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Mistakes and New Horizons in Building from the Social Point of View

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by Lucius Burckhardt

One of the basic reasons for the housing crisis is the artificially high level of rents. Construction, for lack of rationalization comparable to that obtaining in the manufacture of consumer goods, continues to be relatively expensive. It does, however, justify the subsidies granted for the construction of low-cost housing, rendered necessary by the continued abandonment of the countryside and the growth of cities. The mistake often committed in this sector consists in building solely for the requirements of today, when account should be taken of the sociological evolution of future demand, and housing embodying an "elastic" conception should also be planned to permit its adaptation to the needs of successive generations. Three postulates are desirable: maximum rationalization in the division of building sites; also, maximum rationalization, if possible, in actual construction methods; finally, adoption of standards of perfection in design (e.g., by way of competitions organized on a large scale).

The promotion by the City of Zürich of Low-Cost Housing

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by Sigmund Widmer

A work appearing in German, by J. Peter ("A Half Century of Housing Policy in Zürich", 1957), furnishes a summary view of the whole question. The brief account appearing here merely points out that over the last 5 years a group of financial measures has permitted the construction of 3500 housing units at moderate rents. The City has also, for the first time, extended its assistance to neighbouring communities, in the elaboration of a regional plan, whether involving housing built by cooperatives or communal building. In town as on the outskirts, special stress on differentiated construction and on green belts.

Housing Policy in the City of Berne

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by Hans Gaschen

Berne, on December 1, 1957, had only 44 apartments available for occupancy. In 1958 only 550 were constructed (687 less than in the preceding year). Such a situation has induced the city to lend its support to construction companies and cooperatives. 1000 new housing units are in the planning stage, entrusted either to independent architects or to architects' offices combined by the City into work groups. The City fixes the rents and in most cases assigns tenants.

Low-Cost Housing and its Public Promotion in the City of Basle

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by Othmar Jauch

From 1942 to 1950, 70.6 millions (nearly 21 furnished by the Confederation and the balance by the Canton of Basle-City) were earmarked by the Canton for the construction of low-cost housing. In 1950 the Confederation terminated its subsidies, but the City, in addition to its support in the erection of 7 houses for the aged (2 others in planning stage), is itself constructing housing for large families in all districts of the city and is also supporting Federal action in this direction.

The "Farbhof" Municipal Housing Scheme in Zürich-Altstetten

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Prop.: City of Zürich; architect: M. E. Haefeli and W. M. Moser, FAS SIA; eng.: E. Schubiger SIA

The complex is situated on 2 sites, one of 9000 sq.m., the other of 4300 sq.m. and comprises three 6- and 7-storey apartment houses, 2 multi-family houses, a wing of shops, a green belt and a playground. The apartment houses comprise 160 flats of 1, 2, 3 and 4 rooms, plus 24 flats in the 3-storey houses. Rents: 66-75 fr. (1 room), 88-96 fr. (2 rooms), 98-116 fr. (3 rooms), 118-129 fr. (4 rooms).

The Bellevaux-Pavement Centre in Lausanne

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1957, Architect: W. F. Vetter and J. P. Vouga FAS SIA; eng.: R. Suter, Lausanne

A law of the Canton of Vaud of December 8, 1953, placed 30 million francs at the disposal of the commune for the construction of low-cost housing. The centre shown here comprises 3 apartment houses (the present issue presents only 2 of them) erected on a site measuring 15,000 sq.m., up to that time the property of the City of Lausanne, and containing 168 apartments in all. One of these 3 apartment houses has 3 floors, the other 2, 5, 6 and 7 floors. Rents: 70 fr. (1 room), 100 fr. (2 rooms), 110 and 120 fr. (3 rooms), 130 fr. (4 rooms).

Low-Cost Housing in Holland

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by Lucia Hartsuyker-Curjel

In 1901 there was adopted the first law establishing certain norms for building throughout Holland, the communes being legally obliged to take the necessary general measures, and the State, for its part, lending financial support to the building cooperatives. In 1902 another law set forth the preliminary conditions for a public housing program, a State subsidy making it possible for the cooperatives to charge 30 to 40% lower rents. In 1920, creation of a construction premium benefiting not only the cooperatives but also private persons. In 1921, a law regulated in a general way all building in Holland, there being even thus early a definite interest in city-planning. Even if, during the war years, building came to an utter standstill, study groups laid the foundations for the reconstruction undertaken since the end of the war. The responsible administrative agencies assign tenants to the low-cost housing facilities thus created. Rents are not in excess of from $\frac{1}{10}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ of incomes.

Low-Cost Housing and Rationalization of Construction in Poland —The Kolo district (Warsaw)

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Architect: H. and S. Syrkus (Warsaw)

Since 1945 Poland has been intensively engaged in reconstruction, not only the restoration of war damage but also the development of new housing schemes. Among others, H. and S. Syrkus particularly have striven, along the lines followed by them before the war, to promote, in the building of the Kolo district of Warsaw, rationalization in construction. From 1947 to 1950, they worked with a relatively small basic concrete element (module of 50 cm.); since 1954 they have gone over to elements of larger dimensions. Utility area per inhabitant: only 11 sq.m. From the town-planning point of view, same objectives as in the West: differentiated construction, green belts, division of the district unit (e.g., 10,000 inhabitants) into neighbourhoods of, e.g., 1200 residents. The plans reproduced here were created by the architecture students of Warsaw working under the direction of H. and S. Syrkus, their professors.

Function and Design of the Base in the Sculpture of Brancusi

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by Carola Giedion-Welcker

The publishing firm of Benno Schwabe, Basle and Stuttgart, brought out for Christmas 1958 the basic monograph on the great Rumanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi, written by Mrs. Carola Giedion-Welcker, the outstanding authority on modern sculpture. We reproduce from this work the chapter dealing with the function and the design of the base in the works of Brancusi. The base for him has the function of providing the sculpture with its spatial environment ("espace milieu"—Henri Focillon), of setting it apart from the given surroundings. The author distinguishes bases which are related to the sculpture and those which have a contrapuntal relation to it. His stone bases possess the formal clarity of geometrical shapes, whereas his wooden bases recall the elements of Rumanian farmhouses. They always have the function of enhancing the three-dimensional and rhythmical quality of the sculpture; this is achieved most strikingly by the triple base of the "Malastra" in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Living with Paintings

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by Heinz Keller

Present-day writing on art is concerned mainly either with art in and for itself or with the classification of works of art according to historical categories; but, and it is a significant omission, one will search in vain for attempts to elucidate the role of art in our everyday lives. In the same way, the artist, in modern times, usually does not work for such and such a buyer or lover of the arts. Most art patrons are, at the present time, disoriented. Most of them are afraid to trust their spontaneous reactions; paintings are bought to furnish a room, to constitute an investment, to give evidence of one's social status. One hardly dares any more to have the courage of one's own personal tastes. Nevertheless, dealing with paintings, originals of course (the best reproductions, in this respect, are still insufficient), is one of the very best ways of knowing one's self. In our age of visual inflation intimate contact with a few paintings, which shed a certain light on the unexplored recesses of our being, is indispensable in that it enriches our personal relationship and also gets us into as immediate touch as possible with artistic creativity in general.