

Architecture in the Developing World: Algiers, Chandigarh, Brasilia, and Beyond

Formation of the International Congress of Modern Architects (CIAM – Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) in 1928 at La Sarraz, Switzerland, following on the heels of the successful 1927 exhibition of new, avant-garde housing by architects of the Deutscher Werkbund at the **Weissenhofsiedlung** in Stuttgart, Germany. The Swiss noblewoman Hélène de Mandrot played host to 24 leading architects from a dozen different European countries and the U.S., among them Le Corbusier, the German Ernst May, and many others. The "La Sarraz Declaration" called for the abolition of the classically oriented Beaux Arts system of architectural design in favor of an education more closely aligned with Taylorism, standardization, and the general economic system of the 20th century. See Frederick Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, 1911: a scientific approach to accurately measuring time per individual task in organizing the industrial workday and workplace, which led to increasing competitiveness through factory efficiency studies. In domestic architecture: Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, "**Frankfurt kitchen**," which she developed using a stopwatch and time and motion studies for an array of cooking and cleaning activities. Popular with CIAM Swiss president Karl Moser and Swiss CIAM secretary general Sigfried Giedion. Constant general leadership role of Le Corbusier throughout CIAM's 3 decades of influence. Organization concentrated especially on urbanism and planning, until its demise in 1959, when a group of CIAM "youth members," led by Alison and Peter Smithson of Britain and Aldo van Eyck of the Netherlands, successfully argued that the group abandon the name "CIAM." On a conference/round-trip cruise from Athens to Marseilles in summer 1933, comparative analyses of 33 modern cities and their plans led to a document, *The Athens Charter*, which emphasized "four functions:" dwelling, work, recreation, and transportation. These became semi-official categories for CIAM planners and architects. However, Nazi architecture such as Albert Speer's **plan for Berlin** and the huge **Hall of the People** in Berlin (1936), combined with Soviet "socialist realist" architecture under Stalin (exemplified by Boris Iofan's **Palace of the Soviets** in Moscow of 1931 - winning competition entry), curtailed CIAM influence in Europe. Compare Iofan's work to the submission by Le Corbusier in 1931, which reflected the influence of Russian Constructivist **Project for a Monument to the Third International**, by Vladimir Tatlin, 1919, Moscow. No CIAM conferences took place again until 1947 due to WWII.

CIAM Influence: The whole philosophy of having small, avant-garde groups of like-minded architects develop urbanistic doctrines, publish architectural magazines, and disseminate ideas through networks of visiting design teaching positions is owed in no small part to CIAM. Le Corbusier works with a small team that includes his cousin, Pierre Jeanneret, to develop the 1933 "**Plan Obus**" for Algiers; this project demonstrates Le Corbusier's superimposition of modern forms onto the old city, or Casbah: note the long arching roadway that includes housing - his viaduct city - connecting central Algiers to its suburbs. The curvilinear complex of housing in the heights accesses the waterfront business district via an elevated highway bypassing the Casbah.

Actual projects that took the CIAM modernist program abroad: **Chandigarh** Capital City and Capitol Complex for new state of the Punjab in India, founded 1951 following independence of India and establishment of Pakistan. Designed by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, 1951, who replaced Maxwell Fry, constructed 1951-1964. Sculptural roughcast concrete (*beton brut*), primitivist sculptural forms set on a rational plan to symbolize independence and sophistication of a new state capital for the state of Punjab, after its traditional capital, Lahore, went into the making of the brand new nation of Pakistan in 1947. Note buildings: Le Corbusier, **Hall of Assembly** at Chandigarh; "**The Open Hand**," monumental sculptural symbol for the new capital, Chandigarh, 1960; **Court of Justice**; **Secretariat building**.

Brasilia, new capital for Brazil, master plan by Lucio Costa, 1956, in shape of a bird or airplane. Costa wrote: "The master plan is "born of a primary gesture that signals a place or takes possession of it. Two axes that cross at right angles, that is to say, making the sign of the cross."

Major capital buildings by Oscar Niemeyer, who had earlier collaborated with Le Corbusier on the Brazilian Ministry of Health and Education in Rio de Janeiro in 1936. Niemeyer seeks beauty and harmony of sculptural forms in Brasilia's Presidential Palace, completed 1959, and the **National Congress building**, 1958-1960. Dual high rises, shallow cupola (**House of Deputies**), and bowl (**Senate**) are at the apex of the monumental axis of the capital. CIAM modernism in service of United Nations and monument landscapes: Kenzo Tange, **Peace Center**, Hiroshima, Japan, 1950-56. Wallace Harrison and Max Abramovitz, **United Nations Headquarters**, New York, 1947-50; Tower = offices for ambassadors/delegates; Sloping building = general assembly building.