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2-13 TAMARA BJAŽIĆ KLARIN

ERNEST WEISSMANN'S ARCHITECTURAL AND PLANNING PRACTICES
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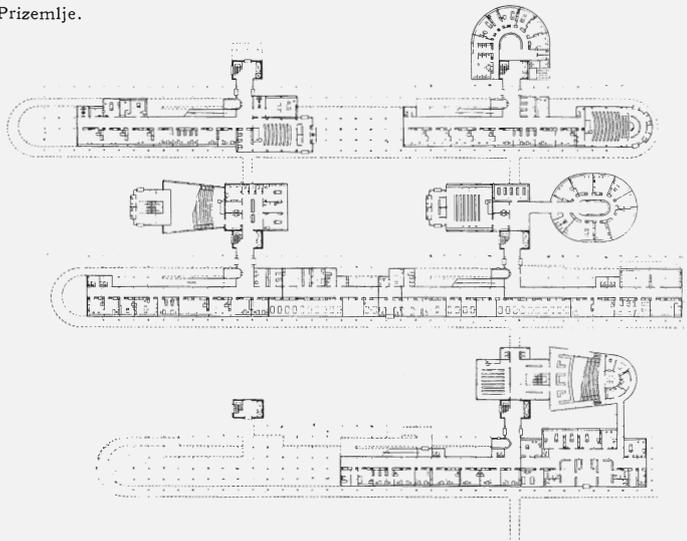


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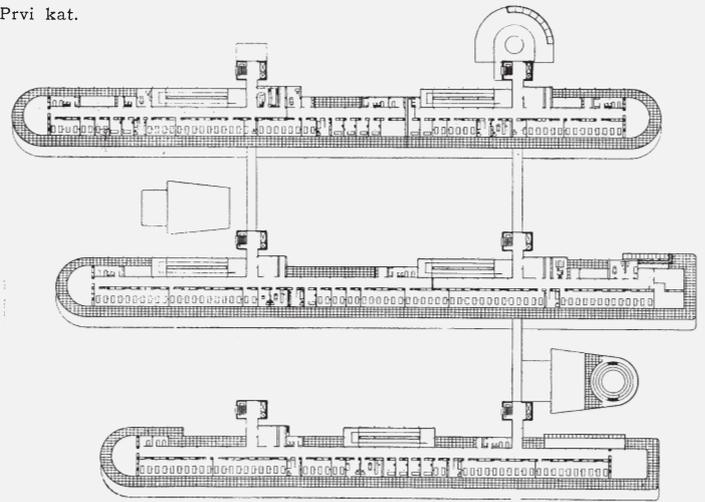


FIG. 1 ERNEST WEISSMANN, FOUNDATION AND CLINICAL HOSPITAL IN ZAGREB, 1930-1931

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ERNEST WEISSMANN'S ARCHITECTURAL AND PLANNING PRACTICES CONTINUITY OF ORIGINAL CONCERNS OF "NEW ARCHITECTURE" AND POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

ERNEST WEISSMANN
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE [CIAM]
SELF-HELP
SPATIAL PLANNING
UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS [UN DESA]

Architect Ernest Weissmann (1903-1985) dedicated his career to improving the living conditions of the deprived population – before and immediately after World War II in Europe and the United States and, starting from the 1950s and owing to senior positions he held at the United Nations Department of Social Affairs [UN DESA], also in underdeveloped countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The means by which he tried to achieve it were type projects flexible enough to respond to each individual case, education, teamwork, and self-help approach. The latter was thought to strengthen the local

communities, their experts, resources, and production. Relying on the research on Weissmann's pre-UN DESA career, this paper argues that Weissmann formulated most of his ideas, in particular self-help, and the above-mentioned methods, and put them into practice and an international perspective, before 1951 thanks, to his collaboration with Le Corbusier, the School of Public Health in Zagreb, the International Congress of Modern Architecture [CIAM], New York-based Structural Study Associates [SSA] group, Board of Warfare, and United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration [UNRRA].

INTRODUCTION

During the 1950s, at a time of decolonization and a ubiquitous desire to build a sustainable world after World War II, United Nations departments and specialized organizations played an important role in the modernization of underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, including future members of the Non-Aligned Movement. From 1951, the Housing and Town and Country Planning Section of the United Nations Department of Social Affairs (UN DESA) was headed by the Croatian born architect Ernest Weissmann (1903-1985; Fig. 2).¹

UN DESA was founded with the task of promoting the right of all nations to develop. Weissmann gave his contribution by supporting and developing hundreds of projects aimed to solve the housing crisis, raise the living standard, provide the implementation of economic programs through spatial plans, and relief after natural disasters. His ultimate goal was sustainable, planned, and harmonized development of the economy, society and living environment, cities and villages, whole regions and continents. The means by which he tried to achieve it were type projects flexible enough to respond to each individual case, education, teamwork, and self-help approach already put into practice in UN DESA in the late 1940s.²

The latter was thought to strengthen the local communities, their experts, resources, and production. Local communities were not

passive recipients of help anymore but rather co-creators of their better future. Among numerous projects supported by Housing and Town and Country Planning Section were the study on Tropical Housing (1952), School of Regional City Planning in Bandung (1959), reconstruction of Skopje after the earthquake (1963), a network of UN centers for regional planning (1965), experimental social housing settlement PREVI in Peru (1968), etc. The pinnacle of Weissmann's UN career was the conference "Habitat on Human Settlements", in Vancouver in 1976. The conference pointed to problems of inequitable economic growth and uncontrolled urbanization calling, among others, for more equitable distribution of development benefits, planning and land use regulation, and for environmental protection. The above mentioned Weissmann's work is mostly reduced to the listing of institutions he has worked for (Galic, 1991) or to sporadic noting of his participation in UN DESA activities at the Global South (Muzaffar, 2007; Shoshkes, 2013).

Relying on the research on Weissmann's pre-UN DESA career, the published one on his work until 1939 (Bjažić Klarin, 2015) and the new one on his engagements within the International Congress of Modern Architecture [CIAM], Structural Study Associates [SSA] group, Board of Warfare, and UNRRA in the 1940s, this paper will argue that Weissmann formulated most of the above-mentioned ideas and methods from the very beginning of his career and tried to put them into international practice. Furthermore, from this position, Weissmann's UN DESA activities in the future research will be reconsidered as a continuity of "original" pre-war values and practices of "new architecture", repeatedly ignored by CIAM, into the post-war construction and development of the Global South. Besides contributing to the knowledge on Weissmann work in the 1940s the paper will also contribute to the knowledge of CIAM and the continuity of pre-war ideas and practices into post-war reconstruction.

THE SOCIALLY RESPONSIBILITY OF AN ARCHITECT AND THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Ernest Weissmann's interest in social issues was already apparent in the early 1920s. His graduate thesis, defended at the Zagreb Polytechnic in 1926 was "A House for Workers' Welfare", a conventional solitary building with an inner courtyard and a brick façade characteristic of industrial buildings (Fig. 3). In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Weissmann was well introduced to all the problems of an underdeveloped country – lack of basic infrastructure, poor housing conditions of the predominantly



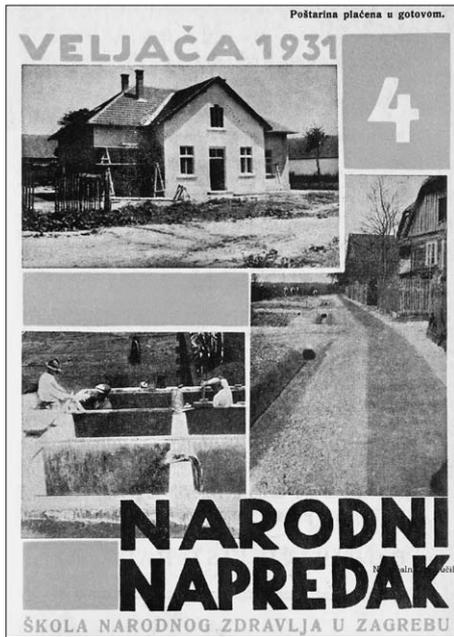


FIG. 4 NARODNI NAPREDAK (PEOPLE'S PROGRESS)

nation of private to the public one.⁵ Weissmann looked up to Soviet and European constructivists, whose results in “minimum dwelling” production were witnessed by him at the Second CIAM Congress held in Frankfurt in 1929. In a country without a housing policy, where every eighth resident suffered from tuberculosis, Weissmann collaborated with the architect Bogdan Teodorovic and the physician Miroslav Delic, who worked for the School of Public Health, on the development of standardized prefabricated sanatorium or hospital buildings, improved through several projects from 1928 to 1931 (Fig. 1).⁶ The final result – a standardized building based on a free plan and skeletal construction – was flexible enough to meet different building programs and locations.

Aware of different conditions of production, Weissmann did not insist on the use of “concrete, glass and steel” (***) 1931.a), but on solving a given design task in the most economical way with the available resources – materials, technique, and labor that defined the very form of the building.⁷ While the jury of the international architectural competition for the Foundation and Clinical Hospital in Zagreb recognized his standardized prefabricated system as a valuable contribution to the health care architecture, Weissmann constructed his first building – the People's Center with an outpatient clinic and public bath in Pisarovina for the School of Public Health. The Center was built with traditional materials, and the key role in its construction was played by the local community, which contributed “money, transportation, and physical work” (***) 1931.b).⁸

FIG. 5 ZAGREB WORK GROUP, THE THEMATIC UNIT HOUSE AND LIFE AT THE FOURTH EXHIBITION OF THE ZEMLJA GROUP IN ZAGREB, 1932



In the backward Pokuplje region, the People's Center was a bearer of progress, socialization, and of curative and preventive medicine. The School's work was dedicated to modernizing life in rural areas, where 80% of Yugoslavian population lived in poor-quality housing. The rural population was encouraged to help itself through the construction of “model (...) houses to serve as an example and inspire imitation” and through the distribution of free plans for type family houses and farm buildings (Kolaric-Kisur, 1938: 38), construction courses, public lectures, exhibitions and screenings of sanitary-technology films, etc. (Fig. 4). At the same time School's employees were sent abroad for study trips and training in sanitary engineering. Thanks to the collaboration with the School of Public Health, Weissmann delivered public lectures, participated in the Hygiene Exhibition in Zagreb in 1931, and conducted research on the housing conditions of Yugoslav emigrants in the United States for the Ministry of Social Policy and Public Health in 1933.

CIAM AND A UNITY OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND PHYSICAL PRODUCTION OF SPACE

Weissmann was first introduced to the field of city and urban planning through multiple analyses of Zagreb prepared for the Fourth CIAM Congress in 1932 and he immediately established the relation between urbanization and economy.⁹ It was a joint effort of Work Group Zagreb (*Radna grupa Zagreb*), a CIAM national group for Yugoslavia established by Weissmann, Vladimir Antolčić, Viktor Hećimović, Zvonimir Kavurić, Josip Pićman, Josip Seissel, and Bogdan Teodorović. As Weissmann's knowledge of planning ob-

⁵ Weissmann published the *Declaration* in the *Problemi savremene arhitekture* edited by Stjepan Planić in 1932.

⁶ Those projects were the Jewish Hospital and the Foundation and Clinical Hospital in Zagreb, tuberculosis sanatorium near Belgrade etc.

⁷ He summed this approach in the formula “function = technique = form”, and explained it on the example of the sanatorium in Kraljevica in a publication of the same name [Weissmann and Delic, 1930].

⁸ The municipality provided the site, and the Sava County (Banovina) funds for the construction [Bjazić Klarin, 2015: 117].

⁹ Results of the Zagreb Work Group analyses were presented at the Fourth Exhibition of the Association of Artists “Zemlja” in Zagreb in 1932. More in: Bjazić Klarin, 2015.

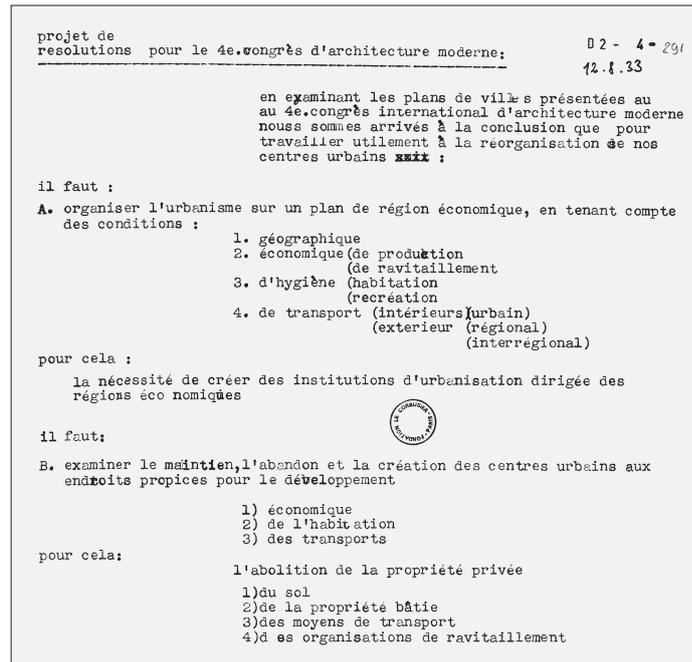
¹⁰ Department was established in 1928.

¹¹ A complex study of Zagreb was provoked by the CIAM's secretary Sigfried Giedion. He conditioned his support to Weissmann in the struggle to exercise his right to produce construction documents for Foundation and Clinical Hospital by participating in CIAM 4. More on CIAM 4 in: Sommer, 2007.

¹² CIRPAC was CIAM elected executive body [Giedion, S. (1935) *Letter to E. Weissmann*, 9th July; GTA ETH, Zürich; CIAM 5 Working Program. CCA, MARS Papers, 130627].

tained at the Zagreb Polytechnic was lacking, the Urban Planning course was introduced in 1934, while Le Corbusier only become intensively involved in urban planning in the early 1930s, Weissmann's mentor was a city planner and Zagreb Group member Vladimir Antolić. As an employee at the Department for City Planning Antolić worked on the new Zagreb regulation plan based on the entry awarded at the international competition for the plan launched in 1930.¹⁰ Thanks to the competition, Zagreb finally met the conditions for establishing urban planning on a scientific basis. The plan introduced all the principles of a functional city, including zoning and neighborhood units that became the main social and spatial organizational element provided with housing services, educational facilities, and supply chains. Neighborhoods of free-standing residential buildings surrounded by greenery were meant to replace workers' slums placed south of the railway line. Furthermore, besides working in Le Corbusier's studio, Ernest Weissmann used his stay in Paris to take an economics course that would play an important role in his understanding of the city and spatial planning.

The Fourth CIAM Congress was aimed to use the analysis of 33 cities to bring a resolution of functional city, a resolution on the technical aspects of modern urban planning with which Weissmann agreed.¹¹ Analyzing the relations between the city of Zagreb and its region, traffic, housing, and labor, Work Group Zagreb was faced with the slums and the impossibility of implementing regulation plans (Fig. 5). The Group insisted on questioning the implementation, which implied a critique of the capitalist system. Namely, they pointed out that without changing the legislative and legal framework, all plans were more or less useless. At the time of the US New Deal – programs of economic and social recovery that included low-cost housing, and the construction of new industrial cities within the five-year plan in the USSR, the Zagreb Work Group wanted to incorporate the issue of plan implementation into the resolution of CIAM at the Fourth Congress, a document intended to direct the future urbanization in the world. In its *Alternative version* of the Athens Charter, the group presented by Weissmann, Antolić, and Teodorović – demanded the coordination of spatial planning with the “economic plan for the region” – geographical, economic (production and distribution), and hygienic factors and needs (Fig. 6). Like architecture, planning depended on rational spatial organization and the use of modern technology. The model which was proposed as optimal was the Soviet, Milyutin's version of a linear city, a planning model designed to abolish the village-city duopoly – provide the village with public facilities, and the city with direct contact with nature. The backbone of the city was the main traffic



corridor with greenery, which was lined with “belts” of housing, public facilities, green areas, and industry. The most radical part of the *Charter* concerned the implementation of a plan in which the Group required “the abolition of private ownership over: 1. land, 2. real estate, 3. means of transport, 4. the organization of supply system”, all in the interests of the community (Weissmann, 1933).

Le Corbusier, Giedion, and Walter Gropius, who took over the CIAM after the departure of the left CIAM fraction for the USSR in 1930, were not fond of the Zagreb Group initiative supported by comrades from Spain, the Netherlands, Britain, and France. They pragmatically resolved the architecture – politics or technique dilemma in favor of technique. Although the *Alternative Version of the Charter* had been rejected, Weissmann, José Luis Sert, and Wells Coates were entrusted with the preparation of the Fifth CIAM Congress program, also dedicated to urban planning, which assumed further work on analyses, on drawing up a schematic plan of the region and on devising concrete projects, like clearing the slums (Fig. 7). Slums and their clearance also represented points of interest for the British group MARS and the French CIAM group, with which Weissmann closely collaborated in London and Paris, where he lived from 1934 to 1937. The proposed program, presented at the 1935 CIRPAC meeting in Amsterdam, established a hierarchy of spatial planning – state, region, city, and neighborhood units, viewed from the standpoint of natural features, causality, and sustainable development – available resources, production, markets, and transport.¹² Production,

FIG. 6 ERNEST WEISSMANN (ZAGREB WORK GROUP),
ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF CIAM'S ATHENS CHARTER, 1933

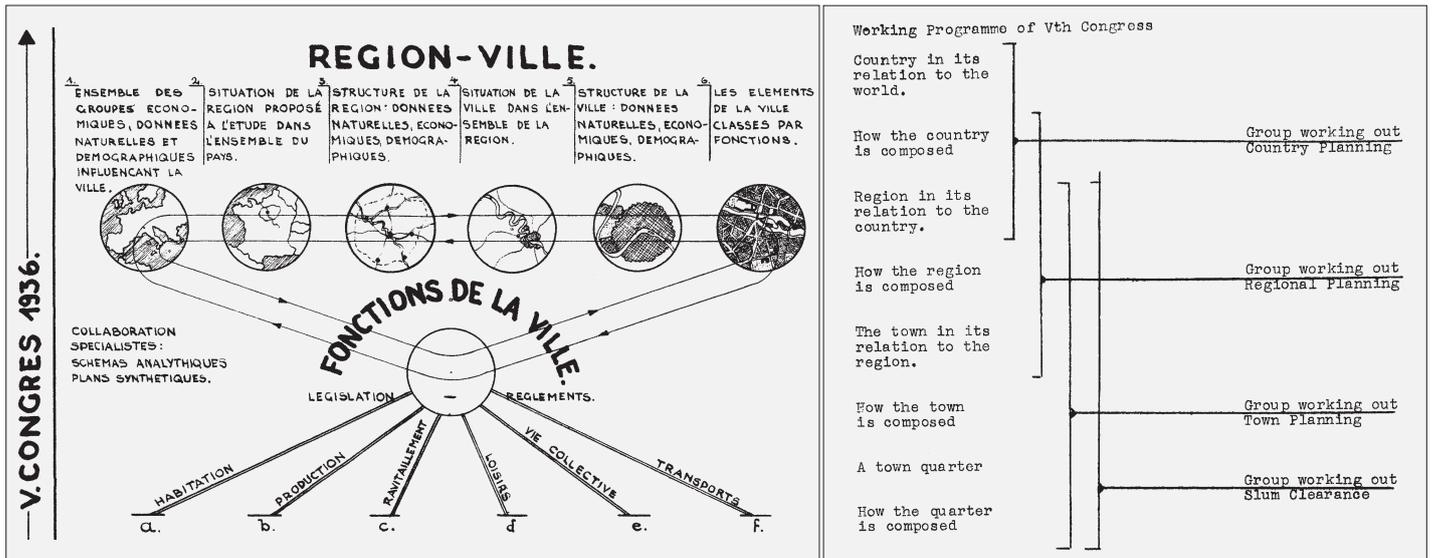


FIG. 7 ERNEST WEISSMANN, WELLS COATES, AND JOSE LUIS SERT, CIAM 5 WORKING PROGRAM

administration, and business operations determine the capacity of the housing stock, the quality of which depends on the density and size of living space per person, and space for recreation.¹³

Weissmann presented the first comprehensive elaboration of his understanding of housing and leisure in the context of cities and villages, as well as their general, technical, administrative, and legislative features, in a letter to Le Corbusier on the eve of CIAM 5¹⁴ (Weissmann, 1937). Inspired by the victory of the Popular Front in France, he repeatedly called for social housing programs funded by the state and municipal authorities. He elaborated on the construction of new and the renewal of old city districts, as well as the reorganization of rural areas – coordination of program and location with the needs of the population and the economic and regional plan, free disposal of land, development of collective housing types adapted to population structure and customs, technologies and natural resources. He incorporated all of these into the proposals and conclusions of the Fifth Congress on the General Principles of Housing, which he co-signed with Antolic, Arthur Korn, and Mart Stam (** 1937).¹⁵ In the conclusions, special attention was given to the housing community with accompanying facilities for the preschool and elementary education, supply, and leisure, which were to be developed in consultation with the inhabitants. The Fifth Congress was the culmination of Weissmann's pre-war career at CIAM.

Weissmann further elaborated the conclusions of CIAM 5, i.e. the approach he called “human planning” (Weissmann, 1939), in the USA where he arrived to arrange the Yugoslav exhibition space at the World's Fair in

early 1939. In a presentation prepared for the Fifteenth International Congress of Architects in Washington on *Humane Planning (Urbanism)*. *Cities and Villages* he introduced the notion of a regional unit – city and village, whose planning was of course based on geographical, topographical, economic, technological, and socio-political factors that were constantly changing – progressing or deteriorating, which was why the plan itself had to be flexible.¹⁶ The points elaborated in the conclusions of CIAM 5, on the construction of new and the renewal of existing city districts, were adjusted to the scale and protocols for the transformation of the region, i.e. its settlements. Weissmann put the crisis of the village and the city in both the historical and contemporary context, addressing the issues of industrialization, urban growth, and rural stagnation, a process that yet awaited Third World countries in which what can be called free labor was still a substitute for technology. Technology could be used for the common good, but could also be abused like Ger-

¹³ Amsterdam CIRPAC meeting, Report, 1935 [FLC, D2-6-125/141].

¹⁴ These were also the topics of CIAM 5.

¹⁵ These conclusions were supposed to serve as the basis for the Congress resolution.

¹⁶ The Congress was canceled due to the German attack on Poland [*** 1939].

¹⁷ Weissmann worked with Frey for Le Corbusier, and met Larson at CIAM 2. SSA architects promoted their ideas in magazines *Shelter* and *Architectural Record*, in which Weissmann published his tuberculosis pavilion of the Foundation and Clinical Hospital in 1934 [Strum, 2019; Weissmann, 1934].

¹⁸ Weissmann was Yugoslavia's representative in the Exhibition Sub-Committee of the *Inter-Allied Information Committee* and Center in New York 1942-1943. In 1940 and 1941 he shortly worked with J.L. Sert in New York. They designed the luxury East River Crescent [ERC] apartment building on East River Drive, and a slum-clearance project

many was doing, by putting it in the service of war and mass extermination. Weissmann, however, was not a pessimist. He called for an era of planning that would meet the material and spiritual needs of all mankind, and it was up to architects and planners to use their knowledge to provide the technical, economic, and administrative framework for its implementation.

THE USA – PUTTING THE IDEAS INTO PRACTICE

The idea of a radical transformation of society through technological rather than social revolution became even more appealing in the atmosphere of the coming World War II. Instead of being harnessed for profit, technology, especially mass housing production, could be used to create a quality living environment for all (total design). Weissmann shared such ideas with the Structural Study Associates [SSA], a group of left-wing technocrats, American supporters of the *Neue Bauen*, which were gathered around Buckminster Fuller – Albert Frey, Knud Lönberg-Holm, Simon Breines and Carl Theodor Larson. Weissmann was in contact with Lönberg-Holm and Breines thanks to CIAM 4 preparations since his visit to the USA in 1933.¹⁷

Collaboration with SSA, dedicated to the team work, was of particular importance for Weissmann, a Jew and – since 1940 – an emigrant involved in the promotion of anti-fascist resistance in Yugoslavia.¹⁸ It provided him with an opportunity to participate in the production of a prefabricated building – the Dymaxion Deployment Unit [DDU], development of the syllabus for Building Industry Training, and get employment in the Board of Economic Warfare and UNRRA where he worked on programs of assistance and reconstruction.¹⁹

Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion Deployment Unit was designed to tackle the housing crisis in the growing centers of the US defense



FIG. 8 BUCKMINSTER FULLER (COLLABORATOR ERNEST WEISSMANN), DYMAXION DEPLOYMENT UNIT (PHOTO BY ERNEST WEISSMANN)

industry (defense housing) and in the long run to change the very idea of architecture and living.²⁰ Weissmann contributed to the production of a DDU prototype designed for six people in Butler Manufacturing in Kansas City which took three months.²¹ The assembly of the pre-fabricated, corrugated steel unit with standardized furniture required two workers and six working days (Fig. 8). After being presented to the federal authorities in Washington in May 1941, the unit was exhibited at the New York MOMA in the winter of the same year.²²

The wide application of mass-produced housing required the education of a new generation of architects, or rather the reform of the education system. The reform program, *The BI-2 Report on Design Training for the Building Industry*, was developed by Weissmann, Lönberg-Holm, Larson, Paul Nelson, and Sert under the group name Building Industry Design Education Group.²³ The program relied on a radical reform of the construction industry that was expounded in Lönberg-Holm and Larson's *Planning for Productivity*, or rather on the production of a housing unit (shelter) which, like any other product, had a shelf life. This led the group to design a sustainable cycle of production and use. Industrial production and the environment, natural resources, research, design, fabrication, distribution, use, and *disintegration* were viewed as a cycle to which both contributed, the architect and the user (Strum, 2019).

Holding the position of industrial engineer and economic analyst in the Board of Economic Warfare since May 1943, Weissmann worked on the preparation of the first phase of "assistance and reconstruction programs for the occupied European countries, with an

– renovation of two city blocks in East Harlem with free-standing slab blocks and Y-shaped skyscrapers in greenery. [Weissmann, E. (1943) *Letter to the Yugoslav Information Center*, 6th August. AEW, f. 6.1.]

¹⁹ The Committee, which had offices in charge of import, export and analytics, prepared the US economy for total war; it determined the production quotas of strategic industries and strategic Axis Powers' targets, controlled the import, export and distribution of raw materials, etc. [Woods, 2021].

²⁰ For Fuller the prefabricated lightweight and portable structures were also a tool for *dismantling* overcrowded cities by dispersing industry into agricultural areas. Decentralization provided absolute freedom of movement that was supported by a global network of roads and air corridors. [Strum, 2019]

²¹ More on DDU in: Colomina, 1997.

²² *** 1941.b

²³ Sert emigrated to the US in the summer of 1939.

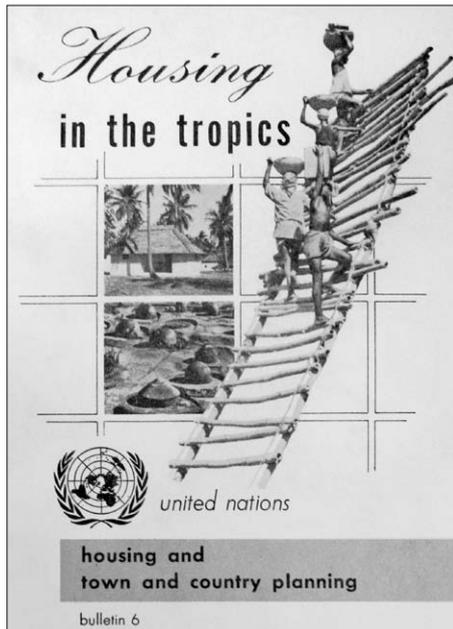


FIG. 9 HOUSING AND TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

emphasis on special reconstruction programs for various fields of industry, mining, raw materials, transportation and communications” (Weissmann, undated). The program was also aimed at reviving the building industry, providing temporary accommodation, and developing a plan for the distribution of aid in the territories that were yet to be liberated.²⁴

In June 1944, Weissmann got a similar position in the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration [UNRRA], its Technical Service of the Industrial Rehabilitation Division of the Procurement Office in Washington (UNRRA 1944).²⁵ With over 8,200 employees in regional offices and operational missions in recipient countries, UNRRA was in charge of purchasing the goods, providing basic prerequisites for reconstruction, and handling of displaced persons. As a “Shelter Specialist”, Weissmann and Ben Reiner devised the first UN shelter program, packages with blankets (Oberlander, 2006), and had opportunity to apply the self-help approach on a big scale. The UNRRA policy was to encourage self-help as much as possible, including the governments of the recipient countries to plan reconstruction and development on their own. In the first year, they provided food, clothing, medical supplies, etc., while in the second year the basic infrastructure and production were established thanks to shipments of machinery, tools, and materials as well as the training of local experts.

Weissmann programmed aid for Czechoslovakia, Italy, Poland, China, and Yugoslavia, which he visited in the summer of 1945 (UNRRA, 1945). The latter was among the worst-ravaged countries; its industry and infrastructure were destroyed, while it had 1.6 million displaced and a large number of starving people and war orphans. In the name of its fight against the Axis Powers, Yugoslavia was granted \$415 million in machinery, building materials for the reconstruction of 25,000 houses, etc. (Ajlec, 2020).²⁶

OPPOSING THE CIAM CHAPTER FOR RELIEF AND POSTWAR CONSTRUCTION

Weissmann and the SSA group – Paul Nelson, Carl Theodor Larson and Knud Lönberg-Holm shared the same idea of post-war reconstruction.²⁷ As the experts involved with prefabrication and reconstruction, they tried to contribute to discussions on CIAM’s contribution and organization after the war.²⁸ In May 1944, the severance of ties with CIAM groups in Europe and the approaching end of the war, prompted the establishment of the CIAM Chapter for Relief and Postwar Construction, a temporary body that would oper-

ate in New York until the groups reunited.²⁹ In the election for the Management Board, Weissmann was third in the number of votes – behind Sigfried Giedion and László Moholy-Nagy, and ahead of Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe.

The main dispute within the Chapter was: how should the CIAM members stationed in the US during the War get involved in rebuilding Europe? Starting from the UNRRA’s policy that architects in war-torn countries wanted to manage reconstruction on their own, Weissmann stood with Paul Nelson and Marcel Breuer against accepting commissions in Europe and meddling too much. Reconstruction should be undertaken by young, local architects, while their US colleagues should be available to them for cooperation and advice. The latter’s focus should be on post-war housing in the US and the problems that would arise due to large, forthcoming migrations.³⁰ Through these projects, they would develop new knowledge and practices that could be applied in Europe.³¹

Weissmann also pointed to the dangers that could “arise from not fully considering all phases of the reconstruction as well as limiting our (CIAM’s, A/N) interest only to Europe”, or rather to the need for all involved in reconstruction to understand that “there is only one development and that we must account for the development all over the world” (Weissmann, 1944).

Like Lönberg-Holm, Weissmann thinks of the CIAM Chapter solely as an advisory body. Having in mind that the US was one of a few countries that developed new construction technologies and materials during the war,

²⁴ The renovation of damaged residential buildings, hospitals and schools was included. New facilities were built only for displaced persons and workers in basic industries. [Ernest Weissmann’s résumé, AEW, f. 4.2.]

²⁵ The Board was abolished in July 1943, and the UNRRA established in November 1943.

²⁶ Thanks to the knowledge of foreign languages along with exceptional communication and organizational skills, Weissmann was appointed the Deputy Director of Industrial Rehabilitation as early as December 1945 [UNRRA, 1945].

²⁷ Nelson was engaged in the reconstruction of France, while Larson worked for the Senate National Housing Agency and the Military Affairs Committee [Strum, 2019: 178].

²⁸ CIAM’s activities in the US were intensified after Giedion’s arrival in 1938, as well as after a significant number of European architects were hired for the 1939 World’s Fair. More in: Mumford, 2000; Kalpakci, 2017.

²⁹ *CIAM-Meeting, 20th May 1944*. GTA ETH, 42-SG-2-214; *The CIAM Chapter Committee Meeting, 20th May 1944*. GTA ETH, 42-SG-2-201

³⁰ *CIAM Special Meeting, 20th May 1944*. GTA ETH, 42-JLS-1-8/76

³¹ In 1943, Weissmann reviewed conference material on post-war housing [National Housing Agency, 1944. AEW, f. 3.2].

³² CIAM Chapter planned to publish manuals on the US building industry [Technical News Service, GTA ETH, 42-SG-2-177].

they imagined the Chapter as an international center for the acquisition and exchange of knowledge on reconstruction and construction, first in Europe, and then also in underdeveloped countries.³² The Center was supposed to address issues such as an integral approach to design, research of construction technologies and different types of buildings, and continuing education of designers. The public also had to be prepared for their implementation and aware of their interdependence within the system.³³

After giving a presentation on the problems of the first phase of post-war planning, emergency care, and reconstruction, in June 1944 Weissmann, Larson, and Nelson were joined by Lönberg-Holm and put in charge of drafting the work program for the CIAM Chapter – *Shelter Relief, Rehabilitation of Housing, Rural and Urban Redevelopment* (Larson, Lönberg-Holm, Nelson, and Weissmann, 1944). In line with the self-help approach, the report emphasized the need to activate local resources to rebuild the housing stock and start up the economy.³⁴ Providing housing for the homeless was planned in three phases. The first included the redistribution of the existing housing stock, repair of the less damaged buildings, and setting up of temporary camps. In the second phase, inhabitants would work on the reconstruction with provided tools and materials independently, and establish the building industry. The last phase was the reconstruction of urban and rural communities through the development of their own production. The latter would initiate the transition from wartime to a peacetime economy. Of course, all of these activi-

ties varied, depending on geographical, economic, and technical factors, which was why the standards for design, urban and rural renewal and construction, as well as laws, had to be flexible. The requirements were the minimum space standard, basic hygienic conditions, individual freedom, and privacy, but also the customs of the community.

Lönberg-Holm, Larson, Nelson, and Weissmann thought that the first post-war CIAM congress, the Sixth one, should be dedicated to the topic of World Reconstruction – the organization of education, plant production, construction, and planning.³⁵ Eventually, Lönberg-Holm drafted the *Standards on Community Planning* program and presented it to the CIAM Chapter in late 1945.³⁶

However, proposals were also submitted by the UK group (*The Impact of Contemporary Conditions Upon Architectural Expression*), the Swiss (*The Relationship between Architect, Painter, and Sculptor*), and the Polish group (?) (*Neighborhood Unit*). In May 1947, Weissmann brought together all the proposals under the topic – *New Standard of Values for Community Development* (Weissmann, 1947). He believed that the subject of CIAM 6 should be the problems of emergency reconstruction in Europe and long-term reconstruction in the US (slum clearance and working-class housing), i.e. the impact of industrialization, which was inevitable, on the planning, design, and organization of work. Larson, Lönberg-Holm, Nelson, and Weissmann did not attend CIAM 6 in September 1947 in Bridgewater.³⁷ Once again, the demands for an interdisciplinary approach and planned development, or rather an integrated approach to the planning of the human environment, were overlooked.³⁸

After the dissolution of the UNRRA, in January 1948 Weissmann continued working at the Industry and Material Division of the Economic Commission for Europe [ECE] in Geneva, the organization in charge of rebuilding the European economy.³⁹ His job description was once again similar – analyses of the current situation and the strategy for the development of European industry, including the building and housing industry, whose main problems were lack of materials and transportation. Weissmann renewed and established a forum on construction and housing in Europe – both Eastern and Western, which was one of the fundamental tasks of ECE. After his transfer to the UN Department of Social Affairs Weissmann's deliberations on the balanced development of European countries, the poor East and the wealthy West, were mapped on a new, larger scale (Weissmann, 1981). The underdeveloped Third World countries became the main field of his activity.⁴⁰

33 The issues were defined / borrowed from the Lönberg-Holm questionnaire prepared for the Architects Committee of the National Council of Soviet-American Friendship [CIAM Special Meeting, 20th May 1944. GTA ETH, 42-JLS-1-8/76].

34 Larson, Lönberg-Holm, Nelson and Weissmann were members of the Chapter's Technical Research Committee and the Programming and Planning Committee. The report was presented in July 1944 [CIAM Chapter Meetings, 25th June and 15th July 1944, H.H. Harris's circular letter, 30th June 1944. AEW, f.1.5].

35 The goal of CIAM 6 was the adoption of the Chart of the Principles of Reconstruction [CIAM Chapter Informal Meeting, 20th October 1944, CIAM Chapter proposal for the CIAM 6 theme. AEW, f. 1.5].

36 Papadaki, S. (1946) Letter to E. Weissmann, 25th February. AEW, f. 1.5.

37 CIAM 6 Documents. Bergamo 1947. GTA ETH, 42-AR-1-1/21.

38 Weissmann, E. (1943) Letter to S. Giedion, 16th March, Unofficial Meeting of Giedion, Lönberg-Holm, Sert, and Weissmann, 19th February 1943. AEW, f. 1.5; Strum, 2019: 198.

39 UN ECE, 1957

40 In the early 1950s, Asia alone had more than 100 million people living in slums with 1,000 inhabitants per square meter [Gartner-Medwin, 1952].

CONCLUSION

Ernest Weissmann refused the idea of an architect serving the investor and took over the responsible role of a builder of the new, more egalitarian society that would provide the deprived categories of the population with decent living conditions as early as in the late 1920s. In the 1920s and 1930s he already started to articulate his understanding of the architect's social role through the collaboration with Le Corbusier, the School of Public Health in Zagreb and a left-leaning fraction within CIAM. Weissmann adopted, developed, and implemented design and planning concepts and practices that remained a personal *modus operandi* throughout his career. Taking the demand for maximum economy and productivity into account, Weissmann always strived to develop the universal type of designs and programs that were also adaptable to each particular situation – to different resources, traditions, and workforce. When work methods were in question, he stood up for the self-help approach. Its aim was to straighten the local population, educate it (model buildings, type building plans, construction courses, film screenings, etc.), and make it more self-reliant in modernization and independent in improving their living conditions. In cooperation with the local community, Weissmann carried out his first construction – the People's Center in Pisarovina, with an outpatient clinic and public bath.

Weissmann's idea of *humane planning* defined in the 1930s also stood out from the CIAM discourse. It was not directed toward the technical aspects of urban planning, but rather toward its implementation, with a particular focus on land disposal, and coordination between economic, social, and spatial development. For Weissmann, urban planning was just a segment of a complex system of the development and construction of a sustainable living environment on various scales – from villages, housing communities, and cities to the regions, countries, and entire continents, aimed at preventing unplanned construction with fatal consequences for both the society and individuals. It was based on the neighborhood unit, rural reorganization, and the linear city, or rather a new regional planning unit that combined the village and the city into one whole.

In the early 1940s, Weissmann was granted the opportunity to put some of his ideas into practice. Thanks to the collaboration with Buckminster Fuller and SSA he took part in the production of lightweight prefabricated housing unit, Dymaxion Deployment Unit, and got employed in the Board of Economic

Warfare and UNRRA. The postwar reconstruction of Yugoslavia, Poland, Italy, China etc. gave him an opportunity to upgrade his “help the people to help themselves” approach. He participated in the implementation of reconstruction programs aimed at providing basic conditions for self-development, basic production, and educational and health care infrastructure.

However, Weissmann's efforts to introduce his concepts and methods an international scale through CIAM were not successful. In the 1930s CIAM refused his radical demands for the abolition of private property and in the 1940s it gave priority to the issue of synthesis in architecture at the expense of shelter and post-war reconstruction. As Weissmann claimed, as early as in the 1930s CIAM turned into an elite organization that was too professional, “abstract” and exclusively interested in developed countries – Western Europe, US and maybe USSR (Weissmann, 1984-1985: 34). Nevertheless, as a “practical idealist”, Weissmann remained committed to his goal and position of an “international civil servant” who did not stop believing “in peoples' equality and right for decent living conditions”.⁴¹ Thanks to his engagement as a director of the UN Sector for Housing, Urban Planning, and Regional Planning, his work contributed to the implementation of original concerns of pre-war “new architecture” to post-war reconstruction in the 1940s and development in the Global South in 1950s and 1960s.

[Translated by Lida Lamza]

⁴¹ Weissmann, G. (1987) Letter to O. Koenigsberger, 19th May. TFA.

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ILLUSTRATION SOURCES

- FIG. 1 PLANIĆ, 1932
 FIG. 2 Association of Croatian Architects / Udruženje hrvatskih arhitekata, Zagreb
 FIG. 3 Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb, Department of Architectural Technology and Building Science / Arhitektonski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Katedra za arhitektonske konstrukcije i zgradarstvo, Zagreb
 FIG. 4 School of Public Health Journal, 1931
 FIG. 5 UBU Gallery, Marc Dessauce Collection, Ernest Weissmann's Archive, f. 9.1, New York
 FIG. 6 Fondation Le Corbusier, D2-4-291, Paris
 FIG. 7 Het Nieuwe Instituut, Cornelis Van Eesteren Archive, EEST-IV-109, Rotterdam; Canadian Centre for Architecture, Wells Coates Bequest, MARS Papers, 130627, Montreal
 FIG. 8 UBU Gallery, Marc Dessauce Collection, Ernest Weissmann's Archive, f. 4.1, New York
 FIG. 9 UN DESA Journal, 1952

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