

# Panel Discussion I

with Ryan Fred Long, Raquel Franklin, Paola Ardizzola, Ulrich Hartung, and the Audience chaired by Titia Rixt Hoekstra



- [B] What do we understand by taking a stand regarding architecture and design, and particularly of the Bauhaus and Modernism?
- [C] How can we explore the kinds of stand taken by Bauhaus and Modernist architects and designers and their consistency?

### Titia Rixt Hoekstra

«taking a stand» as a concept

There is one thing that really struck me and that is the title of this conference, «Taking a stand?»: the concept of «taking a stand» and «*Haltung*». The first question that occurs to me is about how these architects that we talked about relate to the concept of *Haltung*, the concept of «taking a stand». I think this is actually a new and innovative question within architectural history, because we use to talk a lot about buildings, about architects and their oeuvre, their collection of buildings, but we do not discuss their actual *Haltung* very much, the actual position or attitude of the architects. I think this is a relevant question for the following reasons: These architects worked in a world that was full of ideology; Communism, incipient fascism, the world of capitalism, there were these huge ideological evocations and, at the same time, the architects themselves had a sort of ideological motivation, because they were planning and building for a «new world». And sometimes these ideologies from society matched the ideology of the architect and sometimes they did not match at all. I would like to ask all the speakers on this panel how these architects that you talked about defined the stand they took: How did they define their *Haltung* in a world that was defined to such an extent by ideology? What kind of stand did they take and how would you study that as a historian or an architectural historian? How would you go about analysing that kind of attitude?

[B] [C]

### Paola Ardizzola

I can talk about Bruno Taut. First, I have to say that he was an absolute outsider, which means that in all his career he never wanted to take a specific stand and that he never wanted to belong to any school. Probably we can assert that this is in itself a stand. He never participated in CIAM, he didn't want to develop a specific ideology, he didn't like the word ideology in general, because it implies the concept of being a follower of a pre-determined idea. He always specified the difference between ideology and idea, the latter free of any pre-established structure. He was just interested in expressing and sharing his ideas, and somehow he had this shy attitude of hiding behind his projects, so maybe not everybody knows that he is the one who built 10,000 housing units in Berlin in less than ten years. This attitude came from a belief in a sort of renewed medieval guilds approach, according to which the striking architecture and beauty at the service of the community must be anonymous. It is no coincidence that the first Weimar

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Bauhaus Programme in 1919 was characterized iconographically by Feininger's «cathedral of the future». Thanks to the *Siedlungen* [housing estates] he really changed the face of the city with his actions—and at that time nobody could have said the same—but nevertheless, he did not proclaim anything in relation to this. We must admit that he very much used writing as an effective means to convey new meanings and he wrote about 400 books, articles, essays etc, but none of them was a specific manifesto. The only manifesto we have from Bruno Taut is *Alpine Architektur* [*Alpine Architecture*] (1919), which was a manifesto against the war. On the other hand, if we want to get to know something about his stand in relation to what he did abroad, we should first take into consideration his attitude towards travelling and moving to other countries. As far as we know, he understood that as an opportunity. He wrote in his *Skizzenbuch*: Our land is where we build. That means he felt productive and positive abroad; where he had the chance to build, he did not feel like a stranger.

A case in point is the prolific work he carried out in Turkey in just two years. It is very significant that the political establishment in Turkey called on Bruno Taut to design the catafalque for the state funeral of Atatürk, the first president of the Turkish Republic, who took the country into modernity, and that they did not give this engagement to a Turkish architect: Taut somehow represented a synthesis between the modernity that Atatürk was pursuing and tradition. The same applies to the fact that he passed away there in December 1938, and even today is the only foreigner whose burial in the Istanbul Islamic monumental cemetery of Edirne Kapi was ever authorized.

While he was travelling to Japan, he wondered in a text he wrote: Is the journey going to be our homeland from this moment on? So fully aware of this new state, of these new conditions, he did some projects, but he could not build up anything; he was just concentrating on some furnishing design, interior designs. Nevertheless, he tried not only to take the best from that culture, but really to understand it deeply through his writings. That means if we want to answer the question of the stand he took, we have to state that he was always extremely emphatic with the new culture he had to face, paying a great deal of attention to localism and tradition in construction as something we can always learn from, especially in exile in Japan and in Turkey. He was always extremely empathetic, and I want to conclude by drawing your attention to an unpublished photo I saw at Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul

dialogue between modernity  
and tradition

relationship to traditions  
and cultures  
adapting architecture to  
local conditions

[B]

long ago and that shows the day, 10th November 1936, when Bruno Taut arrived in Turkey from Japan. On the photo, you see an official committee sent to welcome Bruno Taut and they are trying to interact with him. And Bruno Taut is looking in the other direction, where there are two farmers dressed according to the typical Ottoman tradition, let's say. So, he is more interested in the localism and the culture, that is how I interpret these photos, rather than in the official committee of welcome. Thus, this was Bruno Taut, always trying to understand really deeply. And this also relates to architecture, because many of his books, although written when he was still in Germany, refer to such a great extent to ancient and traditional architecture, not only to Western architecture. Before he travelled to Japan, he already knew about Japanese temples and the architecture of these Far East countries. He did not focus on the architectural object in itself, but he emphasized the process, in terms of the problem that architects had to solve and how they managed to achieve the final aim; he was interested in the process of how good architecture can be generated, in keeping with the specific needs which were required. As a matter of fact, Bruno Taut's work is difficult to define; that's why I have been studying his oeuvre for 25 years and still have not given up, because I'm still a beginner with him.

learning from design processes

#### Titia Rixt Hoekstra

To summarize: we can observe a tension with regard to the architects we talked about: On the one hand, they showed their colours but, on the other hand, many of them had to be productive in very diverse contexts and because of that it wasn't always so opportune to take a very definite stand; can I put it like this?

complexity of taking a stand

#### Ryan Fred Long

Yes, I think speaking about how difficult it is to take a stand is a helpful way of thinking about Hannes Meyer in Mexico. Certainly, he took a stand and that had to do with collectivity and the popular. When he was in Mexico, he was involved with the people's graphic workshop that took a stand in a way against another very well-known and—today much better known—Mexican tradition, which is the Muralist tradition. The people's graphic workshop could be more political, more immediate, could respond more directly to certain problems and, of course, could produce things that people could afford and they could circulate much more easily, so I think that working together with the people's graphic workshop

collectivist ethos

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showed that collectivity and then that type of work that the print-makers could do with the muralists showed a certain amount of the popular. And certainly, Hannes Meyer took a stand when he was in Mexico against Fascism, as part of the pro-German cultural league there. He helped the Taller de Gráfica Popular design many prints, he organized a lecture series, he was the photo editor of «El libro negro del terror nazi en Europa», [The Black Book of Nazi Terror in Europe] (Mexico City 1943), which was a Peruvian-Mexican-Yugoslavian co-production, which is quite fascinating to think of. Nevertheless, something that really shows how simply taking a stand is very complicated is that under Hannes Meyer's direction the Taller de Gráfica Popular, the people's graphic workshop, became financially feasible for the first time—and perhaps it was most stable under Hannes Meyers' directorship during its lifetime from the late Thirties to more or less the late Sixties and early Seventies—because as a Communist Hannes Meyer also understood the radius of capitalism. He encouraged the people's graphic workshop members to create fine art prints and bind them in very expensive books and sell them to markets where they could be purchased. So, Hannes Meyer certainly represents the complicated nature of taking a stand in such a context.

complexity of taking a stand

Titia Rixt Hoekstra

OK, to be a Communist you sometimes need to be a little bit capitalist—sounds a bit like opportunism.

Ulrich Hartung

- [C] Richard Paulick started out as an architect closely associated with the Bauhaus. He worked in Walter Gropius' architectural office and was closely linked to his ideas and those of Bauhaus. In Shanghai, however, he could not build. His activities involved, on the one hand, furniture construction and Bauhaus-style interior decoration, which was the most superficial side of the Bauhaus, and on the other hand, he could engage with its most interesting side, namely planning activity or, to be more precise, social planning. Even if this had perhaps not been taught at the Bauhaus during Gropius' time, I think it would have permeated the Bauhaus and construction and planning activities in this context: Paulick would already have gained insights along those lines in Gropius' architectural office while working on the Dessau-Törten housing estate. Then he had perhaps also picked up something from Hannes Meyer and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. I'd like in this

context to mention the plans for a workers' housing estate for the Junkers-Werke (1930/32) commissioned by Hugo Junkers from the Bauhaus in Dessau and developed under the direction of Bauhaus Director Mies van der Rohe and urban planner Ludwig Hilbersheimer. This modern Bauhaus housing estate project set new standards in housing construction in terms of sociology, economics, and ecology. However, the subsequent political changes meant the planned housing estate was not built.

In other words, Paulick was able to gain indirect planning experience, gleaned concrete experience as a left-wing architect, perhaps not as a Communist, but as a left-wing architect in the circle of young architects, Hans Poelzig's pupils, in Berlin. In other words, certain experiences were conceivable in this field of social planning. When he returned to the GDR, he adapted stylistically to the architectural doctrine of traditionalism; he seems to have grudgingly accepted this in order to be able to continue building as a left-wing architect with a social focus, as he immediately saw the possibilities that Stalinallee with its over 2,000 apartments afforded in terms of planning a large-scale social building programme. This was, after all, not the first housing construction programme that Erich Honecker launched in 1972. Large-scale social planning, including the relevant infrastructure, throughout the entire GDR—those were the new great possibilities that Paulick wanted to participate in. In stylistic terms he adapted, which was certainly not what he wanted initially. There is a very well-known statement he made, in which he described the turret of a Moscow high-rise hotel as a «feudalistic fool's cap» and refused to do anything similar. That entailed turning against hierarchical architecture, its symmetry, the subordination of parts to a dominant idea and its tendency to embellish everything. That is an important point, for modern architecture rejects any hierarchy of forms. This is now a quite traditional design analysis, which is a tool that I continue to consider important.

Nevertheless, he had to adapt if he wanted to build in the GDR. And he did so in a clever—I would almost say, conceptual—way in his historicizing buildings; they are consistently symmetrical, they also incorporate historicizing details, but at the same time every single aspect is considered in the overall design, in a spirit of practicability, in no way in terms of functionality. The floor plans, for example, in the C-blocks, are floor plans that were already used in 1908 in the apartment building in Berlin-Friedrichshain where I lived for years. In other ways, a kind of set of

planning and building in the gdr  
doctrine of «national tradition»

complexity of taking a stand

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three: three apartments, one in the middle, two on the side, each with two rooms; these are completely conventional floor plans. The apartments are not particularly large either. But what is specific is the development of the entire complex, the collectivist aspect of the architecture as a grand palace, as a gigantic palazzo, also couched as a palazzo stylistically, with this great Neo-Renaissance attitude.

- [C] After 1956 he had a hard time moving away from this attitude that he had adopted. It was not easy for him. He had adapted and to that end had gained a new point of view, and it was not easy for him to abandon it again, to adopt yet another attitude. However, he did in several steps reacquire this Bauhaus tradition that he had always held on to. There is a text by him from 1950 in which he calls for the industrialization of building, in direct succession to Gropius' *Baukasten* from 1922 and also with the statement that one avoids monotony not by producing a minimal range but instead through an optimal range with variations. These are ideas developed by Gropius that form part of the canon and Paulick has internalized this canon. This is one of Gropius' men, OK, but one who has made new use of his ideas or attempted to do so, also with regard to the colour scheme, as we saw in the view of Halle-Neustadt. And he was successful in that respect in Halle, at least quantitatively.

industrialized building  
rationalizing housing construction

#### Titia Rixt Hoekstra

Would it be right to formulate the conflict situation as follows: On the one hand, you can see an ideology that is implicit to design and to architecture, which is Bauhaus, and it is confronted with the ideology of a state system or an ideal. Paulick tried to be faithful to the Bauhaus heritage, to cast off all these ideological state processes, and to continue that legacy—I do not know if you would agree.

#### Ulrich Hartung

No, that is not correct. He officially disowned the Bauhaus. You had to under Stalinism. And that is indeed what he did. There are statements where he stated quite clearly something along the lines that there were people who came into the world after a year of the preliminary course and six months of the Bauhaus canteen and their results were just as bad everywhere as we see today. Those are nasty comments and there is no excuse for them. There are a few remarks about the architecture discussion that are terrible, and I am afraid they were largely meant seriously. In the



[N] How do our own cultural, social, and political beliefs and stances affect our understanding of the Bauhaus, Modernism, and modernity?

complexity of taking a stand

meantime, he had concluded his engagement with the Bauhaus. And that made it all the more difficult for him to start a reconstruction in his head and to refer to it again. Because he realized, and this was the objective aspect, that it was only possible to get to grips aesthetically with a large number of buildings—a social building programme—by drawing on Bauhaus ideas on form, colour, variation, and functionality. That was the conclusion that he implicitly, I would say, drew in the 1960s. But not explicitly. These conflicts and how harsh they were should not be underestimated. Paulick is not some kind of thoroughgoing hero. Absolutely not. But he worked intelligently on contributing to modernism.

Let me point out once again here that I have problems with representations that focus too much on the negative and are always in danger of overlooking things in the process. I think the tendency to focus on the negative is at least very difficult.

#### Simone Hain

marginal counter-history

I would just like make a comment. I appreciate this moment very much. For me it means that the Bauhaus-Archiv becomes a marketplace for counter histories, and this is a moment I would like to say thank you for, to everybody who was involved in programming this moment. Let me say it again: We find ourselves in the 100th year after the Bauhaus was founded and are now coming to a point, in November at the very end of the centenary year, where we are, so to speak, moving into a conversation with each other, where the focus is not on icons, objects, creativity; with the idea of *Haltung* or attitude as a bridging link we are talking about what it is that we actually belong to as researchers, and as scholars too: the brotherhood of mankind.

being contemporary with the world vs. european ideologies of progress

[N]

#### Titia Rixt Hoekstra

architectural historiography of modernism

complexity of taking a stand

To sum it up, if we use labels like «*Haltung*» or «taking a stand» in the historiography of modern architecture and for instance associate Communism with Hannes Meyer, we always should bear in mind how incredibly complex these positions are, these attitudes, this taking a stand, and that these labels often do not fully describe the complexity of the situations they encompass. Let us start taking questions from the audience now.

#### David Maulén de los Reyes

Raquel, I have a little question for you, you told us that Hannes Meyer was not the same in the 1940s. I remember, in an earlier

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conference you said he was not the same person with the Johannes Pestalozzi influence, was not the same person with the influence of logical positivism in Dessau, he changed in the early 1940s. Can you explain this epistemological change, please?

Raquel Franklin

- [C] Well, of course there are certain aspects of his trajectory that he preserves throughout his entire life but his ideology changes in that at some point he radicalizes to the left. So, in 1927 for example, he wrote a letter to one of his friends (Willi Baumeister) saying: I feel that I am slipping towards the left; so even «The New World»<sup>1</sup> seems to me soft and effeminate. That was exactly a week before he wrote to Gropius how he was going to teach architecture at the Bauhaus praising «The New World». And then he got into Marxism at the time he was in the Bauhaus, after being challenged by one of his students to do so. In the Soviet Union he then embraced Communism, but he was not even a member of the Communist Party there. It was only after he got back to Switzerland that he joined the Communist Party and then, in Mexico, he absolutely dealt with the issue of Communism through his relationship to the Mexican Communist Party and to the German Communist exiles. For example, the altercation he had with Paul Merker regarding his political position as a Swiss citizen towards Nazism, or the position the German Communist Party in Mexican exile should play with regards to the Soviet Union and the Mexican Communist Party. So, it was all about politics, but yes, he radicalized over the years, and especially after being in the Soviet Union.

Chin-Wei Chang

I have some specific questions regarding Richard Paulick. Ulrich Hartung, you mentioned his career in Shanghai, China. For me, Paulick is not the typical *Bauhäusler*, because he was neither trained nor taught there, but he is an architect connected with the Bauhaus. I am wondering what enabled him to work in the fields of interior design and urban planning in China, but not that much as an architect. Could you just explain the situation during that specific period of time, the 1930s and 1940s, with regard to the Shanghai building market, because I know that if Paulick worked there, he had to compete with a lot of foreign architects in Shanghai, and, probably hardest of all, he had to compete with the first generation of Chinese architects, who had returned to their Motherland. Maybe the reason why he worked as an interior designer

or urban planner was that it was very hard to get business as architect, or do you know any other reasons? And last but not least, what brought him to teach at the university in Shanghai, St. John's University, because I know that during that period Paulick wrote a letter to Gropius and it seems to me that he didn't have a good time in Shanghai, especially during his teaching there. Do you know why?

Ulrich Hartung

There is no easy answer to this question. I would say that he mentioned—not in this letter, but in another letter to a friend in East Germany around 1949—that he had no career in Shanghai, no career as an architect. Of course, the problem was, as you already mentioned, that the Shanghai building market was highly competitive and he had to compete with the other foreign architects and the Chinese architects, and it was a special situation under the rule of Chiang Kai-shek. But he could work as a planner and he could collect a lot of knowledge about planning in this situation which helped him later in the GDR. However, Paulick made exaggerated statements when depicting this time. He claimed that he had built several skyscrapers there and had done various things that turned out not to be true. I have to say that I owe all this information to Eduard Kögel's account, which takes a very critical approach, because I did not research Paulick in China myself.

Eduard Kögel<sup>2</sup>

Richard Paulick arrived in Shanghai in 1933 without any financial reserves and was able to find work as a designer in the interior design firm *the modern home* through his former fellow student Rudolf Hamburger. It would not have been possible to establish his own office at that time, as the world economic crisis had arrived in Shanghai, with a slight time lag, and he would have needed a good network of both Chinese and foreign clients. Paulick was certainly glad that from 1934 he was able to work as an interior designer in tycoon Victor Sassoon's successor company *modern home* for another two years. When Sassoon dissolved the company in 1936, Paulick continued the business under the name *modern homes* with his brother Rudolf and Hans Werther, a Bauhochschule Weimar graduate. Hans Werther already had experience with building construction in Shanghai at this time but committed suicide shortly after this period. For the Paulick brothers, continuity in interior design work was a secure source

of income, as in this respect they had a network among foreigners in Shanghai. When the Sino-Japanese War began in Summer 1937, opportunities for building construction dried up until war ended in Autumn 1945.

Paulick owed his appointment as Professor of Interior Design to Huang Zuoshen, who was Gropius' first Chinese student to return to China shortly before the outbreak of the Pacific War. There was no communication with Gropius until 1946. In 1943, when Paulick was appointed Professor of Interior Design at the University of St. John's, which was run by American missionary societies, he insisted on a simultaneous professorship for urban planning, which was also approved, although he had nothing to demonstrate his credentials in this subject. His arguments that China would urgently need planners after the war were obviously plausible. At the same time, in 1943, together with his brother, he founded *Paulick & Paulick architects and engineers*, which, however, only had a chance to build small air raid shelters. In 1946/47, this company received several larger architectural commissions, for example for railway stations or a university campus. No further projects were implemented due to inflation and the incipient civil war between the National Government of Chiang Kai-shek and the People's Liberation Army of the Communists under Mao Zedong. As Paulick lost his German citizenship during the war, as a stateless refugee he could not travel freely in the country even after the war. This limited his business activities to the region between Shanghai and the capital Nanjing, where his brother Rudolf ran a branch for *modern homes* in 1946/47. There is a villa in Shanghai (which after 1949 was used as a state guesthouse by the Communist Party of China), which in its rustic materiality could have borrowed some aspects from Frank Lloyd Wright or from Marcel Breuer, and which Chinese authors claim Paulick designed. However, this is unclear, as this building does not appear in Paulick's estate. On the other hand, the Austrian architect Hans Hajek, who also taught as a professor at St. John's, claims to have designed this villa. I asked one of Paulick's collaborators, Li Dehua, about this, and we could not clarify unambiguously whether Paulick was only responsible for the interior design or whether his involvement extended beyond that. He is not mentioned in the documents in the archive in Shanghai, which Li Dehua could not explain despite having worked on the project himself. Paulick seems to have been involved somehow, but his role remains unclear.

In the Forties, Paulick dealt intensively with the question of a «modern» architectural style, also putting questions to Gropius about this (1941 and 1945), although Gropius did not reply. After 1945, Paulick «discovered» Marcel Breuer's new buildings in the USA in American magazines and viewed them as the logical extrapolation of ideas from the Bauhaus.

#### Ronny Schüler

Paola, thank you for the outline of Bruno Taut's contributions in Turkey. Looking from the perspective of research focused on Palestine and Israel, Turkey is always like a sort of mirror that functions as a counter example regarding modes of transfer and perception. And I was wondering whether these invitations to Turkey of German architects, artists, teachers was something that was mainly promoted by the elite, by the government, so that it was a sort of top-down transfer process, and I was wondering how the local architectural scene, the Turkish architects, reacted to that? Because we are discussing processes of transfer and it is like a process of tensions between push and pull, between appropriation and rejection and obviously that works differently in Palestine, so I was wondering how it was experienced in Turkey at that period.

#### Paola Ardizzola

This is really a very interesting question. First, there was a precedent concerning the official relationship between Germany and Turkey. And indeed, in the years of the First World War, there were already very intense exchanges. And from the cultural point of view, we have a specific reference to the competition for the German-Turkish House of Friendship (the project was not realized). This was in 1916, many German architects participated in it—among them, Hans Poelzig, Bruno Taut himself, etc. so there was somehow already a very sound political relationship between the two countries. And for instance, as you know, German and the Turkish politicians were trying at that time to create this famous railway, the train from Berlin to Baghdad for specific trade exchanges. Therefore, there was also a policy related to specific trade exchanges. On the one hand, that was the reason. On the other hand, it was because many architects—who were accused of Bolshevism, for instance, like Bruno Taut or maybe some Jewish architects—were forced to flee; Walter Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe left Western Europe with regular passports, but other architects were forced to flee eastward. And Turkey was desperately

processes of transfer, translation,  
and transformation

local impact of transfer processes

exchange processes  
power relations and geopolitics

[C] How can we explore the kinds of stand taken by Bauhaus and Modernist architects and designers and their consistency?

need for a new image  
national identity construction

working conditions and  
relationships

local impact of transfer processes

in need of these new ideas to really build a new national image; it was a perfect match and perfect timing. However, local architects, who had mostly been trained in Europe, had a problem with this competition from German architects and they criticized them in journals—they wouldn't know the Turkish culture, so they wouldn't have the right to build and to be so relevant instead of them. It was therefore really a very conflictual time. And it is very interesting to observe that Bruno Taut, when he was teaching at the university, was happy to have Turkish assistants, because he wanted to share and develop a methodology within the Turkish milieu, whereas he only wanted assistance from Germany for his buildings, mainly schools and his famous Faculty of History, Geography and Languages in Ankara. To be more precise: He did not trust Turkish architects. And indeed, you know, he called Franz Hillinger and other assistants that were still in Germany. So, for a while it was really a big conflict. But it is interesting, because this school type that he invented somehow became the typology that you can find all over Turkey, especially for high schools. The same applies to his ideas of a new pedagogy according to Montessori and Steiner, etc., which had an important impact on the society and pedagogy of a Turkish establishment.

#### Member of audience

I want to ask Professor Long: As we know and debate, Hannes Meyer's career started in the First World War and extended to the Second World War and then, finally, the Third World. If you are concerned with modernity, is there any major change of attitude, or to be more precise, I would like to know about his attitude to Mexico compared to the Soviet Union.

#### Ryan Fred Long

I am afraid I guess I do not have a really good answer to that question. I do not know how much his attitude towards those different places changed. Frankly, I do not know very much at all about Hannes Meyer's time in the Soviet Union. What interests me, and maybe this helps to answer your question to some extent, is the tension between his internationalism or universalism as really very clearly described in «Die Neue Welt», the manifesto from 1926, where he stated that the new technology had freed «our local sense», and the completely different attitude during his time in Dessau, expressed by the notion of «building as destiny» and the close relationship of building with landscape which is to be found

tension between universalism  
and regionalism

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and regionalism

in *Bauhaus and Society* (1929) as well as in the task of designing and building schools all over Mexico. And I am interested in the strong conflict between Universalism and Regionalism—not Universalism and Nation, because a region can be super-national or transnational but also subnational and within a nation-state. And I think what Hannes Meyer brings to scholars of Mexican history and Mexican architecture and Mexican visual art and many other things is that kind of joint or disjoint between the Universal and the Regional. In a context like Turkey, I suppose, that is always trying to define itself in the face of Europe and in Mexico as a result of its own revolution, which brought a large degree of optimism to certain populations for a relatively short amount of time, and so I'm sorry, I can't answer this specific question, but that's why Hannes Meyer and regionalism in Mexico is particularly interesting to me. I am hoping to do a lot more research on the letters he wrote when he lived in Mexico to get an impression of what his thoughts about Mexico were and then to compare them to the Soviet Union.

#### Raquel Franklin

complexity of taking a stand

working conditions and  
relationships

Well, speaking of his attitude towards Mexico and the Mexicans, it is quite paradoxical, because he refers, on the one hand, to the indigenous people in such a wonderful way, as noble, truthful, and honest and, on the other, refers to mixed race people—that is, mainly the majority of the Mexican people—as corrupt, as the ugliest people he has ever seen in his life. He said: I have never experienced such a land in which so much corruption is to be found, etc. And I believe he never felt at home. He never wanted to make Mexico his permanent home; he saw it as a temporary stage before coming back to Europe and contributing to the reconstruction of whatever was going to happen in the war. But he never saw Mexico as a true option.

Let me just add something with respect to your remarks about the school programme. Meyer was, I would say, irrelevant to the school programme. It was organized in three different levels. There was mixed participation from the states, the municipalities and even individuals who contributed to construction of the schools, but the programme was organized to have specifically one Mexican architect for each of the states of Mexico. Meyer was called on only to organize an exhibition of the works of CAP-FCE [Management Committee of the Federal School Construction Programme] in the Palace of Fine Arts [Palacio de Bellas Artes].

national identity construction

He said: My friends or colleagues, architects, called me because they knew that I was the only one who was able to organize an exhibition in such a short period of time; it was around two weeks, and that's why they called me. And then they asked him to be the editor of that catalogue. The exhibition was in 1945 and it was about the schools already built and those in the process of being constructed for the 1946 deadline. And then he just took on that role. Speaking of that idea of the national and international, it was not brought by Meyer but came from the Mexican architectural establishment (*Sociedad de Arquitectos Mexicanos*), which in 1933 organized a conference to speak about what Mexican architecture should look like. There was a huge debate at that point regarding the different ways the participants understood Mexican identity. One way was just to go back to the indigenous roots of Mexicanity and say, OK, this is where we are coming from. Another approach said: Well we need to do Neo-Baroque architecture, because that represents the colonial period and we are its outcome. A third one took Art Deco as a way of expressing Mexican Modernity and the fourth one, which included Juan O'Gorman, took the radical position of Rationalism. That meant it was an ongoing debate by the time Meyer got to the country. In contrast to CAPFCE, in the Taller de Gráfica Popular, he actually served as what I would say was an ideological leader for the artists in the workshop.

## Notes

1 Hannes Meyer, «Die Neue Welt», in: *Das Werk*, 13 (1926), 7, pp. 205 ff., <https://www.cloud-cuckoo.net/openarchive/Autoren/Meyer/Meyer1926.htm> (Consulted March 16, 2020). [English translation Hannes

Mayer, «The New World», in: Claude Schnaidt, *Hannes Meyer: Buildings, Projects and Writings*, London 1965, pp. 91 ff.]  
 2 Eduard Kögel, who could not attend the symposium, answered the question subsequently for the publication. We would like to thank him for this.