in point. The institution opened in November 1915, shortly after German troops had conquered Warsaw from Russia, the former imperial power. The WUT was not a completely new institution, but the German occupants went to some length to mark the caesura. They celebrated the opening with – given the wartime situation – remarkable ado and ceremony.⁵⁷ The fact that a film was produced specifically for the occasion, to project the event's significance to a broader public, underlines that this was more than just a measure to get the urban infrastructure running again.⁵⁸

The German occupants obviously hoped to win the hearts of the Polish population by presenting a highly attractive, though somewhat tainted gift. They offered university training in Polish language, which the Russians had not been willing to grant before 1915. Moreover, they provided – albeit because they regarded this as a function of their military goals – the Poles with a substantial say in the new institution. For the Polish elite, the WUT, and its department for architecture, mattered a lot, even under less than ideal circumstances. The new institution provided the chance to make up for a development which had been derailed long before.⁵⁹

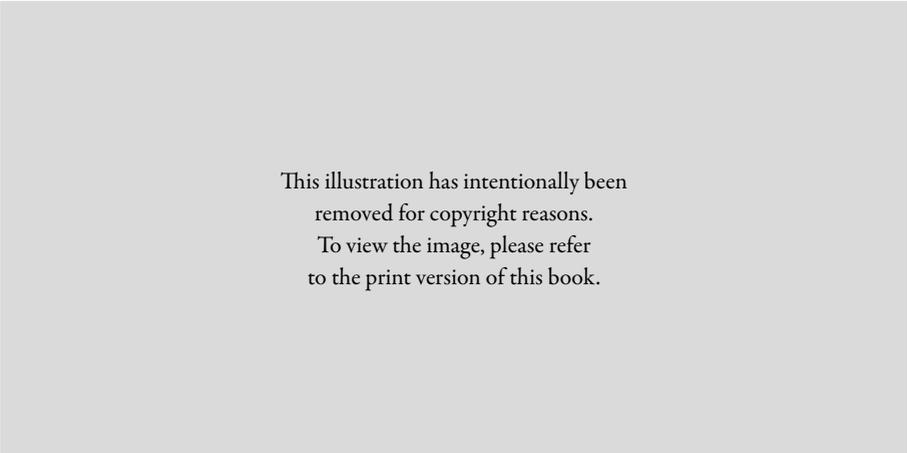
The construction of the building in which the WUT was housed is characteristic of its transnational conception. Trying to merge the best traditions available, two Polish architects had visited the predominant sites of technical education in Europe, and merged the architecture of these schools into their own, original contribution.⁶⁰ A similar synthesis governed the setting-up of the WUT's faculty of architecture. Its professors had been mostly educated abroad given the lack of any suitable Polish institution. For this reason the architecture curriculum was marked by a blend of various European traditions.⁶¹ The Department of Architecture was one of the first in Europe to feature a chair of urban planning and to include the social dimension of architecture that was so important for the profession's role in the envisaged new state.⁶² The fact that there were few traditions standing in the way of establishing – also in European terms – a state-of-the art approach quite obviously helped to bring this about.

With all impediments that the war and the occupation incurred, the three years between 1915 and 1918 still offered a window of opportunity. Networks were established during the war, for example, when German advisers evaluated an urban master plan for Warsaw conceived by the WUT professor Tadeusz Tołwiński. The political undertones of the WUT's architecture department naturally did not remain uncontested. From the day the WUT opened, its professors were accused of collaborating with the German occupiers. Nevertheless, founding professors of the department of architecture, like the painter Zygmunt Kamiński who was dean in the 1930s, believed that there was no alternative that would enable Polish technical students to stay and form the elite that the country so desperately needed. Indeed, when Poland gained independence in November 1918, the graduates of the WUT formed the basis for a new elite with immense professional success and influence in the newly established state.

With the end of the First World War and its reverberations – which did not come to Poland until 1920 – the department of architecture of the WUT finally stabilized and began a more routine teaching pattern. However, its hallmarks of all-inclusive training and a modern approach, particularly with regard to the social dimension of architecture, remained in place. Therefore, and given the high number of graduates, the institution became and remained influential on a national level.⁶³ The Polytechnic School at Lviv, which had already been established in the 19th century and initially competed with Warsaw, had a less clear-cut modernist outlook and in terms of numbers only attracted about a third of those inscribed at the WUT faculty of architecture. The department of Fine Arts of the university in Wilno and the department of architecture of the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow, both es-

tablished shortly after the First World War, which were the other institutions for training architects within the territory of the Second Polish Republic, followed a different, far more classic, training trajectory.⁶⁴

While those who had been born before 1895, like Feliński, had studied at the polytechnics of the partition powers, the younger generation of Polish architects was predominantly educated at the WUT.⁶⁵ Their training, however, was not necessarily less European. On the contrary, the faculty was almost by nature internationally oriented as it had received its training abroad.⁶⁶ Consequently, the curriculum was hybrid, influenced by French, German and Russian traditions. Because the institution had so recently been founded the curriculum was also practically oriented, being one of the first departments in Europe to include urban planning in its courses.⁶⁷ Urban planning was taught using concrete examples, including at international comparative level, and approaches which included much more than just the built environment became a hallmark of the WUT's faculty of architecture.⁶⁸

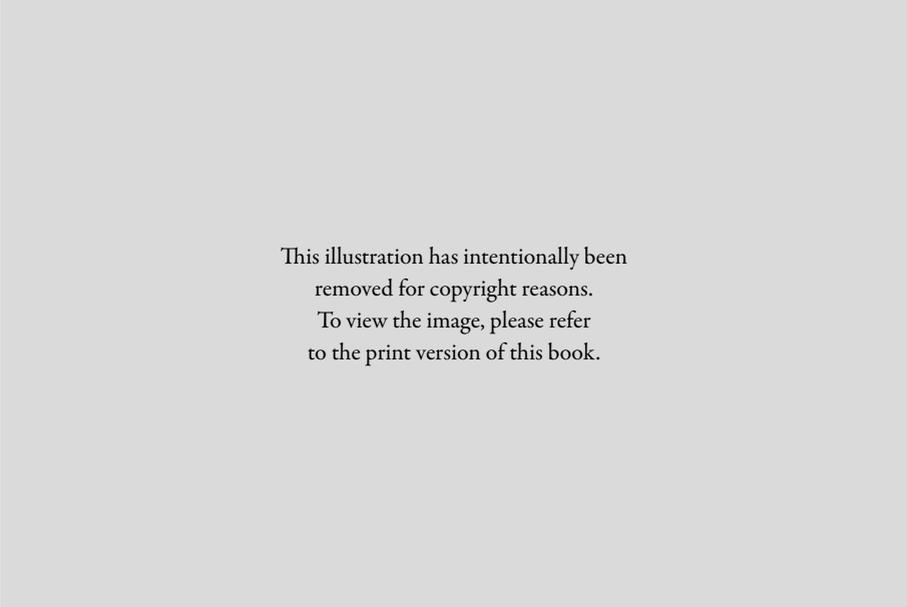


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12. Designs by graduates of the Faculty of Architecture, WUT, 1933

By 1922 the faculty had seen its first batch of diplomas awarded to students. In March 1922 the Polish government had also set regulations governing the working of a newly established chair for Polish architecture, stressing the need to link architecture and nation building.⁶⁹ With its strong engineering bias and alertness to the social challenges of the new republic, the faculty of architecture was and remained in a strong position to keep its ties with the expanding and 'planning' state.⁷⁰ In

1934 the faculty reacted to growing social demands and introduced a specialization in urbanism. This programme brought together civil engineers, and experts specialized in urban development and taught the latest relevant knowledge in economy, sociology and technology in order to train experts for the increasingly complex urban space.⁷¹ This blend was the basis for what came to be known as the Warsaw School of Architecture, typifying a specific, modern and socially aware strand of architects.⁷² By the 1930s being a student at the WUT's faculty of architecture had become a "status symbol" and a signifier of being modern. The faculty's balls became a fashionable social event.⁷³



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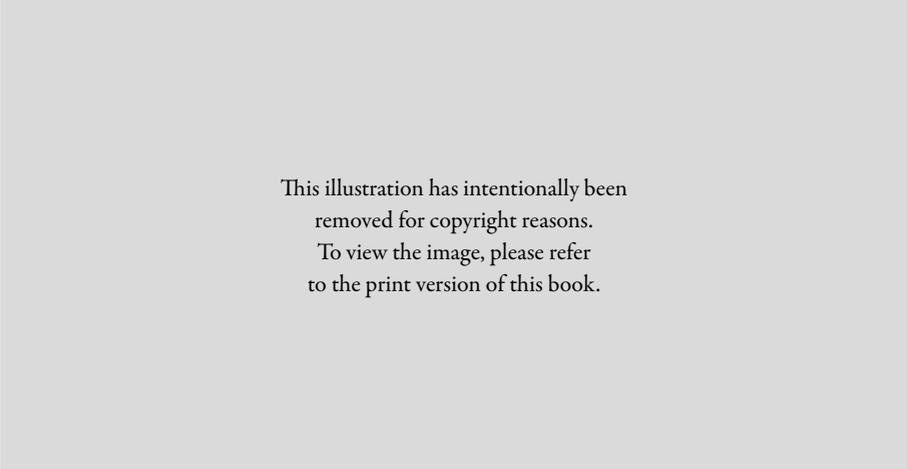
13. Architects' Ball at the Faculty of Architecture, WUT, 1938

In Poland, architects, as well as other technical experts, depended heavily on the state. Nearly half of the Polish engineers in the interwar period served the state or state-dependent institutions.⁷⁴ The qualifications of the graduates of the WUT architecture faculty, as well as their career patterns, reflected the needs of the new state and the imminent opportunities for the much-needed experts. Due to the extreme lack of established experts, the 'fresh' graduates progressed quickly, that is at a young age, onto high-ranking positions and duties as the new Polish state embarked

on an ambitious series of urban improvement projects following an initial phase of political and economic consolidation. Architects were assigned new tasks in the fields of hygiene, health and education in particular, all of which were emphasized by the government as being of central importance.

While it is hardly surprising that younger architects were generally more receptive to modernist architecture, the swift advance of the young generation, born between 1891 and 1905, in post-First World War Poland is still striking. Obviously, the fact that this generation did not need to crowd out a strong existing traditional elite contributed to their impressive inroads in the developing building programme.⁷⁵ But at least equally important was that they were in command of the latest knowledge and combined state of the art housing technology with a social edge.

The emancipation of women was part of the modernizing agenda of the new states.⁷⁶ Although the profession remained largely male-dominated, there was a striking number of female architects, in addition to the well-known Helena Syrkus and Barbarba Brukalska, who enjoyed impressive careers.⁷⁷

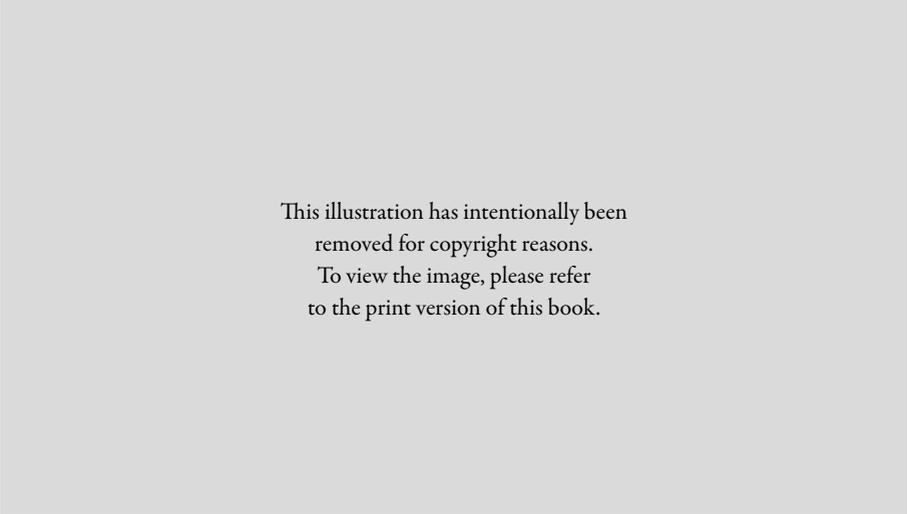


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14. Birth years of architects awarded building commissions in Poland between 1919 and 1939, showing (1) projected plans and (2) completed projects. A: born before 1875, B: 1876-90, C: 1891-1905, D: after 1906.

The strikingly high number of women among the graduates of the architecture faculty can be seen as reflecting the specifics of the Polish situation, namely the absence of an established elite and the general openness of the new architectural education.⁷⁸

Of the 813 graduates of the WUT's architecture department in the interwar period, 96 (twelve percent) were women. This compares to only some 300 female students (not graduates), many of whom were from East Central Europe, matriculated at the eight (later nine) *Technische Hochschulen* of the progressive Weimar Republic. These were only four percent of Germany's 7000 students of architecture. When solely considering the graduated architects, the faculty in Warsaw alone brought forward as many female architects as the whole Weimar Republic.⁷⁹



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15. Final diplomas at Faculty of Architecture, WUT. 1921-1939, of which number of women

The extraordinary increase in supply and demand of architects in general is reflected in the actual number of architects who became members of the official professional organization of architects in the Second Polish Republic, the *Stowarzyszenie Architektów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Association of Architects of the Republic of Poland, SARP). The SARP, dealt with in the following chapter, grew six fold between 1918 and 1939. Unsurprisingly in contrast to what has been said earlier, but still noteworthy, the architects practicing in Poland in the 1920s had been trained by more than 40 different, mostly foreign educational intuitions.⁸⁰

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16. Increase in number of organized architects in Poland and Warsaw, 1919-1938

The example of Polish architect Szymon Syrkus (1893–1964), “perhaps the foremost exponent of Functionalism anywhere in Eastern Europe” illustrates this well.⁸¹ Like most of his colleagues, Syrkus was internationally educated. Between 1912 and 1917 Syrkus studied at the technical universities of Vienna, Graz and Riga, as well as the Academy of Fine Arts at Cracow and finally the newly established WUT, from which he graduated in 1922.⁸² Between 1922 and 1924 Syrkus spent periods in Paris and Berlin, with excursions to the German *Bauhaus* and *De Stijl* representatives in The Netherlands. He only returned permanently to Poland in 1924, at which point he became crucial to the formation of an avant-garde strand in Polish architecture and played a fundamental role for architects in society.

As a result of the partition of Poland and the strict regimes of Russia (and later also Germany), this kind of ‘forced internationalism’ was particularly pronounced in Poland, but similar examples can also be found in Czechoslovakia. A most telling case is Czech architect Jan Kotěra. Kotěra is generally seen as one of the defining figures of Czech modernism. He was one of the most gifted students of Otto Wagner in Vienna. His wide-ranging influence was based on a number of factors. First, he was able to translate the more radical aspects of the architectural discussion into solutions attractive to the Czech national movement – opening up a space which had not existed in the more established Viennese setting. Second, Kotěra embodied a broad approach to architecture, in particular with a view to its social dimension.

This, thirdly, made him a deeply influential teacher as professor at the school of Applied Art in Prague – in which he fittingly succeeded Friedrich Ohmann, a member of the German-speaking Austrian elite. For the likes of Bohuslav Fuchs, Jaromír Krejcar, and Adolf Benš, all key figures of Czech modernism, Kotěra was an influential teacher who transmitted both a transnational vision of architecture as well as the notion of architecture as an engine of social reform in his teachings.⁸³

An even more impressive breakthrough of young architects – compared to that of Prague – occurred in the industrial city of Brno. Here, in a city hotly contested between Czech and German speakers until and through the First World War, ethnicity and language had a significant influence on expert-elites. When a Czech town council supplanted its German predecessor in 1918, this opened up numerous opportunities for young Czech architects.⁸⁴ The first graduates of the Architecture and Civil Engineering course at the Czech Technical University in Brno, most importantly Jindřich Kumpošt, had already gained recognition and started to play a key role in making Brno a landmark on the European map of modernism by the mid-1920s. Employing the framework of international modernism played as much of a definitive role for the quick advance of these young architects as their focus on social architecture and hygiene-related buildings did.⁸⁵ These new architects could thus also profit from the mechanisms described for Brno in the previous chapter, namely the official attempt to shape an exemplary modern and international city.

The Rise of Scientific Urbanism and the Self-Empowerment of Architects

Choosing a particular method to train architects had implications which were not restricted to the universities or academies of art where architecture was taught. Moreover, the fact that certain models prospered in certain regions was far from coincidental. Guillén has argued, predominantly on the basis of South- and Central American examples, that an engineering type of training did well in countries where the state – in absence of a strong civil society – was the main engine of socio-political change. Guillén was also not the first to stress that the engineering model, as opposed to the *beaux-arts* model, favoured the rise of modernist architects. The latter fostered an encompassing view on matters social and provided future architects with a tool-kit in technology, statistical methods and the like, which supported their claim to have a say beyond the construction-site. One could even argue that this new form of education provided for a mental framework of social empowerment, not unlike what could be found in other strands of engineering.⁸⁶

For similar reasons to those Guillén stipulated for South America, the engineering model for training architects flourished in East Central Europe. This model served the needs of the catch-up modernization the newly erected states were confronted with in a far more convincing way than the classic architectural education which focused on the artistic aspect of architecture. What was true for engineering-centred architecture was at least equally true for the rise of urbanism, namely a much more scientific and holistic approach than classical architecture, where architects were conceived not so much as artists, but rather as technicians and social engineers. The emergence of urbanism followed both new supplies – of planning knowledge – and new demands from the state to organize urban space. Yet, the rise of urbanism was also a result of the ability of a new class of experts to widen the frame of what needed and could be solved, as well as those potentially able to solve these problems. In this process specialization and generalization were not necessarily contradictions.

Few other fields embodied a new kind of expertise with a cause in the way that urbanism did.⁸⁷ This rather young discipline obtained its legitimacy by incorporating ‘scientific methods’ which rested on the extreme credibility that science and technology had acquired in the previous decades.⁸⁸ Since 1900, methods like statistical comparison and the use of newly available visual material like aerial photography, surveys, and sociological analyses contributed to the idea that planned development of all aspects of the city – if not of society as a whole – was not only desirable, but also achievable. Moreover, basing one’s arguments on numbers and formulas also promised to deflect political conflict and even international tension.⁸⁹

Of course, more often than not the scientific approach architects and urbanists claimed to employ was less objective than they thought. Often ‘scientific’ served a discursive strategy rather than reflecting methodologically sound new approaches. But David Kuchenbuch is correct in stressing that the scientific claim deeply transformed the profession of the architect. In embracing and problematizing the social on a scientific basis the architect as “objective expert”, in place of the “philanthropic bourgeoisie”, came to control the commanding heights in the battle for better housing and town planning.⁹⁰

Urban planning, particularly on the European continent, was expected to deliver more than simply improving the organization of a city.⁹¹ In tackling the ills of the modern city, it strove to tackle the ills of modernity itself by using modern means. Radical urban planners envisioned a new society and the rise of ‘New Men.’⁹² This surplus of expectations was also a reaction to new technological possibilities, whether real or imagined. Almost necessarily, urban planners became techno-

scientific experts closely related to the state and society. They were strongly tied to the political, social and cultural developments and debates of their time.

Most of the first urbanists in a modern sense were architects by training. Though self-taught urbanists, architects had few qualms in making bold claims about what could be achieved in applying new urbanistic insights. The discussions of the CIAM provide ample evidence of the continuous conflict over how far architects should make inroads into the urban framework planning, and where they were to be confined by the expert knowledge of specialists.⁹³ Architects like Walter Gropius or Le Corbusier very actively contributed to shaping the imagination as to what modern urbanism might achieve. One may think of the surprising scope of action *Bauhaus* radicals had in building, social transformation, and education or the impressive Red Vienna projects, equally inspired by the promises of scientific urbanism and the political dividends it was hoped to yield.⁹⁴ Urbanism became so attractive because, on the one hand, it radically widened the field of what architecture (and architects) could achieve and improve and, on the other hand, offered a rather concrete application of the general, often lofty, trend for planning.⁹⁵

While these phenomena are in themselves significant and had a deep historical impact, in this context they help to explain why architects could successfully claim new domains of competence and activity. What was long regarded as a disadvantage of education, namely that architects would not be real engineers as they lacked depth and technological rigour, was in the 1920s remodelled to the advantage of the planning generalist. Cornelis van Eesteren, long-time head of the CIAM, noted “the achievements of the art of urban design were situated in a wider perspective in the 1920s”. Urban design became “a synthesis of organized life and technology” that had supra-local dimensions and called for a strong management of all experts involved.⁹⁶ The new discipline of urbanism was potentially open ended and had many contact areas with other disciplines, many of them, like sociology and statistics, becoming fashionable in this very period. In a nutshell this ambition comes to the fore in the CIAM’s declaration of La Sarraz, and its claim to regulate all areas of life: “Urbanism is the organization of all the functions of collective life; it extends over both urban agglomerations and over the countryside.”⁹⁷

In many ways the impact of urbanism was more pronounced in East Central Europe against the backdrop of a severe urban crisis and the development of new capital cities. For this reason the link with planning in a wider sense, as well as regional and national planning, was also strong here. While the precise implications will be discussed in chapter 5, it is important to note here that this link also reflected the standing of architects in East Central Europe. We may assume that they were more

likely to take on the role of ‘national modernizer’. Urban planning became a mode of self-empowerment everywhere. Yet, in East Central Europe the stark contrast between the failed towns of the 19th century, with their slums, unhygienic living conditions and the promises of the modern city, was particularly salient.⁹⁸

As urbanism mostly concerned transforming already existing cities, their structures subsequently became the main obstacles and impediments. Far-reaching concepts could only succeed if massive funds were provided to master deep-cutting change. Further, ideally juridical *carte-blanche* was required, to change the existing ‘irrational’ structure of property division. The Soviet Union had, since the 1920s, provided a closely followed example of how this aspiration could be put into practice. As Heather DeHaan has shown in her case study of Nizhnii Novgorod (Gorky) this entailed a deep transformation of the architectural profession. In a convincing metaphor, inspired by the fact that the planners ascribed needs to citizens, DeHaan compares the first generation of urban planners in the Soviet Union to “omniscient narrators of a novel”.⁹⁹ To these planners a scientific approach was the key to both solving concrete urban problems and mediating potential conflicts with political decision makers.

It is unsurprising that the Soviet Union briefly turned into a *Sehnsuchtsort* of architects and urban planners from the whole of Europe, and hundreds joined its planning bodies in the early 1930s.¹⁰⁰ Also, many architects who did not participate in building new cities east of the Ural shared a fascination for the role their profession attained in the Soviet Union. Of course, the political conditions in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary differed very significantly from those further east. Most importantly, the regime of private property largely remained intact in East Central Europe with immense consequences for large-scale urban transformation projects. But also here, the state and organizations close to the state became the main agent of modernization and a decisive sponsor for architects. Indeed, the state combined the fields of urban planning and general planning, thus giving urbanism the significance of a national task.¹⁰¹

Modernist architects in East Central Europe clearly reflected the imminent change incurred by the rise of urbanism. In 1935 Stanisław Brukalski (1894-1967), one of the foremost modernist architects in Poland, insisted that visionary planners and architects were no “learned maniacs” but that the “achieved level of urbanist knowledge and a superb progress in construction techniques and the new architectural forms based on these fundamentals offered creative forces which would be sufficient” to realize the new goals.¹⁰² What makes the notion behind this so telling is the idea, to put it in simple words, of solving the problems of the 19th century using

20th century knowledge. Knowledge first and foremost meant urban knowledge in this instance. Roman Feliński provides a good example of how in Poland the clout of urbanism translated into architectural opportunities. Even though he was driven out of his leading position in the state administration in 1926, due to his leftist convictions, he was able to exert considerable influence with his urban plans for the state's two most critical large-scale projects – Gdynia and the *Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy* (COP).¹⁰³

Generally speaking, modernist architects in Poland expressed the social mission of architecture in a clearer way than their counterparts in the West did. This also reflected the aspirations of architects. Szymon Syrkus, who had studied in Riga during the First World War and was fluent in Russian, referred to the fierce debates in Russia around 1930 and argued that many of the more radical solutions, such as communal kitchens, would also be relevant in the Polish context. Syrkus refrained from imitating the communist programme and from closely copying Soviet examples. Yet, the radicalism of the approaches taken in the East served as a reference for him: “Architecture” he demanded, had to “exert a direct force targeted at the transformation of the ways of life”. Herein architecture would need to express what Syrkus called “*zwingungsfähigkeit*” (ability to enforce).¹⁰⁴

These statements, which Syrkus made in 1930 during the preparation of what came to be known as CIAM IV, a congress on the so-called functional city, could easily be complemented by other statements by Syrkus and other likeminded Polish architects. Syrkus used the term “architectonisation” to stress the dynamics of architecture and the inroads it ought to make into the realm of the social. For this process he used the formula $A=f(S,T,P)$ describing architecture as a function of social, technical and spatial factors.¹⁰⁵ Roman Piotrowski, an architect thinking along the same lines as Syrkus, called on the state to enable architects to fulfil their social mission.¹⁰⁶ The pronounced tendency to stress the social role of architects was also informed by the fact that the state and social organizations as sponsor played such a strong role for architects in the region. This link became even more pronounced due to the global economic crisis of 1929, which led to the almost complete disappearance of private sponsors.¹⁰⁷

Architects, through their close relations with the modernizing state and related organizations, did act as implementers of modernity. Their radical claims were partially founded on the enormous challenges urbanism faced in Poland and the other countries of East Central Europe – as described in the previous chapter. But the aspirations and factual role of architects also stemmed from the tension inflicted by the economic shortcomings which more often than not constrained architects in the region to planning for the future instead of building in the present.¹⁰⁸

Guillén has apodictically formulated that “modernist architecture is the child of industry and engineering”. According to him, modernist architecture rose alongside scientific management. Method, standardization, and planning thus lay at the heart of modernist architecture’s success story, with architects turning into “technicians, organizers, and social reformers”.¹⁰⁹ Against this background, Guillén makes a second point of even higher relevance for this study. He argues that modernist architecture developed in Europe in a “much more unconstrained way” than in the US, “shaping life at the factory, the home, and the public building”. While in the US technological progress and architecture went hand-in-hand, in continental Europe, where industry lagged behind, architects embarked on a process of modernization from above. This, according to Guillén, caused modernist architects in the “relatively backward and politically troubled Continental European countries” to be in a “position to lead” and exerting a “tremendous influence over social and industrial organization as the designer and planner of dwellings, cities, and workplaces”. Continental European architects, much more so than in the UK and the US, “actively advocated and planned for a transformation of society”.¹¹⁰ It was a given to Karel Teige, the most imaginative architectural thinker in East Central Europe, that a real avant-garde would not only “build modern”, but also “struggle for a new thinking”, that is, a turnover of the existing social order.¹¹¹

If we accept this quite general interpretation we should assume that in the particularly politically troubled and economically backward countries of East Central Europe the link analysed by Guillén was even more expressed. Stressing an engineering bias in architectural education as the key to the breakthrough of modernist architecture is an important explanation for the role modernist architecture attained in East Central Europe. Moreover, Guillén’s insistence on the importance of the state as a sponsor not only helps to explain the rise of modernist architects in East Central Europe to political and social influence, it also turns this region into a highly relevant case for the general understanding of modernism.¹¹²

The Lure of the Machine

The promises of modernism, efficiency via planning and staunch anti-traditionalism, was necessarily most convincing in a region which, particularly as regards Poland, was afflicted with enormous impediments to economic development and a social structure characterized by dysfunctional remnants of tradition.¹¹³ The Czech and Polish avant-garde in general, and their architectural avant-garde specifically, provide ample evidence of how the “machine became an ideological, technical, and

aesthetic frame of reference” – not just for the design and production of buildings, but for bringing about a new, more efficient social order.¹¹⁴

The Polish constructivist poet Tadeusz Peiper’s 1922 battle-cry poem *Miasto, Masa, Maszyna* (City, Mass and Machine), inspired by Italian futurism, had an extensive impact well beyond the Polish avant-garde. The ‘3 x M’ slogan evoked the allure of the modern. As in other contributions to Peiper’s avant-garde journal *Zwrotnica* (Junction), and various further contributions to the early Polish avant-garde, emphasis was placed on the revolutionary and all-changing aspect of technology.¹¹⁵

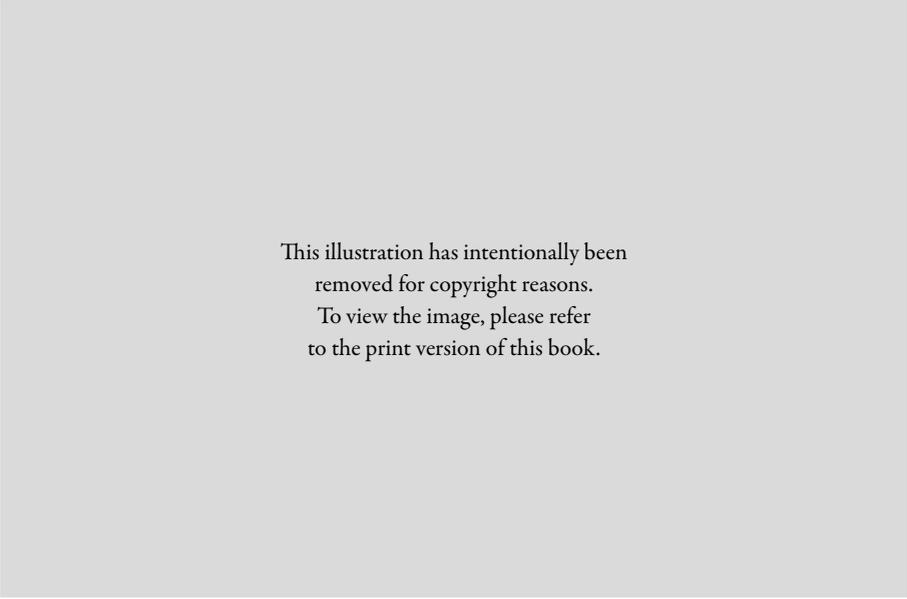
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17. Machine culture in the *BLOK* journal

Peiper’s poetry related to and added to a frame of reference which, as a consequence of extremely rapid general technological progress and the secular experience of engineered warfare in the First World War, became broadly established and accepted.¹¹⁶ Le Corbusier, in his manifesto *Vers une architecture*, invoked the automobile, along with ocean liners and airplanes, as a two-pronged promise of new aesthetics and standardization.¹¹⁷ The automobile, by adapting architecture to the experiences of modern life, turned into the most potent symbol of transition. Even

though mass production, unlike in the US, hardly existed in Central Europe in the 1920s the social promise it offered was highly convincing.¹¹⁸

One could even argue that technology attained particular clout in the catch-up context of Polish situation in the 1920s.¹¹⁹ The first edition of the Polish avant-garde journal *BLOK* not only displayed pieces of modernist architecture, but also tanks and automobiles.¹²⁰ The journal's fifth edition prominently displayed the artist Mieczysław Szczuka's statement that "changes in construction materials, as well as changes to the system and state of construction technology determine the changes to the external appearance of the items constructed, as can be seen in airplanes, airships, cruisers and transatlantic steamboats".¹²¹ The following editions of *BLOK* continued to promote the appeal of the machine. Unsurprisingly the first demonstration of the group which ran *BLOK* was held in March 1924 at the Warsaw premises of Laurin & Klement, a car manufacturer. Simultaneously, a member of the group, Henryk Berlewi, put on a show called *Mechanofaktur* at the Austro-Daimler Salon.¹²²



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What may seem to be an almost exclusively artistic expression was in fact far more. The avant-garde's obsession with technology, the machine, and the city, was a shared international trend and created many bridges throughout Europe using different frameworks, such as the Constructivists, as the following chapter will show.¹²³ Bringing to mind the allure of technology, as Le Corbusier most famously did with his notion of houses as "machines for living", provided new lines of argumentation.¹²⁴ But the theme of technology also built bridges within Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and between different artists and architects, allowing modernist architects to voice their demands in an ever-increasing crescendo.¹²⁵

Karel Teige was no less radical than the aforementioned Polish artists. The works of Teige offer the best example of the game-changing effect the rise of technology had on the scope of architecture in the region. Teige was fascinated by American culture and he subscribed to the cult of the modern engineer. He admired Le Corbusier as an engineer who based his architecture on modern industrial production. Certainly in the early 1920s he regarded Le Corbusier as the personification of architecture, being the one art form that suited his new criterion of seeing science and rationalism as the true basis of modern life. Rationalism was best expressed in Gustave Flaubert's motto "L'art de demain sera impersonelle et scientifique", which Teige repeatedly cited.¹²⁶ In his 1925 article *Constructivism and the Liquidation of Art* new architecture was conceived of as a science, "a logical and rational blueprint for modern life". Teige subscribed to the idea, popular among Soviet architects, "that there is no art of construction, no architecture per se, only a unified, strictly scientific process of building". For him it was even necessary to liquidate all artistic aspects of architecture.

Of course, similar ideas also emerged in other countries, particularly the Netherlands and Germany.¹²⁷ But it was also no coincidence that Teige, a Czech thinker, came to such radical conclusions. And it was no less a coincidence that the idea that architecture should be stripped of its artistic content grew popular with influential architects in East Central Europe. The notion that one lived in a "machine age", as presented in the eponymous 1927 exhibition in New York, went without saying.¹²⁸ Fittingly, Szymon Syrkus contributed to the exhibition catalogue, which also reproduced several of the finest examples of Polish modernist architecture from the mid-1920s. Syrkus' catalogue essay established, even more so than other contributors, technology as the key and pacemaker for a new architecture and a new notion of space.¹²⁹

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Hungarian László Moholy-Nagy concluded: “This is our century: technology – machine – socialism. Come to terms with it, and shoulder the tasks of the century”.¹³⁰ Indeed, most famously at Moholy-Nagy’s institutional base, the *Bauhaus* at Weimar and Dessau, a new tool-kit of applied technology was productively translated into new spatial and architectural solutions. Motion analysis informed the *Bauhaus*-inspired, efficient Frankfurt kitchen and numerous new floor designs in just two examples of this. New technical possibilities of using huge glass-surfaces and terraces merged with hygienic insights to produce – allegedly – healthier buildings.¹³¹



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As will be shown in the following two chapters, these tropes unfolded their potential in an even more convincing way in East Central Europe, where they provided modernist architects in the region with the muscle to tackle the very ills at the heart of the national crisis.

Themes of Change - Architecture as Technology: Rationalization, Planning, and Technocracy

In an early article defining his mission, Szymon Syrkus declared that “architecture changes the social pattern, as the social pattern changes architecture”. In accordance with his companions within the avant-gardist *Praesens* group, Syrkus explained that “all forms of artistic creation should be subjected to the supreme social role of architecture”.¹³² In so doing Syrkus was following a trend that was also current in the Netherlands and Germany. Architecture was seen as the art most oriented to the new technological opportunities, and in its combination of space, sculptural elements and the use of colours architecture promised to merge the different artistic strands of the avant-gardes.¹³³ Why did architects find it so easy to appoint themselves to positions of agents of modernization and why were they so successful in convincing wider circles of their point? As has been demonstrated, modernist architects acted in a frame of reference which stretched far beyond their profession but which was also heavily influenced by architects and architecture. The topics to which architects related their discipline were anything but marginal. Considerations on the impact of rationalization on society, on implementing a new healthy lifestyle via housing, or on new and efficient forms of constructing the city all formed the very essence of thinking about social change. Themes like the ‘new woman’, the liberating role of sport and leisure, or new ways of bringing up children appeared to be not only the natural domain of architects, they could also easily be connected with each other and to the great questions of the time.¹³⁴

Three terms, overlapping but certainly not identical, mark and structure the respective imaginary: rationalization, which included its powerful subcategory Fordism as detailed below and standardization, planning as a second term and, finally, technocracy.¹³⁵ All three terms lead far beyond what is our topic here. But we need to sketch which aspects were critical to modernist architects, particularly those in East Central Europe. While doing so it is important to realize that these concepts, as will be shown in the next chapter, enabled communication beyond borders, crossing the Atlantic and the mental distance between West and East Europe. Moreover,

in embarking on these concepts, they allowed modernist architects inroads in debates of more general societal relevance:

While the attraction of rationalization and standardization to architects is initially obvious, given the dramatic housing crisis, it is still surprising how high expectations went. These were fired by mechanization and standardization, as in Ernst Neufert's visions of industrialized housing and the Weimar Republic's *Reichsforschungsgesellschaft für Wirtschaftlichkeit im Bau- und Wohnungswesen*.¹³⁶ Such visions rested on an – often overestimated – impact of new building materials such as glass and concrete. The 1930s saw concrete “as heroic both in formal and in social terms”, allowing for a “social betterment through public works”.¹³⁷ In Europe Fordism turned into a wide-ranging concept that was seen as making use of the new technological opportunities and potentially capable of overcoming deep social, economic, and political crisis.¹³⁸ Fordism, fundamentally an organizational concept, catalysed in Europe what could be called expertise with a cause, that is, the systematic use of technology in the aim of improving society. The heavy expectations that came with it far exceeded a more effective organization of production. In this, Fordism also promised the potential of offering an alternative path of development beyond the old liberal systems and the threat of right- or left-wing authoritarianism.¹³⁹

Eventually, it was not so much the streamlined aesthetics of the automobile or its symbolizing technological progress but in fact standardization which Ford came to epitomize to European modernist architects. Somewhat ironically Oud referred to the envisaged minimum flats as “Wohn-Ford”.¹⁴⁰ If many of the *Bauhaus* architects, particularly Walter Gropius, regarded standardization as the key to solving not only the post-war housing crisis but also easing social tension in general and reconciling society with modernity, this promise was even more convincing in the framework of East Central Europe and especially Poland with its disastrous housing situation.¹⁴¹ Indeed, architects like Barbara and Stanisław Brukalski and Helena and Szymon Syrkus were fascinated by what standardization and an industrialized building process seemed to make possible. Syrkus hailed the opportunities offered by completing flats in a manner that resembled the methods Ford used to manufacture cars.¹⁴² Together with his wife Helena he developed a programme, using the capacities of the Polish steel industry, to build 100,000 standardized flats thus effectively adopting earlier similar plans by Le Corbusier.¹⁴³

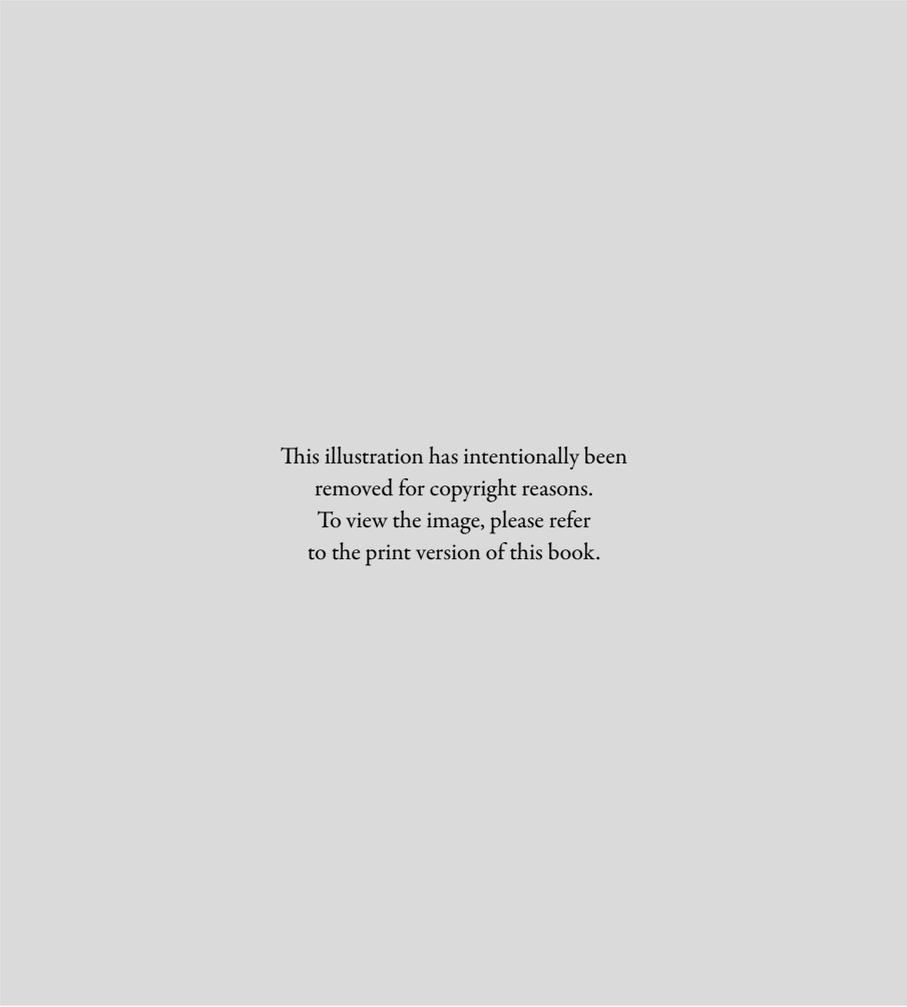


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21. Apartment building, S. Syrkus, 1930s

These plans, although they never came to fruition, took their persuasive power from the very notion of planning as an advancement on future progress.¹⁴⁴ Building on huge efforts to co-ordinate the economy during the First World War in practically all belligerent countries, and on the notion that modern industry and communication both asked for and allowed for completely new levels of streamlining the economy, planning became one of the hot political topics of the 1920s in general.

In the catch-up logic and rhetoric of the states of East Central Europe the political identification of critical economic domains, taking into account security issues and political legitimacy, made perfect sense. The COP in Poland, discussed in chapter 1, is a prime example of this tendency and so are the advances into regional planning and then national planning in Poland connected with the name of Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski.



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Planning fulfilled a function for architects as it both provided them with the chance to place their projects in a wider framework and, in drawing on a wider framework, gain the very stability, predictability and provision of funds necessary for building beyond the private house.

Yet, planning, in its technocratic character, was also an attractive idea to architects as it assigned them a prominent role. In their respective visions techno-scientific experts would employ technological progress as a neutral medium for bringing about improvement without necessarily transforming politics or society. Equally, unsurprisingly, technocratic thought was in practice far less neutral. This was not only so for leftist ideas inscribed into the language of planning. The manifold technocratic approaches could easily be merged with the rising authoritarian ideas in most states in East Central Europe. In a certain sense authoritarianism was even inscribed in technocracy as technocratic solutions could only be effectively introduced and rolled out within a stable political environment that was highly assertive.

All three themes, rationalization, planning and technocracy were themes of social change evoking a radical dynamic towards a better future and all these themes allowed modernist architects to place themselves in the driver's seat. All three themes added to the fact that, in comparison to previously, architects attained the role of a national elite, as has been explained in concrete examples for Poland above. For the leading CIAM-architects Josep Lluís Sert and Le Corbusier, referring to José Ortega y Gasset's notion of elites, the CIAM also aimed to provide an elite function.¹⁴⁵ After all, modernist architects had command of the seemingly revolutionary new building technologies, in particular reinforced concrete, and at least pretended to combine these forcefully with the new possibilities of standardization. Szymon Syrkus, in addition to his many other accolades, made his name as an innovator of new building techniques.¹⁴⁶

Given their thorough training and the complexity of their trade architects appeared as the natural protagonists of large-scale planning. Unsurprisingly, such modes of self-empowerment also had a flipside. As euphoric as both modernist architects and many in an audience of the convinced were about the allure of technocracy, there was clearly also a darker side to such visions. Both the dynamic and potentially pervasive impact of rationalization and planning and their potentially negative results are expressed in the later, more analytical term of social engineering.¹⁴⁷ Thomas Etzemüller has placed 'Social Engineering' in a long tradition of utopias of human improvement. Yet, he has shown at the same time how such ideas only acquired a new power after the First World War. The experience of having dealt successfully with complex technological problems suggested it was also possible to

solve social problems through neutral, scientifically grounded expertise. Social engineering emerged as a “specific mode of problematizing modernity”.¹⁴⁸ Modernist architects, who envisioned themselves as experts of the social with their “rhetoric of crisis and self-empowerment” played a critical role in this process. The ensuing tension has been often connected with the figure of Le Corbusier and discussed more controversially in recent years.¹⁴⁹

It was typical of social engineering that planning ambitions did not stop at the level of individuals’ daily lives. This was of obvious relevance for architects. Attempts to reorganise modernity mainly targeted the family as the link between society and the individual, as David Kuchenbuch has demonstrated with regard to Sweden.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, housing and urbanism turned into the most important fields of action of social engineering. What made architecture so topical in the hyped discussions on applying Fordist models, or achieving an efficient technocracy via rationalization, was not only and not even in the first place the technological dimension which characterized modernist architecture, but rather the very fact that architecture represented a most suggestive interface between new technologies and human beings. While the actual technification of architecture notoriously fell short of what its protagonists hoped for, the conception of new forms of housing offered an opportunity to transform society at its basic level. One of the red threads in Helena Syrkus’ memoirs is her pride in co-operating with sociologists, economists, statisticians, and other experts of social change.¹⁵¹

When modernist architects discussed, as they did in 1929 at the second CIAM congress in Frankfurt, the requirements of the minimum dwelling their judgements were based on far more than structural analysis or building materials. In fact they had to design the conditions for ‘standard’ lifestyles.¹⁵² Technology played both a symbolic and a more practical role in this form of intervention in the very lives of individuals. Applying concrete technological innovations beyond the laboratory or the factory also seemed more and more attractive in areas such as housing and hygiene. As Fritz Schumacher exclaimed, this was self-evident: “The urban doctor does not only need to check a patient’s hot forehead. He must assess the fever in terms of numbers. He must not only check the patient’s body externally but must also be able to examine x-ray images of the interior.”¹⁵³

The Frankfurt congress was of utmost importance for the CIAM groups from East Central Europe and initiated them into this new organization. Farkas Molnár from Hungary and Szymon Syrkus and Józef Szanajca from Poland presented examples from their respective countries, stressing the social dimension of the minimal housing designed in Warsaw, for example.¹⁵⁴ Examples from Łódź were repro-

duced in the book published after the congress.¹⁵⁵ The theme remained central to the CIAM but also highlighted ideological and geographic differences. Karel Teige argued in his contribution to the publication of the CIAM III congress in Brussels that the problem was rather about defining what the “existential minimum” subsistence level of human was. Providing more flats, Teige argued, was not sufficient to solve the problem of capitalism’s chronic housing crisis.¹⁵⁶

In an exemplary way, Teige turned housing into a problem and placed the issue on the public agenda. It was no coincidence that Teige engaged himself in this discussion and became one of its leading voices.¹⁵⁷ The minimum dwelling as an expression of social housing was particularly relevant for East Central Europe. The CIAM’s third congress in Frankfurt, in 1929, triggered greater interest from the region’s architects than the ensuing congress held in Brussels in 1930. The Frankfurt congress was also definitive for the formation of a Polish CIAM group and a number of relevant contributions on the theme from this country, as the next chapter will show.¹⁵⁸ In this, the problem of the minimum dwelling offers a telling example of how social engineering became a particular mode of problematizing modernity. The topic of the minimum dwelling served to frame a problem that otherwise would have remained diffuse, and it carried the promise of solving such problems once and forever.¹⁵⁹

In a similar manner the problem of public health also appeared on the architects’ horizon. They embarked on a more general trend of applying concepts of efficiency to humans and the human body, and governments began to dedicate a lot of time and resources to public health projects.¹⁶⁰ As explained in chapter 1, health and hygiene gained a primordial importance for the legitimacy of new states fighting sanitary problems on a dramatic scale. Similarly to the Weimar republic,¹⁶¹ though in proportion (and given the financial constraints of a state like Poland even more impressively), these new states invested in sanatoria, hospitals and other related projects.¹⁶² Most of the prime examples of this trend carry a strikingly modern character.¹⁶³ Yet, also in Czech Brno, to quote just one example, we find an outstanding number of functionalist health-related buildings erected in the short period between the mid-1920s and the Second World War.¹⁶⁴

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23. Sanatoria in Otwock and Istebna, Poland

The architecture of social reform was, of course, not specific to East Central Europe and this strand of architecture was not solely a phenomenon of the interwar period. The growth of organized social movements also led to a growth in social architecture.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, the promise of this new architecture's potentially positive effects on hygiene and general well-being went much further than erecting clean houses, hospitals or sanatoria.

Conclusion

What Sigfried Giedion, the great enunciator of the promise of the modern movement, called "befreites Wohnen" (liberated housing) in a manifesto of 1929 successfully encapsulates the idealistic spill-over so typical of housing reform.¹⁶⁶ As in the literary image of glass houses, one of the most potent 'reach-out' terms, such terms carried a double dynamic. They pointed to the future and they created inroads into domains which had not previously been central to architects.

Many of the more radical visions never even came close to realisation. Yet, this does not imply that they had no, or only limited, impact, as the following chapters will show. It is important to realize, however, that the self-empowerment described above could only work against the background of general technological and economic modernization and the emergence of new discourses reflecting this change. The following two chapters will thus address the communication of modernist architects in the region in question and will look at the structures in which these architects organised to push through their ideas and gain a new standing for themselves.

3. Organising New Architectural Goals

The first meeting of the League of Nations' *Committee of Architectural Experts* (CAE) was held on 9 March 1936.¹ This constituent meeting of the committee followed eight years of protracted debate on how to include architecture within the League's expanding framework. While architecture was certainly not a key concern of an organisation which sought to maintain world peace, it was still an interest which both specifically and generally reflected the League's aims.

Concretely, the decision to erect the League's permanent seat in Swiss Geneva marked the consolidation of the organisation. Given the League's prominent position as a beacon for world peace, expectations consequently ran high as to what such a building should ideally reflect. The demanding expectations placed on the League turned its future headquarters into a symbol of sorts. In this respect it is unsurprising that the decision on the final design of the Palace of the League of Nations was arguably one of the most controversial outcomes of any 20th-century architectural competition.² Luminaries of the modernist movement such as Le Corbusier protested fiercely against what he and many of his brothers in spirit regarded as a hopelessly traditional result – and a gesture of disrespect for Le Corbusier's ambitious contribution to the competition.³

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24. Entry for League of Nations competition by Henryk Oderfeld and S. Syrkus

For the League this reaction further clarified what the decision to build gigantic headquarters in an exposed place had already signalled: the paramount role of architectural representation should not be limited to aesthetics. It was no coincidence that 1928 also marked the beginning of discussions on setting up an architectural committee within the League, thus reflecting a more general commitment to architecture.⁴ For many years, though, it was not clear what this involvement would look like. Would the League try to influence the field and further the trends towards socially engaged architecture as described in the previous chapter? Further, would the League involve architects who described themselves as modern or rather the traditionalist architects?

As with other expert committees the League did not – and for financial reasons could not – establish structures of its own but had to focus on coordinating existing professional organisations. Moreover, the League, following its logic as an international organisation and the policy of its Intellectual Cooperation and International Bureaux Section, the secretariat of the Intellectual Cooperation Organisation of the League of Nations, needed to keep clear of politically tainted questions.⁵ Instead the League tried to focus on those areas which most evidently needed international co-ordination whilst not being overtly controversial.⁶ The regulation of architectural competitions was perfectly suited to this policy. Institutionally, moreover, this strengthened the International Bureau and International Cooperation Section within the League and against the rival *Commission internationale de coopération intellectuelle* (Department of Art of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, CICI), whilst also operating in the framework of the Intellectual Cooperation Organisation.⁷

As with other areas, the League aspired to prove its necessity by bringing together experts in the field, and by tackling problems which the nation states by definition could not solve on their own. With regard to architects this meant that the League needed to define standards for international competitions.⁸ Both the League's own competition to design its headquarters, and the highly disputed contest to design a Palace of the Soviets in Moscow in 1931, had shown how pertinent this question was.⁹ By regulating competitions, as the British government had stressed in 1933, a clear and accepted need for international regulation was identified, and it was required in order to achieve a level playing field for architects working outside their home country.¹⁰ The CAE's establishment is also a textbook example of what Thomas Misa and Johan Schot have termed the "hidden integration" of Europe which occurred through regulations and exchange.¹¹

The CAE embarked on considerable activity to produce new regulations in the second half of the 1930s.¹² However, it is not the regulations to govern competitions which are of relevance here. It is how the League addressed architecture as a critical field that is of significance. The League could have become, as it did in other areas, a collecting basin for all those organisations in the field of architecture and housing which had suffered a considerable blow through the First World War.¹³ Indeed, the League went to great lengths to identify the key players in the field. The CAE's establishment provides an overview of the complex scene of international organisations in the fields of architecture and housing around 1930, halfway into the central period of this study. The CAE correspondence quickly reveals that the scene was not only complex due to competing organisations, but also due to their overlapping goals and different levels and degrees of configuration. While the *Comité Permanent International des Architectes* (Permanent Committee of Architects, CPIA), founded in Paris in 1867, presented itself as the only, first, and natural contact, the League also strove to involve the *Reunion Internationale d'Architectes* (International Union of Architects, RIA), established just before the CAE by Pierre Vago as a more progressive alternative to the conservative CPIA and connected with the influential French journal *L'architecture d'Aujourd'hui*.¹⁴

In addition to the professional international organisations of architects in the narrower sense, a number of more thematically oriented groups emerged, all reflecting the dynamics of the themes of housing and urbanism which had been the fundamental reason for establishing the RIA. The most noteworthy and long-lasting was the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning (IFHTP), established in Britain in 1913 by Ebenezer Howard. Howard had been instrumental in the garden city movement and the Town and Country Planning Association

(TCPA) set up fourteen years earlier, in 1899, with a much more national, British outlook.

While the CPIA's prime goal was to represent the profession of architects, the IFHTP strove, particularly from the late 1920s, for knowledge exchange and exchange of best practices. Whereas spreading national models had been its key mode of operation before the war, in the 1920s the focus shifted to reaching a consensus over standards in clearly defined fields of expertise and employing scientific methods.¹⁵ Philip Wagner has shown that the IFHTP, whose roots lay in the 19th-century congress system and primarily functioned via yearly congresses, turned into an extremely dynamic framework. This had a lot to do with the scientific outlook it claimed to pursue and its entanglement with the thriving new field of urbanism.¹⁶ The IFHTP, again, had to compete with other organisations in its field, namely the *Internationaler Verband für Wohnungswesen* (International Federation for Housing, IVW), appropriately founded in Frankfurt, the hotspot of housing reform in 1929. The IVW brought together those planners and housing activists who regarded the IFHTP as too traditional and particularly criticised the latter organisation's shying away from impactful political interventions in the urban structure.¹⁷ Tellingly, however, the IFHTP also undertook considerable efforts to link itself with the League of Nations and become, via the League, the international leader in town planning.¹⁸

All these organisations reflect how architecture had, since the late 19th century, been charged with ever more far-reaching expectations. These expectations were also present in the original set-up of the CAE, as a resolution of the CICI made clear: "The Committee [the CICI, M.K.], noting, moreover, that architecture and the associated arts raise other international problems which the Intellectual Co-operation Organisation cannot disregard, expresses the hope that the Institute will also invite suggestions from the Committee of Architects in respect to these problems."¹⁹

Eventually, due to the late establishment of the CAE in the crisis-ridden mid-1930s, it fell short of the highflying expectations placed on it and did not embrace the dynamics of architecture, those elements in line with the *zeitgeist*, or those pointing to the future. Irrespective of this, the establishment of the League and its expert committee serve as an example of the existing and emerging scientific and technical international organisations in the field of urbanism and architecture and reflect the dynamics of this scene. The League shook up the international scene and all aspiring organisations had to relate to the League in one way or another.²⁰

This chapter will look at how modernist architects of the 1920s and 30s found new ways of organising themselves and, via international connections, made new

claims about the social relevance of their profession. The chapter will show how these organisations reflect a trend where architects were no longer grouped together as professionals but instead united around architectural and town-planning problems whilst also claiming to be able to provide internationally proven solutions. At the same time this chapter will explain how organisational skills and prowess on the international stage turned into a critical asset. The chapter will particularly highlight the interplay of national and international developments and, against this background, the shift towards pooling architects around issues, causes and specific goals. This will be done by focusing on the CIAM as the most radical – and in this respect revealing – association of modernist architects.

From around 1850 onwards international organisations mushroomed in basically all fields of science and social life.²¹ The First World War served as a catalyst for a new, second phase of internationalism. The war fundamentally transformed existing modes of exchange, lent new intensity to some but also ended many established forms of exchange.²² In the interwar period the older, ‘classic’ form of internationalism gave way to new forms which generally comprised a problem-solving approach and aspects of social improvement, partially replacing the politically rather neutral exchange of knowledge which had been the norm before the First World War.²³ The League of Nations itself is a telling case in point, albeit not at first glance. Recent historiography has shifted its focus from the League’s lack of successful peacekeeping to its impressive achievements in intellectual exchange and technological standardisation by setting up expert committees such as the architectural one discussed above.²⁴ The League successfully coordinated infrastructure projects and cross-border technological networks as part of a new “technocratic internationalism”.²⁵

The League is thus also a prime example of the emergence of new, supranational loyalties and perhaps even identities with a “distinctive League voice”.²⁶ Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck and Jakob Vogel introduced the term “transnational spheres”, referring to a new kind of space that emerged in the 19th century and allowed for an intense exchange of people and ideas. This, they argue, by definition led to a new way of thinking about social problems as more than the sum of ideas developed in different places.²⁷ The crisis of internationalism caused by the overall post-war crisis and the impending rise of nationalism did not, however, necessarily translate into a decline in international associations. Yet, often the newly set up associations differed in their organisational pattern and their goals. Internationalism, as shown in the aforementioned examples from the fields of urbanism and housing, became more issue-driven and thus also politicised. Moreover, the interplay of national and international dynamics became increasingly intense. It was the

newly established nation states in East Central Europe, in particular, which pushed for international recognition. These two undercurrents, a more issue-driven internationalism and the opportunities newly established states saw for gaining legitimacy via international exchange, ushered in a powerful dynamic.²⁸

In the politically charged discussions of the 1930s it made organisational sense to refrain from aligning the League with programmes of a more radical kind. Many modernist architects believed, in contrast, that this exactly was the order of the day. Their disillusion with the League of Nations went beyond the disappointment with the new building in Geneva. After its establishment in 1928 the CIAM was briefly eager to collaborate – on its terms – with the League. Le Corbusier’s graphic “battle plan”, revealed during the CIAM’s initial convention in 1928, depicted the different agencies of the League as a natural ally of the pressure group of modernist architects that he envisaged the CIAM would become.²⁹ Yet, the relationship between CIAM and the League developed at best into one of love-hate and quickly thereafter into a case of neglect rather than disappointed affection. When the CAE was established the CIAM apparently ceased to be an option for the League – most probably because the CIAM was regarded as too outspokenly leftist.

The problematic relationship between the League and the CIAM thus poses the question of what kind of organisation the CIAM actually was. Some scholars have seen the CIAM as on a continuous line with the IFHTP and its goal to develop the promises of urbanism internationally.³⁰ Others have rather stressed the specificity of the CIAM and also the importance it ascribed to differentiating itself from existing organisations – a position also endorsed here.³¹ In order to understand what is specific and new about the CIAM it helps to take a closer look at its formative phase, as, in the words of Bruno Latour: “Group formations leave many more traces in their wake than already established connections, which, by definition, remain mute and invisible”.³² This will be done by asking why the Eastern groups of the CIAM came to play such a critical role and what the respective architects saw in the CIAM – and what the CIAM saw in this region. Before doing so, attention will shift to how architects in the East Central Europe, particularly in Poland, organised themselves following the deep rupture caused by the First World War.

Organising Architects in a New State

The dynamics of the change from organising a profession along its technical core in the 19th century to reaching out into society in the first half of the 20th century can be well studied in the Polish example. When Warsaw-based architect Tadeusz

Szanior attended the 7th International Congress of Architects, organised by the CPIA, in London in 1906, he did so as an unofficial delegate of Poland – irrespective of the fact that this country neither existed on the map nor within the sphere of international relations.³³ On his way back to Paris Szanior met the secretary general of the CPIA who apparently was considerably upset with this breaking up of the routine of an internationalism based on the acknowledged sovereignty of nation states.³⁴ Nevertheless, the CPIA's next congress, in Vienna in 1908, was attended by more than 30 Polish architects who formed the *Delegacja Architektów Polskich utworzona w 1908 roku po Międzynarodowym Kongresie Architektów w Wiedniu* (Delegation of Polish Architects created in 1908 after the International Congress of Architects in Vienna). It was not until the 1911 congress in Rome that an official representative of Poland attended, seven years before the Polish state actually came into being.³⁵ While the problem of representing a non-existent country is instructive for the logic of international representation, and while this problem highlights the fact that architecture and national representation were for this very reason intrinsically intertwined in Poland until 1918, only the post-First World War situation brought about a completely new departure.

Even before the First World War architects in Polish Russia had already begun forming the informal and small-sized *Koło Architektów* (Circle of Architects), linked with the general association of engineers, and concerned with regulating governing architectural competitions. The *Koło* was a rather traditional organisation, as reflected by its preferred architectural styles and its membership, which served to limit access to attractive commissions, particularly with regard to young architects. This characteristic remained in place in the circle's successor organisation, the *Powszechny Zjazd Architektów* (General Convention of Architects, PZA), established in 1919. The tasks and scope of the PZA were much wider than that of the *Koło* as the void left by the earlier respective German, Russian and Austrian organisations needed to be filled. Given that the first graduates of the Warsaw University of Technology (WUT) were generally far better qualified than the older generation, this impending conflict increasingly transformed into a conflict between those advocating a profession focusing on classic building tasks, and those young architects perceiving themselves as harbingers of a better social future in service of the newly established nation. What had initially been informal meetings of a small group of progressively minded architects, transformed into a breakaway group named the Association of Polish Architects, *Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich* (Association of Polish Architects, SAP) in 1926.³⁶

Bohdan Pniewski, who was already an established architect with a progressive though not radical profile at the time of the SAP's first meeting, remembered how the red cover of the minute book for the meeting reflected the SAP's social and political orientation. The then rising stars Szymon and Helena Syrkus, as well as Józef Szanajca and Bohdan Lachert, had indeed joined the SAP because of its reformist agenda.³⁷ The key demands of the SAP's programme were: first, a "social architecture" to meet the demands of the great mass of the population suffering from the drastic housing conditions. Second, urbanism and urban investment based on planning, and finally, third, fighting the opportunism of investors and arbitrariness of building administrations, accompanied by demands targeted at a more effective inner organisation of the architectural profession.

The SAP organisational committee not only positioned itself significantly to the left of the authoritarian Sanacja regime which began to rule Poland in 1926, but also comprised several members who had lost their official positions due to their political convictions. The organisation itself, however, represented numerous strands in the profession.³⁸ During the world economic crisis of the early 1930s, which hit Poland extremely hard, members of the SAP fought for public investment particularly to address the housing deficit.³⁹

The SAP's scope of activity overlapped with a number of noteworthy centres of activities of modernist architects in Poland. The architects engaged on a building programme of the the Warsaw Housing Co-operative WSM and the Social Insurance Institution ZUS. Moreover, the SAP comprised those urbanists who had advocated a planned urban economy from an early point.⁴⁰ In 1934 the strictly progressive orientation of the SAP organisational committee ended with its fusion with other professional organisations into the SARP. The SARP, also due to increasing political pressure, started to silence the progressivist strands which had initially been so typical of the SAP.⁴¹

The SAP reflected thus in manifold ways the specific conditions and challenges of East Central Europe described in the previous chapter. To a far greater degree than respective organisations in Western Europe, the SAP combined the mission of progressive architects with building the new nation state where the new state capital Warsaw provided a particular stage to implement broad and deep-cutting change. The state and architects had largely congruent interests. The new SARP organisation and its remodelled relationship with a more authoritarian state also showed, however, the limitations of this progressive deal. The SAP reflected an emancipating profession which was reaching out in ever new areas of social and economic life. Moreover, it answered international demand to represent Poland on

the stage of expanding and multiplying international organisations. In a review of modernist architecture and the activities of modernist architects in Poland of 1931 Dutch architectural critic Theo van Doesburg captured the SAP's "strictly nationalist" activity in "making propaganda for [...] modern architecture" internally and its functioning as a sounding board for these Polish achievements abroad.⁴²

The SAP and the SARP, as broadly oriented organisations, however, only reflected a small part of the dynamics of organising modernist architects in East Central Europe in the interwar years. Two largely new trends are telling cases in point, reflecting the departure of the professions towards new shores after 1918. As in the Netherlands and Germany, modernist architects became key players in the avant-garde movements mushrooming in East Central Europe after the First World War.⁴³ Further, following what was on the surface a very different logic, modernist architects were in the driver's seat in a number of new pressure groups, for example for housing reform, which reflected the profession reaching out into new domains of society. While the latter aspect will be treated at the end of this chapter, the former aspect will be central to the following chapter on the role of communication.

The SAP, however, was not the most radical of the organisations reflecting the rise of modernist architects. Szymon Syrkus was the founder and a key member of the influential Polish avant-garde group *BLOK*, which was established in 1924 and was a precursor of the group *Praesens*, which lasted from 1926 to 1930. *BLOK* built on early Constructivism in Poland, but being characterised by intense tensions between artists of more radical, constructivist convictions and those advocating a greater flexibility and leeway of artists. It came to an end in 1926. Some of the members joined the new group *Praesens*, whose founder Szymon Syrkus saw architecture as a key discipline of the new group's activity: "By way of experiment, the architectonic approach provides new opportunities, not only artistic as it might seem, but also social."⁴⁴

Praesens also took its drive from its *Weltanschauung*. The group's members shared leftist political convictions and many were members of the Socialist party, dovetailing with an emphasis on collective work.⁴⁵ Syrkus was one of the older members, whereas many others, such as Barbara Brukalska, Lachert and Szanajca, were born around 1900 and only in their mid-20s when *Praesens* took shape. The group was clearly also a generational project. Most of the group's members had been educated at the WUT and some, like Szanajca, still held teaching-posts there.

The Syrkus couple, Barbara and Stanisław Brukalski, Bohdan Lachert and Józef Szanajca focused on projects with a clear social impact.⁴⁶ Within only a few years this led to yet another organisational split. While the more artistically oriented mem-

bers of *Praesens* formed the group a.r. (*artyści rewolucyjni, awangarda rzeczywista*, that is revolutionary artists or real avant-garde) in 1929,⁴⁷ the modernist architects established a new group programmatically called *Praesens kolektyw*. The addition of 'kolektyw' underlined a new focus on architecture and stressed that the latter had to be conceived and realized collectively through teamwork. By 1930, *Praesens* had become much more geared to practical issues with the question of housing being a central concern.⁴⁸

Of *Praesens kolektyw*'s 14 members in 1933 a remarkable four were women, mirroring the comparatively much higher number of female architects in the younger echelons of architects in Poland in relation to Western countries. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the most important reason for this phenomenon was the complete transformation of the architectural profession. Yet, given that the caring professions tended to be those considered suitable for women at the time, this may also be viewed as a result of the relevance of the social dimension of architecture for the group.⁴⁹



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In this vein, while the thematic intersection between functionalist architects and constructivist artists had narrowed since the mid-1920s, architects like Syrkus, Szanajca, Lachert as well as the other architect members of *Praesens* looked increasingly towards other professions. The intersection between modernist architecture and similarly new fields such as statistics, sociology, and in particular urbanism, expanded quickly. This led to close co-operation with the Zespół ‘U’ (group ‘U’) of progressive planners.⁵⁰ ‘U’, which stood for ‘Urbanistyka’, intended to build a new, interdisciplinary group focused on architecture and technology, while departing from the more narrowly defined artistic roots of the *BLOK* period.⁵¹ The new group also intensified their collaboration with the housing co-operative WSM hoping to achieve practical realisations instead of the theoretical focus of avant-garde groups of the mid-1920s.⁵²

Architecture in a New Key - the CIAM

As part of the European avant-garde movements the significance of *BLOK* and *Praesens* did not just lay in their function as transmission belts of new ideas, concepts and, in part, also concrete knowledge. The groups’ establishment cannot be understood without viewing them as part of a Europe-wide movement of similar associations providing frameworks for international collaboration. Russian Constructivism formed a key stimulus for *BLOK* in particular, while in the second half of the 1920s the first examples of modern architecture in France, the Netherlands, and Germany became concrete points of inspiration and contention. Ernst May’s *Neues Frankfurt* and Hannes Meyer’s radical concepts proved that sweeping visions could be translated into concrete measures just as much as new experiments in collectivist housing in the pre-1932 Soviet Union did.

Thus, it was certainly not by chance that the active architects of *Praesens* concurred with the growing uneasiness with traditional international representations of progressivist architects. In fact, East Central European architects, and Polish architects in particular, played a key role in the CIAM, given that it was a radically new form of organising architects around issues. The CIAM was established in 1928 in direct reaction to what in the eyes of many modernists was a scandalous decision to adopt a conventional design for the Palace of the League of Nations. From the early 1930s onwards one can trace the propaganda activity of the CIAM in addressing this issue as well as attempts by the CIAM to influence the national delegates of the League accordingly.⁵³ Yet, the CIAM wanted much more than just attention to modernist designs. The organisation strove foremost to engender a new social

and political role for architects by way of introducing scientific methods into a domain perceived as unregulated and partially chaotic. For this reason, the CIAM determinedly claimed not to be a traditional kind of organisation. The CIAM saw itself as artistic-aesthetic avant-garde which at the same time tackled concrete social problems. Organising itself as a collective was a key concern and perceived by the CIAM's secretary general Sigfried Giedion as an efficient weapon against reactionary forces.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the goal of constituting an organisation beyond national reference frames, to which the architect Mart Stam aspired, remained unachievable. Cornelis van Eesteren, president of the CIAM from 1930 to 1947, constantly had to negotiate between the workings of the various national groups and the centrally fixed goals of the CIAM.

In important respects the CIAM was a typical organisation of the second wave of internationalism which followed the First World War. Belief in scientific methods and in the neutral power of scientific solutions loomed large in the CIAM.⁵⁵ The CIAM was partly set up to compete with the established professional organisations and never strove to represent architects as a whole. Yet, it was also the project of a generation of architects born between the mid-1880s and the turn of the century. This generation dominated the CIAM for over 30 years, almost until its dissolution in 1959. The leading CIAM architects – Walter Gropius, van Eesteren and Le Corbusier – were clear from the start that its specific form of collaboration was a unique feature in comparison with the established professional organisations. The CIAM focused on architects as “people of action”, while claiming, at the same time, to be in charge of universal solutions.⁵⁶

Sigfried Giedion, an engineer and art historian by training, was clearly aware that this first entailed reformulating societal problems in a new way. These problems then needed to be solved through comparisons between cities, prepared by the single CIAM groups organised by nation. This would guarantee a maximum effect with a rather limited commitment, particularly by using strategies of winning over the public.⁵⁷ The CIAM, not only as a group and in its inner workings but also in its demands, saw itself as avant-garde: a “prefiguration of a society in which art and life were integrated”.⁵⁸

Lofty as such a postulate was it left considerable scope for a variety of responses. Indeed, at its founding meeting in Swiss La Sarraz, the CIAM issued two declarations, reflecting, as per later nomenclature, the approach of a ‘Romanic’ and ‘Germanic’ faction.⁵⁹ This division mirrored the conflict over the precise role of architects in modern society, though both factions agreed upon the fact that this role needed to extend beyond the established confines of the profession.⁶⁰ While the

so-called Romanic camp had a keen interest in the aesthetics of the new architecture and partially concurred with Le Corbusier's vision of large-scale capitalism as the dedicated sponsor of modernist architecture, the so-called Germanic group instead advocated socialist concepts, based on scientific and economic insights which were dominant in the German, Dutch and Swiss groups, but also in most groups in East Central Europe.⁶¹

The question of how exactly to define political engagement remained controversial and challenged the organisation throughout its existence. Although contemporaries did not doubt that the CIAM as a whole had strong leftist leanings, this did not mean that it was not heavily elitist in many ways. Commitment to collectivist housing and radical urbanist measures went hand-in-hand with technocratic self-empowerment on a national scale while most CIAM members agreed that the solutions they proposed were universally valid.⁶²

Significantly, the CIAM – as the name suggests – manifested itself predominately via its congresses, of which five were held before the Second World War. However, partly due to its almost missionary character, links between these congresses not only remained strong but also grew both in scope and in intensity. Moreover, the larger the congresses became and the more far-reaching goals the CIAM set, the more time was spent on preparations and numerous smaller, preparatory meetings. In order to stay ahead of the challenges a kind of executive committee, *Comité International pour la Réalisation du Problème Architectural Contemporain* (CIRPAC), was formed.

Given that already existing international organisations like the CPIA represented architects as a profession and others addressed the themes of housing and urbanism, the organisational form of the CIAM became one of its distinctive characteristics. Giedion, secretary general of the CIAM, who was a gifted networker and visionary agenda-setter, expressed the organisation's view of itself this way: "These are congresses which rest on collaboration, not congresses in which individuals only report from their specific domains as in the 19th century."⁶³ Cornelis van Eesteren, the CIAM's second president and another influential player, described the specific character he wanted the CIAM to acquire as: "work first, talk later".⁶⁴

Giedion excelled in what became a hallmark of the whole CIAM organisation, namely the reflected and emphatic departure from established, seemingly obsolete architecture and urbanism.⁶⁵ In order to maintain the organisation's inner cohesion it was necessary to constantly distance oneself from the allegedly all-surrounding reactionary spirit – in the traditional associations of architects, the League of Nations, national governments or organisational committees of world exhibitions. The

highly divergent notions of how to develop the CIAM made this negative cement necessary.

Thus, the five pre-Second World War CIAM congresses did not only, and probably not even in the first place, serve to exchange knowledge or best practice. These events rather adopted and established themes by appealing to the imaginative and associative potential of modernist architecture and its optimistically assessed opportunities. The CIAM constantly had to define its mission in order to maintain its group cohesion whilst also questioning who belonged to the CIAM as a means of defining its profile. In Giedion's opinion it was only through strict co-optation that the "movement could gain a direction".⁶⁶ All this was reflected in the CIAM's statutes: paragraph 2 held that the purpose of the association was "a) to establish the demands of modern architecture, b) to represent the demands of modern architecture, c) to spread the idea of modern architecture to technical, economic and social circles, d) to make sure that building tasks could be solved in the modern sense".⁶⁷

Stressing the group dynamics of the CIAM does not imply that the problems CIAM addressed did not exist or were irrelevant. Yet, rather than filling a broadly accepted 'evident' gap, the CIAM formulated the problems it then promised and claimed to be able to solve. The notion of the 'social' in architecture played a central role here. Kees Somer has stressed that while the CIAM architects perceived themselves to be avant-garde, the organisation's goals were in many respects part of a much broader movement aiming at the internationalisation of architecture, housing reform and a new urbanism.⁶⁸ The CIAM tried to conquer the commanding heights of the growing movement for social reform via planning. The Dutch architect Berlage had insisted, in a programmatic lecture on the founding congress of the CIAM – and with a "stalwart seriousness", as Giedion remembered – that architecture was "the only social art".⁶⁹ While Berlage hinted in the first place at the interaction of architects and society, the social dimension of architecture was a key concern for the great majority of the CIAM architects. Therefore, the CIAM did not just want to prepare the ground for new architectural solutions. At least its more ambitious members like Le Corbusier, also strove for a new place of experts in general and architects in particular *vis-à-vis* politics.⁷⁰

Self-empowerment - the CIAM and its Polish Group

Thus the CIAM reflected the new architects' struggle over their place in society. Le Corbusier envisaged architects as capitalist experts of grand designs while the more leftist members of CIAM saw the architect as a transformative expert, bring-

ing about new forms of collective society.⁷¹ These divisions erupted in the so-called Mundaneum affair. The *Mundaneum* was a grand-scale urban plan to house Paul Otlet's organisation of the same name in Geneva. Otlet had established an institute to gather and classify all available knowledge. Otlet envisaged an improved League, incorporating all relevant players in the fields of science and culture, which could bring about real social improvement on a global scale. Otlet had commissioned Le Corbusier as this project was not only symbolically but also content-wise highly topical for modernist architects. This commission posed, even more so than the predominantly aesthetic struggle over the Palace of the League of Nations had done, the question of what modernist architecture should be able to achieve and how architecture could change society and how far it should reach out. The latter explains why the *Mundaneum* came to be seen as a matter of principle by leading figures in the modernist movement. Karel Teige, along the lines of his radical convictions outlined in the previous chapter, fiercely accused Le Corbusier of taking a bourgeois stance and of a lack of revolutionary spirit. Le Corbusier was not inclined to plead guilty in terms of political nonchalance. In his response he stressed that he was writing "on the way to Moscow" and thereby highlighting his bonds with the Soviet Union, and explained his commitment to a political mission.⁷²

Indeed, the positions of the two foremost intellectuals of architecture were less pronounced than it may seem, but they still highlight a definitive problem: how neutral should experts be? It is not too far-fetched to also see an East-West cleavage at play in this debate which found its way into the textbooks of the history of architecture.⁷³ Was it not, given the political developments around 1930, necessary to position oneself? And were not the architects in East Central Europe, just like Teige in Czechoslovakia, closely involved with the developments in the Soviet-Union and predestined to register the relevance of this shift? And was not the question of how to solve the housing problem – that is foremost through new technologies or rather by deep cuts in the property structure and by replacing the focus on the individual by a focus on collective forms – far more pressing in Central and Eastern Europe? Additionally, although Teige entertained a troubled relationship with the CIAM which he felt was too bourgeois an organisation, the Mundaneum affair shows how important both the CIAM and Le Corbusier as points of reference and fora were to him.

This was also true for the Polish modernists. The Polish architects Szymon Syrkus and Józef Szanajca appeared on the CIAM's radar very early on when they entered the competition to design the League of Nations' headquarters.⁷⁴ Their staunchly modernist designs clearly marked the two as kindred spirits. Syrkus, in

response, expressed the strong interest “of Poland” at CIAM actions and offered to help organise them.⁷⁵ Yet, the identification of Syrkus, Szanajca, and a number of other Polish architect members of *Praesens* with the CIAM went much further. The identity of interests and convictions rested on three columns. First, Syrkus and his brothers and sisters in spirit had shown their commitment to the modernist design language and their ability to use it originally and in a state-of-the-art way. Second, they wholeheartedly embraced the modernist architects’ claim to shape society. Syrkus’ contribution to the Machine-age exhibition in New York in 1927, *Architecture opens up Volume*, had gained him particular international acclaim as a voice in the discourse on what this new and better society shaped by architects should look like.⁷⁶ Thirdly, Syrkus and the other Polish architects who joined CIAM had through *Praesens* gained concrete experiences in the collective method of working, which the CIAM held in such high esteem and regarded as the prerequisite to any substantial solution in its vision of urbanism and building.⁷⁷

Giedion was impressed by the work of *Praesens* and the journal of the same name.⁷⁸ Syrkus, was able to draw on the *Praesens* group to form the Polish CIAM group and declared that the group put itself on the disposal of the CIAM.⁷⁹ Apart from minor changes the group remained intact up to the outbreak of the Second World War. The Polish CIRPAC delegates were Syrkus (member of the initial CIRPAC) and Szanajca (replaced in 1933 by Piotrowski), albeit Syrkus exerted by far the strongest influence. Syrkus delivered several reports to the CIRPAC and the CIAM and held different positions in the CIAM hierarchy, for example heading the CIAM’s committee on regional planning from 1936 onwards.⁸⁰ Syrkus was one of three members proposed when the CIAM planned to install a core group in order to improve the organisation’s effectiveness.⁸¹ This is particularly remarkable as the CIAM’s purpose was not least to acknowledge hierarchies within the modern movement.

The Brukalski couple also played a significant role in the organisation through a number of contributions to the CIAM congresses. Stanisław Brukalski also took part in the organization-committee and, together with Alfred Roth, he headed a commission looking for opportunities to interest ‘friends’ in the CIAM.⁸² Helena Syrkus – vice-president of the CIAM after the war – served as interpreter, translator, keeper of the minutes and support for Giedion on several occasions.⁸³ During the first thematic CIAM congress, held in Frankfurt in 1929 and focussing on the ‘minimum dwelling’ (CIAM II), Polish contributions from co-operative housing organisations served as examples, as well as at the CIAM III congress in Brussels in the following year.⁸⁴ Warsaw’s immense need for social housing and urban improve-

ment meant that there was substantive intersection between the problems modernist Polish architects were concerned with and the CIAM agenda.⁸⁵

The Polish group belonged to the most active national groups within the CIAM. Giedion, for example, confronted the Czechoslovakian architect and CIAM member Bohuslav Fuchs with the question of why his group was so passive, while “a country like Poland is so exceptionally active”.⁸⁶ Technical questions with social dimensions, such as the minimum-dwelling issue, allowed Syrkus to use the special problems he was dealing with in the Polish context to particularly enhance his international standing.⁸⁷ For this purpose, Syrkus also managed to successfully include Polish experts on housing and co-operatives, although not architects themselves, in the CIAM organisation. The CIAM offered a politically open concept, characterised by a radical approach toward planning, albeit with strong leftist leanings. Moreover, the CIAM provided state-of-the-art knowledge in urban planning and social housing – two areas critical to the Polish situation. In directly connecting to the international discussion, the Polish planning-experts could realize – at least on paper – a “great leap into the future”.⁸⁸ Adding to this, international solutions were comparatively more prestigious in Poland than in the West. The clout of internationalism was often used to push through one’s own agenda at home.⁸⁹ In the context of the Polish CIAM group this was true both for the “international” and for the “modern” label. Polish contributors to the CIAM could profit from both the proximity to internationally renowned experts and from the aspiration of the Polish state for international recognition through the ostensibly modern solutions analysed in chapter 1.

Of course, structural reasons explain only so much and the activity of the Polish group owed a lot to the idealistic drive of the Syrkus couple. Syrkus sensed the opportunities offered on the international stage very clearly when he declared: “We – the members of CIAM – and friends are part of the great international working community and we represent the ideas of CIAM in Poland. We cannot and do not want to be seen as international representatives of the whole Polish body of architects.”⁹⁰ Syrkus’ strategy involved presenting his new ideas against the backdrop of international examples, which he grasped better than most of his colleagues.⁹¹

Indeed, Poland had a lot to offer to the CIAM, providing the potential of political leverage the organisation so badly needed. Warsaw, at least so Syrkus claimed, could become a laboratory where the ideas of the functional city could be tested on a grand scale. Yet finding solutions to social problems also proved a persuasive argument for channeling the international discussion back towards local practice and vice versa.⁹² What comes to the fore in the discussion of specific housing projects

in Warsaw at the CIAM congresses is that the CIAM was not only an organisation that promoted the exchange of knowledge, but also conferred reputation and appreciation on its members. Local problems could be advanced as internationally recognised case studies. International recognition, on the other hand, could be channelled back into the local struggle for chances to implement one's concepts and ideas.⁹³ Of course, the rationalisation of housing was also an important topic in the IHFTP, but the latter organisation, unlike the CIAM, shied away from politicising this topic.⁹⁴ Moreover, the CIAM advocated much more radical visions of industrialised building.

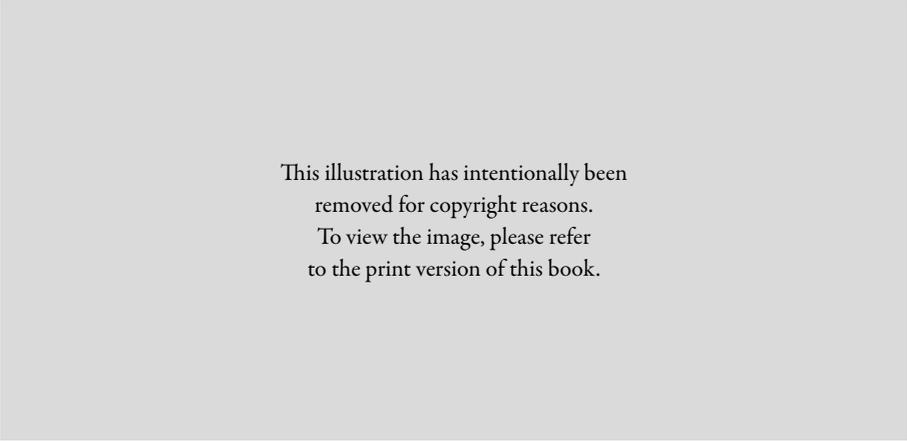
CIAM-Universalism or Eastern Fast-track? The CIAM-Ost

Tellingly, the League of Nations' *Committee of Architectural Experts* (CAE) eventually only comprised established architects from Western Europe. In this the CAE contrasted starkly with the CIAM, and this was not by chance. As explained above, the CIAM as an organisation focused on the social impact of architecture and offered enormous opportunities for newcomers by selecting its members in a new way. However, the CIAM looked eastwards with high expectations, always seeking cases which could prove its ambitious goals were feasible and productive. The notion of an East Central European space of crisis, awaiting sweeping CIAM solutions, however, had obvious limits. If the problems in the region were so specific this gave rise to the question of whether universal CIAM solutions could really be put in place.

Not only had the general political climate in Europe drastically worsened by the second half of the 1930s but the belief in the universal nature of the discourse on architecture and urbanism also vanished. Revisiting earlier existing divisions within the CIAM, between those who wanted to proceed with sweeping urban solutions which entailed both social change and a more moderate variant focussing on aesthetics and change within a capitalist system, a group of CIAM members from the East Central European countries pressed ahead with proposals for a more ambitious regional association within the CIAM. This initiative forms a revealing expression of how the described modes of exchange acquired, or even had right from the start, a geographic dimension. For the states established after the First World War the new borders also formed new contact zones in need of regulation.⁹⁵

The Czechoslovakian architect František Kalivoda and Hungarian architect Farakas Molnár took up the CIAM discussion on regional planning with a view to the CIAM's 1937 congress in Paris as a point of departure for proposing increased collaboration with the "Balkan" countries plus Poland.⁹⁶ Originally Molnár suggested

that all the countries which bordered the Danube should form a joint project entitled: “the country on a world-wide scale”, a planned exhibition on each country within the context of the global economy. The notion of top-down planning in large regional frameworks remained central for the group, quickly branded CIAM-Ost, including Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece, Austria and Romania.⁹⁷



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26. Group picture CIAM-Ost meeting at Budapest. Seated: S. Giedion, H. and S. Syrkus

The CIAM-Ost held three meetings. The first was in Budapest from 29 January until 1 February 1937; a second meeting from 29 April until 5 May in Czech Brno and Zlín, the home of the famous *Bat'a*-works and its extensive functionalist architecture; and finally, already overshadowed by the high-tide of authoritarianism in East Central Europe, on Mykonos, Greece, on 5 and 6 June 1938.⁹⁸ The originally envisaged triangle of Vienna-Budapest-Bratislava no longer proved realistic as a place to convene in the light of the political developments in Central Europe. Despite the sparseness of written records for the CIAM-Ost, those that exist still give a clear picture of what drove the architects who met within the group. In line with the programme of the CIAM, it departed from the idea that town-planning without regional planning made no sense.⁹⁹ The Budapest meeting based its actions on the assumption that the relevant factors for modernist architects in Western Europe did not apply in the rest of the world. As conditions for architects across the region of East Central Europe were broadly similar, these architects argued, cooperation was

the order of the day.¹⁰⁰ With a view to the CIAM's Paris congress later that year the groups strove to prepare this congress but made particular advancements in developing regional and national planning.¹⁰¹ The groups used CIAM categories – and would likely not have come together had the CIAM framework not existed. The CIAM's eastern groups, as Ernest Weissmann from Yugoslavia stressed, were particularly in need of CIAM guidance.¹⁰² But they departed from the more narrowly defined CIAM programme. The architects assembled in the CIAM-Ost particularly stressed the need to develop the countryside – and the chance to do so via new scientific institutes to be founded by the respective governments.

Based on this, the CIAM-Ost architects identified two themes for which they saw the need for a dual-speed Europe where the East was in the leading position. These themes were housing and regional planning. The first had been a key issue within the CIAM from its beginnings, while the second became a major area of interest in the second half of the 1930s. The architects assembled within the CIAM-Ost framework, however, wanted to make faster advances in both areas: housing solutions, the so-called minimum dwelling, were to be even more radical than those of the modernist CIAM-designs. This basically meant more public, communal spaces, such as baths and kitchens, at the expense of private space. Such solutions were seen as the only valid answer to the region's severe housing crisis and very limited economic means. Moreover, two reasons specific to the region lay behind the urge for regional planning. The post-1918 borders cut through older connections from the imperial context, and the discrepancy between town and countryside was particularly pronounced in the region. The underdeveloped countryside was to leapfrog up to a modern level by the application of a scientific approach. Social infrastructure would be provided by a grid of smaller central towns.¹⁰³

The CIAM-Ost could easily be viewed as proof that the CIAM methods were hardly as universally applicable as the CIAM luminaries had proclaimed – as Monika Platzer argued.¹⁰⁴ Yet, the CIAM-Ost could also be interpreted as an illustration of the particular opportunities that interwar internationalism, as well as CIAM-universalism, offered to experts from a peripheral region. The CIAM was essential both in terms of connecting people and providing concepts which structured an exchange over questions commonly deemed important. Shortly after the inception of the CIAM-Ost, Hungarian Architect Béla Halmos wrote to Molnár: “When I started to think of our task, I realized how vital and organic an idea it was to form a separate Central-European group within the CIAM. In this grouping the geographic unity of the region which does not stop at the borders, is well reflected.”¹⁰⁵

Nevertheless, the CIAM-Ost cannot be seen as an outright success story. Firstly, closer scrutiny of affairs in Poland and Hungary highlight the manifold obstacles modernist architects in these countries had to contend with in the face of growing right-wing authoritarianism.¹⁰⁶ For architects it became increasingly difficult to distance themselves from political appropriation. The fear of clashing over political issues was strong even before the CIAM-Ost's first meeting. Molnár's letter to Giedion, which urged the latter to come to Budapest, stressed that he needed Giedion, and architects Syrkus and Italian Piero Bottoni "from remote countries", for the public image of the CIAM-Ost. Molnár was afraid that otherwise the new organisation would be seen as part of the Little Entente System. The latter had been formalised since 1933 with a view to strengthening economic co-operation between the members of the formerly predominantly military alliance and in 1937 was reconsidering its position towards Hungary.¹⁰⁷

Additionally, personal animosities within the Hungarian group presented a constant threat to the whole undertaking.¹⁰⁸ The group's cohesion very much depended on CIAM action being taken centrally, namely in Zurich.¹⁰⁹ The Czechoslovakian case reveals even more clearly the heavy clashes both within the group and between the regional CIAM chapter and the CIAM organisation despite the manifold congruencies of interest. The problems of the Czech group run like a red thread through the correspondence of Gropius and Giedion with the CIAM members from East Central Europe and are described as a source of constant frustration. While many other groups similarly did not live up to the expectations of the CIAM headquarters in Zurich in terms of activity, or simply did not pay their dues, the Czechoslovakian group was a specific case.¹¹⁰ In Czechoslovakia, with the modernist hotspots of Prague, Brno and Zlín in particular, modern architects had shaped exemplary cities in a way rarely found in the rest of Europe. The country's industrial potential and progressive political structure made it a logical case for the CIAM, the more so once Germany left the modernist scene in 1933. Moreover, as the respective report from Molnár on the CIAM-Ost's second gathering stressed, there was a scientific research institute on regional planning in Zlín – as part of the Baťa works. It was believed that institutes built along this example could form an engine to power the transformation of the countryside.¹¹¹

The immense achievements in Brno, Prague and Zlín even stunned Le Corbusier. In turn, this made it far less obvious that the Czechoslovakian group would accept leadership by the central CIAM organisation. While personal anomalies haunted the working of the group in the Bohemian lands, the radical political stance of Karel Teige and some of his brothers in arms was hard for Zurich to take.¹¹² Along

the fault-lines which emerged in the Mundaneum debate, the heavily leftist leanings of Teige and at least parts of the Czechoslovakian group clashed with the neutral political stance taken in Zurich.¹¹³ When scepticism and fear of aligning the CIAM too closely with radical political strands was added to the mix, some CIAM members saw the organisation's balance endangered. Most French and Italian architects within the CIAM viewed the whole CIAM-Ost project as deriving from the view of architecture as a discipline intent on improving social conditions rather than being predominantly concerned with aesthetics.¹¹⁴ The refusal of the CIAM's 'Romanic' faction to come to Budapest also points to deeper cleavages within the CIAM over which course to take.

This cleavage also hints at the CIAM-Ost as a potential expression of asymmetries inherent in the CIAM organisation. In this reading joining the new organisation would be a move towards the sidelines rather than promoting oneself. Indeed, Sigfried Giedion was a sceptical follower of the new branch of the CIAM. Giedion complained about a chaotic situation of rivalry and non-western standards.¹¹⁵ Further, Fred Forbát, a CIAM member from the region, stressed the obstacles of bringing together groups which remained very diverse outside the established organisation. It was also for this reason that he was grateful for the role Giedion – whom he generally rather disliked – had played as a mediator in Budapest.¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, despite all these aspects, the CIAM-Ost had substantial relevance – not only as a symptom of the general dynamics and tensions within the CIAM, but also because the CIAM-Ost triggered a new dynamic. The Czechoslovakian group was revived, in particular due to the activity of Kalivoda. As he stated himself, the CIAM-Ost allowed him to re-engage in CIAM activity.¹¹⁷ The CIAM-Ost's secretariat in Budapest, run by Molnár, reflects the group's institutionalisation and its becoming a focal point for different initiatives in the region with reference to the CIAM framework. The first two gatherings of the CIAM-Ost prompted significant press coverage, mirroring the clout of international organisations in general and the CIAM specifically in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.¹¹⁸ Yet, the significance of CIAM-Ost is to be found in two particular respects:

First, while the 'classic' CIAM congresses focused on comparing cases which were often, in fact, quite distinct, the CIAM-Ost established a framework of concrete collaboration, in particular in regional planning across national borders. The fact that the rising political tensions during the CIAM-Ost's existence prevented further elaboration does not diminish the fact that the CIAM came very close to 'materialising' as a concrete planning institution. The first examples of scientific institutes meant to develop the countryside came into being and linked up with gov-

ernment institutions. *Landesplanung*, rural planning through the decentralisation of industry, as Molnár reported to Gropius, was apparently such a highly attractive prospect for the Hungarian government that Molnár's leftist past was neglected.¹¹⁹ Molnár's colleague Virgil Bierbauer envisioned 350 urban centres to structure the Hungarian countryside and thus re-organise the entire nation's society.¹²⁰

Second, the immense stress put on planning and large-scale housing schemes should draw our attention to the continuities beyond 1945. These continuities, regularly obscured by the extreme disruptions of the Second World War, the holocaust and the radically new political order which emerged after 1945, will be treated in chapter 6. It should be noted here, however, that the way in which problems were framed and solutions proposed points beyond the 1930s. Moreover, the emergence of the CIAM-Ost raises the question of what happened to the social mobilisation of architects, in itself a basic reason for setting up the CIAM-Ost.¹²¹

Realizers - the WSM as Interface

When compared with the deep socio-political change incurred by the establishment of state socialism after 1945 the CIAM and CIAM-Ost certainly never lived-up to their own high-flying goals concerning a direct impact on politics and society. This should not lead us, however, to downplay their significance. The organisation's influence was, in many respects, actually felt in the long term and by means of a trickle-down effect of their ideas. Further, both organisations, albeit via organisations in the member countries, directly interacted with administrations and other decision makers on the ground. Werner Moser, first president of the CIAM, saw these groups as "the only means to exert influence on the [national, M.K.] administrations".¹²² This influence ushered in remarkable policy changes in Sweden, in particular, which turned housing and research on housing into central themes of legislation.¹²³ But, of course, legislation was not enough to provide architects with new building opportunities and anyway, in order to change legislation architects needed to influence the political machine.

Using a revealing term, Szymon Syrkus spoke of "Realisatoren", 'realizers' and 'enablers', who, as intermediary figures, helped to put the modernist architects' visions into practice.¹²⁴ The backgrounds of these men and women reflect the immensely widened contact zone between architecture, society and politics. Moreover, the critical role of 'realizers' mirrors the development explained in chapter 1 of a state interfering in society in a way unheard of in the 19th century. Further, the term reflects the emergence of new sponsors for modernist architects.

Yet, the problem of realizers, of interlocutors between architects and the spheres they wanted to reach out to was no less present in or pressing for the CIAM – as neatly expressed in the title of Le Corbusier’s *Haut Comité pour l’Extension de l’Architecture à l’Economie et au Sociologique*. In fact, this question was central to the organisation from the very beginning. For Le Corbusier, the very rationale of the CIAM was to facilitate contact with decision makers. In its early phase the CIAM had set up a committee with CIAM sponsors, including Jean Michelin, Gavriel Voisin, and Robert Bosch, but significantly also the Czechoslovakian minister of foreign affairs Edvard Beneš.¹²⁵

That those who actually built CIAM were also masters of skills and qualities not necessarily associated with architects (and those architects organised in the ‘classic’ associations) is part of the wider picture. This was true for Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius, both organisers of sorts who from the beginning of their careers excelled in gaining support and attention from political and economic decision makers. It was even truer for Cornelis van Eesteren and Sigfried Giedion, arguably the most influential players in the CIAM.¹²⁶

Sigfried Giedion was the mastermind behind the organisation who conceived its *raison d’être* but who also set up the CIAM’s secretariat in Zurich and tied the divergent national groups to the CIAM’s centre. Giedion, who was not an architect by training, functioned as a kind of PR-officer for the CIAM. He coined the catch-phrases which structured and spread the CIAM themes and he made sure that this message reached the media in the different countries. Giedion developed the organisation’s profile based on its distinction from other, existing bodies. Giedion also conceived marketing strategies and strategies of disseminating the CIAM’s ideology. In his eyes, the CIAM’s explicit desire for power was what made the organisation unique.¹²⁷ Gropius tellingly replied to critical remarks by Fred Forbát by stating that the CIAM needed Giedion as he was “ein Kopf” and that above all things he was in charge of the initiative so crucial for the CIAM.¹²⁸

As far as Syrkus’ realizers were concerned van Eesteren was even more pertinent. By dint of his early architectural achievements van Eesteren had gained a position as head of Amsterdam’s urban development administration in 1929. His insistence on combining far-reaching ambitions with a solid basis via comparing different European cities, enabled van Eesteren to provide the data so essential for the otherwise notoriously lofty CIAM discourse.¹²⁹ Van Eesteren was able to draw on the rich statistical material provided by his administration in Amsterdam, Europe’s leading city in terms of urbanism.

Thinking in a collective manner was much more indispensable to van Eesteren than it was to Le Corbusier, and was also a guiding principle for his urbanist designs. With this principle in mind van Eesteren promoted collaboration between the CIAM architects and experts from all walks of life. This was particularly intended to acquire the statistical knowledge necessary for the CIAM's visions in housing and urbanism.¹³⁰ By using the CIAM to transfer critical knowledge van Eesteren also sought to serve the purpose of distinguishing the CIAM from other, more traditional associations of architecture. Van Eesteren believed that the CIAM had to do this by organising "working congresses" instead of other forms of congresses more oriented towards representation or a more superficial demonstration of best practices.¹³¹ This could only be achieved if experts and specialists joined in with the discussion and if the CIAM kept close ties with those in the fields of urbanism and housing who were able to put their visions into practice.

When Syrkus referred to *Realisatoren* he had concrete examples in mind, such as Teodor Toeplitz and Stanisław Tołwiński, his collaborators from Warsaw. Both men provided Syrkus with the means to build and establish links with the sphere of politics. Tellingly, Toeplitz, the director of the WSM, and Stanisław Tołwiński, the expert of social housing, were among the very few non-architects to participate in the CIAM.¹³² This reflected the CIAM's interest in the social dimension of building. But their engagement also shows how the Polish CIAM group managed to turn an unfavourable situation into an asset. The group successfully presented Warsaw as a central place of urbanist discourse, where the social aspects of housing were taken into account – such as when Tołwiński presented the adoption of the minimum-dwelling concept as a part of a collective organism at the Brussels CIAM III congress in 1930.¹³³ At the same time this link highlights the appeal of the CIAM to the heads of the WSM.

Toeplitz, born in 1875, had grown up within the imperial framework described in chapter 1. He studied at the Technical University in Charlottenburg, Berlin, and travelled extensively in Europe. Toeplitz had already held various positions within the Warsaw administration during the First World War and, as a long-time member of the Polish socialist party, had the leftist credentials shared by most members of *Praesens*. Toeplitz and Tołwiński conceived and repackaged the problem of housing in a new, 'modern', way. Toeplitz was instrumental in the establishment of the *Związek Miast Polskich* (Federation of Polish Towns) and the *Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich* (Association of Polish Town Planners, TUP), a member-organisation of the IFHTP since 1925, and the *Towarzystwo Reformy Mieszkaniowej* (Association for Housing Reform, TRM) set up in 1928. Toeplitz was extremely well-con-

nected internationally, for example in his role as vice president of the IVW.¹³⁴ He not only had strong ties to all the influential players in the housing reform movement in Poland but also abroad. Toeplitz also had a keen eye for the ‘propaganda’ dimension of his mission, organising numerous exhibitions and lectures on the housing question. In 1937 he was co-organiser of the first Polish housing congress, in which he brought together the WSM and TRM, both promoting the concept of the basic living space. Toeplitz was also the instigator behind the newly-founded journals *DOM*, an acronym for *Dom, Osiedle, Mieszkanie* (House, housing estate, apartment, DOM) and *Organizacja Gospodarstwa Domowego* (Organisation for Domestic Economy, OGD). The declaration of La Sarraz was presented in Poland for the first time in his house.¹³⁵

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27. WSM exhibition on the minimum dwelling

Tołwiński, born in 1895 and thus almost one generation younger than Toeplitz, had an equally leftist background and was also a member of the socialist party and of several organisations within the co-operative movement, including the *Związek Robotniczych Stowarzyszeń Spółdzielczych* (Federation of Workers’ Cooperatives, ZRSS).¹³⁶ He also played an important role in the Association for Workers’ Settlements TOR and the *Towarzystwo Uniwersytetu Robotniczego* (Association for Workers’ University, TUR) – all of which were intermediary organisations which formed the framework of the cross-disciplinary field of housing and connected with the WSM.

The WSM itself was founded in 1921 on the initiative of the Polish Socialist Party and in the strong tradition of the Polish co-operative movement.¹³⁷ While co-operatives often functioned as an antidote to socialist claims for emancipation, the WSM was in fact part of the latter. Still, the common interest in easing the appalling housing situation in Warsaw meant that the WSM operated, at least until the second half of the 1930s, with considerable success even in Sanacja-Poland.

As president and chief organiser of the WSM and the *Stoleczne Przedsiębiorstwo Budowlane* (Building Operation of the Capital City, SPB) Toeplitz and Tołwiński oversaw the physical process of awarding building commissions and as chief figures of the housing reform movement they were in close touch with the relevant political decision makers at the national level and in Warsaw. Of significance to both the *Praesens* group and the nascent CIAM was that these two were able to provide statistics and content in surveys.¹³⁸ They had networks which included reform-minded political circles and contacts with financiers.¹³⁹ The goals and range of action of this organisation was certainly not fully congruent with the ideas of *Praesens* and the CIAM. However, there was substantial overlap, in particular with regard to the shared assumption that deep social problems could be cured by providing better housing and urban solutions.

For Syrkus, collaborating with Toeplitz and Tołwiński was thus not just about the trivial fact that someone had to provide the funds and political clout for large-scale housing schemes. He made the point that in the specific Polish and Warsaw environment these men could open windows of opportunity unavailable elsewhere. Moreover, Syrkus understood and argued early on that architecture turned into teamwork and its success was dependent on how far architects succeeded in bringing together and collaborating with the state-of-the-art specialists in the field.

From the late 1920s onwards the WSM provided the *Praesens* architects with the opportunity to build and to experiment with new solutions.¹⁴⁰ The WSM commissioned architects who combined social engagement with socialist ideas and enthusiasm for functionalist architecture. Most of them belonged to the *Praesens* group: along with the Syrkus and Brukalski couples and the architectural partners Bohdan Lachert and Józef Szanajca, there were also the town planner Jan Chmielewski and the young *Praesens* members Roman Pietrowski and Zygmunt Skibniewski. In Żoliborz in Warsaw's northern outskirts these architects erected a model estate, which in many respects set the tone for later projects. Of these the most noteworthy is the workers' estate in Rakowiec, the western district of Warsaw, planned by Szymon Syrkus and Helena Syrkus. These model projects, built between 1926 and 1939, were also used to test ideas discussed at the CIAM congresses.¹⁴¹ The Brukalski couple,

for example, integrated two experimental Frankfurt laboratory kitchens into their design.¹⁴² The WSM ambitions and estates far exceeded providing economic housing. Its social dimension comes to the fore in the institution of the *Dom Społeczny*, a community house combining different services and run by the WSM tenants' self-help organisation called, significantly, *Szklane Domy* – as in the example from Żeromski's novel with which this book opened. The WSM estates integrated numerous reformist institutions in its housing complexes.¹⁴³

After the First World War there was a shortage of around 60,000 flats in Warsaw and, according to official statistics, 5 persons tended to share a living space which averaged about 22 square meters. Given the lack of significant private initiative to build economic housing the new state tried to fill the void via the *Państwowy Fundusz Mieszkaniowy* (National Housing Fund, PFM). Established in 1919, the PFM provided credit preferentially to housing co-operatives. A Committee for the Expansion of Warsaw was responsible for handing out the credits. As the WSM lamented however, the impact was limited and the co-operative therefore proposed the establishment of a Social Housing Enterprise, which emerged in the second half of the 1920s. The new facility employed the engineer and social militant Otto Rode's novel methods of construction, based on German models where the intention was to standardise building.¹⁴⁴ The *Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego* (National Development Bank, BGK), established in 1924, also worked to remedy the lack in housing. The BGK funded housing directly and via a number of other intermediate institutions from the late 1920s onwards. Moreover, the *Banca Commerciale Italiana*, played an important role in mediating low-interest funds for the WSM.¹⁴⁵

Of course, what the WSM was finally able to realize remained in the realm of four digit numbers, falling short of the high-flying expectations – and of some of the achievements of social housing in the West. Despite this, the WSM's achievements were remarkable in comparison to other building efforts in Warsaw and Poland, and also in many Western countries, however. Moreover, the WSM provided a framework for modernist architects to interact with societal actors and politicians. In this framework and building on the facilities established within the WSM Szymon Syrkus was able to develop his programme for industrialised housing for 100,000 units per year. To be achieved within a 5-year plan and through massive state support, such a plan necessarily posed the question of nationalising private property and pointed to the general questions of regional planning dealt with in chapter 5.¹⁴⁶

Finally, the WSM offers a strikingly East Central European story in that it demonstrates how architects had to take – and took – the conditions on the ground into consideration even when situating themselves in an international and potential

universalist discourse. Syrkus concluded that for the time being adopting English or Dutch architecture was not the goal of Polish architecture but rather to look for the simplest and most inexpensive realisations. The essence of architecture, he believed, was ‘to underpin’ how the lives of individuals and their communities were organised.¹⁴⁷ Syrkus criticised Western European designs for their “hypertrophy of flats and anaemia of public utility buildings”.¹⁴⁸



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With the support of the WSM, Syrkus tried to reduce individual space to a minimum, compensating for this with the space designated for public utility as per his slogan: “living space as small as possible, and theatre as large as possible.”¹⁴⁹ The slogan was not only meant metaphorically. Syrkus’ theatre design for the WSM project in Żoliborz, resembling works by Gropius and Piscator, revealed his concept of how the user of this space could be both a contributor to it and its creator.



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The notion of the active stakeholder was quintessential for the WSM. In essence this meant that cheap and convenient dwellings could be achieved through mutual assistance and that “the cultural needs of its [the WSM’s, MK] members” could be met through solidarity.¹⁵⁰ Consequently the workers had to be interested in the question of housing. Even radical architects like the Syrkus couple followed the pragmatic propositions made by the theorists of the WSM. The whole building process was characterised by an intense interest in the everyday-life of the tenants. As Barbara Brukalska, a member of *Praesens* and responsible for one of the first constructions in Żoliborz, put it: “To build cities, not on the basis of abstract principles but thinking of the people, the thousands of simple men for whom we have to organise the space in which they live, work and rest and for whom we must conceive an architecture of such objectivity and stability that it can be defined as classical, and so solidly anchored to contemporary reality that it can at the same time be defined modern – this is the duty of our generation.” Brukalska argued that “new life-styles should be made possible, not imposed” and that the “unnecessary limitation of a prospective resident’s freedom [is] an abuse of the builder’s powers”.¹⁵¹

These arguments were grounded in personal conviction, but they also reflected a reality which did not tolerate social change pushed through by force, as was happening further east in the Soviet Union, and did not allow for providing the individual with all the desirable elements which were presumably available in the most advanced cities in the West, and thus had to stress communal aspects wherever possible. Important elements of the WSM projects had previously been developed in Western Europe.¹⁵² In particular, French cases of mutual help organisations served as an example. However, undertakings like the *Szklane Domy* were perceived, as Tołwiński put it, “[...] in a much broader sense as a neighbourhood-organisation”.¹⁵³ Two motives prevailed: first, the wish to provide more common facilities in order to allow the construction of smaller – inexpensive – flats and second, to provide a social structure for the highly scattered population entering Warsaw. Instead of enforcing a new order the WSM aimed at “creating the concrete shapes of [a] new deal”.¹⁵⁴

Both housing reformers and architects from the WSM scene contemplated how to achieve dwellers’ “moral and material well-being” and how to educate “new men in new housing estates”.¹⁵⁵ The model estate in Warsaw’s western quarter Rakowiec, built by the Syrkus couple, particularly aimed at showing how these goals could be achieved practically – and attained accordingly strong international attention.¹⁵⁶

The WSM was unique insofar as it built social and cultural facilities and dwellings simultaneously. The co-operative is also a significant case in point for how

continuous pressure turned the housing question into an accepted responsibility of the state.¹⁵⁷ The WSM thus shows what leverage the modernist *Praesens* architects enjoyed as well as their limitations. The picture remains incomplete, however, if the international dimension is not brought in again.

Conclusion

The collaboration between the group *Praesens*, which was in fact the Polish branch of the CIAM, and the WSM sheds light on the question formulated at the beginning of this chapter of how modernist architects began to organise architecture's new goals and how these goals were translated into practice. The interaction of the three organisations – the CIAM, *Praesens* and the WSM – illustrates the dynamics at play, in particular the interplay of internationalism and nationalism. Contrasting this example with more traditional ways of organising architects, the theme with which this chapter opened, highlights what was new about the CIAM and *Praesens*. The novelty lay in organising architects around social issues.

Was it then coincidental that the described dynamics were particularly expressed in the states of East Central Europe, as suggested by the example of the CIAM-Ost? This was, quite clearly, not the case, particularly when the structural conditions of the region described in chapter 1 and the specifics of the region's architectural profession described in chapter 2 are taken into account. One could even argue that the international networks around the CIAM and the politics of comparison they entailed had much more of an impact in Poland and East Central Europe than in the West. Teodor Toeplitz skilfully navigated between international negotiations, for example in the framework of the IFHTP or the CIAM, and national negotiations with administrations and other stakeholders by pointing to international benchmarks.

Politicising the housing question served as an effective strategy for placing architects at the centre of social and political discourses. In this context the issue-based CIAM was highly relevant and attractive. The inroads modernist architects could make into state administrations and other social organisations until the mid-1930s also depended on the international clout they could solicit. The intermediaries which Szymon Syrkus revealingly dubbed *Realisatoren* played an important part herein. The fact that the Polish Sanacja regime passed a law in 1928 which, in comparison with Western Europe, granted greater leeway for expropriations is a telling case in point for the congruent interest of these housing reformers and the state – at least until the early 1930s.¹⁵⁸

This chapter addressed the new ways in which architects became organised in the interwar period. With a focus on the CIAM, and in particular its Polish group, the chapter unfolded the dynamics of this new internationalism – the politics of comparison, the instrumental use of internationalism and the rise of expertise with a cause using the example of the CIAM. The chapter demonstrated that for modernist architects from East Central Europe the CIAM offered a particularly attractive ‘package.’ This package was so attractive because of the relatively much greater prestige and clout of international references in East Central Europe. Yet, this package was also so attractive because the central CIAM topics, sweeping urban measures and new ways of tackling the issue of housing in a holistic way, addressed problems that were particularly pronounced in East Central Europe. The realm of CIAM-Ost was a highly attractive region for the CIAM for mostly the same reasons. For the CIAM it was much easier to establish national organisations in states which did not already have well-developed traditional associations of architects.¹⁵⁹ What was, in comparison with Western Europe, partially stronger support of the CIAM’s political goals, a greater chance of disposal over real estate, and the quick transformation of society in this region also provided relevant testing grounds for the CIAM – as chapter 5 will show. The dynamics of architecture as a discipline of social change and modernisation, which the League of Nations could not integrate in its organisation, explain the relevance and success of the CIAM and make the CIAM’s interplay with the actors on the ground in Poland so pertinent.

The impact of organising architects and architectural themes of change in new ways can, however, only be understood, if we understand how these themes came to be communicated in new ways. And this impact can only be grasped if we understand how architects began to use new methods of communication. Both questions will be central to the next chapter.

4. Communicating Social Change through Architecture

Dites-vous bien que l'architecture a besoin de votre attention.

Le Corbusier, 1923¹

Karl Moser's closing speech at the second CIAM congress, held in Frankfurt in 1929, identified the "relationship between architecture and public opinion" as one of four central problems the CIAM would need to deal with in the future.² The Swiss father figure of modernist architects addressed the theme, helping to define the architectural and urbanist endeavours of *Neues Frankfurt*. Indeed, public relations *avant-la-lettre* became a key concern of the nascent organisation that the CIAM still was, and of modernist architects in general.

The previous chapter demonstrated how architects organised themselves in new transnational issue-based networks. These social issues required frameworks and they had to be both relevant and comprehensible beyond national borders. The latter depended to a large degree on the emergence of new printed and visual media as well as the emergence of a new communication space driven by a shared interest in the cause of modernist architecture. This space was defined not only by new media and by political change incurred by the post-First World War settlement (see chapter 1), but also by avant-gardists whose very hallmark was seeking to narrow the distances between languages, disciplines and nations and who organised themselves in new ways (see chapter 3). This new space could be used by a new strand of architects, who were internationally versatile and trained according to the new credo of modernist architecture, which emphasised the discipline's technological and social dimensions (see chapter 2).

This chapter cannot do full justice to the various phenomena treated here – the plethora of new architectural journals which emerged during the interwar period, the new role of photography or architectural plans as a means of communication. Instead this chapter reflects on and outlines how these phenomena were employed and adapted by architects in East Central Europe in order to demonstrate changes in the cross-border communication of architects and to analyse how this new communication was a precondition for these architects' rise to a new social, cultural and political prominence. The main themes of this chapter are the condensing of communicating social problems in architecture, the emergence of new frames of reference, and the communicative projection of things to come, namely a promising future defined by progress brought about by modernist architects.

The Spatial Structure of the New Discourse on Architecture

In his foreword to the 1995 edition of Henry Russell Hitchcock's and Philip Johnson's seminal book *The International Style*, Johnson is only half-joking when he refers to contributor Alfred Barr's decision to "capitalize" *International Style* as one of great importance. Being an involved party Johnson might be biased but the point he makes on the relevance of branding the new architectural movement – as the authors did in 1932 – is convincing. Although Johnson himself, with hindsight, qualifies his book as flawed, it still provides a very revealing account of 'making' a phenomenon by describing it. In so doing the book also reflects the modernist architects' early struggle to historicise their own achievements. Having allegedly earned Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe "big teaching jobs" in the US, Johnson was convinced that the hierarchy established in his book was about much more than description and indeed was of factual relevance in itself.³

Indeed, the itinerary the three men – Barr, Johnson and Hitchcock – followed on their trans-European car journey in 1930 and 1931 not only reflected but also established a mental map of modernist architecture. Incidentally, in 1995 Johnson noted that their visit to Brno, Czechoslovakia, was the book's only true addition to an otherwise well-established route. Thus Johnson unwittingly reflects the East-West asymmetries in perceptions of modernist style which the three men in fact confirmed rather than questioned. At the same time their European travels just months before national borders took on a completely new significance is an urgent reminder of the pervasiveness of internationalism in not only providing a brand name but also being embraced by the three critics of architecture – and those they described. This internationalism was the basis for and enlivened by new forms of

communication, particularly visual ones, of which a new kind of architecture book was an important manifestation. The book *International Style* is also an apt example of this phenomenon.

The early establishment of modernist architecture as an international phenomenon and within an international communicative framework, in which internationalism was continuously stressed in a strategic manner, was part of the success story of modernist architects. By constantly reflecting their membership of an international movement these architects confirmed their expert status and their self-proclaimed relevance beyond their professional field in the narrower sense.⁴ Two aspects of what could be called an ‘intentional internationalisation’ need to be stressed: first, a reflection of one’s own role both historically and *vis-à-vis* the most important intellectual currents of the time – as Hitchcock and Johnson did, but also as the ‘inventor’ of a “new tradition” Sigfried Giedion did⁵ – and second, the emergence and rise in relevance of what could be called ‘hinge’ figures who served as links between the wider public and the architect-experts in a narrower sense. Giedion, along with Szymon Syrkus, Gropius, and Le Corbusier in certain respects, are all examples of this phenotype.

When considering what has been said in chapter 1 about the relevance of the ‘politics of comparison’ for East Central Europe, and the modernising alliance between state and architects described in chapter 2, it seems very likely that both dynamics of an ‘intentional internationalisation’ had a comparatively greater effect in this region. At the same time one might, for the same reasons, gain particularly revealing insights by looking at how these communicative mechanisms unfolded in East Central Europe.

Karl Schlögel’s remark on the “Wunder der Gleichzeitigkeit” (miracle of simultaneity), a term coined for *Art Nouveau*, was even more true with regard to the spread of modernism.⁶ For Erich Mendelsohn the “Internationale Übereinstimmung des neuen Bagedankens”, the international congruency of modern architecture, was one of its main characteristics.⁷ Considering the political divisions of post-First World War Europe, the popping up of flat roofs and ribbon windows in the suburbs of Paris, the pine-woods of German Dessau, and Budapest’s Napraforgó street, and even as far east as Balcic (now Bulgaria) or Eforie in Romania, and, of course, the Soviet Union, within a short space of time demands explanation.⁸ These buildings’ frequent reliance on new technologies, which had to be acquired and mastered, raises even more questions. This “miracle”, it seems clear, may only be properly understood when communication, and here particularly visual communication, is taken into account. It is equally clear, however, that new ideas of architecture did not sim-

ply spread in concentric circles due to technologies which made it easier and cheaper to communicate suggestive pictures of new designs. Of course, specific goals in each particular place were to a certain extent served by modernist solutions. And, of course, many of the local solutions were quite original in character. In our context, though, it is important that the communicative space in which new architectural designs and theories were discussed was structured in a new way, thereby allowing for a radically different manner of discussing architecture from the 19th century. Here the relevant question is: how did modernist architects use this new space to assign themselves a new role?

The modernist discourse extended far beyond the *Bauhaus*. However, the *Bauhaus*, located in the centre of Europe, was a communicative hotspot which should not be underestimated. From the mid-1920s onwards many of those architects who shaped the field of modernism in East Central Europe spent time in Weimar or Dessau. This was true of Fred Forbát and Farkas Molnár as well as Szymon Syrkus, who was not a regular student purely due to his age, and for the *Bauhaus* associate Karel Teige.⁹ Meanwhile, the themes set at the *Bauhaus* remained sacrosanct to those many architects in the region from a similar lineage who did not personally visit the *Bauhaus*.¹⁰ It seems as if the *Bauhaus* promise of providing a new holistic vision of a life in line with the demands of modern times was particularly attractive to modernist architects in East Central Europe who were willing to or entrusted with building new societies. Those from this region were clearly over-represented among the foreign students of the *Bauhaus*.¹¹

Gropius, who of course served as a link between the *Bauhaus* and the CIAM, also showed them how to introduce ideas into an organisation which in turn led to the production of influential books, articles and pictures filling the pages of new architectural magazines all over Europe. Apart from the *Bauhaus* it was Le Corbusier's workshop, and the reputation of Le Corbusier, which outshone any other modernist architect in Europe. The Hungarian architect Károly Dávid studied with Le Corbusier, as did Ernest Weissmann from Yugoslavia, to name just two of Le Corbusier's close followers.

In practical terms, Ernst May's Frankfurt became an important reference point by the late 1920s, mainly because May's housing project – in contrast to the few projects Le Corbusier had realized by then – proved that new architecture could deliver results on a large scale.

Significantly, and unsurprisingly, all these hotspots – Dessau, Paris, and Frankfurt – were to be found in the West, thus reflecting an asymmetry which was the flip-side of the synchronicity just mentioned. The Soviet Union is the one import-

ant counterpoint to this picture. But it has to be kept in mind that what architects knew of the Soviet Union was hardly based on personal contacts and direct exchange mechanisms. The networks described in the previous chapter and which will be detailed with regard to the architects' communication in this chapter included very few or no Russian architects.¹²

These asymmetries were also reflected in the languages used. None of the native languages of East Central Europe was likely to be understood in Western countries, while a knowledge both of French and German, and to a far lesser extent English, was simply assumed as given. Most of the architects of the region born before 1918 had studied at a German language university. It was thus unsurprising that the CIAM-Ost used German as common denominator to mark its geographic aspiration. The visual dimension of the modern project attained even greater relevance through this *lingua franca*, which of course never fully dominated East Central Europe and was in decline after 1918 whilst the languages of the new states gained importance.¹³ There is certainly something to be said for the argument that visual communication had a particular impact on the multi-lingual situation characteristic of the eastern part of Central Europe in the interwar period.

The Abstract Heritage of the First World War and the Logic of the Media

The impact of the First World War can hardly be exaggerated when explaining how complex architectural ideas of modernist construction, often packed in visual shorthand, spread so quickly. The war was a precondition for radically shaking up the established social and political orders. Whilst simultaneously embracing the allure of the machine, technology (i.e. the modern) seemed the only way to make sense of a catastrophic experience intrinsically entwined with the 19th century, at least to the avant-gardes and those seeing themselves as modernists.¹⁴ The term *avant-garde*, just like the term *modern*, attained a political connotation.¹⁵ Though it is impossible to gauge the exact impact of the First World War on the members of the *avant-garde* movement, it no doubt accelerated their ascent and provided them with a frame of reference. The New Man as a utopian concept and the building of visionary, improved societies almost appeared to be a logical imperative derived from the war experience. The manifesto of the Dutch group *De Stijl*, arguably the most influential of the *avant-garde* groups mushrooming around 1918, made explicit reference to the fact that "the war is destroying the old world with its contents: individual domination in every state."¹⁶

For our perspective two particular links require attention. First, the First World War both radicalised and politicised avant-garde movements which had already existed in the years before 1914 – and were to a certain extent linked with each other. This implied that at least some of these avant-gardists were actively searching for tangible ways to build new, better societies and that at least some lessons were learned from the upheaval of war. New opportunities now existed to actively seek tangible solutions for building new, better societies and in so doing introduce entirely new approaches. This notion is equally present in the *Bauhaus* founding document as it is in the aforementioned *De Stijl* manifesto, though the *Bauhaus* also tried to compensate for the failure of the German revolution.¹⁷ It was no coincidence that many architects began to turn towards other forms of artistic expression in order to obtain a more holistic understanding of what they viewed as the needs of the new era. At the same time, artists looked to architecture as the most obvious concrete lever with which to build – in the widest sense of the word – a new society.

Second, the First World War was also a catalyst for new, more abstract forms of communication. The war, a deep social rupture, made the reductionist paintings of Mondrian or Malevich seem far less exotic than they might have appeared before the war. This new reduced design vocabulary easily crossed borders. The new visual language these paintings heralded also informed modernist architecture.¹⁸ An unintentional but important side effect was, of course, that these new buildings, with their lack of details and often dramatic gestures in spectacular concrete slabs, came across well even in small-scale photos.¹⁹ This change also entailed a revolution of established ways of perception. Walter Benjamin's book *Einbahnstraße* noted that the end of the Gutenberg Galaxy had been brought about by the avant-garde obsession with advertisements and new visual forms.²⁰ The pertinent example of Gropius' *Totaltheater* and Syrkus' *Teatr Symultaniczny* deeply reflected this change among modernist architects.²¹

The history of the avant-garde in East Central Europe has received considerable attention in the last two decades, expressed through a number of high-profile exhibitions and their respective catalogues.²² These exhibitions have demonstrated in increasing detail the astonishing radical creativity, originality, and richness, including in sheer manpower, of Central and East European avant-gardists, as well as their tightly-knit networks. In Poland, links both with the Western – Berlin, Vienna – and Eastern avant-garde hotspots were strong. In the mid-1920s, however, with the establishment of the journal *BLOK* and the group of the same name, fascination with the Soviet Union prevailed. The journal *BLOK* functioned as a global transmitter, partly because members of the *BLOK* group, such as the constructivist

sculptor Katarzyna Kobro, had gained first-hand experiences in the Soviet Union. An iconic moment for the Polish avant-gardists was Kasimir Malevich's visit to Warsaw in March 1927. *Praesens* organised an exhibition of his work in hotel Polonia and Malevich made a point of visiting the Syrkus couple's workshop in Senatorska street.²³

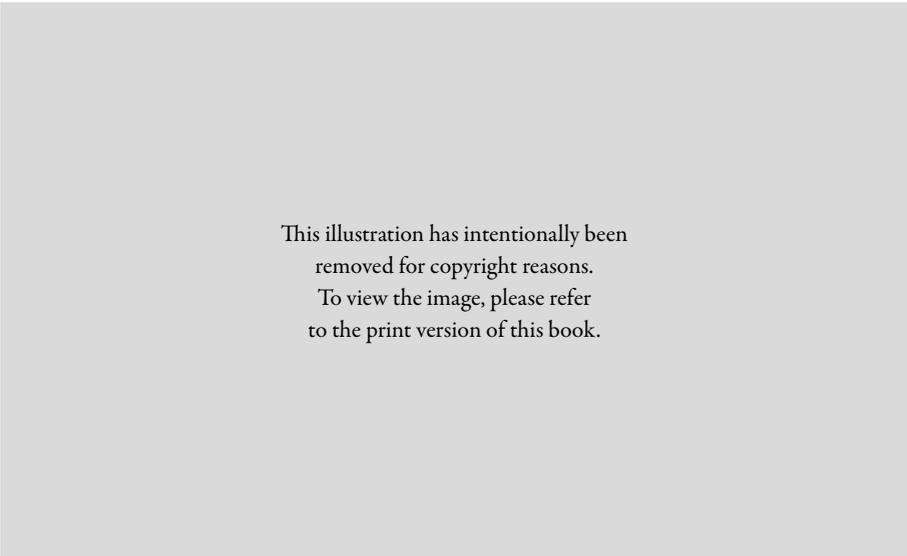
For members of *BLOK* such as Kobro, herself of Russian, Latvian and German origin, the Soviet Union was an important frame of reference. Kobro had worked with Malevich and El Lessitzky. Karel Teige was heavily influenced by his travels to and contacts in Russia which dated from 1925. Arguably, "he became the best-informed expert on contemporary Soviet culture and architecture outside the Soviet Union".²⁴ *BLOK* was the first journal outside Russia to publish a theoretical text by Malevich.²⁵ The journal sought unity in art, work and social life by embracing Constructivism wholeheartedly. The last two issues mainly focused on architecture as perhaps not the smallest denominator but a field which seemed to allow the high hopes of merging art, work and social life to be realized.²⁶

This setting almost naturally created new opportunities for those architects who "were intent on broadening the field of artistic intervention to encompass the whole of social and political life".²⁷ East Central Europe offered a fertile ground for radical solutions. It was no coincidence that the first museum of modern art in Europe was established in Polish Łódź in 1930. The works of Kobro and other artists from the group *a.r.* as well as many Western European examples of art were on display there. The many first-class pieces by European avant-gardists form a most revealing example of extremely dense networking, but also of the position that *Praesens* – and then *a.r.* – members were able to establish for themselves in the second half of the 1920s.²⁸

Avant-gardism allowed for linking into universalist reference frames which was most attractive in countries which had literally only (re)appeared on the European map a few years earlier. As Syrkus stated in the first number of *Praesens*: "It is not the ornaments of the peasant-journal of Łowicz [a popular Polish vernacular-style, M.K.] which have contributed to Poland's reputation but rather Copernicus who gave Polish science international renown. Poland will only find a place in the world of the twentieth century through the competitiveness of the Polish intellect and Polish inventions, not through folklore or ethnographic art."²⁹ In many respects, *Praesens* served as a sounding board, putting Syrkus' name on the international agenda, and constituted an important precondition for the international attention Syrkus' work attracted.³⁰

The *a.r.*'s "revolutionary" artists' split from *Praesens* in 1929 was a telling moment for the emancipation of modernist architects from avant-gardism and the spilling over of avant-garde ideas into the realm of much more pragmatic and concrete attempts to change the world in the fields of housing and urbanism. Although *Praesens* suffered in terms of originality, the split also created opportunities for modernist architects in Poland to work collectively. The ideological struggles which plagued the Czechoslovak kindred spirits within the CIAM were far less pronounced in Poland.³¹

There was, however, an important precondition for the impact of avant-gardist approaches which has not been mentioned yet: the emergence of new media. The post-1900 innovations in offset-printing, which facilitated the spreading of high-quality photographic images, had an enormous impact on the field of architecture. It is not too far-fetched to speak of a symbiosis of modernist architecture and new visual means. The symbolic dimension of technology certainly helped as the stunning technological achievements of modernist buildings adapted to the logic of the media in its longing for the outstanding.³² In a slight overstretching of the point, it could even be argued that modernist architecture was at least a media phenomenon or could in any case not have functioned, without its interaction with the modern media.



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30. The visual allure of modernism. The Brukalski couple's own house covered in *Praesens* 1930

Beatriz Colomina has made the all-inclusive point that modernist architecture as such has to be understood as mass media. Architectural designs and manifestations thus have to be perceived as part of a wider ensemble of media such as architectural models, photographs or film.³³ In fact, for a long time, the breakthrough of modernist architecture was restricted to paper. The high number of journals and books dedicated to modernist architecture was not commensurate with what for a long time was a very limited number of actual building realisations. Journals dedicated to architecture and often published in association with professional organisations had already emerged in the 19th century.³⁴ Due to the long exposure required in early photography static architecture had for a long time necessarily been a popular photographic subject. It was only the breakthrough of off-set prints shortly after the turn of the century that made it much easier to reproduce high-quality photos in print. And only the new modernist buildings offered motifs which fully brought the strength of photography over traditional engravings to the fore.

Hailing new technologies as such was a hallmark of avant-gardism. Novelty, along with an openness towards the fields of industry and technological change intended to further progress towards a new society, and the new medium of photography dovetailed with this conviction.³⁵ It was not a coincidence that the then still relatively new visual medium of film was also enthusiastically embraced by avant-gardists as well as many modernist architects in East Central Europe.³⁶ For example Syrkus, after finishing his studies in Warsaw, went to Berlin to gain practical experience in the new medium, amongst other things, by building sets and painting posters for the then leading UFA-film studios.³⁷

The visually mediated dimension of modernist architecture has attained much more attention in recent years.³⁸ Both Le Corbusier and Giedion have been rediscovered as the photographers they also were and both men's strategic use of what was then considered an advanced medium – photography – has been highlighted.³⁹ While Giedion and Le Corbusier were necessarily amateurs, the 1920s also saw the emergence of the new vocation of architectural photographer. The German Werner Mantz was probably, along with Arthur Köster, the architectural photographer who did most to define the new visual style in Central Europe. Mantz shaped the genre of visualised modernist architecture with his oft-reproduced photos featuring stark contrasts of light and shadow and stressing rectangular angles as well as alignments in a systematic way. People's understanding of modernist architecture was to no small degree a result of the work of Mantz and fellow photographers.⁴⁰ This technique, to be sure, owed a lot to László Moholy-Nagy, who not only created

the *Bauhaus* iconography, but also theorised how to merge the new photographic language with new architecture.⁴¹

Photography also allowed architecture from Europe's margins to be easily and speedily admitted into the dominant discourse. Technical innovations made photography a much cheaper and accessible medium. Meanwhile, visualising the promise of glass and concrete proved particularly suggestive where the ghosts of defunct urban structures and social misery loomed large. Moreover, applying the new technologies also suggested being part of an encompassing international movement. Stressing the chances of the new building material concrete and referring to the most impressive cases abroad and at home lent a certain self-evidence to the issue.⁴²

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31. The promise of reinforced concrete. Examples in *Praesens* 1926 and 1930

Syrkus' correspondence with Giedion or Gropius – just like the correspondence between many other CIAM members – regularly concerned providing pictures of recent buildings (and sometimes the architects in question themselves).⁴³ Giedion internalised the suggestive power of photography so much that he, in the aftermath of a CIRPAC meeting in 1936, proposed placing an “interesting photo” on the cover of the minutes.⁴⁴ Reproducing modernist buildings from abroad demonstrated the capacity of the new strand of architecture, whilst adding pictures of one's own designs, even without explicitly making this point, proved the point that one was in line with the pre-eminent trends of one's time. The latter, quite obviously, was even more true when modernist architects managed to get pictures of their work printed in foreign journals.

All that said, by around 1925 an international, or European at least, strongly visually defined communication space had emerged, which allowed architects who subscribed to the credentials of the modernist movement to participate rather easily. As internationalism became the very hallmark of this new space it made sense – much more so than for the traditional journals – to refer to examples of modern architecture in the new states of East Central Europe. These countries' entry into the space of modernism confirmed, in this logic, the ascent of the new idea of modernist architecture.

The following subsections will sketch out this space and attempt to better understand its mechanisms by employing examples from East Central Europe and Poland in particular.

Architectural Journals and Books as Architectural Programme

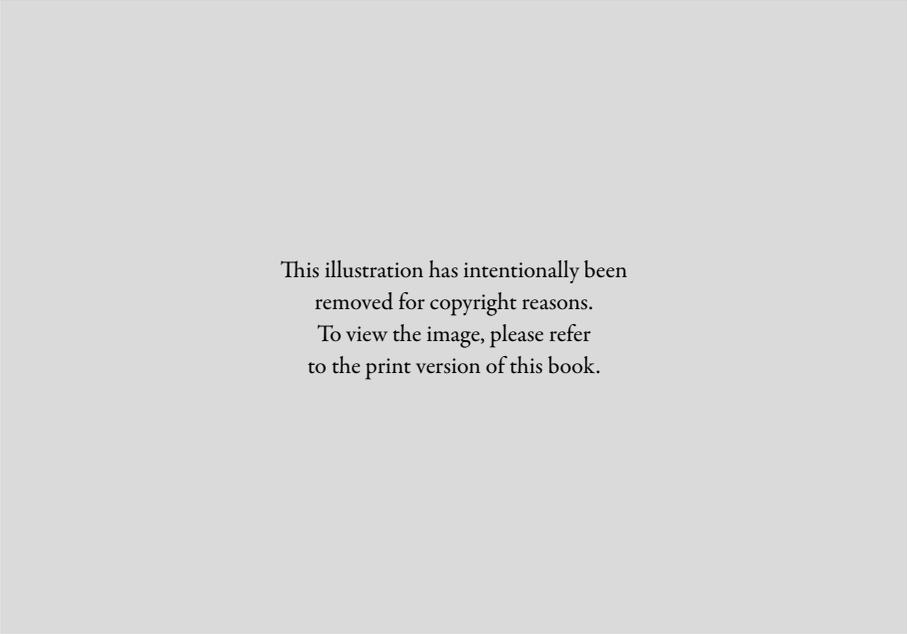
The most influential journal in Central Europe and East Central Europe for spreading the idea of modernist architecture was the short-lived Swiss avant-garde publication *ABC Beiträge zum Bauen*. *ABC* was edited by the modernist luminaries Hans Schmidt and Mart Stam and strongly influenced by El Lissitzky's design and Vladimir Mayakovsky's prose – that is, *ABC* to a considerable degree drew its inspiration from the young Soviet Union. By doing so in a consequential way the journal offered both a visual and conceptual reference point for the mushrooming avant-garde groups throughout Europe. Although not well-known, *ABC* also reveals a second important point for the communication of architects. Once the first buildings were belatedly realized according to *ABC* principles, these buildings turned into powerful icons. A good example is the private house *Mart Stam* built in the Baba quarter of Prague in 1928. The house was erected as part of a housing exhibition in Czechoslovakia and on the invitation of Karel Teige, using striking contrasts between glass and concrete in a conceptually modernist way.⁴⁵

Stam became a star of the developing field with his Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam. The factory not only featured the new materials and aesthetics which Le Corbusier popularised for private villas but it additionally promised to revolutionise the workspace. As explained in chapter 2, fostering general efficiency was one of the central concerns and promises of modernist architects. Stam's, and *ABC*'s, take on architecture and the way architecture was to be communicated is emblematic for both the relevance and impact of new kinds of journals dealing with architecture. The modernist architects contributing to *ABC* and its impersonators had

clear aesthetic convictions which were applied almost as laws. But these aesthetics, as Stam and Schmidt claimed in their own works, had to be linked with promises of societal change. While the classic architecture journals principally confined themselves to reproducing buildings, discussing their technical background and aesthetic values, the new type of journal brought in social aspects which reached far beyond architecture proper. *ABC* also published influential technical and scientific articles, whilst urban planning was an important topic in the journal from the outset – for example, Mart Stam’s planning for the town of Trautenau in Czechoslovakia.⁴⁶

ABC had considerable influence on the CIAM – both in terms of personal links and the way the social mission of architecture was conceived and framed. In some respects, the CIAM also served as an attempt to formalise the journal’s strategies and to extend these through holding events such as congresses.⁴⁷ In its clear focus on architecture *ABC* differed from avant-garde magazines with a broader scope such as the Dutch *De Stijl* and *i10*, published in collaboration with Oud and László Moholy-Nagy, among others, and succeeding *De Stijl* or El Lissitzky’s Russian-French journal *Veshch Gegenstand Objekt* which in a variety of ways influenced avant-gardists. Despite *ABC*’s short lifespan, from 1924 to 1928, this characteristic left a marked imprint on efforts to find adequate publicity for the cause of modernist architecture and inspired, for example, the journal *Praesens* and numerous other journals in East Central Europe.⁴⁸ This transfer was massively facilitated by the iconic typography introduced by *De Stijl*, which in a brand-like manner signalled membership of the “corporate identity” of modernism for all those who incorporated it. Modernist architects stressed the connection between architects and typographers. El Lissitzky, who referred to himself as a “book constructor”, serves as the best case in point for the “typographer-architect”.⁴⁹ During his stay in Germany in 1922 Syrkus grasped the power of new typographic forms, particularly that these forms provided a powerful tool given that the new visual language was also understood in the West.

For architects in East Central Europe the easy ‘linking-in’ allowed for by the corporate brand modernism became particularly attractive. There were close links between *De Stijl* and Poland and *De Stijl* and *BLOK*, and later *Praesens*, and members of all these groups corresponded extensively.⁵⁰ In 1925 *BLOK* featured a cover depicting the global spread of the magazine’s reach under the headline “Where to find Blok”, including cities in China, Japan and Brazil.⁵¹

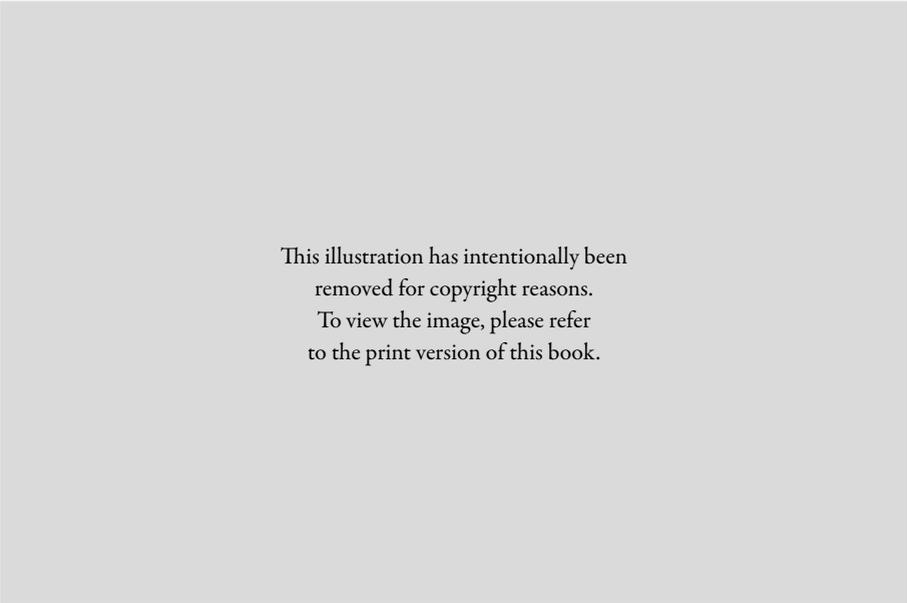


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32. Cover of the *BLOK* journal

Those European journals which covered and promoted architecture in a new way had become consolidated by 1930 while trend-setting magazines like Le Corbusier's and Amédée Ozenfant's *L'Esprit Nouveau* (in 1925) and *ABC* had expired. In 1932 the originally radical avant-garde group *de 8* from Amsterdam joined forces with the more moderate Rotterdam-based *De opbouw* to publish *De 8 en opbouw*, which was less zealous than *de 8*'s original 1927 manifesto suggested but was nevertheless a very influential publication.⁵² Two years earlier *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* (AA) had already been established in France. In contrast to *De 8 en opbouw* and the other examples described, AA was not a result of artistic avant-gardists looking towards architecture. Founded by André Block and Marcel Eugène Cahen, the journal was run in the 1930s by Pierre Vago, of Hungarian-Jewish descent. The journal reflected Vago's interest in opening up architecture to new technological opportunities and connecting it more strongly to the social questions of its time. The journal also aspired to offer a forum for what was now a well-established new architectural scene, particularly by using high-quality illustrations and thus capturing the visual power of what was new.

Le Corbusier received ample attention in AA, but the journal also covered his less radical colleagues. This, combined with a decisively European perspective, made it almost self-evident that AA became the main forum of European exchange and of defining hierarchies and systems of belonging and relevance in the wider field of modernism. In this, AA was much more successful than Vago's second pet-project, the *Réunions internationales d'architectes* (RIA).⁵³ The first issue of AA contained an eight-page section on "L'architecture d'aujourd'hui en Pologne" accompanied by stunning images.⁵⁴ The pictures of realized projects and designs, particularly of exhibition architecture, as in this case the *General Exhibition* in Poznań, of 1929, catered to the visual standards established by the *Das Neue Frankfurt* journal's *Bildberichte* (visual reports).⁵⁵



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33. 'Architecture today' in Poland and exhibition on architecture in primarily Central European countries, AA, 1930, 1933

The *Neues Frankfurt* was a prime example of how far the notion of a corporate brand, evoking social progress, new technology and urban improvement, could be taken. Further, *Neues Frankfurt* provided ample examples of how powerful it was to visualise the new architectural successes and the promises this approach held for a

better future by pushing through Ernst May's reform agenda.⁵⁶ To this end the journal used photomontage in new ways, thus setting an example for other journals and, not coincidentally, raising architect May, the man behind the journal, to celebrity status by the late 1920s.⁵⁷

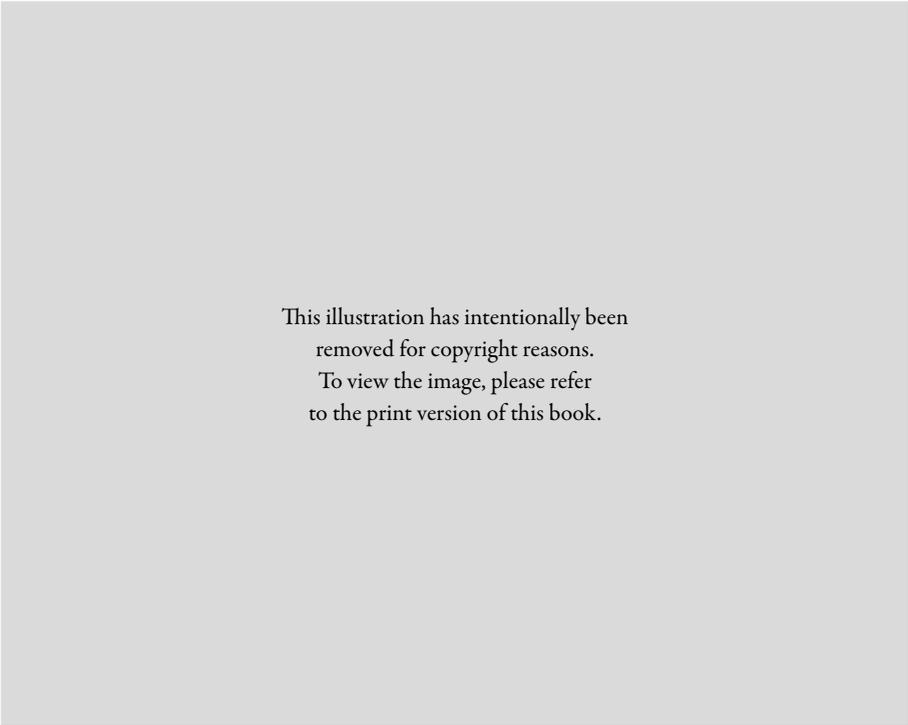
Journals devoted to architecture were not, of course, an innovation of the inter-war period. However, during that period two important changes shook up the existing scene. The first was the rise of avant-gardism and its manifestos which were, in a certain sense, serialised as highly conceptual journals – such as *De Stijl* or *ABC*.⁵⁸ The second was the establishment of new nation states with their ensuing needs to reflect and propagate their aspirations for social improvement. Moreover, the ongoing shake-up, which led to these journals' establishment, not only increased the number of such – still nationally defined – journals, but also their thematic scope.

The reciprocal perception of the development of modernist architecture in eastern and western countries reflects the asymmetries sketched at the beginning of this chapter. It was much harder for Polish, Hungarian or Czechoslovak modernist architects to gain coverage in a German or French journal than vice versa.⁵⁹ That said, these architects found reception in *Die Form*, the *Bauwelt* or *AA*, which earned them, in their home countries, comparatively greater prestige than, say, an article on Gropius in a Polish journal would do. Moreover, articles on the achievements of modernist architects in East Central Europe in Western journals were not written in a hierarchical tone but instead stressed the common ground of modernism and highlighted the relevance of the region's achievements.⁶⁰ *Wasmuth's Monatshefte* had already in 1928 reported on the achievements of modernist architects in Poland.⁶¹ In 1934 *De 8 en opbouw* published an article by Szymon Syrkus on modernist architecture in Poland.⁶²

AA offers an interesting case in point. The journal, as H el ene Janni ere termed it, exhibited a "politique  trang ere", with correspondents for Hungary (Pierre Vago's father Joseph Vago) and for Poland (Szymon Syrkus).⁶³ In addition, the renowned architectural critic Julius Posener, who was instrumental in the journal from its start, functioned as correspondent for Central Europe and also covered Czechoslovakia.⁶⁴ *AA* dealt with work by architects from these three countries on several occasions, particularly in the early 1930s. The journal thus placed these architects' work in a hierarchy of modernism but also incorporated these works into this body.⁶⁵ An article on Czechoslovakia from 1932 shows *pars pro toto* how the East Central European examples featured as news from an experimental space which was of relevance to the rest of Europe and the architectural profession as such.⁶⁶ *AA* showed

particular interest in building achievements in the realms of health, schooling and sports in Poland and Czechoslovakia.⁶⁷

Linking-up with this interest allowed for entering a communication space attractive for both sides – the journal and its contributors from the ‘new states’. Syrkus used this new space virtuously. He was a regular contributor to AA, serving as a correspondent during the journal’s first four years, appearing as part of a survey, complete with picture portrait in the AA’s first issue. Syrkus also published in Dutch and German journals. He employed the group *Praesens* as a means to legitimise himself as head of a substantial movement in Poland rather than operating as a single individual. Via *Praesens* Syrkus not only connected himself both to other avant-garde movements and the more moderate strand represented by AA, but he also drew on an extensive body of completed projects in the relevant fields for the new kind of journals covering architecture. *Praesens*, moreover, offered examples of collective work and of transcending the narrower confines of architecture proper.



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Syrkus raised radical arguments even in contributions which at first sight concerned technical issues. His article in AA on the question ‘Maisons basses, moyennnes ou hautes?’, on the main theme of the CIAM’s Brussels congress, ended with the statement “Constructions Des villes nouvelles, LES VILLES FONCTIONNALISÉES AUX MAISONS HAUTES PARMI LA VERDURE”.⁶⁸ Similarly, in an extensively illustrated article in the first AA issue of 1932, Helena and Szymon Syrkus clarified their intended programme to construct 100,000 flats yearly by using new methods in steel construction.⁶⁹

These articles reflect a win-win situation for a journal seeking to create a clearer profile for its programme of modernist architecture as an international phenomenon as well as a phenomenon of social relevance. This win-win situation played out particularly for modernist architects in the ‘new states’ in need of an international sounding board for their far-reaching ideas. The sheer number and synchronicity of new journals dealing with modernist architecture established in the late 1920s in East Central Europe speaks to the impact of new forms of communication and the attraction of the promise of modernist architecture in the region.⁷⁰

The journals were interconnected in a variety of ways via modernist architects who met in other frameworks – avant-garde groups, exhibitions, or organisations such as the CIAM. Larger journals such as AA featured a *Revue des Revues*, reporting the content of other journals, many foreign but generally likeminded, and in this way strengthened the idea of a wider movement of which one was part. The table of contents of the Polish journal *DOM* and the Czechoslovak *Stavitel* (The Architect), for example, were regularly reproduced in AA. The same was true for the contents of AA or leading German periodicals of architecture which found their way into the Polish *Architektura i Budownictwo* (Architecture and Building, AiB). AiB, just like its Czechoslovak and Hungarian counterparts, was keenly aware of recent international trends and projects.⁷¹

New journals on modernist architecture sprang up in the whole region in question. Even a small country like Czechoslovakia produced the more mainstream *Stavitel*, and *Stavba* (Construction), edited by Teige, which tended towards a radical modernism and published numerous articles from *L’Esprit Nouveau* but also work by Gropius.⁷² Moreover, the avant-garde group *Devětsil*, masterminded by Teige, published the more specific but short-lived magazines *Revue Devětsilu*, *Disk* and *Pásmo* which covered art more broadly but also considered modernist architecture. In 1930 the group *Levá fronta*, which had replaced *Devětsil*, established a journal of the same name (1930-1933) which was closely connected to the Czechoslovak communist party. This strand reflected the politicisation of Czech modernist archi-

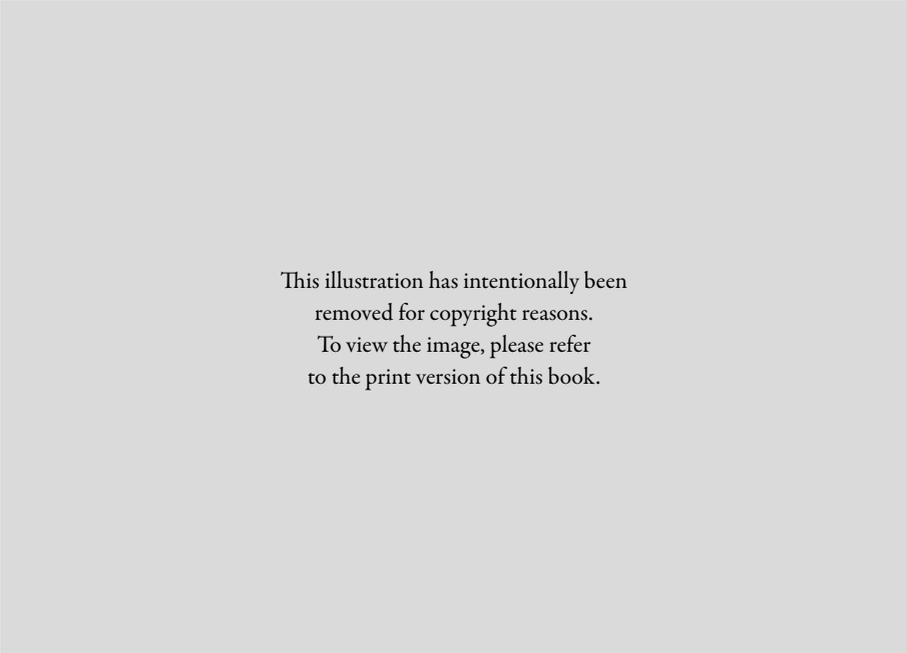
rects as well as the tensions which, as described in the previous chapter, prevented these architects from substantially contributing to the CIAM for several years.⁷³

While journals such as *Levá fronta* did not exist in Hungary or Poland the general trend of diversifying journals covering architecture and these journals devoting more attention to modernism also emerged here – and in the wider region. In Hungary, the most eminent example of a modernist movement publication was the journal *Tér és Forma* (1928-1948), edited by Virgil Bierbauer, which counted Farkas Molnár among its regular contributors.⁷⁴ Outside this study's narrower geographic confines, but exceptionally influential within them, was the Yugoslav journal *Zenit*. The journal and the current of *Zenitism* form a prime example of how an initially broad avant-garde movement came to focus more and more on architecture and its modernist promise while still sticking to key avant-garde principles in visual language and a quest for the 'New Man'.⁷⁵

This general pattern may be well studied for the Polish example: while the first half of the 1920s saw the rise of avant-garde journals with a generic focus on the arts, in the widest sense, the progress of more formal organisations ushered in more focused, and often stable, publications. Avant-garde magazines in Poland, such as Tadeusz Peiper's *Zwrotnica* and the less radical *Rytm*, were followed by *BLOK*, a longer-lasting journal which embraced technology and thus developed a more concrete programme and a more clearly directed dynamic with regard to modernist architecture. In many ways *Zwrotnica* served as a hinge pin between the early avant-garde and a second stream of journals with an emphasis on architecture. Peiper had (as discussed in chapter 2) defined the masses and the new technical world of the machine as the most important points of departure and thus focused on the city. He had also introduced the Polish public to the works of Le Corbusier. Peiper described the journal's mission as "implanting in our people a sense for the present age".⁷⁶ He thus helped to establish Constructivism, which fulfilled such an important bridging-function in East Central Europe – a bridge between radical avant-gardes and the more concrete tasks of architecture.

Additionally, Peiper turned *Zwrotnica* into the first Polish avant-garde magazine "to be noticed in wider Europe".⁷⁷ Subsequently, *BLOK* and later, briefly, *Praesens*, enjoyed similar fame. *Praesens* highlighted architecture and reflected the splitting of the avant-gardists into those pursuing radical visions in the arts and those seeing architecture as the tool to bring about concrete social improvement.⁷⁸ *Praesens* was founded in 1926, not least because Syrkus and his fellows in spirit were deeply unhappy with the mainstream position of the AiB. Syrkus felt that AiB's failure to pay attention to the *L'Esprit Nouveau* pavilion in Paris was almost scandalous. More-

over, AiB almost completely ignored the *Międzynarodowa Wystawa Prac Architektonicznych*, the International Exhibition of Architecture in Warsaw in 1925, a showcase of modernism.



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35. Czechoslovak modernist designs in *Praesens*, 1930

AiB had emerged in 1925 in Warsaw connected to the faculty of architecture at Warsaw University of Technology and to *Kolo Architektów*. While certainly not part of the avant-garde, AiB also distinguished itself clearly from the established journal *Architekt*, founded in 1900 in Cracow by the *Krakowskie Towarzystwo Techniczne* (Cracow Society of Technicians).⁷⁹ AiB preceded AA in also covering the general topics of planning, technology, and social change in urban space, championing a modernist but not radical architecture. AiB prided itself rightly on its international outlook and systematically following-up developments in other European countries. From its inception the journal accompanied its articles with many high-quality photos. AiB included among its regular contributors architects from the modernist camp, as well as those who were open to new solutions but had rather

classically professional careers. In this sense AiB not only served as a communicative bridge linking Poland with the rest of Europe, but also between the different camps in the country itself.

An interesting insight into the allocation of relevance is provided by a letter by the German architect Heinrich Lauterbach – whom AiB introduced as “our German friend” – to Birbauer published in *Tér és Forma* and reprinted in AiB in August 1930. Lauterbach, an expert on Polish architecture, sketches the particular challenges architects faced in the new state of Poland. He states that it is thanks to Szymon and the group *Praesens* that one is able to grasp the most relevant Polish architectural advances. He introduces Syrkus as the Polish architect of greatest renown in Germany due to his role in the CIAM congresses at La Sarraz and Frankfurt, his publications on the housing question, and his architectural realisations, in particular the artificial fertilizer pavilion at the General Exhibition at Poznań in 1929.⁸⁰

In contrast to comparable German journals, for example, AiB contained a much higher proportion of international references, and not only in the extensive sections specially devoted to foreign journals.⁸¹ A strong preference for the technical and social dimension of architecture, including housing, also emerges while questions of style played a proportionally less important role.⁸² The editorial of the first issue linked the journal closely with the dynamics of the new capital while the second issue featured an extensive comparison of urban development and urbanism in different European capitals and opportunities and needs for planning accompanied by futurist designs for Warsaw by architect Lech Niemojewski.⁸³

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36. Lech Niemojewski, plans for a future Warsaw, commercial district and street lay-out, 1925

Niemojewski's sketches, and the photos of modernist buildings abroad and in Poland in particular, show-cased the achievements of modern technology. The combination of new forms of visual representation and the modern technologies these represented, one would imagine, had a particularly strong pull for the reader of *AiB*. In the close interaction between articles illustrating the novel and arguing for the potential of, say, improved sanatoria or modern housing, *AiB* achieved a double translation which was potentially more convincing in Poland than, for example, France. The latter is to say that *AiB*, apart from almost literally translating foreign works on architecture, managed to translate the abstract promise of modernism into concrete examples, which were explained in visual and textual form and provided architects with a forum to explicate the whole range of their vision. Articles by Edgar Norwerth, architect and critic of architecture, which reflected on exactly this link, frequently featured in *AiB*.⁸⁴ Thereby, *AiB* also fulfilled an important role in reflecting the shared goals of professional architects. The SAP's *Rocznik* (Yearbook), in contrast, limited itself to organisational matters.⁸⁵

A typical issue of *AiB* comprised 40 pages and covered three to four topics – mostly exemplary large-scale building projects – in depth. These themes were often drawn from foreign architectural realisations. In the first ten years of its existence *AiB* referenced 27 Dutch case studies, while the larger countries of Germany and France unsurprisingly received even more attention.⁸⁶ These references attest to an enormous density of exchange, which followed certain asymmetries. There was certainly no clear concept that the Netherlands and some other countries were leading the way while Poland was only a recipient of foreign ideas as underlined by the many reproductions of Polish works in foreign journals.⁸⁷

An important question is to what extent this international exchange was channelled into domestic debates. By far the most relevant example in Poland in this respect was the journal *DOM* which was the organ of the Polish movement for housing reform described in the previous chapter. The richly illustrated monthly served both as a transmission belt for the housing debate and a concretisation of abstract debates. This also has to be seen as part of an intensive information campaign aiming to familiarise the public with the goals and achievements of international functionalist architecture.⁸⁸ This effort was even more fully expressed in the WSM's own publication *Życie WSM*, a newspaper published by the *Szklane Domy* association of tenants to inform on developments in the housing estates.

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DOM's interconnectedness with the urban transformation of Warsaw and the city's new housing projects was clearly inspired by May's *Neues Frankfurt*. In a similar way *DOM* translated the grand themes of modernism into concrete solutions, in particular with regard to new solutions in housing. Simultaneously, *DOM* reflected the importance of the WSM, turning the abstract *Praesens* discussion into solutions which could be realized and thus tried out and then communicated again.

Both in terms of the form chosen and in content, regularly reporting foreign examples, *DOM* and *AiB* were part of an international publications scene dealing with modernist matters which emerged from the mid-1920s on. *DOM* sought an international example of concrete relevance for Poland and thus often looked to neighbouring countries in similar situations.⁸⁹ Both *DOM* and *AiB* regularly reported on CIAM events and initiatives. The Polish CIAM group, and again Syrkus in particular, used this structure to spread news of the CIAM programme in Poland. Still in 1938, in an internationally extremely tense political situation both domestically and internationally, *DOM* published an extensive double-issue on the CIAM's 1937 congress in Paris.⁹⁰

DOM and *AiB* both demonstrate the new opportunities architects gained from international exchange around the issues which defined modernism – both social and aesthetic. Nowhere is the dramatic change in communication methods more apparent after the First World War than in the medium of architecture books. The genre was almost reinvented due to a twofold profound change.⁹¹ First, the technical precondition of cheap high-quality reproductions enabled and quickly made it much more common to visualise architecture in book form. Modernist architecture, as has been discussed before, lent itself particularly well to photographic reproductions and would, in turn, have been much less impressive in the traditional hand-drawn format. Moreover, and connected with the former, the cause of modernism galvanized the existing publication format. While it had previously been common to cover exemplary buildings from the past or assess the state-of-the art in recently erected buildings, often of an inherent significance due to their function, new kinds of books dealt with promise and vision. The few early examples of completed building projects represented *pars pro toto* the opportunities and possibilities of new technologies and a new functionalist approach. Concrete examples were often taken from the field of industry, namely buildings which before the war had been confined to specialised publications.⁹²

A few revealing examples highlight what was at stake. Architectural critic Walter Müller-Wulckow's central role in the breakthrough of modernist architecture has only recently received adequate attention. Müller-Wulckow was the mastermind

behind a series of four books featuring modernist architecture in the bestselling *Blauen Bücher*, a German book series which both established and spread the canon of modernist architecture. During the First World War Müller-Wulckow had already envisaged a new society ushering in a new type of art and was a member of a short-lived avant-garde movement. At that time Müller-Wulckow had also contacted architects asking them for pictures of buildings he regarded as representative of his time. The planned book was to contain “Buildings of Labour and Traffic”.⁹³ Müller-Wulckow’s *Blue books* sold in five digit numbers, which, given their rather specialised theme, was a remarkable success.

Müller-Wulckow thus facilitated, and partially initiated, a process which also occurred in France and other European countries.⁹⁴ The first half of the 1920s saw the publication of a number of books characterised by their vision or daring use of pictures, or both. In 1923 Le Corbusier published all his articles from the journal *L’Esprit Nouveau* as a book entitled *Vers une Architecture*, providing thus a reference point, as the title suggested, for the future of the discipline.⁹⁵ In the Soviet Union Moisei Ginzburg, the founder of the OSA organization of modernist architects and editor of the modernist journal SA, published *Style and Epoch* in 1924.⁹⁶ With regard to its visionary character the book is often likened to Le Corbusier’s *Vers une Architecture*. Another fine example of this new kind of missionary book which claimed to be life-changing is Sigfried Giedion’s *Befreites Wohnen* of 1929. It was deliberately aimed at a wide audience. These books which were ahead of their time, depicting not only a new architecture but a better future and therefore reaching out to the widest possible audience.⁹⁷

This had been attempted systematically by the series *Bauhausbücher*. These books, inspired by Gropius, fulfilled different functions: canon building, providing an outlet to showcase the *Bauhaus*’s achievements, and disseminating the vision which Gropius summarised in his *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, first published in English in 1936.⁹⁸ In France, books published in collaboration with AA attempted an equal degree of cohesion.⁹⁹

One of the storytellers of modernist architecture, Adolf Behne, offers an example of how communication and disseminating the cause quickly merged with the very issue of modernist architecture in only 50 pages in *Eine Stunde Architektur*. Behne assembled the most important statements around the promise of housing, the idea behind *Sachlichkeit*, and some concrete examples in the form of slogans, hammering his message into the mind of the reader.¹⁰⁰

Unlike Behne, most other “propagandists” of new architecture, a contemporary term, relied on the visual power of photos.¹⁰¹ Partly in order to provide examples

which still did not exist in one's own country, and partly seeking to acknowledge the relevance of one's own cause by referring to the ubiquity of the modern movement, landmark books on modernist architecture emphasised the international character of their theme.¹⁰² A good example is the book *Internationale Baukunst* edited by Ludwig Hilberseimer in co-operation with the *Deutsche Werkbund* of 1927, which offered a visual state of the art.¹⁰³ In a similar vein, Gropius presented his book *Internationale Baukunst* of 1927 as a "Bilderbuch moderner Baukunst", a picture book of modern architecture. Gropius explained in his preface that the fact that all the examples shared common characteristics was a "sign of their relevance, pointed to the future and indicated a general desire to design in a completely new way".¹⁰⁴

Almost as suggestive as the signifier 'international' was the reference to the two promised lands in the West and the East. Erich Mendelsohn's 1926 *Amerika. Bilderbuch eines Architekten* made a deep impression even beyond Germany due to its visual impact.¹⁰⁵ Bruno Taut's *Die neue Baukunst in Europa und Amerika* of 1929 strengthened the transatlantic link.¹⁰⁶ Le Corbusier's *Quand les Cathédrales étaient blanches: Voyage au Pays des Timides*, could be seen as a counterpoint, in a sense answering exaggerated expectations.¹⁰⁷ This echoed the early transatlantic urban exchange in the years immediately after the First World War in embracing and rejecting examples from the New and Old World.¹⁰⁸ For Le Corbusier, his disappointment with the US followed his disillusion with the USSR, which had initially caught the imagination of European modernist architects, most vividly captured in the success of El Lissitzky's *Russland. Die Rekonstruktion der Architektur in der Sowjetunion*.¹⁰⁹

As Elisabetta Bresciani has rightly pointed out these books served as a projection screen for the modernist programme while at the same time providing models for modernism themselves. Architecture books spread the idea of a "single modern architecture and modernity" to a greater degree than the comparable journals which, despite their international references and contacts, were still largely dependent on their national context.¹¹⁰ Most of these books were reviewed in *AiB* and other journals, which in turn set the tone and synchronized the resulting discourse.

Travelling, Gathering, Thinking Alike: Architects as Modern Men

Those architects who defined the movement had to become writer-architects. These writer-architects, like Le Corbusier, Gropius or Taut, became authors who quickly showed greater trust in the impact of the visual than in the written and took into account that modernist built icons mainly gained attention through pictures rather

than direct encounters. Their books, to be sure, also significantly contributed to what could be called personal branding of the human icons of modernist architecture. Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris changed his name to Le Corbusier in 1920. He wanted to make sure that his work and written output as an architect would be distinguished from his work as a painter.

Le Corbusier fashioned himself as a new type of architect and was seen as such. A special issue of the AA on Le Corbusier summarised this development thus: “Le Corbusier n’est pas un architecte, mais un réformateur social”.¹¹¹ Le Corbusier had already transformed himself into the first star of the modernist movement by the late 1920s. In Poland he was acclaimed by the *Praesens* group.¹¹² Over the years *AiB* regularly covered Le Corbusier’s work. Particularly remarkable is an article by Lech Niemojewski on “Le Corbusier as a Writer”.¹¹³

Both Gropius and Le Corbusier transformed their image into trademarks. In their cases it was often more important to know who had said something rather than what exactly they had said. Personality and charisma alone can hardly explain their rise to public fame. Instead perhaps the combination of embodying technological progress, a talent to boldly and verbally name the new opportunities, and also their abilities to and talents in leading exceptionally modern lives themselves can serve as an explanation. An idea of this combination may be vividly grasped in László Moholy-Nagy’s film *The Architects’ Congress*, shot at the CIAM IV congress and attesting to these architects’ self-perception as harbingers of modernity.

Le Corbusier and Gropius functioned as agenda-setters and communication anchors. The critics of architecture can be found on a different, more refined and reflected level, where they quickly turned themselves into key figures of the new movement. Adolf Behne, Sigfried Giedion, Theo van Doesburg, and Lewis Mumford no longer confined themselves to reporting on evolutions of style or the criticism of single buildings, but rethought the task of architects as such as well as the architect’s place in society.¹¹⁴ Another example is Adolf Loos, born in Brünn (Brno), who early on celebrated American advances in modern building technologies and became an important interlocutor within what had formerly been the Habsburg empire, particularly through his many personal contacts.¹¹⁵

The aforementioned men saw themselves as drivers of change, much more than, say, Julius Posener, who regarded himself as an interlocutor between France and Germany and a chronicler of the modern movement. Mumford viewed himself as a theme-builder. A self-professed “disciple” of Patrick Geddes, Mumford became an advocate for community building, using new technologies in housing.¹¹⁶ In this Mumford is an example of a fruitful misunderstanding that led to American ad-

miration for the social standards of housing in central Europe, while architects in the Netherlands or Germany prided themselves on their Fordist approach towards housing, their “dwelling machines,” or as Dutch modernist architect Jacobus Oud described their products their “dwelling Fords.”¹¹⁷

Giedion, in particular, used all available formats to spread his message, including high- and low-brow media.¹¹⁸ From the mid-1920s on, Giedion became one of the most eminent ‘translators’ between the general public and the technical sphere and promoter of new expert groups, a paradigmatic techno-intellectual of a new kind who helped to widen the frame of what was perceived as territory for expert action.¹¹⁹ Michel Callon has stressed the importance of “traduction”, that is the requirement that experts should frame a problem by making a case for its solution.¹²⁰ In Bruno Latour’s terminology those who enabled this translation could be referred to as “group talkers, recruiting officers”.¹²¹

Yet, men like Le Corbusier or Gropius, who in part owed their development to men like Giedion or Behne, or, for that matter, Hitchcock and Johnson, not only featured on newspaper covers because of the glamorous nature of their projects, but also because of the vision they espoused – to cure the ills of the past and modernity alike with the means of modernity. Le Corbusier and Gropius, highly controversial in their home countries, were hailed as problem solvers with a potentially global reach. The visionary potential inherent in urbanism reflected back on the experts who personified this potential. Their celebrity-like fame could be understood as an advancement on the seemingly promising future where social and political tensions would be eased or even wiped out by technological advancement and new planning insights. Men like Le Corbusier also attest to the remarkable personalisation of technological progress and the expectations attached to it.

Stanisław Brukalski reflected this development in 1935. The challenge now for experts, Brukalski claimed, was to win over the public to one’s visions and insights. The successful expert was a propaganda expert.¹²² In terms of the modernist content of his work, Brukalski also drew inspiration from Le Corbusier, Gropius and others. Similarly, the architect Roman Feliński, who represented a more moderate modernism whilst still being a pioneer of urbanism in Poland, heavily relied on his extensive publicist activities. Feliński advertised the opportunities of the new discipline of urbanism via the popular press, radio transmissions and other media, employing the *Towarzystwo Reformy Mieszkaniowej* (Society of Housing Reform, TRM) as a transmission-belt to the wider public.¹²³ This worked very well because of the social significance of Feliński’s mission.

Enhancing one's standing as architect by successfully communicating one's idea was also very typical of Szymon Syrkus. Syrkus was, just like Le Corbusier in France and Gropius in Germany, a writer-architect who devoted a considerable amount of his time and professional energy to his intellectual positioning. Syrkus played a central role in the AA network of correspondents.¹²⁴ In this role Syrkus entered a space which was characterised by asymmetries, but equally offered enormous opportunities. The new journals and new forms of books presented a communication framework while the common cause of modernism offered a communication structure in which those who furthered the cause participated in its prestige.

The role Behne or van Doesburg played on a European scale was played in Poland by Edgar Norwerth and Alfred Lauterbach. Both used the columns of *AiB* to systematically report on the developments of modernist architecture in countries further west and at the same time reflect the progress of modernist architecture in Poland.¹²⁵ The absence of a potent market – and the fact that most of those professionally interested in architecture in East Central Europe easily read German or French – seems to have impeded the publication of these books in Eastern European languages. The example of East Central Europe in this sense confirms the hierarchies partially established by the new kind of architecture books – and the status the authors of these books had gained both as intellectuals and architects.¹²⁶

Syrkus and the architects of the *Praesens* group used their standing and contacts in the CIAM to enter the described communication space. The CIAM tried to use all media channels.¹²⁷ Giedion strategically planned journal issues in order to spread the CIAM programme.¹²⁸ The CIAM congresses held before the war were accompanied by book publications and other PR-activities and publicity formed a constant and structural category of the CIAM correspondence. From the moment Szymon Syrkus joined the CIAM, he exchanged ideas with Giedion on how to spread the appeal of the congresses in Poland.¹²⁹ Already in 1929 Syrkus had stressed, with a view to the CIAM's publication strategy, that the organization's ideas were gaining “ever more ground in Central Europe”.¹³⁰ Syrkus' publicity activities included concrete projects such as exhibitions and material for books, published in Zurich and in Warsaw.¹³¹ In 1935 the CIAM, through Giedion particularly, proposed its own *International Journal*, although due to the intensifying political situation it never materialised.¹³²

The CIAM-Ost offers a good case in point of how these mechanisms worked. Immediately after its inception the new sub-organisation set up a secretariat under *Farkas Molnár*. The secretariat obliged the national member groups of CIAM-Ost to: 1) regularly report on their progress *vis-à-vis* the Paris CIAM congress of 1937,

2) inform on “progress in realising modernist architecture in the respective countries” and 3) every national group was obliged to build an archive “which assembles publications, newspaper clippings and photos which were of relevance from the perspective of CIAM”.¹³³

This said, it would be highly misleading to interpret such efforts as merely strategic. From all we can see in the CIAM correspondence and in the CIAM meetings, for which the CIAM members had to make enormous investments in terms of finances, time, work and intellectual commitment, the modernist cause was a deeply-held conviction which almost formed a defining personal characteristic. For the sake of clarity, albeit in somewhat exaggerated form, this bearing comes to the fore in a quote by the French avant-garde artist and typographer Francis Picaba, who stated that “my personality will always be more modern than my oeuvre”.¹³⁴

Both Le Corbusier and Gropius styled themselves as modern men, which included the way they led their private lives and, in Gropius’s case, not conforming to established marital convention.¹³⁵ Gropius’s correspondence with Fred Forbát provided numerous examples of the sense of belonging to a new formation. The sense of being modern overrode divisions of nation, generation, status and standing: Forbát was Hungarian, 14 years younger than Gropius, an employee in Gropius’s private workshop and never achieved the same renown as Gropius.¹³⁶ None of these significant differences prevented them from using a personal tone in the correspondence which reveals mutual interest in family affairs and personal sensitivities. This intimate tone and mutual interest were nourished by a very clear sense of an ‘us and them’ idea of who belonged to the progressive camp and shared a new concept of how to lead one’s life and those who did not.

In a telling observation Andrew Saint hinted at the significance of the zip-pull-over Hannes Meyer featured on a portrait of 1928, only three years after the zip was invented.¹³⁷ One could with equal right refer to a portrait of Barbara Brukalska, showing the architect as a very stylish example of the modern woman and all the features this epitome encapsulated.¹³⁸ As design professionals both architects had a clear sense of the communicative aspect of their work, of the message they sent. The same was true of the deliberately informal clothing style which distinguished CIAM congresses – and their visual representation – from the much more formal gatherings of the, say, IFHTP. Modernist architects made a point of freeing themselves from the conventions of a bygone time and of giving up traditions which defined the specific fusion of professional calling and the personal way of life. The choice – or calling – to be modern, often had stronger implications and stemmed from stronger motivations in East Central European societies, which often still com-

prised traditional social structures and were just developing metropolitan scenes, than in the West. Even in the exceptional situation of Szymon Syrkus' internment in the Auschwitz concentration camp the Syrkus couple recalled the glass-plate of their table at home as a reminder of their shared ideals of modernism.¹³⁹ In East Central Europe the modernist redefinition of a *vita activa* merged with the sense of being on the cusp of a new era during the post-1918 period. Piotr Piotrowski characterised the “wish to be modern, the will to shape the new situation, to acquire an active gaze oriented towards the real life” as typical in its opposition to the “melancholic reflexion” on death which dominated the decades before 1918.¹⁴⁰

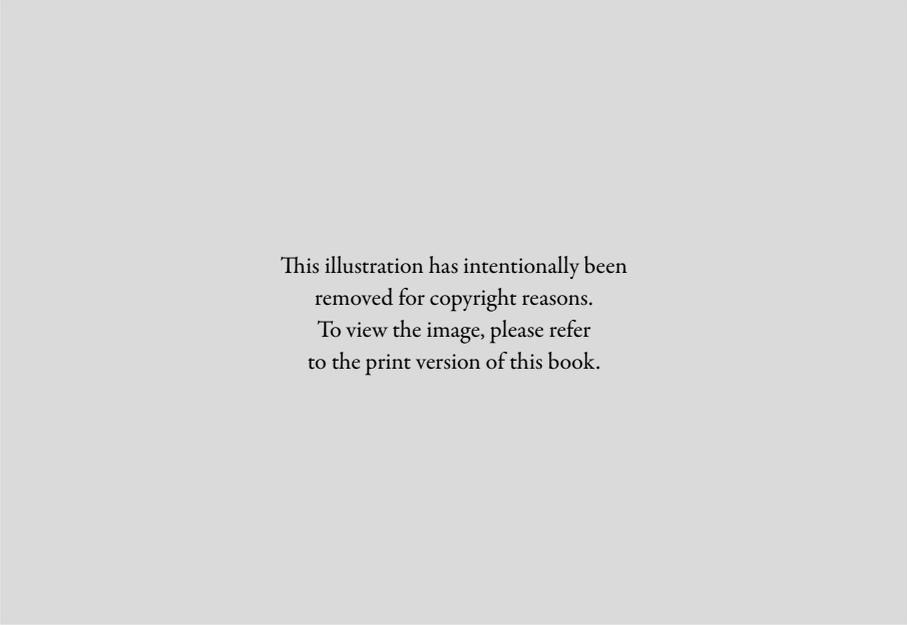
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The observations made on the correspondence between Gropius and Forbát can be easily complemented by numerous examples from the CIAM. A tone of closeness in the correspondence and constant confirmations of friendship, of continuously asking about the well-being of family members, who often took part in the correspondence, prevailed.¹⁴¹ In the passages of his memoirs devoted to the CIAM Forbát accentuated his friendship with the Syrkus couple and recalled that “soon everyone [i.e. within the CIAM] fell in love with Helena.”¹⁴² While it was still men like Giedion, Gropius, Van Eesteren, Le Corbusier and Szymon Syrkus who stood in the limelight, they never questioned the role of women as active participants in their quest for a modern world. It was the closeness engendered by a shared cause, of fighting against resistance, of hoping for a better future to prove this cause right, which particularly facilitated proximity across linguistic, national and generational borders. This belonging was not so much expressed in simple invitations to join common meetings but rather in making a point of embracing a modern position towards all aspects of life, e.g. when Helena Syrkus told Gropius in a letter that she had always been proud of “not being uptight”.¹⁴³ This informal matter-of-fact gaze comes to the fore even in Forbát’s letters, written in extremely restricted personal living circumstances from a train-waggon while overseeing the progress of the Soviet city Magnitogorsk. For the believer in modernist solutions the awkward situation he found himself in formed a challenge to be overcome by rational planning and superior designs.¹⁴⁴

This culture of closeness under the umbrella of the shared cause also extended to and included travelling and international exchange.¹⁴⁵ These were no longer mainly or exclusively purpose-driven – that is serving knowledge exchange and professional affairs – but became a defining feature of one’s persona as modernist architects. AA organised trips to the USSR and Poland – through Szymon Syrkus – in September 1932 and to Czechoslovakia Hungary and Austria in 1935, which also served to emphasise the bonds between the brothers-in-arms of modernism in these countries and to then visually give evidence of the shared journey by reproducing the latest buildings of modernism in the journal.¹⁴⁶

Within the CIAM framework gatherings and travelling attained a new level of importance. Of course, the financial aspect of travelling was a constant point of concern. However, the financial commitments that the Syrkus couple, for example, was willing to make seem to confirm the argument just made: attending CIAM gatherings and being in the company of kindred spirits justified mobilising the very last financial resources. Szymon Syrkus summarised his earlier commitments in a letter a few days before the outbreak of the war: “Whether she [Helena, M.K.] will

be able to come is not dependent on us. It is also not determined by finances – which was never the deciding factor for us, as you know, as we are easily-swayed and greatly prefer collaborating with the CIAM to material wealth. We were never really concerned that the cost of travel was beyond our means.¹⁴⁷



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39. Banquet for French architects in Warsaw 1932, in AA

Obviously, certain personal characteristics were necessary to flourish in these environments, and these did not only involve architectural capability or adherence to modernist principles. Helena Syrkus' international background – including her command of the German, French and Russian (in addition to her native Polish) languages – was one of her attributes which helped her to quickly acquire a key position in the organisation. In her reflection on the relevance of the CIAM in general and for her in particular Helena Syrkus constantly stressed the like-mindedness and close personal contact with her fellow-travellers from the CIAM, based on a broad set of shared personal interests far beyond shared professional interests even many decades after the last congresses.¹⁴⁸

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40. CIAM IV, Patris II, H. Syrkus with Le Corbusier and S. Giedion

Communicating Problems and Solutions via Language and Exhibitions

Of course, the common basis of a belief in modernist solutions and leading a ‘modern life’ oneself did not prevent severe conflicts over just how to resolve issues. Le Corbusier’s 1929 conflict with Teige over the Mundaneum, discussed in chapter 3, is a good illustration of the potential fault-lines. The conflict also illustrates well how much the specific collaboration of modernist architects in the CIAM and beyond was driven by themes of change rather than a mere general collaboration or knowledge transfer.

It has been remarked that Functionalism has to be understood not so much as a style but as a “specific historical way in which architecture found a place in knowledge, politics and public discussion”.¹⁴⁹ The “language of modernism”, which Adrian Forty analysed, conceived of the relationship between architecture and society in a new way – and was a language understood across the barriers of national idioms.¹⁵⁰ In particular, two new generic terms structured the communication on modernist architecture and kept its loose ends together: *Sachlichkeit* and Constructivism transported the rise of technology and linked modernist architecture to numerous other fields in the arts and technology, as well as wider society as such. These terms suggested a revolution in living conditions. *Sachlichkeit* or *Neue Sachlichkeit*

retained the spirit of a disillusioned Weimar Republic after post-war expressionism and was coined during an exhibition of the same name in 1925. The term soon came to be used beyond Germany as well.¹⁵¹ When Le Corbusier, in his *Defense of Architecture*, directed at Teige, confessed that he was guilty of “*lése-Sachlichkeit*” he indirectly confirmed the all-pervading establishment of its rule.¹⁵² *Sachlichkeit* in Le Corbusier’s reading meant architecture according to strictly functionalist principles and with a clear social edge and a practical rationale – and thus not in line with the greater flexibility and stress on aesthetic principles which characterised the ‘Romanic’ faction within the CIAM – and Le Corbusier. In their agreeing to disagree, Le Corbusier and Teige, however, proved that *Sachlichkeit* captured a crucial and central category of what modernist architecture should be. Their disagreement showed not only how communication despite diverse backgrounds could work while at the same time giving an idea of the dynamics of this discussion. For Teige, but also for Syrkus and many others, who all – at least initially – admired Le Corbusier, the promise of *Sachlichkeit* was immense. The sober approach of a form of architecture predominantly understood as a technology to improve society seemed to offer the greatest possibility of solving their countries’ housing problems while aesthetics seemed to be more of a luxury problem. Further, Teige’s, and to lesser extent Syrkus’, leftist convictions could easily be combined with the essence of *Sachlichkeit*.

The more relevant term for East Central European architects was, however, Constructivism. The term fulfilled a twofold function. Constructivism was the rallying cry under which an international avant-garde assembled.¹⁵³ Heterogeneous as this movement was, Constructivism revealed an integrative power. Moreover, Constructivism was, to a greater extent than *Sachlichkeit*, a dynamic term with a promise for the future and made use of concrete examples in the Soviet Union. Constructivism and the OSA group were clearly linked with – and abroad associated with – the Russian Revolution. Vladimir Tatlin’s famous tower encapsulated the dynamic of progress on the verge of the utopian. The Hungarian László Moholy-Nagy, when joining the *Bauhaus* in 1925, was deeply inspired by Constructivism. Artist-architects, he claimed, were in a position to shape humankind by organising vital processes of life.¹⁵⁴ As Tzvetan Todorov has rightly stated, “architecture was the logical apotheosis of Constructivist experiments: inspired by artistic principles, the architect would fashion the world building real houses, life-size cities and landscapes”.¹⁵⁵ Here Constructivism is a telling example of how a new dynamic field opened up a communication space around what in this case was a largely utopian issue. This dynamic, as well as the concrete grounding of Constructivism in its interest in new materials, made it highly attractive to artists and particularly to

architects in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.¹⁵⁶ Journals and Constructivist avant-garde movements emerged in all three countries, in many respects motivated by the promise of radical change to a deeply depressing situation right after the First World War. In all three countries the artists and architects built on the networks established during and in the aftermath of the 1922 Düsseldorf congress of the *Union Internationaler Fortschrittlicher Künstler* (International Union of Progressivist Artists), later *Konstruktivistische Internationale* (Constructivist Internationale, KI), which established Constructivism as slogan. At that meeting utopian visions had been combined with an emphasis on the opportunities of practical progress already made, particularly stressing the need for and opportunities of international communication. El Lissitzy and van Doesburg used the KI to build networks and journals, of which *BLOK* was an important part. The article “What is Constructivism” written jointly by members of the Polish group *BLOK* was inspirational for Theo van Doesburg.¹⁵⁷

The dynamics which the concepts of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and Constructivism entailed are to be found in the communication structure which the CIAM, along with many other things, also was. This is best visible in the thematic congresses which were one of the hallmarks of the CIAM. Following its establishment in Swiss La Sarraz, the next gatherings in Frankfurt (CIAM II, 1929) and Brussels (CIAM III, 1930) both tackled critical topics around the overall question of housing.

With the establishment of the CIRPAC and its working groups as problem-solving committees the CIAM tried to move on from framing problems to solving problems. While this aspiration was never fulfilled in the way the CIAM architects hoped for, the Frankfurt congress clearly shows the novelty of and opportunities afforded by this approach. The congress in effect coined a term for a complex problem by using the catchphrase ‘minimum-dwelling’ and placed it on the political agenda, thereby functioning as a unifying agent of the respective discourse. It was largely through international comparison that the congress established that problems existed, were urgent and universal in kind. This reflects the attention to making rules expressed in the urbanists’ struggle to achieve unified maps.¹⁵⁸

Being able to refer to concrete manifestations of the CIAM problem-solving potential in Ernst May’s Frankfurt, the congress at least attempted to function as a pace-setter. The constant comparisons, yet another hallmark of the CIAM, gave a sense of urgency to the themes of change which the CIAM had introduced or at least taken up and framed internationally.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, Frankfurt was put on the international map as a front-runner in taking on the greater social question of housing. It was no coincidence that May, who, along with Gropius and Le Corbusier, was

one of the international celebrities of social architecture, was soon thereafter hailed in the Soviet Union as a master of far-ranging urban planning.¹⁶⁰

The mechanism behind this could partly be described, as David Kuchenbuch has pointed out for housing and urbanism in general, as “crisification”, a strategy to frame, and therefore also dramatize, social problems in order to push through or speed up social politics.¹⁶¹ The Weimar Republic saw an immense upsurge in statistical and scientific work on the “*Kleinwohnungsfrage*” in the late 1920s, which was dictated by the crisis of political legitimacy and austerity there. The CIAM congress provide excellent examples of how this discursive framing of problems was taken to the next, concrete level – and throughout Europe. Right after the Frankfurt congress, AiB reported the results, referring to its earlier coverage of the congress.¹⁶²

The focus on exemplary buildings of modernism often avoided the fact that these buildings cannot be separated from the wider urban infrastructure, the “urban machinery”.¹⁶³ Measures undertaken in order to improve this “machinery”, also via the CIAM, became part of a Europe-wide communication and exchange of experts. Cities also had to position themselves in a pattern of urban progress, particularly the capital cities. The activities of the Polish housing reform movement give ample evidence of this twofold process of drawing inspiration and concrete knowledge from international examples as much as using these new frameworks to position oneself. The 1932 campaign, *Tani Dom Własny* (An Affordable Home of Your Own) disseminated via an exhibition of the same name, as well as a special issue of *DOM* serve as good cases in point.¹⁶⁴

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The clout of the IFHTP and the organisation's specific knowledge was used in a similar way by urbanists in Czechoslovakia to establish an Institute for Urbanism. With the help of the IVW a Czechoslovak Association for Housing Reform was established during an IVW conference in Prague in 1935 and the theme thus placed on the public agenda.¹⁶⁵ In order to understand why this went so smoothly we have to take into account how comparisons worked within the new field of urbanism. From its very beginnings and in an increasing manner, the development toward urbanism was international in character, creating its own international organisations and various networks of exchange.¹⁶⁶

An important pre-condition for the CIAM's success in bringing architects from very diverse backgrounds together around problems were new techniques in communicating architecture. The writer-architects Behne and van Eesteren had already made remarkable attempts to condense the essence of new architecture and urbanism by the mid-1920s. Van Eesteren made use of slides and apparently planned a film. There were also plans to publish van Eesteren's ideas under the title *Eine Stunde Städtebau* in a series alongside Behne's *Eine Stunde Architektur*.¹⁶⁷ Van Eesteren's approach was game-changing in that he perceived the city in a holistic way and combined this with his notion of urbanism as a science with clear-cut methods. Based on his earlier experiences in Paris he used diagrams and maps as visualisations to communicate his complex results much more consistently and in a manner that was easier to comprehend than others had done before.¹⁶⁸ Van Eesteren succeeded in, on the one hand, taking a much richer set of information into account while, on the other hand, keeping this information abstract and thus communicable.

Within the CIAM van Eesteren strove to unify categories and modes of representation of architecture and urbanism in order to facilitate a systematic comparison of cities and to give more clout to the demands of CIAM. This aim brought van Eesteren and the CIAM into the orbit of the Austrian political economist and sociologist Otto Neurath. The progressive climate of the 1920s resulted in Neurath becoming director of the *Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum* (Museum of Society and Economy). The wide scope of this institution provided Neurath with the means to develop the ISOTYPE project, a visual dictionary with some two thousand symbols.¹⁶⁹

While this was not, in itself, a new approach, the embracement of modern storage and communication media certainly was. Neurath believed that the new media would enable him to forge a new standardised language and thus disseminate knowledge in ways previously unheard of. Under modern conditions, Neurath saw new urgency for such an undertaking, but also new hope of achieving this through new

technology and new visual media. Neurath directly linked the development of his pictorial language to technological progress. What technology had achieved for industry and hygiene for health pedagogy, visualisation was now to achieve for social progress.¹⁷⁰

Through strict standardisation, information could not only be communicated but also easily compared, which was particularly important to Neurath. More important was his activist stance. Adopting general trends like urban reform with its intention of teaching tenants how to live, Neurath stressed the social edge of his new communication method.

Tellingly, as Charles van de Heuvel has argued, modernist architecture and new visual architectures of knowledge overlapped in manifold ways. Paul Otlet, the mastermind behind the Mundaneum and universal ways of organising knowledge, who had worked with Neurath, used modernist architecture to visualise his systems of knowledge organisation. Moreover, Otlet used similar categories for describing the knowledge revolution he saw at play and wanted to promote as Le Corbusier had done in his *Vers une architecture*. Both men used terms like plan, standardisation or classification not only in their ordering function, but as instruments “to create a better society”.¹⁷¹ Urbanism offered a framework for comparisons but also another dynamic term pointing to a better future. When Norwerth discussed the transformative potential of Le Corbusier’s 1925 book *Urbanism* in AiB, it was the dynamic of the concept which he stressed.¹⁷²

Exhibitions may also be seen as a medium which transformed the way architects communicated. Of course, exhibitions were not a new phenomenon in the 20th century, but they changed in character at this point for a number of reasons. Building on the framework established by the World’s Fairs since the mid-19th century, the new nation states used exhibitions to put themselves on the map as modern entities.¹⁷³ This was true both for exhibitions in these countries themselves and for exhibitions abroad, most efficiently the said World Fairs. At the same time the most prominent international exhibitions gave reason to debate the relationship between official state representation and the role modernist architects could play here along the lines described in chapter 1. This was true for the 1937 World’s Fair in Paris – where Lachert and Szanacja and Brukalski built the Polish pavilion – and for the 1939 New York World’s Fair.¹⁷⁴

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42. Polish pavilion at the Paris World Fair, 1937

Ever since proto-urbanist Werner Hegemann had organised the first exhibition on urbanism in 1910, these events served to both define the phenomenon and to provide a framework for the politics of comparison.¹⁷⁵ While urbanism remained a matter for specialists, architecture exhibitions by their very nature attracted a far

broader public.¹⁷⁶ Though modernist architects' claim to represent their countries was certainly not uncontested, modernist architecture was well-suited to the genre. This was true for temporary buildings, which were still able to capture the revolutionary aesthetics of glass and concrete, such as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's famous Barcelona Pavilion of 1929 as well as exhibitions capturing the visual impact of new architecture in photographic form. The most striking and well-known example was the Weissenhof estate built for a *Werkbund* exhibition in Stuttgart of 1927.¹⁷⁷

Exhibitions were not only urban events because they were organised within the spatial domain of a city, but also because their main theme of technical modernisation was attuned to urban space in many ways. Exhibitions greatly contributed to a more scientific discourse on cities and to linking urbanism and architecture to a wider social cause – or even the nation as such. One particularly revealing and effective example is the Stockholm exhibition of 1930, of which iconic photographs were widely published.¹⁷⁸ This exhibition attempted, more or less in direct reaction to the Paris World Exhibition of 1925, to merge what was perceived as European, or even global, modernism with the essence of “Swedishness”.¹⁷⁹

Czechoslovakia staged a national exhibition in 1928. In line with the new nation's desire to look towards the future, Brno was deliberately chosen over Prague. The organisers selected the country's dynamic second city because it “had no tradition and no past” and they felt that this would allow Brno to match the new state in terms of having no sizeable tradition. The workshop and the laboratory were to feature here as the new model of the state.¹⁸⁰

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43. PeWuKa of 1929 in Poznań and Main pavilion of Brno Exhibition Grounds built for the Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in Czechoslovakia on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the new state (current view)

The PeWuKa of 1929 in Poznań, was attended by more than four million visitors. The exhibition was a revealing example of merging national aspirations with those of technical experts, in particular modernist architects. As the global economic crisis began shortly thereafter, the exhibition marked a shift of emphasis from the question of the nation's independence to the social implications of modern art – and architecture.¹⁸¹ AiB devoted a double-issue solely to the exhibition. With numerous emblematic illustrations in the style of Otto Neurath AiB highlighted the overarching societal relevance of the exhibition.¹⁸²

The exhibition was presented as a “confirmation of an exam passed with distinction, an exam in which the ability to lead a life of one's own in the family of nations was tested”.¹⁸³ In excess of 100 pavilions were erected on exhibition grounds covering more than 60 hectares to present the most important economic, political and cultural achievements of the new state of Poland, featuring some spectacular examples of modernist architecture, mostly by *Praesens* architects.¹⁸⁴ Among the latter was a striking design for a pavilion featuring the place of women in the modern economy by Anatolia Hryniewicka-Piotrowska.¹⁸⁵ The fact that the *Praesens* group had been invited attests to the official embracement of modernism. This was a defining moment for *Praesens* and the last time that group acted as one entity. The group split into two after the exhibition: those who followed the avant-garde tradition and those who sought concrete solutions in social architecture.

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The exhibitions mentioned earlier served as a constitutive element of the *BLOK* group's formative phase. But on *BLOK*'s initiative an exhibition of international architecture was also held in Nancy, France, in March 1926. The first issue of the journal *Praesens* broadly covered the Exhibition of Modern Architecture in Warsaw of 1926 with projects from Czechoslovakia, France, Netherland, Germany and Russia.¹⁸⁶ The same was true for the last issue of the journal *BLOK*, which functioned as a catalogue of the 1926 Warsaw exhibition.¹⁸⁷ It was through the high-profile of their group that Syrkus and other members of *Praesens* were able to take part in the 1927 *Machine-Age* exhibition in New York.¹⁸⁸

Exhibitions only had a broad impact if they were embedded in a wider media strategy and had a clear-cut message which reached beyond artistic issues in the narrower sense. The 1923 *International Bauhaus Exhibition* was widely publicised by Gropius and proved decisive for attracting students from other parts of Europe to the new institution. The *Bauhaus* experience, and the lectures of *Bauhaus* associates, on the other hand, informed many of the exhibitions in East Central Europe, which tried to merge modernist architecture and social problems on the spot. This was true for the three exhibitions *Collective Housing* (1931), *For a New Architecture* (1932) and *Build for Our Children* (1932) in Hungary, which built on lectures and publications by members of the Hungarian CIAM group and all shared a sharp reformist edge.¹⁸⁹

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46. Pavilions at PeWuKa

More and more exhibitions were being organised around issues of social transformation in the second half of the 1920s. An excellent example is provided by the 1925 exhibition *Mieszkanie i Miasto* (Housing and Town) in Poland.¹⁹⁰ In the manner of

the ‘crisification’ described above,¹⁹¹ and in a typical interplay of an exhibition and a journal devoted to the goal of modernist architecture, Zymunt Wóycicki referred to a “catastrophic housing crisis”, calling on the state to act. According to him the housing question was a political problem of the first order. Wóycicki used evocative aerial photography to make his point about a hopelessly dysfunctional urban present and contrasted this with far-ranging plans for the most ambitious Polish urban projects of the mid-1920s. The author argued that it was up to the state to develop the territory in the critical regions, in particular the capital Warsaw and the new ‘Capital of the Sea’ Gdynia.¹⁹² Indeed, the exhibition itself drew on substantial state funding and was heavily influenced by state agencies, in particular the Ministry for Public Works. The exhibition thus provides a good example of the alliance between the modernising state and ambitious modernist architects who, as Wóycicki stressed, recommended rationally built modern houses as the solution to the crisis.¹⁹³ Other exhibitions followed this model to awaken the public and tried to pressure the state into taking action. In 1930 *Praesens* organised an exhibition entitled *Mieszkanie Najmniejsze* (The Small Inexpensive Dwelling). The exhibition demonstrated the technical and social opportunities for modernists, as explained in Szymon Syrkus’ accompanying article in the first issue of *Praesens* featuring in particular the Brukowski couple’s newly erected cooperative housing buildings.¹⁹⁴ Given the more than 25,000 visitors who attended the exhibition it was an enormous success.¹⁹⁵

Exhibitions and the rise of a new kind of architecture journal were closely intertwined. Exhibition architecture, built for its visual effect, worked particularly well in the new high-quality photographic illustrations. Even smaller exhibitions attracted the attention of specialised journals abroad.¹⁹⁶ It is revealing that the two first AA exhibitions in France featured Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and particularly emphasized the plight of the new states and their needs – especially Warsaw – to develop new capitals.¹⁹⁷ These dynamics of architecture on display, often still at planning level, media-attention and the combination with the most urgent needs of the state – housing, urbanism, social improvement – all placed in an international framework, made exhibitions a prime example of how the empowerment of architects was enabled, and how these new opportunities were grasped by modernist architects.

Conclusion

This chapter showed that the relevance of organising architects in new ways, as described in chapter 3, can only fully be understood when new ways of communi-

cating architecture is brought into the picture. The CIAM, as the behaviour of its East Central European groups show, displayed significant publicist activities and the organisation's publications committee coordinated the spreading of the appeal of modernist architecture and its promised social impact. The organisation was able to do so because in the ten years between the end of the First World War and its foundation a new communication space emerged, with new, theme-driven journals employing the visual significance of the new architectural approach to the full – enabling the 'miracle of synchronicity'.

Modernist architects in East Central Europe – of which Szymon Syrkus is a prime example – proactively seized the opportunities offered by communication and media to enhance their own position. In a similar way as the national and international organisation discussed in the previous chapter these architects could promote both their claim of superior knowledge and insight by referring to international best practices. The same was true of their claim to be able to achieve concrete improvement – with reference to examples fully completed on the ground.

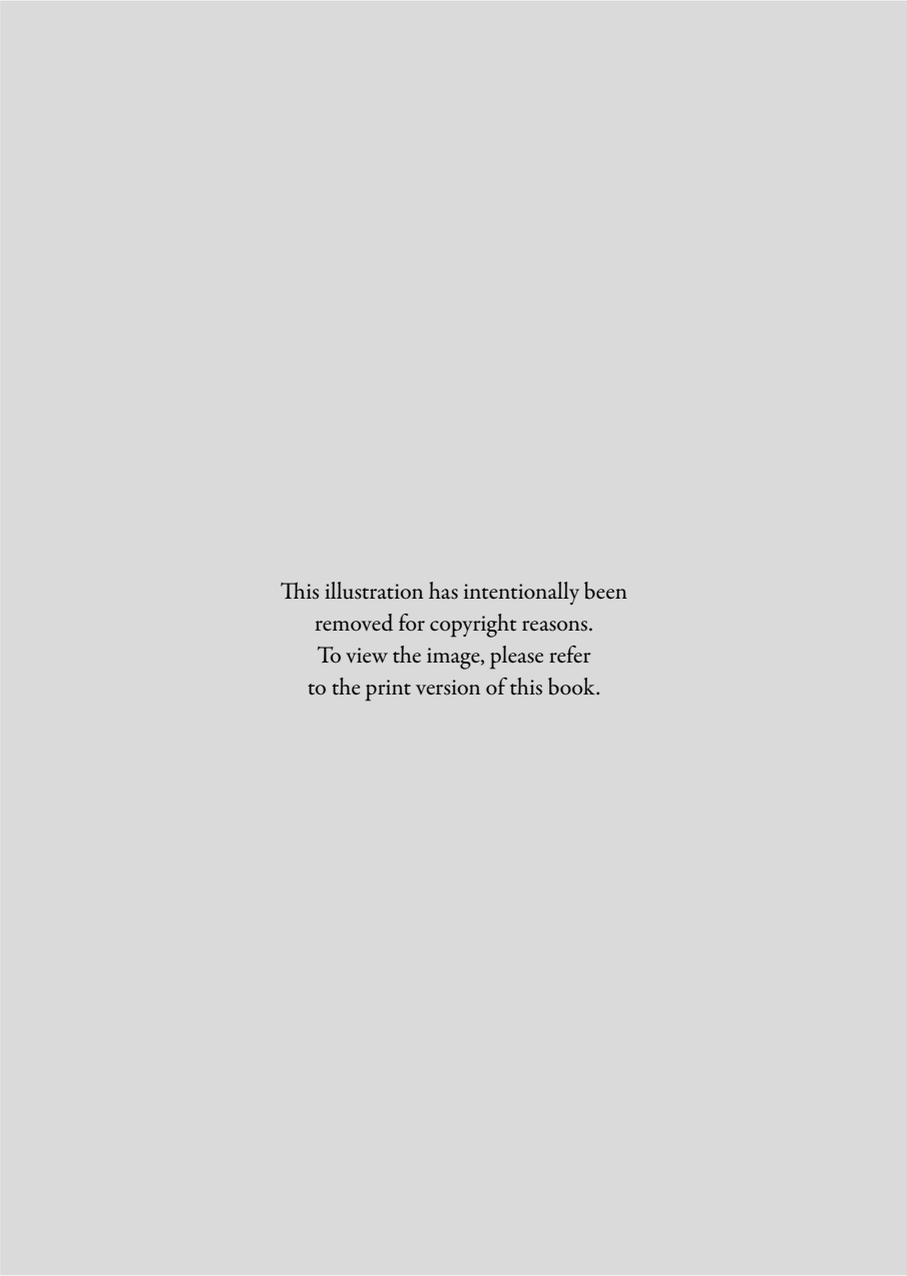
Modernist architects like Syrkus gave the journals and the exhibitions a new look by using typography, a new graphic language, by embracing new media as part of their mission, and by systematically employing international exchange as an argument in support of their cause. What emerged was much more than just a new space to express one's ideas internationally. These new forms of communication in fact triggered various dynamics: dynamics of comparison in new standardised, partially graphic, formats, dynamics derived from visualised visions of improved cities, dynamics derived from describing (and, again, visualising) urban problems, dynamics of referring to allegedly powerful technologies apparent in the 'techno-buildings' of glass and concrete which featured in the new journals – and the list does not stop here. All these dynamics translated, or at least could be translated, into new opportunities of influence for modernist architects – and for the reasons explained in chapters 1 and 2 these opportunities were particularly expressed in East Central Europe and here especially in the new capital cities.

These dynamics will be demonstrated in the next chapter by analysing a concrete example – the *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* planning. Further, the general dynamics described in this chapter will be linked to material problems on the ground: the urban development of the Polish capital Warsaw.

Gallery with Plates

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9. Staircase Café Era, Brno



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10. Melnikov house, Moscow, front façade

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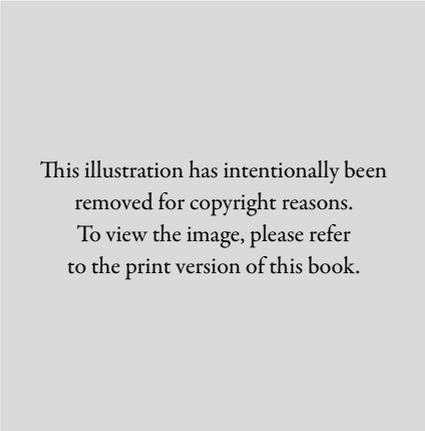
13. Architects' Ball at the Faculty of Architecture, WUT, 1938

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26. Group picture CIAM-Ost meeting at Budapest. Seated: S. Giedion, H. and S. Syrkus

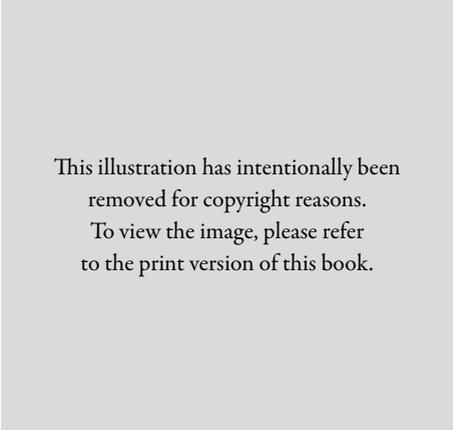
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27. WSM exhibition on the minimum dwelling



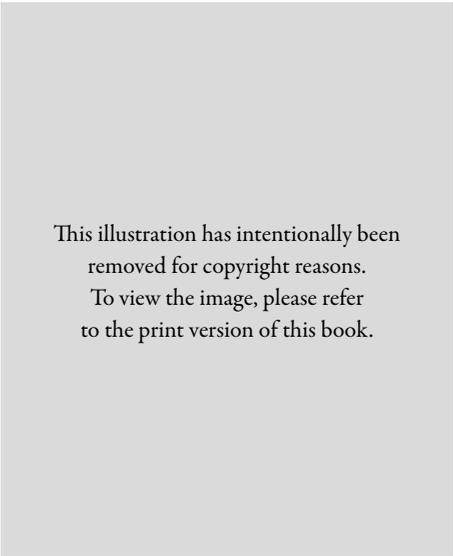
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32. Cover of the *BLOK* journal



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41. *DOM*, Campaign An Affordable Home of Your Own, 1932



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61. Cover of last issue of *AiB*, June 1939

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38. Living modernism. Painting Two Figures, F. Molnár

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43. Main pavilion of Brno Exhibition Grounds built for the Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in Czechoslovakia on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the new state (current view)

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48. Le Corbusier in Zlín, 1935

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49. C. van Eesteren, Sketch of Warsaw, showing public property for housing purposes ("Staatsgelände für Wohnzwecke") lying north of the city limits

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55. Map showing pollution in Warsaw for CIAM IV congress



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64. Plans of housing estates for Koło, Warsaw, H. Syrkus, 1947, initiated during wartime

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65. Letter S. Syrkus from Auschwitz of 25 July 1944

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69. Kolo estate built between 1947 and 1950, designed by H. Syrkus during the war

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71. B. Bierut on 22 June 1948, being shown designs for the *Trasa W-Z* main traffic artery by architect Józef Sigalin. Also present is Roman Piotrowski, amongst others

5. Materialising the International Agenda: Warszawa Funkcjonalna

The editorial to AiB's first edition of 1925 highlighted three seminal changes for architects: technology, which allowed for a new kind of architecture, the emergence of a new public for architectural and urban problems which transcended national boundaries, and, finally, architectural challenges on a completely new scale. The editorial stated that an architect could therefore no longer afford to be a "poet and dreamer" but had to become an intellectual and constructor. It was certainly no accident that, in contrast to the existing Cracow-based Polish architectural journal, the new journal was to be based in the new capital Warsaw. Warsaw gave structure, focus and relevance to the role of talking about architecture in Poland. The uneasy but meaningful alliance between modernist architects and the state manifested itself in the capital. Last but not least, more than any other place, the capital served as a link between the national frame and the international frame in which architecture was debated and conceived.¹ This link, almost by definition, involved politics.

When emphasizing the relevance of new means and forms of communication which enabled the self-empowerment of architects, one should not lose sight of the material dimension of the new communicative space described in the previous chapter. It was the dynamic change that the capital cities of East Central Europe underwent after the First World War which was reflected, both visually and in text format, in the pages of the many journals established at that time. This chapter will use the case of Warsaw, and more specifically the planning effort known as *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, Functional Warsaw, as an example to spell out the dynamics of urban change in the Polish capital and the ensuing new opportunities available to modernist architects. The chapter will trace the architects acting both in the national and

international sphere and consider the political pressures and expectations they were confronted with. In so doing this chapter will also merge the themes of the four previous chapters: first, the structural conditions of East Central Europe and what these implied for architects, second, new forms of architectural training bringing about architects as a new kind of urban expert, third, the impact of new forms of organising architects, in particular the CIAM, and fourth, the new communicative space for modernist architects described in chapter 4.

The CIAM IV Moment - Politics Coming in

The 1933 CIAM congress, known as CIAM IV, attained almost legendary status after the Second World War. In somewhat of a misreading of the more complex course of the congress, CIAM IV was seen as the hub of a new form of radical urban planning that extended beyond the human scale under the header of The Functional City. Moreover, the congress location – it was held in Athens on board the *Patris II*, a remodelled liner – and its casual ambience proved eye-opening in the 1930s, and was very vividly portrayed in László Moholy-Nagy's film *The Architects' Congress*.²

Yet CIAM IV also came to attain iconic status because it marked a watershed for the organisation. CIAM IV was in every way the most political CIAM congress and this was felt on at least three levels. In early 1933 the Nazis had seized power in Germany and thus nearly brought the modernist movement to an end in one of the places where it was most spectacularly visible. The *Bauhaus* had bowed to Nazi pressure and dissolved itself on 20 July, only a few days before CIAM members boarded the *Patris II* on 29 July 1933. No German CIAM members were present. Even a man of Gropius's standing was careful not to endanger his position at home. The Hungarian CIAM group was also unable to attend as the Hungarian regime had refused to issue them with passports in punishment for their participation in a critical exhibition on urban problems.³

Even more directly linked with the CIAM's fate was the changing political situation in the Soviet Union. In the wider context of Joseph Stalin's consolidation of power, the now uncontested leader had broken the bond between socialism and the architectural avant-garde, which to so many modernist architects seemed no less than a given. This had direct consequences for the CIAM. When neither Le Corbusier nor any other modernist entry won the 1932 competition to design the Palace of the Soviets in Moscow but a rather conventional neoclassical entry was selected, Le Corbusier spoke of treason of the modern age.⁴ Le Corbusier and other CIAM leaders strongly criticised the decision and threatened to abandon their intention to

hold a CIAM congress in Moscow, which they actually did. They sent Stalin two telegrams boldly explaining their concerns. In an attempt to moderate the text of the telegram Sigfried Giedion was at least able to remove Le Corbusier's comment that after the competition the USSR was doomed "to a miserable mediocre, retrograde and decadent end". Nevertheless, as a consequence of this written intervention, the position of Western experts in the Soviet Union worsened further.⁵

While Stalin aspired to find "politically fixed models" for the urban transformation of the whole countryside, the CIAM sought to explore new fields of work, in part to demonstrate the universal validity of its urbanist approach.⁶ The failure of the respective, well-developed plans for a cooperation based on shared goals, however, is also illustrated by the fact that architects from the Soviet Union only played a limited part in the interwar international expert communication – and the CIAM specifically. The Soviet Union had already declined to send architects to the preliminary congress of 1931 and simply stated that Nikolai A. Miljutin's concept of a socialist city had to serve as a model for the CIAM.⁷

Le Corbusier's overreaction (and that of others) can only be understood against the background of the hopes that had been placed in the Soviet Union as a "laboratory of history", as the Czech left-wing intellectuals referred to it.⁸ The Moscow incident also made it clear that the CIAM experts lacked the influence they believed they had. In addition, the many CIAM affiliated architects who had entered the Soviet Union in order to contribute to building new cities had experienced dramatic disruptions to their careers and their personal lives – or found themselves in a highly fragile position if they remained in the Soviet Union. Ernst May, Fred Forbát and Hans Schmidt all avoided the 1933 congress. "It's important to stay in touch in times like these" May ended a letter to Forbát in August 1933, summarizing the months which had made the prerogatives on which their architectural work and vision relied obsolete.⁹

CIAM IV was also the most political congress to date as its main theme, The Functional City, had far-reaching political implications – or so, at least, many CIAM members believed. Another notable absence was Karel Teige, a key figure in the preceding discussions but who regarded Le Corbusier's approach as hopelessly bourgeois.¹⁰ Tensions within the CIAM group, founded only five years earlier in 1928, now became patently obvious.¹¹ The argument – which extended beyond Teige and Le Corbusier – was about defining the place of architects as experts in society and *vis-à-vis* politics, including authoritarian politics. Giedion described the main contentious point as the following: "Question of principle = Technicians or politicians?" For Giedion this implied two options. Either congress members would

consider themselves – as they had so far – as technicians and thus resolve problems on a technical basis, or they would see themselves as politicians with a clear stance against capitalism following the model that Karel Teige and the Czechoslovakian group had opted for.¹² For Giedion the first option included the chance to exert influence but also the risk of being side-lined immediately after an – expected – change in the political system. Opting to act as politicians would be the only way to exert influence in a “socialist situation”. In the background loomed the big question of, as Giedion put it, whether the future expectation would be that “every specialist [would] take a political side” Giedion believed so. On the other hand, given the political chaos of the present time, he believed that the voice of the CIAM as technical experts outside politics was enormously important “to create order”.¹³ It was this link which estranged Otto Neurath, who took part in the congress as a “specialist”, from Le Corbusier who was “wedded to safeguarding the autonomy of the ‘master planner’” while Neurath insisted on keeping in touch with the common man.¹⁴

Le Corbusier and Giedion’s disagreement over phrases and formulations was also so laboured because a resolution was to be sent out to the press and governments alike which it was thought would have a considerable impact. Le Corbusier insisted on an “active resolution”, which was also to tackle the question of economic change. Commenting on a report by Le Corbusier for the CIAM congress in 1937 Walter Gropius noted in a memo for Giedion: “To me he seems almost dangerous in his arrogant partial superficiality [...] I am increasingly understanding why experts who work out special questions based on years of experience turn on their heels when viewing this pattern.”¹⁵

Gropius’s lamenting reflects a conflict which manifested itself during and after the CIAM IV congress, a conflict over urban change based on piecemeal analytical preparation versus urban change which emanated from sweeping plans where local conditions were considered as merely a secondary issue. As a second point of contention, partially connected to the previous point, CIAM IV exposed the question of how to politically support the extensive urban change architects wanted to achieve. This discussion touched both the architects’ self-perception as apolitical – or, as others argued, political – experts and the very self-image of the CIAM as an organisation basing itself solely on scientific considerations.¹⁶

Tellingly, although a special committee was formed to come up with a resolution based on the results of intense discussions, a unanimous statement on the discussions on the Patris II and in Athens never came about. Le Corbusier only published what he, somewhat mistakenly, suggesting a uniformity that never existed, called Charta of Athens in 1943.¹⁷ In August 1933 Le Corbusier reached out to those who

were in responsible positions and, he said, waiting for a statement from the CIAM and for a call to practical action: "It is high time, Giedion, the world is on fire. There is a need for reinforcement. We are the technicians of modern architecture. In the name of due procedure and of the holy cause I demand that the resolution will be published."¹⁸

The concept of the Functional City, partially Le Corbusier's brainchild, was also a means of empowering the CIAM. After all, this extensive urbanist vision claimed to regulate areas of social life which had thus far been beyond the scope of architects or were not considered as part of a uniform vision. This, logically, meant at the same time that political support became a key factor in defining the success of the Functional City. Without support at the highest level the transformation of whole cities had to remain a vision rather than a reality. Moreover, urbanist planning, which in itself was a technical discipline claiming scientific neutrality, became increasingly aligned to the evolving political systems. Prime examples are the two models, perceived to be opposing ends of the discussion: the 'capitalist' General Extension Plan for Amsterdam of 1935 and the 'socialist' Reconstruction Plan for Moscow of 1935. As has been argued, both plans need to be seen in their political context as manifestations of a deep paradigm shift which took place in a "unique international constellation".¹⁹

The Soviet promise to once and for all vanquish the city of the 19th century through all-encompassing planning, the provision of seemingly endless resources of material and labour, and by doing away with the impediments of change, in particular property rights, which haunted the modernists, was almost too good not to be accepted. "One of the most important tasks ever to be assigned to a town planner has been entrusted to me", Ernst May explained to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* before departing for the Soviet Union.²⁰ As many of the architects who joined May directly, or as part of the broader programme to bring foreign architects to the Soviet Union, had learned the hard way the political price they had to pay was immense. While most of these architects could identify with the political goals of the regime, they had a much harder time accepting that the expert authority they claimed was interpreted radically differently in their guest country. Even an architect as experienced, flexible, and willing to accept setbacks as Forbát was completely disillusioned by 1933. By the mid-1930s most western architects had left the Soviet Union, or lost the standing which initially brought them there and had been reduced "to the level of collaborators". Mart Stam, Hannes Meyer and Hans Schmidt left the Soviet Union as "broken men".²¹ Moreover, there were few options left to go to in Europe, with Germany's political transformation and countries like Hungary becoming in-

creasingly authoritarian. Deeply troubled by recent developments Gropius wrote to Forbát in October 1933, “everyone returns to blood and soil”.²²

We should be careful, however, not to schematically contrast the growing political pressure on architects and their professional leeway. In many instances, the changing political climate offered new opportunities for architects. This was the case, as will be discussed in this chapter, for the CIAM project *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*. Before focussing on this case, this chapter will briefly outline other attempts to seize the opportunities for a new, functional urbanism despite the darkening political sky in Europe, then turn to the rise of the idea of the Functional City, and will move to urbanism in the ‘late’ metropolis Warsaw.

Realising the Novel: The Functionalist Laboratory of Zlín

The turning of the political tide in the early 1930s gave rise to a large-scale emigration of architects. Apart from those in Germany, few architects were forced to leave their country at that time. But the places where modernist visions could be realized became scarce. One of the most imaginative counterpoints to this development was Erich Mendelsohn’s *Académie Européenne Méditerranée* (European Mediterranean Academy, AEM). The *AEM* began to take concrete shape in 1933 with the purchase of a building site on the Côte d’Azur near St Tropez. Mendelsohn, one of the stars of the modernist movement, had conceived this academy together with architects Hendricus Theodorus Wijdeveld and Amédée Ozenfant partly in reaction to the closure of borders and the Nazi regime’s assault on culture and science – and thus everything the 1920s avant-gardists had stood for. The academy was heavily inspired by the *Bauhaus* and was intended to train a new generation in a European spirit within a broad selection of the arts. Mendelsohn had mustered an impressive array of like-minded intellectuals, artists and scientists. The academy’s *Comité d’Honneur* comprised Albert Einstein, Henry van de Velde, Igor Stravinsky, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Paul Valéry.

Forbát was entrusted with designing the buildings for the academy.²³ He had finally decided not to return to the Soviet Union in May 1933, having left it a few months earlier. Forbát took this decision in reaction to the change in political conditions under which architects had to work in the Soviet Union. In a premonitory statement, Forbát attested to a new, and increasingly threatening situation for him and his fellow-travellers: “I also believe that because of the mass-emigration from Germany the position of German specialists, who are not party communists, will become untenable. To be spied on and denounced by one’s own communist col-

leagues will reach a level, which cannot be sustained". Forbát believed that any leeway experts might have to express themselves in technical matters would become even more reduced than it already was.²⁴

By May 1933 Forbát had not only lost his position in the Soviet Union but also his German citizenship. As he had no clear prospects in his native Hungary the political change of climate in Europe left him clutching the straw of Mendelsohn's insecure undertaking. Dozens of modernist architects who had formerly been employed in the Soviet Union or were unable to stay in Germany turned, like Forbát, into 'free radicals' trying to gain a foothold in a place where they could practise their profession. From Turkey to Kenya and Mexico the likes of Martin Wagner, Ernst May and Hannes Meyer, to name only the best known, tried to escape the turning tide in Europe.²⁵ Dutch architect Henk Niegeman, who had also been in the Soviet Union until 1933, joined Forbát in Mendelsohn's visionary enterprise.

Mendelsohn's academy confirms the high expectations associated with modernist architecture. The academy also served as a remarkable attempt to re-assert modernist architecture as the leading discipline – albeit belatedly given the new political conditions.²⁶ In what could be taken as an almost symbolic event a fire destroyed the lot on which the academy was to be erected in June 1934, while the adverse political climate had made the ambitious endeavour increasingly difficult anyway.

With Germany and the Soviet Union no longer part of the modernist map regions which, in terms of attention, had been peripheral entered the limelight. In contrast to its neighbouring countries Czechoslovakia remained economically and politically stable and kept its democratic system in place. This also allowed an undertaking to thrive which constituted arguably the most impressive concrete materialisation of the modernist idea of architecture with all its social and cultural reverberations in Europe. Unlike Mendelsohn's academy project, which due to the deteriorating political situation and a lack of political support remained embryonic, the industrial town of Zlín in south-eastern Moravia was able to develop its full building potential using the dynamics of the Czechoslovak state, economy and society. By combining the ideas of modernist architecture with the ideas of economic rationalisation and standardisation (as discussed in chapter 2) the factory town of the Baťa shoe-company reflected the scope of the modernist project like a concave mirror – as well as its problematic aspects.

The case of Zlín has benefited from ample attention in the last years.²⁷ Exhibition projects and new research have established Zlín as a unique example of architectural modernism on an urban scale in terms of its dimensions and radical character. Zlín was not a town planned from scratch. It was the extreme growth of the local Baťa

factory and the latter's global economic success that caused the city's appearance to completely change. The Baťa dynasty initiated functionalist city planning and had the new quarters and buildings erected using an innovative method of standardised construction.²⁸

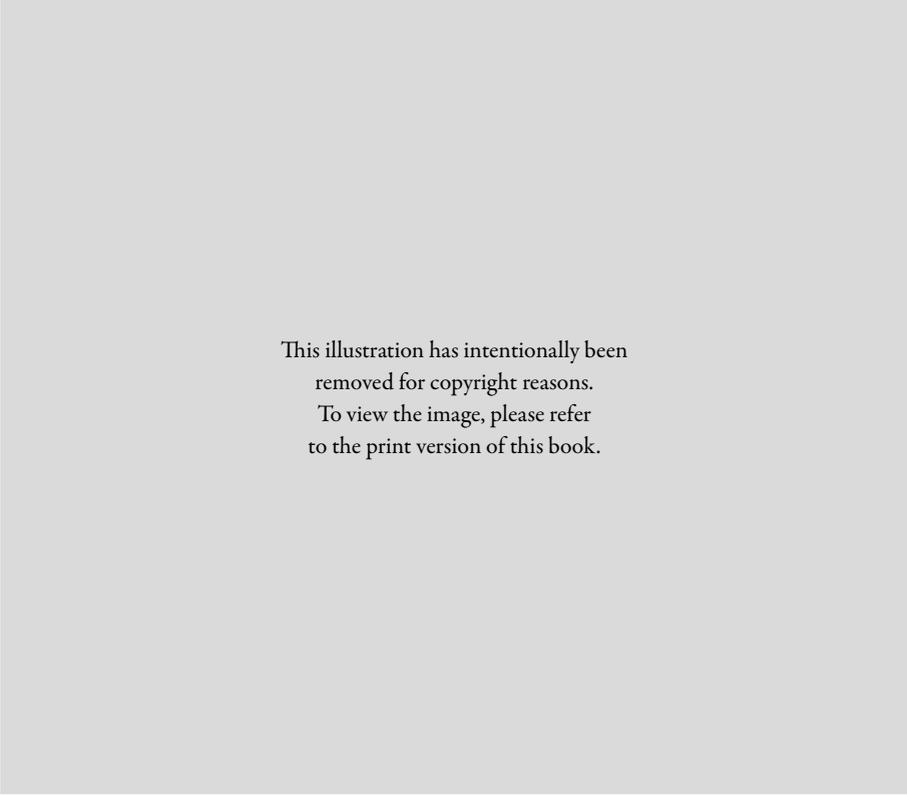
Many thousands of new inhabitants not only moved into modern flats, but they also became part of a modern routine dictated by the factory along with a holistic programme of leisure and educational activity. The Baťa family's ambition extended far beyond simply production efficiency. In merging modernism and the aspirations of the new state of Czechoslovakia, the company employed the town to create "the new Czechoslovak man" and "the new industrial man".²⁹ Baťa saw their endeavour, including far-reaching regional planning, as an important step in putting Czechoslovakia on the international map and presenting their country as a societal hub and economy of the future. In so doing their new town was to become an epitome of a modern, efficient society. To an astonishing degree it already attained this status by the mid-1930s – not least due to the numerous Baťa replica towns spread all over the globe.³⁰

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47. Functionalist buildings on large scale in Zlín

In order to reach out beyond the Moravian countryside, Baťa used all kinds of communication technologies, and the city's modernist architecture and the first skyscraper in Czechoslovakia, in particular, featured prominently in visual communication. Functionalist architecture served as marketing tool, as part of a corporate brand, but also as part of an encompassing marketing strategy using the most modern tools, including its own film studios. These separate strands were merged in a stunning glass-concrete memorial for Tomáš Baťa.³¹ The company's 1929 flagship store in Prague made it into the MoMa International Style exhibition of 1932.³²

Zlín is thus also a prime example of the communicative framework which constituted modernism, shaped by modernist architects and shaping the careers and personae of modernist architects. Le Corbusier visited the place for several weeks as part of a jury in 1935 and was deeply impressed by what he regarded as a new stage in social relations achieved by urbanism, architecture and the large-scale economic organisation he had admired for years.³³ Though Le Corbusier's relationship with the company never lived up to his expectations, despite the numerous plans he prepared, his stay in Zlín forms a telling example of the economies of attention he was part of and which also reflected back on Zlín. The Belgian CIAM group's report following their visit to Zlín indulged in superlatives praising the allegedly perfect composition of light, air and speed in this new kind of town.³⁴



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Pierre Vago, who organised the third RIA congress in Zlín in 1935, was at least as enthusiastic about this exceptionally successful new definition of urban society. Zlín, to him and his fellow RIA members, was a “révélation”, an “ultramoderne” town and a “hymne à la standardisation”. Other noteworthy RIA members, in particular Auguste Perret, agreed. Vago however, used his statements on Zlín to critically engage with Le Corbusier, whose judgement of Zlín he, in line with the ideological character of the CIAM, felt was too quick and overlooked the potential negative aspects of this city, and whom he ridiculed for having invoked the spirit of Louis XIV to encourage even further developments.³⁵

Significantly, Zlín was also the site of the second 1937 CIAM-Ost meeting (together with Brno). The CIAM-Ost members experienced Zlín as a place of the future and materialisation of a new epoch. In a letter to Gropius, Farkas Molnár reported how deeply impressed he was by the countless “naked people exercising sport” as much as the functionalist flats.³⁶

The Idea of the Functional City

Zlín forms a highly relevant example of a manifestation of the Functional City and as a focal point of the high hopes that accompanied it. There were also limits to the latter, as indicated by Vago’s recollections. Zlín was clearly a success story due to the economic dynamics of Baťa. It was developed as a function of economic interest and did not start from a planning perspective as such. Monika Platzer has rightly stressed that modernist architecture in Zlín was a means to serve the company’s ends.³⁷ The Baťa company had little interest in ‘branding’ its headquarters as a Functional City. The Baťa family rather sought to brand their vision of modernist urbanism as part of the genius of their company. Moreover, even in its heyday, Zlín remained a small place of around 30,000 inhabitants in the Czech countryside. Finally, despite Le Corbusier’s visit and the CIAM-Ost meeting in 1937, Zlín was only very loosely connected to the CIAM discussion – partially due to the longstanding dysfunctional character of the Czechoslovak CIAM group.

This said, the example of Zlín underscores the attractiveness of both the idea of building new cities in a modernist way from scratch and the notion that such a city could deeply transform and improve society in the 1930s. While the CIAM certainly did not invent functionalist urbanism, the organisation successfully dominated the ensuing discussion and gave it a uniform shape. The idea of the Functional City condensed many of the characteristics of the new science of urbanism as described in chapters 2 and 4. The principle of dividing a city according to its

four alleged primary functions of housing, work, traffic, and recreation comprised the main ideas of zoning, developed around 1900 in Germany. The concept of the Functional City, which the CIAM adopted after its Brussels congress, took existing ideas further and also brought different strands of thought together. In a solar city the best sites would be reserved for housing, extending the discussions of the Frankfurt and Brussels CIAM congresses on affordable and healthy housing. Planned transport arteries and zones for industry, indebted partially to Milyutin's linear city – itself going back to Arturo Soria y Mata – also reflected the technocratic notions of rationalisation and efficiency which loomed so large in all CIAM discussions. Ernst May had conceived his brainchild Magnitogorsk as a linear city.³⁸

Two developments which gained momentum around 1930 helped the concept of the Functional City to get off the ground.

First, as explained in the previous chapter, visual shorthand such as Isotype had made quick progress in the 1920s. Otto Neurath's iconography was of particular interest to urbanists. This kind of condensed information made it possible to effectively communicate the complex information behind a city divided into its functions. Or at least such visual language suggested that such complex problems could be grasped quickly and easily. Moreover, Neurath's system facilitated the comparison of cities.³⁹ The CIAM IV congress, despite all struggles over the prerogative of interpretation of what it actually agreed upon, was the most successful event in terms of communicating the CIAM's programme. With Neurath as an active collaborator, the CIAM was to compare 34 mostly European cities along predefined criteria and uniform modes of presentation. These cities were placed in seven different categories including port cities and administrative centres. The concept allowed for comparing very different places, theoretically on a global scale, but in fact largely in a European framework.⁴⁰ Warsaw, along with Paris, London, Berlin and Budapest, featured as an example of a metropolis.⁴¹

Second, around the same time, advances in scientific urbanism and statistics enabled planners to place their ideas far more firmly on the ground. Cornelis van Eesteren had held an influential position in the town planning department of Amsterdam since 1929. He thus had the manpower at his disposal to garner extensive and concrete data on urban transformation. Moreover, with his collaborators, he developed a uniform system to graphically display urban planning – partly in line with Neurath's principles and building on a number of lectures van Eesteren had given in 1928, later assembled under the title *The Idea of the Functional City*.⁴² Amsterdam thus played a key role for turning the concept of the Functional City into a 'hot' concept in the early 1930's. The categories developed here informed the CIAM IV

congress of 1933. Additionally, it was in Amsterdam in 1935 that the CIAM for the first time exhibited comparisons of 34 cities along functional categories stemming from CIAM IV.⁴³ In December 1931, and again in September 1932, the CIAM delegates were provided with guidelines developed by van Eesteren and the Dutch CIAM group. They also received maps depicting the analyses made for Amsterdam as models. Van Eesteren asked every group to prepare a map on a scale of 1:10 000, blank spots were to be left for public buildings, while residential buildings were to be reproduced in exact detail.⁴⁴

Though contemporary urbanists questioned the revolutionary character of CIAM's discussion of the Functional City, the "historical self-dramatization" may be seen as part of or even central to the discussion's success.⁴⁵ This success story, indeed, is not to be found in ground-breaking new analytical material. Further, comparing cities in the form of surveys had been practiced before – though not for a long time. There were three new aspects specific to the CIAM endeavour. The first was the 1931-1932 branding of the term Functional City as one which reflected all-encompassing planning with a strong social edge and a dynamic, almost utopian character, viewing the city as mouldable. This was also achieved by drastically reducing displayed information and focusing only the four aforementioned functions – though van Eesteren made the particular point that this was in no way meant to avoid taking into account the complexities of modern urban life. Le Corbusier had this in mind when he demanded: "Analyse and classify by looking through a filter, through a prism for the modern era. This prism will shed a special light, the light of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne."⁴⁶ Second, this reductionist approach, while still tackling the city as a whole, almost necessarily had to focus on the dynamics, the envisaged better future of each city in this transformation to a truly Functional City. This aspect was very aptly grasped by the *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* plan. Third, and partially connected to the previous two points, the fourth CIAM congress constituted the first true manifestation of the collective work principle the CIAM had claimed to espouse from the beginning. The collective work, which made architects stress that the very gathering as a group and their intense interchange constituted a major step forward, turned the CIAM collective into an entity producing solutions for the future rather than analysis of the present situation.⁴⁷

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49. C. van Eesteren, Sketch of Warsaw, showing public property for housing purposes ("Staatsgelände für Wohnzwecke") lying north of the city limits

Both the aspirations of the Functional City and the CIAM IV congress, as well as concrete procedures of comparison, had been agreed upon in two preparatory meetings in Zurich and Berlin in 1931.⁴⁸ The gathering in Berlin from 4 to 7 July 1931 assembled a remarkable array of architectural luminaries, including many German architects who from 1933 onwards were forced to step aside for political reasons. Along with Walter Gropius also Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Ernst May and Erich Mendelsohn were present, as well as Alvar Alto, Uno Åhrén, and Szymon Syrkus. The guidelines developed in Amsterdam attained official status in Berlin and thus enabled the comparisons which marked the CIAM IV congress. Further, in Berlin the two major fault lines of the discourse on the Functional City – and the CIAM as such – came to the fore for the first time. The modernist architects present in Berlin discussed the limits and merits of the analytical approach to urbanism versus the synthetic approach. Partially interlinked with this debate was the question of how political – in practice meaning how openly leftist, that is Marxist – the CIAM was to behave in public.⁴⁹

The tension behind these debates was to some extent dissolved in the formula of contrasting the existing city with the new city. While the existing city was approached through an analytical process, the new city was to be treated in a synthetic and constructive way.⁵⁰ Moreover, the term new city was used in the broadest sense, covering both remodelled existing cities as well as completely new cities – such as those built in the Soviet Union by CIAM members. At the time of the preparatory congress in Berlin it was still believed that CIAM IV would be held in Moscow and that the new Soviet cities therefore had to be given a central place in the discussion on the Functional City.

The distinction between these two types of cities, the existing and the new city, could not obscure the differing opinions on the desired goal: was the main imperative to better understand the status quo of cities, including their historical evolution, or rather was the future city, potentially only loosely connected with the existing city, the main objective? Unsurprisingly, those architects openly leaning to the left tended to advocate the latter. Younger discussants, such as Arthur Korn, who somewhat surprisingly had been appointed by Gropius as the spokesperson of the German group, questioned the need for a comparative approach at all and rather demanded to place the future city centre stage.⁵¹ In Berlin Szymon Syrkus became a representative of this camp, arguing that “architects doing practical work should not waste any time” on the analytical study of existing cities. Syrkus, much more resolutely than the members of the other national groups, elicited the social and political dimension of the Functional City. Therefore, it comes as no surprise

that he referred several times to the example of the Soviet Union and the urbanist debates there. Syrkus did not want to simply mimic the Soviet examples and he admitted that architects had historically never succeeded in bringing about a social revolution. But to him the radical character of the Soviet developments served as a measure to live up to. Syrkus demanded – in accordance with the central idea of the avant-gardists – that architecture had to and could express the most radical ideas and exert a direct impact on the changing of life-styles by setting an example. Herein architects had to express their “their capability to enforce” – for which Syrkus coined the German neologism “*zwingungsfähigkeit*”, which would be as powerful as “gunfire” but much more effective.⁵²

Of course, the different positions which those architects present in Berlin took not only depended on personal taste but very much on different experiences and on the local conditions they acted in. The ‘Romanic’ CIAM members from France, Spain and Italy were not present in Berlin. Therefore, the older tension between their aesthetic approach versus the ‘Germanic’ analytical approach did not emerge and was overshadowed by an East-West split, with generally more moderate positions taken by most Dutch and many German architects like Mendelsohn, whilst architects from Poland and Czechoslovakia adopted radical, that is advocating radical urbanist solutions, positions.⁵³ Exposing the rising political tension with which this chapter started Ernst May stated in Berlin that “the division between two socio-political systems – socialism and capitalism – was directly reflected in urban design”.⁵⁴

Peer Böcking, a German architect and close follower of Hannes Meyer who had moved to Czechoslovakia due to his leftist leanings and became a member of the architectural branch of the *Leva Fronta*, represented this strand. Like Korn in Germany, the founder of the *Kollektiv für sozialistisches Bauen* (Collective for Socialist Building), these architects conceived of themselves as primarily communists and only secondarily as architects. Böcking and other members of the Czechoslovak group argued that the focus on analysis would automatically lead to overstressing the static character of cities.⁵⁵ Consequently, the Czechoslovak group questioned the whole concept: “There is no functional city. The city has no functions.”⁵⁶ Instead, the upcoming congress should focus on new cities in new social –i.e. socialist – conditions.

Against this background Walter Gropius operated as “mediator” as he was “well informed about the acute social contradictions in Eastern Europe”.⁵⁷ Van Eesteren, in close cooperation with Gropius, tried to deflect the tensions arising from political posturing and from stressing the relevance of the overarching social question

by pointing to the future publication and exhibition on the Functional City, and the preparatory work still necessary. His manual to prepare the two, however, also contained a reference to the relevance of synthetic work, championed mainly by Syrkus. Taking into account what Syrkus had suggested, the final resolution of the Berlin meeting stated that “new, for example collective, forms of society and technical possibilities” should be part of future plans. In order to deflect van Eesteren’s concerns these were to be subject to prior study. The synthetic part could therefore not be fully complete, but should “go far enough to fix our thoughts about the new city and offer a direction that can lead to further elaboration.”⁵⁸

Two lessons are to be learned from the Berlin meeting: the framework of the Functional City despite all its unresolved tensions worked well to unite the different currents in the CIAM while still guiding their collaboration. Moreover, the concept worked well in branding the CIAM’s approach and thus showing the organisation’s relevance to the outer world. With the CIAM seeking greater political relevance, this is the second lesson to be learned from the special congress in Berlin, a lesson pointing to the CIAM IV congress..

Demanding the implementation of the Functional City became the CIAM’s ideology. This ideology enabled the CIAM to present itself as apolitical and thus attractive to various political regimes, both on the left and on the right. In the concept of the Functional City political, social, and planning problems could be tied together and by so doing the function of architects as pacemakers of societal progress could be emphasized. While Syrkus’ intervention did not win the day in Berlin, the questions and demands he raised remained important – far beyond Warsaw and Poland. Unlike any other architect in Berlin Syrkus exposed the dynamic and game-changing character of the concept of the Functional City. As part of the official statement of the Polish group in Berlin Syrkus had declared: “I must stress, that for many cities it [the discussion about the Functional City, M.K.] is not about utopian projects. For us, for example, it is deeply needed and a functional city may soon be built and thus would no longer just be a utopian idea.”⁵⁹

Indeed, many things which had already become fixed in the more developed Western European major cities and could thus no longer be the object of functionalist planning, were still fluid in Warsaw. Against this background it was only logical that Syrkus expressed little interest in the analytical preparation of the topic of the Functional City. For him the general ideas had priority as that was the only way the immense problems of Warsaw could be countered. Accordingly, Syrkus announced that the Polish group would prepare a draft on “the new city of Warsaw” in which the existing city, which he regarded as having become obsolete, would

hardly be considered.⁶⁰ In this way Syrkus also defined a potential field of action for the CIAM. Warsaw was a far more mouldable and also dynamic place than, say, Amsterdam. This proposal automatically put Syrkus in a relevant position. Syrkus' line of argument was also a reasonably successful attempt to keep as much of the potential political edge of the concept of the Functional City as possible to preserve its transformative potential, while not going as far as the Czechoslovak group to question the whole concept for political reasons.

That Syrkus struck a chord became clear when the CIAM leadership realized that the CIAM IV congress could not be staged, as planned, in Moscow. For a brief moment Warsaw was in the frame. Warsaw was on the way to Moscow and would have been a stopover *en route* to the congress there anyway.⁶¹ More importantly, albeit not in such a dramatic manner as in the USSR, there seemed to be a promising experimental ground there for CIAM's urbanistic and architectural concepts. Polish CIAM members had already energetically stressed this very link at a meeting in Warsaw in December 1932. The SAP, TUP and *Praesens* would all commit themselves to the CIAM.⁶² Syrkus promised to establish good working conditions for the CIRPAC and highlighted that "our position concerning the current economic situation could be of rather great interest for colleagues working under similar conditions."⁶³

Here Syrkus was reverting to the line of thought which he had argued one year earlier at the special congress in Berlin. Then, however, the CIAM architects, very much impressed by a stunning report Ernst May had given on the situation in the Soviet Union, believed that in the East they would have command over experimental ground on which to build functional cities from scratch. Despite varying political visions this would allow for, as Fred Forbát stressed in Berlin: "Functional urban planning is clearer and less ambiguous because it does not have to struggle with the anarchy of private property boundaries and as a result can arrange the unhindered directives of the pure principles of design."⁶⁴

The great hopes placed in the Soviet Union in turn implied that, when these expectations crumbled in 1932, the compromise reached in Berlin equally came into question. The notion that a western city like Amsterdam and the new urban projects east of the Ural could generally follow the same line, was hardly convincing any more. In particular, two questions now evidently were still open and more pressing than it had seemed after the Berlin congress: first, the unresolved political tensions, and second, the need for a field of action, a testing ground, where one could materialise the far-reaching functionalist visions and transcend the conflict ridden reality of the predetermined existing city. This was a wider background against which the Polish capital Warsaw came into view of the CIAM.

The Promise of Urbanism and the late Metropolis Warsaw as City of Tomorrow

The fifth issue of the AiB journal in 1934 opened with a programmatic article under the header *Warszawa jako Stolica* (Warsaw as a Capital City) by Stanisław Woźnicki. The author started with the observation that this theme was currently to be found everywhere: the capital city occupied architects as much as the government and society as such and also filled the pages of the popular press.⁶⁵ While architects tried to get a grip on the chaos they were confronted with in the new capital during the first years after the First World War, Woźnicki argued that now, 16 years after Polish independence, and under different political circumstances, the capital, as an issue for the whole nation of 30 million, could be looked at more systematically and as a true capital.

Woźnicki made it clear that the ensuing problems were of such a scale that only an “urbanistic-architectonic dictatorship” over the territory of Warsaw could solve them. The capital had to be understood as a problem of the whole state and thus a political problem. As so many opportunities for the capital had been wasted “radically”, so the “means of its salvation” had to be “radical”.⁶⁶ Therefore, AiB devoted this issue to the theme of Warsaw and a number of articles looked at specific problems of Warsaw both as the capital as well as situating Warsaw internationally by including an article on the establishment of Paris as the capital of the world.⁶⁷

The ensuing issues of AiB in 1934 were also dominated by the theme of Warsaw and attest to the relevance of the topic and of the fact that the capital had become a key issue for the architects. Yet, this interest also attests to a new intense link between politics and urbanist questions. This link was spelled out in assessing past mistakes, but in particular future visions. This is where the promise of urbanism came in. According to van Eesteren, urbanism was to be conceived as an “anticipating discipline” which was to achieve a “synthesis of organised life and technology” and in so doing reached out far beyond the place treated.⁶⁸ This observation is important for our context as it points to the fact that exchange over urbanism was not ‘only’ an exchange over best practices and know-how. Given that urbanism also dealt with the connectedness of cities it was a transnational and international endeavour *sui generis*. This is one reason why Syrkus’ intervention in Berlin in 1931, and his later treatment of Warsaw as a Functional City, had such a strong European dimension.

While the general development of urbanism in Poland did not differ fundamentally from other European states, some specifics need to be highlighted. Due to the weak tradition of urban self-administration in Poland’s eastern territories – and

Warsaw – urbanism in Poland was initially occupied with gathering data. In the case of Warsaw even basic cadastre data was missing.⁶⁹ This also implied that state building, the training of new functional elites at the WUT, and the rise of urbanism went hand in hand in Poland. Roman Feliński, a pioneer of urbanism and author of the first systematic publications in this discipline in Poland, gained his central position in this field due to his strong position within the Warsaw University of Technology and the Ministry of Public Works. One of his main contributions was the establishment of the first Polish archive for urbanist plans and documentation. Feliński was also a pioneer in the application of aerial photography for urbanism.⁷⁰ Feliński demonstrated the potential of new urbanist solutions in the extensions of the two districts of Warsaw Ochota and Żoliborz.⁷¹ He gained particular renown for his role in planning the the new town of Gdynia.⁷²

While Feliński's career is indicative of the opportunities deriving from the dynamic situation of the Polish Second Republic in the 1920s and early 1930s for the early, necessarily self-professed urbanists, it was in particular Tadeusz Tołwiński who left his mark on the discipline. Odessa-born Tołwiński had, during his studies in Karlsruhe before the First World War, already specialised in town planning and had visited state-of-the art examples throughout Europe. Also, Tołwiński had previously already designed garden city projects close to Warsaw. During the war he used his expertise to develop the *Plan Wielkiej Warszawy*, the first master plan for Warsaw as well as the *Szkic wstępny planu regulacyjnego*, a zoning plan.⁷³ Tołwiński and his collaborators' main task was the comprehensive statistical evaluation of the given state. He also co-founded the architecture faculty of the WUT and, from 1918, exerted a deep and long-lasting influence as professor of town planning.⁷⁴

Both as an academic and as a planner Tołwiński used the window of opportunity which opened up after the Russian retreat and the new German occupiers' strategically motivated willingness to grant Polish planners a certain leeway during the First World War. Throughout the war and immediate post-war situation of extreme pressure to solve urban problems and a simultaneous lack of established experts and knowledge, the new discipline of town planning inevitably gained tremendous significance. In 1919 a commission of both national and local officials was formed to match the master plans with the much more complex reality.⁷⁵ In both areas, training and concrete planning, Tołwiński set the framework for the further planning development of Warsaw.

Once the Sanacja regime became established in Poland in 1926, the aggravating crisis of largely uncontrolled urban growth turned into a high-profile political issue. In 1927 the government charged the young US-trained planner Stanisław Różański,

born in 1899, with preparing a master scheme for urban development in the whole country. In 1928 Róžański became head of a special planning division within the Warsaw administration tasked with preparing a new, updated master plan for the city which was to be in line with the rules he had developed for the whole country.⁷⁶ Róžański completed the plan by 1930.⁷⁷ The following year the plan was accepted by the Ministry of Public Works after consultations, among others, with the renowned Swiss urban planner Hans Bernoulli.

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50. Róžański plan for Warsaw, designating residential areas and green aereas, 1928

It is worth looking at Bernoulli's observations, as they both pinpointed the great lines of the post-First World War urban development of the Polish capital, but also the aspects which made Warsaw an internationally relevant case. Bernoulli, who already before the First World War had made plans for *Nova Warszawa*, a garden

city near Warsaw, stressed the fatal legacy of the Russian period of Warsaw. At the same time he highlighted the unique character of the city with its dynamic growth, more than one million inhabitants, and the opportunities arising from building the capital of a new state. Bernoulli viewed the extreme growth dynamic of Warsaw as a key concern with the prospect of there being 3 million future inhabitants of the capital.⁷⁸

As a further reward for his successful planning efforts, Róžański became head of the Regional Planning Office for Greater Warsaw in 1930 and developed the first regional planning scheme for Poland, initially engaged in building arteries to turn Warsaw into the traffic hub for the whole country. Poland was the first European state, with the exception of the Soviet Union, to establish a national policy of town, regional, and countrywide planning.⁷⁹ Those planners responsible for the first master plan were able to build on new planning instruments, which had been developed in the previous two decades in Western Europe and the USA.⁸⁰

Moreover, it is striking to note that Róžański's new schemes directly addressed the deficits of the pre-war era – they made use of the huge, mainly state-owned open space beyond the northern fortifications of Warsaw, for example, which for military reasons could not be used before the war. Temporarily, three fifths of all newly erected flats in Warsaw were constructed in the northern district of Żoliborz. Stressing the scale of urban problems, Róžański was quick to highlight the potential of modern urban planning methods. From the beginning Róžański, who placed a strong emphasis on publicizing his beliefs, positioned Warsaw among the foremost European capitals like London, Vienna, Paris, and Berlin in order to highlight deficits, but also to enlist support for his planning efforts.⁸¹

Róžański pointed out two factors which in his eyes defined Warsaw's development and enormous opportunities: first, the geographical connections which turned the city into an international centre of trade, supported by the strong presence of industrial companies, and second, the city's status as capital of Poland. Both factors resulted in high population density, which in its turn caused three further problems: housing shortages, urban hygiene problems, and traffic difficulties. While the second and third point, in Róžański's view, did not deserve special attention, the geographical setup was decisive. Warsaw was a centre of material and spiritual exchange from west to east via railway, air traffic, and waterways. Yet contemporary Warsaw, Róžański argued, was not up to the challenges posed and opportunities provided by this situation.

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51. Office for the Regional Plan for Warsaw at the Exhibition for Housing Construction, Warsaw 1935

The extreme scale of urban problems and the importance of the new capital for the young state strengthened the presence of the central state. In 1925 Oskar Sosnowski, founder of the Union of Polish Urbanists TUP and head of the department for Polish architecture at Warsaw Polytechnic, argued that while the circle of Warsaw-based architects *Kolo Architektów* and Tołwiński had taken the first initiative to seize the urban opportunities of Warsaw, it was now up to the government to create the conditions for a “policy of recovery” and a rational development.⁸² What comes to the fore here is the possibility and necessity of attaining political legitimacy by tackling the capital’s dramatic urban problems.⁸³

Warsaw’s urban extension quadrupled between 1916 and 1939, which exceeds the developments of any other Central European city of this size.⁸⁴ While the populations of Prague, Berlin, or Budapest grew only slightly, the number of inhabitants almost doubled in Warsaw from some 700,000 after the Russian retreat in 1915 to around 1,300,000 in the city and 1,900,000 within the so called metropolitan complex in 1939.⁸⁵

This both resulted in and promoted huge planning efforts and cemented the strong and specific role of planning in Warsaw, which had a tendency toward sweeping measures and extending beyond the confines of the city. To some extent this preference for the grand design might have been influenced, at least until the mid-1930s, by the severe lack of detailed information. It was also because of this twofold task of planning and assessment that the planning bodies established in Warsaw from about 1930 attained a size and also a professional quality only matched by very

few other European metropolitan cities. By 1939 the Warsaw Department of Urban Planning, which had been established in this form in 1936, had enlisted more than 400 employees, most of them engineers.

All these developments have to be seen against the background – and strongly connected to – the international discussion on town planning. This resulted in the use of state-of-the-art planning instruments like zoning and green belts in tackling very basic challenges like the largely disorganised urban sprawl in Warsaw. It also included innovative elements like the *superdzielnice* (super districts), self-contained residential districts which were intended to help decentralise administration, commercial activity, and traffic. In line with these measures the early stress on regional planning is noteworthy.⁸⁶

Although it contained new and innovative elements and is unique in its wide range and broad claim of problem solving, what could be called the Róžański tradition of urban planning still remained within the mainstream of international discussion and development. The main goals were, on the one hand, a ‘cleaning up’ of the urban pattern and, on the other hand, a ‘catching up’ with Western Europe, also in terms of political representation.⁸⁷ After all, Róžański was a civil servant who constantly had to work between local and national authorities, thus levelling out all too radical propositions. Both Róžański and Sosnowski’s elaborations on Warsaw’s future stressed the geographic assets of Warsaw, its central position at the intersection of international traffic routes, and its dynamic development. Warsaw was, as Sosnowski concluded in a characteristic statement, a capital city in a “state of potentiality”.⁸⁸ Sosnowski underlined that all planning should be based on a clear vision of what the improved future version of the city would look like. This would define whether Poland would play a decisive role in the future or just a subordinate role.⁸⁹

Sosnowski’s widely shared diagnosis had political consequences in two directions. First, the need for radical urbanism was politically motivated as, according to the somewhat stretched argument, the urbanist shortcomings were due to political reasons, namely the Russian past of the city. In 1925 Stefan Źeromski had come to the conclusion that “Warsaw belonged to the type of cities which had been dispossessed, which had been pushed from their normal path of development. In the city’s growth, flourishing, in its monumentality and its beauty one could recognize the history of its slavery”. Warsaw’s uncontrolled growth reminded Źeromski of the foot of a Chinese woman – “forcibly and artificially bound”. Thus, the writer concluded, the “liberated capital” still looked like the provincial border fortress of the “Tsarist satrapy”.⁹⁰

Żeromski was not just any writer. Through his excellent networks among the Polish political elite and his novels' links to the new state he had attained the status of a national icon, and been rewarded with an official apartment in the Royal Castle in Warsaw by the president of the Republic. His political vision is clearly expressed in his novel *Przedwiośnie* (The Coming Spring). Here, Żeromski had introduced the glass houses discussed at the beginning of this book, glass houses serving as metaphors for overcoming the very impairment he deplored. Żeromski's vision was a radical one, though the level of communism which he deemed necessary to reach the goals he dreamed of remained disputed.

Quite obviously there was a link between the way he stressed Warsaw's dark past and his utopian vision for Poland and its new capital. This link leads to the second political aspect, the question of what the diagnosis of past failure meant for the future city. As Sosnowski and Żeromski suggested but did not spell out, the consequence could be that urban reform would not suffice. Only a radical new solution would do away with the fatal legacy. Syrkus had already argued this in 1925: "Warsaw all of the sudden turned into the centre of a huge state, made and forced into cooperation with the West, it turned inextricably into a part of Europe. New demands and new opportunities emerged. Warsaw – the capital of Poland – does not simply have to repeat what had been done in Haussmann's Paris during the reign of Napoleon III, it can do more of this and it can do this better."⁹¹ Regardless of all obstacles, Syrkus claimed, the new generation of young architects would meet the challenges of a "fascinating task" and build a city which would meet the expectations and standards of the third decade of the 20th century. Syrkus concluded his article by stating that Poland was a country where architects combined the know-how achieved in France – where Syrkus wrote this article – with the opportunities of Canada and Brazil.⁹²

Syrkus' aspirations had a concrete basis in the urban developments of the late 19th century. Urban growth in East Central Europe, broadly speaking, set in later than in the West but was then far more dynamic. This relative dynamism becomes particularly apparent when comparing how cities from the region ranked in a list of the 20 largest cities in Europe around 1850 with the situation around 1900. Warsaw and Budapest belonged to the "most impressive winners" in these 50 years.⁹³ The enormous growth ciphers of both cities created challenges of political legitimacy in the urban sphere as well as bringing in planners and architects as potential problem solvers. Yet, these ciphers also constituted the framework in which visionary planning could develop. In the late 19th century, Ferdinand de Lesseps, the developer of the Suez Canal, even predicted that Warsaw would become the largest European

city in the 20th century “due to the fact that this is the place where East meets West and where the most colossal exchange to be imagined, the exchange between the continents, will take place”.⁹⁴ Exaggerated as it may seem from today’s perspective, at the time Lesseps’s point was not the opinion of a maverick. Polish statisticians estimated in 1912 that Warsaw’s populace would grow from around 850,000 to 4.6 million in the fifty years to come – thus quintupling.⁹⁵ Both the reality of growth and the expectation of progress originated, as Lesseps had pointed out, from Warsaw’s geographical position within the Russian Empire and its huge market.

Warsaw’s position as the most westerly big city of the Tsarist empire, and situated in a notoriously unstable province came, however, at a cost. As a fortified city with almost no autonomy the city statutes had prohibited significant and planned enlargements and resulted in massive overcrowding.⁹⁶ With more than 100,000 inhabitants per square kilometre in its central districts, Warsaw had the densest population in Europe in the years before the First World War.⁹⁷ Similarly, the average of almost four persons occupying one room was unmatched, at least in Central Europe.

Policies to control the crisis were combined with envisaging a new capital of the future. In August 1934 these strands came together under Mayor Stefan Starzyński who had been appointed by the Sanacja regime. In order to tackle the urban crisis the regime equipped Starzyński with special powers. Starzyński embarked on an all-encompassing programme, including financial reform, numerous infrastructure measures and a systematic development of Warsaw’s partially new outer districts. When Starzyński took over the presidency of Warsaw he was a well-established technocrat, but hardly an expert of architecture or urban matters. The Sanacja regime entrusted him with the task of reorganising Poland’s capital city, which encountered severe financial problems while not being able to fulfil its basic functions in housing and urban development.⁹⁸ Further, in order to win over the majority of its capital’s population who did not support the Sanacja regime, Starzyński began to systematically explain and promote his urban reform measures. Part of this scheme was the strategy of ‘crisification’ introduced in the previous chapter.⁹⁹ The city administration, for example, used deliberately appalling photos of the shanty towns and slum-like outskirts of Warsaw to garner both public and political support for new extreme urban politics.¹⁰⁰

Starzyński understood well that urban measures which would affect the lives of so many had to be widely communicated, and had to convince both Warsaw’s inhabitants as well as the state-level politicians who decided on funds and regulation. After 1934 Starzyński pursued such a policy systematically. He tried to emphasise the dramatic reality as well as future prospects in order to enlist support for his

far-reaching plans. As has been explained in the previous chapter, using exhibitions to display architectural visions, and also urban planning, had been a successful means of communication and garnering support since the turn of the century. This increasingly also entailed the technical side of planning. Róžański's first plan was already presented at the Polish General Exhibition in Poznań in 1929.

When the *Warszawa przyszłości* (Warsaw of Tomorrow) exhibition opened in March 1936 in the military part of Warsaw's National Museum this coalescing of architectural aspiration and attempt to gain political legitimacy was taken to the next level. The exhibition was in many respects a culmination of the trends Stanisław Woźnicki had described in the Warsaw issue of *AiB* quoted at the start of this sub-section of the chapter and the lessons Starzyński had learned. Given the scale of urban problems, "propaganda was imperative", as Edgar Norwerth, who was himself a versatile writer-architect, stated in 1935.¹⁰¹

While Norwerth criticised the exhibition for not consequentially embarking on a brand-creating strategy and getting lost in too much detail, in our context the main significance of the exhibition is how it came about. Starzyński strategically realized the potential of systematically communicating urban renewal and vision. The idea for the exhibition, however, was brought forward by architects Stanisław Brukalski, Stanisław Rutkowski and Szymon Syrkus as well as Teodor Toeplitz.¹⁰² Their interest in the project was twofold: these architects, with Brukalski and Syrkus two of the most renowned modernist architects in Europe, feared that the co-operative impetus of housing reform had come to a halt. Moreover, they had painfully realized that significantly contributing to the housing question without encompassing urban planning was of no avail. While the gap between these leftist architects and the authoritarian Sanacja regime was politically considerable, they were able to meet on a technocratic level which was typical of scientific urbanism. In this the Warsaw of Tomorrow exhibition very aptly captures the alliance of modernisation described in the first chapter.

In the preface to the exhibition catalogue Starzyński argued that when considering the project for a new Warsaw it was important to realize that Warsaw was the centre of Poland and a central place within Europe. In order to progress one had to look for those areas where the conflict over the city's feature was least expressed. Only then would one be able to "protect oneself from the spirit of the city of the 19th century – the battle fields of economic and social struggles".¹⁰³

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52. Starzyński and politicians visiting the Warsaw of Tomorrow exhibition with maps of Warsaw in Poland and in Europe behind them, 1936

As the title of the exhibition suggested, the main solution for avoiding the conflicts that had curtailed Warsaw's development was to draw advancements on the future. The city's "tomorrow", evoked by suggestive pictures of water taxis and streets lined by homogeneously shaped modern houses, appealed to the values of urbanism. Shifting responsibility for the obvious shortcomings of the city to the pre-First World War occupants allowed both politicians and modernist architects to join forces under the header of urbanism. Both could join forces in a seemingly apolitically envisaged "urbanistic dictatorship" by resorting to the allegedly self-evident application of urbanistic measures.¹⁰⁴ This resulted in a win-win situation for architect-urbanists and politicians by blaming the past and calling for a better future – albeit not democratic in the narrowest sense. What is more, the exhibition succeeded in mobilising political and societal actors. The heads of the state bank BGK and the Association for Workers' Settlements TOR staffed the preparatory committee along with Starzyński. Stanisław Różański served as coordinator of the committee.¹⁰⁵

With its suggestive, but also slightly patronising, before-and-after pictures of urban problems and a bright future the exhibition succeeded in attracting huge crowds and broad press coverage both in general newspapers as well as in *AiB* and other journals directed at an informed public. What the exhibition in essence did was galvanize the city as a place of change. The exhibition served as the starting point for a cycle of two further exhibitions, particularly as a kick-off and catalyst for visionary politics which designated huge areas of the developing city for future use. Using the positive impact of the exhibition on the government and the public Różański proposed a new Department of Urban Planning with more manpower,

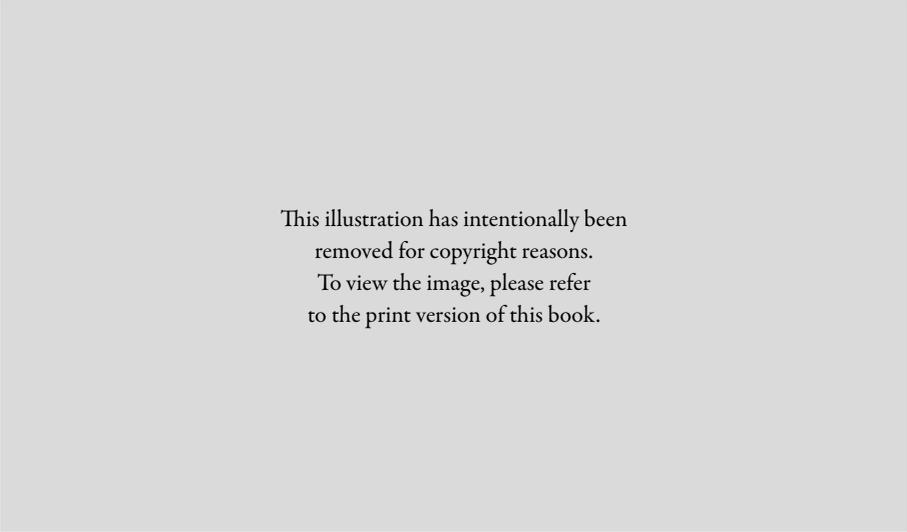
comprehensive competences and directly responsible to the president of Warsaw – which came into being in 1936, as mentioned above.¹⁰⁶ The rising expectations with regard to Warsaw's future found their clearest expression in the planning of huge exhibition grounds which were to serve in 1943 or 1944 as the site of a World Fair celebrating 25 years of the new state's independence with six million visitors expected. Even more extensive were the plans to hold the Olympic Games of 1956 in Warsaw at what would by then be newly-completed sports grounds.¹⁰⁷

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53. Warsaw, Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow exhibition, 1938. Map of Warsaw showing schools and cultural institutions, map showing progress of public transportation network extrapolated into the future

Very much in accordance with this future vision, and in accordance with the lines laid out by Starzyński in the exhibition catalogue and in a second exhibition under the title *Warszawa wczoraj, dziś, jutro* (Warsaw, Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow), 1938, the planning for a Functional Warsaw, had advanced in the meantime, namely after the Berlin meeting and the CIAM IV congress. The plans for a Functional Warsaw formed the centre of the Warsaw of Tomorrow exhibition in 1936. This was certainly a fitting choice, as the plans resembled a triangle which also informed the exhibition and the politics of urban reform in which it was situated: the plans for a Functional Warsaw perceived the urban past as flawed, highlighted the dynamics of future development, and placed these dynamics into an international, i.e. essentially

a European, framework. In the plans for *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* the concrete city and the still rather abstract international CIAM discussion on the Functional City came together.



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54. Warsaw, Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow exhibition, 1938: S. Starzyński (left) and S. Różański

Warszawa Funkcjonalna

The notion of a “state of potentiality”, which Sosnowski literally referenced and the exhibition spelled out visually, was already behind Syrkus’ intervention in Berlin in 1931. The Polish contribution played an important role at the CIAM IV congress, but it had to comply with the official guidelines proposed by the Dutch group. Thus it was mainly concerned with the actual situation of Warsaw and hardly with the city’s future. Four tables were shown at the CIAM IV congress to illustrate the Warsaw situation. Three tables illustrated the functions of housing, work and recreations, the traffic-system and Warsaw in its region. Unusually, the fourth table illustrated Warsaw’s air pollution, based on data provided by the Public Institute for Hygiene in Warsaw. As Helena Syrkus stated, this was the first recorded measurement of this nature throughout Europe.¹⁰⁸



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55. Map showing pollution in Warsaw for CIAM IV congress

Syrkus' explanation delivered on the Patris II on 31 July 1933 and published in the *Annales Techniques* was rather brief and general. Syrkus stressed that the river Vistula was the determining element for the development of the town. Moreover, he noted how the fortress erected in the inner city during Warsaw's Russian period had prevented the organic development of the city until after the First World War. Now, north of the fortress, worker districts were to be constructed.¹⁰⁹ Most of the data used was provided by the President of the City of Warsaw, the Planning and Land Survey Office, the Office for the Regional Plan,¹¹⁰ the Association of Polish Architects, SAP and the Association of Polish Urbanists, TUP.¹¹¹ The tables were later shown in different places, including Amsterdam in 1935.¹¹²

Clearly, the Polish CIAM group and 'sympathetic' groups like the TUP invested heavily in making use of the congress and using it as a forum for the Warsaw case. Further the interest of architects in Poland was considerable. Syrkus published a long and richly illustrated report on the CIAM IV congress in AiB, also discussing the maps of Warsaw. Syrkus grasped this opportunity in order to present his own work with the clout and backing of an international congress and mentioning luminaries – Le Corbusier in particular – but also presenting his own works as part of a forward-looking and almost definite trend.¹¹³

Building on these preparatory works, and particularly on Syrkus' radical idea formulated in 1931 in Berlin, and taking into account the urban development of Warsaw in the early 1930s described above, led to one of the most remarkable planning documents of the interwar period, using the catchy and internationally easily adaptable title of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*.¹¹⁴ The plan was a result of Syrkus' co-operation with the planner Jan Olaf Chmielewski and was a telling mixture of expertise and self-empowerment.¹¹⁵ For Syrkus it was clear that the mere bold gesture of envisioning a future Warsaw along functionalist lines would not suffice to gain the support and attention he wanted. By bringing in the established and highly innovative planner Chmielewski the weight of expertise was added to his proposal. Both men worked in the framework of the 'U' group introduced in chapter 3. They also built on the extensive material which Róžański and his administrations had assembled since the late 1920s. The plan was based on data provided by the Office for the Regional Plan and set up in collaboration with Stefan Zbigniew Różycki (geomorphological data), Tadeusz Tilling (waterways), Jerzy Hryniewiecki (graphic illustration of tables) and Helena Syrkus (text-editing).¹¹⁶ Given the brief period of time within which the plan was conceived, the still flawed state of statistical knowledge in Warsaw, and the, at the same time, extremely extensive composition of the plan, the gap between analysis and synthesis remained a crucial issue.

The planning for a functional Warsaw was concluded early in 1934 and published in Poland in the same year – first by the TUP, then by the SARP, including a French translation.¹¹⁷ On the one hand, the study was a product of Chmielewski's planning background. On the other, it showed Syrkus' talent for suggestively placing topics into public discourse and for pressing ahead with his vision at the interface of politics, architecture, and the public. In this sense *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* provides a perfect example for the connection between the Polish situation with its specific problems and the international discussion of architecture and urban planning. In particular, the work was a reaction to the concept of the Functional City.¹¹⁸

Characteristically, the text starts off with architects rather than buildings or an urban design: “The work of architects is based on projecting, that is the planned conception of the future.” In order to re-establish this function the authors believed that the “crippling of the profession”, which had been caused by the economic needs of the day, would have to be resolved. Throughout, the authors argue in favour of a planned economy with functionalist urbanism as its logical consequence and architects in a leading position.

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56. Maps from *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*. Warsaw at the crossroads of European communication arteries

Chmielewski and Syrkus then, in typical manner, declared that their proposal was not based on local conditions in Warsaw, but rather on their collaboration with the CIAM. The authors distinguished different groups of cities, of which their attention was drawn to those that were the continuous objects of change based on various factors. What they were looking for in Warsaw were the factors and conditions of growth and the ability to cope with a crisis situation. Syrkus and Chmielewski believed that functionalist planning was only possible when distinguishing between fixed and dynamic or impermanent factors. This they also did in order to deal with the gap between the still meagre data they had at their disposal and the bold statements they were making about future developments. In stressing movement and consequently differentiating between static and adjustable criteria, the future Warsaw appeared in flux. The authors mainly viewed Warsaw’s position at the intersection of intercontinental traffic arteries, its combination of a developed industrial

structure and easy access to commodities and, finally, Warsaw's function as political centre and centre of consumption as fixed factors.

The plan's most important new feature was its vision of the city at a regional, national and even European level. Numerous illustrations underscored the notion of the metropolitan organism based on the directions of traffic and removing the old city's disruption of the natural traffic flow. Here Syrkus and Chmielewski argued, in line with Żeromski's observations quoted above, against what they perceived as the "tsarist impairment of the city's backbone".¹¹⁹ Yet, this statement also went against the still dominant mainstream planning which, in their eyes, was caught up in the flawed urban pattern of the past.

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57. Maps from *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*. Communicating urbanistic information with visual shorthand

Based on the logic of traffic and equipped with the tool-kit of functional city planning, Chmielewski and Syrkus envisioned that the differences between town and countryside would be levelled out through a broad zone branded *Warszawa Maksymalna* or *Wmax*, stretching some 100 kilometres north to south and east to west. They developed a new and easy-to-communicate system to depict statistical information, in particular in its dynamics. Warsaw was consequently presented as a city at the intersection of transcontinental traffic lines: "In our conception the scale of the region is interconnected to the scale of central Poland, Europe, and even the world in such a way that on pressing the key Żerań [one of the places in the concept to be developed, M.K.] we hear the echo of Tłuszcz and Żyrardów—Moscow and Paris, and at the same time Modlin, Czersk, Stockholm, and Suez."

As a counterweight to the conceived spots of active development, so called “inactive-zones” were to function as an antidote to the negative effects of the metropolis.¹²⁰ The authors of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* planned urban infrastructure at the intersections of major traffic arteries, which was meant to structure the wild settlements outside the inner city. They placed particular emphasis on establishments for the community.¹²¹ This was regarded as essential for a radical redefinition of the city.

Syrkus and Chmielewski admitted that the vision of a functionally organised Warsaw was utopian as long as real estate remained predominantly in private hands. And they admitted that ample attention had to be paid to the prevailing social conditions: “We do not want, like the technocrats, to get carried away by technical enthusiasm in order to forget the crisis, unemployment, and the homelessness of the masses. We know all too well that at this very moment, when production and consumption are in such disorder, and when the path-breaking social forces unfold such a dynamic, we can only theoretically prepare Warsaw for the future, the Functional City.”¹²² Interestingly, however, and probably for the sake of the adaptability of the concept, there is no allusion to a specific political system, though the authors displayed a positive view on a “planned economy”.¹²³

In order to illustrate what they intended, the authors referred to Le Corbusier’s *La Ville Radieuse* or Nikolai A. Miljutin’s *Socgorod*. But even when taking into account the obvious links to Arturo Soria y Mata’s *ciudad lineal* (1882) and Miljutin’s *continuous city* (1930), as well as the plans for a *Stadtlandschaft* developed simultaneously for Hamburg, Bremen, and Stettin, Syrkus’ and Chmielewski’s approach was something new. In the 1930s Chmielewski used the term *Warszawski Zespól Miejski* (WZM), which could be translated as “town-complex Warsaw.”¹²⁴ Miljutin’s ideas had been discussed at length in AiB in 1931.¹²⁵ It is not so much the optimistic assessment of the development of the city, shifting between vision and hubris, which is remarkable. Rather, it is striking how easily the attitude to be modern went hand in hand with the internationalist pretence of the study. The study gained its radical character – and the fascination it exerted beyond Poland’s borders – from the dramatic gap between a critical urban situation and aspirations to accomplish a new European hybrid city. This city was perceived as a direct consequence of intensified and new forms of communications, transgressing borders and deeply affecting the – functionally organised – urban pattern.

Nikolaus Pevsner has argued that it was “the conquest of space, the spanning of great distances, the rational coordination of heterogeneous functions that fascinated modernist architects.”¹²⁶ Apparently, the Polish group was more willing than others to adapt the main ideas proposed at Athens, namely that at its core archi-

ecture had to be functional in character and that the chaotic use of land had to be overcome in favour of a collective land use scheme.

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58. Maps from *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*. Clusters of future urban development

Helena Syrkus translated *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* into German and French and the Syrkus couple provided many of their brothers-in-arms with a copy.¹²⁷ Helena Syrkus also presented the concept to the CIAM group in Zurich at one of its regular meetings.¹²⁸ Bernoulli and Nicolaus Kelen, a specialist of water energy, discussed the planning effort. On the basis of the positive feedback from the Zurich group, in particular Karl Moser, and supported by Bernoulli and Kelen, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* was put on the agenda for the May 1934 CIRPAC meeting in London – which was also attended by the whole British MARS group of modernist architects. Along with the members of the CIRPAC board, those present also included Raimond Unwin, Frederic Osborn and Patrick Abercrombie.¹²⁹ Apparently, the plan triggered long and intense discussions. One of the debates was whether the Polish example was to be announced as a model for the next congress, whose title at that time was ‘The functional city – synthesis’. Sert and Weissmann supported Le Corbusier in pushing forward with it, while the Dutch, German and Swiss groups, who insisted on a thorough analysis, were more sceptical. The discussion on *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* was also an example of the cleavages within the CIAM and has to be seen in the context of the general discussion within that organisation – and the political tensions which confronted the organisation.¹³⁰ At the London meeting in May 1934 the decision was taken that the CIAM was “a specialist” organisation and wanted to abstain from political statements.¹³¹

On the basis of material presented at Athens, the Polish group was the only one – with the partial exception of the Spanish group and the case of Barcelona – to develop a concrete concept for a functional urban region within the framework of the CIAM. Le Corbusier viewed *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* as a new step in the planning of huge areas, in particular because of the so called “focusing method” applied to increasing scales (district, city, country). Due to the fact that the study provided urban planners with far more tools than the Charter of Athens had foreseen, the CIRPAC, that is the governing body of the CIAM, recommended *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* as a model study for large-scale urban and regional planning. The CIRPAC decided to have the document translated into English. In 1935 a Spanish edition came out.¹³² In a resolution signed by Gropius, Sert, Le Corbusier, and Wells Coates, the CIAM tried to pressure the president of Warsaw into implementing the scheme.¹³³ While for obvious reasons, given the radical character of the plan, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* was not immediately adopted for political implementation, it quite clearly had an impact on the long term planning of Warsaw – and on the way Starzyński framed urban change.¹³⁴ The plans were discussed within the SARP and the architects Bohdan Lachert, Romuald Miller and Roman Piotrowski, as well as the specialists Zbigniew Stefan Różycki, Jan Strzelecki and Tadeusz Tołwiński commented on the proposal.¹³⁵

While the Polish architects would gain international attention and prestige, the CIAM would, at least potentially, come close to realising its mainly theoretical assumptions. When an exhibition on the topic Functional City was planned to be staged in Warsaw, with the support of “the most relevant authorities” Giedion pushed van Eesteren to strongly support the matter. Encouraged by the CIAM’s secretariat in Zurich – eager to refer to realisations of the organisation – Helena Syrkus put considerable effort into having *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* translated, published and disseminated.¹³⁶

The planning also impacted on the standing of Polish CIAM members within this organization. Syrkus and Roman Piotrowski became members of the commission on the resolution on the Functional City, Syrkus was also on the press committee and, along with his wife Helena, part of the group reflecting further development of the CIAM, while Helena Syrkus was member of the committee occupied with the minutes of the congress.¹³⁷ From 1937 Syrkus headed the CIAM’s committee on regional planning and was proposed by Giedion as a member of an envisaged core group of the CIAM of three to five members, meant to steer the organisation through the troubled waters of the late 1930s.¹³⁸ Chmielewski remained a major player in town planning in Warsaw until the German assault on Poland in

September 1939.¹³⁹ In 1936 he succeeded Róžański as the main planning official in Warsaw.¹⁴⁰ Here again we can see how a particular national challenge and proposed solution to it and the international framework in which it was developed influenced each other and created an advantageous situation for those, like Syrkus, who were able to act in both spheres. What Chmielewski and Syrkus did was to turn the difficult situation of Warsaw into an advantage. If one wants to assess the plan, one has to understand planning as a communicative act aimed at different audiences.

Chmielewski and in particular Syrkus were not primarily interested in solving the specific urban problems of Warsaw. By entering the existing discussion on the Functional City with its codes and developing graphic vocabulary, they instead aspired to establish Warsaw on the international map as an example of dramatic urban challenges and radical planning opportunities. Traffic not only figured as the dynamic momentum of Warsaw's future growth, but the traffic lines dominating the maps in the concepts also directly linked Warsaw with Paris and other European cities. Functional City, as a communicative frame of reference, offered the opportunity to bring one's case into the sphere of international attention – much more so than traditional planning instruments which rather implied a process of catching up in comparison to certain benchmarks.

The *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* plan was deeply indebted to the CIAM – for its framework, its terminology, its points of reference – and the sounding board which the CIAM offered after its publication. Yet, the plan also reflected the very political and social characteristics explained earlier in this chapter only to be found in East Central Europe, and specifically in Warsaw. Part of this story was also that the group *Praesens* with its vision of collective work did not in practice function as it had hoped due to the lack of building commissions. This opened up the opportunities for a planning effort that was radical and only loosely connected with practical tasks.

What comes to the fore in the *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* plan is the CIAM as an organisation that not only worked towards an exchange of knowledge, but also of reputation and appreciation. Local problems could be advanced as internationally recognised case studies. International recognition, on the other hand, could be channelled back into the local struggle for chances to realize one's concepts and ideas. What the CIAM offered was particularly attractive considering the Polish situation. More so than other arenas, the CIAM provided the chance to employ the glamour of internationality at home. This became apparent already in the considerations to organise a CIAM congress in Warsaw, as presented above. Syrkus stressed financial problems, but explained: "This is a matter of prestige for our country – but also of the prestige of the congress." Explicitly hinting at the economy of prestige

described in the last chapter, Syrkus stated: “Our authorities declare the arrival of Le Corbusier a *conditio sine qua non*.” Finally, he explained that Polish CIAM members would know all too well “that Warsaw would not be as attractive a location as the venue of the previous congress [Brussels, M.K.]” Yet, this “would be a case of positive support of the work to be done.” Moreover, Syrkus stressed that “our position concerning the current economic situation [the economic crisis, M.K.] could be of rather great interest for colleagues working under similar conditions.”¹⁴¹

The plan was still current at the 1936 CIAM meeting in La Sarraz and served as a model for regional planning within the CIAM.¹⁴² It would certainly have played an important role 1937 in Paris had not the overall topic been changed away from the Functional City. Still, the plan loomed large in Szymon Syrkus’ presentation on the application case of Rural Areas and was referred to in the final publication summarising the congresses results.¹⁴³ Moreover, the potential of regional planning was to become a major topic in the ‘CIAM-Ost’ organisation, founded in 1937.¹⁴⁴

Of course, despite all its radical overtones and far-reaching aspirations, the *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* plan did not come out of the blue. In fact it was less revolutionary than the text claimed. Largely inspired by the Anglo-Saxon tradition of urban planning, the relationship of countryside and city and the delimitation of the city’s borders had already been keeping the pioneers of urbanism busy. Yet, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* provided a model which was located in a concrete geographical setting, but was sufficiently abstract to be used in different contexts and to be filled with different content. Chmielewski’s and Syrkus’ model was particularly attractive in that it could account for future urban growth – or even shrinkage – without questioning its “organisational principle”.¹⁴⁵

Warszawa Funkcjonalna is thus relevant in a number of respects. As will be discussed in chapter 6 it had a long term effect on the urban planning of Warsaw, and as has been shown above, it was widely followed in the international planning scene. But it also had an indicative relevance in that it showed the nexus of politics and planners – as at the same time did the Warsaw of Tomorrow exhibition. Most relevantly in our context, it showed, how architects successfully placed themselves in the driver’s seat. *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* demonstrates how the themes discussed in the four previous chapters, the tensions of the post-imperial urban space, the rise of a new type of architect, the impact of new ways of organising architects in the CIAM and SARP and the impact of communication all merged and mutually impacted on each other.

This multi-layered relevance also comes to the fore in criticism of the concept. Quite obviously, with all its suggestive visual attachment and catchy phrases the

work by Syrkus and Chmielewski was vulnerable to criticism for its superficiality. This criticism touched the fault line which had opened within the CIAM in the early 1930s.¹⁴⁶ Left-leaning German architects, for example, felt that the concept of the Functional City did not pay sufficient attention to economic questions and the class struggle in particular and therefore lacked analytical rigor.¹⁴⁷ This debate was triggered again by *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, a conceptual work which similarly generated many of the general criticisms that the concept of the Functional City faced. The plan also exposed the fault line between the proponents of analysis and synthesis. When Gropius applauded the strong gesture of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* this was somewhat of a backhanded compliment, pointing to the potentially lacking analytical grounding.¹⁴⁸ Otto Neurath criticised the visual language of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, specifically map IX and the use of agricultural symbols, as overly sloppy and not meeting the standards established by him and thus added to the criticism of an overly bold gesture.¹⁴⁹ This criticism was part of a more general estrangement between Neurath and the CIAM after the 1934 CIRPAC gathering – but Neurath’s criticism was also shared by Fred Forbát.¹⁵⁰

The problem of sweeping planning ideas versus thorough analysis was also emphasised by Martin Wagner, Berlin’s influential Chief City Planner until 1933. In an extensive memo to the Syrkus couple of March 1935, Wagner, who was then working as a planner in Turkey, took *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* as an opportunity to delve deeper into the problem of functional urbanism, thereby acknowledging the relevance of Syrkus’ effort.

Wagner discussed the general patterns of urban development, which he saw as functions of humans as consumers of energy. Instead of planning what was to be desired, as he believed Chmielewski and Syrkus did, one should depart from the well-understood dynamics of the city. In Wagner’s eyes the Warsaw town planners failed to explain the “fundamental economic momentum [*Triebkräfte*] of Warsaw’s future development”. They thus lost sight of the many other possible development paths, in particular what Wagner saw as a likely possibility that cities would transform into something completely new. Town planners therefore, Wagner argued, had to be reformers of the economy, a fact he felt was not adequately attributed in the plan for a Functional Warsaw.¹⁵¹

The fact that *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* triggered a general debate was underlined by similar criticism voiced by the CIAM president Cornelis van Eesteren. Van Eesteren, on the one hand, lauded Syrkus’ bold statement and acknowledged *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* as the “first synthetic work of a congress group”. Yet, on the other hand, he also feared that what – according to him and Wagner – was still too super-

ficial a treatment of far more complex issues would prove not to be the best example. Syrkus accepted this criticism and defended his planning effort as merely the first step of an ongoing process. He argued that further strict adherence to the collective work pattern of the CIAM would remedy the shortcomings.¹⁵² Commenting on Wager's critique of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, Gropius embraced Wagner's main points but asked Helena Syrkus to frame the reaction in the right way: "Given the political circumstances which we today encounter in all countries I believe it to be the fate of modernist architecture to advance the theoretical insights. Implementation in the wider sense will only be possible in a second wave, which will perhaps only begin much later." The public, Gropius held, was too occupied with political questions in order to find much support for the cause of the CIAM.¹⁵³

While Róžański stayed within the limits of classical urban planning, using regulations, hygiene, and the representative development of the capital as a leitmotif, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* can almost be seen as an attempt to overcome the process of catching up with Western examples and reversing the situation with a radical vision not conceivable in the already "crystallized" – as Chmielewski and Syrkus put it – cities of the West. In this sense, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* is also a telling example of the rise of the modernist strand of architects within the larger context of urban crisis, even if to some extent this meant making up the problems for which one could offer a solution. One could argue that what Chmielewski and Syrkus proposed was to solve the urban problems of the 19th century (regulation, hygiene, housing) using planning instruments of the 20th century, stressing the enormous opportunities available to Warsaw due to its favourable geographic position.

In this way, the plan rose above politics and followed a techno-scientific type of logic. At the same time, given the necessarily close connection to the city administration it also became part – albeit only for a certain period – of mayor Starzyński's political programme.¹⁵⁴ Radical urban improvement, even if only achieved in the future, was a source of political legitimacy while close relations with the city administration translated into access to resources for the urban planners. This formed the framework under which far reaching, radical urban vision, closely connected to political decision making was possible. This win-win-situation was, however, not to last.

Conclusion

Henry Russell-Hitchcock observed in 1947 that the state came to play the deciding role for architects, replacing the exclusive relationship with private clients in an

“Architecture of bureaucracy” rather than “architecture of genius”.¹⁵⁵ This new reality was already to be found in East Central Europe by the late 1920s and is evident in the Warsaw example. The world economic crisis of the early 1930s resulted in the almost complete disappearance of the already meagre group of private sponsors for architects, in particular modernist architects.

Due to the preponderance of the post-imperial experience, the centralised state was disproportionately present in East Central European capital cities in comparison to Western Europe. This was further exacerbated by the urban challenges described in this chapter, as well as the nationally charged construction of the new capitals as a token of legitimacy. Moreover, yet another legacy of the imperial past, the lack of a strong tradition of self-administration – certainly in Warsaw – made it easier, and somewhat necessary, for the central state to intervene. Starzyński’s appointment was a direct consequence of this nexus.

It is, however, less clear whether this had the negative consequences for architects as insinuated by Russell-Hitchcock. The urbanist dictatorship suggested in the context of the Warsaw of Tomorrow exhibition implied a double self-empowerment – of architects and politicians. As this chapter has demonstrated, the gloomily painted imperial past offered a common ground for ambitious urban planners as well as for politicians in need of future projects to deliver the strongly needed legitimacy. At first glance it seemed both sides could profit from boldly envisioning the future development in a new way.¹⁵⁶ Warsaw became a focal point of national and societal transformation and as such a “symbolization of modernisation”.¹⁵⁷ The capital city became a space within which to prove oneself – as a politician and as an architect. Syrkus used his plan for a Functional Warsaw in the guise of a new type of urban expert who had grossly enlarged his scope of action.

Almost as soon as *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* was published, however, the fault-lines of this self-empowerment became apparent – fault-lines within the group of CIAM architects, and fault-lines in the relations between modernist architects and politics. In April 1977, 40 years after the last pre-war CIAM congress in Paris (CIAM V), Helena Syrkus wrote a long letter to Martin Steinmann. Steinmann was the Swiss historian of architecture who, in the second half of the 1970s, began to set up the CIAM archive at the then newly founded Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture, *gta*, at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. Steinmann contacted Syrkus in order to better understand how the CIAM had formed as an organisation which, by 1970s, had almost fallen into oblivion. In her letter, Helena Syrkus goes to great lengths to present the achievements of the Polish group in what to her was the right light. The emotional letter is full of

memories which had quite obviously shaped Helena Syrkus' life in a way few other things had and culminates in her recollections of the plans for a Functional Warsaw and the impact of this plan. In particular, she recalls the preparatory meeting for the 1937 Paris congress in Amsterdam in July 1935. This meeting was devoted to regional planning, among other things. When Szymon Syrkus, following the lines of the Berlin meeting of 1931 and the main lines of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, and encouraged by the positive feedback in London the year before, advocated broad-scale international planning beyond national borders, Gropius lost his, as Helena Syrkus called it, "Olympic calmness". Pointing to Syrkus, and the CIAM members Bottoni, Pollini, Weissmann and Sert who supported him, Gropius cried out "you are all dilettantes".¹⁵⁸

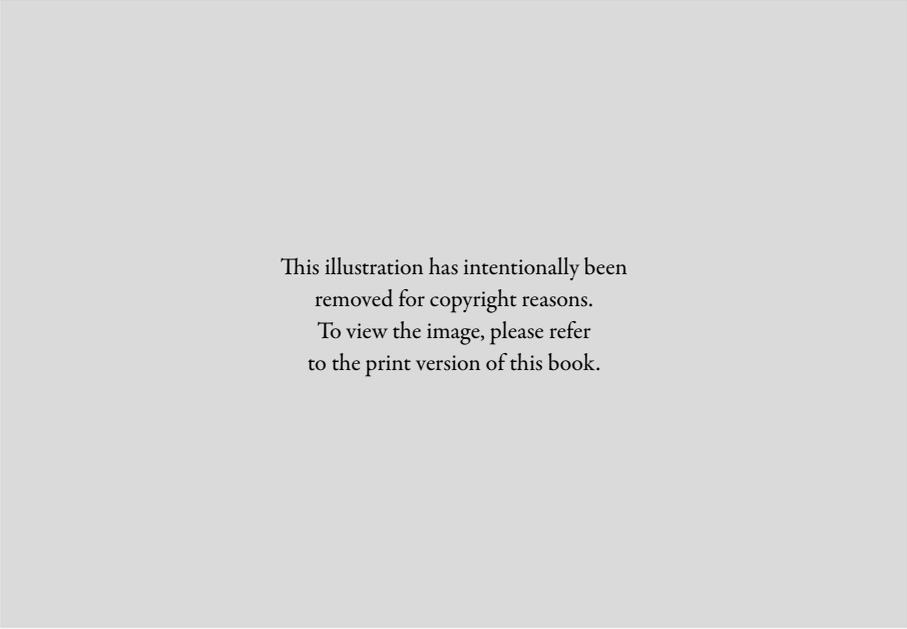
This scene sparked the 'foundation' of the 'Dilettantes Club', symbolised by a heart and arrow drawn by Helena Syrkus' lipstick, to which its members still felt attached many decades after the event. Helena Syrkus immediately came up with a hymn for the dilettantes, as well as for their opponents, the analytic fraction with the noteworthy line "Analyse über alles, über alles im Kooongres, vom dem Steiger bis zum Haefeli über Moser und den Hess – Analyse, Analyse, über alles im Kongress". Sung to the tune of *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*, the lyrics listed the names of the most noteworthy, mostly Swiss, advocates of thorough analysis – the latter contrasting with the sweeping synthesis Syrkus had in mind.

The song apparently prompted Gropius to immediately join the camp of the 'dilettantes', at least socially. Apart from again pinpointing the relevance of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, the anecdote highlights the fierce debates over how exactly planning should go about – and thus over which exact role the architect was to play. The fact that – and the manner in which – Helena Syrkus recalled these events also reveals the personal investment in these debates and the merging of personal, also political convictions and life-styles with professional beliefs and choices, which was so typical for the CIAM.¹⁵⁹

This fusion of personal commitment, political convictions and professional outlook became highly problematic after the CIAM's Paris congress, a congress already marked by the attempt to depoliticise the CIAM, and to move the organisation into less contested fields. The informal alliance between modernist architects and the modernising state was put into question by the rise of authoritarianism and political radicalisation in Hungary and Poland, and the German assault on Czechoslovakia in 1938. The strain under which the tight and often emotional networks of the CIAM were put, and the trial by fire of the Second World War for modernist architects, are the two main themes of the following, last chapter.

6. Under Pressure: Modernist Architects and the Rise of Political Extremes

The Warsaw of Tomorrow exhibition, held in March 1936, was the most explicit manifestation of the modernising alliance between Polish architects and the state. However, just a few months later this alliance began to crumble. Political attention turned instead towards monumental buildings. The plan for a Functional Warsaw, which had been assigned a central place in the 1936 exhibition, was put on hold and never put into practise in the ensuing years. Following the death of Józef Piłsudski, de facto leader of Poland since the 1926 coup, on 12 May 1935, a political power struggle arose, strengthening the nationalist forces – similar to most other states in Central Europe. Within this sphere of increasing international tensions politicians came increasingly to look towards architecture as a means to portray the nation's political aspirations. This also implied a change in what architects were expected to deliver and an erosion of the aforementioned alliance between the modernising state and modernist architects. Now, politicians demanded from architects to demonstrate clear political commitment. This was most vividly expressed in the planning for an entire model central town quarter around Warsaw's Piłsudski square. The associated competition, intended to seriously alter Warsaw's city centre appearance, had opened just before Piłsudski's death, but quickly became charged with a commemorative aspect to honour Poland's quintessential leader. Plans to embellish the new quarter with a grandiose monument to mark the deceased politician provide ample evidence of the merger of politics and town planning.¹



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59. Design for a Piłsudski forum for Warsaw, 1938

Architektura i Budownictwo (AiB) reacted to the death of Piłsudski by prominently placing a tribute to the leader on the cover of its second issue in 1935. The statement, made in the name of the SARP and TUP, did not so much highlight the achievements of Piłsudski the statesman but rather that he had been heavily involved in architectural developments, culminating in large-scale plans to redesign Warsaw's centre.² There was intense architectural interest in the 1935 competition for the latter, and for the commemorative monument for Piłsudski two years later.³

The profession was quite clearly offered a central role in reconfiguring the public face of Poland, albeit under altered political conditions.⁴ The changing political climate did not immediately lead to a departure of modernist architects from the stage. The Brukalski couple and Józef Szanajca and Bohdan Lachert submitted a much-noted entry to the competition for the quarter around the Piłsudski square, which contained a number of functionalist planning features.⁵ Yet, the manner in which state, society and architects interacted in this framework was definitively different from the late 1920s and early 1930s. This was true for the range of official buildings from the National Museum to a number of ministries, which now

also came to dominate the pages of *AiB*.⁶ Starzyński and the Polish government were now clearly taking inspiration from Europe's authoritarian leaders, particularly Mussolini, as they more assertively expressed their political aspirations through architecture.⁷

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60. National Museum, Warsaw

The working conditions, and thus the lives, of the East Central European CIAM members became increasingly influenced by the turning political tide. From around 1937 onwards the Syrkus couple's correspondence with their CIAM colleagues complaining about a general lack in commissions and of politicians losing interest in modernist designs also began to include worries about the changing political scene as such.⁸

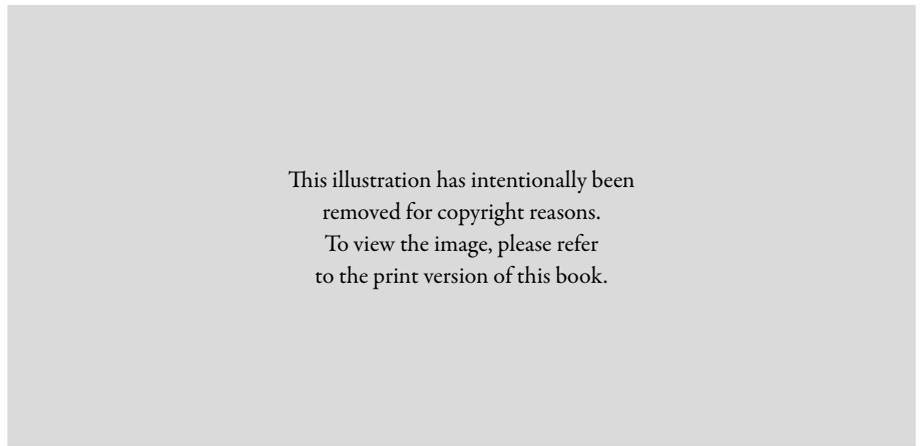
In Hungary Forbát similarly noted that designs in the style of the "Reichskanzlei" carried the day and that this meant more than losing out in competitions.⁹ International exchanges of ideas, a hallmark of the CIAM, became increasingly hampered. Meanwhile, the CIAM showed itself less confident about engaging with politics and retreated to less contested, but also less impactful, themes such as leisure. The latter served as the theme of the CIAM's fifth congress in Paris in 1937. Shortly after the congress Le Corbusier placed his engagement with the CIAM on hold because, as he claimed, he no longer believed in collective work.¹⁰ In many respects Paris was a defensive congress which left the representatives of the radical wing of

the CIAM, such as Hans Schmidt, disillusioned.¹¹ Gropius, who had departed for the US by then and could not attend the congress in Paris, sent his regrets to Sigfried Giedion, stressing that “the importance of the congresses lay in them being a spiritual island on which all our ideas further mature amidst the European desert around us”.¹² Cornelis van Eesteren, in a somewhat resigned tone, argued that the “light approach” which the French had proposed for the congress was probably the only practical way given the “current difficulties in cooperating internationally”.¹³

Although Forbát and the Syrkus couple remained in Hungary and Poland respectively for the time being, the exodus of architects (particularly but not exclusively modernists), from Central Europe accelerated quickly after 1933. Whole communities of exiled architects from Central Europe in Spain and Turkey functioned as transmitters of modernism, only to soon face political challenges in these countries too.¹⁴ While the reasons for these architects’ exile varied, the often politically charged engagement with modernism turned into a potential threat. The escape movements testify to the name many modernist architects had made for themselves, and to the transferable nature of the technological logic of modernism. But they also demonstrate that modernism bore many more political connotations at this point than had been the case in the 1920s. Austria followed in the wake of German political developments in 1934 with regard to authoritarianism and also became a place where it was difficult for modernist architects to survive. By the second half of the 1930s the same was true of Hungary and, shortly thereafter, from 1937, Poland. Czechoslovakia, so far an island of stability and democracy, by 1938 was similarly the subject of German expansionism and ceased to be an independent state in March 1939. As has been shown in chapter 3 the CIAM-Ost organisation resulted both from growing disruptions within Europe and was an attempt to formulate an East Central European answer to the challenges of the 1930s. Eventually the organisation fell victim to these very tensions.

In Poland, the SAP – since 1934 known as SARP in reference to the Polish state – lost its purpose as a hub for modernist architects in 1937 and instead began to introduce ethnic criteria and political imperatives as core values. Further in other countries in the region the national associations of architects, which had been established after the First World War, also became the sites of ideological battlegrounds. Journals and other channels of communication which had been established in the same spirit and within the same networks as the CIAM and the SAP began to suffer and go into decline. Even those journals which maintained an open perspective signalled by their choice of themes that a new era had arrived for architects. In 1936 *AiB* published in detail the new professional order of architects which had emerged

in Nazi Germany and how it directly reflected the new ideology.¹⁵ The last issue of *AiB*, from June 1939, was most prescient in featuring an aerial bomb on its cover, devoting large parts of its pages to aerial warfare and the ways cities could react to the central concern this threat posed – and the role architects could play herein.¹⁶



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61. Cover of last issue of *AiB*, June 1939

This final chapter will consider the different dimensions which marked the expansion of the profession of architects as treated in the previous chapters. This chapter will demonstrate how the activity of modernist architects, particularly in East Central Europe in the 20 years before the war, which had been charged with political and social relevance, now became an echo chamber. It was far more difficult for modernist architects to conceive of themselves – or to be viewed by politicians and military leaders – as mere technicians in the way it had still been possible for architects in the First World War. This was particularly true for those many modernist architects who strongly identified with the communist project. After analysing how the loyalties of modernist architects became questionable and international contacts strained, this chapter will describe the experience of the war for modernist architects using Warsaw as one of the most apocalyptic places of the war. Finally, the chapter will look at how modernist architects tried to focus on the post-catastrophic city while the windows of opportunity quickly closed for them between 1945 and 1948.

Questioned Loyalties and Strained International Exchange

From 1933 on East Central Europe found itself between the two antagonistic powers of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Whether looking westward or eastward, architects in Poland or Hungary could see what the rise of a new kind of political ideology meant for the formerly 'free' profession, albeit not always from first-hand knowledge. After Ernst May left the Soviet Union in 1933 all the Soviet architects he was in touch with were killed. In Germany the new government targeted Jewish architects on principle, as well as modernists who were not willing to renounce their convictions. By 1939 more than one hundred architects who had attended a German university or school of higher education were living and working in Tel Aviv alone, including nineteen alumni of the *Bauhaus*.¹⁷

The writer and poet Alexander Wat's seminal work *My century*, which is arguably the most impressive account of how intellectuals in Central Europe identified with the promise of communism and the extraordinary price they paid, describes a very specific social and political constellation. Communism in Poland and other countries in the region, much more so than in France or even Germany, sought to remedy social conditions perceived as rotten to the core.¹⁸ Wat's account of his experiences as a writer of decisively leftist inclinations is generally also reflective of modernist architects like the Syrkus couple, the Brukalski couple, or Bohdan Lachert, Józef Szanajca and Roman Piotrowski and his wife Anatalja.¹⁹ Since 1937 the increasing nationalism and dominant right-wing politics had already marginalised the avant-garde current in Polish architecture.²⁰ This said, it only led to direct sanctions in individual cases, such as for Władysław Czerny who lost his position in public administration due to his membership of the Communist Party.²¹

Again, the example of Szymon Syrkus is enlightening. Those attributes which contributed to Syrkus' success on the international scene of architecture now became questionable: his radical embracing of modernist forms, his international connections and internationalist identification and, not least, his leftist sympathies which went beyond housing reform and the improvement of workers' situations. These attributes ran counter to the rise of "moral nations" in Poland in the late 1930s.²² Forces which Syrkus perceived as reactionary quickly gained political ground. They marked societal fault-lines as impossible to fix, and, while taking inspiration from the rising fascist states, regarded the tightening international situation as confirmation of the need for nationalist politics at home. Increasing anti-Semitism, and the introduction of anti-Semitic measures as official policies, meant that Syrkus' Jewish background began to matter in a way that, from what we know, it never had before 1937.

The Syrkus couple's correspondence with other CIAM members provides a clear picture of how deeply the changing political and social situations affected their professional and personal lives. In Szymon Syrkus' letter to Giedion of June 1937 Syrkus reflects in detail on where the CIAM, its eastern groups, and the CIAM architects in Poland stood. He came up with a mixed impression. Syrkus presents a success story of increasing co-operation, of linking advanced regional planning in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland within the framework of the initial CIAM-Ost collaboration and he praises the qualities of the CIAM as such. At the same time Syrkus refers to what to him was now the unsurmountable obtrusiveness of a politically radicalized Teige in Czechoslovakia. More importantly, Syrkus provides a bleak picture of the situation in his home country. Syrkus and Roman Piotrowski, vice-presidents of the SARP general organisation and its Warsaw branch respectively, had lost their positions. The same applied to the many like-minded architects who played key roles in the SAP/SARP until 1937. Elections in May 1937 had resulted in a clear victory of the "tightly organized right", Syrkus explained. The dominance of CIAM ideas in the SARP thus came to an end. As Syrkus told Giedion, from this point on only four members of the old Polish CIAM group could be counted on: the Syrkus couple, Piotrowski and his wife Anatolja. All this said, Syrkus stressed his identification with the CIAM and reminded Giedion that he had never claimed to represent all Polish architects.²³

Indeed, during 1937 and 1938 the tensions within the SARP rose significantly, just as Syrkus had feared. These tensions did not so much reflect stylistic issues, but opposing opinions on the societal role of architects. After the war Roman Piotrowski remembered how those architects from the CIAM *Praesens* camp who advocated radical social reform quickly lost ground. These architects had advocated a strong state initiative, even state-run planning bureaus during the economic crisis of the early 1930s. These general conflicts over the architect as social actor versus the classical private 'free' profession now developed an outspokenly political aspect. The respective conflicts emerged over solidarity measures for the republican side in the Spanish civil war. But they became particularly expressed in protest against the increasing and now overt anti-Semitism at the Faculty of Architecture at the WUT. Radical leftist politics also became associated with "alien Jewish Communism" within the SARP.²⁴ In 1938 the Warsaw branch of the SARP gave itself new statutes which excluded almost all its Jewish members.²⁵ At least 59 architects had to leave the organisation. In 1939 all Jews were formally expunged from the SARP membership lists.²⁶

The SARP also took a clear political stance. It embraced the expansionist military course of the Polish government in the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1938. For leftist and Jewish architects – two characteristics which the political right often viewed as two sides of the same coin – the fight for the “true face of Polish architects” was much more than an obstacle to their careers. The exclusion of leftist and Jewish architects went hand in hand with attempts to gain a privileged position for architects – for which these architects needed the government.²⁷

After the war Helena Syrkus gave a vivid account of how the situation within the SARP changed in line with the worsening political climate.²⁸ In fact, it is striking to note that the new threats become clearly apparent in her correspondence early on. As long-held convictions turned problematic, the Syrkus couple clung even more to the core of what they perceived as the CIAM values. Hans Schmidt wrote a lengthy reflection in support of the Syrkus couple and their social engagement, arguing that the conditions in Poland would in theory be favourable to push through the new architecture he also fought for.²⁹ Helena Syrkus reported to Hans Schmidt in September 1938, however, that although they had still work, the sponsors were no longer the right ones – that is, only private instead of public financing was available.³⁰

The tone of the correspondence between the Syrkus couple and van Eesteren, Gropius, Giedion, Forbát, Schmidt and many other luminaries of the movement of modernist architecture changed notably from 1937 on. In an ever more pressing political situation, the core CIAM members, who by now knew each other well having met personally several times, more often referenced personal themes in their correspondence.³¹ Under extreme circumstances close affiliations with fellow modernists attained a new relevance and often even decided the fate of these architects. By October 1938 it became impossible to make long-term plans, as Helena Syrkus wrote to Hans Schmidt: “we are going through a difficult period and we seriously have to consider our future”.³² František Kalivoda, who was now heading the revived Czech CIAM group and was the driving force of the CIAM-Ost along with Molnár, received a warm letter from Helena Syrkus, emphasizing their personal bonds, but at the same time voicing her scepticism. She believed that the CIAM-Ost, apart from Czechoslovakia, was suffering from adverse political developments in its member countries. Kalivoda’s plan to establish a CIAM-Ost journal seemed unrealistic — albeit desirable — to her. The climate for such a journal in Poland was “not warm enough”. Further, the professional meetings, which Kalivoda proposed, seemed difficult to realize.³³

Indeed, in January 1939 the Syrkus couple decided that they had to leave their home country. Helena Syrkus reported to van Eesteren that she and her husband

had already known for a long time that they had to leave Poland, but had stayed because they wanted to keep supporting the CIAM cause there. It was now clear to them that this was no longer possible. The government's decision to exclude Szymon Syrkus from the task of finally realising *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* was seen as writing on the wall.³⁴

The old CIAM networks served as a potential parachute. In the hopes of opening a door to the US Helena Syrkus wrote to van Eesteren that Szymon had almost concluded a book project on functionalist architecture which might serve as a lever for an academic engagement in the US: "As a matter of course a CIAMbook [sic!] – as we are all but loudspeakers of our collectively generated ideas". Helena Syrkus wondered whether the external threat potentially served as an opportunity for them as it was forcing them to finally push through important theoretical work.³⁵ Along with the CIAM book Helena Syrkus somewhat desperately praised her own qualities as an organising force of many CIAM events and her fluency in German, English, French, and Russian.

Helena Syrkus made similar approaches to Gropius and Giedion, the latter of whom was also in the US: "Now we too are beginning to take a practical interest in geographical matters", she confided to her CIAM colleagues who, she believed, could translate their place in the hierarchy of architects into practical support for the two of them as a couple.³⁶ In several letters Helena Syrkus urged Gropius to find a way for her and her husband to enter the US by taking some kind of work. The couple prepared CVs, improved their command of the English language and considered different tasks with which they could be of use in the US – all to no avail.³⁷ Gropius had brought – or at least supported – his trusted old *Bauhaus* colleagues Marcel Breuer and Martin Wagner to the US.³⁸ The stricter immigration quotas meant, however, that the success rate for East Europeans was much lower than for those from Western Europe – which Fred Forbát painfully learned in 1938.³⁹ Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy answered these letters in English, instead of the German which they normally used with Helena Syrkus, telling her that they had tried their best. However they were receiving similar requests almost daily and chances of success were limited.⁴⁰ Academic posts in the US were scarce and only open to those who had also made a name for themselves on the American side of the Atlantic, namely mostly the prominent *Bauhaus* veterans.

Nevertheless, Gropius went to great lengths to support the Syrkus couple. He approached Catherine Bauer, the well-known advocate of modernist architecture in the US, amongst others.⁴¹ Van Eesteren, who still felt reasonably safe in the Netherlands, also tried to garner practical support and to cooperate with Giedion and

Gropius in order to support the couple in Warsaw, concluding his respective letter with “if need be you know that you are our friends”⁴²

The correspondence between the Syrkus couple and the other leading CIAM architects was framed by the “desire that you and we ourselves may succeed in retrieving everything for which we live through the present storm”, as Giedion had expressed it one year before the Second World War broke out.⁴³ By mid-1939 the Syrkus couple were much more optimistic even though “around us everything is in danger”. General developments in Poland, Syrkus wrote, were positive as democracy was gaining new ground and offered new work opportunities for modernist architects.⁴⁴ The very different tone of this letter, as many others of the same period, shows how architects in East Central Europe constantly had to adapt to a quickly changing political situation.

With hindsight it is astonishing to follow the correspondence between Helena Syrkus and numerous CIAM members until the last days before the war. From early 1939 onwards these letters purvey a clear sense of the situation becoming untenable for architects of Jewish origins and leftist convictions. At the same time the correspondence took on a new intensity in professional matters. In August 1939, for example, Helena Syrkus engaged in an exchange with the preeminent Italian modernist architect Alberto Sartoris on rather general questions of modernist architecture.⁴⁵ Also in August 1939 the Syrkus couple renewed contact with Le Corbusier again, returning to the analytics-synthesis debate which had occupied the CIAM for so long, including recalling the ‘hymns’ of the two camps.⁴⁶

At the same time the correspondence was dominated by frantic attempts to somehow continue the travelling which had typified CIAM till 1939, even though the political situation made this almost impossible. The significance of personal contact was stressed continuously. In letters to Sartoris, van Eesteren, Giedion, and many others the Syrkus couple referred to their weekend-house as a desirable place to meet and invited their colleagues to share their company there in order to continue the intimate shared professional and personal bonds which characterised the CIAM.⁴⁷

In January 1939 Forbát, who was now in Sweden, wrote from Lund to propose that a CIAM meeting be held in Gothenburg given that the German railways would certainly not be functioning until July of that year.⁴⁸ Eventually, a small Polish contingent travelled north in the summer of 1939. While Szymon Syrkus could go, Helena was not able to. When the “times of contempt” were past, she would make up for that, Helena Syrkus wrote to Forbát.⁴⁹ On 22 August, after this last trip abroad, Szymon Syrkus confided his state of mind to Hans Schmidt. Given

the circumstances conventional letters were no longer possible. He longed to meet Schmidt in person again to discuss everything that was going on. Syrkus wrote how the “crass light” thrown onto recent developments had suddenly clarified “inter-relations” which had long seemed a mystery to him: “We try to work and think as though everything around was as normal”. Syrkus then provided more information on the WSM Rakowiec project which had been restarted in the interim.⁵⁰ Meanwhile Helena Syrkus continued her plans to attend the CIAM meeting in Liège, intending to leave for Belgium on 9 September 1939.⁵¹ In one of his last letters to the West Szymon Syrkus wrote to the CIAM president van Eesteren on 26 August 1939 – five days before the German invasion of Poland and thus the start of the Second World War in Europe – that it was now no longer a financial question whether his wife could come to Liège: “But we are calm and prepared for everything, and work on preliminarily far-reaching designs.”⁵²

The CIAM architects in Hungary were no better off than their Polish colleagues. Fred Forbát, who had returned to Hungary from the Soviet Union in 1933, found his leftist political convictions and his Jewish background so disadvantageous that he was targeted in a twofold way by the rising forces of the political right. From 1937 onwards Forbát’s correspondence is dominated by his attempts to leave his country of origin. Just before the war started Forbát managed to move to Sweden using contacts with Swedish CIAM architects, Uno Åhrén in particular. Even there he found himself confronted with suspicions regarding his Jewish background and it was not until after the war that his professional career was on track again.⁵³

Molnár had already reported on the difficult situation that the Hungarian CIAM group faced in 1936. Due to the group’s involvement in an exhibition which was critical of housing politics in Hungary the group had been placed “under surveillance”, a status which could last for months at a time.⁵⁴ Shortly after the Nazis seized power in Germany in 1933 Molnár had published an article which sought to defend modernist architecture from accusations of being in essence Bolshevist. The hoped for goal was to incorporate social and economic questions, without necessarily engendering political implications. Concern for social questions had led to false associations. The fact that modernist architecture could flourish in various political circumstances – as Molnár argued would still apply in Germany as well as in the Soviet Union – according to him testified to the strength of the movement and its apolitical character. Moreover, Molnár argued that modernist architecture could be reconciled with national traditions.⁵⁵

Increasingly militant anti-Semitism in Hungary made the situation there, as in Poland, worse and also dangerous for many modernist architects. In November

1937 Forbát signalled “S.O.S.” to Moholy Nagy “and all others who already are outside”.⁵⁶ On 14 April 1938 the introduction of anti-Jewish legislation in Hungary prompted Forbát to use dramatic language to seek Gropius’s support to get out of the country. The new law would deny Forbát the ability to work and he did not believe that the laws would satisfy the “agitated public opinion”. “It will become even worse,” Forbát predicted.⁵⁷ Molnár decided to disband the Hungarian CIAM group in 1938, finding himself in a situation where he was apparently questioning every assumption which had thus far guided his professional and personal life.⁵⁸ In 1939 Molnár was able to join the professional organisation of Hungarian architects, a step which had become necessary in order to access commissions, just as had happened in Poland.⁵⁹

The international situation worsened in tandem with the increasingly poisonous political climate in most East Central European states. Following Germany’s annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia, and with Poland apparently next on the list, it was only a question of time before war would erupt. Thus two trends described in the previous chapters became definitive for East Central European CIAM architects: First, the bonds formed within the CIAM now attained a new meaning far beyond mere professional connections and potentially became a means to survival. Second, the mutual dependency of experts and the state, which was so strong in the new states of East Central Europe anyway, also took on new relevance and meaning. The economic crisis in the 1930s had highlighted the extreme dependency of architects on sponsors.⁶⁰ However, the state had also become more dependent on urban environment experts to control the expanding capitals and to meet the rising social demands on the state as an actor in the social realm. The Second World War would, in general terms, intensify these tensions.

Continuity and Rupture – the Onslaught on Warsaw

Once war began, the described mutual dependence of architects and the state intensified exponentially – but also changed in character, as state-induced pressure and force was now applied without restriction. This was certainly true for the territories occupied by the advancing German armies, that is, what remained of Czechoslovakia on 15 March 1939 and Poland after 1 September 1939. After surrendering on 28 September 1939, Warsaw was turned into a prime example of war against cities, a novel feature of the Second World War. The new approach not only involved an occupation regime of unparalleled harshness, but also included Nazi town planning intended to strip the existing city of its shape and character. This in turn implied a

double challenge for architects on the spot who suffered physical threats not only as Jews, leftist architects, or simply Poles, but also on the professional level. These architects, or rather those who could continue their planning work, constantly had to adjust their designs for the capital to reflect the changing onslaughts on the city.⁶¹

In July 1939, during his last pre-Second World War meeting with CIAM colleagues in Stockholm, Szymon Syrkus learned from the emigrated German architect Wilhelm Schütte that the German architect Friedrich Pabst had allegedly already been appointed as town planner for Warsaw, and was to take up his post on 1 October 1939.⁶² While the veracity of the anecdote cannot be verified, this story, and primarily the German treatment of Warsaw during the Second World War in urbanistic terms, is relevant in two ways. First, the German occupiers' efforts to rethink the urban pattern even in wartime shows that town planning maintained and attained a key role during the war. Second, German planning served as a negative foil for Polish underground planning, which was in part a reaction to this new challenge, and in part a continuation of the plans for *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*.

In contrast to the earlier German treatment of Prague, and briefly subsequently of Copenhagen, Brussels, Amsterdam and Paris, Germany led an actual war against the Polish capital. Warsaw was in many ways a goal and thus victim of Nazi ideology and the city's treatment can hardly be explained through the pragmatics of occupation. The Nazi plan was to deprive Warsaw of its metropolitan character and reduce it to a centre of a largely agrarian, new German settler-dominated territorial structure, provisionally dubbed *Generalgouvernement*.⁶³

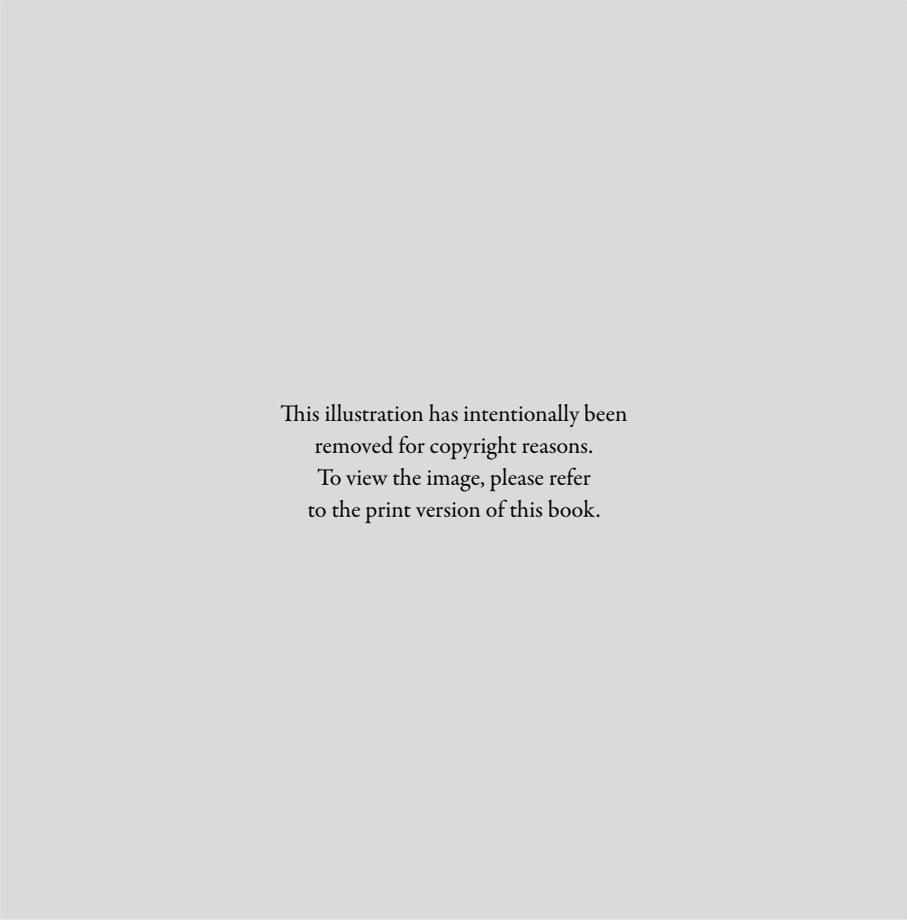
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62. Cover of the book *Defense of Warsaw* by Teresa Żarnowerówna

Nazi politics with regard to Warsaw only seem to follow coherent lines at first glance. From the first day of the German attack it was clear that Warsaw – now to be ruled from Cracow – was to be stripped of its role as a Polish capital and a centre of Polish culture. This also implied the destruction of the population – intentionally the Jewish population, and at least putting up with heavy losses of human lives of the non-Jewish inhabitants. This was already true for the unrestrained warfare against the civilian population in 1939, continued with radical measures taken against the Polish elite and against actual and perceived resistance, and included numerous victims of expulsions, resettlements and forced labour, all culminating in Warsaw.

On second glance, however, the ideas governing the treatment of the former Polish capital are far less clear. From the beginning of the occupation more pragmatic minds within the new administration also viewed Warsaw as an important economic element. Over the course of the war, these voices became louder – before the apocalypse of the 1944 uprising ushered in human and urban destruction on a scale that was previously unheard of. The German occupation principally faced the challenge which Ferdinand des Lesseps had identified in the 19th century, and which informed the radical planning for the Polish capital discussed in the previous chapter. As a metropolitan city in the making at the crossroads of major European traffic arteries, the city offered enormous economic potential. Even the Nazis had to admit that the city they took over had little in common with the propaganda image of a hopelessly backward and primitive country. Friedrich Gollert, a key figure in the new administration, tried to resolve this cognitive dissonance by admitting that the Polish capital had developed at an “American speed”, but criticised the rather chaotic development which had not occurred in a uniform manner.⁶⁴ The Prudential high-rise building very obviously stood in the way of stereotypical perceptions and was thus dismissed by Gollert as of an “impressive scale” but not suited to its surroundings.⁶⁵

Warsaw proved provocative and a challenge to its new occupants in terms of its modern architectural achievements and with regard to its nature as a complex metropolis, and this was reflected by the German administration’s talk of the “Warschauproblem”.⁶⁶ The German occupation administration had considerable leeway to tackle this perceived problem. Gollert enthusiastically referred to “completely new modes of administrations which had been conceived without any role models and only according to the needs of the administration”.⁶⁷ The administration’s action plan reveals the clash of a brutal racist logic and an almost naïve modernisation euphoria in extreme form. Allegedly “civilising achievements” in administration, road construction or the regulation of the river Vistula served to legitimise population politics deprived of any normative or moral constraints.⁶⁸



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63. Prudential building Warsaw: plan, construction phase, and final state

Urbanism was very much part of this link. Town planning was a prime activity of the “creative imitative” which Gollert had invoked as the order of the day. The planning measures were not limited to various far-ranging designs, most of which almost completely remained paper dreams due to the war. These plans also included measures to establish a new social structure in the old capital in order to turn it into a German urban centre. It is striking how easily modernising politics and state of the art planning tools went together with brutal politics of extermination. The Nazi-concept of the *Siedlungszelle* which was to govern the new Warsaw – like most

towns and cities in the new Germany – did not much differ, at first glance, from the neighbourhood unit, a well-established planning ideal by the 1930s. The *Siedlungszelle*, however, followed the logic of racism and was seen as the core of the new ‘purified’ *Volksgemeinschaft*. For obvious reasons forcing through such ideals in a geographic context, with an almost exclusively undesired (from a Nazi perspective) population, was to have dire consequences for the latter.⁶⁹

Niels Gutschow and Barbara Klain calculated that the ten planned “cells” would have resulted in a new German town of Warsaw of 40,000 inhabitants.⁷⁰ A memorandum written by Gollert in early 1944, entitled *Grundsätzliche Bemerkungen über die Gestaltung Warschaus während des Kriegs und nach dem Kriege* (General Remarks on the Organisation of Warsaw during and after the War) reveals how little these plans responded to the urban dynamics of Warsaw, even or specifically in the war situation.⁷¹ Gollert envisioned a prosperous industrial metropolis, closely connected with the Reich positioned at the intersection of major traffic arteries. Instead of archaic settlement concepts, this memorandum was about highly specialised industries which, as Gollert stressed, were in the German interest.⁷²

Soon after the Germans took over, the former Polish capital arguably turned into the “most agonising spot in the whole of terrorized Europe”, in the words of the Polish writer and Nobel prize-winner Czesław Miłosz.⁷³ For the Polish architects and planners who survived the German invasion, German politics *vis-à-vis* Warsaw posed two big challenges beside personal hardship. They had to remodel their plans – like the concept of *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* discussed in the previous chapter – in the light of the new urban realities of the three waves of destruction in 1939, 1943 and 1944. Moreover, their housing settlements, realized or planned, had to be re-considered in the light of the war experiences and the German assault on the urban community as a social fabric. The establishment of the ghetto along with the wider holocaust, measures against Polish resistance, resettlements, forced labour and the first steps towards building or establishing German quarters, though all different in character and scope, must all be seen as attempts to destroy the local population.

Both challenges informed – and thus to a certain degree also coined – the work of *Pracownia Architektoniczno-Urbanistyczna* (PAU). The architectural-urbanistic workshop PAU was established in 1940 as an underground group of a remarkable range of modernist architects and urbanists. At the height of its activity PAU comprised more than 80 active members.⁷⁴ Helena Syrkus later noted one of the main points which typified PAU as its interdisciplinary composition. The organisation comprised economists, sociologists, and psychologists, as well as architects.

The main lines of German policy served as a negative foil to PAU, while the main achievements of modernist, CIAM-associated architects before the war formed their major point of departure. These were in particular the housing estates realized within the framework of the WSM and the plans for Warsaw as a Functional City. The circumstances under which PAU acted are hard to imagine as they reflected the extremely harsh conditions of German occupation policy. Helena Syrkus' memoirs contain large sections devoted to her PAU experience. She fought right into the 1970s to have the group's achievements presented in the right light.⁷⁵ For Syrkus a central point was the group spirit and group cohesion that characterized PAU. In this, the group very much reflected the deep identification which had probably already characterised the Polish CIAM group even more than any other CIAM group even before the war.

The main beliefs of the pre-war period – improving workers' situations by applying scientifically based insights to building better communities, placing oneself in a wider international strand of thoughts, and social engagement – also informed, within the limits dictated by the new reality, the activity of this group during the war. For evident reasons international communication ceased. But PAU had still access to international literature, as Syrkus importantly stressed. PAU could not deliver concrete projects. Building activity in Warsaw almost came to a complete stop during the war and even the most urgent remedial works often did not get done. For this reason discussing questions of modern town planning, continuing urbanist projects started before the war, and developing schemes for future urban life took a central place in PAU activity. Helena Syrkus fittingly likened the workshop to More's island Utopia.⁷⁶

Collaborative work was key within PAU in the tradition of both the CIAM and *Praesens*. But building communities was also intended as a survival strategy and a blueprint for the future post-war society. The settlements which PAU planned during the war were designed so as to facilitate interaction among its inhabitants. The experience of war led to a radicalisation of the underlying ideas.⁷⁷ Just before he was imprisoned by the Germans in the Auschwitz concentration camp Szymon Syrkus had stated in a paper given in September 1942 that "Our goal is building, but not the erection of a few buildings, but the establishment of a new material and spiritual environment according to plan under new economic, social, demographic and physiocratic conditions."⁷⁸

PAU was able to cover its work through the WSM and a commission from the city council.⁷⁹ PAU's collaboration with the renowned sociologist Stanisław Ossowski was symptomatic of its focus on the communal aspect of building. Ossowski

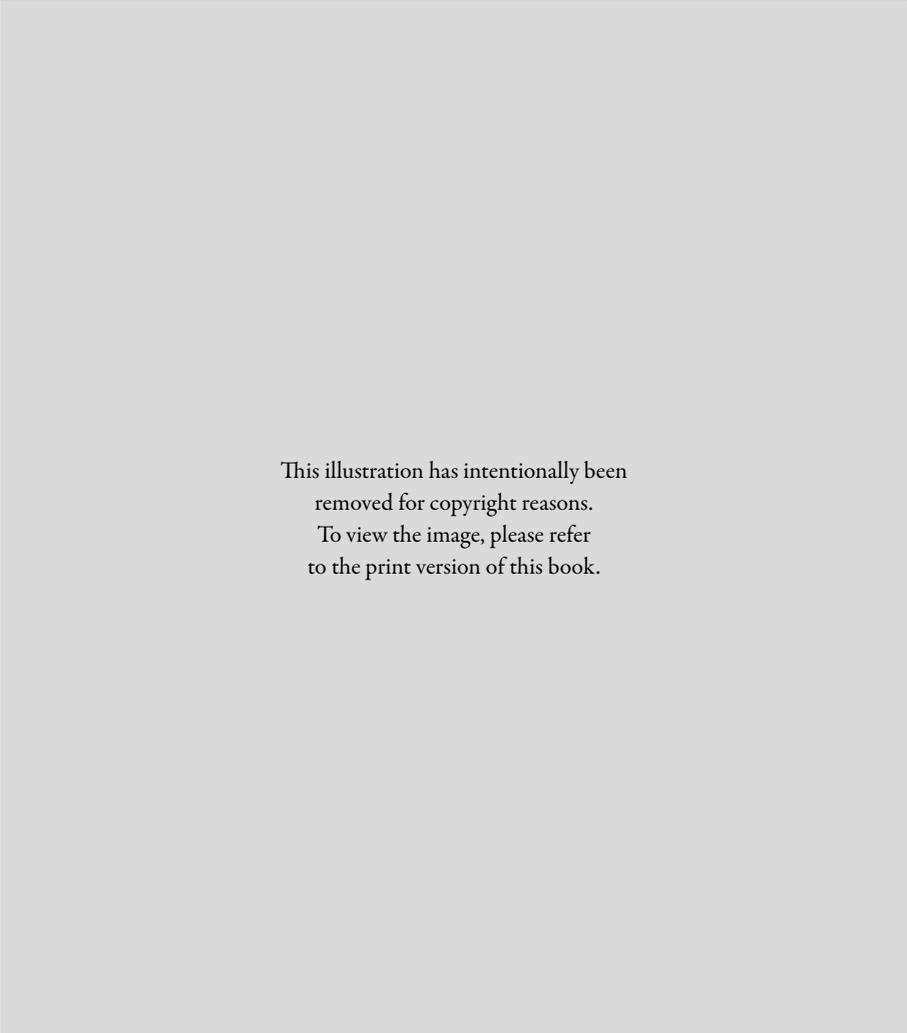
wrote a study on community organisation in the housing estates of the future in which he also reflected on how to balance the need to replace the holes caused by wartime destruction with something completely new and the need to retain certain established structures so that people could still identify with the place they lived in.⁸⁰

The ideal PAU housing estate was termed *osiedle społeczne* (social housing estate) and was to encircle a primary school. Each of these estate units was made up of a number of *kolonia*, smaller colonies grouped around a kindergarten.⁸¹ The scheme was strikingly extensive in scope, both spatially and temporally. The projects were only meant to serve as the initial steps towards and examples of a future with numerous estates, each intended to house some 11,000 inhabitants. In the long run – four phases were specified up to the year 1975 – not only were the northern districts of Warsaw and their vast empty spaces to be transformed but, in fact, the entire city and eventually the whole region was to be changed.⁸²

In the centre of each estate were *współżycie zbiorowe*, areas where communal activities could take place. Each housing estate was meant to function like an organism. Syrkus and others formulated a theory behind social housing estates in 1942 which was secretly published under the title: *Communal Service – an aid to creating a sense of community in housing estates*, taking into account the experience and statistical data collected so far.⁸³

The community structure was thus not seen as something to be added to an already extant estate but rather conceived as a “skeleton structure” of each colony, underlining a rather organic perception of architecture.⁸⁴ The notion of education, however, was not alien to the concept. In Helena Syrkus’ eyes the new housing estates were to perform a defining role in “socialising” and “civilising” its inhabitants: “The employment place should not serve as the only formative agency, rather the part of daily life spent in one’s home should contribute, through a network of communal institutions, to building new forms of communal living and culture.”⁸⁵

“Obsługa społeczna” (communal service) became the keyword for PAU’s work.⁸⁶ As Stanisław Tołwiński from the WSM laid out in a study undertaken between 1943 and 1944, self-administration and the mobilisation of volunteers should define what a future community would look like after the war.⁸⁷ This was to be a community held together by much stronger bonds than those of pre-war society.⁸⁸ The rich establishment of social infrastructure was part and parcel of war-time projects and more radical than in pre-war projects. There were three contributing factors which emphasised the social dimension of building within the PAU.



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64. Plans of housing estates for Koło, Warsaw, H. Syrkus, 1947, initiated during wartime

First, due to the near impossibility of construction during the war, PAU planners were forced to return to those aspects of architecture which needed nothing more than a pen. Theory offered the only way of using the resources in place. In a series of lectures held in early 1942 almost all the papers dealt with the communal

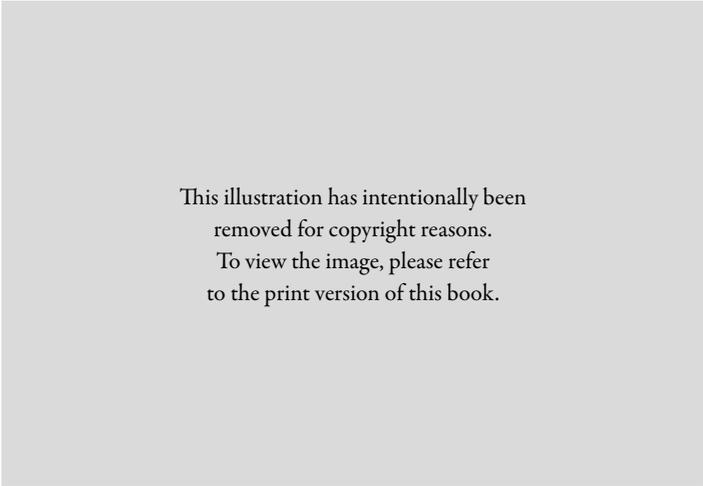
aspects of housing.⁸⁹ These aspects necessarily comprised a more utopian dimension as they concerned future conditions and could not be counterchecked with reality. The notion of community may also have been fostered by the fact that in the closely integrated PAU circle architects were working collectively.⁹⁰

Second, given the German occupiers' attempts at demolishing Warsaw both in terms of its urban environment and socially, any internal attempt at enforcing cohesion seemed particularly relevant: "Through a new type of housing estates we want to raise a new, ideal man, we want to build ideal forms of societal life and contribute to shaping a new culture", as Helena Syrkus remembered later.⁹¹

Third, in a paradoxical way extensive war-time destruction perfectly set the scene for radical urbanist schemes. The PAU planners fit their pervasive aims easily into this larger framework. As Helena Syrkus made clear: "the destruction of the inner city paved the way for unlimited possibilities".⁹² The radical notion of a Functional City thus became more realistic – in line with the notion of destruction as a "blessing in disguise" similarly hailed by town planners in other countries at this time.⁹³

For Szymon Syrkus, *spiritus rector* of PAU, 20 October 1942 brought a harsh but still tolerable period of the war to an end. On this day Syrkus was picked up by the Gestapo at the PAU premises, whilst surreptitiously working on the reconstruction of Warsaw and not, as officially expected, for the WSM. Jan Olaf Chmielewski, Syrkus' partner and co-author of the plans for a Functional Warsaw, was imprisoned at the same time.⁹⁴ Syrkus was transferred to the Auschwitz concentration camp, but luckily, for Syrkus, he was not imprisoned as a Jew. Syrkus' second stroke of luck was becoming employed as a draftsman in the central building division of the Waffenss at Auschwitz.⁹⁵ By dint of the extraordinary shortage of architects in Germany Syrkus' expertise became an extremely valuable asset.⁹⁶ Whether Syrkus' survival or better treatment was due to his international standing cannot be determined on the basis of the existing sources.

Within the cruel cosmos of Auschwitz, Syrkus' 'privileged' position also allowed him to exchange letters with his wife Helena, who was still in Warsaw. These censored and strictly limited letters reveal how Syrkus stuck to and even deepened his personal vision of modernism under extreme circumstances and in the face of personal experience of the war.



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65. Letter S. Syrkus from Auschwitz of 25 July 1944

The majority of the letters comprise architectural and urbanism questions, which may at first glance seem quite astonishing.⁹⁷ In his first letter, of 17 January 1943, Syrkus asked his wife to continue the work which had thus far defined their lives. Syrkus repeatedly refers to their shared convictions.⁹⁸ These, according to him, were defined by their belief in architecture's social mission and their desire to continue learning and developing their professional personae, particularly with regard to their work with the CIAM. References to their collective forms of working also appear frequently.⁹⁹

Against all the odds Syrkus tried to make sense of his experience in the camp. In a letter of May 1943 he reflected on the post-war urbanist future which lay ahead, the work awaiting the Syrkus couple: "Die Zeit ist groß" (We live in momentous times). At the end of the year Syrkus wrote to his wife that "I am not tired of life, having survived this year. Leaving the ivory tower has served a purpose".¹⁰⁰ He asked his wife to read as much as she could on architectural matters. A shortage of accommodation for the poor would arise after the war and PAU architects would be ideally placed to build the needed flats cheaply in an industrial way according to new insights and knowledge.¹⁰¹ Syrkus was convinced that enormous new opportunities would follow the long period of waiting for a chance to begin building on a massive scale.¹⁰² Syrkus' plans became more concrete as the war entered its last phase in the summer of 1944. That June he wrote: "during all this time that I was not working on

the minimum flat I kept on thinking about this problem". The break, Syrkus argued, had led him to better understand the character of his work and the specific way his wife and he himself solved problems.¹⁰³

Personal Toll and Collaboration

The correspondence between Helena Syrkus and her husband Szymon during Szymon's imprisonment in Auschwitz is an extreme example of a wider phenomenon. Throughout the war CIAM members made inquiries about what remained of their old networks and about the fate of the Syrkus couple. This accords with a number of important specifics established in the previous chapters: the extremely tight relations forged within the CIAM, whose members' closeness was not only based on professional interest but also, and equally, on shared life-styles and the belief in the possibility and desirability of social change via urbanism.

As late as in 1940 the Swiss architects and CIAM members Hans Schmidt and Hannes Meyer had tried to arrange political asylum for the Syrkus couple in Mexico – where Meyer was now working.¹⁰⁴ Meyer had already tried to get in touch with Syrkus in 1939 to get Syrkus' housing projects published in Mexico, and in order to "get Syrkus known in America".¹⁰⁵ In April 1940 Meyer explained to Schmidt that he saw an opportunity to get the Syrkus couple into Mexico as "political emigrants with a work permit". This could work on the condition that they provided material to identify them as the outstanding specialists they were.¹⁰⁶ In the end Schmidt's and Meyer's initiatives came to nought. Nevertheless, it is important to note the conditions on which it was based, a deep friendship between Schmidt and the Syrkus couple – also including shared leftist convictions – and the Syrkus couple's status as distinguished experts. These conditions meant that they at least had a chance of leaving the country and thus were more likely survive the war.

Apparently, Schmidt had reacted to an "SOS message" which he had received on 4 December 1939 via Forbát. Helena and Szymon Syrkus provided an address at which they could be reached and sought Forbát's help in obtaining a visa to leave Poland for Sweden. They also asked Forbát to garner support from Gropius, van Eesteren, Eugen Kaufmann and Schmidt.¹⁰⁷ In January, with new and pressing information from Helena Syrkus, Forbát wrote again to Gropius with different proposals to bring the couple initially to Sweden and then subsequently to Britain or North or South America. In the meantime Forbát's own situation was becoming precarious and he too asked Gropius about opportunities to head westwards from Sweden, "of course placing myself second rank to the Syrkus couple who are in greater need".¹⁰⁸

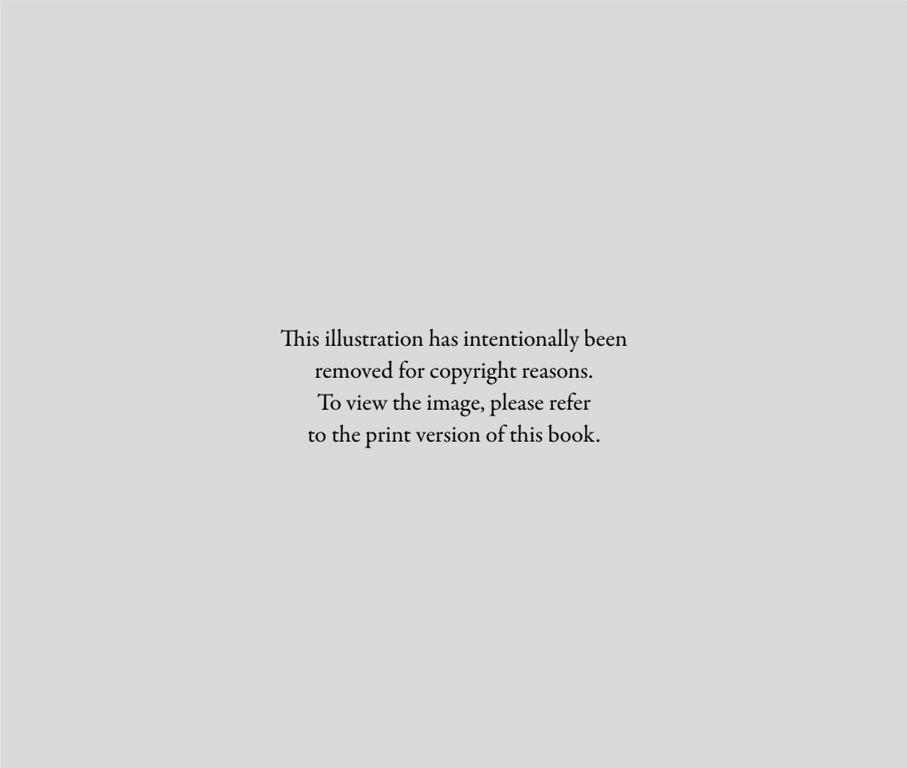
In the meantime the British Mars group also started different initiatives to get the couple to Argentina or Brazil.¹⁰⁹ In July 1941 Forbát reported on a positive letter from Helena which had reached Hans Schmidt.¹¹⁰ Given that Forbát's mail was censored by the Germans it was unsurprising that when Forbát informed Gropius in the summer of 1944 that he was in touch with Helena Syrkus again the information on Szymon Syrkus' status was hardly accurate.¹¹¹

In fact, like the Syrkus couple, the architects close to them underwent a harsh ordeal after September 1939. The *Praesens* and CIAM member Józef Szanajca, congenial partner of Bohdan Lachert, who served as a Polish soldier, did not survive the German invasion. Stanisław Brukalski was imprisoned in a German P.O.W. camp from 1939 to 1944. Maksymilian Goldberg, one of the most gifted modernist architects in Poland of the youngest generation, died either in the Warsaw ghetto or at Treblinka. Oskar Sosnowski, a central figure in the reconfiguration of Warsaw as the new model capital, was shot on 24 September 1939 at the University of Technology while saving the inventory of the best examples of Polish edifices.¹¹² The famous building engineer Stefan Bryła, who constructed the first Polish skyscrapers, including the Prudential building in Warsaw, was the dean of the undercover university which led to his death in a street execution.¹¹³ At least one third of the 700 architects organised in the Warsaw chapter of SARP did not survive the Second World War.¹¹⁴

It is necessary to ask how far the ordeal of these architects resulted from their being architects or even being modernist architects.¹¹⁵ While this is reasonably clear for the second half of the 1930, when authoritarian governments directly and indirectly restricted the scope of action of modernist architects, this link is less clear during the war. Without doubt, identifying with modernist architecture and its associated leftist overtones made the situation of these architects much more difficult.¹¹⁶ Under the radical occupation regime in Poland such 'subtleties' as a modernism were overshadowed by much more severe threats. Many of the Jewish graduates of the WUT, who managed to leave Poland in time, emigrated to Tel Aviv.¹¹⁷

The extremely high structural dependence of architects on sponsors became even more pronounced in wartime, when building commissions on the free market almost disappeared. Though the wider picture still remains sketchy we know that a number of the most prominent protagonists of the modernist movement had few qualms in linking with the New Order.¹¹⁸ In the Netherlands J.J.P. Oud joined the *Cultuurkamer*, which served the Nazi occupation regime in controlling cultural life. Hendrik Wijdeveld, the co-founder of the *Académie Européenne Méditerranée* opted to collaborate closely with the new regime while van Eesteren's position is less

clear.¹¹⁹ Molnár, who had compromised with the political realities of Hungary in 1939 in order to get the chance to work, wrote for right-wing newspapers during the war. He died during the Russian siege of Budapest in 1945.¹²⁰



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66. H. Syrkus to C. van Eesteren post-war postcard of the office of PAU showing site of S. Syrkus' capture

Although years passed before the wartime behaviour of Le Corbusier and others fell under scholarly gaze, already shortly after the war CIAM members had a clear idea who took which side in the war. In a letter to van Eesteren of August 1946, Forbát outlined the situation of various CIAM members in Sweden and beyond. He reported how in Hungary Molnár had “joined the Arrow Cross Party” during the war, “with flying colours”. He also said that Kalivoda, whom he disliked anyway, had been an “active collaborator” during the war in the Protectorate.¹²¹

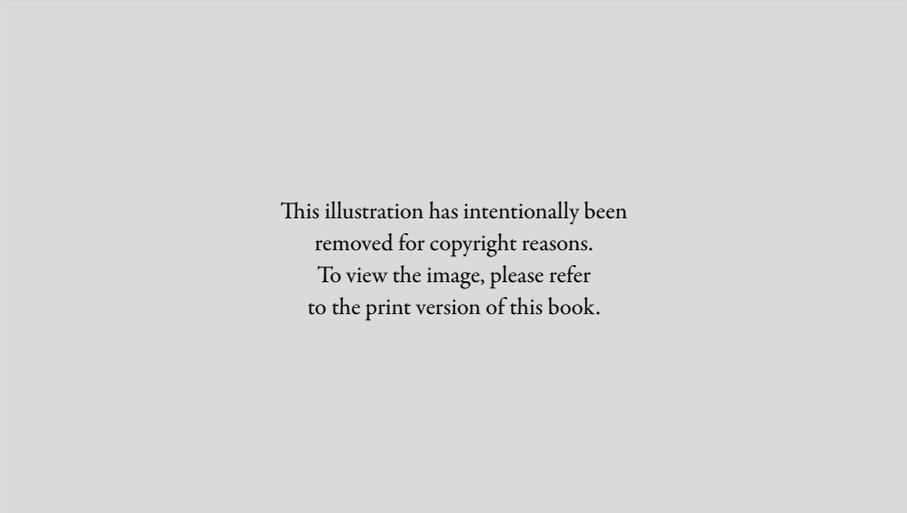
Forbát's first post-war letter to Helena Syrkus is dated late July 1945. Still lacking news from Szymon Syrkus, Forbát was sceptical of Helena's earlier proposal to hold the first post-war CIAM congress still that year. He first wanted a better view of their "family affairs" in order to truly make the CIAM a family again, as it had been before the war. "Corbu", for example, Forbát felt had "drunk quite a lot of Vichy-waters" and similarly Alvar Aalto was rather too close to Albert Speer during the war, in Forbát's eyes. He was unsure what exactly the Belgian group had been up to.¹²²

Windows of Opportunity: Warsaw as a Post-catastrophic City

Beyond the question of collaboration with the enemy, which was of greater interest to Forbát than the Syrkus couple, it is astonishing that at the end of the war the latter immediately began thinking of how to rebuild the CIAM. This urgency must be understood against the background of the gravity of the situation in post-catastrophic Warsaw. The Syrkus couple believed the CIAM input and legitimacy derived from CIAM support was necessary for the grand solutions that an urban catastrophe of unprecedented scale required.

Viewing Warsaw as a post-catastrophic city helps to link the devastation suffered there with the general social and political problems of East Central Europe. Many cities in Eastern Europe, albeit in most cases less dramatically than Warsaw, had been the victim of wartime destruction through the frequent movement of the frontline. Generally speaking, cities like Warsaw, L'viv or Minsk suffered much more from the holocaust and measures targeting specific social groups and minorities than cities in Western Europe. Urban destruction and eradication of entire societies thus went hand in hand with Warsaw serving as a particularly dramatic example of an intentional "urbicide". As a consequence, far-reaching measures of urban renewal were subsequently required.¹²³

Warsaw during the uprising of 1944 was – apart from Stalingrad – the most significant example of a city turned into a battlefield.¹²⁴ The brutal crushing of the uprising by the Wehrmacht and SS not only caused at least 150,000 military and civil casualties on the Polish side. Further, militarily strategic, political, and symbolic aspects such as the ruthless tearing down of the city structure with a focus on places of memory – such as archives and libraries – were significantly added into the mix in the aftermath of the uprising.¹²⁵



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67. Destruction of Warsaw after the 1944 Uprising. Prudential building up front

Recent studies have stressed the traditions and continuity of reconstruction for Europe as a whole. They also hint at the link between the hope for the radically newly designed city and the astonishing degree to which destruction was perceived as a chance to push through pre-war visions of the 'healed' city.¹²⁶ The mid-20th century urban tabula rasa in many ways enabled the international community of planners and architects to modernise and fundamentally change the cityscape – and offered again a common theme to the planning community formed in the 1920s.¹²⁷

Deep as the impact of the war was, the same effects also partly prevented deep-rooted change. The shortage of experts able to plan and exert change and the valuable resource of the sub-terrain infrastructure which had to be taken into account, prevented a radical start from scratch also in Warsaw where the destruction was so extensive.¹²⁸ In contrast to numerous calls to look for an alternative capital or to even refrain from rebuilding the almost completely destroyed city, the SARP, which had already re-established itself in December 1944, demanded that Warsaw be declared the nation's capital again as otherwise its reconstruction could not succeed.¹²⁹ The reconstruction of Warsaw was, from its inception, a question of national relevance – mirroring the situation of the 1920s and 1930s in extreme form. This was also true as regards the political legitimacy which the political regime could gain (and potentially lose) in the capital.¹³⁰

As befits the character of state socialism, the role the central state played in the capital became hugely amplified in comparison with the 1930s. The *Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy* (BOS) (Office for the Reconstruction of Warsaw) was established on 14 February 1945, very soon after the German retreat from Warsaw. Although continuity with interwar modernism prevailed, both in terms of the BOS's personnel and in terms of the general urbanist approaches, the extreme rupture necessarily left its marks on the work of the BOS. As Maciej Nowicki, a rising star of modernism on a global scale, remarked soon after the war in an article entitled *In search of a new Functionalism* continuing with old approaches was not an option in the face of a radically changed framework.¹³¹ In any case, as before the war, the functionalism of the CIAM strand only represented one current next to others. Architects of the Polish School of Architecture, set-up during the war at the University of Liverpool, adhered to much more moderate ideas and, due to their war-time planning and, in some cases, upon their return to Poland, left their mark on the reconstruction of Polish cities.¹³²

A particular case was the Old Town of Warsaw. PAU planners had considered the medieval core of Warsaw as somewhat obsolete. Thus the destruction resulting from the September 1939 siege of Warsaw had also been seen as an opportunity for regeneration. Once Warsaw's centre had deliberately been demolished, in the wake of the Warsaw uprising of 1944, the Old Town became a nationally and politically charged subject.¹³³ Even exponents of modernism now insisted that the Old Town be rebuilt to allow the inhabitants to identify the city as the capital.¹³⁴ This argument struck a chord, especially given that the legitimacy of the new communist government was so weak. Jan Zachwatowicz, a modernist architect who grasped this very point, argued along these lines to convince the communist government to rebuild Warsaw.¹³⁵

Yet the tension between "odbudowa", that is pragmatic reconstruction, and "przebudowa", that is a visionary transformation of Warsaw, was discussed intensely.¹³⁶ Unsurprisingly, most of the arguments which architects employed in these discussions were not selfless. The size of the BOS was unmatched in Europe.¹³⁷ Its members comprised the most brilliant architects of interwar modernism: Roman Pietrowski, Romuald Gutt, Stanisław Brukalski, Helena Syrkus and Bogdan Lachert.¹³⁸ Szymon Syrkus held a leading position in BOS.¹³⁹ With almost 1,500 staff the BOS was much more than a normal planning body and was able to put its plans into practise.¹⁴⁰ Piotrowski, a member of *Praesens* and the CIAM, and a pre-war technical director of TOR, was the head of BOS. He embodied the striking continuities between modernism and immediate post-war reconstruction which could also be found in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

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68. Members of BOS

The window of opportunity which lasted from early 1945 (following the German retreat) until 1948 (when communist power became consolidated) revealed two striking strands of continuity.

First, new housing estates with a strong social and community focus, following the lines developed within PAU and the WSM before and during the war, emerged.¹⁴¹ The most impressive example was the Koło housing project, realized by Helena and Szymon Syrkus between 1947 and 1950 in Warsaw. For the first time architects were now able to use the prefabricated building methods they had developed before the war. To the Syrkus couple, as well as to Stanisław and Barbara Brukalski, it seemed like a direct line of continuity between the avant-garde of the interwar-period and the promises of socialism could be established.

Second, the urbanist schemes governing reconstruction were also directly continuous with the *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* concept.¹⁴² Embedded in a framework Chmielewski referred to as WZM, the Urban Agglomeration Warsaw, a number of planners had continued developing the planning for a Functional Warsaw, adding the details which were lacking in the original concept, and going to great lengths to consider the social implications of the planning during the war.¹⁴³ These plans highlighted the even greater need for regional planning than before the war with the loosely structured city as a model.¹⁴⁴

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69. Kolo estate built between 1947 and 1950, designed by H. Syrkus during the war

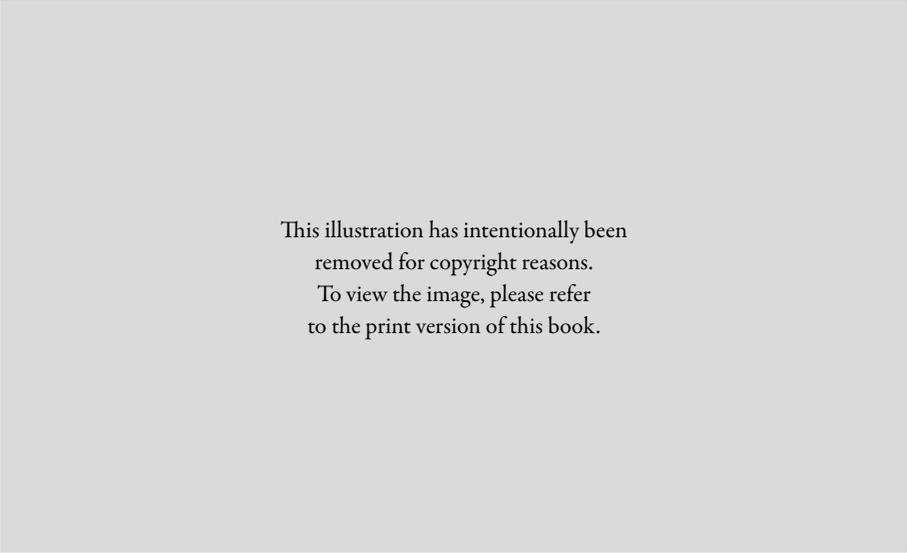
The communist government under Bolesław Bierut, head of the provisional Polish government (and president of Poland from 1947 onwards), ordered that all territory within the boundaries of Warsaw be nationalised on 26 October 1945. The associated decree stated that this was a necessary precondition to push through a “rational reconstruction” of the capital according to the “needs of the nation”. Thus the territory of Warsaw became nationalised both literally and symbolically.¹⁴⁵ Though the tabula rasa-like destruction of the city, legal preconditions – that is the nationalisation of the land within the city – and the substantial resources of BOS all pointed in the direction of sweeping urban measures and building a completely new city following a unified plan, the reality was much more sober. This not only had to do with the sentiments and political considerations which guided the reconstruction of the Old Town. Unsurprisingly, given immediate post-war conditions, the constant lack of resources proved an obstacle.

Yet, the situation on the ground was also changing quickly, and the BOS architects were unable to maintain a firm hold on the reins. The population of Warsaw almost doubled between January and May 1945 to 366,000 despite the virtually complete lack of urban infrastructure. On average 2,500 persons returned to Warsaw daily during February and March 1945.¹⁴⁶ Thus the structures built by the returnees influenced matters which the BOS planners could not ignore – and restricted their discretionary power.¹⁴⁷

The modernist architects in Poland gained ground in relative terms until 1948 at least. After the war leftist architects began to profit from their political credentials.¹⁴⁸ This was also true for the imperative of building mass housing with the state in the driver's seat. During the war PAU, the WSM and the underground university had all made preparations for new forms of housing.¹⁴⁹ Since 1945 urbanism had become an important field of architectural activity. The social relevance of town planning, so hotly disputed in the 1930s, was now a given. The situation in 1945 offered especially those architects who were already politically inclined to the left before 1939 unique opportunities to push through the visions which had informed their careers and to align their beliefs and aspirations with factual planning and realisations.¹⁵⁰ Further, the BOS served as an architectural conveyor belt into the planning bureaucracy and to transform independent architects into members of larger units.¹⁵¹

Jan Olaf Chmielewski, who had co-authored *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* with Syrkus, became head of the urbanist department of the BOS and president of the Main Office for Regional Planning of the Ministry of Reconstruction and thus gained the chance to push through his ideas which had long remained theories. Other modernist architects embarked on even more rapid career climbs after 1945. The modernist architect Władysław Czerny was vice-mayor of Warsaw in late 1944 and early 1945. Roman Piotrowski, previously head of the BOS, became deputy minister of Reconstruction in 1948, fulfilling various high-ranking political functions. Piotrowski then served as Minister for Building from 1951-1955. Stanisław Tołwiński, who had worked closely with the *Praesens* architects through the WSM and the housing reform movement, served as mayor of Warsaw from March 1945 until 1950.¹⁵²

Even more politically significant was the career of Marian Sychalski. He was a graduate of the faculty of architecture of the WUT and had already become both a devoted communist and a successful architect before the Second World War. Sychalski had distinguished himself through his designs for low-priced workers' housing. After the war Sychalski briefly served as mayor of Warsaw and then Deputy Minister of Defence and a member of the politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party between 1945 and 1948. After he was side-lined for political reasons Sychalski had a second career from the late 1950s on, which took him into the highest levels of Polish politics.



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70. Spychalski and Dwight Eisenhower visiting the remains of the Old Town of Warsaw

A similar link between interwar modernist architects and new political elites can be observed in the early phases of the new socialist states in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Industrial housing also formed an important means of career advancement in Czechoslovakia, in part due to the high level of economic development.¹⁵³ In Hungary, Virgil Bierbauer (Borbiró), who ran *Tér és Forma* until 1943, became the communist government's undersecretary for housing between 1947 and 1949. Before he was forced to leave Hungary in 1948 József Fischer, head of the Hungarian CIAM group after the Second World War, had served as president of the Council of Public Works in Budapest after 1945.¹⁵⁴

While the rise of modernist architects in planning bodies could, superficially, be seen as a continuation of the collective work methods with which *Praesens* and PAU had experimented, it also became clear by 1948 that the modernist architects joining the BOS and other planning bodies had to pay a considerable price. Reconstruction planning had to be adapted to a more modest reality from 1948 on, at the latest. New plans for a *Wielka Warszawa*, a Greater Warsaw, dating from October 1948 were never officially adopted.¹⁵⁵ This exposed a growing gap between the architects' and urbanists' visions and the goals of the communist elite. Urbanists and architects

quickly lost their autonomy as urban reconstruction became part and parcel of the planned economy and, indeed, both symbolically and propagandistically part of the six year plan.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, this was intended to demonstrate the regime's political performance, in particular through coordinated planning in the framework of the six year plan – also with a view to courting international attention.¹⁵⁷

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71. Continuities of planning? First image: S. Starzyński at the Warsaw of Tomorrow exhibition, 1936. Second image: B. Bierut on 22 June 1948, being shown designs for the *Trasa W-Z* main traffic artery by architect Józef Sigalin. Also present is Roman Piotrowski, amongst others

The consolidated communist regime could also be seen as pushing the informal alliance of the modernising state of the 1930s to the limit – and breaking it by establishing a clear prerogative for the political side. The latter became fully evident when architects were forced to convert to the new dogma of Socialist Realism.¹⁵⁸ Conversion to this new style of artistic expression was not something that could be gradually achieved. Architects had to make it clear, often publicly, that they understood what a new era expected of them. Le Corbusier now became an explicit enemy image.¹⁵⁹ Socialist Realism, which had already been forcibly introduced in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, was to underline that state's leading role. Communist leaders in Poland also deemed this new style of building necessary to win the hearts and minds of the workers who might otherwise find the sober charm of modernist buildings alien. Socialist Realism also allowed for a 'national style' of building – whatever this might really mean.

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72. CDT department store ('Smyk'), 1948-1952, the last prominent modernist design in Warsaw's inner city before the breakthrough of Socialist Realism

The introduction of Socialist Realism did not necessarily end the potential careers of the protagonists of interwar modernism during the window of opportunity which closed in 1948. It did, however, form a deep caesura for these careers. The BOS was integrated into the newly established central planning bodies, while the WSM ceased to exist as such.¹⁶⁰ The compromises modernist architects had to make were considerable – in terms of style and also, eventually, with regard to the international networks which were part of the very logic of interwar modernism. With interwar modernism being discredited as cosmopolitan, international contacts as such became suspicious – and most often simply curtailed.

Though a convinced socialist himself since long before the Second World War, Szymon Syrkus was increasingly looked at with suspicion due to his international contacts and his identification with pre-war modernism. Syrkus lost his position in BOS and moved to a chair at the WUT in 1949 – which he lost again in 1951.¹⁶¹ Barbara and Stanisław Brukalski and Bohdan Lachert also became professors at the WUT. In 1952 Lech Niemojewski, however, whose futurist designs for Warsaw had attracted a lot of attention in the mid-1920s lost his position at the department, where he had served as a dean from 1947 to 1948. This was as a result of the publication of his book *Uczniowie cieśli* (Disciple of a Carpenter) written in 1946 and published in 1948.¹⁶² In this book Niemojewski described how the alliance

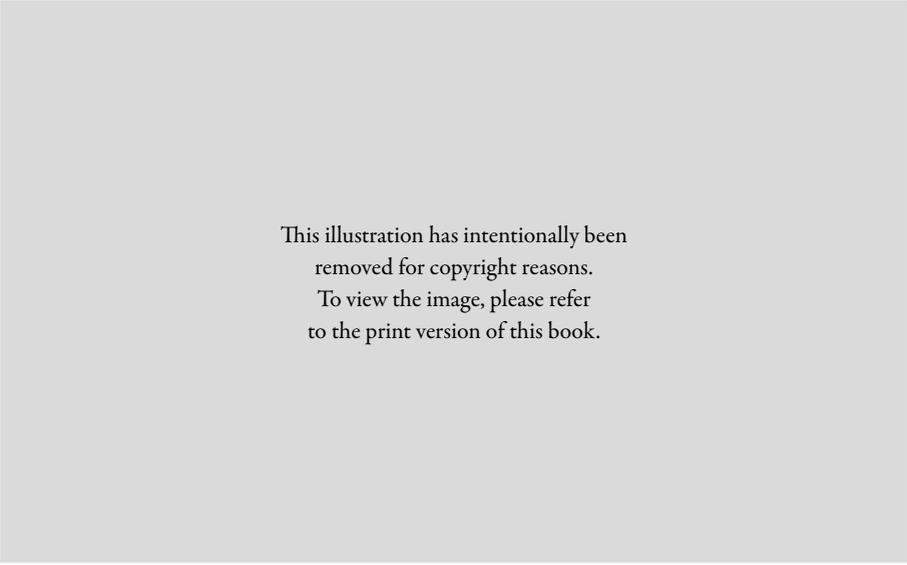
between planning architects and planning economy was only ideal on the surface. By resorting to Christian patterns of interpretation Niemojewski spelled out the dilemmas of his profession in a way the communist party found unacceptable. Both Niemojewski and Edgar Norwerth, to be sure never representatives of the radical variant of modernism, refused to continue working as architects under the conditions which prevailed after 1948.

The exact trajectories of estrangement between modernist architects and the communist regimes are hard to trace. When they are discernible it can only be individually established if these architects moved away from the regime on their own initiative or if they were rather actively side-lined by the regime. Helena and Szymon Syrkus regarded social progress and modernist architecture as two sides of the same coin which for them meant the embracing of socialism even if this meant the sacrifice of old personal bonds. A striking, albeit still unexplained example of this is the kidnapping of the US architect Hermann Field after visiting the Rakowiec estate with the Syrkus couple in 1949. The Polish security service had been informed by Helena Syrkus of Field's arrival while it is unclear what she exactly knew about the consequences for Field.¹⁶³

In any case the fate of Hermann Field shone a bright light on the impact of the Cold War in Poland and the consolidation of a Stalinist regime on architects and their international contacts. This, however, was not immediately true after the war. The final part this chapter will look at the immense attention the rebuilding of Warsaw received beyond what became the Iron Curtain in 1945, and over the following years. By so doing, this chapter will finally focus again on the essence of modernist architects' identification with the cause of modernism, the dream of a better society achieved through sweeping planning implementation and social architecture.

Old Bonds and new Attention: Warsaw as a Realized Utopia?

On 4 July 1945, less than two months after the Second World War had ended in Europe, Fred Forbát received a telegram in Stockholm from Helena Syrkus. Syrkus expressed three issues in telegram form. First, that she still had no sign of life from her husband Szymon Syrkus, whose Auschwitz tattoo-number she reported, and thus she sought help in determining his fate. Second, she noted her involvement in and the plans for reconstruction in Warsaw. Thirdly, she expressed her hope of quickly resurrecting the old bonds of the CIAM on a planned trip to Paris.¹⁶⁴



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73. Telegram H. Syrkus to F. Forbát of 4 July 1945

Walter Gropius also received a similar telegram in Harvard in the USA as, most likely, did a number of other 'activists' from the pre-war heydays of the CIAM.¹⁶⁵ Of course, a telegram could hardly serve to fully convey the extensive changes brought on by the end of the war for modernist architects in East Central Europe. Nevertheless, two important themes of general relevance emerge. First, the telegrams reveal a tightly-bound network which had survived the war. As shown earlier in this chapter, this network, largely synonymous with the CIAM, sometimes ensured a given individual's survival before, during, and briefly after the war. Once Forbát and Helena Syrkus re-initiated communication, very practical concerns such as food-shipments from Sweden to Warsaw took priority.¹⁶⁶ And, indeed Gropius and Forbát did their best to trace Szymon Syrkus. Gropius, for example, contacted US secretary of state James F. Byrnes, amongst others.¹⁶⁷ Second, the aforementioned network served to generate interest in the shared mission, in addition to providing a framework for professional exchange. In her telegram to Forbát Helena Syrkus had already expressed the hope of soon continuing pre-war discussions with Uvo Åhrén, Sven Markelius and Alvar Aalto, all distinguished modernist architects from the Nordic countries. The shared mission gained even more prominence in their communications than it had had before the war.

The theme of Warsaw formed the backbone of communication between the Polish CIAM members and their colleagues. This was partially due to the fact that the capital was at the forefront of the thinking and practice of architects like Helena and Szymon Syrkus. It was also due to the fact that their old and new intellectual bonds involved great interest in the destroyed capital, a place which embodied – almost as no other place did – the catastrophe of the Second World War for contemporaries. In her telegram to Forbát Helena Syrkus linked the re-establishment of her pre-war contacts with the fate of Warsaw. Indeed, for the ensuing two years, the personal and professional lives of Helena and Szymon Syrkus would be marked by linking these two elements, namely re-establishing the pre-war CIAM structure and their own planning for Warsaw.

Meanwhile, Szymon Syrkus was taking the first steps in his post-war life in a similarly striking way by immediately continuing his professional work and continuing his ‘mission’ of social architecture. Szymon Syrkus was liberated by the Americans, on 3 May 1945, from a forced labour camp in Bavaria which the SS had driven him to from Auschwitz. Already on 14 May 1945 Syrkus contacted his Swiss colleagues and CIAM fellows Sigfried Giedion, Werner Moser, Alfred Roth, Hans Schmidt and Hannes Meyer with the intention of re-establishing old contacts and supporting those who helped him in the camps.¹⁶⁸ Syrkus wrote to the American military administration in Bavaria on 18 July 1945 asking whether he and the garden architect Ludwik Lawin (who had been interned in Auschwitz with Syrkus) could visit Munich, Nuremberg and Würzburg, and other places “for scientific purposes”. Syrkus wanted to study the destruction of German cities in those places to prepare himself for the reconstruction of Polish cities.¹⁶⁹ Syrkus’ letters attest to the fact that, as he put it in a letter of late June 1945 to his colleague Juliusz Żakowski in London, that it was only his profession that had kept him alive during the 35 months he spent in German camps.¹⁷⁰

In August 1945 Szymon Syrkus wrote a long letter to Forbát, briefly outlining his situation and quickly changing topic to the urbanist tasks ahead and the chances of putting the CIAM methods developed before and during the war to use to solve these tasks. Many members of the old *Praesens* and WSM circles were now in the “high and highest positions” Syrkus noted and urged Forbát to meet with them and discuss these questions. “On Auschwitz we will remain silent” he added. In an addendum to the letter by Helena Syrkus to Forbát, writing now as “head of the propaganda of reconstruction”, she added that the war only ended for her on 1 August 1945 with the return of Szymon and provided information on her ordeal after being imprisoned by the Germans in Breslau. At the same time Helena Syrkus

inquired about potentially showing the exhibition *Warsaw Accuses* in Sweden and about obtaining material support for the reconstruction of Warsaw there.¹⁷¹

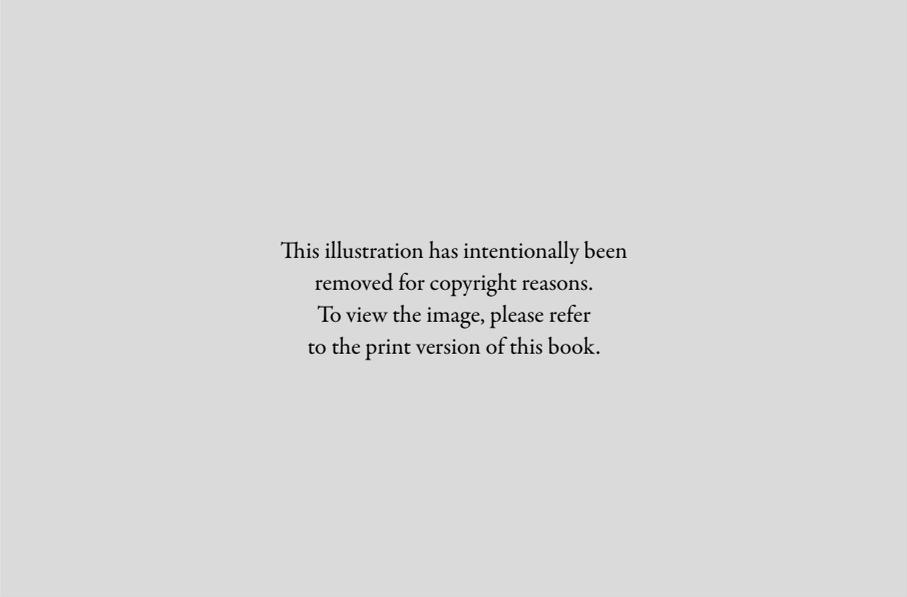
During the first two years after the war Helena and Szymon Syrkus were completely immersed in the task of reconstruction. In subsequent correspondence the Syrkus couple informed Forbát in detail about the progress of reconstruction, which they always linked to the reestablishment of CIAM contacts. They told Forbát about Hans Schmidt, André Lurçat and Paul Nelson having visited Warsaw to take part in competitions. Szymon Syrkus reported how they worked incessantly given the enormous tasks they were facing with “raw nerves”: “But how could it be different if one is living as one does amidst the coming into being of a new world and taking part in this process.” This hectic life, as Syrkus regretted, stood in stark contrast to the need for the profession of architects and urbanists for reflection.¹⁷²

While the war had in most respects brutally cut off the exchange which formed a professional life-line for architects like Helena and Szymon Syrkus, somewhat paradoxically the immense destructions inflicted on Warsaw formed much more than a pretext to re-establish these contexts. It could even be argued that the case of Warsaw was really only now finding the global attention which, for example, the concept *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* strove for. From day one the reconstruction of Warsaw was not confined to the immense problems on the ground but placed in an urbanist continuity and viewed as a problem of global relevance. The destruction of cities in many European and Asian countries also meant that the example of Warsaw was of interest far beyond its region. The challenge of reconstruction was a global task which sometimes even transgressed war-time divisions.¹⁷³

The aforementioned exhibition *Warsaw Accuses* generated an intense response and thus served as a revealing expression of this shared language and the global interest in the task of reconstruction. The mission of reconstruction was now elevated through the moral imperative of assisting the nations and cities that suffered from brutal destruction politics of Nazi Germany. After being on public display in the National Museum in Warsaw from May to June 1945 the exhibition travelled the globe, accompanied by a booklet illustrated by the artist and architect Teresa Żarnowerówna. Żarnowerówna had been one of the founders of the *BLOK* group in the mid-1920s and had initially emigrated from Poland to Paris and finally to the USA in 1937.¹⁷⁴

Żarnowerówna, having already contributed a number of photo-montages to the book *The Defense of Warsaw* in 1942, knew the traditions of modernist architecture in interwar Poland well.¹⁷⁵ The booklet for the exhibition *Warsaw Accuses*, just like the exhibition itself, used photographic material to show the appalling scale of de-

struction in Warsaw and thus established the city and its reconstruction as a case worthy of global interest.¹⁷⁶ The exhibition also made reference to the initial plans for a new capital. By contrasting the old with the new the exhibition linked back to the pre-war exhibition *Warsaw of Tomorrow*.¹⁷⁷

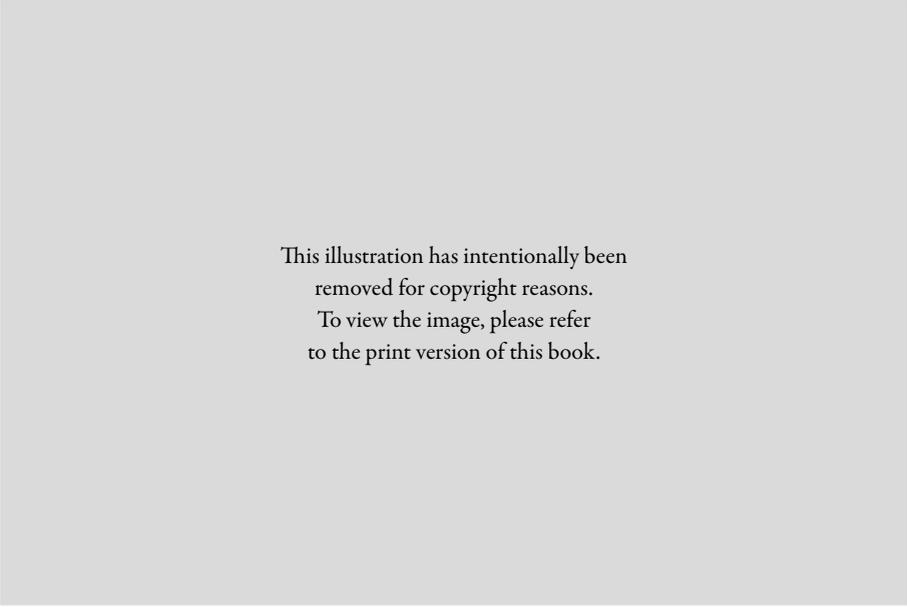


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74. Exhibition catalogue *Warsaw Lives*. Destruction and reconstruction

The exhibition was held in Tokyo, Moscow, London, Paris, New York, Chicago, Budapest, Prague, Berlin, Stockholm and Vienna, amongst other places.¹⁷⁸ It was organised by the BOS, the Polish Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Reconstruction. Many well-known architects and urbanists were involved, such as Jerzy Hryniewiecki, Jerzy Staniszkis, Maciej Nowicki and Tadeusz Przypkowski. Walter Gropius opened the exhibition in the USA under the title *Warsaw Lives*, a title proposed by the influential architectural critic Lewis Mumford. Gropius stressed the continuities between the new designs and the modernist traditions of the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁷⁹ Continuing the successful marriage of modernist architecture and the social cause in exhibitions as developed in the 1920s and 1930s, the post-war exhibitions *Warsaw Accuses/Lives* presented the rebuilding effort ongoing in Warsaw, while also stressing the enormous suffering Warsaw had undergone. The designs for

sweeping urban renewal were strictly in a modernist tradition, continuing the main ideas from *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* and reminiscent of Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin* in their visualisation.¹⁸⁰



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75. *Warsaw Lives*. Projected Warsaw skyscrapers

International opinion on the design for a future Warsaw was extremely important to the new political regime, as well as to the planners and architects of the BOS and the city administration of Warsaw.¹⁸¹ Interestingly, proving that the Cold War was not yet in full swing, the USA was a most important source of feedback. The *Warsaw Accuses* exhibition provided Helena and Szymon Syrkus with the opportunity to tour the US for six months in 1946 – and briefly the United Kingdom. Whilst in the US, they met again with old brothers-in-arms such as Walter Gropius.¹⁸²

In the US the Syrkus couple also met the sociologist David Riesman, who later became famous for his book *The lonely crowd*. Riesman had already been deeply interested in how communities functioned – and the role urbanism and architecture could play herein – in the 1940s. Riesman saw the plans for a new Warsaw as an exemplary answer to the extreme challenges of post-war reconstruction: “a bold contemporary plan which is now being put into effect, the new plan for the com-

munity of Warsaw.” Riesman stressed that it was only because of the occupation and destruction of Warsaw that architects were beginning to collaborate with psychologists, social workers, economists and other specialists to plan a socially-conceived city and thus a new kind of metropolis.¹⁸³ With the Syrkus couple in mind, David Riesman regarded architects as the key figures of the time. Architects, according to Riesman, were the true visionaries, not least due to the fact that they had been condemned to inaction during the war: “One small group in our society, the architectural fraternity, has continued to produce and to stimulate thinking in the utopian tradition – thinking which at its best combines respect for material fact with ability, even enthusiasm, for transcending the given.”¹⁸⁴ Riesman stressed the immense opportunity of putting into practice what had been theoretically conceived years earlier.

In this, Riesman was borrowing a number of tropes established by Lewis Mumford in the foreword to the brochure which accompanied the touring exhibition in the US. Mumford called up a vision: “The plans of new Warsaw did not spring by magic out of the dust and rubble of the noble city that was first to stand up under the Nazi attack in 1939. Long before the Germans invaded Poland, the groups of Polish architects had begun the preparatory work of making surveys and studies for the development of Warsaw and its countryside. Under ordinary circumstances, those plans would have been delayed or blocked by many vested interests. But the nightmare of destruction that Warsaw underwent has provided this compensation: it has cleared the ground for a bold creative effort. The present exhibition outlines the first steps toward transforming Warsaw into a new kind of metropolis, a true mother-city, nurturing and guiding the smaller communities and neighbourhood units that will nestle around it. Warsaw will live again, not by a pious restoration of the past, not by idolizing its dead self, but by taking the leadership in building a new kind of urban community.”¹⁸⁵

What comes to the fore here are the themes of urbanism, social housing and the neighbourhood unit as a cross-sectoral topic which was not yet affected by the Cold War schism. Community, a relevant but hardly central theme in the CIAM discourse, now took centre stage. Chmielewski regarded the construction of communal life so important that he added it as a separate function to those mentioned in the Charter of Athens in his work on Warsaw. During the Second World War he stated: “[...] the conscious transformation of structure from mechanical concentrations of population into organized communities of a higher order is only possible if community relationships are accepted as one of the principal functions of the man who lives in a community.”¹⁸⁶

Of course, both Mumford and Riesman were arguing from a progressive viewpoint, using the example of Warsaw as an allegory for their home country, of a better urbanism which was more oriented towards social factors and to community. Mumford and Riesman, both leading intellectuals of their time, were less interested in the specific context of Warsaw-beyond-the-war-experience. In particular, the political constraints which would soon strongly impact the reconstruction of Warsaw were hardly an issue for Riesman or Mumford.

In this, they were not alone. Just before the window of post-war Warsaw opportunities closed, the eminent Swiss writer Max Frisch, then still foremost an architect, visited Warsaw. Frisch, who knew the destruction of German cities well, stressed the specificity of the Warsaw case. Warsaw, he noted in 1948, the first city to suffer bombing, offered the “silhouette of destruction gone mad”.¹⁸⁷ Against this background Frisch stressed the singularity of the reconstruction of Warsaw. He highlighted the decisive nature of the law which organised the nationalisation of land within the city boundaries: “Tabula rasa. By this the first precondition for true urban development is fulfilled. Abolishment of private land property. For the first time urbanism has a real chance after it was taught since decades.” In Warsaw the town planner had “a free hand”. To Frisch it was very likely that the “exceptional chance to build a city of our century was fully understood and will be realized”. Though Frisch, who had more information to hand than Mumford and Riesman, saw the danger signals for a different development, he still believed that the architects could keep the future development in their own hands.¹⁸⁸

Indeed, the opinion of the international urbanist and architectural scene was extremely important to the regime and for three years provided the modernist architects and planners in Warsaw with considerable influence. The first designs for the reconstruction of Warsaw were concluded in September 1946 and presented to a board of international urban planners visiting Warsaw for this purpose, many of whom were well known to the Polish CIAM architects now active in the BOS. The visiting group comprised Soviet architects S.J. Czernyszew and W.B. Baburow as well as André Lurçat, Paul Nelson (an American expert in the French Ministry for Reconstruction) van Eesteren, and Hans Bernoulli who had already commented on the General Plan for Warsaw of 1931.¹⁸⁹ Tadeusz Tołwiński, who developed the first master plan for Warsaw during the First World War, completed the group. The high-profile commission confirms that international advice was not only deemed necessary for political legitimacy but also that at this point international exchange was still unproblematic.

In October 1946 the planning for Warsaw was presented in considerable detail at the Congress of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning in Hastings.¹⁹⁰ Borrowing earlier lines of argument by Syrkus und Chmielewski the presented plans stressed how catching-up was specific to Warsaw. At the same time, equally in line with Syrkus' and Chmielewski's pre-war arguments, the text mentioned how closely interwoven Warsaw's development was with trends throughout Europe. Referring to the economic and juridical changes in post-war Poland, the plans finally highlighted the frameworks of opportunity which could turn the reconstruction of Warsaw into an example for the whole continent.¹⁹¹

The positive feedback the designs received in Hastings, as well as the involvement and interest of many experts in the reconstruction of Warsaw, also attests to the enormous attention the Warsaw case generated in the West. The well-known French geographer Pierre George published a study on the reconstruction of Warsaw in 1949, after having led a commission of experts to Warsaw. George stressed the positive continuity with the achievements of interwar-modernism, in particular in co-operative housing estates. Warsaw was to prove an example for a Functional City on a human scale.¹⁹² Maciej Nowicki and Le Corbusier also planned an international competition for the reconstruction of Warsaw, involving Eero Saarinen, Alvar Aalto and Oscar Niemeyer. Due to the worsening political situation this competition was never held.¹⁹³

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76. H. Syrkus, with mayor of Warsaw S. Totwiński and his wife Joanna visiting Stockholm, 1948

The combination of the label "Europe's most battered city" and high-flying plans for its rebuilding gained global attention.¹⁹⁴ In September 1947, under the headline 'Poland's Rebuilding amazes U.S. Experts', the *New York Times* described how lead-

ing American planners praised what they had seen in Warsaw. Both quantitatively and qualitatively this would surpass all comparable planning in the US. The architect Hermann Field, later to be imprisoned in Poland, opined: “what they are doing is more modern to me than what we called modern before the war”.¹⁹⁵

The reconstruction of Warsaw revealingly triggered much more than the curiosity of experts. Warsaw, symbolising both the war against the cities and a striking reconstruction, regularly made it into the newspapers across the globe until around 1949. Although communist and decidedly leftist papers unsurprisingly paid more attention than others, interest transgressed party boundaries and included all western countries, with the partial exception of Western Germany.¹⁹⁶ The latter was mirrored by a politically motivated, extremely positive perception in East Germany of the new Warsaw as the “most modern city” in Europe.¹⁹⁷

This division in perception strengthened by 1948 and pointed to the deeper schisms which then burst open. These schisms, quite obviously, can be explained by the intensifying Cold War but cannot be fully explained by the political constellation. As has been explained in the previous chapter the question of how architects should position themselves *vis-à-vis* society had already divided the pre-war CIAM, most clearly at its 1931 gathering in Berlin.¹⁹⁸

By March 1949 Forbát, when reflecting on experiences with colleagues from the East like Helena Syrkus, was disillusioned. Forbát doubted that it was possible to continue collaborating. Gropius agreed that communication with “those behind the Iron Curtain” was becoming increasingly difficult.¹⁹⁹ Forbát and the Swedish group had already resisted the so-called “Statement by the CIAM” of 16 October 1946, written by Helena and Szymon Syrkus and signed by Hans Schmidt and Mart Stam, demanding to extend CIAM’s scope, reflected also in a new name, “International Congresses for Social Architecture & Town Planning”.²⁰⁰ Restraining private property of the land was equally on the agenda as “a planned economy directed by the democratic organizations of that society”.

What had, beyond all divides, characterized the pre-war CIAM, namely shared language, formulation of problems and general agreement on desirable solutions, was now much more difficult to establish.²⁰¹ At the seventh CIAM congress 1949 in Bergamo, the fracturing could no longer be contained.²⁰² In a well-known declaration Helena Syrkus, then vice president of the CIAM, stated that the demands of the Charter of Athens had been fully implemented in Warsaw. Now it was about setting the next logical step, which to her meant to proceed to Socialist Realism. It would only be possible to defend and preserve international culture through the defence and preservation of national culture under Soviet guidance.²⁰³

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77. H. Syrkus with Le Corbusier and Josep Lluís Sert at CIAM congress in Bergamo, 1949

The consolidation of state socialism and Socialist Realism as an official style caused an almost complete cessation in international contacts which had been so vital to the success of modernism in the interwar period. This was true both for personal contacts as well as for the exchange of ideas and comparison of different urban situations. In consequence, the publicist and architect Leopold Tyrmand bemoaned an onslaught on “true internationalisation” in the reconstruction of Warsaw.²⁰⁴ Tyrmand acknowledged the achievements of the planned economy in reconstruction but believed that what in his eyes were mediocre results for the latter had to be explained through a lack of international exchange.²⁰⁵ In practical terms this was an expression of what Dariusz Stola has called the “Great Sealing Off” from 1948 on.²⁰⁶

In similar form this tendency played out in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In Hungary, the preeminent modernist journal *Tér és Forma* had continued publishing throughout the war, under the guidance of József Fischer from 1943. As Fischer, a Social Democrat, could not agree with the forced merger of the Social Democratic and Communist parties he was removed from his position in 1948 and the journal folded shortly thereafter.²⁰⁷

The cessation of long-standing communication had a deep impact, as clearly becomes apparent in Tyrmand’s observations. Soviet examples dominated – at least until the death of Stalin in 1953 – the columns of architectural magazines which before the war, and in the immediate post-war period, had prided themselves on their broad geographic range.²⁰⁸ *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*, the culmination of the Polish CIAM architects’ efforts to merge the international discourse and local problems, was dismissed by Edmund Goldzamt as a superficial attempt to solve the structural

crisis of the capitalist city and thus “propaganda for reactionary social-economic trends”.²⁰⁹ Interest in the reconstruction of Warsaw – which, of course never stopped – only resurfaced in publications from the mid-1950s onwards.²¹⁰ In the meantime many members of the youngest echelon of architects reacted by emigrating and seizing opportunities presented to them in Basra, Bagdad or Accra. Thus the architects internationalised their work in a manner that was no longer possible in Poland.²¹¹

Conclusion

What Tyrmand’s statements capture in a nutshell is that the continuity of planning with interwar modernism implied a continuity of international networks. It is striking to note how strongly Warsaw – both before and after the war – was seen as a place of opportunities, as a potential metropolis of European scale, characterized by exceptionally dynamic development – not just within Poland but also abroad.²¹² Mumford’s statement coined about post-Second World War Warsaw, that “Every handicap is a potential opportunity”, had already been true in pre-war Warsaw. Warsaw generated so much attention outside Poland because it seemed to offer the opportunity to finally realize long-held visions of sweeping urban change on a metropolitan scale. It is part of the tragedy of the history of Warsaw that its central position – as Warsaw’s president Stefan Starzyński expressed it in his “I wanted Warsaw to be great” before being arrested by the Germans – would in a certain sense, with respect to international resonance, only be fulfilled after the war.²¹³

What comes to the fore in the general interest in the Warsaw case, may also be seen as the expression of a major shift. This shift is reflected in the International Labour Organisation’s 1941 conclusion that “the most striking contrast between the discussion of post-war reconstruction which is taking place today and the discussion on the same subject which took place a quarter of a century ago is the shift of emphasis from a mainly political conception of the problem of world order to an essentially social and economic conception”.²¹⁴ Riesman’s and Mumford’s high expectations regarding Warsaw may be seen as an expression of this shift.

What did this imply for the architects involved? Sylvia Necker coined the term “Archikrats” to highlight the merger of architects and technocrats that occurred under National Socialism.²¹⁵ The term also captures the Faustian bargains architects were willing to make to be able to push through their designs. This term further captures, albeit with lesser ideological implications, important aspects of the experience and reality of modernist architects in the 1930s and ’40s in East Central Europe. A central theme of this chapter has been the increasing mutual dependence of archi-

rects and the state that occurred in this region by the late 1930s. The Second World War posed the dilemmas associated with these Faustian bargains in an extreme way.

We can only fully grasp the deep impact of the identification of modernist architects in East Central Europe with the cause of modernism by considering the war years. Modernism not only promised superior housing solutions, but also a solution to the dysfunctional structures left over from feudal times, aggressive nationalism and anti-Semitism, often linked with economic depression and urban crisis. For the reasons laid out in this and the previous chapters the link between perceived crisis and belief in a better future was particularly pronounced in East Central Europe. And so was the belief in internationalism. This link did not just inform professional choices but the very lifestyles of the architects in question. Modernism, after all, promised personal liberation, from the restrictive roots of religion and ethnic origins.

Still, it remains a challenge to integrate the war into the biographies of modernist architects and to establish what effects the war had on the way these architects re-conceived their role as architects. The Second World War put many pre-war identifications into question, but this had already partly begun before the war broke out. The war did not just put careers at risk, but risked the very lives of the architects analysed here, particularly because they identified with modernism. In Syrkus' letters from Auschwitz the comprehensive demand to change social conditions comes up in his insistence that architecture and urbanism should no longer be separated. Syrkus saw this insight as a direct consequence of his Auschwitz experience. He believed that the war would provide the opportunities to build a new, better city, also integrating those groups which had been excluded from the pre-war city. In one of his last letters from Auschwitz Syrkus stressed the opportunities of the envisaged new era for architects.²¹⁶ The post-catastrophic city of Warsaw was a reflection of the impact of the war, with new opportunities and increased dependencies on the political regime. Syrkus' vision which gave him hope in the camp at Auschwitz was at best only partially fulfilled.

Not just Syrkus' high hopes, but the general questions treated in this chapter point to a larger question beyond the scope of this book – whether there was continuity or discontinuity between interwar modernism and socialist modernism. Striking continuities can be found in Syrkus' pet theme of industrial housing construction flourishing in the socialist world from the 1960s on. A closer look would also need to take into account the more general themes of planning, as employed in *Warszawa Funkcjonalna*.²¹⁷

Epilogue

The first chapter of this book opened with a scene from the film *The Black Cat*, featuring a genial architect-engineer in an East European setting. In its conclusion the book draws attention to another film, albeit of a very different nature. In September 1989, only weeks before the fall of the Berlin Wall, *Die Architekten* was one of the very last films to be shot in the GDR. The film depicts the story of a brilliant graduate of architecture who spent years condemned to working on insignificant projects. Through a series of favourable circumstances the film's hero is finally offered the chance to build a large-scale communal centre for a huge residential estate of pre-fabricated apartment blocks. The lack of such centres had been a constant point of criticism of socialist housing.¹

Though the protagonist is well qualified and idealistic, and allowed to pick his own team, his project eventually fails, or at least it falls short of the highly-demanding expectations, culminating in the hero's break-down as he inaugurates the flawed compromise he was forced to build. The film, which depicts the breakdown of a state – the GDR – and a political system – socialism – almost in real-time, once more assigns the architectural profession a central role. In this way, the film shares a number of themes which form key aspects in this book. The architect is depicted not only as a powerful agent of social change but also as subject to political pressure – due to the very nature of his profession, its dependence on huge investments, and bureaucratic support. The tension between a profession which in essence is based both on individual agency and collective modes of working prescribed by socialism is another important theme. This is also true for the question of how far architects are able to envisage and implement an ideal environment for successful community while leaving enough space for the individual.

As a film, *Die Architekten* also clearly brings up the question of the cultural representation of architects and, similarly, a theme, equally central to this book – the architect as symbol of modernity, and even, as here, its failure. The film premiered in

1990, when the country it depicted was in the process of dissolving and 40 years after the narrative of this book ends. One may ask how far the links mentioned point to a relevance of the themes of this book beyond the region under scrutiny and beyond the first half of the 20th century in the end. By doing so this epilogue will place the main conclusions of this book within the wider framework of 20th-century European history. After all, in that it reconfirms the enduring high expectations in the architect, the film is certainly more than a representation of the rejection and failure of the profession and its social impact.

This book sought to provide a history of modernist architects as a group, their dynamic development, their engagement with society and politics, and their experiences as subjects and agents of social and political ruptures. Analysis had focussed on East Central Europe for two reasons: first, in the new states founded in 1918 the dynamic – and imperative – of modernization was almost their *raison d'être*. These states became part of an imaginary European context of comparison in which they had to prove their potential to live up to the demands of modernity. The ensuing politics of comparison created immense opportunities for architects and placed a spotlight on their attempts at reaching out in new domains – social and political. Second, East Central Europe was subjected to deep political disruptions – including 1918, the rise of authoritarian regimes in the 1930s, the Second World War and occupation, and the establishment of communist regimes from 1944 on. Modernist architects were particularly affected by these caesura due to the nature of their engagement in the top-down project of modernization. The historical ruptures form part of their life histories – albeit not only in a negative manner – in a much stronger way than for the vast majority of their western colleagues. In this sense, one could even argue that the biographies of the modernist architects in the region bear a more collective imprint than in other regions.

Chapter 1 explained the emergence of the informal and contested modernizing alliance between architects and the states, while chapter 2 discussed the expression of this alliance in new ways of training architects as national experts and which themes guided the social and cultural construction of the modernist architect. Consequently Chapters 3 and 4, on organising and communicating architecture, analysed the interplay of changing societal expectations, and self-empowerment of architects against the background of internationalism and modernism as two sides of the same coin in the “European moment” of the late 1920s and early 1930s.² Unravelling the significant and little-known CIAM-Ost made it possible to locate the specific place of East Central Europe in this broader picture.

Chapter 5 brought the different thematic threads together using plans for a Functional Warsaw as a case in point. *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* is a striking example of the international communicative space that emerged in the CIAM and intensified problem-focused international communication. Chapter 6 showed how fragile the alliance between state and architects, of which *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* was also an expression, was when, in the wake of radicalized politics, loyalties came into question and anti-Semitism unfolded its destructive potential. The aforementioned alliance came at a price, the more so as the goals of architects and the state in many respects differed. The chapter analysed why – particularly in the circumstances prevailing in 1930s Europe – the wholesale identification with modernism became a decisive factor for the architects in focus. A key insight brought forward by this study is how closely-linked modernist convictions in professional life and attempts to live up to these convictions were. Although holding these convictions endangered architects the international bonds of the CIAM also provided protection in the face of these threats. Finally, the chapter showed how the war experience shaped the resulting extreme professional and intellectual investment in reconstruction. The reality of the respective high-flying plans, however, clashed with the realities of the ideologically decidedly inflexible new socialist regimes – in a certain sense anticipating the constellation of the film *Die Architekten*.

While the first five chapters in the book described post-1918 East Central Europe as a space of opportunities for modernist architects, one should not neglect the inherent limitations and also heterogeneous character of this space. Syrkus' professional life history, the main example of a modernist architect referred to in this book, was certainly not a one-dimensional success story of a gifted individual making use of the particular opportunities which came his way in a specific political and geographical situation. Despite Syrkus' striking career within the CIAM, the obstacles he had to overcome must not be overlooked. These were, in some ways, typical of the East Central European setting during the interwar period. At home, an architect like Syrkus enjoyed limited success. Despite the apparent social and economic merits of his designs, by the mid-1930s he, like many other modernist architects, came increasingly under attack. Despite all their achievements, Syrkus and other CIAM members from East Central Europe, with few exceptions, were also far less in the limelight than, for example Walter Gropius or Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and could not, like them, translate fame into new opportunities on the other side of the Atlantic.

Looking eastwards does not force us to completely reinterpret the history of architects in the 20th century and of modernism. Yet, it does suggest that important aspects must be emphasised and re-evaluated. First of all, the eastern perspective alerts us to the fact that modernism was much more than a style. Architects employed modernism to push through over-arching ambitions, including personal emancipation. The engagement of architects like Fred Forbát and Szymon Syrkus in communicating and organizing modernist architecture as the essence of their profession, and their willingness to stay true to their cause in a period when this entailed considerable personal risk, highlights the role of modernism as a belief-system and a vehicle of personal emancipation. To Syrkus, Forbát and their likes being a modernist architect entailed much more than just a specific interpretation of what architecture should look like. Rather, it was a deeply-held conviction which permeated all aspects of life and held particular promise in a region where religious discrimination and feudal remnants had long held sway.

The architects analyzed here should also be seen as brokers of modernity in this regard. They employed the promise of modernity in shaping modernism into a social movement and creating powerful networks. Using this movement and its international networks, they contributed to building new societies and urban frameworks. Collective and personal strategies went hand in hand. This book shows how modernism was not so much a particular vision of the city or of building, but rather materialized in networks of mutual support. The notion of modernist architects as brokers of modernity also questions their designation as technocrats. The modernist architects in question were often self-made men and women, who successfully navigated between different professional and state requirements. They appear as talented mediators of the social, who used the identities of experts and technocrats to advance their political and social visions for the future in a highly turbulent political context. Brokering modernity also applied to the architects who moved between the local and the European or even global level, and the interchange between universal principles and concrete challenges. By highlighting, via the CIAM, the link between a purportedly universalist discourse and local problems, this study also measured the extent of global impact at the local level and vice versa and showed how strongly interrelated both poles were in the project of modernism.

The involvement of architects from Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Poland in the CIAM not only testifies to the rapid speed with which the ideas of modernism travelled. The CIAM, in addition to providing a network, also served as a lever for acquiring influence at home. This book has shown that the way that architects exchanged ideas must be viewed in a more comprehensive manner than is usually ap-

plied, not only including planning as communication, but also personal networks, strategic publications, the use of catchwords and agenda-setting, the skilful combination of visual clout, and suggestive statistics.

That the rise of the welfare state and modernist architecture were interdependent developments is not a new insight. The strong role the state played in the new nation states of East Central Europe, however, casts this link in a harsh light. To be sure, the political, socio-economic and cultural differences between these countries were considerable and results for one country may not easily apply in the other two. Yet, still it can be stated that the link between modernization and the legitimacy of the new political entities was stronger than in the established states of the West. Moreover, the state had to serve as a surrogate for weak or partly missing aspects of civil society and private actors – also in housing. The prominent role of the state offered enormous architectural opportunities, as has been amply demonstrated here in the example of the Polish capital of Warsaw.

As this book has shown, in the early 1930s Polish architects were already intentionally seeking institutional clients whilst also embracing collective forms of work. This raises questions about the continuities between the interwar and the socialist period as well as the continuity of planning. Yet, this also places an infrequently expressed conflict which confronted architects everywhere in 20th century Europe more sharply into relief. While pushing through modernization in planning bodies of an impressive scale, architects became much more dependent on the state – a dependence which became apparent *in extremis* during the Second World War, but which had already been expressed, as analysed in chapter 6, previously.

By highlighting the link between the state and architects, as well as the latter's active role in forming new structures and communicative spaces which allowed them to channel transnational dynamics into local transformations, this study has shown that it is necessary – and rewarding – to understand modernist architects more broadly as experts. Modernist architects as experts of social relations acted within a net of dependencies which extended far beyond 'mere' building. Further, their status as experts was defined by these dependencies and acknowledged by engagement in societal debates at home and approved by successful interaction in new types of organisations, such as the CIAM, abroad. Due to these dependencies it is not surprising that the political ruptures which marked East Central Europe after the First World War – where the founding of new states caused a deep caesura non-existent in the West – affected the life histories discussed here in such depth. These effects were genuine in a positive, enabling way, as well as in terms of a threat which potentially carried lethal consequences.

One question which runs throughout this book, but due to its complexity and scope also points beyond this book, is what kind of mark these ruptures left on the professional thinking of these architects. Chapter 6 analysed the influence of the experience of the war and its material consequences on the planning efforts for Warsaw's reconstruction. Moreover, that chapter pointed out that the respective planning has to be understood within a twofold international context – derived from earlier planning conceptions conceived in the CIAM framework and acknowledged by international exhibitions and experts from abroad after 1945. However, the chapter also demonstrated how this link became questionable, how international engagement in the CIAM and the expectations of a political regime at home, which seemingly offered many of the perspectives modernist architects had so protractedly longed for, could no longer be dovetailed and how this ended with the last deep rupture of 1948.

This book consciously opted not to focus on aesthetic questions of style and the associated implications. While the terms and categories of modernism and modernity play an important part, these were not understood normatively. The book's imperative was also not to add to the ongoing debate of the place of modernism *vis-à-vis* traditionalism.³ It goes without saying that the group analysed here, as well as their built work, only form a small part of architects active at the time and of what was built. Further, Szymon and Helena Syrkus or the Brukalski couple should certainly not simply be regarded as progressive minds who were fighting – as they believed themselves to be doing – the reactionary forces to introduce a just, well-planned and fair society through improved housing and urban planning. Even though these architects prided themselves on the efforts they made to integrate future dwellers into their plans, they still strongly, and unquestioningly, believed in their superior status as architects. It is also very obvious that, for example, Helena Syrkus had few or no qualms in aligning herself with the new communist regime even when the regime, in 1948, embarked on an architectural vision which in many ways was detrimental to Syrkus' earlier held beliefs and when others with less illusions as to the true nature of the regime left Poland.⁴

For reasons described in chapter 6 this book ends its narrative with the caesura of 1948. It does so, however, suggesting continuities in planning and in other domains worth further exploration. The question of autonomy of architects under state socialism after 1948 should certainly not be answered in simple dichotomies. This is all the more true as, as this book has shown, early on architects engaged with the state not least to push through their own agendas. In this respect, the caesura of

1948 also marks a culmination of a certain success, which did not necessarily end in the period starting now.

With the focus on architects as a group and their political and societal engagement, the question of how and when the parabola describing the rise of these architects and the factors which advanced this rise came to an end must be addressed. The notion that a disillusionment with modernism as well as planning in the West occurred in the 1960s is well established.⁵ By the 1960s modernist architects were no longer acclaimed as problem-solvers but often condemned as technocrats. Broad-scale disillusionment with the promises of prefabricated buildings, the large-scale use of concrete and standardization also extended to the idea of the Functional City as such. Rational designs could hardly convey the richness of experiences of those living in these cities, particularly not after the deep rupture of the Second World War. When the writer Leopold Tyrmand travelled through a partially reconstructed Warsaw in early 1954, he wrestled with his own memories and norms. Looking at some pre-First World War tenement blocs which survived the Second World War, he admitted that he now discerned something in these buildings which those architects who dreamt of “szklane domy”, of glass houses, in the interwar period could not.⁶

The disillusionment with the promise of modernism necessarily impacted on the standing of those who shaped it. Around 1900, when modern technology began to influence architecture, the Austrian architect Otto Wagner described the architect as the “crown of the modern man in its successful combination of idealism and realism”; this would have seemed a dubious statement in the 1960s.⁷ The “architect super-specialist is obsolescent in present time” Polish architect Oscar Hansen stated in 1959.⁸ The phenotype of expert-architect portrayed in this book has been replaced by today’s star-architects who produce so-called ‘signature architecture’. The architect, addressing special problems and perceiving social givens as mouldable is far less plausible, though, of course this might change or is already in the process of changing.⁹

In a certain sense the criticism of modernist architecture and its planning aspirations, which mushroomed after the 1960s, testifies to the extensive success both had enjoyed in the preceding five decades. This leads to the question – beyond the scope of this book – of what happened to the enormous excess of planning and self-empowerment characterising the group of architects described here.¹⁰ In 1961 Walter Gropius complained that the main problem of architecture and architects was “lost belief”. After all, architects were predestined to shape society as a whole. Yet, due to their lack of authoritative power they were unable to do so. For Gropius this even

implied doubting the merits of democracy if it was unable to put “the inspiration and capability of architects into practice”.¹¹

It was no coincidence that the turning of the tide in the 1960s coincided with the dissolving of the CIAM. After the Second World War the organization was never able to regain the momentum it had enjoyed in the 1930s – despite the seminal opportunities offered by urban reconstruction on a European scale. In chapter 6 it was noted how the beginning Cold War marred the CIAM gatherings held immediately post-war. In the 1950s a new way of thinking about and discussing architecture in relation to society marked the end of the strong group cohesion and *esprit du corps* which had characterized the pre-war ‘CIAMOIS’, that is the CIAM core group. The shared themes, which despite any controversy united characters as different as Gropius and Le Corbusier, Szymon Syrkus and Josep Lluís Sert before the war were now replaced by a plethora of different topics. Architects from East Central Europe, with the exception of Yugoslavia, ceased to play a decisive role in the CIAM for political reasons. The organisation’s centre of activity was shifting westwards, to the United Kingdom and the Americas. With the foundation of the International Union of Architects in 1948, acknowledged by UNESCO and thus politically attractive to the socialist states, the internationalist selling point of the CIAM also became increasingly contested.¹²

The dissolution of the CIAM between 1956 and 1959 eventually led to an interest in that organization’s history in the 1970s. Martin Steinmann, who established the CIAM archive at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology’s Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture at Zurich, got in touch with Helena Syrkus in 1970. Following an extensive taped interview Steinmann and Syrkus began corresponding. Steinmann was determined to get the facts right and Syrkus wanted to give her perspective on what she expected would become the official record of everything she believed in.¹³ For obvious reasons Syrkus initially had refused to speak German in the interview, answering questions in French, although she often fell back into the language she had used during most of her CIAM involvement, and in which her memories survived.¹⁴

In 1974 Helena Syrkus re-initiated an intense correspondence with Zurich-based CIAM veteran Alfred Roth.¹⁵ With a nod to nostalgia Helena Syrkus still signed her letters with a lipstick-painted heart, the symbol of the “dilettantes”, as she had done in the 1930s, while also trying to place the group’s experience in a broader framework as she prepared her memoirs.¹⁶ Helena Syrkus reminisced about the last decade of post-war CIAM activities and the British Team X, who in her mind produced hot air instead of tackling the real problems, and thus stood in sharp

contrast to her idealized picture of the essence of the CIAM.¹⁷ This comprised, in the main, the extremely intense personal bonds between members. CIAM was to be understood as “Congrès Internationaux d’Admiration Mutuelle”.¹⁸ This deep feeling of belonging also coloured other characteristics which Syrkus highlights in her exchanges with Steinmann and Roth, particularly the intense identification with modernism and internationalism.

These themes subsequently reappear in Helena Syrkus’ correspondence with Hans Maria Wingler, founder of the *Bauhaus* archive in 1960, who, after moving the archive to West Berlin in the 1970s, was able to systematically extend its collections. Helena Syrkus took part in the founding ceremony for the new archive building in West Berlin in May 1976 and donated different objects to the archive over the ensuing years.¹⁹ Helena Syrkus was still acting as a broker of modernity and in this was a typical representative of her cohort of modernist architects and of how modernism was a life-time project to them. The way CIAM was historicized in Zurich and West Berlin finally testifies to its legacy and to the modernist cause as a theme embracing the whole 20th century and a much wider geographic region than the one predominantly treated here.

Helena Syrkus’ 1976 invitation to West Berlin, and more to follow, as well as exhibitions devoted to Gropius, Georg Muche and other protagonists of the mission she identified with so strongly, offered a certain consolation to her in the face of the rise of postmodernism in the 1970s and early 1980s, which she found hard to swallow.²⁰ Despite the passage of time and her formerly sharp tone mellowed by age, she remained undeterred as regards a central assumption of her generation’s quest. One year before she – as one of the last of the core group of the CIAM – died in November 1982 Helena Syrkus wrote to Alfred Roth “Le peuple donnera les forces à ses architectes”.²¹

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Notes

Introduction – Brokers of Modernity

- ¹ Stefan Żeromski, *The coming spring* (New York: Central European University Press, 2007), 87.
- ² *Ibid.*, 88.
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ Stanisław Tołwiński, *Wspomnienia, 1895-1939* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1970), 274–275. For the trope of the glass house in general see: Ute Caumanns, “Modernisierung unter den Bedingungen der Teilung. Überlegungen zur Frage strukturellen und kulturellen Wandels in Warschau am Beispiel öffentlicher Gesundheit,” in *Städte im östlichen Europa: Zur Problematik von Modernisierung und Raum vom Spätmittelalter bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Carsten Goehrke and Bianca Pietrow-Ennker (Zurich: Chronos, 2006).
- ⁵ From 1932 onwards the house was enlarged and redesigned by the leading modernist architect Maksymilian Goldberg: http://www.podkowiaskimagazyn.pl/archiwum/szkolny_dom.htm.
- ⁶ On the link between Żeromski’s vision and the Polish movement for housing reform: Jadwiga Roguska, “The New Housing Between Dogma and Reality,” in Miłobędzki, *Architecture and Avant-Garde in Poland 1918-1939*, 61. A housing estate, built as late as the 1960s in Bielany, a district of Warsaw, is called *Przedwiośnie* after Żeromski’s novel.
- ⁷ For the different visions see: Ralph Musielski, *Bau-Gespräche: Architekturvisionen von Paul Scheerbart, Bruno Taut und der “Gläsernen Kette”* (Berlin: Reimer, 2003), 17–27; 79–95; 121–139. For the also politically revolutionary character of Taut’s programme see: David Gartman, *From Autos to Architecture: Fordism and Architectural Aesthetics in the Twentieth century* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009), 76.
- ⁸ Jean-Louis Cohen, *The Future of Architecture since 1889: A Worldwide History* (London: Phaidon, 2017), 242, 244.
- ⁹ Paul Scheerbart, *Glasarchitektur* (Berlin, 1914), 18, 47. See also: Gertrud Olsson, “Paul Scheerbart’s Utopia of Coloured Glass,” *Colour and Paints*, 2004; Angelika Thiekötter and Oliver Bätz, *Kristallisationen, Splitterungen: Bruno Tauts Glashaas* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1993).
- ¹⁰ On the symbolic value of this territory for the new Polish state and its architectural formation: Wojciech Romaniak, *Wybrane zagadnienia urbanistyki i architektury w województwie pomorskim w latach 1920-1939* (Warsaw: Neriton, 2005), 102–116.
- ¹¹ Martin Kohlrausch and Helmuth Trischler, *Building Europe on Expertise: Innovators, Organizers, Networkers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 70–77. For architects as technocrats: David Kuchenbuch, *Geordnete Gemeinschaft: Architekten als Sozialingenieure – Deutschland und Schweden im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2010), 89–100.

- ¹² Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993); Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- ¹³ Chapter 1 delivers a more thorough treatment of how to define East Central Europe.
- ¹⁴ Czesław Miłosz and Adeline G. Levine, *Miłosz's ABC's* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002).
- ¹⁵ See, out of many other publications introduced in this book, Steven A. Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
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- ¹⁷ For the concept see: Georg Franck, "The Economy of Attention," *Telepolis*, 1999.
- ¹⁸ Martin Filler, "The Powerhouse of the New," *The New York Review of Books* 57, no. 11 (2010); Barry Bergdoll and Leah Dickerman, eds., *Bauhaus 1919-1933: Workshops for Modernity* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2009). On the hierarchies attributing attention to the *Bauhaus*: Mauro F. Guillén, *The Taylorized Beauty of the Mechanical: Scientific Management and the Rise of Modernist Architecture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 15–17.
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- ²⁰ Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995); Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design, from William Morris to Walter Gropius* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960).
- ²¹ See the pioneering work: Ákos Moravánszky, *Die Erneuerung der Baukunst: Wege zur Moderne in Mitteleuropa 1900-1940* (Salzburg: Residenz-Verlag, 1988).
- ²² As just one example out of many others, which will be dealt with in more detail in chapters 1-4: Timothy O. Benson, ed., *Central European Avant-gardes: Exchange and transformation. 1910-1930* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
- ²³ Wojciech Leśnikowski, ed., *East European Modernism: Architecture in Czechoslovakia, Hungary & Poland between the Wars. 1919-1939* (New York: Rizzoli, 1996).
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- ²⁵ For the East European city see: Martin Kohlrausch, "Imperiales Erbe und Aufbruch in die Moderne. Neuere Literatur zur ostmitteleuropäischen Stadt," *H-Soz-Kult*, 16 November 2015 (2015) and for Warsaw: Jarosław Trybuś, *Warszawa niezaistniała: Niezrealizowane projekty urbanistyczne i architektoniczne Warszawy dwudziestolecia międzywojennego* (Warsaw: Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, 2012).
- ²⁶ Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000); Kees Somer, *The Functional City. CIAM and the Legacy of Van Eesteren* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2007).
- ²⁷ van Es, Evelien et al., ed., *Atlas of the Functional City: CIAM 4 and Comparative Urban Analysis* (Bussum: Thoth Publishers, 2014).

- ²⁸ The surviving papers of Helena and Szymon Syrkus are kept in the archive of the Polish Museum of Architecture in Wrocław (*Muzeum Architektury*). See also the rich memoirs of Helena Syrkus: Helena Syrkus, *Ku idei osiedla społecznego* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1976). Correspondence relevant to the questions asked here is to be found in the CIAM archives (gta, Zurich), Gropius's papers (*Bauhaus-Archiv*, Berlin), Fred Forbát's papers (*Arkitekturmuseumets Arkiv*, Stockholm) and van Eesteren's papers (*Nederlands Architectuurinstituut*, Rotterdam). The archive of the city of Warsaw (*Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie*) further holds relevant sources. Moreover, this book relies strongly on journals and books published in the interwar period and the immediate post-war period, also for the visual material which is part of the analysis.
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- ³⁰ Tom Wolfe, *From Bauhaus to Our House* (New York: Bantam, 1999).
- ³¹ See Ulrich Herbert, "Europe in High Modernity: Reflections on a Theory of the 20th Century," *Journal of Modern European History* 5, no. 1 (2007): 7.
- ³² Jan C. Behrends and Martin Kohlrausch, eds., *Races to Modernity: Metropolitan Aspirations in Eastern Europe, 1890-1940* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014).
- ³³ On the lack of studies of architects as a group: Sylvia Necker, *Konstanty Gutschow: 1902-1978; modernes Denken und volksgemeinschaftliche Utopie eines Architekten* (Munich: Dölling und Galitz, 2012), 13. As an essay on the topic see: Regina Heß, "Vom Gedächtniß 'großer Männer' zur Inszenierung der Global Player – Der Architekt in der Moderne," in Nerdinger, *Der Architekt – Geschichte und Gegenwart eines Berufsstandes*.
- ³⁴ See Kamila Twardowska, *Frederyk Tadanier* (Crakow: Instytut Architektury 2016); Michał Wiśniewski and Rafał Ochędusko, *Adolf Szyszko-Bobusz* (Crakow: Instytut Architektury, 2013).
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- ³⁸ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Limits of Art: Two Essays* (London, New York: Seagull Books, 2010), 41.
- ³⁹ Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (London: Penguin Books, 2007). See also the earlier, 1892, dramatic treatment of the rise and fall of a "master builder" by Henrik Ibsen: Henrik Ibsen, *The Master Builder* (Mineola: Dover Publications), 2016.
- ⁴⁰ Cohen, *Future*, 109.
- ⁴¹ Klaus von Beyme, *Das Zeitalter der Avantgarden: Kunst und Gesellschaft 1905-1955* (Munich: Beck, 2005), 100–108.
- ⁴² See Herbert, "Europe," 9.
- ⁴³ With several examples of a, by now, consolidated modernism in Poland: Tadeusz Michejda, "O zdobyczach architektury nowoczesnej," *AiB* 7, no. 5 (1932): 137–152.
- ⁴⁴ Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).
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1. Modernity in Eastern Europe – East European Modernism?

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- ² Hanna Böhm, "Architekt und Film – Dokumentation, Repräsentation, Set Design," in Nerdinger, *Der Architekt – Geschichte und Gegenwart eines Berufsstandes*, 702; Ralph Eue, "Who's that guy. Rasterfahung nach dem Architekten im Film," *Bauwelt*, 1-2 (1997): 24-25. Generally on the growing relevance of architects for film-settings: Erich Kettelhut and Werner Sudendorf, *Der Schatten des Architekten* (Munich: Belleville Verlag, 2009).
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2 . Architects as Experts of the Social: A new Type entering the European Scene

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3. Organising New Architectural Goals

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- ⁹⁷ See the documentation on the CIAM-Ost in Budapest, 1937, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-05-1-9-F and, on Molnár’s role: András Ferkai, *Molnár Farkas* (Budapest: Terc, 2011), 308–315.
- ⁹⁸ See the protocol of the Brno meeting and the respective correspondence of Molnár, Kalivoda, Syrkus and Giedion from November 1936 to March 1937. BA WGA, Papers II, 129. On the Greek gathering very little is known. Hans Schmidt refers to this very fact in his letter to the Syrkus couple of 19 September 1938, MA SP.
- ⁹⁹ Monika Platzer, “Die CIAM und ihre Verbindungen nach Zentraleuropa,” in Blau; Platzer, *Mythos Großstadt*, 229.
- ¹⁰⁰ Results of the Budapest meeting of 1937. gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-05-1-9-F.
- ¹⁰¹ On the Paris conference (CIAM V): Mumford, *CIAM*, 107–116.
- ¹⁰² Weissmann to Gropius no date, probably January 1937, BA WGA, Papers II, 129, 12/613.
- ¹⁰³ Monika Platzer, “Die CIAM und ihre Verbindungen nach Zentraleuropa,” in Blau; Platzer, *Mythos Großstadt*.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 230.
- ¹⁰⁵ Quoted in: András Ferkai, “Hungary. City Analysis. Social Commitment or Cold Professionalism?,” in van Es, Evelien et al., *Atlas of the Functional City*, 228.
- ¹⁰⁶ Éva Bajkay, ed., *Molnár Farkas. 1897-1945* (Pécs: Pannónia, 2010), 141.
- ¹⁰⁷ Molnár to Giedion, 4 December 1936, BA WGA, Papers II, 129, 12/193.
- ¹⁰⁸ Forbát to Gropius, 13 August 1938, Gropius to Forbát 30 October 1933, Forbát AM FP, 1970-18-187-01.
- ¹⁰⁹ Forbát to Gropius, 23 February 1937, Gropius to Forbát 30 October 1933, AM FP, 1970-18-187-01.
- ¹¹⁰ See Thomas J. Misa, “Appropriating the International Style: Modernism in East and West,” in Hard; Misa, *Urban Machinery*, 84–93.
- ¹¹¹ Molnár to Giedion, 21 May 1937, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹¹² Correspondance S. und H. Syrkus with Molnár, Kalivoda, Corbusier, Gropius, Giedion in 1938, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1938. See also: van Es, Evelien et al., *Atlas*.
- ¹¹³ Klaus Spechtenhauser and Daniel Weiss, “Karel Teige and the CIAM: The History of a Troubled Relationship,” in Dluhosch; Švácha, *Karel Teige. 1900-1951*, 244.
- ¹¹⁴ Gropius to Molnár, 16 May 1935, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹¹⁵ Giedion to van Eesteren, 6 February 1937, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.

- ¹¹⁶ Forbát to Gropius, 23 February 1937, Gropius to Forbát 30 October 1933, AM FP, 1970-18-187-01.
- ¹¹⁷ Kalivoda to Gropius, 19 June 1937, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹¹⁸ See the respective correspondence between Kalivoda and Molnár in BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹¹⁹ Letter Molnár to Gropius, 28 May 1937. BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹²⁰ Monika Platzer, "Die CIAM und ihre Verbindungen nach Zentraleuropa," in Blau; Platzer, *Mythos Großstadt*, 230.
- ¹²¹ See letter from Giedion to Forbát, 14 September 1946, while both Syrkus travelled the US, proposing a new CIAM-Ost with Szymon Syrkus as president. AM FP, 1970-18-162.
- ¹²² Quoted in: Steinmann, *CIAM*, 32.
- ¹²³ Kuchenbuch, *Geordnete*, 68–74.
- ¹²⁴ Correspondence S. Syrkus with Giedion and Moser, 5 January 1929 to 31 December 1929, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1929.
- ¹²⁵ On both committees: Mumford, *CIAM*, 27.
- ¹²⁶ On van Eesteren as an organiser see: Somer, *Functional*, 70–79, on Giedion: Sokratis Georgiadis, *Sigfried Giedion: Eine intellektuelle Biographie* (Zurich: Ammann, 1989), 85–107.
- ¹²⁷ Mumford, *CIAM*, 25–26.
- ¹²⁸ Gropius to Forbát, 30 October 1933, AM FP, 1970-18-187-01.
- ¹²⁹ Franziska Bollerey, *Cornelius van Eesteren: Urbanismus zwischen 'de Stijl' und C.I.A.M.* (Braunschweig, Wiesbaden: Vieweg, 1999), 27, 171–172.
- ¹³⁰ Somer, *Functional*, 106–108.
- ¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 107.
- ¹³² On the role of Toeplitz and Tołwiński: Syrkus, *Ku*, 74–75. For an overview of the WSM's history: Jan Andrzej Szymański, *Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa 1921-1970: Zarys dziejów* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Spółdzielcze, 1989).
- ¹³³ Tołwiński, *Wspomnienia*, 328–333, 420–422. See in particular a paper by Tołwiński given in Paris in June 1937. gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 45-4-36 D and 5-4-36 D. See also Mumford, *CIAM*, 114.
- ¹³⁴ Andrzej Turowski, "From Workers' Estates to Co-operative Habitat," in Miłobędzki, *Architecture and Avant-Garde in Poland 1918-1939*, 55; Chmielewski, Syrkus and Hryniewiecki, *Warszawa*, 16.
- ¹³⁵ Syrkus, *Spoleczne*, 161–195.
- ¹³⁶ For Stanisław Tołwiński see his autobiography: Tołwiński, *Wspomnienia*. See also Zofia Chyra-Rolicz, *Stanisław Tołwiński* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1987), 116–119. A good overview on the different organisations is provided in: Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich, ed., *Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich, 1923-1973* (Warsaw: Arkady, 1972).
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- ¹³⁸ See, for example, the letters by Syrkus to Giedion of 12 August 1929 and of 14 and 16 October 1929, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1936.
- ¹³⁹ For Toeplitz's approach see out of his numerous articles in AiB: Teodor Toeplitz, "Nowe sposoby budowania," AiB 4, no. 4 (1928): 129–147.
- ¹⁴⁰ Elżbieta Mazur, "Żoliborz – dzielnica obietnic," in Falkowski, *Straty Warszawy 1939-1945. Raport*; Ute Caumanns, "Mietskasernen und 'Gläserne Häuser': Soziales Wohnen in Warschau zwischen Philanthropie und Genossenschaft. 1900-1939," in Janatková; Kozłowska-Witt, *Wohnen in der Großstadt*.

- ¹⁴¹ Barbara Klain, "City Planning in Warsaw," in Bosma; Hellings, *Mastering the City*.
- ¹⁴² Roguska, "Radical", 18.
- ¹⁴³ Kohlrausch, "Houses".
- ¹⁴⁴ Turowski, "From", 55.
- ¹⁴⁵ Roguska, "New", 68.
- ¹⁴⁶ Roguska, "Radical", 18.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 16.
- ¹⁴⁸ Roguska, "New", 67.
- ¹⁴⁹ Quoted in: Roguska, "Radical", 17.
- ¹⁵⁰ Turowski, "From", 55.
- ¹⁵¹ Cited in: *ibid.*, 58–59.
- ¹⁵² For the French, Belgian and Austrian examples studied in Poland see: Tołwiński, *Wspomnienia*, 304–305.
- ¹⁵³ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁴ Łukasz Heyman, *Nowy Żoliborz 1918-1939: Architektura-urbanistyka* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1976), 241.
- ¹⁵⁵ Tołwiński, *Wspomnienia*, 304, 462–463.
- ¹⁵⁶ Helena Syrkus and Szymon Syrkus, "Osiedle WSM na Rakowcu," *DOM*, no. 5 (1931): 2–12.
- ¹⁵⁷ Władysław Dobrzyński, *Opieka mieszkaniowa jako zadanie państwa i samorządów* (Warsaw, 1929).
- ¹⁵⁸ Wagner, *Stadtplanung*, 137, 233.
- ¹⁵⁹ Mumford, *CIAM*, 26.

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- ³ Hitchcock and Johnson, *International*, 14–15.
- ⁴ Saunier, "Sketches".
- ⁵ Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2008). See also: Spiro Kostof, "Architecture, You and Him: The Mark of Sigfried Giedion," *Daedalus* 105, no. 1 (1976).
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- ⁷ Ita Heinze-Greenberg and Regina Stephan, eds., *Erich Mendelsohn. Gedankenwelten: Unbekannte Texte zu Architektur, Kulturgeschichte und Politik* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 48–53.
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- ¹³ Roswitha Reinbothe, *Deutsch als internationale Wissenschaftssprache und der Boykott nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt am Main, New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

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- ¹⁵ For a historically informed definition of the mercurial term avant-garde: Beyme, *Zeitalter*, 31–41.
- ¹⁶ Second statement of manifesto, from *De Stijl*, 2, no. 1 (November 1918): 4.
- ¹⁷ Todorov, *Limits*, 17.
- ¹⁸ Sonja B. Uzelac, “Visual Arts in the Avant-gardes between the Two Wars,” in Djurić; Šuvaković, *Impossible Histories*.
- ¹⁹ On the influence of Malevich on the Polish avant-garde: Małgorzata Omilanowska, ed., *Tür an Tür: Polen – Deutschland. 1000 Jahre Kunst und Geschichte* (Cologne: DuMont, 2011).
- ²⁰ Walter Benjamin, *Einbahnstrasse* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 40–43.
- ²¹ Adam Miłobędzki, “Polish Architecture in the Period 1918–1939,” in Miłobędzki, *Architecture and Avant-Garde in Poland 1918–1939*, 10.
- ²² Benson, *Central*; Passuth, *Treffpunkte*; Parlagreco, *Costruttivismo*; Schuler and Gawlik, *neue*; Nowakowska-Sito, *Wyprawa*; Ryszard Stanislawski and Christoph Brockhaus, eds., *Europa, Europa: Das Jahrhundert der Avantgarde in Mittel- und Osteuropa* (Bonn: Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1994), here in particular volume 4 on architecture. See also: Sascha Bru, *Europa! Europa? The Avant-Garde, Modernism and the Fate of a Continent* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009).
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- ²⁹ Szymon Syrkus. “Preliminarz architektury.” *Praesens* 1 (1926): 6–16, 6.
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- ⁴⁰ Reinhold Mißelbeck, Wolfram Hagspiel, *Werner Mantz: Vision vom neuen Köln; Fotografien 1926-1932* (Cologne: J.P. Bachem Verlag, 2000); Michael Stöneberg and Arthur Köster, *Arthur Köster: Architekturfotografie 1926-1933; das Bild vom "Neuen Bauen"* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2009).
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- ⁴³ See for example Gropius to H. Syrkus, 8 November 1936, in MA SP. And, in particular, Alberto Sartoris' request for photos from buildings from the Polish CIAM group for his *Ellimenti dell'architettura funzionale*, which eventually came out in 1944, of 19 August 1939 in order to represent the Polish achievements as well as possible. See also a letter signed by among others Victor Bourgeois, Mart Stam, Hans Schmidt, of 1939 (no exact date given), urging Szymon Syrkus to send his publication "Skelettbau" for a journal publication. Both letters in: MA SP.
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- ⁴⁶ "Mart Stam, Trautenau," *ABC* 2, no. 1 (1926): 7.
- ⁴⁷ Mumford, *CIAM*, 12.
- ⁴⁸ Somer, *Functional*, 57–59; Hélène Jannière, *Politiques éditoriales et architecture 'moderne': L'émergence de nouvelles revues en France et Italie (1923-1939)* (Paris: Arguments, 2002), 190.
- ⁴⁹ Catherine de Smet, "The 'Other Side' of the Architectural book," in *Modern: Architekturbücher aus der Sammlung Marzona*, ed. Elisabetta Bresciani (Vienna: Schlebrügge, 2003).
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- ⁵¹ Przemysław Strożek, "Krakow and Warsaw: Becoming the Avant-Garde: Rydwan, Maski, Wianki, Formiści; Nowa Sztuka, Zwrotnica and Blok," in *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines*, ed. Peter Brooker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 105.
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- ⁵⁴ AA 1, no. 1 (1930), 36–43.
- ⁵⁵ Jannière, *Politiques*, 181.
- ⁵⁶ Heinz Hirdina, *Neues Bauen, neues Gestalten: Das Neue Frankfurt, die neue Stadt, eine Zeitschrift zwischen 1926 und 1933* (Berlin: Elefant Press, 1984). See also: Walter Prigge and Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Das Neue Frankfurt: Städtebau und Architektur im Modernisierungsprozess, 1925-1988* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 1988).
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- ⁵⁸ Annette Ciré and Haila Ochs, eds., *Die Zeitschrift als Manifest: Aufsätze zu architektonischen Strömungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1991).
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- ⁶⁰ Virgil Bierbauer, "Die neue Architektur in Ungarn," *Die Form. Zeitschrift für gestaltende Arbeit* 5, no. 18 (1930): 487–494; Janniére, *Politiques*, 179.
- ⁶¹ Korngold, Lucian (1928): Die neue Baukunst in Polen. In: *WMBS XI* (5), S. 204–213. For the general interest in the Polish developments see also: Alfred Lauterbach, "Der Klassizismus in Polen," *Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst und Städtebau* 11, no. 5 (1927): 201–203.
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- ⁶³ Janniére, *Politiques*, 189.
- ⁶⁴ On the network of correspondents: *ibid.* On the role of Posener for AA see his memories: Julius Posener, *Heimliche Erinnerungen: In Deutschland 1904 bis 1933* (Munich: Siedler, 2004), 332–333.
- ⁶⁵ Janniére, *Politiques*, 340–341.
- ⁶⁶ "L'architecture contemporaine", AA 3, no. 1 (1932): 69–72.
- ⁶⁷ See, e.g., the article: "Piscine d'eau chaude a Ciechocinek (Pologne)", AA 5 no. 3 (1934): 74–75.
- ⁶⁸ Szymon Syrkus, "Maisons basses, moyennes ou hautes?" AA 2, no. 4 (1931): 44. Capitalisation as in original.
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- ⁷² *Stavba* published in 1929 Le Corbusier's seminal article *In Defense of Architecture* (reprinted in AA in 5 no. 10 (1935)). Translations of articles by Gropius appeared in: *Bytová Kultura* no. 4-5, (1924): 61–65 and *Stavba* 3 (1924): 85–88.
- ⁷³ Klaus Spechtenhauser and Daniel Weiss, "Karel Teige and the CIAM: The History of a Troubled Relationship," in Dluhosch; Švácha, *Karel Teige. 1900-1951*.
- ⁷⁴ Bajkay, *Molnár*, 138, 141. On *Tér és Forma* see: Plank, *Fény*, 35–36 and, including the treatment of Lachert's work in *Tér és Forma* 1930, Pal Ritoók and Ágnes Anna Sebestyén, "Communicating "space and form": The history and impact of the journal *Tér és Forma* as the Hungarian pipeline of Modernism." *Docomomo* 59, no. 2 (2018): 20.
- ⁷⁵ Igor Marjanović, "Peripatetic Discourse of Lubomir Micić and Branko ve Poljanski," in Bogdanović; Robinson; Marjanović, *On the very Edge*; Darko Šimičić, "From Zenit to Mental Space: Avant-garde, Neo-avant-garde, and Post-avant-garde Magazines and Books in Yugoslavia, 1921-1987," in Djurić; Šuvaković, *Impossible Histories* and Miloš R. Perović, "Zenitism and Modernist Architecture," in Bogdanović; Robinson; Marjanović, *On the very Edge*.
- ⁷⁶ Quoted in: Katarzyna Nowakowska-Sito, "Kunst und Künstler der Zweiten Republik: Haltungen – Relationen – Kontexte," in Schuler; Gawlik, *Der neue Staat*, 162.
- ⁷⁷ Strožek, "Krakow," 1199–1201.
- ⁷⁸ The most extensive overview on *Blok* and *Praesens* is provided by: Chionne, "Blok," 157–183.
- ⁷⁹ Editorial, AiB 1, no. 1 (1925).
- ⁸⁰ Other members of the *Praesens* group, namely the Brukalski couple and Lachert and Szanajca, are

- also mentioned. "Prasa zagraniczna o Polsce," *AiB* 6, no 8 (1930): I-II.
- ⁸¹ This did not only mean western references. In the years 1931, 1932, and 1933 *AiB* published numerous well-informed and illustrated articles on the Soviet-Union. Other European countries were covered in the following years.
- ⁸² See, e.g., the series on contemporary Dutch architecture (*AiB* 1930), Swiss architecture (*AiB* 1930), or German sport facilities architecture (*AiB* 1930, no. 4). Le Corbusier's "urbanisme" was even reviewed twice in *AiB* (*AiB* 1925/26, no. 10 and 11). Similarly, the Weissenhof exhibition was covered extensively two times by *AiB* in 1927.
- ⁸³ Alfred Lauterbach, "Zagadnienia Wielkiego Miasta," *AiB* 1, no. 2 (1925/26): 15–23.
- ⁸⁴ See e.g. Edgar Norwerth, "Edukacja"; Edgar Norwerth, "Wystawa Międzynarodowa Architektury Nowoczesnej," *AiB* 1, no. 4 (1925/26): 37–38.
- ⁸⁵ Chionne, "Blok," 173–175.
- ⁸⁶ For the Dutch case see: Wenderski, "Literary," 155.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 150–152.
- ⁸⁸ Wojciech Leśnikowski, "Functionalism in Polish Architecture," in Leśnikowski, *East European Modernism*, 231.
- ⁸⁹ See numerous articles on Czechoslovakia in *DOM* 4, no. 11/12 (1932), e.g.: Szymon Syrkus and Juliusz Żakowski, "Zjazd lewicowych architektów w Pradze Czeskiej," *DOM* 4, 11-12 (1932): 43–47.
- ⁹⁰ *DOM* 10, no. 6-7 (1938). See the respective correspondence of Helena Syrkus with van Eesteren on 14 February, 1938 and with Gropius, 9 September 1938 and her letters of 18 February 1938 to Weissmann and to Sert and other heads of the respective national groups to provide information on their groups for *DOM*. MA SP.
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- ⁹² See, out of many examples, the treatment of the new market hall in functionalist design: Alfred Lauterbach, "Jan Stefanowicz, *Hala targowa w Końskich*," *AiB* 3, no. 1 (1928): 14–21.
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- ⁹⁴ Generally on architectural books in France: Jean-Michel Leniaud and Béatrice Bouvier, eds., *Le livre d'architecture: XVI-XXe siècle* (Paris: Ecole nationale des Chartes, 2002).
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- ¹²² Stanisław Brukalski, "Popularność i publiczność architektury," in Barucki, *Fragmety Stuletniej Historii. 1899-1999*.
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- ¹²⁴ Jannière, *Politiques*, 189.
- ¹²⁵ On Norwerth: Maria Rotkiewicz, "Wielki Samotnik. Edgar Aleksander Norwerth (1884-1950)," *Kultura Fizyczna*, 1-2 (2000); on Lauterbach: Hanna Krzyżanowska, "Lauterbach Alfred," in *Polski słownik biograficzny konserwatorów zabytków*, ed. Henryk Kondziela (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Konserwatorów Zabytków, 2006).
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- CIAM, 13 F: L/U - 2-1-1; Fritzie van Eesteren to the Syrkus couple, 30 December 1937, on publishing a text by Cornelis van Eesteren in Poland: MA SP.
- ¹²⁷ Somer, *Functional*, 176–184.
- ¹²⁸ See, e.g., Giedion, letter to Syrkus couple on planned new journal and exhibition in Warsaw, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1935.
- ¹²⁹ Syrkus to Giedion on PR follow-up of CIAM IV. gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1933 1933.
- ¹³⁰ Syrkus referred explicitly to the purpose “der Propaganda des Kongresses wegen” S. Syrkus to Giedion 13 September 1929 and 7 February 1930, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1929-1939.
- ¹³¹ See, for example, Giedion’s exchange with both Syrkus on propagandistic material for the USA: gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1936 and on the, also propagandistic, evaluation of the 1937 Paris CIAM V congress of 3 September 1937 *ibid.*
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- ¹³³ Hungarian CIAM group, Conclusions of Budapest meeting, 3 February 1937, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 5-1-92 D.
- ¹³⁴ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 13, 12 August 2016.
- ¹³⁵ See Reginald R. Isaacs and Walter Gropius, *Walter Gropius* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1983), 237–241.
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- ¹³⁷ Saint, *Image*, 124.
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- ¹⁵⁰ Forty, *Words*, 19–28.
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- ¹⁵³ Hubert van den Berg, “A worldwide network of periodicals has appeared...’: Some Notes on the Inter- and Supranationality of European Constructivism between the Two World Wars,” in Purchla; Tegethoff, *Nation, Style, Modernism*.
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- ¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 27.
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- ¹⁶⁴ *DOM* 4, no. 7-8 (1932).
- ¹⁶⁵ Wagner, *Stadtplanung*, 233–236.
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- ¹⁸¹ Bombicki, *PWK*. See also: Andrzej Szczerski, “Ein Festival der Leistungen – Die Allgemeine Landesausstellung ‘PWK’ in Posen 1929,” in Schuler; Gawlik, *Der neue Staat*.
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- ¹⁸³ *Ibid.*
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- ¹⁸⁶ Maciej Chmara and Adolph Stiller, “Blok und Praesens – Zeitschriften der Avantgarde,” in *Polen*, ed. Adolph Stiller (Salzburg: Pustet, 2008), 36. On the reception of the exhibition see: Norwerth, “Wystawa” and Hanna Faryna-Paszkiewicz, *Geometria wyobraźni: Szkice o architekturze dwudziestolecia międzywojennego* (Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2003), 65–72.
- ¹⁸⁷ Strożek, “Krakow,” 1199–1201: 1205.
- ¹⁸⁸ Syrkus, “Architecture”.
- ¹⁸⁹ András Ferkai, “Biographies – Hungary,” *Centropa* 3, no. 1 (2003).
- ¹⁹⁰ Zygmunt Wóycicki, “Cel i istota wystawy ‘Mieszkanie i Miasto,’” *AiB* 2, no. 6 (1925/26): 2.
- ¹⁹¹ Kuchenbuch, *Geordnete*, 75–77.
- ¹⁹² Wóycicki, “Cel”. See also Aleksander Raniecki, “Dział Mieszkaniowy Wystawy ‘Mieszkanie i Miasto,’” *AiB* 2, no. 6 (1925/26): 29–35.
- ¹⁹³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁹⁴ See “Wystawa Mieszkaniowa w Warszawie” *AiB* 5, no. 11-12 (1929): 86–87 and “Wystawa Mieszkanie Najmniejsze” *AiB* 6, no. 2 (1930): 80. Many of the participants of the exhibition also contributed to the CIAM II congress in Frankfurt. See Szymon Syrkus, “II Międzynarodowy Kongres Architektury Nowoczesnej” *AiB* 5, no. 11-12 (1929): 87–88.
- ¹⁹⁵ Ute Caumanns, “Mietskasernen und ‘Gläserne Häuser’: Soziales Wohnen in Warschau zwischen Philanthropie und Genossenschaft. 1900-1939,” in Janatková; Kozińska-Witt, *Wohnen in der Großstadt*, 218.
- ¹⁹⁶ See, e.g., Benedikt Liebermann, “Die Wohnungsausstellung in Stanislawow,” *die neue stadt* 6, no. 2 (1932): 38.
- ¹⁹⁷ Pierre du Colombier, “La Deuxième Exposition de L’architecture aujourd’hui,” *AA* 4, no. 3 (1933): 102–103.

5. Materialising the International Agenda: Warszawa Funkcjonalna

- ¹ Bartetzky and Fichtner, *Neue*.
- ² The film was praised for its propaganda-effect at the CIAM-Ost meeting in Budapest, 1937: See Giedion to Molnár, 28 January 1938, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ³ Forbát, *Erinnerungen*, 192–193.
- ⁴ Somer, *Functional*, 114–115.
- ⁵ Bodenschatz et al., *Städtebau*, 111–115; Mumford, *CIAM*, 71–73. Forbát, *Erinnerungen*, 150–152.
- ⁶ Bodenschatz et al., *Städtebau*, 115.
- ⁷ Mumford, *CIAM*, 63–64, 87–88.
- ⁸ Rostislav Švácha, “Before and After the Mundaneum: Teige as Theoretician of the Architectural Avant-Garde,” in Dluhosch; Švácha, *Karel Teige. 1900-1951*, 129.
- ⁹ May to Forbát, 29 August 33, AM FP, 1970-18-193-03.
- ¹⁰ Somer, *Functional*, 36, 107, 110.
- ¹¹ Steinmann, “Political”.
- ¹² Mumford, *CIAM*, 87–88.
- ¹³ Letter Giedion to Le Corbusier, 4 September 1933, reprinted in: Thilo Hilpert, ed., *Le Corbusiers ‘Charta von Athen’: Texte und Dokumente* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1988), 179–182.
- ¹⁴ Vossoughian, *Otto*, 126–28; Giuliano Gresleri, “Convergences et divergences: de Le Corbusier à Otto Neurath,” *Transnational Associations* 55, 1–2 (2003).
- ¹⁵ Gropius to Giedion, 5 January 1937, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹⁶ On the earlier discussion of the CIAM’s relation to politics see Mumford, *CIAM*, 15, 40.
- ¹⁷ Le Corbusier, *La charte d’Athènes* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1957).
- ¹⁸ Letter Le Corbusier to Giedion, 29 August 1933, reprinted in: Hilpert, *Corbusiers*, 171.
- ¹⁹ Bodenschatz et al., *Städtebau*, 7.
- ²⁰ Thomas Flierl, “Possibly the Greatest Task an Architect Ever Faced: Ernst May in the Soviet Union (1930-1933),” in *Ernst May 1886-1970*, ed. Claudia u.a. Quiring (Munich: Prestel, 2011), 158.
- ²¹ Ingberman, *ABC*, 141.
- ²² Gropius to Forbát, 30 October 1933, AM FP, 1970-18-187-01.
- ²³ Forbát, *Erinnerungen*, 195–198.
- ²⁴ Forbát, *Erinnerungen*, 186.
- ²⁵ Kohlrausch and Trischler, *Building*, 187–194.
- ²⁶ Hendricus Th. Wijdeveld, Erich Mendelsohn and Amédée Ozenfant, *Academie Europeenne Méditerranée : Architecture, painting, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, typography, theater, music and dancing, photography and film* (Amsterdam: Self-published, 1933).
- ²⁷ Klingan, *Utopia*; Winfried Nerdinger, ed., *Zlin: Modellstadt der Moderne* (Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2009).
- ²⁸ Zarecor, *Manufacturing*, 224–244.
- ²⁹ Gregor Feindt, “Eine ‘ideale Industriestadt’ für ‘neue tschechische Menschen’. Baťa’s Zlín zwischen Planung und Alltag, 1925–1945,” in *Kulturelle Souveränität: Politische Deutungs- und Handlungsmacht jenseits des Staates im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gregor Feindt, Bernhard Gißibl and Johannes Paulmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 109.
- ³⁰ Ladislava Hornáková, “Baťa Satellite Towns around the World,” in Klingan, *A Utopia of Modernity*.
- ³¹ Petr Szczepanik, “The Aesthetics of Rationalization: The media Network in the Baťa Company,” in Klingan, *A Utopia of Modernity*, 203–206.
- ³² Hitchcock and Johnson, *International*, 173.

- ³³ Jean-Louis Cohen, “‘Unser Kunde ist unser Herr’: Le Corbusier trifft Bata,” in Nerdinger, *Zlin*.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.
- ³⁵ Vago, *Vie*, 135–136. See also the broad coverage on Zlin in different issues of AA in 1935, in particular Joseph A. Vago, “Zlin, Phénomène sociale,” AA 6, 11 (1935): 48–50.
- ³⁶ Report of Molnar to Giedion, 21 May 1937, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ³⁷ Monika Platzer, “Zlin – Ein architektonischer Sonderfall,” in Nerdinger, *Zlin*, 99.
- ³⁸ Konyševa and Meerovič, *Linkes Ufer, rechtes Ufer*.
- ³⁹ Enrico Chapel, “Représenter la ‘ville fonctionnelle’: Chiffres, figurations et stratégies d’exposition dans la CIAM IV,” *Le Cahiers de la recherche architecturale et urbaine*, no. 8 (2001); Nader Vossoughian, “Mapping the Modern City: Otto Neurath, the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM), and the Politics of Information Design,” *Design Issues* 22, no. 3 (2006), see also: Ute Schneider, “The Conception, Production and Language of the Maps,” in van Es, Evelien et al., *Atlas of the Functional City*.
- ⁴⁰ Mumford, *CIAM*, 73.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 84.
- ⁴² van Eesteren, *Het*, 23–53; Somer, *Functional*, 147; generally: Vossoughian, *Otto*.
- ⁴³ Somer, *Functional*, 177–183.
- ⁴⁴ Daniel Weiss, Gregor Harbuch, and Bruno Maurer, “A Major Heritage and an Unpublished Book. Introduction to the Atlas of the Functional City,” in van Es, Evelien et al., *Atlas of the Functional City*, 15–16.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.
- ⁴⁶ Chapel, “Thematic,” 31.
- ⁴⁷ On the principle of collective work within the CIAM see: Somer, *Functional*, 68–79.
- ⁴⁸ Grt. [Gantner], “Der 4. Internationale Kongreß für das Neue Bauen in Moskau,” *die neue stadt* 6, no. 1 (1932): 18.
- ⁴⁹ Sokratis Georgiadis, “Function and the Comparative Method. An Essay in Reconstructing Theory,” in van Es, Evelien et al., *Atlas of the Functional City*, 49.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ Somer, *Functional*, 107; Georgiadis, “Function,” 55.
- ⁵² Polish CIAM group, “Stellungnahme betreffend Richtlinien zur Diskussion der Funktionellen Stadt innerhalb der CIAM (6 June 1931),” reprinted in: Steinmann, *CIAM*, 117.
- ⁵³ Somer, *Functional*, 108–110.
- ⁵⁴ Georgiadis, “Function,” 51.
- ⁵⁵ Somer, *Functional*, 107.
- ⁵⁶ Quoted in: *ibid.*
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.
- ⁵⁸ Quoted in: *ibid.*, 112.
- ⁵⁹ Polish CIAM group (6 June 1931): Stellungnahme betreffend Richtlinien zur Diskussion der Funktionellen Stadt innerhalb der CIAM. reprinted in: Steinmann, *CIAM*, 117.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁶¹ See Invitation, reprinted in: Steinmann, *CIAM*, 127. See also, e.g., van Eesteren to Giedion, 23 November 1932, gta GP 42-K-1932.
- ⁶² S. Syrkus to Giedion, 22 November 1932, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1932.
- ⁶³ S. Syrkus to Giedion, 10 April 1933, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1933. See also Giedion to S. Syrkus, 26 November 1932 and 29 March 1933, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1932-33 and Giedion to van Eesteren, 25 October 1932, *ibid.*

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- ⁶⁶ Somer, *Functional*, 138.
- ⁶⁷ See the articles by Anton Dygat on Paris, Czesław Przybylski on architectural and town-planning questions in Warsaw, Bogumił Rogaczewski on regulation in Warsaw, Bohdan Pniwski on the terms of discussing Warsaw and Tadeusz Tołwiński on Warsaw as the capital of the state and a number of similar contributions in *AiB* 10, no. 5 (1934).
- ⁶⁸ Somer, *Functional*, 72.
- ⁶⁹ Wynot, *Warsaw*, 147.
- ⁷⁰ Feliński, *Kwestia*, 159.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷² Adam Czyżewski, "Town and Regional Planning," in Miłobędzki, *Architecture and Avant-Garde in Poland 1918-1939*, 42.
- ⁷³ Teresa Kotaszewicz, *Tadeusz Tołwiński 1887-1951: Architekt, urbanista, twórca Polskiej Szkoły Urbanistyki* (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza Politechniki Warszawskiej, 2016), 118–130.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 47–65.
- ⁷⁵ Koło Architektów w Warszawie, *Uwagi do szkicu wstępnego planu regulacyjnego miasta st. Warszawy*, Warsaw 1916.
- ⁷⁶ Stanisław Różański, "Plan ogólny wielkiej Warszawy," *AiB* 4, no. 11 (1928): 410–415.
- ⁷⁷ Wynot, *Warsaw*, 162–63.
- ⁷⁸ Hans Bernoulli, "Rozwój Urbanistyczny Warszawy," *AiB* 7 no. 4 (1931): 138–140.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 162.
- ⁸⁰ For the reception of international examples see: Wagner, *Stadtplanung*, 137.
- ⁸¹ Stanisław Różański, "Plan ogólny wielkiej Warszawy," *AiB* 4, no. 11 (1928): 410–415; Edgar Norwerth, "Kompozycja w regulacji Warszawy," *AiB* 5, no. 3 (1929): 84–94.
- ⁸² In Polish: "polityka uzdrowienia". Oskar Sosnowski, *Powstanie, układ i cechy charakterystyczne sieci ulicznej na obszarze wielkiej Warszawy* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Zakładu Architektury Polskiej Politechniki Warszawskiej, 1930). On Sosnowski: Adam Miłobędzki, "Oskar Sosnowski – Architekt i badacz oraz jego zakład architektury polskiej," *Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki* 35, 3–4 (1990).
- ⁸³ For the need for architects to position themselves vis-à-vis a more active government see: Józef Krupa, "Na marginesie wystąpienia Rady Związku Stowarzyszeń Architektów Polskich," *AiB* 7, no. 8 (1932): 254–257.
- ⁸⁴ Adam Jankiewicz and Joanna Porębska-Srebrna, "Tradycje urbanistyczne Warszawy," in Falkowski, *Straty Warszawy 1939–1945. Raport*.
- ⁸⁵ Wynot, *Warsaw*, 159, 175.
- ⁸⁶ Biuro Planowania Regionalnego Okręgu Warszawskiego, *Planowanie regionalne w okręgu warszawskim*, Warsaw 1938.
- ⁸⁷ Kazimierz Sasaki, "Planowanie Miast w Polsce w Okresie Powojennym," *AiB* 1, no. 6 (1925/26): 4–28.
- ⁸⁸ The Polish expression was "stan potencjalny". Sosnowski, *Powstanie*, 53.
- ⁸⁹ Sosnowski quoted in: Chmielewski, Syrkus and Hryniewiecki, *Warszawa*, 31–32.
- ⁹⁰ Quoted in: Marian M. Drozdowski, *Warszawiaczy i ich miasto w latach drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1973), 12.
- ⁹¹ Szymon Syrkus, "Architektoniczne podstawy budownictwa mieszkaniowego," *Odbudowa Gospodarcza* no. 2 (1925): 20–26, 2, 22.

- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ The numbers are from: Gunszburger Makaš and Conley, *Capital*, 27 and, also the quote, Lenger, *Metropolen*, 54–55.
- ⁹⁴ Jerzy S. Majewski, *Warszawa nieodbudowana: Metropolia Belle Époque* (Warsaw: Veda, 2003), 5.
- ⁹⁵ Peter Martyn, “Emerging Metropolises and Fluctuating State Borders: Architectural Identity and the Obliteration of Warsaw in the First Half of the Twentieth Century,” in Murawska-Muthesius, *Borders in Art*, 140–142.
- ⁹⁶ Turowski, “From”.
- ⁹⁷ Bolesław Malisz, “Functional Warsaw: a Challenge from the Past,” *Planning Perspectives* 2 (1987).
- ⁹⁸ Grzegorz Piątek, “Wystawa ‘Warszawa przyszłości’ (1936). Między pokazem architektury a ‘jarmarkiem dydaktycznym,’” *Miejsce* 6, 147–173 (2016): 150.
- ⁹⁹ On the urban politics of Starzyński see: Grzegorz Piątek, *Sanator: Kariera Stefana Starzyńskiego* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo W.A.B, 2016).
- ¹⁰⁰ Karolina Lewandowska, ed., *Dokumentalistki: Polskie fotografie XX wieku* (Warsaw: Bosz, 2008), 16. Generally on this strategy: Wagner, *Stadtplanung*, 73.
- ¹⁰¹ Quoted in: Piątek, “Wystawa,” 151.
- ¹⁰² For Toepflitz’s role as a “realizer” see chapter 4.
- ¹⁰³ Quoted in: Chmielewski, Syrkus and Hryniewiecki, *Warszawa*, 45.
- ¹⁰⁴ Piątek, “Wystawa,” 152.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 150–151. For TOR see chapter 3.
- ¹⁰⁶ Wynot, *Warsaw*, 166.
- ¹⁰⁷ Trybuś, *Warszawa*, 43, 55–65, 257.
- ¹⁰⁸ Syrkus, *Ku*, 134.
- ¹⁰⁹ Szymon Syrkus, Varsovie, *Annales Techniques B IV* (1933): 1171.
- ¹¹⁰ The Polish names for the two institutions are: *Biuro Regulacji i Pomiarów* and *Biuro Planu Regionalnego*. See the respective memo on the regional-plan of Warsaw by Stanisław Różański in the van Eesteren papers. 8-1933 1933, NAI, EEST, 4.77.
- ¹¹¹ S. Syrkus to Giedion, 25 May 1932, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1932. It was not possible to show aerial pictures of Warsaw and its region as these were classified as strictly confidential by the authorities. Syrkus (1976), 134.
- ¹¹² See correspondence between van Eesteren and Syrkus from 5 March 1935 on in: NAI, EEST 4.77.
- ¹¹³ Szymon Syrkus, “Informacje o IV-ym Międzynarodowym Kongresie Architektury Nowoczesnej,” *AiB* 9, no. 8 (1933): 246–251.
- ¹¹⁴ Jan Chmielewski and Szymon Syrkus, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich, 1934) and the new and commented edition of the work: Chmielewski, Syrkus and Hryniewiecki, *Warszawa*.
- ¹¹⁵ On Chmielewski see: Adam Kotarbiński, “The Developing Career and Thoughts of Jan Olaf Chmielewski,” *Planning History* 21, no. 1 (1999).
- ¹¹⁶ Syrkus, *Ku*, 149.
- ¹¹⁷ See Martin Kohlrausch, “Warszawa Funkcjonalna: Radical Urbanism and the International Discourse on Planning in the Interwar Period,” in Behrends; Kohlrausch, *Races to Modernity* on which parts of the arguments presented here are based.
- ¹¹⁸ Le Corbusier, *La ville radieuse: Éléments d’une doctrine d’urbanisme pour l’équipement de la civilisation machiniste; Paris, Geneve, Rio de Janeiro* (Boulogne-Billancourt: Éditions de l’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui, 1935).
- ¹¹⁹ Chmielewski, Syrkus and Hryniewiecki, *Warszawa*, 87.

- ¹²⁰ Ibid., 102.
- ¹²¹ Malisz, “Functional”.
- ¹²² Chmielewski, Syrkus and Hryniewiecki, *Warszawa*, 108–109.
- ¹²³ Ibid., 101.
- ¹²⁴ See Niels Gutschow and Barbara Klain, *Vernichtung und Utopie: Stadtplanung Warschau 1939-1945* (Hamburg: Junius, 1994), 64.
- ¹²⁵ Leonard Tomaszewski, “Urbanistyka w Z.S.R.R.,” *AiB* 7, no. 8/9 (1931): 321–337, see in particular 322–323.
- ¹²⁶ Quoted in Guillén, *Taylorized*, 36.
- ¹²⁷ See, e.g. the letter to Teige of 18 March 1935 accompanying a copy of the concept. BA WGA, Correspondence with Helena Syrkus.
- ¹²⁸ Among others Giedion, Karl and Werner Moser, Alfred and Emil Roth, Haefeli and Steiger took part. Syrkus, *Ku*, 159: 155–157.
- ¹²⁹ Syrkus, (1976), 157. See also: Mumford, *CIAM*, 92.
- ¹³⁰ See the respective protocol of 20 May 1935: NAI, EEST 4.101, 7. See also: Malisz, “Functional,” 257–258.
- ¹³¹ Weiss, Harbuch, and Maurer, “Major,” 13.
- ¹³² Malisz, “Functional,” 257–258.
- ¹³³ The letter to Marian Zyndam-Kościałkowski is reprinted in: Syrkus, *Ku*, 159.
- ¹³⁴ See Chmielewski, Syrkus and Hryniewiecki, *Warszawa*, 37
- ¹³⁵ Ibid., 43.
- ¹³⁶ Giedion to van Eesteren, 30 September 1935, BA WGA, Papers II, 129. See also Giedion to Syrkus couple, 10 July 1935, *ibid.* The correspondence Syrkus-Giedion contains numerous letters referring to propagating *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* as well as a list with all CIAM-members who received the text: gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42 K-1935.
- ¹³⁷ Steinmann, *CIAM*, 140; Somer, *Functional*, 169, 172–173; Mumford, *CIAM*, 78, 81, 85.
- ¹³⁸ H. and S. Syrkus, Correspondence with a view to the CIRPAC meeting in Amsterdam and the Functional City and the letter of Giedion to Syrkus of 17 May 1935, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42 K-1935. See also Giedion to Gropius, 20 October 1937, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹³⁹ Kotarbiński, “Developing”.
- ¹⁴⁰ Wynot, *Warsaw*, 174–176.
- ¹⁴¹ S. Syrkus to Giedion, 10 April 1933, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1933.
- ¹⁴² See report of the commission for the presentation of realisations, 17 September 1936, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, CA 5-1-57 D. See also gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM CA 5-1-55 V and BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹⁴³ Important aspects of WF are taken up in Szymon Syrkus’ “rapport no 3 Cas d’application – regions et campagnes” for CIAM V, 1938, Steinmann, *CIAM*, 196–197. See also: Domhardt, “Garden,” 186.
- ¹⁴⁴ Monika Platzer, “Die CIAM und ihre Verbindungen nach Zentraleuropa,” in Blau; Platzer, *Mythos Großstadt*.
- ¹⁴⁵ Chmielewski, Syrkus and Hryniewiecki, *Warszawa*, 43.
- ¹⁴⁶ Weiss, Harbuch and Maurer, “Major,” 11.
- ¹⁴⁷ Mumford, *CIAM*, 63–64.
- ¹⁴⁸ Reginald R. Isaacs, *Walter Gropius* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1984), 728; Somer, *Functional*, 196.
- ¹⁴⁹ Sophie Hochhäusl, “Otto Neurath - The Other Modern: Proposing A Socio-Political Map for

- Urbanism" (Cornell, 2010), <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/17779>, 181–182. The criticized map is displayed in: Chmielewski, Syrkus and Hryniewiecki, *Warszawa*, 90.
- ¹⁵⁰ See Forbát's remarks on the relevance of "visual language" in the post 1951 CIAM-discussion. AM FP. 1970-18-162.
- ¹⁵¹ Martin Wagner (8 March 1935), "Die funktionelle Stadt. Eine kritische Betrachtung zur Klärung des Begriffs der funktionellen Stadt im Anschluss an die Arbeit der polnischen Gruppe 'Praesens' und 'U' über das städtebauliche Problem von Warschau," BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹⁵² Correspondence between Syrkus and van Eesteren in 1935, quoted in: Somer, *Functional*, 196.
- ¹⁵³ Gropius to H. Syrkus, 6 April 1935, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹⁵⁴ Most likely, *Warszawa Funkcjonalna* also influenced the encompassing plans for the COP. See Furtak, *Centralny*, 59.
- ¹⁵⁵ Jean-Louis Cohen, *Architecture in Uniform: Designing and Building for the Second World War* (Montréal, Paris, New Haven, CT: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2011), 418.
- ¹⁵⁶ Rüdiger Graf and Benjamin Herzog, "Von der Geschichte der Zukunftsvorstellungen zur Geschichte ihrer Generierung: Probleme und Herausforderungen des Zukunftsbezugs im 20. Jahrhundert," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 42 (2016).
- ¹⁵⁷ For the quote see Trybuś, *Warszawa*, 347 and also the many unrealized projects referred to in this book. See also: Błażej Brzostek, *Paryże innej Europy: Warszawa i Bukareszt, XIX i XX wiek*.
- ¹⁵⁸ On the Amsterdam gathering: Mumford, *CIAM*, 103.
- ¹⁵⁹ H. Syrkus to Martin Steinmann, 12 April 1977, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM.

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- ¹ Trybuś, *Warszawa*, 190, 194. See also: Faryna-Paszkiewicz, *Geometria*, 186–188.
- ² "Dnia 12 maja zmarł Marszałek Józef Piłsudski," AiB 11, no. 2 (1935): Title-page.
- ³ For the Piłsudski monument competition see Trybuś, *Warszawa*, 304–318.
- ⁴ See the double issue of AiB 11, no. 3–4 (1935). No. 5 of AiB of the same year contained further material on this theme.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 201–203.
- ⁶ AiB 12, no. 4–5 (1936), double issue with an extensive illustrated article of what was seen as typical of recent Polish architecture. See also Faryna-Paszkiewicz, *Geometria*, 195–215 and the examples in Czesław Olszewski and Łukasz Gorczyca, *Warszawa nowoczesna: fotografie z lat trzydziestych XX wieku* (Warsaw: Fundacja Raster, 2012), 60–67.
- ⁷ Issue 7 of AiB 12 (1936) reported extensively on the *Reichssportfeld* in Berlin. See also the general article on the architecture of the Third Reich: Michał Kostanecki, "Architektura Trzeciej Rzeszy," AiB 14, no. 9 (1938): 285–305 and the several treatments of Mussolini's architectural program in AiB in 1937 and 1938, in particular Jerzy Münster, "Tradycja i racjonalizm w dzisiejszej architekturze Italii," AiB 14 no. 11–12 (1938): 383–392.
- ⁸ See generally Helena Syrkus' correspondence for the years 1937–1939 in MA SP.
- ⁹ Forbát to Gropius, 23 February 1937, Forbát AM FP, 1970-18-187-01.
- ¹⁰ Somer, *Functional*, 204–205.
- ¹¹ H. Schmidt to Syrkus couple, 19 September 1938, MA SP.
- ¹² Gropius to Giedion, 24 June 1937, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹³ Van Eesteren to Giedion, 8 February 1937, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ¹⁴ Bozdoğan, *Modernism*; Burcu Dogramaci, *Kulturtransfer und nationale Identität. Deutschsprachige Architekten, Stadtplaner und Bildhauer in der Türkei nach 1927* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag,

- 2008); Bernd Nicolai, “Der goldene Käfig’ Ernst Reuter und Martin Wagner im türkischen Exil,” in *Ernst Reuter. Kommunalpolitiker und Gesellschaftsreformer. 1921-1953*, ed. Heinz Reif and Moritz Feichtinger (Bonn: Dietz, 2009) and Joaquin Medina Warmburg, *Projizierte Moderne. Deutschsprachige Architekten und Städtebauer in Spanien (1918-1936): Dialog – Abhängigkeit – Polemik* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2005).
- ¹⁵ “Nowa ustawa o zawodzie architekta w Niemczech,” *AiB* 12, no. 6 (1936): 207–208.
- ¹⁶ For a similar cover and thematic issue see AA 8, no. 12 (1938). For architects’ expectations of the coming war see also: Cohen, *Architecture*.
- ¹⁷ Flierl, “Possibly”; Hans-Christian Rössler, “Die Wunderstadt, die niemals schläft,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 85, 11 April 2009.
- ¹⁸ Aleksander Wat, *My Century: The Odyssey of a Polish Intellectual* (New York: New York Review Books, 2003), 14–23.
- ¹⁹ See on these circles: Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation’s Life and Death in Marxism; 1918-1968* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Chomątowska-Szalamacha, *Lachert*.
- ²⁰ See the respective communication between Helena Syrkus and Sigfried Giedion from 1938 onwards: gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1938-39.
- ²¹ Jan Stefanowicz, “Architektura międzywojenna,” in Barucki, *Fragmenty Stuletniej Historii. 1899-1999*.
- ²² Eva Plach, *The Clash of Moral Nations: Cultural politics in Piłsudski’s Poland, 1926-1935* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006), 160–162.
- ²³ S. Syrkus to Giedion, 22 June 1937, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1937.
- ²⁴ Władysław Czerny, “Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich,” in Barucki, *Fragmenty Stuletniej Historii. 1899-1999*.
- ²⁵ On the exclusion of Jewish architects from SARP: Kunz, *Architektki*, 27–29.
- ²⁶ Roman Piotrowski, “Lata trzydzieste w Stowarzyszeniu Architektów Polskich,” in Barucki, *Fragmenty Stuletniej Historii. 1899-1999*, 70.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*; Roman Piotrowski, “Życie zawodowe, towarzyskie i stowarzyszeniowe architektów,” in Barucki, *Fragmenty Stuletniej Historii. 1899-1999*.
- ²⁸ Syrkus, *Ku*, 201–205.
- ²⁹ See the exchange between Hans Schmidt and Syrkus couple on functional architecture and Schmidt’s reflection on the task of architects with a view to the economic-political situation. 12 February 1937, MA SP.
- ³⁰ Helena Syrkus to Hans Schmidt, 9 September 1938, MA SP.
- ³¹ See the reflection of her now much closer relation with Gropius, including the ‘Du’ now used, in a letter from H. Syrkus to Gropius of October 1936 (no day): BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ³² H. Syrkus to Hans Schmidt, 19 October 1938, MA SP.
- ³³ H. Syrkus to Kalivoda, 8 February 1938, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1938.
- ³⁴ H. Syrkus to van Eesteren, 10 January 1939, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ³⁵ H. Syrkus to van Eesteren, 10 January 1939, BA WGA, Papers II, 129. The book mentioned by Helena Syrkus Project refers to the text “La genealogie de l’architecture fonctionnelle”, MA SP.
- ³⁶ H. Syrkus to Gropius, 24 January 1939. BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ³⁷ H. Syrkus to Gropius and Giedion, 17 January 1939, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1939. On Gropius’ last attempts to help the Syrkus couple see also: Isaacs, *Walter*, 892.
- ³⁸ On Gropius’s attempts to help CIAM members from the US: Jill E. Pearlman, *Inventing American Modernism: Joseph Hudnut, Walter Gropius, and the Bauhaus legacy at Harvard* (Charlottesville:

- University of Virginia Press, 2007), 145–146.
- ³⁹ See Forbát's correspondence with Moholy-Nagy and Gropius in AM FP, 1970-18-187-01, 193-01 and 199-01.
- ⁴⁰ AM FP, 1970-18-159-01. See also Moholy-Nagy to Syrkus couple, 16 March 1938. Helena Syrkus answered in their old mutual language of German "hoping that he had not unlearned it" on 9 September 1938, BA WGA, GS 19: folder 637.
- ⁴¹ Gropius to Bauer, 15 February 1939, and Gropius to H. Syrkus 5 March 1939, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ⁴² Van Eesteren to H. and S. Syrkus, 20 January 1939, MA SP.
- ⁴³ Giedion to H. and S. Syrkus, 21 September 1938, MA SP.
- ⁴⁴ H. Syrkus to van Eesteren, 30 June 1939, MA SP.
- ⁴⁵ See exchange between Sartoris and H. Syrkus of August 1939, MA SP.
- ⁴⁶ H. and S. Syrkus to Le Corbusier, 2 August 1939, MA SP. See also the extensive letter from Le Corbusier to the Syrkus couple on general questions of modern architecture of 16 May 1938, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM, 42-K-1938. For the 'hymns' see conclusion of chapter 5.
- ⁴⁷ The weekend house served almost as a trope throughout the correspondence mentioned in this chapter and invitations were issued to many more than the mentioned CIAM architects.
- ⁴⁸ Forbát to Syrkus couple, 14 January 1939, MA SP.
- ⁴⁹ H. Syrkus to Fred Forbát, 4 August 1939, MA SP.
- ⁵⁰ S. Syrkus to Hans Schmidt, 22 August 1939, MA SP.
- ⁵¹ H. and S. Syrkus to Forbát, 10 August 1939, MA SP.
- ⁵² MA SP. See also a similar letter to Hans Schmidt, quoted in: Maasberg and Prinz, *Neuen*, 154.
- ⁵³ Forbát, *Erinnerungen*, 229–232.
- ⁵⁴ Molnár to Gropius, 11 September 1936. See also: Forbát to Gropius, 10 September 37, BA WGA, Papers II, 129.
- ⁵⁵ Farkas Molnár, "Confusion of notions surrounding architecture and politics," *Nygat* no. 20 (1934), reprinted in Bajkay, *Molnár*, 105-112: 106, 111–112.
- ⁵⁶ Forbát to Moholy Nagy, 17 November 1937. Moholy Nagy answered on 7 January 1938, AM FP, 1970-18-129-01.
- ⁵⁷ Forbát used the expression "kochende Volksseele". Forbát to Gropius, 12 April 1938, AM FP, 1970-18-187-01.
- ⁵⁸ Ferkai, "Biographies," 19; Bajkay, *Molnár*, 141.
- ⁵⁹ For a broader perspective on the fate of architects from Eastern Europe who studied at the Bauhaus or were associated with this institution see the special issue of *Centropa* 3 (2003) 1.
- ⁶⁰ See also the literary treatment of this basic conflict in Stefan Heym, *The Architects*, written in English between 1963 and 1966 but published only in 2000 and 2005 in German and English respectively.
- ⁶¹ Generally, and in line with some of the following remarks; Martin Kohlrausch, "Warschau im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Besatzungspolitik und Stadtplanung," in *Stadt und Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Fritz Mayrhofer and Ferdinand Oppl (Linz: Österreichischer Arbeitskreis für Stadtgeschichtsforschung, 2008).
- ⁶² Tolwiński, *Wspomnienia*, 471.
- ⁶³ Barbara Klain, "Warschau 1939-1945: Vernichtung durch Planung," in *Der "Generalplan Ost": Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, ed. Mechtild Rössler, Sabine Schleiermacher and Cordula Tollmien (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993).
- ⁶⁴ On the relatively modern appearance of Warsaw in the late 1920s and 1930s see: Brzostek, *Paryże*,

- 145–236.
- ⁶⁵ Friedrich Gollert, *Zwei Jahre Aufbauarbeit im Distrikt Warschau. Im Auftrage des Gouverneurs des Distrikts Warschau SA-Gruppenführer Dr. Ludwig Fischer nach amtlichen Unterlagen zusammengestellt und bearbeitet* (Warsaw: Deutscher Osten, 1941), 20–31. On the Prudential high-rise, one of the most prominent Interwar building projects in Warsaw, see AiB 8, no. 11 (1931): 388–391 and AiB 10, no. 7 (1933): 210–216.
- ⁶⁶ Ludwig Fischer, Grundsätzliche Bemerkungen über die Gestaltung Warschaus während des Krieges und nach dem Kriege (March 1944), APW, ADW, no 482, sheet 2, 13.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 50–51. See also: Government meeting in Warsaw on 15 October 1941, sheet 6, Gouverneur Fischer: “Bericht über die allgemeine Lage im Distrikt Warschau,” APW, ADW, no. 132.
- ⁶⁸ See the many examples in: Krzysztof Dunin-Wąsowicz et al., eds., *Raporty Ludwiga Fischera, Gubernatora Dystryktu Warszawskiego 1939–1944* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza 1987).
- ⁶⁹ On the link between racist policies and spatial planning: Uwe Mai, “Rasse und Raum”: Agrarpolitik, Sozial- und Raumplanung im NS-Staat (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002), 289–301.
- ⁷⁰ Gutschow and Klain, *Vernichtung*, 28.
- ⁷¹ APW, ADW, Fischer, Bemerkungen.
- ⁷² APW, ADW, Fischer, Bemerkungen, 22–23. See also: Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, “Warsaw as a City for Light Industry: A Solution to the ‘Problem’ of Poland’s Jews,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 24, no. 3 (2010).
- ⁷³ Czesław Miłosz, *The captive mind* (London: Penguin, 2001), vii.
- ⁷⁴ Syrkus, *Ku*, 205–206.
- ⁷⁵ H. Syrkus to M. Steinmann, 12 April 1977, gta Archiv / ETH Zurich, CIAM.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 268. On the set-up of PAU see: Syrkus, *Spoleczne*, 360–363.
- ⁷⁷ Syrkus, *Ku*, 240–242.
- ⁷⁸ Szymon Syrkus, Paper of 26 September 1942 given for PAU, quoted in: Gutschow and Klain, *Vernichtung*, 59.
- ⁷⁹ Syrkus, *Spoleczne*, 354–355.
- ⁸⁰ Its title was: “Urbanistyka i socjologia, organizacja przestrzeni i życie społeczne w przyszłych osiedlach, ogólne zagadnienia dotyczące współżycia zbiorowego w dzielnicy pracy”. See Syrkus, *Ku*, 241.
- ⁸¹ Gutschow and Klain, *Vernichtung*, 61.
- ⁸² Syrkus 1976, 263, 266, 320. On the discussion of the neighbourhood-unit-idea in PAU see: Syrkus, *Ku*, 293.
- ⁸³ The Polish title read: “Obsługa społeczna jako czynnik kształtujący osiedle”. The text is reprinted in: *ibid.*
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., 276, 290.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., 234. For the respective documents see *ibid.*
- ⁸⁶ Syrkus, *Spoleczne*, 362–366.
- ⁸⁷ Stanisław Tolwiński, *Zagadnienie samorządu w świetle doświadczeń demokracji ludowej* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1946).
- ⁸⁸ Syrkus, *Ku*, 234, 242. See also Helena Syrkus, “Działalność architektów i urbanistów w Warszawie w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej 1939-1945,” *Studia Warszawskie* 17 (1973).
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., 366.
- ⁹⁰ The collective nature of PAU is stressed continuously by: Syrkus, *Ku*, 280.
- ⁹¹ Syrkus, *Ku*, 242 and 274.
- ⁹² Ibid., 242.

- ⁹³ Jörn Düwel and Niels Gutschow, eds., *A blessing in disguise: War and town planning in Europe, 1940-1945* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2013).
- ⁹⁴ Kotarbinski, "Developing".
- ⁹⁵ Gutschow and Klain, *Vernichtung*, 173.
- ⁹⁶ Durth, *Deutsche*, 158.
- ⁹⁷ See also: Kohlrausch, "Szymon".
- ⁹⁸ Szymon to Helena Syrkus, 17 January 1943 (letter 1), MA SP.
- ⁹⁹ Szymon to Helena Syrkus, June 1943 (letter 8), MA SP.
- ¹⁰⁰ 21. November 1943 (Letter 17). MA SP.
- ¹⁰¹ Szymon to Helena Syrkus 12 December 1943 (Letter 18), MA SP.
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Architektura i Budownictwo	Odbudowa Gospodarcza
Bauwelt	Ost-Europa Markt
BLOK	Population
Bytová Kultura	Praesens
The Central European Observer	Rocznik SAP
De 8 en opbouw	Stavba
DOM	Time
Droga	Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst und Städtebau
Die Form	The Yale Law Journal
Kronika Warszawy	
Life	

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