

From the gta Archives

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From the gta Archives Compiled and commentated by Stanislaus von Moos and Daniel Weiss



1 Hans Schmidt, *Zur Erinnerung an den Aktivdienst 1939* (In remembrance of active military service in 1939); colored pen drawing; Bequest of Hans Schmidt, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

Hans Schmidt, founding member of the CIAM and one of the leading figures of the Neues Bauen in Switzerland, had been active in the Soviet Union from 1930 to 1936. Back in Basel, he followed the call-up for military service with the announcement of wartime mobilization in 1939, as many of his colleagues did. The drawing shows a formation of soldiers with the Basel Barracks as background. As a cofounder of the communist Partei der Arbeit der Schweiz (Swiss Party of Labor), Schmidt found himself increasingly isolated in the years after the Second World War and in 1956 accepted a position at the Deutsche Bauakademie in East Berlin.

3 Hans Hofmann, "Aus Schrott wird Eisen und Stahl" (Scrap is turned into iron and steel); text panel for the wartime-economy exhibition at the Mustermesse Basel, 1943; Bequest of Hans Hofmann, gfa Archives, ETH Zurich.

In his early years, Hans Hofmann had been a proponent of the Neues Bauen in Switzerland. As chief architect of the Swiss National Exhibition of 1939 he successfully added a regionalist-rustic touch to Swiss modernism. The wartime-economy exhibition held in 1943 during the Mustermesse (sample fair) Basel was aimed at embedding the Swiss-manufactured products shown at the fair into the narrative of the *Geistige Landesverteidigung* (Spiritual National Defense).





4 Werkbund Housing Estate Weissenhof, Stuttgart, 1927; photographs by Alfred Roth, 1935 and 1946; Bequest of Alfred Roth, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

The young Alfred Roth had served as the architect in charge of the construction of the two apartment buildings in the Weissenhof Housing Estate designed by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret in 1927. Visiting Stuttgart in 1935, Roth photographed Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's apartment block, now adorned with a swastika flag. He returned shortly after the Second World War, only to find Walter Gropius's steel-frame model house bombed-out.



Dr Giedion

Here is the bombardier's seat in a B-17 Flying Fortress. Unfortunately the bomb sight is behind the man, but you must admit it is a good photograph of the chair!

Gutheim

6 U.S. Army Signal Corps, bombardier's seat in a B-17 Flying Fortress; photo, c.1940; Bequest of Sigfried Giedion, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

In preparing his book *Mechanization Takes Command* (1948), Sigfried Giedion spent many years collecting information on chairs and loungers that could be adapted to a variety of postures and activities. The collected material would serve as the basis for a chapter on patent furniture. That a picture showing the moveable seat of a U.S. bomber pilot also caught his attention is not surprising.



7 General Electric Consumers Institute, *Wartime Laundry Demonstration*; advertising leaflet, c.1940; Bequest of Sigfried Giedion, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

Advertising brochures for household appliances from the General Electric Corporation are also to be found among the research materials for Sigfried Giedion's *Mechanization Takes Command*. Published by the in-house Consumers Institute, the promotional booklets were meant to appeal to U.S. housewives; thus, emphasis was placed on practical everyday tips. Following U.S. entry into the Second World War in 1941, the female readership was also urgently reminded of its civic duties on the home front.

WARTIME LAUNDRY DEMONSTRATION



HERE'S your complete wartime laundry demonstration manual. It starts right out with ideas for your introductory speech. Following this, you take your audience through a typical laundry tackling the wartime problems just as they come up in the home. You may wish to mimeograph the charts for distribution.

GENERAL  ELECTRIC
CONSUMERS INSTITUTE - BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

Nutrition

•
Food Preparation

•
Food Preservation

•
Consumer
Consultation

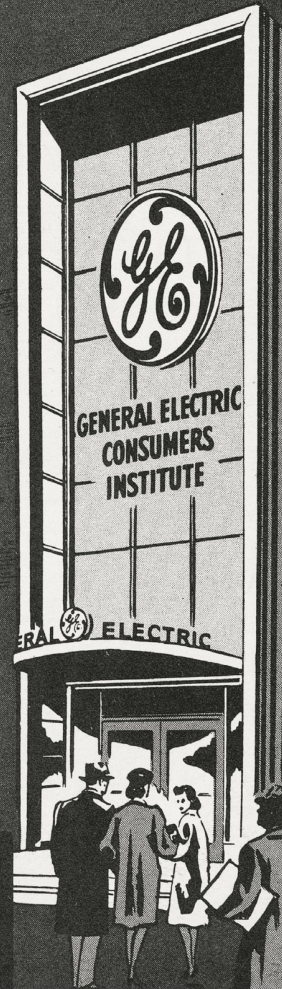
•
Appliance Care

•
Appliance Repair

•
Laundering

•
Home Heating

•
Air Conditioning
etc.





8 Fritz Stucky, army post at the Sand military base, Urtenen-Schönbühl, Canton of Bern; photographs, 1966; Bequest of Fritz Stucky, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

The units of the prefabricated Variel system developed by Fritz Stucky could be transported like containers and easily stacked to form multiple-story building complexes. The system could be used utilized for a variety of building assignments and was in fact used worldwide in hundreds of cases for schools, hospitals, administrative buildings, and housing complexes, as well as military facilities.



9 Title page of *Habitation 5-6* (1944); Bequest of Alfred Roth, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

A competition was held among prisoners of war in 1944 in the hope of producing ideas for postwar reconstruction. The jury included Alfred Roth, who was repeatedly active on behalf of foreign architects interned in Switzerland during the Second World War. Toward the end of the war Roth, joined by a number of these architects, founded the Bureau Technique de la Reconstruction with branches in Zurich and Milan.

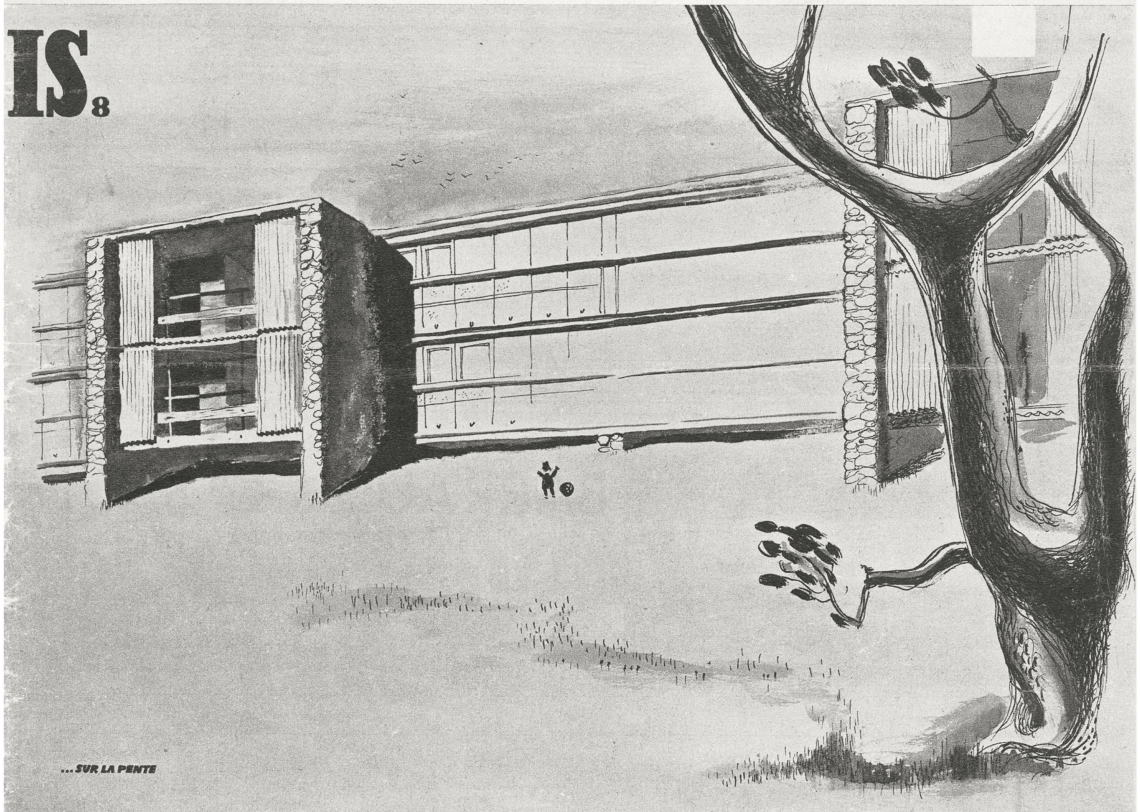
lausanne • mai-juin 1944 • paraît tous les deux mois • XVII^e année • le numéro Fr. 1.50

CIVITAS
Collection de la Cité Humaine

ALFRED ROTH
architekt b. s. a.
zürich dolderal 19

h a b i t a t i o n

IS₈



... SUR LA PENTE

Voir pages 10 et 11.

concours de la captivité

ce numéro contient les reproductions des projets primés et récompensés par le jury des concours d'architecture et d'urbanisme organisés dans les camps de prisonniers de guerre **5-6**

10 Ernesto N. Rogers,
letter to Alfred Roth,
August 16, 1944;
Bequest of Alfred Roth,
gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

Ernesto N. Rogers,
cofounder of the Milan
architectural firm BBPR,
fled from Italy's fascist
race laws to Switzerland
in 1939, where he
formed close contacts
with Alfred Roth and
Max Bill. His office
partners Gian Luigi
Banfi and Ludovico
Barbiano di Belgioioso
were arrested in 1944
for their participation
in the Resistenza. Banfi
died in the Gusen labor
camp shortly before the
liberation of Italy.

De l'Italie j'ai toujours des
nouvelles affreuses : ce qui me
plonge dans la plus profonde
inertie. Et même qu'ici je ne
puisse me plaindre à rien, je
sens un désarroi intime d'y être.

Ne m'oublie pas, mon très,
très cher Alfred, et accueille mes
salutations les plus affectueuses.

16. 8. 44.

Ernesto.

Mes élèves Chessa et Magistretti viennent
probablement à Zürich : ce sont deux garçons
très bien, qui ont une grande admiration pour
tes travaux et que je me permets de recommander
à ton amitié.

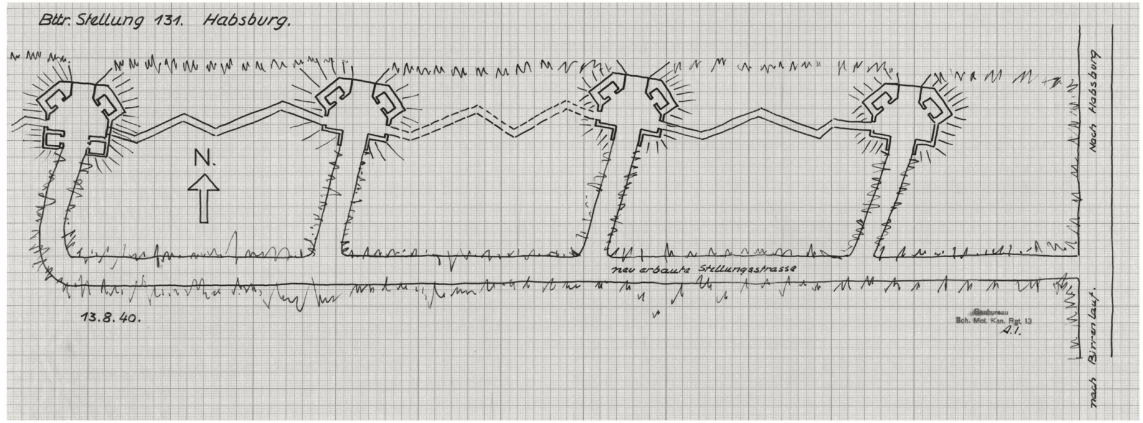
Tu peux m'écrire en adressant - sans autre indication
ainsi : M. F. ROLLIER chez DESSEMONTET
12, rue Chenevieres VEVEY —

11 Arnold Itten, underground cannon emplacement close to Habsburg; sketch, August 13, 1940; Bequest of Arnold Itten, gfa Archives, ETH Zurich.

Arnold Itten was one of the early proponents of modern architecture in the Bernese Oberland. Among those hoping to acquire practical building experience in Itten's office was the young Dutch architect Mart Stam; he worked there from 1924 to 1925. During his active military service in the Second World War, Itten was in charge of the construction office of an artillery regiment. His assignments at the time, including various designs for military facilities, are preserved in his bequest.

12 Heinz Isler, atomic-bomb shelter; photo, 1955; Bequest of Heinz Isler, gfa Archives, ETH Zurich.

At the height of the Cold War, shell-construction pioneer Heinz Isler was commissioned by the Swiss army to develop an atomic-bomb shelter. The semispherical concrete shell covered with earth could be erected by a small number of soldiers in the space of a week without the aid of machinery. The strength of the construction was tested in field trials using blastings.



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ORGANISATIONSSTELLE FÜR AUSSTELLUNGEN
DER ARCHITEKTURABTEILUNG



FESTUNGEN AN DER ATLANTIKKÜSTE

AUSSTELLUNG VOM 11.MAI BIS 1.JUNI 1978
ETH-HÖNGGERBERG HIL, ARCHITEKTURFOYER
ÖFFNUNGSZEITEN: WERKTAGS 08.00–20.00 UHR

13 Organizational Office for Exhibitions of ETH Zurich's Department of Architecture, *Bunkerarchitektur* (Bunker architecture), exhibition poster, 1978; Archives of gta Exhibitions, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

With his book *Bunker archéologie* and the eponymous exhibition in the Centre Pompidou, in 1975, Paul Virilio presented the results of his long-lasting explorations of the bunkers along the Atlantic Wall built during the Second World War. Whereas the primary concern of Virilio's examinations was to arrive at fundamental propositions about the nature of war and the specific logic of military spaces, the exhibition held at ETH three years later primarily celebrated the aesthetic fascination of the subject.

14 Armin Meili, Allmend infantry barracks in Lucerne, 1934–1935; photograph by Sigfried Giedion; Bequest of Sigfried Giedion, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

The infantry barracks in Lucerne, executed in exposed concrete, is one of the major projects of the architect Armin Meili. As the director of the Swiss National Exhibition of 1939 and later also as a politician and high-ranking military officer (he had been a colonel in the Swiss General Staff during the Second World War), Meili had a significant influence among those shaping postwar Switzerland.



Verfügung Nr. 6
des
**Kriegs-Industrie- und -Arbeits-Amtes über die Normalisierung
des Kantholzes.**

(Vom 1. Oktober 1943.)

Das Kriegs-Industrie- und -Arbeits-Amt,
gestützt auf die Verfügung Nr. 26 des eidgenössischen Volkswirtschafts-
departementes vom 2. April 1941 über die Sicherstellung der Versorgung von
Volk und Heer mit technischen Rohstoffen, Halb- und Fertigfabrikaten (Pro-
duktion, Verteilung und Verwendung von Holz und Holzkohle),

verfügt:

Art. 1.

Kanthölzer (Balken) aus Nadelholz dürfen ab 1. November 1943 innerhalb
der Dimensionen 6/6—24/28 nur noch auf folgende Abmessungen eingeschnitten
werden:

6/6									
6/8	8/8								
6/10	8/10	10/10							
6/12	8/12	10/12	12/12						
6/14	8/14	10/14	12/14	14/14					
6/16	8/16	10/16	12/16	14/16	16/16				
6/18	8/18	10/18	12/18	14/18	16/18	18/18			
6/20	8/20	10/20	12/20	14/20	16/20	18/20	20/20		
	8/22	10/22	12/22	14/22	16/22	18/22	20/22	22/22	
	8/24	10/24	12/24	14/24	16/24	18/24	20/24	22/24	24/24
		10/26	12/26	14/26	16/26	18/26	20/26	22/26	24/26
		10/28	12/28	14/28	16/28	18/28	20/28	22/28	24/28

Die Sektion für Holz kann auf begründetes Gesuch hin den Einschnitt von
Kanthölzern anderer Abmessungen bewilligen. An die Erteilung der Bewilli-
gung können Bedingungen geknüpft werden.

1943 — 501

15 Swiss Office for War Industries and Labor, rationing and normalization of squared timber, directive of October 1, 1943; Bequest of Jakob Zweifel, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

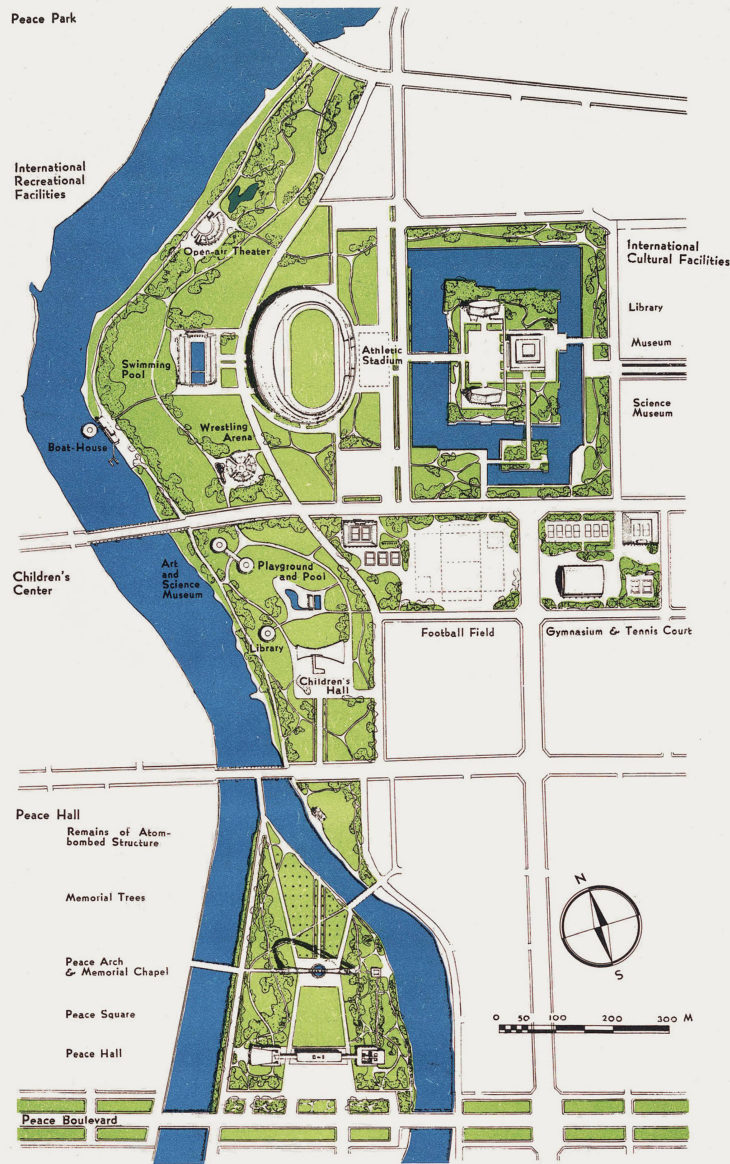
The tasks of the Swiss Work Group on Wood, founded in 1931 under the name Lignum, included promoting the industrial manufacture of wooden building components. As a result, wood as a domestic resource became increasingly popular as a modern building material. After 1939, the federation supported state regulatory programs and sent out official directives as a supplement to its publication *Holz in Technik und Wirtschaft* (Wood in technics and in the economy). The wood industry evidently hoped to profit from the war-related shortage of other construction materials.

16 Aldo Rossi, Monumento ai Partigiani, Piazza del Municipio, Segrate, 1965–1967; photographs by Heinrich Helfenstein; Bequest of Heinrich Helfenstein, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

Rossi's monument honoring the Italian anti-fascist resistance is one of the outstanding testimonials to a younger generation's attempts at meeting the challenges represented by the legacies of the Second World War in Italy. The photographs were taken by Heinrich Helfenstein, who served as Rossi's assistant in the 1970s and translated his lectures at ETH into German. Helfenstein's pictures belong to the canonical images of Rossi's architecture.



CENTRAL THEME OF HIROSHIMA CITY PLANNING



PEACE PARK PROJECT

Designed by:
Kenzo Tange, Takashi Asada, Sachio Otani
and their associates of the Planning Research
Group, Architectural Department, Tokyo Uni-
versity.

Our city planning is a planning for construction of a peace city as the symbol of the human ideal for eternal peace as well as a planning for reconstruction of human life. Therefore we have launched a program of constructing peace facilities, as the central theme of city planning, and also housing, working, recreation and transportation facilities. Hiroshima which had a population of 136,000 at the close of war had increased its population to 270,000 (as of Dec. 1949). The problem of housing shortage is still acute. Although numerous temporary homes have been erected, these are far from meeting actual needs. However, construction of ferro-concrete apartmenthouses, though of a crude nature, has gotten underway in recent months, bringing new light and hope into the lives of many.

Despite all hardships, we of Hiroshima are daily becoming more resolute in our conviction that peace is not only desirable but imperative, and in our determination to establish a peace city symbolic of the human ideal for eternal peace.

Hiroshima no longer belongs to the people of Hiroshima or Japan alone. It belongs to the whole human society. This is the spirit which lies at the core of Hiroshima's city planning. The central theme of Hiroshima city planning program, therefore, lies in the ultimate creation of a city whose facilities would be of real service to mankind in its pursuit of peace and happiness. The following is a brief description of the important peace projects contemplated by the City of Hiroshima.

17 Kenzo Tange, Peace Park Project, Hiroshima; page from the brochure *Peace City Hiroshima*, c.1950; CIAM Archives, gta Archives, ETH Zurich.

Many among the CIAM documents preserved by the urban-planning theorist Jacqueline Tyrwhitt are related to the reconstruction of Hiroshima. The Peace Park, codDesigned by Kenzo Tange, was intended to give the city a new center and to serve as a landmark for world peace. The project was presented at the eighth CIAM as an example of a civic center and subsequently published by Tyrwhitt in *The Heart of the City* in 1952.