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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

PRAGMATIC MODERNISM: PROJECT [*PROJEKT*] AND POLISH DESIGN, 1956-1970

Recently Scholars of design history began to recognize the phenomenon of Socialist Modernism, the return to modernist aesthetics to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the thaw, the disavowal of Stalinist policies by Nikita Khrushchev after the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party in February of 1956 and the resulting turn away from Socialist Realism, a historicist method in architecture that expressed socialist values, which the Stalinist favored. Scholars of art and design argued that Socialist Modernism in Poland constituted an affirmation of the party's authority and that of the political system because designers who practiced it focused on abstract form and technological experiments. Unlike the modernism of the early 20th century, which followed a utopian ideology to ensure universal well being through art and design, it focused on the aesthetics of elementary form. However, based on this research, I investigated the journal *Projekt* of the main state-sponsored publisher in the years, 1956-1970. I have found that its contributors practiced a pragmatic modernism. Although they focused on technological experiments and utilized abstract form, failing to engage in politics, the designers that surrounded *Projekt* attempted to create user center design that fostered the well being of man, avant-garde values that the 1920s and 1930s functional modernist groups of Central and Eastern advocated. Therefore, following a period of Socialist Realism (1948-1956) in Poland, *Projekt* advocated for avant-garde values in design while ignoring the political situation, therefore fulfilling a pragmatic site in which it tolerated the authoritarian party, but argued for user based, socially conscious design that connected it to like minded designers in the west.

KEY WORDS: Socialist Modernism, Socialist Realism, *Projekt*, Poland, thaw

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PRAGMATIC MODERNISM: PROJECT [*PROJEKT*] AND POLISH DESIGN,
1956-1970

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THESIS

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The Graduate School
University of Kentucky

2011

PRAGMATIC MODERNISM: PROJECT [*PROJEKT*] AND POLISH DESIGN,
1956-1970

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College Fine Arts at the University of Kentucky

By

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2011

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TO MY MOTHER, EWA CZERWIŃSKA

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The following thesis resulted from the direction of Victor Margolin, design historian, who suggested that I continue my education in art history at the graduate level and specialize in Eastern European art and design. I credit him with my continuing drive to achieve a high level of scholarship in the field as well as the suggestion to look at the journal, *Projekt*, the focus of this thesis. My Thesis Chair, Anna Brzyski, exemplifies the scholarship in Eastern European art history to which I aspire and the anti-canonical approach to the study of art history that informs this and other projects. In addition, Robert Jensen whose research and teaching continue to inspire my pedagogical goals and remain a credit to this university provided timely and instructive comments and evaluation, allowing me to complete this project. Jerzy Rozenberg allowed me the opportunity to research the Polish groups of Blok and Praesens in his Constructivism course, which led to the composition of the first chapter.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In April 1956, the year of Khrushchev's secret speech that ended the years of Stalinism in Poland and signaled the beginning of the so-called thaw, a new design journal began publication in Poland. Co-founded by professors Jerzy Hryniewiecki, architect, urbanist, and since 1946 the professor of the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute, and Józef Mroszczak, a graphic designer who lectured at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, among others, the magazine began publication under the small Warsaw publisher, Art (*Sztuka*), transferring to Arcades (*Arkady*) in 1957 after only two issues. Jerzy Hryniewiecki served as the editor of the magazine while Mroszczak contributed articles on design and architecture theory, reporting on Polish and international projects. Irena Huml, an art historian who specialized in decorative art, and Wanda Filipowiczowa, the director of the Institute of Industrial Design (*Institut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*), IWP, contributed reportage, criticism, and commentary. The magazine continued publication through various publishers until 2003.

By 1960 *Projekt* constituted one of the main publishing efforts of Graphic Arts Publishers (*Wydawnictwo Artystyczno Graficzne*) or WAG. Even though the magazine tended to focus on formal design principles, its editors remained interested in improving the function of the buildings in order to better serve the structures' users. Many of the designers and architects who collaborated with *Projekt* explored structural possibilities in architecture in order to solve the pressing problems of the day. These problems varied from overpopulation to the appropriate separation of the industrial and residential districts within the city. In industrial design, Polish professionals sought the appropriate

program that would allow for the creation of the synthetic environment that fostered psychological and emotional well being. At the same time the designers were also interested in reconnecting with the international scene, especially the west.

This study uses *Projekt*, the main design journal in Poland during the period from 1956 to 1970, as a case study of a pragmatic approach to modernism, which was the hallmark of a phenomenon that other scholars have referred to as Socialist Modernism.¹ Although it argued for socially conscious design, like the rest of the profession, the journal failed to agitate for political change, remaining in a depoliticized state. In this way, *Projekt* played into the party's idea of allowing cultural autonomy as long as the party's authority remained intact and fostered a depoliticized notion of functionalism. It played into the party's goal of utilizing the functionalist aesthetic in architecture in order to appear successful in comparison to the West and valued its forms for lack of specific social meaning, which the architects could have utilized to subvert the authority of the party. But, by advocating for design that expressed avant-garde notions, specifically the ability of art to create a novel basis for life, the magazine attempted to foster a relationship with the profession internationally, especially with the West. Therefore, *Projekt* promoted a 'pragmatic' notion of modernism and functionalism.

Projekt not only looked westward, attempting to connect Polish design with international design trends, but also championed architects such as Oskar Hansen, whose theory of 'open form' undermined both rigid modernism and the image-oriented theory behind Socialist Realism, and designers like Andrzej Pawłowski, who promoted the idea

¹ Reid, Susan E. "Communist Comfort: Socialist Modernism and the Making of Cosey Homes in the Khrushchev Era." *Gender & History* 21, no. 3 (November 2009): 465-498. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed December 26, 2010), 465.

of socially conscious design, also embraced by Thomas Maldonado and the Ulm School of Design (*Hochschule für Gestaltung*) in Ulm, Germany (West Germany at the time).

Polish design following the thaw of 1956 and the functional modernism that resulted after the relatively short period of Socialist Realism, 1949-1956, came under the scrutiny of art and design historians relatively recently. Scholars such as David Crowley and Piotr Piotrowski began to characterize the modernist design and the preceding Socialist Realist period. Their research fit into the literature concerning the nature of Modernism in Eastern Europe during the Khrushchev era; it undermined the idea, which prevailed during the period itself, that Modernism belonged solely to the west, working to characterize said modernist design as focused on the user and the creation of popular design.² Both David Crowley and Piotrowski characterized the Polish adoption of modernism or the international style as complacent in preserving the party's authority and structuring its cultural and ideological program. According to Crowley, Polish architecture of the post-thaw period adopted modernism because architects and the party considered it politically neutral. Apparently, the abstract form of modernist design carried little specific cultural or social messages, failing to undermine the authority of the party. For the party, modernism in architecture and consumer culture that drove

² Reid, Susan Emily Crowley David, ed. *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*. Oxford: New York, 2000; Crowley, David, and Susan Emily Reid. *Socialist Spaces : Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*. New York, NY: Berg Publishers, 2002; Crowley, David, and Jane Pavitt. *Cold War Modern : Design 1945-1970*. London: V&A, 2008; Piotrowski, Piotr. *In the Shadow of Yalta : Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989*. London: Reaktion, 2009; Piotrowski, Piotr. "Modernism and Socialist Culture: Polish Art in the late 1950s." In *Style and Socialism. Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*, edited by S. E. Reid, D. Crowley, 133-148. Oxford & New York : Berg Publishers, 2000.

industrial design became a chance to match the West, proving the technological prowess and the possible abundance of a socialist state.³

Piotrowski also sees Polish art and design following the thaw as an exercise in *depoliticization* that jettisoned avant-garde values, focusing on universals that ignored the specific social and political situation. In “Modernism and Socialist Culture: Polish Art in the Late 1950s,” Piotrowski argued that the idea of art as autonomous practice, one that did not have an explicit social function and emphasized pictorial values, pushed the possibility of social and political involvement to the sidelines in favor of universal principles. In essence, the communist system that emerged during the thaw under Władysław Gomułka tolerated contemporary art and design, but with the condition that artists and designers would not involve themselves in politics or criticize the ‘power system.’ Piotrowski described the contemporary art and design that emerged in the late 1950s in Poland as complacent and constituting “a conservative tradition supporting modernist post-Stalinist regimes.”⁴

In the article “Building the World Anew” in the *Journal of Design History*, Crowley moved past the definition of thaw design in Poland as de-politicized or complacent in the party’s ideological program. Crowley observed that designers in Poland “clearly concerned [themselves] with issues surrounding the nature of modernity and the development of popular and socially useful designs like many other designers in the rest of the world,” despite the ideology set by the party.⁵ *Projekt* represented this face

³ David Crowley, "Building the World Anew: Design in Stalinist and Post-Stalinist Poland." *Journal of Design History* 7, no. 3 (1994), 198.

⁴ Piotr Piotrowski, “Modernism and Socialist Culture: Polish art in the late 1950s” in Susan Emily Reid and David Crowley. *Style and Socialism : Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* Oxford: (New York, 2000), 145.

⁵ Crowley, "Building the World Anew: Design in Stalinist and Post-Stalinist Poland," 201.

of the of Polish thaw modern design, attempting to create socially useful and popular designs that aimed to better the physical and psychological well being of its users, even though the treatment of the magazine in the literature proved limited.

Scholars like Crowley and Piotrowski mentioned the magazine in passing in certain articles and books, characterizing it as a forum that followed the trends of the day and expressed technocratic and positivist tendencies. For them, *Projekt* promoted depoliticized functionalism and modernism. Crowley viewed the magazine as part of the experimental nature of post-war Eastern European Modernism. In studying the technological possibilities in design, the architects and designers appeared to concern themselves with technological possibilities of modernist architecture, believing that it could produce useful, even life-altering designs.⁶ In Crowley's view, like Polish architects and designers, the magazine adopted the idea of designer as a formalist who concerned him or herself largely with form and material. He mentioned that the magazine's articles focused on "abstractions" and adapted "buzzwords" such as "geometry and organic structures" in its attempt to reject theory in favor of rationality.⁷

Piotr Piotrowski mentioned the magazine in passing in *Avant-Garde in the Shadow of Yalta*, characterizing it as a "forum of analytical critique of art" that argued from the "modernistic...or rather 'formalistic'" point of view.⁸ Piotrowski identified *Art Review (Przegląd Artystyczny)* as the most serious forum of artistic critique, and placed *Graphic Art (Plastyka)*, *Structures (Struktury)*, along with *Projekt* as magazines that expressed this modernistic point of view. Piotrowski noted that as the party attempted to

⁶ David Crowley, "Thaw modern: Design in Eastern Europe after 1956," in *Cold War Modern : Design 1945-1970*, ed. David Crowley (London : V&A, 2008), 136.

⁷ Crowley, "Building the World Anew, 198.

⁸ Piotr Piotrowski, *Avant-Garde in the Shadow of Yalta: Art in Central and Eastern Europe in 1945-1989* (London: Reaktion, 2009), 81.

halt the effects of the thaw around 1960s, *Art Review* changed its editorial board and its stance, while *Graphic Art* and *Structures* ceased to publish.⁹ Other than characterizing the magazine as a forum of artistic critique that focused on modernism or formalism, modernism without its initial social goals, Piorowski revealed little of *Projekt*'s editorial program. He included the journal simply as an example of how the artists during the thaw utilized the formal nature of their work as a strategy to depoliticize their art while drawing closer to the international avant-garde.

In the Literature, *Projekt* appears solely as one example of architectural discourse in a larger attempt to characterize the nature of thaw design in Poland. A thorough analysis of *Projekt*, its role in shaping Polish modernist design and its impact on design discourse in Poland remains unwritten. The relationship between the design that *Projekt* propagated and the party's cultural program requires investigation. This thesis analyses the editorial program of *Projekt* as it applies to architecture and design.

In publishing articles that centered on the explorations into complex geometry and organic structures the magazine desired to follow the trends apparent in the profession internationally, especially in the west. Even though the magazine published these structural explorations, it attempted to connect them to functional and user-center design that promoted the psychological and physical well being of man, restoring the goals of the early 20th century modernist groups such as Praesens.

This thesis focuses on the period of 1956-1970 in the journal's history. This period of the thaw represents the beginning of the magazine's publication. In it *Projekt* rejects Socialist Realism in favor of modernism in order to promote consumer products

⁹ Piotrowski, *Avant-Garde in the Shadow of Yalta*, 88.

and technologically based architecture, attempting to use the newly developed industry. In this period the communist party jettisons a cohesive and utopian ideological program. It appears to gain more independence from the Soviet Union and in turn accepts influence from west. As a result following the thaw Polish designers face less restrictions and remain free of a cohesive ideological program such as Socialist Realism.

In the 1960s, the journal becomes a site of discourse in which the Polish designers attempted to play a part in the profession internationally, looking west for models as before the Second World War and like those designers attempt to use design in order to better the users' life. However, the journal needs to account for the party's intentions to utilize modernist design as abstract and devoid of any subversive political context in order to preserve its authority and to promote consumerism in order to satisfy its citizens. This conflict characterizes the period and complicates the designer's attempts at creating user-centered and popular designs, connecting with the profession internationally, making the period particularly interesting.

Given the pragmatic situation of Polish designers during the period of the thaw, I ask the following questions: If Socialist Realism aimed to utilize architecture in order to form a new basis of living, did it continue the avant-garde project of the early 20th century avant-gardes? Why did the contributors and editors of *Projekt* thoroughly reject Socialist Realism after the magazine began publication as Socialist Realism as a policy in art and architecture began to wane? How does *Projekt* magazine fit into the conception of thaw design in Eastern Europe, did it play into the party's hands in promoting modernist aesthetics and aid the party's adoption of consumer culture in order to satisfy the

populace with its brand of Socialism, or did it attempt to provide user centered, socially conscious design?

If these questions are answered, the perception of design and specifically modernist design in Poland will change. Likewise, the perception of modernist design in Poland and Eastern Europe in general will change. Modernist design will no longer appear as either a purely positivistic exercise concerned with the creation of pure form and abstraction or one that played into the party's agenda as a depoliticized aesthetic, which helped the government compete with the west and attempted to supply its citizens with consumer products in order to prove the worth of socialist society. This study uses *Projekt*, the main design journal in Poland, as a case study to show that designers who surrounded it promoted a *pragmatic modernism*, that as researchers into the benefits of technology and industry for design, they fostered avant-garde values such as the promotion of universal well being and the nature of design as a force for social change. Socialist Modernism, a term that seemed impossible in the period in question as modernism appeared to belong exclusively to the west, navigated the space between party control, which utilized the abstract form of modernism, and the desire to affect social change through design by attempting to promote universal well being. Rather than a purely positivistic exercise in abstract form, whether in art or architecture, Socialist Modernism attempted to focus on function and user centered design in order to promote universal well being. This feature of modernism was thought as exclusive to the west in the attempt of western designers such as Thomas Maldonado at Hfg Ulm to combine design and science and of architects to move past the international style during the 1960s

or one that disappeared following the second world war and the early period of utopian modernism of the 1920s and 30s.

The first chapter, which depends largely on secondary sources, analyzed the development of the avant-garde modernist groups from roots in Russian Constructivism and the western art movement De-Stijl and the Bauhaus school. The Blok group (1924-1926) develops from sources in Russian Constructivism and visually from the western De-Stijl movements through the education of artists in Russia, the travel of Russian constructivists and artistic journals. It jettisoned other Polish avant-garde art groups, which concern themselves with pure abstraction in an attempt to use art and technology to guide life in order to ensure physical and psychological well being. Blok reforms around architecture as Praesens (1926-39), attempting to structure the living environment and come under the influence of Le Corbusier through the figure of Szymon Syrkus and the Bauhaus in the creation of housing estates. The Blok and Praesens constitutes a part of the larger Polish architectural tradition, which includes classical modernists and classicist, as avant-garde groups that promoted the functional modernist design in Poland. The Praesens becomes a founding member of CIAM, an association of groups from European countries that promoted modernist architecture and urbanism, taking part in writing the Charter of Athens, a treatise on urbanism that attempts to move away from developer centered city design in order to form a cohesive and clearly zoned plan that could ensure the well being of its inhabitants. This chapter establishes the development of the early 20th century avant-garde groups, and the Polish functional modernist tradition, showing that Polish architects and designers formed a part of the international profession and connected with groups in Western Europe to which *Projekt* attempts to

return following the party's ideological shift away from Stalinism and Socialist Realism. It shows that in a utopian approach to design and architecture these early 20th century groups subscribe to the avant-garde values that *Projekt* attempts to revive in Poland during the thaw period.

The second Chapter analyses the implementation of Socialist Realism from 1949-1956 by the communist party following the war, attempting to reconstruct the Polish economy and society as based on the model of the Soviet Union. Socialist Realism continues or rather radicalizes the utopian design project, which the early 20th century avant-garde engaged, by attempting to structure the lives of citizens by shaping their environment. Although Socialist Realism appears similar to the functional modernism in its attempt to restructure the life of its users, its attempt to bring different architectural traditions including modernism into its fold leads to hybridization. In the same vein, the ambiguous nature of the historicist form of Socialist Realism escapes precise definition, causing conflict between the party, the architects, and theoreticians. It illustrates the façade and image oriented design that proponents of Socialist Realism favor. The case of Bohdan Pniewski illustrates the fact that the party's micromanagement of specific projects and the fact that the exact form of Socialist Realism escapes definition leads to project delays and dissatisfaction for all parties involved. The debate on the precise form of Socialist Architecture at home forces some architects to work for the design of exhibitions abroad, which allows for the development of structural theories later featured in *Projekt*. The chapter analyses the theoretical confusion over the form of Socialist Realist architecture, which leads to micromanagement by the party and dissatisfaction with projects, ending in the hybridization that stems from an attempt to synthesize

various architectural traditions into an ill defined form. It helps to clarify the reasons for *Projekt*'s rejection of Socialist Realism and that of theory in the beginning of its editorial program and explains the need for *Projekt*'s conception as a design magazine for the thaw period. It shows that the pool of architects, who contribute to *Projekt* and retain the connection with theories of the early modernists as well as develop their own experiments in structure, originate in the work on exhibitions abroad. Hansen for example follows the lead of Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret develops his theory of open form during his time as an exhibition pavilion architect.

In the third chapter, *Projekt*'s editorial policy is examined to show that it constituted a forum of designers and architects who engage in a *pragmatic modernism*, attempting to promote socially conscious and user-centered, popular design while exploring experiments in structure, under the communist party that favored functional modernism because it allowed it to compete with western nations and viewed its forms as abstract and depoliticized. In promoting user centered and socially conscious design, *Projekt* connected the Polish design profession with its equivalent abroad, especially in the West. The editorial statement and early articles that take architecture and design as subject signal the departure from Socialist Realism and a negative attitude towards that methodology in design. They redirect Polish design towards functional modernism to take advantage of the brand new economical possibilities. An examination of key articles shows that the editors and contributors of the journal explored structural experiments in connection to function rather than pure technological abstraction. The magazine reports on the work of architect, Oskar Hansen, and designer, Andrzej Pawłowski, who create a user centered and socially conscious architecture and design. *Projekt*'s support of these

architects and their theories which stem from broader developments in Europe and America, show that the journal supports user-centered socially conscious design, connecting the profession back to the west. Reconstructing the editorial policy, through the close analysis of the article subjects, illustrates *Projekt*'s goal to reconnect with the West and attempt to reinstate the avant-garde's concern for socially relevant design by championing certain designers and socially applicable design practice. Therefore, *Projekt* attempts to reinstate Poland's modernist tradition, the development of which is illustrated in the first chapter, and draw on the avant-garde values of socially engaged art and design to which those groups subscribed. It argues for this type of design under the Communist Party as a publication of a state sponsored publisher, exemplifying a pragmatic rather than utopian stance of early 20th century modernist groups, attempting to deal with overpopulation and the human beings relationship to the environment both natural and synthetic.

In my analysis I am relying on Peter Burger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, a text that describes the features of the avant-garde, such as social engagement and the rejection of art's autonomy in order to define *pragmatic modernism*, as a *hybridization* of depoliticized functionalist practice with the theory of social engagement. I will argue that *Projekt* exemplified such hybridization and therefore was a vehicle of pragmatic modernism. Burger's theory identifies the 1920s and 1930s avant-garde groups of BLOK and Praesens as avant-garde on the basis of their rejection of art's autonomy and the idea that art acts as the basis or a plan for life, structuring the living environment. In the third chapter, Burger's theory identifies the same values in the theory of design and

architecture that were advocated by *Projekt*, and that played a part in the formulation of the concept of *pragmatic modernism*.

Berger's theory of the avant-garde proves attractive because it shifts the problem of the avant-garde away from its usual role in the development of modern art. Unlike Theodor Adorno who sees the avant-garde as the advanced stage of art, or Lukacs who views it as decadent, Berger formulates a critical definition of the avant-garde that does not assign value to these movements. Berger explored the avant-garde's break with the institution of art, thereby rejecting the avant-garde as an evolution in art practice.¹⁰

Berger's theory allows one to criticize art as an institution, moving away from an argument constructed within the framework of the institution itself, which Hegelian scholars, such as Adorno and Lukacs, construct. As Berger points out, if one works within this institutional framework, the separation between low and high art inherent in that system forces a quality judgment and prevents an analysis of the mechanisms that form the relationship between fine art and the culture industry. An extra-institutional view makes the investigation of architecture and design, genres of cultural production that span the high art and cultural industry spectrum, possible. Burger's theory of the avant-garde is attractive because it applies criticism to the "normative framework" that structures the function of works of art (and design).¹¹ Such an approach allows one to explore the function of design as an institution in a society with a single party government, one that responds to developments of art in a specific way and allows for the characterization of the *pragmatic modernism* in which *Projekt* engaged.

¹⁰ Peter Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), li.

¹¹ Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, liii.

Chapter Two: The Polish Avant- Garde of 1922-39

During the 1920s, the Polish architectural avant-garde jettisoned Futurism and Dada to focus on utility and functionalism. This avant-garde core consisted of two groups: BLOK and Praesens. These groups formed the basis of the functionalist, modernist movement in Poland and Europe. They embraced a leftist, avant-garde position that viewed art and design as the means of structuring life through the creation of an alternative living environment to the existing one. As a design forum, *Projekt* shared some of their characteristics and goals. It attempted to promote similar avant-garde values in response to the post-war situation and international camaraderie in design while working within the one party state. This led to the hybridization of architectural practice into a pragmatic form of modernism. This chapter establishes the avant-garde roots of Polish functional, modernist architecture and design, allowing a comparison between the avant-garde aspirations of the architects in the 1920s and 1930s and those that inspired *Projekt*.

BLOK formed in 1924 as a group of artists, designers and architects who shared a loose program. Mieczysław Szczuka, Teresa Żarnower, Władysław Strzemiński, Katarzyna Kobro and Henryk Berlewi formed the core part of the group. BLOK published a journal by the same name.¹² Although it identified itself as a group of Cubists, Suprematists, and Constructivists, BLOK's primary current of artistic inquiry centered on Constructivism. The Praesens (1926-39) group formed after BLOK's disintegration in 1926. It centered on the architect, Szymon Syrkus, who directed the

¹² Andzej Turowski, "Avant Garde Periodicals of the Constructivist Movement," in *Constructivism in Poland, 1923-1936: BLOK, Praesens, a.R.* Museum Folkwang Essen, 12.5-24.6.1973. Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller Otterlo, 14.7-2.9.1973, ed. Ryszard Stanisławki (Stuttgart: Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, 1973), 47.

group to work on new functionalist architecture. Such architecture sought to better society by utilizing modern industry in order to restructure the living environment. All the arts, including abstract “geometric” painting, constituted parts in the final product: architecture.¹³

The shift towards Constructivism became a function of social change in Poland during the interwar period. During the mid 1920s the Polish economy improved. The inflation halted and economic growth ensued; the country began to accept influence from abroad, especially from the west (a direction it faced as the People’s Republic of Poland).¹⁴ Andrzej Turowski in his book *Polish Constructivism* showed that Constructivism, which sought to create “a new social structure” through building, required a stabilized or stabilizing economy and society.¹⁵

The artists, architects, and designers who formed BLOK gathered under the banner of Constructivism and around the idea of art as “analytical” and socially relevant. They searched for a place in society “for the objects that [the group realized].”¹⁶ The editorial statement published in the first issue of the magazine illustrated the group’s intentions. The ‘functionalist’ outlook on art as a socially relevant practice appeared in the language of the editorial. The Editors of *BLOK* characterized the artist as the “worker and inventor,” placing the “principle of economy in the forefront” as required by

¹³ Andrzej Turowski, “Praesens 1926-39,” in *Constructivism in Poland, 1923-1936: BLOK, Praesens, a.R.* Museum Folkwang Essen, 12.5-24.6.1973. Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller Otterlo, 14.7-2.9.1973, ed. Ryszard Stanisławski (Stuttgart: Dr. Cantz’sche Druckerei, 1973), 39-40.

¹⁴ Jadwiga Roguska, “The Radical Avant-Garde and Modernism in Polish Interwar Architecture,” in *Architecture and Avant-Garde in Poland 1918-1939*, ed. Adam Milobedzki (Bologna: C.I.P.I.A., 1996), 14.

¹⁵ Andrzej Turowski, *Konstruktywizm Polski: Próba Rekonstrukcji Nurtu : 1921-1934 (Constructivism in Poland. an Attempted Reconstruction of the Trend (1921-1934))*, Studia z historii sztuki, t. 32 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1981), 17.

¹⁶ Turowski. *Konstruktywizm Polski (Constructivism in Poland)*, 57.

contemporary life and ultimately argued for the “aesthetics of pure economy.”¹⁷ Such a stance followed a Constructivist mindset, which tied art to industrial production, linking art and society.

In “What Constructivism Is,” signed Editors of BLOK, the group argued the definition of Constructivism as understood by the group’s chief editors, Żarnower and Szczuka. The editorial characterized Constructivism as “a practical application of the creative impulse”.¹⁸ The text argued that the “creative effort [was] directed specifically towards building,” and that the “builders of Constructivism ” accepted the problems of “hygiene and comfort” as “primary concerns” of art.¹⁹ It also claimed that the “THE PROBLEMS OF ART AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS ARE INDIVISIBLE,” utilizing capitalized block letters in order to drive the point home. These statements evidenced the group’s functionalist intentions; it attempted to utilize art and architecture in order to affect. The statements referenced the inclusion of architecture, which focused on hygiene and comfort, and the claim that the problems of art and social problems or art and society remained indivisible represented the functionalist views. This placed the group firmly under the banner of architecture. The group saved little space for fine art. According to Turowski, “in Szczuka’s program, an easel painting... could at most become a

¹⁷ Editors of *Blok*, “Editorial Statement,” in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács (Los Angeles, Calif: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2002), 491.

¹⁸ Editors of *Blok*, “What Constructivism Is” in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács (Los Angeles, Calif: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2002), 496.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 496.

constituent element of an integrally conceived architectonic interior”; it could serve as decoration in the architectural scheme.²⁰

In 1926 BLOK split in two camps led by Szczuka and Strzemiński. The artists who followed Strzemiński, formed the *a.r.* group or the Revolutionary Artists (*Artysci Rewolucyjni*). The architects gathered around Szczuka to form Praesens in the name of a “closer integration of theory and practice of architecture.”²¹ The Praesens group solidified into a ‘functionalist’ architectural group based in Constructivism. This reorganization brought in a new generation of architects into the foray, including Szymon Syrkus, Bohdan Lachert, Józef Szanajca and Józef Malinowski and soon Barbara and Stanisław Brukalski, with the inclusion of engineers and economists.²² As Roguska stated, the program of Praesens revealed a commitment to a ‘functionalist’ architecture that concerned itself with social problems. The program statement by Syrkus pronounced the character and tasks of the “new functionalist architecture,” while Stażewski concentrated on the “connections” between the “architectonic project” and the other arts.²³ The Praesens focused on the union of new architecture, which utilized modern industry, and the demands of society, while all “artistic creation” became subservient to architecture as a function of economic, social, and building factors.²⁴

The Polish avant-garde had its roots in the Russian Constructivist movement, but took aesthetically and ideologically from the western avant-garde such as De Stijl.

²⁰ Andzej Turowski, “Blok 1924-1926,” in *Constructivism in Poland, 1923-1936: BLOK, Praesens, a.R.* Museum Folkwang Essen, 12.5-24.6.1973. Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller Otterlo, 14.7-2.9.1973, ed. Ryszard Stanisławski (Stuttgart: Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, 1973), 38.

²¹ Roguska, “The Radical Avant-Garde and Modernism in Polish Interwar Architecture,” 16.

²² Ibid.

²³ Andzej Turowski, “Praesens 1926-39,” in *Constructivism in Poland, 1923-1936: BLOK, Praesens, a.R.* Museum Folkwang Essen, 12.5-24.6.1973. Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller Otterlo, 14.7-2.9.1973, ed. Ryszard Stanisławski (Stuttgart: Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, 1973), 39.

²⁴ Ibid., 40.

Hence, it synthesized western and eastern influences, becoming part of the aggregate of modern functional architecture groups. Artists such as Strzemiński and Kobro completed their education in Russia and worked with the Constructivists. Russian Constructivists exchanged information with Polish artists through journals while Lizzitsky and Malevich visited Poland influencing Polish groups. Constructivism acted as a foundation or podium for the Polish avant-garde, or the metal frame on which the architects constructed their structure, which ultimately became a building that owed much to the west both in form and detailing.

A number of artists and architects in BLOK studied at reformed academies during the Russian Revolutionary period. Strzemiński and Kobro, who eventually became husband and wife, took part in UNOWIS, a group organized by Malevich in Witebsk by this artist who they met working for the IZO (Fine Art Department of Narkompros or the Soviet Commissariat for Education).²⁵ This pair of artists laid the foundations of Russian Constructivist thought on Polish soil.

Besides studying in Russia, Polish artists became familiar with the tenets of Constructivism through indirect contact or because Constructivist artists traveled to Poland. Turowski argued that Szczuka's work moved beyond the picture frame possibly because of his awareness of Tatlin's corner-reliefs. Likewise, Szczuka's use of materials such as wood, glass, and iron, suggested Tatlin's influence.²⁶ Wojciech Leśniowski also noted that Szczuka's Constructivist composition, entitled *Monument to Freedom* (1922)

²⁵ Turowski, *Konstruktywizm Polski (Constructivism in Poland)*, 30.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

showed the influence of Tatlin's formal experiments (Fig. 2.1).²⁷ Hence, the Constructivist's experiments informed the aesthetic experiments of the Polish avant-garde in its search for "spatial and structural systems" that could be manipulated in a "rational and standardized approach to design".²⁸ The Constructivists informed the functional approach to design that the Polish group adapted.

El Lissitzky also informed the art of Szczuka and Berlewi. They met when Lissitzky visited Warsaw on the invitation of the Kultur-liga, a Jewish cultural association that originated in Kiev in 1917 in order to promote Yidish culture whose members included Lissitzky and Berlewi, in the autumn of 1921.²⁹ At this time Lissitzky was formulating the idea of "proun", and he was still a proponent of Malevich's Suprematism.³⁰ Lissitzky's visit was accompanied by the publication of his article "The Defeat of Art" (*Przewyciężenie Sztuki*) in the BLOK journal, which in effect repeated his lecture at the Moscow INCHUK. Lissitzky argued for the defeat of art, corresponding to the defeat of religion, under the pressure of utilitarianism. His essay mentioned the "formal works of Tatlin" and Malevich.³¹ This suggested that Lissitzky steered Polish art toward utilitarianism or the care for functional design. Malevich also met with the members of the Praesens group upon his return from a lecture trip to Germany.³²

²⁷ Wojciech Leśnikowski, "Functionalism in Polish Architecture," in *East European Modernism: Architecture in Czechoslovakia, Hungary & Poland between the Wars*, ed. Wojciech G. Leśnikowski and Vladimír Šlapeta. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 205.

²⁸ Wojciech Leśnikowski, "Functionalism in Polish Architecture," 205.

²⁹ Turowski. *Konstruktywizm Polski (Constructivism in Poland)*, 39. Malevich also met with the members of the Praesens group upon his return from a lecture trip to Germany.²⁹

³⁰ Andrzej Turowski, *Konstruktywizm Polski (Constructivism in Poland)*, 39.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

³² Wojciech Leśnikowski, "Functionalism in Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, and Polish Architecture from the European Perspective," in *East European Modernism: Architecture in Czechoslovakia, Hungary & Poland between the Wars*, ed. Wojciech G. Leśnikowski and Vladimír Šlapeta. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 32.

Lissitzky's visit helped solidify in Poland the idea of unifying art and society through utilitarian art. Therefore, the use of new materials, structural compositions, and the idea of "utilitarian" art all became basic ambitions of Polish explorations in 'functional' architecture.

In his article "Notes on Russian Art" (*O sztuce Rosyjskiej—Notatki*) published in *Railroad Switch (Zwrotnica)*, Strzemiński reported on the "art of the revolution," his phrase for Constructivist art. He divided the developments of Constructivism into two courses, one represented by Tatlin, the other by Malevich. As Turowski has explained, Strzemiński saw Malevich as the "highest" form of Constructivism, while Tatlin "[perverted]" the idea of construction by caring more for material.³³ In the second part of the article, published in 1923, Strzemiński made it clear that he considered Malevich a "higher" Constructivist because purely utilitarian art proved false, and he saw a need for art that relied on abstraction.³⁴ Although this showed Strzemiński's close alliance to Malevich and his desire to keep the abstract in art, or keep art from becoming purely design, the article and Constructivism in general focused the Polish avant-garde on the idea of joining art and society. This is also evident in the already-mentioned essay "What Constructivism Is" (*Co to Jest Konstruktywizm*), which in point fourteen, emphasized, through the use of capitalization, "the inseparability of the problems of art and the problems of society."³⁵

The BLOK group, which identified itself as a gathering of Cubists, Suprematists and Constructivists, began under the influence of the theory of Constructivism and the

³³ Turowski, *Konstruktywizm Polski (Constructivism in Poland)*, 41.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁵ Editors of *Blok*, "What Constructivism Is" in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930*, ed. Timothy O., Benson and Éva Forgács (Los Angeles, Calif: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2002), 497.

standardized approach to design that it offered, especially in the use of materials, but much of its architectonic projects became influenced by western modernists. Władysław Strzemiński whose introduction to Constructivism appears above, undermined the work of Tatlin and the strict “utilitarianism” of the Productivists, the Russian Constructivist artists who like Tatlin concerned themselves with creating mass produced art using industrial materials. Instead, he relied on De Stijl or Neo-Plasticism models for his architectural formulations. The arrangements of color planes in *Design for an Interior* of Strzemiński from as late as 1931, showed a compositional debt to Theo van Doesburg and Mondrian. Leśnikowski revealed that Theo van Doesburg, Piet Mondrian, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe influenced the compositions and architectonic projects of artists like Szczuka, Żarnower, and Kobro, which they published in the BLOK magazine.³⁶

A similar debt to the Neo-Plasticist movement and elementary “functionalism” of either Le Corbusier or the German modernism appears in the work of Szczuka. In *Design for an Interior* from 1924, Szczuka, created a room that owed a debt to the designs of Van Doesburg and the paintings Mondrian. Lines and colored planes form the panels of the ceiling and the floor that shape the space of the interior; these same elementary forms decorate the desk that appears in the foreground. Szczuka splits the wall to which the desk attaches with a linear composition reminiscent of Neo-Plasticism, while placing a colored plane as the background for the bookcase. Hence, Szczuka uses the compositions of Mondrian in order to organize the space and pick out the furniture that he designs (Fig. 2.2). Szczuka’s *Architectural Design*, 1924 shows a perspective drawing that

³⁶ Leśnikowski, “Functionalism in Polish Architecture,” 205.

communicated little of the buildings function or purpose. The elementary construction envisions a rational system of forms that Szczuka assembles into an abstract building. The design used elementary, geometric forms for the building structure. *Pilotis*, ground level supporting columns that elevate a mass of the ground, supported the structure and large windows stretch across the façade, which suggest the influence of Le Corbusier's "5 points for Architecture a New Architecture," that the French architect describes in *Vers une Architecture* of 1923 (Fig. 2.3). The *pilotis* and the long, horizontal window, present two of the five points that the architect proposes as the foundation of the new architecture. The detailing of the building's top floor façade, on the other hand, suggests Neo-Plasticist influences, while the same divisions, which recall Neo-Plasticism as those seen in the *Design for an Interior*, appear to shape the courtyard, although their exact nature or material elude the viewer in this simplified rendering.

The formal qualities of these designs, originally published in the BLOK magazine, attest to Szczuka's and the avant-garde's debt to western architects. These formal experiments, which take more from the western designers than Russian Constructivism, show that the Polish avant-garde looked west and toward the aesthetics that later became known as the 'international style' in its search for a radical architectural form.

The fact that the BLOK group published designs and writings of the western modernists, attested to the prevalence of this aesthetic and theory in shaping the projects of the Polish functional modernists. As the architect, Bohdan Lachert, stated in his article, "Mieczysław Szczuka as an Architect," BLOK published projects and theoretical

writings of Mies van der Rohe, van Doesburg, Piet Modrian, and Gerit Rietveld.³⁷

Additionally, a statement by Theo van Doesburg, entitled “The Renewal of Architecture,” originally published in the fifth issue of the BLOK magazine, became a part of the editorial “What Constructivism Is.” The fact that as editors of the BLOK magazine, Szczuka and Żarnower placed Van Doesburg’s statement on architecture into their later editorial manifesto showed that they wanted to adopt his aesthetics and compositions as a basis for the system of rational and structural design they sought.

The theorist’s statement informed the architectonic experiments of BLOK members such as Szczuka. In the statement, van Doesburg argued that the “accurate optical balance and the equivalent integration of individual parts [could] be attained only with the help of color”.³⁸ This clearly served as the basis for the “paper architecture,” the analysis of which appeared above, that Szczuka published in the BLOK journal. As observed above, Szczuka used color planes in order to “integrate the individual parts” of his interior such as the bookcase into the overall space. Hence, Szczuka used color to create “the interplay of forms” and handled it as a material, as “an organic growth from architecture”.³⁹ By doing so, he followed the precepts of the Neo-plasticist movement in constructing his experimental designs. Hence, the modernist architectural movement of Neo-plasticism directly influenced the designs of the leaders of the BLOK.

The built projects of the architects connected with the Praesens group evidenced the influence of the Dutch Neo-Plasticist movement as well, especially Gerit Rietveld and his Schroeder house in Utrecht. The husband and wife team of architects, Barbara and

³⁷ Bohdan Lachert, “Mieczysław Szczuka w Roli Architekta (Mieczysław Szczuka as an Architect)” in *Mieczysław Szczuka*, ed. Anatol Stern and Mieczysław Berman (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1965), 63.

³⁸ Editors of Blok, “What Constructivism Is,” 496.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Stanisław Brukalski, constructed an analog of his canonical work as a villa in *Żoliborz*, a district of Warsaw, in 1927 (Fig. 2.4).⁴⁰ Therefore, the influence of the Dutch Neo-Plasticist movement on the avant-garde architecture remained strong throughout the 1920s, and it can be observed both in the early “paper architecture” and later projects.

The western influence on Polish functional modernist architecture stretched further than just the tenets of van Doesburg and the Neo-plasticist design. Continuing the idea of a socially applicable art (or in this case architecture) that originated with Constructivism, the influence of Le Corbusier and the German functional modernism became equally important to forming Polish avant-garde architectural thought, especially its social dimension and as it applied to planning. The influence of Le Corbusier appeared relatively early and continued to inform Polish architecture, during the 1930s specifically. In 1927 Szczuka and Żarnower, working with Piotr Kaminski and Antoni Karczewski, created what Leśnikowski views as a “typical functionalist” super-block housing estate in which large garden space surrounded the housing structures (Fig. 2.5).⁴¹ This modernistic example of town planning recalled the *Plan Voisin* for the center of Paris that Le Corbusier exhibited at the International Exhibition of the Industrial and Decorative Arts in Paris (1925). This conception district slab high-rises with accompanying green space became the standard for the urbanism of CIAM. Hence, Corbusian influences in functionalist architecture appeared on the cusp of the BLOK-Praesens transition.

The influence of Le Corbusier on the Polish avant-garde and architecture in general can be attributed to Szymon Syrkus, one of the leaders of Praesens group.

⁴⁰ Izabella Wisłocka, *Awangardowa Architektura Polska, 1918-1939 (Polish Architectural Avant-Garde, 1918-39)*, (Warszawa: Arkady, 1968), 125.

⁴¹ Leśnikowski, “Functionalism in Polish Architecture,” 205.

Syrkus' professional career tied him directly to French theory and Corbusier. He studied at the Warsaw Polytechnic at the department of architecture during the Fall of 1918 before moving to Cracow in order to study at the Warsaw Fine Arts Academy (*Akademia Sztuk Pięknych*). After completing his education in Poland Syrkus left for Paris during the years of 1922-24, where he became exposed to the works and articles of Le Corbusier, who published his *Vers une Architecture* in 1923.⁴² Therefore, the author of the Praesens program came under the direct influence of Le Corbusier.

The influence of Corbusier also appears in the avant-garde's publishing program. The writings of Le Corbusier along with that of Walter Gropius, Auguste Perret, Alvar Alto and J.J.P. Oud appeared in the first two issues of the eponymous journal that Praesens, like BLOK, published.⁴³ As Leśnikowski revealed, Syrkus considered Le Corbusier "a genius" and "made [that] point clear" in the magazine.⁴⁴ Besides the Praesens, the influence of Le Corbusier stretched into the 1930s because of the Warsaw Faculty of Architecture in which some students and faculty treated the contents of the book *Vers une Architecture* as "bible truth."⁴⁵ Through Syrkus and the publications of the Praesens journal as well as the influence of Corbusier on the Warsaw faculty of architecture attest to the debt that the Polish functional modernists owed to the French architect.

The influence of Constructivism on BLOK and the primacy of Mieczysław Szczuka's interpretation of Constructivism and Dutch Neo-plasticism sent the Polish avant-garde along 'utilitarian' lines that stressed the search for a 'rational' and

⁴² Wisłocka, *Awangardowa Architektura Polska (Polish Architectural Avant-Garde)*, 125.

⁴³ Leśnikowski, "Functionalism in Polish Architecture," 210.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Jadwiga Roguska, "The Radical Avant-Garde and Modernism in Polish Interwar Architecture," 21.

‘systematic’ solution for design as well as the fusion of art and society. Such an attitude inspired the focus on architecture under the leadership of Praesens (1926-39) and a synthesis of ideas that stemmed from German modernist architecture and the design of Le Corbusier. It is important to point out that Praesens joined CIAM, International Congresses of Modern Architecture (Congrès internationaux d'architecture modern) or – CIAM, an organization that Le Corbusier and Siegfried Gideon, a Swiss historian and architecture critic began with a number of prominent European architect in order to promote the principles of modern architecture in all areas fields associated with the practice through events and congresses. Hence, even though the Polish functional modernism grew out of a grass roots Constructivist movement, it adapted the formal solutions of the Western radical ‘functionalist’ architecture in order to provide economical dwellings in its housing estate plans.

The BLOK group and Praesens represented the modernistic avant-garde because they attempted to synthesize art and life, eliminating individual production, and the differences between production and reception, thereby undermining the notion of an autonomous art. As Peter Burger argued, the avant-garde attempted to “organize a new life praxis from a basis in art.”⁴⁷ In “What Constructivism Is,” the editors of BLOK provided a definition of Constructivism that echoed Burger’s language. They wrote that Constructivism “[introduced] art into life as a factor contributing to the general development and in its turn depended upon changes occurring in the other fields of human creative activity.”⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Peter Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 49.

⁴⁸ Editors of *Blok*, “What Constructivism Is,” 496.

By defining art as a “factor [that contributed]” to the “general development of life,” the leaders of BLOK saw art as a discipline, such as the natural sciences, or philosophy that could provide the model for life.⁴⁹ Proposing that art “depended upon changes [that occurred] in the other fields of human activity,” the editors showed that rather than a separate field from disciplines like philosophy, physics or engineering, art took influence from these fields. Therefore, like the Russian Constructivists, the leaders of BLOK considered art as a field that structured life and depended on the developments in other disciplines. This relationship became apparent in the work of the Constructivist avant-garde.

In works like *Monument to Freedom*, Szczuka utilized glass, steel, and iron, all industrial materials, in the works’ construction. Besides plainly using construction materials, Katarzyna Kobro utilized methods of engineering in the construction of her works. In 1924 the artist utilized a method of multiplying a basic unit to calculate the linear dimensions of the each shape of a sculpture. This method of calculating the dimensions by using a coefficient appeared in the effort to reconstruct her works after 1967 by Janusz Zagrodzki.⁵⁰ Rather than a field of closed off activity that concerned itself with aesthetics, art for BLOK constituted a discipline that contributed to the creation of knowledge and inevitably structured the way of life.

Another principle of the avant-garde that Burger pointed out deals with the fact that avant-garde art preserved values that abstracted from life and “[projected] the image of a better order” unto society. Henryk Starzewski, for example, in “On Abstract Art”

⁴⁹ Editors of *Blok*, “What Constructivism Is,” 496.

⁵⁰ Janusz Zagrodzki, “Reconstruction of Katarzyna Kobro’s Sculptures” in *Constructivism in Poland, 1923-1936: BLOK, Praesens, a.R.* Museum Folkwang Essen, 12.5-24.6.1973. Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller Otterlo, 14.7-2.9.1973, ed. Ryszard Stanisławski. (Stuttgart: Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, 1973), 55.

(*O Sztuce Abstrakcyjnej*), argued that abstract art “[expressed] the laws that rule all things and our existence” or “a plastic equivalent of nature.”⁵¹ Rather than just in art, this principle became evident in the texts that concerned architecture and design. Władysław Strzemiński, writing in *Line (Linia)* of 1931 after his break with the Praesens, expressed this view by stating that architecture served as “a regulator of the rhythm of social and individual life.”⁵² This kind of “sublation” or the transcendence of art in the praxis of life became the “intended purpose or function” of avant-grade art or design.⁵³

Polish architecture, like most national schools, hybridized modernism and traditionalism to create architecture such as ‘modern classicism.’ Because of its influences and the architecture that the groups featured in their magazines, and because Praesens became the Polish representative of the CIAM the designs of BLOK and Praesens constituted the Polish contribution to functional modernism. These two groups were the most radical in their application of modern design principles, but they only formed a part of the Polish architectural tradition. As Wojciech Leśnikowski has noted, the Polish Architectural Association (*Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich*) or SAP⁵⁴ stated in its first exhibition catalogue of 1925 that the group refused to see itself as an avant-garde group with a single program but remained inclusive of “ a wide variety of [architectural] options.”⁵⁵ These would include the so-called “Polish Manor Style,”

⁵¹ Henryk Starzewski. “On Abstract Art (*O Sztuce Abstrakcyjnej*),” in *Constructivism in Poland, 1923-1936: BLOK, Praesens, a.R.* Museum Folkwang Essen, 12.5-24.6.1973. Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller Otterlo, 14.7-2.9.1973, ed. Ryszard Stanisławski. (Stuttgart: Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, 1973), 85.

⁵² Władysław Strzemiński, “The Principle of New Architecture,” *Linia* (No. 3) (1931): 10.

⁵³ Peter Burger. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 50-51.

⁵⁴ *Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich* altered its name to *Stowarzyszenie Architektów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* or SARP in July of 1934 at the Congress of Delegates (Zjazd Delegatów) in Warsaw; at the VI Congress of Delegates (Zjazd Delegatów) in 1952, the delegates decided to change the name back to *Stowarzyszenie Architektów Polskich*, keeping the acronym SARP.

⁵⁵ Leśnikowski, “Functionalism in Polish Architecture,” 206.

which derived from 18th century Neo-Classicism and the Academic classicism prevalent during the 1920s and 1930s as exercised by architects such as the architect and professor Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, and the more elementary reduced classical mode connoted. The SAP sought a middle of the road approach, welcoming different architectural methodologies into their fold, including the modernist associated with Praesens.⁵⁶ These architects desired to utilize functional and rational building that resulted from technological advancement, abandoning decoration and craft sought.⁵⁷ The SPA differed from Praesens in that it failed to subscribe to a radical idea of restructuring the entirety of the living environment, but attested to the variety in modern architecture, which combined modern construction materials and classical forms. Architecture of the 20th century, as evidenced by SAP's program consisted largely of a synthesis between historical form and modern building technology.

The 'functionalist' intention to provide economical living arrangements for people struck a cord with the avant-garde that since its inception from Constructivism concerned itself with social problems. As proponents of radical functional ideas, the Polish architectural avant-garde became attracted to the German functional ideas, especially as they applied to planning. As Leśnikowski stated, the experiments carried out by the Deutscher Werkbund influenced the Polish housing settlements of the early 1930s.⁵⁸ Polish planners visited the German Siedlungs in Magdenburg, Berlin, Liepzig,

⁵⁶ Olgier Czerner, "Formal Directions in Polish Architecture," in *East European Modernism: Architecture in Czechoslovakia, Hungary & Poland between the Wars*, ed. Wojciech G. Leśnikowski, and Vladimír Šlapeta. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 182-186.

⁵⁷ Leśnikowski, "Functionalism in Polish Architecture," 207.

⁵⁸ Leśnikowski, "Functionalism in Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, and Polish Architecture from the European Perspective," 15.

Dresden and Frankfurt among others, bringing back their findings.⁵⁹ Additionally, Bauhaus attracted several poles. Among them, Max Krajewski studied metalworking and observed the creation of the Gropius Törten Estates at Dessau and the new suburb of Dammerstock in Karlsruhe, while Sharoh Ariei studied with Hannes Mayer and Jan Wienfield, observing the experimental theatre and public exhibits of the Bauhaus.⁶⁰ Such contact with the representatives of the German functionalists and especially the Bauhaus injected German functionalist ideas into the functional modernist group in Poland.

The functionalist influences of western European architects and groups on the Polish avant-garde, allowed the Polish designers to join the international modernist movement. The Polish modernists shared the international modernists' intention to create modernist urban plans and usable housing. The influences of the German radical 'functionalists' appeared in housing projects of the Polish modernists who used the functionalist tenets to create usable housing. Far from the plan for functionalist housing blocks that Szczuka and Żarnower loosely based on Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin*, which appeared above, these constructions provided a solution to the residential estates for the working and middle-class. In 1927, the Brukalski partnership of architects began their work for the Warsaw Housing Cooperative (*Warszawska Współdzielnia Mieszkaniowa*) in the Warsaw district of *Żoliborz*. They designed four block estates for this association, utilizing the experimental Frankfurt kitchens in the one- and two-room flats. The Frankfurt Kitchen, originally designed by Austrian architect Margarete Schutte-Lihotzky in 1926 for a social housing project in Frankfurt by the architect Ernst May,

⁵⁹ Leśnikowski, "Functionalism in Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, and Polish Architecture from the European Perspective," 30.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

allowed for an efficient and small kitchen space that could be built at low cost. The pair completed the estates with “social” amenities and “institutions” that served the inhabitants, following the precepts of the German and Dutch functionalists to provide fitting living conditions using economical architecture.⁶¹ As Izabella Wisłocka argued, the separation of the variety of functions such as housing and communication hinted at the formulation of J.J.P Oud, a Dutch architect, the works of whom Brukalski partnership studied in Holland upon their visit. During this visit the pair of architects observed the villa of Ritveld, which the pair later used as a reference point for their Żoliborz villa.⁶² The working class residential estate in Rakowiec, Warsaw that the Praesens group designed collectively in 1930 exemplified the height of the radical “functionalist” housing schemes, which as Roguska indicated resulted from the radicalization of views and consolidation of the avant-garde.⁶³

This project saw completion at the time that the Praesens group entered CIAM, an organization that promoted the modern principles of architecture in all fields related to the practice and viewed architecture as a social force, becoming its Polish representative. Sigfried Gideon, who became the first secretary general, asked the Polish architects Syrkus and Josef Szanaica to join CIAM following the international competition for the League of Nations in Geneva.⁶⁴ As Izabella Wisłocka argued, the design for this working-class residential estate evidenced that the Polish Praesens group, as the

⁶¹ Roguska, “The Radical Avant-Garde and Modernism in Polish Interwar Architecture,” 18.

⁶² Wisłocka, *Awangardowa Architektura Polska, (Polish Architectural Avant-Garde)*, 125.

⁶³ Roguska, “The Radical Avant-Garde and Modernism in Polish Interwar Architecture,” 18.

⁶⁴ Leśnikowski, “Functionalism in Polish Architecture,” 210.

representative of CIAM, concerned itself with social problems more so than its Western counterparts.⁶⁵

The author argued that all the efforts of the Polish CIAM group, whether realized in projects or theorized in the form of statements, focused primarily on the social needs that architecture could have fulfilled.⁶⁶ Hence, Polish architects managed to retain the intentions of the avant-garde to solve social problems, and succeeded with the Rakowiec development. Szymon Syrkus and his wife designed a modular system of “steel skeleton” construction that “facilitated” the creation of prefabricated buildings on a mass scale, allowing the production of 100,000 flats annually. As Roguska showed, the functional modernists envisioned the idea of residential planning for the long-term. It based the planning on five-year schedules, and believed in the establishment of the government planning and design offices that would manage public housing.⁶⁷ Hence, as members of the CIAM, the Polish modernist group Praesens, took cues from Dutch and German precedents and applied them successfully to the creation of economically designed dwellings in their continuous search for a socially relevant, ‘functionalist’ architecture. The intent of using architecture to provide fitting living conditions through the creation of estates reflected the Praesens’ avant-garde nature as understood by Burger’s definition. By utilizing ‘functional’ design for these specific goals the Polish avant-garde desired to create a new basis for the life of the residents, which it served, rejecting the autonomy of art and applying their efforts into large urban projects that affected large portions of Polish society.

⁶⁵ Wisłocka, *Awangardowa Architektura Polska (Polish Architectural Avant-Garde)*, 156.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁶⁷ Jadwiga Roguska, “The Radical Avant-Garde and Modernism in Polish Interwar Architecture,” 19.

Preasens entry into the CIAM saw the Polish architects become part of the international fellowship of modernist, functional architects. Rather than just accepting the influence of the west, the Polish architects connected with it. Syrkus and Józef Szanajca, as his second, attended the Organizational Congress of CIAM in La Sarraz in 1928 as Polish Delegates and both Szymon and Helena Syrkus, who worked as a team of urbanist architects, took part in the 1st congress of the members of International Committee for the Resolution of Problems in Contemporary Architecture (*Comité international pour la résolution des problèmes de l'architecture contemporaine*) CIRPAC, the elected body of CIAM responsible for executing policy and formulating CIAM events such as the congresses.⁶⁸ At the Third Congress of CIAM in 1930, Brukalscy presented the project to regulate the estates of the WSM and the Rakowiec as a “linear” urbanistic scheme that integrated residential and green space. At the IV Congress, the pair took part in specific committees of the Congress. Helena Syrkus took part in the Committee on Protocol and Syrkus took part in the Press Commission. Besides serving on the committee Szymon Syrkus became a member of group of urbanists who formulated the Charter of Athens(*Charte d'Athènes*), while Helena worked as a secretary along with Le Corbusier and Gideon, beginning her work with the secretariat of the CIAM since the Congress.⁶⁹ Therefore, by the 1933 congress, the delegation of Polish architects increased in size and took a variety of roles within the committees of the congress. Szymon Syrkus took part in formulating the modernist urban resolution, Charter of Athens, which analyzed the problems of 33 contemporary cities. The Charter, which stemmed from the analysis of the 33 cities by CIAM members

⁶⁸ Wisłocka, *Awangardowa Architektura Polska (Polish Architectural Avant-Garde)*, 157.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 122.

and Le Corbusier's formulations in the *Ville Contemporaine* and the concept of the functional city set down the guidelines for the creation of a properly zoned city in which the residential zones and industrial zones remained close yet buffered by green and recreations space. High-rise slabs formed the residential zones away from transportation routes the size and width of each depended on the type of transportation. The functional city that resulted from the Charter and the IV Congress formed CIAM's main conception for urbanism

The projects presented by the Polish delegation showed that the Praesens became a contributing member of the CIAM and CIRPAC. At the London CIRPAC congress in 1934, the Polish group of architects represented *Functional Warsaw* (*Warszawa Funkcjonalna*) project by Syrkus and Jan Chmielewski. As Wisłowska showed, the plan for Warsaw received approval from the delegation of CIAM and was considered a "basis" for similar projects of other CIAM groups.⁷⁰ According to Wisłocka, the acclaim for Functional Warsaw as well as their presentation of projects for the WSM, and the fact that Polish architects took an active part in the congresses made the Praesens group a part of the international community of modernist architects. Rather than just accepting influence from Dutch functionalists and Le Corbusier, the Praesens group became an active part in the international association of modernist architects.

The Polish architectural and design modernists synthesized Constructivist influences and those of the western 'functionalist' and Neo-plasticist influences as BLOK and Praesens, becoming representatives of the CIAM as Praesens. Within the broad architectural methodology in Poland at the time, including the academic modern

⁷⁰ Wisłocka, *Awangardowa Architektura Polska (Polish Architectural Avant-Garde)*, 124.

classicism, that utilizing skeletal construction and new materials, these expressed a single program that stemmed from their influences. These groups represented the Polish modernism as they drew from the pressing international developments in the field of design, ranging from functionalism, French purism, and Constructivist. As avant-garde groups, the BLOK and the Praesens prescribed to a utopian ideology, attempted to utilize design in order to better the lives of Polish citizens by restructuring their environment to provide fitting living conditions.

This became especially true of Praesens in its designs of housing estates that followed Dutch and German models and its involvement with CIAM in the creation of large-scale urbanist plans such as *Functional Warsaw* and the *Charter of Athens*. These Polish groups jettisoned the idea of autonomous art that other artistic groups, which utilized abstraction and favored formalism, fostered. Hence, they became avant-garde in their desire to affect society and apply art toward the larger sphere of human existence, similarly to other disciplines, such as natural science. Therefore these two groups, which represent a continuation of a group that formed from the influence of Constructivism, became the avant-garde representation in Polish architecture and design. These groups joined the international movement of functional modernists, as they joined CIAM, becoming part of the larger modernist aggregate that later became defined by the term international style, following the title of the book for the Modern Architecture exhibition by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932. Therefore, the in-between the wars period in Poland saw the rise of BLOK and Praesens, modernistic, functional avant-garde groups, which took influence from Constructivism and the western modernist groups. Rather than just receiving influence

from these groups and larger movements abroad, the Praesens group took part in the international congresses of modernist designers, the CIAM and CIRPAC, helping to form the Charter of Athens and presenting projects such as *Functional Warsaw* that followed the tenets expressed by the CIAM.

The avant-garde notions of socially relevant, rather than autonomous art, and the ability of art to structure life in the same manner as philosophy and the natural sciences formed the programmatic base of the BLOK and Praesens group. In its projects, writings, and largely paper architecture, BLOK desired to apply art to life, structuring it by applying mechanical and industrial production. These ideas originated largely from Russian Constructivism. By synthesizing art and design in the service of architecture, the Praesens group created large urban schemes and estates, like the *Rakowiec* development, that made a realistic attempt at developing a structure for the life of its residents through architecture. They utilized the formalized functional aesthetic to create specific living conditions, producing socially engaged design. Like the BLOK and Praesens group, the contributors to *Projekt*, subscribed to avant-garde notions of socially relevant design that undermined the autonomy of art and formalism, the intention of an artist or designer to focus solely on the aesthetic concerns. In the post-war period *Projekt* moved away from the formalism that resulted from the dogmatic modernism of the international style and CIAM and aligned itself with Buckminster Fuller or Louis Khan. In industrial design they aligned themselves with the scientific operationism of the Hfg Ulm School and Tomas Maldonado, which focus on the idea of using industrial design as a social force. *Projekt* negotiated these concerns in the one party system that tolerated functionalism for its formalistic qualities, attempting to remain politically neutral towards the power

structure, finding itself in a complicated cultural situation and adapting a pragmatic stance toward functional modernism.

The period of Stalinism and Socialist Realism that followed World War II, brushed functional modernism to the side or rather, attempted to hybridize it with the Socialist Realist style. Consequently, the Socialist Realism, despite its roots in Marxism and Leninism and traditionalist aesthetics, radicalized the avant-garde project as it subscribed to the notion of socially applicable design, attempting to use architecture to structure the build environment in such a way as to create a new socialist society and a new socialist citizen. Although the Stalinist leadership allowed for, or at least attempted the creation of architectural projects with the intention of restructuring the life of its citizens, the image driven nature of the architectural method and the confusion that resulted from the attempt to pinpoint exact form of this Stalinist style made the completion of many state projects difficult. The party's attempts to fit the Polish architectural tradition into the fluid definition of Socialist Realism resulted in hybridization and pure rejection of a new generation of designers and architects whose work failed to fit into the Socialist Realism mode.

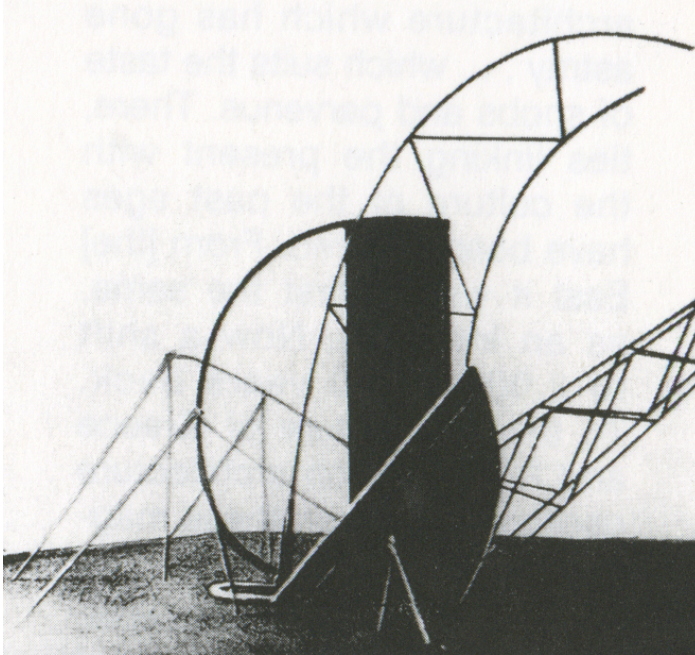


Figure 2.1. Mieczysław Szczuka, *Monument to Freedom*, 1922 From Lesnikowski, Wojciech G., and Vladimír Šlapeta. *East European Modernism: Architecture in Czechoslovakia, Hungary & Poland between the Wars*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1996, 204.

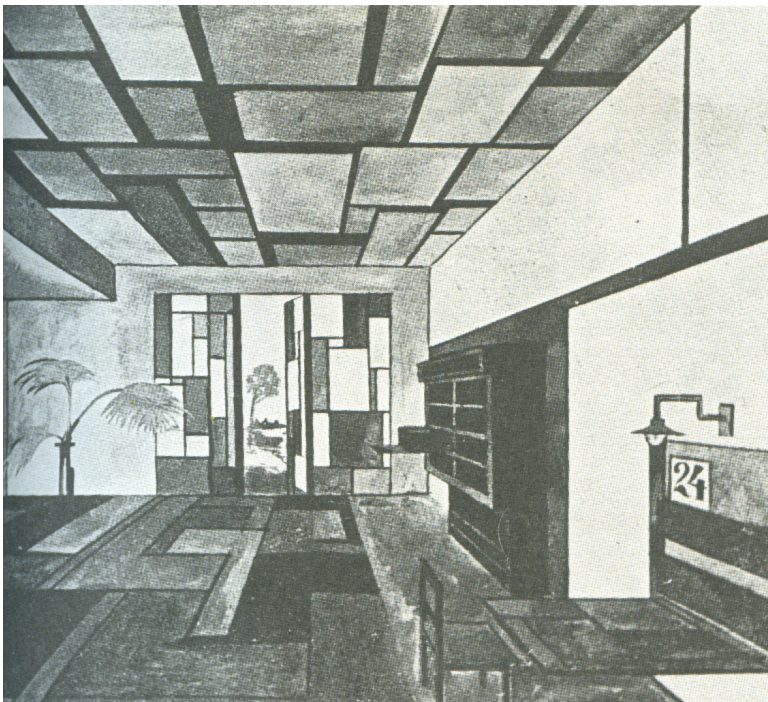


Figure 2.2. Mieczysław Szczuka, *Design for an Interior*, 1924. From Stanisławski, Ryszard. *Constructivism in Poland, 1923-1936: BLOK, Praesens, a.R.* Museum Folkwang Essen, 1973. Stuttgart: Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, 1973, 39.

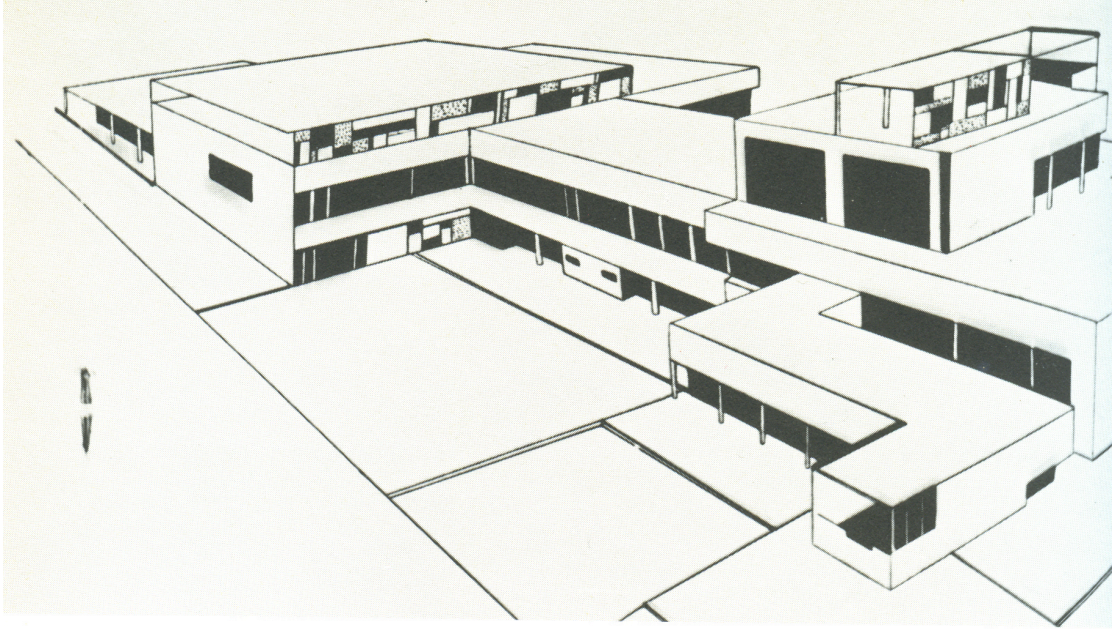


Figure 2.3. Mieczysław Szczuka. *Architectural Design*, 1924. From Stanisławski, Ryszard. *Constructivism in Poland, 1923-1936: BLOK, Praesens, a.R.* Museum Folkwang Essen, 1973. Stuttgart: Dr. Cantz'sche Druckerei, 1973, 40.

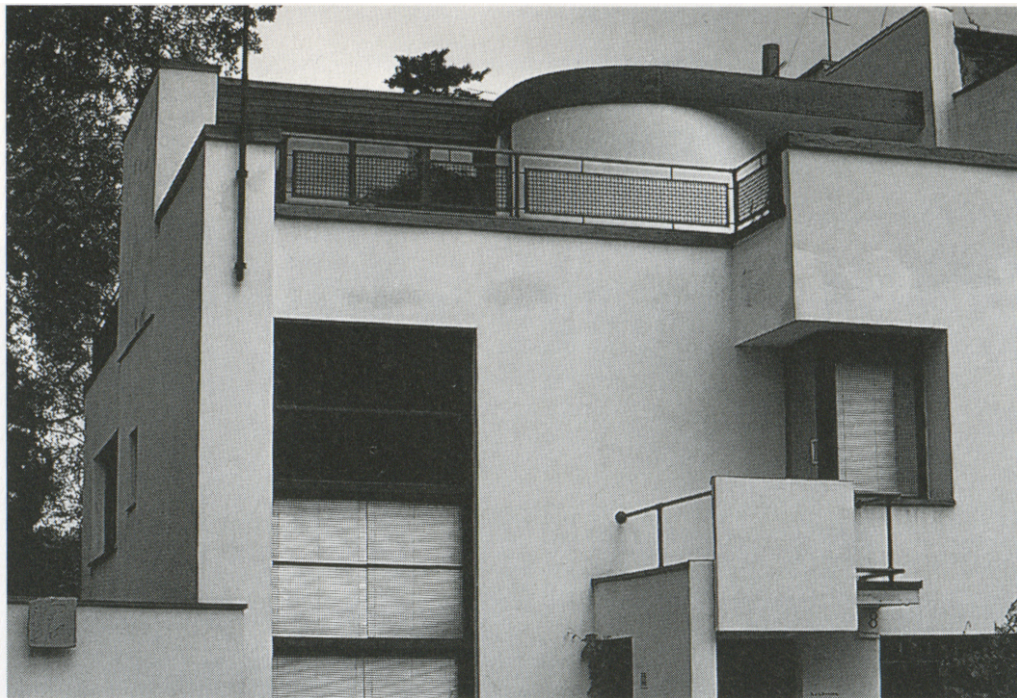


Figure 2.4. Barbara and Stanisław Brukalscy. *House of the Architects*. Warsaw-Żoliborz, 1927 From Lesnikowski, Wojciech G., and Vladimír Šlapeta. *East European Modernism: Architecture in Czechoslovakia, Hungary & Poland between the Wars*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1996,

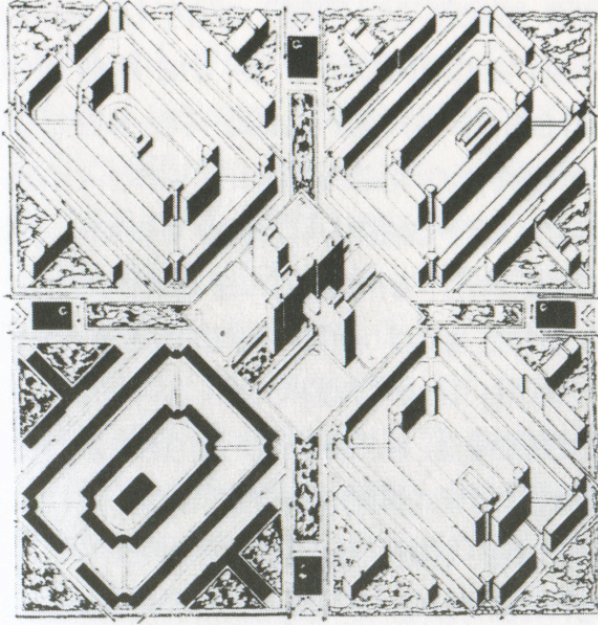


Figure 2.5. Teresa Żarnower, Mieczysław Szczuka, Piotr Kammiński, Antoni Karczewski, Proposal for a superbloc residential development, 1927 From Lesnikowski, Wojciech G., and Vladimír Šlapeta. *East European Modernism: Architecture in Czechoslovakia, Hungary & Poland between the Wars*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1996, 205.

Chapter Three: The Post War Period and Socialist Realism

In the post-war period, the change in the political system in Poland created a one-party system, which altered the development of design practice. The Polish United Workers Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*) or PZPR restructured the architectural profession, the building industry, and the country's economy on the model of the Soviet Union, by implementing a series of five-year plans. As a result it functioned as the biggest if not the only viable client, dictating the terms on which the architectural profession conducted its work. By drawing on various architectural traditions of Poland the Party redirected the efforts of the architectural profession along its own traditional lines, leading to the development of building projects that satisfied neither designers, nor the party, nor the user. The Party superseded the fact that architectural work depends on a relationship between clients, design professionals, theoreticians, and critics. In its effort to become like the Soviet Union, the party enlisted the efforts of architects to construct a socialist society without educating the architects in a particular method of design or defining that method.

Socialist Realism began as a return to realism in literature at the 1934 Great Authors Congress in Moscow. It gained the support of both the party and the professions that it encompassed, spreading to art and architecture.⁷¹ In the Soviet Union, Socialist Realism originated in the work of architects of the 1920s that designed buildings by utilizing a Neo-classical style, which was an antithesis to the international architecture of

⁷¹ Anders Åman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era : an Aspect of Cold War History* (New York Cambridge, Mass.: Architectural History Foundation ; MIT Press, 1992), 53.

modernism and secession, taking its forms from the classical empire style of St. Petersburg of the 19th century.⁷² Socialist Realism became the architectural expression of a socialist society, attempting to meet the ‘realistic’ demands of its users by providing adequate housing, while representing socialist ideals. The architecture expressed a ‘socialist content’ through the use of ‘national form.’ The concept of national form originated in the writings of theorists and critics in the Soviet Union in the 1920s, following the growing interest in national traditions throughout Europe. In particular, it related to Lenin’s concept of nationalism and the works of Stalin concerning the Bolsheviks’ stance on ethnic minorities.⁷³ A 1925 by text Stalin stated that “proletarian culture” took “various forms and methods of the various nations [that worked] to create Socialism.”⁷⁴ The exact form of Socialist Realism escaped precise definition in the Soviet Union and the people’s republics; the theory of national form acted as a guide in selecting the appropriate period or style for building in the specific region. In Poland, the Renaissance attic forms and neo-classical urban design were identified as being ideologically correct.⁷⁵ In the theoretical view, classicism invoked the ‘democratic’ Greek society of 5th century Athens. Therefore, Socialist Realism represented a historicist method that utilized specific styles from specific periods because of their perceived political connotation. Hence, the classicism, or modern classicism, which some architects in Poland exemplified, appeared to fit as an acceptable expression of Socialist Realism.

⁷² Wojciech Włodarczyk, *Socrealizm : Sztuka Polska w Latach 1950-1954 (Socialist Realism: Polish Art 1950-1954)* (Paris: Libella, 1986), 40.

⁷³ Włodarczyk, *Socrealizm*, 29.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 31

In Poland the party began to implement Socialist Realism in 1949 by offering a “mechanism” for design that an architect or artist, one uneducated in the socialist doctrine and style, could utilize.⁷⁶ Socialist Realism was organized along two lines, “isolation” and “openness.” This strategy allowed Socialist Realism on the one hand to negate foreign and ‘bourgeois’ influences and on the other to fit into any culture of the Soviet or satellite states.⁷⁷ Russian theoreticians viewed the functionalist or modernist influences as ‘bourgeois’ and linked them with the West and the class that supposedly worked to undermine the “democratic” ideal.⁷⁸ Consequently, the party and theoreticians of Socialist Realism found such an aesthetic unacceptable. On the other hand, the ethnic character of every nation, or the architecture of that nation, was embraced by the doctrine of ‘national form,’ allowing for a stylistic plurality in the work of artists and architects.⁷⁹ Although this doctrine made the reception of Socialist Realism easier outside Russia proper, it created a fluid definition of form, which as this chapter shows led to confusion in the architectural profession as to the success of actual built projects.

The introduction of Socialist Realism, unlike that of avant-garde, neo-classical or mainstream design, stemmed from the Polish Communist Party’s efforts to structure artistic practice. While Polish avant-garde adopted influences from the outside, the architects and designers themselves adopted those influences. By contrast, Socialist Realism grew from the political ideology that the Polish Communist party adapted from the Soviet Union and imposed on the architectural and design practice. The dissemination of Soviet Realism began with the meeting of “party-affiliated architects”

⁷⁶ Włodarczyk, *Socrealizm (Socialist Realism)*, 34.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 35.

on the 20th and 21st of June 1949 that prescribed the dissemination of Socialist Realist practice. This had an immediate impact on the architectural projects.⁸⁰ Edmund Goldzamt assumed the role of a leader and chief theorist. The Polish Soviet Institute released his booklet on Soviet high rises in 1953, and the book *Soviet Architecture (Architektura Radziecka)* in 1951, which included articles dealing with Soviet architecture. The Polish Association of Architects also chose to adopt and promote Socialist Realism.⁸¹ A juried exhibition of 156 Projects at the Warsaw Politechnic in 1950 addressed the form of Socialist Realism and its implementation in Warsaw. The results were published as *Polish Architecture 1950-1951 (Architektura Polska 1950-51)*, in 1952 by Bohdan Garliński. They were supposed to serve as an example to architects.⁸²

The aesthetics of Socialist Realism were a local manifestation of Stalinist Policies. During the war, when the Red army entered Poland in July 1944, the Polish Committee of National Liberation (*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*) formed under the auspices of the Soviet government. The Polish Worker's Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*) that formed from the Committee took power in late 1948 through a referendum. It combined with the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*) PPS to form the United Workers Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*) or PZPR creating the Polish People's Republic, although subsequent commentators recognized this political takeover as illegitimate and the election as fraudulent.⁸³ The party under the leadership of Bolesław Bierut (The Party's First Secretary between 1948 and 1956) initiated Stalinist policies, restructuring the economy and the building industry according

⁸⁰ Åman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*, 59.

⁸¹ Ibid., 62.

⁸² Ibid., 65-66.

⁸³ David Crowley, "People's Warsaw / Popular Warsaw," *Journal of Design History*, 10.2 (1997): 205.

to the model of the Soviet Union, imposing both a foreign style and professional model unto the architecture and design profession in 1949.

In 1948-49, taking a cue from the Soviet Union, the government created state planning bureaus, which consisted of large workspaces filled with hundreds of employees and consultants, operating on the regional level.⁸⁴ Similarly, building and production in the planned economy became subjugated to five-year plans that recalled the Soviet model. In production as in architecture the party centralized the industrial economy and took control through ‘planning’. An agent of the party, the Central Planning Bureau (*Centralny Urzad Planowania*) set up plans for manufacturing, eliminating the features of market economy such as profit, pricing, and competition. State policies determined the quality and the quantity of goods, removing the consumer completely from the equation and placing all decisions in the hands of the producer. Following the example of the Soviet Union, with which Poland entered into a materials and technologies exchange under the COMECON,⁸⁵ the command economy, neglected light industries, and focused instead on the rapid development of the iron, engineering, and steel industries as part of the militarization of industry during the Cold War.⁸⁶ As a result, the building industry, the economy itself, and the professional structure of the architectural and design professions came under the direct control of the party. Such control made the implementation of Socialist doctrine possible, giving the Party power to restrict and

⁸⁴ Aman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*, 23.

⁸⁵ The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, referred to as the Comecon, CMEA or the CEMA, formed in 1949 as a response against the Marshall Plan by the USSR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. The members agreed to exchange economic assistance, technology, and raw materials in an attempt to make the members self-sufficient. Through the formation of the Comecon, the USSR wanted to dominate the states of Eastern Europe and provide an alternative for those that showed interest in the Marshall Plan.

⁸⁶ David Crowley, “Warsaw’s Shops, Stalinism and the Thaw” in *Style and Socialism : Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*, ed. Susan Reid and David Crowley (Oxford: New York, 2000), 27.

dictate the design profession's behavior. The creation of state controlled offices, the control of the building industry and the economy, allowed the party to control the design professions and institute Socialist Realism. Late in 1953, when the creation of major architecture departments became a priority, the party added education to its means of control. By attempting to implement a cohesive ideological program through the reconstruction of the design profession the party continued the utopian conception of design.

Socialist Realism in architecture continued the attempt of the avant-garde to create a "high" culture in order to counteract the democratization of art that popular culture and mass production brought. By viewing architecture and art as a social force it continued the utopian stance toward ideology. As Wojciech Włodarczyk, argued in his 1986 book *Socrealizm*, the avant-garde attempted to resist the rise of mass culture in which the artist lost a privileged place by creating "high culture."⁸⁷ By making art that engaged social or political problems, rather than purely aesthetic ones, the early 20th century avant-gardes desired to make art relevant and the artist a key member of society.⁸⁸ The similarity of Socialist Realism and the preceding avant-garde movements become clear in Włodarczyk's assertion that "membership in the avant-garde in the between-the-wars period made the acceptance of Social Realism easier."⁸⁹

Boris Groys in the *Total Art of Stalinism* also considered Socialist Realism as the continuation of the avant-garde project. In fact, he believes that Socialist Realism took the avant-garde project further. Socialist Realism like the avant-garde sought to let go of

⁸⁷ Włodarczyk, *Socrealizm (Socialist Realism)*, 54.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

bourgeois culture and construct a new “high” culture. The previous avant-garde of the 1930s and Socialist Realism differed only in how that goal was to be accomplished. The two art movements differed on the role of classical heritage, reflecting reality, and the new individual.⁹⁰ In the case of classical heritage, for example, the party proponents of Socialist Realism wanted to appropriate “the cultural heritage of the bourgeois” in order to use the past cultural capital rather than destroy it as the avant-garde advocated.⁹¹

The primary difference between the utopian ideologies lay in the possibility of enforcement. Socialist Realism served the Communist Party, an organization that controlled society, economy, and politics, and could actually make the new ethical and social function of art a reality. According to Groys, because of the Party, Social Realism took the avant-garde project further, radicalizing it. The previous Constructivist and modernist avant-garde “denied the criteria of taste and individuality in the name of a collective goal,” but “it continued to advocate...subjective taste for its own devices.”⁹² This made social goals hard to implement. Socialist Realism on the other hand denied individuality completely, because the artist became just a servant to the ‘demigod’ Stalin and his party. In urbanism this made the implementation of socialist and humanist tenets, expressed by previous avant-gardes, easy. The party expressed the ‘administrative responsibility’ or rather complete control to introduce the regulations “indispensable to human health and dignity” which CIAM advocated for in the Charter of Athens, the previously-mentioned modernist rule book for city planning as codified by Le Corbusier, making it impossible for “private interest” to triumph, which as the Charter showed, it

⁹⁰ Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism : Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1992), 37.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 39.

usually did.⁹³ Of course, this radical policy of community action stifled individuality in all areas of human endeavor.

The difference in the aesthetics between the avant-garde modernism, Constructivism, and Socialist Realism lay chiefly in the eclectic style that came to combine aesthetic qualities of past artistic and architectural styles. Socialist Realism wanted to “exploit the previous forms of life and culture,” whereas the inbetween the wars period avant-garde “respected the heritage to such a degree” they opted to “destroy” it rather than “utilize or profane it”.⁹⁴ Socialist Realism, considered itself a phase beyond the history of culture and art, in a more radical way than the avant-garde, which “assumed a place in history” by rejecting historic styles and “laying bare the techniques that made up the work, unhindered by content”.⁹⁵

Socialist Realism saw art history as a struggle between “progressive art” that worked in the name of the “oppressed classes,” and “passive art” that accepted political reality as it is, seeking to “canonize” the progressive art.⁹⁶ Progressive art in this sense meant traditional forms associated with a society that expressed certain values preferred by the party, such as the ‘democracy’ of Greek antiquity. In this vein Greek antiquity, the Italian Renaissance, and nineteenth century Russian Realism, considered the progressive arts in their respective times by the Stalinists, became part of the Socialist Realist design in order to capture “the vital force of truly great art” in an attempt to express the progressive, popular ideas inherent in Socialism.⁹⁷ For the avant-garde, the

⁹³ Ulrich Conrads, *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-Century Architecture* (Cambridge: Mass., MIT Press, 1970), 138.

⁹⁴ Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism*, 42.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 42 and 43.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

use of abstraction instead of traditional forms defined 'Progressive' art. 'Progressive art' used materials outside of the realm of art, becoming autonomous in order to create a basis for a new society, rather than referencing societies that shared the values it attempted to express.

The theoretical side of Socialist Realism, which was based on Marxist, Leninist and finally Stalinist theory, arbitrarily structured space and thereby society much like the most hardened expression of New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*). Unlike that movement, which desired to reshape society by recreating the environment through a functional and elementary aesthetic, Socialist Realism became a tool of the party to control society. Because of the party's unlimited authority and control of the profession, coupled with the undefined nature of aesthetic form, Socialist Realism led to a hybridization that stifled the architectural profession.

Party ideology and the creation of a socialist society superseded all other concerns. Socialist Realism as party ideology that tried to structure society became inexplicably tied to the rebuilding of Warsaw, the destroyed capital, as it allowed for the construction of buildings in the new socialist manner, but also for the creation of an entire city, implementing a large scale Socialist Realist urban plan. The party saw the Socialist Warsaw as the model for other Polish cities. Following World War II, the Polish people found Warsaw entirely razed. Only the two main avenues remained. The Nazi *Vernichtungs-Komando* (Annihilation Detachments) carried out the city's destruction as a punishment for the summer 1944 uprising.⁹⁸ It is noteworthy that Bolesław Bierut, announced the beginning of the short period of Socialist Realism, defined as 1949-1956,

⁹⁸ Crowley, "Building the World Anew: Design in Stalinist and Post-Stalinist Poland," 190.

on July 3rd 1949 at a Warsaw meeting of the PZPR during the conference entitled, ‘The Six Year Plan for the Reconstruction of Warsaw’ (*Szescioletni Plan Odbudowy Warszawy*).⁹⁹

The new Warsaw was supposed to share the Socialist content with the rest of Soviet art and design in an effort to create a city for ‘a new socialist society’. Its architecture had to fill the needs of this new society in a realistic manner, which meant that the city required “real, rational planning” in addition to the aesthetic realism, which “negotiated abstraction and idealism.”¹⁰⁰ The “Six-year Plan for Reconstruction,” in its attempt to create a centrally planned city, allowed Polish architects, trained in the pre-war period as modernists, to implement the past avant-garde principles in which they were schooled.

This can be observed when one compares the goals of the “Six-Year Plan” with the points set down in the Charter of Athens by Le Corbusier and based on the deliberations of the CIAM, which analyzed the world’s major cities, pre-war Warsaw among them. The modernist avant-garde ideas toward urban planning and their goals for society as based on that urban planning resembled those of the Socialist Realism. Both the Charter of Athens and the six-year plan, codified in the volume entitled *Six-Year Plan for the Reconstruction of Warsaw* and published under Bierut’s name, treat the city as a disorderly construction unfit for living. While the CIAM analysed 33 cities, Bierut’s plan speaks only of pre-war Warsaw, but their critique is essentially the same. Both base their critique on the capitalist speculation and blame the mass market for the inadequacy they

⁹⁹ Krzysztof Mordyński, "Marzenie o Idealnym Mieście: Warszawa Socrealistyczna (Dream of the Ideal City: Socialist Realist Warsaw)," *Spotkania z Zabytkami (Encounters with Monuments)* 9 (2006), 3.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

find in the modern city.

The similarities in ideology became apparent in the direct comparison of the two volumes. In the 72nd point, the Charter blamed “private initiatives, inspired by personal interest and the lure for profit” for the city’s “regrettable state of affairs.”¹⁰¹ The plan, addressing the city center, blamed “greed and speculation on building sites” for the “motley cosmopolitan image of a capitalist city” in which “shops, stores, and places of entertainment” constituted a “disordered mess.”¹⁰² In CIAM’s vision the “city multiplied in a haste and individual violence,” and a “few private interests...gave rise to the suffering of countless individuals.”¹⁰³ The six-year plan saw the “housing conditions of the working class [deteriorate] year by year” because housing construction stressed, among other things, “making a profitable enterprise” rather than the creation of fit living conditions.¹⁰⁴ Both the avant-garde and the Social Realists noticed the unbearable disorganization of the city and theorized that market speculation created these conditions, although the modernists focused on the capitalists’ inability to control the machine, emblem of popular culture and its creator, while the Social Realists blamed the higher and middle-class. Therefore, both socialists and modernists saw the same problems in the capitalist city, offering similar utopian solutions as the modernists in the in-between the wars period. They mainly disagreed on the form that the city and its architecture should take.

The party dictated the form of the city and its mission (the creation of a socialist

¹⁰¹ Ulrich Conrads, 137.

¹⁰² Boleslaw Bierut and Biuro Urbanistyczne, *The Six-Year Plan for the Reconstruction of Warsaw : Graphical Presentation, Diagrams, Plans, and Perspectives Worked Out on the Basis of Materials and Projects of the Town Planning Office of Warsaw* (Warszawa: Ksiazka i wiedza, 1951), 265.

¹⁰³ Ulrich Conrad, 138.

¹⁰⁴ Bierut, *The Six-Year Plan for the Reconstruction of Warsaw*, 265.

society) as influenced by the Soviet Union. As Krzysztof Mordynski argued, the Socialist Realism in Poland came from the Soviet experience in which the traditional forms of architecture appeared easier for the working class to comprehend.

Theoretically, Socialist Realism returned the beautiful forms of architecture to the masses giving the worker a “city-palace” while monumental architecture highlighted the power of socialism.¹⁰⁵ The new city was to possess a new communication system that allowed for, as Bierut proclaimed, “great mass gatherings and manifestations during anniversaries important to this society,” focusing “the social and cultural life, not only of the whole capital, but the whole nation”.¹⁰⁶ As Mordynski showed, the plan called for zoning the city in such a way as to place offices and factories near the housing estates, replacing the “bourgeois apartments” and communicating “the democratization of life.”¹⁰⁷ The construction of small apartments, without kitchens in certain cases, planned for the elimination of individual concern as a member of the socialist society would dine in a canteen and filled his cultural needs in a “house of culture,” a communal space that included a library and other cultural amenities that constituted a part of every housing estate.¹⁰⁸ Mordynski claimed that the party made architecture fit the “socialist society” that would have become a reality if Polish society molded itself to the policies set by the party. This directive placed the party in direct control of the architectural profession. Hence, architects became servants of the party and its cultural policy.¹⁰⁹ These realistic concerns for the city, which sought to bring offices and factories near communal housing

¹⁰⁵ Mordynski, “Marzenie o Idealnym Miście (Dream of the Ideal City),” 6.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

estates. Hence, both the modernists and socialist wanted to provide the same proper living arrangements, offering the same utopian vision. Socialist Realists wanted monumental forms and wide avenues, while the modernists desired elementary volumes and high rises.

This overarching injection of Soviet socialist culture into all spheres of life as well as architecture created confusion in the architectural practice. Soviet theorists defined Socialist Realism as “socialist in content, and national in form.”¹¹⁰ If the content seemed easier to define the form that expressed such content proved ambiguous. In the case of Warsaw urbanism, housing estates possessed houses of culture that in themselves held certain amenities such as libraries and theatres to allow for collective cultural education of the citizen. Wide avenues made possible the manifestations and celebrations of the state. The form of a house of culture proved a different matter. The interpretive nature of “national form” that appeared to stem from the culture into which Sociality Realism was mounted, allowed Polish architectural traditions, including modernism, to fit into the mold of socialist building. But this created a ‘hybridization of styles’ that caused architects to produce substandard solutions in building. More so than such ‘hybridization,’ the party’s overarching power over the design restricted the work of architects looking for solutions to the problems of construction.

The modernist architects of the 1920s and 1930 who tried to adapt to the presence of Socialist Realism continued their practice through concessions. The most startling case proves that of Szymon Syrkus. As a founder of *Praesens*, the founding member of CIAM in 1928, and one of the authors of The Charter of Athens in 1935, he seemed like

¹¹⁰ Mordyński, “Marzenie o Idealnym Miście (Dream of the Ideal City),” 7.

the least likely person to take up the case of Socialist Realism.

Yet, becoming a professor at the Warsaw Institute of Technology, he made a case for the Soviet-inspired movement in architecture that the party advocated. As Anders Aman showed, Syrkus published an article in issue no. 5, 1949 of the journal *Architecture (Architektura)* entitled “On the Question of Developing Architectural Activity.” It contrasted the condition of the interwar period with that of the post-war, seeing “tremendous opportunities” in the phase of socialism.¹¹¹ Syrkus also used an ideological argument contrasting “cosmopolitanism” of the West with Socialist Realism of Russia.¹¹² Similarly, in an ideological outpouring he called the Palace of Culture and Science designed by a team of Russian architects to crown the new Socialist Warsaw, “a fixed lode star on...the way to the transformation of the old Warsaw...[a] bourgeois and capitalist [city] into Socialist [Warsaw].”¹¹³

Włodarczyk argued that similarity in methods made it easy for previously avant-garde architects to move into Socialist Realism, making the question of opposing or joining the movement mute. The likeness of the Charter’s goals, which CIAM composed with Syrkus as member, and those of the *Plan for the Reconstruction of Warsaw* may have driven Syrkus to accept Socialist Realism and, as Aman argued, seek a compromise between functionalism and Socialist Realism. Whether, he subscribed ideologically to the tenets of Socialist Realism, Syrkus’ validation of Soviet architecture became important to the party’s promotion of its new chosen style.

But the attempt to find a compromise between functionalism and Socialist Realism

¹¹¹ Aman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*, 173.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Agata Passent, *Pałac Wiecznie Żywy (Eternal Palace)* (Warszawa: Spis Treści, 2004), 33.

proved futile, creating a confusion of styles. Although the housing estate that Szymon and Helena Syrkus designed in the Warsaw district of *Circle (Koło)* started as a modernist estate, the later phases transformed into the forms of Socialist Realism, creating structures that constituted a “chimera” from a functionalist perspective.¹¹⁴ The creation of ‘chimeras’ appeared in other buildings in which the functional form of modernist architecture attempted to meet the requirements of Socialist Realism. The open amphitheater, Decade Stadium (*Stadion Dziesięciolecia*) of 1953 that Jerzy Hryniewiecki designed for Warsaw reconciled classicism of the Soviet-derived style with functional needs (Fig. 3.1).¹¹⁵ Similarly, the Moscow cinema on Puławska Street combined monumental and axial forms with a glass wall and thin supports: a staple of the modern movement (Fig. 3.2).¹¹⁶ Therefore, the party’s control over architectural practice, or its attempt to force architecture to follow its ideology, led to the restriction of architect’s practice. It is important to note that Jerzy Hryniewiecki, one of the architects responsible for the creation of *Projekt*, conformed to the formulations of Socialist Realism as expressed by the party along with the modernist architect, Syrkus.

The different brands of classicism suffered the same fate as the modernists, conceding to the party’s definition of Socialist Realism even though their practice appeared to fit into the definition of ‘Soc,’ the derogatory term for Socialist Realism used in Poland. This stemmed from the fact that Socialism Realism, especially the doctrine of “national form” escaped precise definition. As Aman Anders showed, classicism became a viable form for Socialist Realism because of the fact that it enjoyed a formidable position

¹¹⁴ Aman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*, 174.

¹¹⁵ David Crowley, *Warsaw* (Topographics. London: Reaktion, 2003), 95.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 97.

in the Soviet Union, the great importance of classical tradition to the history of Warsaw and the practical knowledge of architects who trained during the interwar period.¹¹⁷

However, the party's constant dissatisfaction with the forms produced by Polish architects and the lack of definition for the proper form of Soc, led to constant discussion and micromanagement on the part of the party ministers, especially in projects important to the party such as public buildings.

As Włodarczyk showed the Soviet Socialist Realism originated in the work of Russian architects of the 1920s, the proponents of the neo-classical movement, which stemmed from the opposition against the international architecture of the secession and the early 20th century Modernism. The Petersburg Empire style of the early 19th century served as a formal prototype for the 20th century neoclassicism. The use of neoclassicism of the 1920s stemmed from the efforts to invoke the spirit of that era.¹¹⁸ Despite the fact that the neoclassicism served as the basis of Socialist Realism in Russia and could be used as a model, it failed to work ideologically as Poland's 'national form.' As Anders had shown, it carried too little historic meaning.¹¹⁹ Edmund Goldzamt, the ideological leader of Polish Social Realism, argued that Renaissance should be the starting point. Interestingly enough, he spoke of the Marszałkowska Housing Estate (*Marszałkowska Dzielnica Mieszkaniowa*) or (MDM), the central housing estate in Warsaw, one of a few examples of monumental architecture that fit the dimensions desired by the party and planned in their reconstruction of Warsaw as the socialist city (Fig. 3.3). Goldzamt's critique stemmed from the fact that the architects based the buildings façade of a large

¹¹⁷ Åman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*, 103.

¹¹⁸ Włodarczyk, *Socrealism (Socialist Realism)*, 40.

¹¹⁹ Åman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*, 104.

apartment building on *Malachowski* Plaza by Jan Heurich in 1907-10, a classical building viewed as an example of bourgeoisie culture, rather than the ‘proper’ Renaissance architecture.¹²⁰

The theorists of Socialist Realism, like Goldzamt, who wanted to create a aesthetic of building out of the ill defined notion of “national form” and Polish architects who followed past national traditions remained in constant debate, causing confusion in the profession. Even a building created as part of the competition that formed part of the *Six Year Plan for Reconstruction*, the plan that envisioned Warsaw as a Socialist City, failed to meet the theorist’s formulations of Socialist Realism, because of the prevalence of traditions such as classicism. The dissatisfaction of Goldzamt and the party ministers with the results of socialist architecture forced the proponents of classicism to argue their case as practitioners befitting Socialist Realism. The editors of the publication *Architecture (Architektura)*, argued for the classicism of the early 20th century. The most vocal among them was Adolf Szyszko-Bohusz, who studied at the St. Petersburg Academy of Art, and argued that it could function as an alternative to the aforementioned “bourgeois” architecture of Heurich.¹²¹ The debates on classicism show that even if, as Aman has claimed, the form of Socialist Realism came from national traditions, the party’s continuous interference and indecision prevented the full utilization of these tradition. Socialist Realism failed to take on the form of Polish Classicism.

Modernist classicists who’s practice fit into the mold of “realism,” and who achieved a position in state offices also faced the challenge of synthesizing their works with the party ideology and the official version of “national form” in architecture.

¹²⁰ Aman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*, 104.

¹²¹ Ibid.

Bohdan Pniewski, a Warsaw architect and urbanist who practiced a modern classicism since the late teens of the twentieth century, exemplified such as case. Born Boghdan Wiktor Kazimierz Pniewski on September 1897, the architect interned in the architectural offices of Jan Heurich and Rudolf Swirczynski, completing his training as a classicist and entered the architecture department at the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute.¹²²

Pniewski's case becomes important because of his emergence as a leader of the architectural profession and his use of the classicized aesthetic. He followed the modern classical tradition of Polish architecture and possessed a coveted position inside of the Central Office of Architectural and Building Design (*Centralne Biuro Projektów Architektonicznych*).¹²³ The “hybridization” of the functionalist modernist aesthetic in the case of Szymon Syrkus, a staunch modernist and a creator of *Praesens* could be seen as a peripheral event as Syrkus steadily retired from the scene, even though as an important Polish architect his support for the socialist style proved important to the dissemination of Socialist Realism. *Koło* (Circle) represented one of his last built projects. Following 1948, upon the creation of state planning and architectural offices as part of the party's reconstruction of the profession, Pniewski became the head of the Central Office of Architectural and Building Design (*Centralne Biuro Projektów Architektonicznych*).¹²⁴ Aman framed Pniewski as an architect with a “modern, personal classicism” responsible for important state commissions in the People's Republic, highlighting the fact that he was able to keep his private practice in his villa in Warsaw.¹²⁵ Although the fact that Pniewski secured his private practice in an era of state offices made him a singularity in

¹²² Marek Czapelski, *Bohdan Pniewski--Warszawski Architekt Xx Wieku (Boghdan Pniewski—Warsaw Architect)* (Warszawa: Wydawn. Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2008), 11-15.

¹²³ Czapelski, *Bohdan Pniewski*, 185.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Czapelski, *Bohdan Pniewski*, 174.

the era of Bierut, his practice in the Central Office and his involvement in the *National Bank of Poland* and the *Parliament Building (Sejm)* became more important. It illustrated the party's overarching control and the bureaucracy of the state system.

The party's involvement in the work of the architect as a smothering influence that stifled rather than facilitated architectural practice became evident in Pniewski's work for the Ministry of Communication and more clearly in the design for the headquarters of the National Polish Bank. Pniewski's experience as designer of the *Headquarters of the Ministry of Communication (Generalna Dyrekcja Ministerstwa Komunikacji)* exemplified the party's micromanagement of state commissions (Fig. 3.4).

The political pressure on Pniewski and his team began on the 26th of February when Zygmunt Skibniewski, a representative of the Office of Warsaw Urbanism (*Biuro Urbanistyczne Warszawy*), communicated the changes requested by the authorities. The points presented to Pniewski's team included specific directions concerning changes to the design, such as point four that necessitated the "reworking of the elevation" to use "architectural detail that [was] understandable to the multitude."¹²⁶ From that point, the design came under the scrutiny of officials in conferences at the Ministry of Communication. The following conference took place in the Cabinet of Ministers Congress (*Presydium Rady Ministrow*) on May 6th and in the National Cabinet (*Radzie Panstwa*) on the 1st of June in the presence of Józef Cyrankiewicz, Hilary Minc, Jakub Berman and Roman Piotrowski. According to Czapelski, the design that followed 1950 in which Pniewski chose to take cue from the Moscow skyscrapers, abandoning earlier

¹²⁶ Czapelski, *Bohdan Pniewski*, 196.

conceptions constituted “a capitulation.”¹²⁷ Pniewski added detail that would be “understood by the multitude” such as the attics, a Renaissance decorative form, common to Poland’s Renaissance architecture, which crowned the façade above the main cornice of a structure that Goldzamt and Bierut favored.¹²⁸ This project demonstrated the direct micromanagement of the design process by the state government in the construction of state buildings such as the GDMK, which undermined the decisions of the modern, classical architect.

The Polish National Bank project (*Narodowy Bank Polski*) exemplified the same phenomenon (Fig. 3.5). Pniewski won the closed contest for the commission (announced in the February of 1947) on the 8th of January, 1948.¹²⁹ The plan changed from the original one developed in 1950-1951 to fit the requirements of Socialist Realism, adding the figurative decoration in the elevation and the decorative crenellations (*wykusze*) with a terrace in the main office building.

As Czapelski showed, despite these additions, the jury criticized the design as presented at the National Architectural Exhibition (*Ogólnopolski Pokaz Architektury*) in 1951. The critique, taken from Józef Sigalin’s notes on the project, centered on the faulty method of design and the “formalism,” a term generally applied to elementary form, that Sigalin observed in the composition. It also criticized the “architectural image” that failed to follow the rules of Socialist Realism and the lack of a reference to the history of Polish architecture and urbanism.¹³⁰ The corrections made to the design created a main

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Czapelski, *Bohdan Pniewski*, 200.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 201.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 206.

office building that abstracted from Pniewski's efforts.¹³¹

The debate and confusion over which “national form” Socialist Realist architecture should take also affected architectural education in the People's Republic. The dissatisfaction over the results of design, even with projects spearheaded by the state like the MDM, inspired the state to structure education programs in order to achieve a “proper” architecture. In the Spring of 1953, the Ministry of Culture envisioned the creation of an architecture department in the higher fine arts schools, which stemmed from the critique of the surface detail of the MDM and Old Town (*Starówka*) in Warsaw, Gdansk, and Lublin and even the PKiN, the *Palace of Culture and Science*. At the Warsaw Fine Art Academy (*Akademii Sztuk Pięknych*) or the ASP, a design for a program of education for the future architecture department, focused on creating an architect capable of designing Socialist Realist architecture.

The program characterized the graduate of the Fine Art Academy as one who possessed the knowledge of Marxism. He/She should have acquired historical and engineering knowledge, focusing on the Polish fine arts and those aspects of Polish folk art that connoted national character. These elements formed the basics for the formation of an architecture that is socialist in context and national in form.¹³² The program attempted to force architectural pedagogy along a restricted path; it set out to teach Marxist ideologies along with technical and engineering theory from past periods through the lens of Polish art that could be interpreted as nationally singular.

Although the period in which the party tried to restructure the architectural pedagogy, rather than just affect certain projects, proved shorter than the already short

¹³¹ Czapelski, *Bohdan Pniewski*, 206-207.

¹³² Włodarczyk, *Socrealism (Socialist Realism)*, 77.

period of Socialist Realism, it illustrated the party's attempt at controlling architecture to the point of micromanagement. As Włodarczyk showed, although the Warsaw academy formed a department of Marxism-Leninism, the cultural politics of the party began to change direction in the spring of the following year. At the session of the Committee on Culture and Art (*Rada Kultury i Sztuki*) in the June of 1954, the fine artists showed interest in alternative art movements to realism. Włodarczyk quoted Włodzimierz Sokorski statement, revealing that the “the party [believed] that the creative process cannot be dictated from the top through laws and regulations”.¹³³ With the selection of a new administration for the Warsaw ASP, the changes in the curriculum were implemented by the school itself, rather than directed by the ministry.¹³⁴

This turn shows that after the failures to pin down the form of Socialist Realist architecture, the party took a step further and tried to formulate the program of the departments of architecture that academies of fine art began to form. This attempt overturned with the cultural change immediately preceding the Thaw in which the party repudiated its Stalinist policies. The ministry desisted in its attempt to control the education of architects; hence it formed the last step in the party's attempt to create an architecture that would lead to the creation of a new society.

Although modern classicists like Pniewski, or modernists like Syrkus, became integrated into the party controlled system of architecture, others remained on the periphery. While the architects in the fine art academies and those working for public commissions in Poland fell under the regulations that guided Socialist Realism, a small number of architects escaped party control through the design of exhibitions aboard.

¹³³ Włodarczyk, *Socrealism (Socialist Realism)*, 79.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

Those who worked within the country followed Socialist Realist rules and the party forbid travel to other countries, except if one worked for the Chamber of Commerce (*Izba Handlu Zagranicznego*) in the capacity of an exhibition designer. These architects designed pavilions as environments for the display of Polish goods and art objects. Such a ‘site’ of architectural expression served as a space in which architects developed their own theories and practices. Paradoxically, Socialist Realism itself caused this site of independent design to appear, preserving independent design practice. These architects honed their craft in contemporary practice, which stemmed from modernist functional aesthetics. Such architects were able to forge a practice that *Projekt* then came to champion in its editorial program. The fact that these architects escaped Socialist Realism allowed them to conceive of the functional contemporary architecture that *Projekt* promoted in the thaw period.

According to Włodarczyk, the tendencies of synthesizing sculpture and painting in service of architecture—these are tendencies taken from the work of the avant-garde—characteristic of Socialist Realism combined with the ‘integrational’ tendencies represented by Jerzy Sołtan who joined the Warsaw academy after working with Le Corbusier. Sołtan, as the head consultant of the Chamber of Commerce (*Izba Handlu Zagranicznego*), transferred the orders for exhibition pavilions to the experimental-science workshop of the ASP since 1952. The department, composed of architects and designers that Sołtan headed, escaped the restrictions placed on architects domestically as their projects headed for abroad. One of Sołtan’s teams constructed the 1954-55 Pavilion *Tropic (Tropik)* for the exhibition in Damascus and Delhi that featured an expandable

construction, which allowed the Pavilion to grow to any size and fit any terrain.¹³⁵

Because exhibition pavilions represented the face of Polish architecture abroad, the government allowed the teams that Sołtan assembled to formulate functional designs unhindered by the ideological stipulations of the party in order to show the validity of Polish architecture on the international scene. Therefore, a select number of architects followed their own inclination in design and experimented by creating such projects.

The exhibition design that the Foreign Trade Chamber spearheaded under the leadership of Sołtan, fostered architects such as Oskar Hansen and their theoretical ideas, such as the idea of ‘open form,’ which became more feasible after the party loosened its ideological grip. ‘open form’ constituted one of the theories of functional architecture that *Projekt* promoted. In the same vein, *Projekt* chose to feature the architect who fashioned the theory. The party attempted to remove such architects completely from the architectural scene, rather than attempting to alter their projects through regulation. Hansen presented such a case.

Returning from Paris in 1950, after completing studies with Paul Jeanneret and Ferdinand Leger, Oskar Hansen attempted to create the interior of a temporary city hall for Warsaw in a former cinema, The World (*Świat*), along with a friend, Lechosław Rośiński. He and Hansen tried to create “cognitive space,” a feature of “open form” by, for example, painting synthetic ideograms of the stresses of the lintels, which otherwise appear horizontal and fail to illustrate the actual tensions distributed through the structure (Fig. 3.6).¹³⁶ In this way, the space became ‘cognitive’ because it allowed the user to perceive or consider the otherwise unnoticed forces that support the structure. The chief

¹³⁵ Włodarczyk, *Socrealizm (Socialist Realism)*, 78.

¹³⁶ Oscar Hansen, *Towards Open Form = Ku Formie Otwartej* (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2005), 14.

architect of Warsaw, Józef Segalin, disapproved of the design and officiated a hearing to revoke the architects' licenses, but they both continued to practice because of Szymon Syrkus's influence.¹³⁷ Putting an aesthetic theory such as that of 'cognitive space' into practice in Poland under the ideological influence of Socialist Realism became impossible. Such an incompatible aesthetic escaped the possibility of party regulation and interference as in the designs of classical modernists such as Pniewski, although those restricted the work of the architect and kept his buildings from coming to fruition.

The exhibition work for the Chamber of Commerce on the other hand allowed theories such as Hansen's to take shape, creating a site for functional, modernism with roots in the work of Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. By working under Sołtan—the architect knew Sołtan from his time in Paris—and for the chamber of commerce from 1952-1955 as a designer of exhibitions and exhibition pavilions, Hansen developed his theory and practice. Because the architects were called on to exhibit poor quality goods, the products of Poland's poor economy of the time, Hansen was able to develop his idea of "adoptive background" in order to show objects of poor "formal" quality.¹³⁸ For the Polish Pavilion at the Izmir International Fair in Turkey in 1955, Hansen created the 'HT structure' with Lech Tomaszewski. The eponymous structure consists of a roof of "hyperbolic paraboloid modules" (Hansen), which could be shifted in order to lay them indefinitely and create a structure of any size (Tomaszewski) (Fig. 3.7).¹³⁹ An early review, "Art of Space, Time, Emotions," by Alexander Wojciechowski from Art Review (*Przegląd Artystyczny*) of 1957 observed that, this represented an example of

¹³⁷ Hansen, *Towards Open Form = Ku Formie Otwartej*, 14.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

architecture structured on geometry, a synthesis of art and science.¹⁴⁰ The positions in exhibition and exhibition pavilion design with the Chamber of Commerce allowed architects the ability to develop their practices without constraints imposed by the party. The practices that architects like Hansen and Tomaszewski developed during the years before the thaw in the exhibition pavilion design, led to further developments in architecture, which synthesized art and science by exploring geometry and natural forms. These developments became evident after the period of Socialist Realism ended. *Projekt* championed such developments as architects like Tomaszewski began to write for the magazine. Therefore, the exhibition design for the Chamber of Commerce allowed architects like Hansen to explore structure and develop theories that became the focus of Polish architecture and the *Projekt* during the ‘thaw’.

As Aman observed, the client’s influence on architecture and design sometimes overpowers the agents that create and represent it, undermining their practices and theories. He cited the international architecture competitions, such as the Chicago Tribune building of 1922, the League of Nations Headquarters in Geneva in 1927, and the Palace of the Soviets of 1932 as examples of big clients who adhered to the “old view of things.”¹⁴¹ In societies that allowed a pluralistic development of culture and that of artistic or design professions, different traditions developed because of the availability of different types of clients, besides such clients as the Tribune Corporation or the League of Nations. In a one-party system adhering to the Stalinist Policies copied from the Soviet Union, which desired a tradition form for building, the development of different traditions and of the practice itself became another matter altogether. Because the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 184.

¹⁴¹ Aman, *Architecture and Ideology in Eastern Europe during the Stalin Era*, 76.

political party of Poland organized the architectural profession, the building industry, and the economy on the model of the Soviet Union, and acted as the biggest if not the only viable client, it dictated the terms on which the architectural profession acted. If by subjugating the various architectural tradition of Poland in service of its political goals such as the creation of a socialist society, the Party stifled the development of the architectural profession.

However, the exhibition design for the Chamber of Commerce served as a site in which a different design method developed despite the control over architectural practice that prevailed during the short period of Stalinism in Poland following World War II. Exhibition design served to allow for a pluralistic development of culture since the Chamber of Commerce behaved as a client that favored functional modernism, which focused on the development of structure in order to create fitting pavilions for Polish commercial products. Therefore, the chamber of commerce allowed for Hansen's theory of 'open form' to develop and Lech Tomaszewski, Jerzy Sołtan and others to work in the functional, modernist mode, performing the kind of experiments in structure that *Projekt* featured. These structural experiments defined the technocratic nature of thaw modernism in Poland

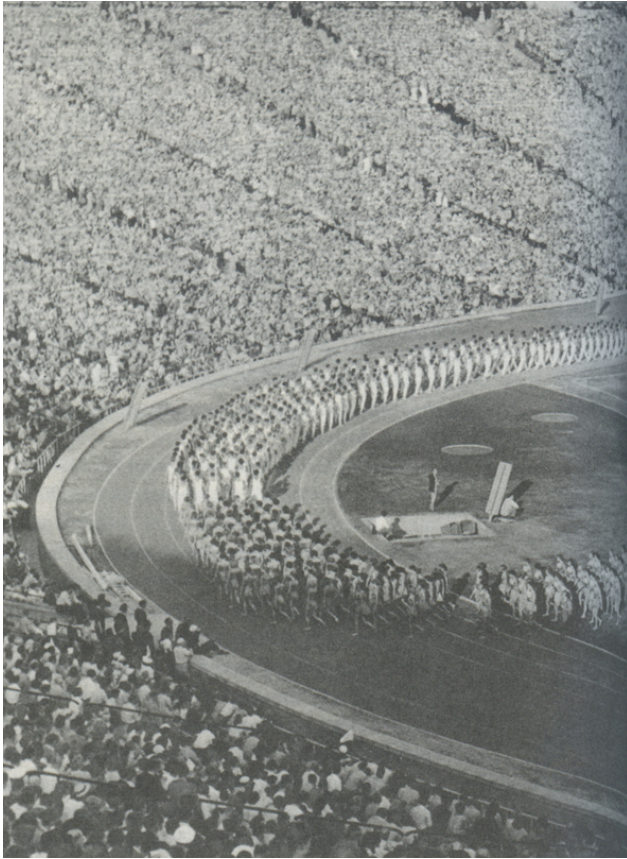


Figure 3.1. Jerzy Hryniewiecki, *Decade Stadium (Stadion Dziesięciolecia)*, 1953 From Crowley, David. *Warsaw*, Topographics. London: Reaktion, 2003, 94.



Figure 3.2. *Moscow Cinema*, Puławska Street, Warsaw From Crowley, David. *Warsaw*, Topographics. London: Reaktion, 2003, 96.



Figure 3.3. Marszałkowska Housing District (Marszałkowska Dzielnica Mieszkalna) and Constitution Square. From Crowley, David. *Warsaw*, Topographics. London: Reaktion, 2003, 116.

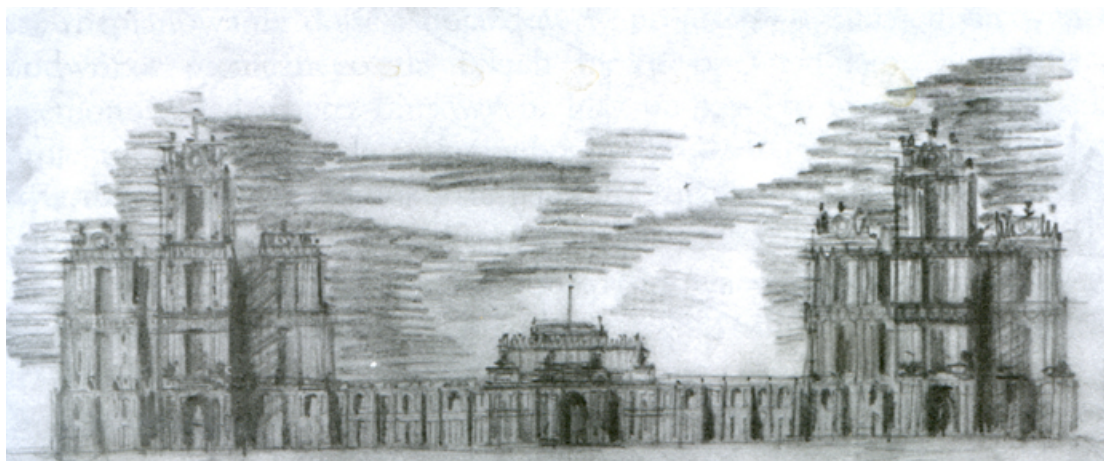


Figure 3.4. Sketch of the Headquarters of the Ministry of Communication (Generalna Dyrekcja Ministerstwa Komunikacji), 1950 From Czapelski, Marek. *Bohdan Pniewski--Warszawski Architekt Xx Wieku. (Bohdan Pniewski—Warsaw Architect)* Wyd. 1. ed. Warszawa: Wydawn. Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2008, 201.

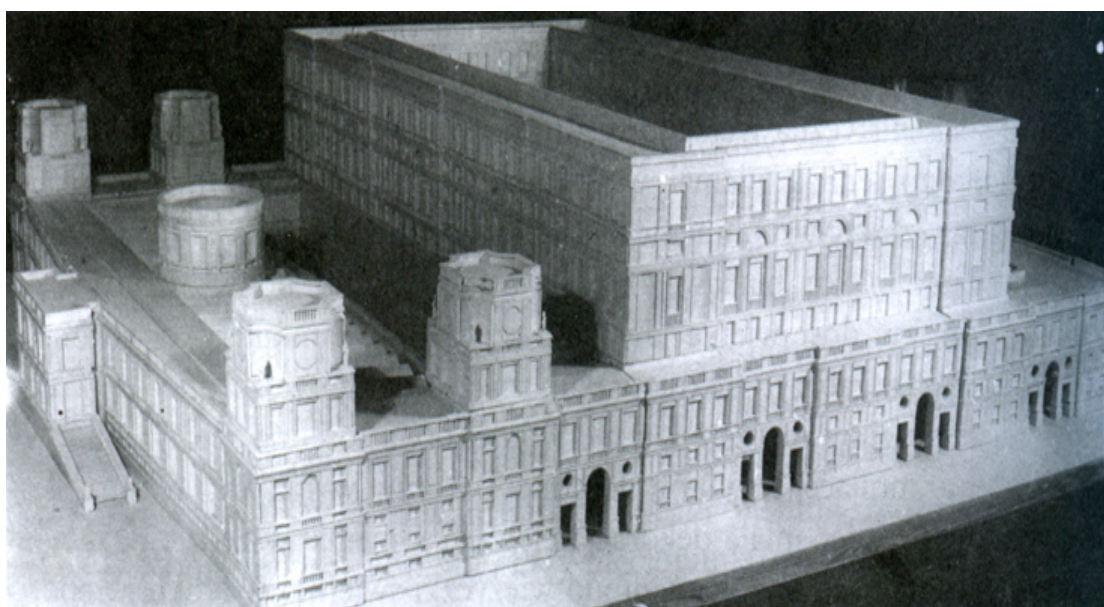


Figure 3.5. Model of the BNP, 1952 From Czapelski, Marek. *Bohdan Pniewski--Warszawski Architekt Xx Wieku.* Wyd. 1. ed. Warszawa: Wydawn. Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2008, 208.

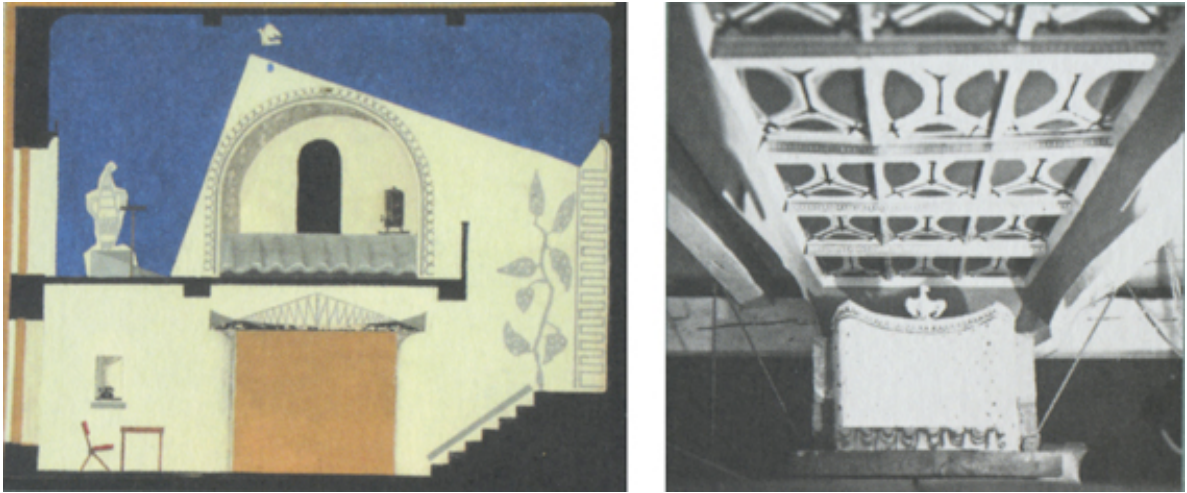


Figure 3.6. Oskar Hansen and Lechosław Rosiński. *Design of Interiors for a temporary city hall*, 1952 (Left color scheme, collection of the Musuem of Academy of Fine Arts, from; right model) From Hansen, Oskar. *Towards Open Form = Ku Formie Otwartej*. Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2005, 179.

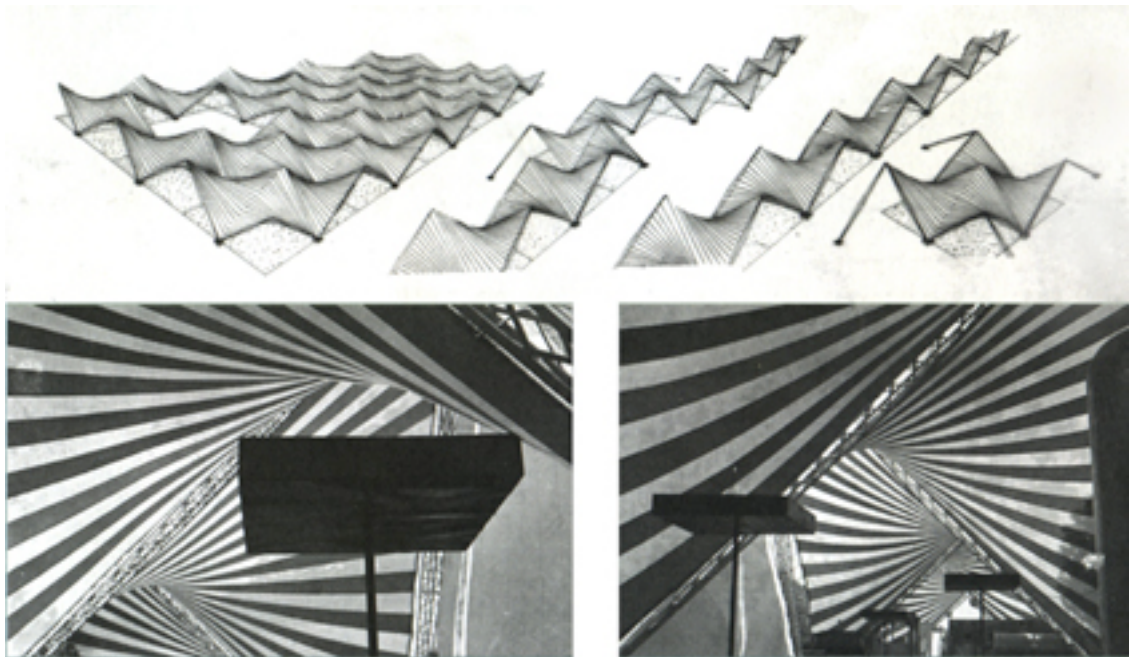


Figure 3.7. Oskar Hansen, Lech Tomaszewski. *Polish Pavilion at the Izmir International Fair*, 1955. From Hansen, Oskar. *Towards Open Form = Ku Formie Otwartej*. Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2005, 184.

Chapter Four: Pragmatic Modernism of *Projekt*

Architects who occupied the peripheral site of production that the Chamber of Commerce represented found themselves in a different situation after the short period of Socialist Realism ended. The journal *Projekt*, (1956-2003) recognized architects like Oscar Hansen and Lech Tomaszewski, who during the period of Socialist Realism worked for the Chamber of Commerce, remaining peripheral figures that mainly worked outside the country. The magazine promoted contemporary design and architecture that took its structural principles from developments abroad, moving beyond the international style, which it criticized for its complacency as a 'style'. It sought a socially applicable architecture, which the Western adherents of the international style abandoned. *Projekt* promoted design and architecture that moved beyond the international style. The magazine's editors and contributors promoted the avant-garde conceptions of architecture and design that a short period of Socialist Realism radicalized, aiming to use architecture and design in order to solve social problems, but with the post-war situation and under the party that favored a less dogmatic socialist ideology. As Bierut's party radicalized the avant-garde project to bring a utopian version of socialism to bring forth a utopian version of socialism. The Gomułka party allowed modern aesthetics and *Projekt* to promote a socially conscious design.

Even if the magazine promoted structural innovation that bordered on formalism and looked to engineering as sources for architecture and design, publishing explorations into abstractions that centered on form and structure, it maintained its focus on design's social function. *Projekt* published abstract explorations of form that designers and

historians of design termed “designerisms,”¹⁴² such as the study of natural forms as a basis for man-made structures, because such theories became popular in the West, and the magazine desired to keep current with developments abroad. However, the magazine refused to fall back on socially irrelevant structuralism that focused purely on form.

The architecture and design that *Projekt* featured are much more complex than the simplistic image of Eastern European design in the period of 1956-70. Discussing the rise of industrial construction in commercial service buildings, Stanisław Janicki characterized the move of commercial spaces from the ground floors of residential buildings into pavilion buildings and commercial centers. Janicki claimed that the rapid introduction of these forms of building resulted from the duplication of foreign: Swedish, Dutch, and English examples.¹⁴³ As a state that existed in the Eastern Blok, but remained a satellite of the Soviet Union, Poland remained socially and politically restricted by a single party system and a socialist ideology. However, the country’s representatives of the architecture and design profession looked to the West for models. As a design magazine in an independent state with an expanded industrial base following the Second World War, *Projekt* wanted to promote a modern and applicable design on an international scale. Therefore, the magazine did not focus just on Poland, but reported on developments in the West and connected with the profession abroad.

The end of Socialist Realism as a doctrine in the arts stemmed from the political thaw, a term that defined the alteration of Stalinist policies in politics, economics and

¹⁴² “Designerism” refers to the design and or production of objects that follow too strict a theory or focus too much on the implementation of a theory, without concern for the function or applicability of the actual object that results from production. It also refers to an alteration of the form or look of the object, creating an extreme plurality or variety of the same object but only with different aesthetic qualities.

¹⁴³ Stanisław Janicki, "Shopping and Service Facilities. Fairs," in *Building and Architecture in Poland 1945-1966*, ed. Przemysław Trzeciak (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1968), 84.

culture following the death of Stalin, resulting in less restrictive or authoritarian practices by the party. Unlike the Stalinist party of Bierut, which mimicked the Stalinist policies of the Soviet party, the Polish post-Stalinists took a different approach towards government and culture following the death of the dictator and the 20th Party Congress, during which Nikita Khrushchev, the party leader following the death of Stalin, announced the reversal of Stalinist policies.

Immediately following the death of Stalin, a discussion in the arts began that suggested openness to new directions in culture. In *Poland Under Communism*, Anthony Kemp-Welch demonstrated the gradual reversal of Socialist Realism as a dogma, citing the statements of Minister of Culture, Włodzimierz Sokorski, who called for the end of Socialist Realism as a theory that directed arts and literature in April of 1954, although artists and writers failed to immediately follow this direct proclamation.¹⁴⁴ There were other signs of the thaw. The Central Film Distribution Agency (*Centrala Wynajmu Filmu*) began distributing American and Western European films after 1956. The magazine *Around the World* (*Dookoła Świata*) became active again in January of 1954. A popular magazine such as *You and I* (*Ty i Ja*), began in 1960, published a feature entitled “My Home Is My Hobby” (*Moje Hobby To Mieszkanie*), which showcased homes of artists and actors, promoting individual taste and the idea of consumption.¹⁴⁵ Hence, Poland shifted culturally accepting western influence and consumerism, which the Stalinist party vilified.

¹⁴⁴ A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 66.

¹⁴⁵ David Crowley, “Warsaw's Shops, Stalinism and the Thaw” in *Style and Socialism : Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*, ed. David Crowley and Susan Reid (Oxford: New York, 2000), 42.

In Poland, this new, much more open cultural climate, which allowed the rise of popular magazines, western influence, and *Projekt* to exist, was a result of the policy of ‘polycentrism,’ according to which Soviet Union allowed its satellite states a certain degree of autonomy following the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party in February 1956. In Poland, this shift away from Stalinist Policies appeared especially quickly and definitely. Among others, workers strikes in Poznan in 1956, which were incited by anti-Soviet sentiment, led to the shift and ascendancy of Władysław Gomułka, First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party from October 21st 1956 to December 20th 1970. Gomułka was a proponent of Polish of de-collectivization and Polish sovereignty from the USSR.¹⁴⁶

The political and cultural repression evident in the Stalinist years lessened following the thaw. According to Paweł Machcewicz, the number of political prisoners dropped far below the levels of the early 1950s, the high point of Stalinism. Although the government refused to entirely give up its influence over culture, the ideological pressure lessened. The Polish party abandoned the “core of totalitarianism,” the efforts to control all spheres of reality in order to fit an “ideological cannon.”¹⁴⁷ Even though the party sought to prevent any oppositional activity that could potentially subvert its political control, it abandoned efforts to engage in a “coherent, comprehensive, ideological project.”¹⁴⁸ The post Stalinists disallowed political or cultural expression that subverted the system that it utilized, but abandoned the Stalinist desire to recreate the lives of its

¹⁴⁶ Kemp-Welch, Poland under Communism, 101.

¹⁴⁷ Paweł Machcewicz, and Maya Latynski, *Rebellious Satellite : Poland, 1956* (Washington, D.C.Stanford, Calif. : Woodrow Wilson Center Press ;Stanford University Press, 2009), 246.

¹⁴⁸ Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite*, 246.

citizens. As a result, the party abandoned Socialist Realism, the expression of that ideological program in architecture and art.

In post-thaw Poland under the leadership of Gomułka, Socialist Realism gave way to the functionalism in architecture and consumerism. In order to foster support from the masses and prove that the new more 'autonomous' Polish party worked for its citizens, the Gomułka government favored development of consumer culture. The industrial designer became important to the creation of aesthetically attractive products in order to reproduce the consumerism of Western Europe in Poland. The same government promoted functionalism or the international style in order to prove that it remained as advanced as the West.¹⁴⁹ By promoting both consumerism through industrial design and functionalism in architecture, the Gomułka government attempted to fulfill a cultural policy that matched its economic and political policy. Politically and ideologically it moved away from its close relationship with the Soviet Union and Sovietization of education and artistic systems. Economically, it allowed a certain degree of de-collectivization of agriculture. The number of cooperatives dropped from ten thousand in 1955, before Gomułka's rise to leadership at the 8th Plenum of the Polish United Workers Party, to 1,534 at the end of 1957.¹⁵⁰ Hence, the cultural policy, like the economic and political authority, shifted direction from the Soviet, and specifically Stalinist ideology of utopianism, to a more open policy that failed to undermine the party's ideology, but proved specifically Polish and largely autonomous.

Given the period of extreme cultural isolation from the West during the Stalinist era, the contributors of *Projekt*, architects and designers like Lech Tomaszewski and

¹⁴⁹ Crowley, "Building the World Anew," 198-99.

¹⁵⁰ Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*, 101.

Oscar Hansen who saw themselves as part of an international design profession, desired to reconnect with the West. The precedent of the Praesens's involvement in the CIAM and CIRPAC attested to the Polish architects' perception of themselves as part of the profession internationally. The short period of Stalinist cultural policies failed to undermine this perception. In this sense, *Projekt* continued the design profession's international goals that appeared in the 1920s and 30s.

In order to become a player in the Western dominated field of international design and architecture, the magazine promoted an avant-garde design. It derived its formal concerns from the West and adapted western concerns for structure, striving to create a singular design by focusing strongly on social relevance. Although *Projekt* operated in a socialist country and promoted architecture and design that expressed socialist values, such as the improvement of living conditions for a majority of the country's citizens, it failed to fit into the communist mold. Given the political system in Poland, the magazine was unable to criticize the party or agitate for social and economic change directly in relation to design or art; none of the articles criticized the failure of industrial bureaucracy to implement functional projects. However, the magazine strayed away from empty formalism. *Projekt's* articles emphasized social. In the field of industrial design, as in the architectural field, *Projekt*, promoted the Western model of the industrial designer and fostered international connections.

Even as a state sponsored publication *Projekt* enjoyed autonomy in its publishing program. In some respect this resulted from the patronage of WAG, Graphic Arts Publisher (*Wydawnictwo Artystyczno-Graficzne*) and the fact that it refused to publish anything that directly subverted the party's autonomy. After all, the magazine was

published in a one party state, which allowed some cultural freedoms, but restricted anything that could subvert the party's authority. *Projekt* published articles that reported on developments in the West, promoted novel concepts, such as construction based on specific geometric principles and organic structures, and argued for social engagement and functionalism. According to Irena Huml, the magazine began at the behest of Wanda Filipowiczowa, who found the group of people that included the co-founders of *Projekt*, professors Jerzy Hryniewiecki and Jozef Mroszczak. Filipowiczowa spearheaded the creation of the magazine. It began small, with quarterly issues.¹⁵¹ After 1960, Jerzy Hryniewiecki, editor until that year, stepped down to be replaced by Jerzy Waśniewicz, who also directed WAG, the large state sponsored publisher. Although Waśniewski remained a party hard liner, he afforded the magazine a large degree of independence. Rather than Waśniewski, Huml credited Magda Motykowa, a member of the editorial staff, with the magazine's independence, since she refused to allow ideology to permeate her work and remained well connected enough to grant her co-workers independence from party control.¹⁵² The explicit patronage of the state publisher and the failure of that publisher to steer the magazine's ideology freed it to follow its own editorial program.

The goals of *Projekt*, like the goals of any publication or artistic group, altered with its development. When the magazine started its run in 1956 with an April, May, and June issue, it promised to champion modernism, by straying away from theoretical writing and aiming to showcase solely architectural projects. This can be seen as an immediate reaction against the situation before the political thaw of 1956 during which Socialist

¹⁵¹ The first issue of April, May, June of 1956 began publication under the Warsaw publisher *Art (Sztuka)*, transferring to (Arcades) *Arkady* with issue number one of 1957 three, and switching to WAG RSW Prasa-Książka-Ruch, the largest state publisher in 1960.¹⁵¹

¹⁵² Hanna Jasicka, ed. Ewa Hornowska and Zygmunt Kalinowski, *Użytkowa fantastyka lat pięćdziesiątych (Utilitarian Fantasy of the 1950s)* (Poznan : Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu, 1991), 19.

Realism became the dominant force in architecture and its theoretical underpinnings, which focused on the image and façade of the building, stifled functional concerns in construction. The magazine plainly announced the end of Socialist Realism. This changed as the magazine developed into the sixties, adapting both social and formal theories in architecture from the West in its search for a Polish as well as a shared international style in architecture and design.

Looking West, *Projekt* wished to promote a modern design and architecture that reflected the developments in the West, striving for functional and socially relevant buildings while promoting industrial design capable of providing Poland with consumer and light industrial products to Poland. These remained largely theoretical. The government's willingness to buy foreign licenses, while borrowing funds in order to boost production, without considering the unlikelihood of exporting Polish products to the already affluent West, undermined the development of Polish consumer and light industry products for domestic consumption. The nature of the command economy led to a regression in the development of an industrial designer.

Both Crowley and Piotrowski pointed to a 'de-politicization' of art and design following the Thaw that caused artists and designers to abandon social and political involvement. But 'de-politicization' or the refusal to comment or agitate for the change in regime meant something diametrically different than the lack of social involvement, or a concern for social problems. The magazine expressed interests similar to those of the early 20th century avant-garde groups such as Praesens, which joined the international movement of modernist architects and remained concerned with social issues. Although both fine artists and designers showed little inclination toward political agitation or

toward the idea subversion of the power structure or the government system, they retained the idea of social involvement. Neither architects nor industrial designers argued for the change of the economic system that would allow them to work for developers rather than housing co-operatives and the design departments of private companies respectively. They neglected to push for the change of both the political or economic system. Inversely, some, like Andrzej Pawłowski, believed a socialist system allowed for the creation of a ‘socially conscious’ designer that shaped the human environment in order to provide comfort of living, rather than ‘style’ products of consumption like the American industrial designer.¹⁵³ Hence, a moderate, communist government such as the one in Poland, following the thaw, actually offered hope for designers like Pawłowski who wanted to become a ‘socially conscious designer.’

Following the period of the party’s control over design *Projekt* tried to redirect the design professions toward contemporary international developments and reintroduce ‘functionalism’ into architecture and design. Rather than a “manifesto” for a formalistic, socially irrelevant architecture and design, the editorial that appeared in the first issue and subsequent numbers of *Projekt* until the end of the 1950s focused on reintroducing rational and functional design systems into the professional fold.¹⁵⁴ Published in four of the following languages: Polish, Russian, French, and English, the editorial, entitled “From the Editors” (*Od Redakcji*) focused on restoring “functional” and rational design principles in Polish architecture. The Editorial department claimed that design or *projekt*, the Polish word for design, “[took] shape in the factory, laboratory, the research

¹⁵³ Crowley, “Thaw Modern,” 142.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

workshop, and the office of the constructor and technician.”¹⁵⁵ Therefore, the editors wanted to promote design that arose from rational scientific principles, rather than an aesthetic theory based in the analysis of historical forms, such as Socialist Realism.

In the statement, the editors gave primacy to the designs of authors who “combined the sensibilities of the artist with the logic of the constructor,” striving for *Projekt* to become a “militant publication for the advancement of art and technics.”¹⁵⁶ As they called for designers who combined the “artist” and “constructor,” the editors rejected designs “bent solely on embellishment and ornamental decoration.”¹⁵⁷ By focusing on the technical side of design, the editors proposed a clear antithesis to the decorative styling of Socialist Realism, which used historical ornament to construct the façade. The editorial statement showed the magazine’s intention to return the profession to functional design. A call against embellishment and ornament rejected the focus of Socialist Realism on the façade and the final image of the building within the cityscape, rather than its function. Buildings such as the MDM and The Palace of Culture and Science emphasized decoration while shortchanging the function of the building by treating the façade and plan as separate entities, paying more attention to the façade. Because of this bias, *Projekt* attempted to refocus design along functionalist lines, undermining Socialist Realism and its focus on decoration and embellishment.

Jerzy Hryniewiecki, architecture professor and co-founder of the magazine, argued for a return to functionalist design of the 1920s and 30s more clearly in an article entitled, “The Shape of the Future” (*Kształt Przyszłości*), which followed the editorial.

¹⁵⁵ Editors of *Projekt*, “Od Redakcji (From the Editors),” *Projekt* 1 (1956): 4.

¹⁵⁶ Editors of *Projekt*, “Od Redakcji (From the Editors),” 4.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

Hryniewiecki stated that “the development of science and technical progress...[created] the possibility of living in miraculously hygienic and miraculously fitting psychological conditions.”¹⁵⁸ This statement read like that of the early 1920s and 30s functional, modernist in which the functionalist desire to create psychologically and ergonomically fitting conditions for living could be realized through the application of technology and the guidance of art. In claiming that the “workplace of man needed to reach the full potential for beauty, cleanliness, and joy,” Hryniewiecki revived the functionalist considerations for the workplace.¹⁵⁹ As shown above, in chapter two, an early formulation of the avant-garde group of BLOK, expressed similar sentiments. In “What Constructivism Is,” signed editors of BLOK, the members of the BLOK group, “[accepted] the problems of “hygiene and comfort...[as] primary concerns” of art, and saw “THE PROBLEMS OF ART AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS [as] INDIVISIBLE.”¹⁶⁰ The attempt to marry art and technology in order to create a more comfortable and beautiful environment for human beings became the mission for design, according to Hryniewiecki. In proposing such as mission for design, he revived the concerns of the early 20th century avant-garde.

The belief that the form of modernity or the “humanistic truth” rested in the “factory halls, laboratories, service equipment, and health facilities,” revived the idea that the functional buildings should act as models for architecture overall, organizing a person’s life to provide maximum comfort and psychological well being, which

¹⁵⁸ Jerzy Hryniewiecki, “Kształt Przyszłości (The Shape of the Future),” *Projekt 1* (1956): 5.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Editors of *Blok*, “What Constructivism Is,” 496.

originated with the German Work Federation (*Deutscher Werkbund*).¹⁶¹ Founded in 1907 at the behest of Herman Muthesius and in existence until 1934 in the interwar period, the organization, an association of architects, artists, designers, and industrialists, sought to unite manufacturing with designers and applied artists in order to increase the competitiveness of German products on in the international marketplace. Artists and designers sought a closer relationship with industry in order to create better products and spaces that provided a healthier living environment for their users. Hence the Magazine's co-founder, argued for the return of functionalism or design that put utilitarian considerations to the forefront and or derived aesthetics from functional forms.

The negation of art's autonomy to which Hryniewiecki subscribed, resulted from the historic development of the culture that Burger observed. According to Burger, art in a fully developed bourgeois society followed the tendency to lose its social function.¹⁶² In Burger's view this resulted from the changed techniques of production as well as the division of labor underway in society, leading to a separate "subsystem of art" in which the individual product lost all social function.¹⁶³ Wojciech Włodarczyk, professor of art history at the Warsaw Fine Arts Academy who specialized in contemporary art, made a similar point in *Socrealizm*. Włodarczyk argued that the "democratization of culture," which "[continued] from the 19th century onward," removed the mystique from the artist's work.¹⁶⁴ The artist became "at best a star, but most often a professional," prompting the avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s to make art the social and political basis in culture, and to value ethics over aesthetics. As Włodarczyk explained, the

¹⁶¹ Hryniewiecki, "Kształt Przyszłości (Shape of the Future)," 9.

¹⁶² Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 32.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Włodarczyk, *Socrealizm (Socialist Realism)*, 54.

influences of anarchism and bohemia on the avant-garde made it reach beyond art to “shape the social and political aspects of the modern world,” and take a more important role in society than just that of a professional aesthete.¹⁶⁵

Rather than just returning the ideas of the early 20th century groups, such as BLOK and Praesens, Hryniewiecki’s statements reveal the return of avant-garde notions true of those groups. The notion of design as a field that structured lives in order to insure universal well being, both physical and emotional, stemmed from the avant-garde idea that art, like other fields of human knowledge influenced human life. Unlike those groups *Projekt* failed to subscribe to a completely utopian conception of these avant-garde concerns.

The nature of design as a field that structured life in order to ensure well-being became evident in his statement that the “workplace of man [needed] to reach the full potential for beauty, cleanliness, and joy.”¹⁶⁶ The idea that “humanistic truth” rested in the “factory halls, laboratories, service equipment, and health facilities,” linked art and design to science as a field. In taking a cue from scientific design, Hryniewiecki likened art and design to fields of endeavor that affected life in a direct manner. By proposing such a link and modeling design on science and industry, Hryniewiecki aimed to point out the design’s mission to ensure well being. Such statements, which proposed the universal well being of man, came from the avant-garde notion, identified by Burger, that art and design created “a new life...from a basis in art.”¹⁶⁷ These undermined the category of individual production and reception, following the avant-garde framework.

¹⁶⁵ Włodarczyk, *Socrealizm (Socialist Realism)*, 55.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 49.

Because a work of art abandoned autonomy, it abandoned individual production, the notion that a single artist produced an autonomous work of art, and individual reception, the idea that recipient and producer are separate or that the recipient had little input in the creation of the work of art. In Hryniewicki's statements, as in the program of the journal and Burger's analysis, art and design acted as the "instrument for living ones life as best one [could]," leading to a universal well being of man.

Hryniewiecki explicitly promoted the idea of art as a social institution rather than an autonomous practice, undermining the idea of autonomous art or design. By announcing that the magazine refused to "further the bourgeois idea that art [was] sacred" and argued that art must "surround [people]" rather than hide in "literary salons," Hryniewiecki expressed the avant-garde's negation of art's autonomy. As Burger pointed out, in his classification of avant-garde as an attack on bourgeois society, avant-gardes "negated art as an institution that [disassociated] with life," since they viewed this dissociation as a "dominant characteristic of art in bourgeois society."¹⁶⁸ Therefore, by directly attacking the bourgeois idea of art as sacred, or autonomous and attempting to liberate art from the 'salons,' Hryniewiecki expressed the avant-garde critique of art as disassociated from life. By calling for art that 'surrounded people' he subscribed to the avant-garde notion of organizing new values for life from art, rather than retaining the autonomous nature of art.¹⁶⁹ The idea of art that 'surrounded people' undermined the idea of individual production and reception, as Burger has shown. Design, as art in Burger's analysis, acted as the "instrument for living ones life as best one can," leading to a universal well being of man.

¹⁶⁸ Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 49.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

Given such statements by the editors and the co-founder, *Projekt* revived this avant-garde mentality, first codified during the 1920s and 30s by the Constructivists, New Objectivity (Neue Sachlichkeit), and in Poland by BLOK and Praesens, in their theoretical writing. By focusing on the mission of the avant-garde that stemmed from the “wonderful development of science and technical progress,” the editors revived the ideas of the early 20th century movements in design and architecture that connected Poland with the modernist and the international avant-garde. Such a policy proved an antithesis to the “Socialist Realist” dogma and theoretically revived early 20th century avant-garde values.

The theoretical shift against Socialist Realism became clearer in Hryniewiecki’s statement. The statement, which argued against “theorizing” and promised to conduct arguments by “showing concrete objects” rather than using words, represented a move against the theory-laden Socialist Realism, which focused on theory, rather than on proper building construction.¹⁷⁰ By promising to dispense with words and simply show the objects of design by themselves, the editors planned to distance themselves from the theoretical confusion, which resulted from the conflict between designers, theoreticians, and the party in the brief Stalinist Period. Although this was already apparent in the editorial, Hryniewiecki used explicit language to make the point clear. He stated that “for the longest time [architects] hid the technical, economical or aesthetic errors” with “contoured monumentalization.”¹⁷¹ This referred explicitly to Socialist Realism and its intention to put monumental forms before function, focusing on the image of the building in the cityscape and the addition of monumental forms in reference to an aesthetic theory.

¹⁷⁰ Editors of *Projekt*, “Od Redakcji (From the Editors),” 4.

¹⁷¹ Hryniewiecki, “Kształt Przyszłości (Shape of the Future),” 9.

Projekt's attempt at reconstructing the design and architectural profession by utilizing technology and industry can be seen as a result of the economic and industrial opportunities that occurred after the country stabilized as a result of World War II. The architects and designers of the post-thaw period found themselves in a more economically stable and industrially viable environment than the avant-garde groups in the 1920s and 1930s. Emerging out of World War II as one of the nations devastated by the encroachment of both German and Russian troops, Poland stood to gain from its post-war situation. As Raphael Shen put it, the new boundaries that resulted from the Yalta and Potsdam agreements of 1945 became “a blessing in disguise for the development potential...of the Polish economy.”¹⁷² The country lost its territory east of the Curzon Line to the Soviet Union, but it gained German territories east of the Neisse and Oder Rivers, areas that unlike those beyond the Curzon line remained rich in minerals and fertile agriculture.¹⁷³ With the territory came the German industry and infrastructure. This territory combined with the factories that Germany erected on Polish lands during its occupation from 1939-1944, transformed Poland into an industrial nation.

The Potsdam agreement stipulated that the Soviet government ceded all claims to German property, including the shares of German industrial and infrastructure on Polish territory as well as the land acquired from Germany, allowing Poland to reap the benefits of its new wealth.¹⁷⁴ Because of the Soviet Government's agreement to leave German industry to Poland and the efforts of workers to either hide important pieces of machinery from factories or to defend them from plunder upon German evacuation, Poland emerged

¹⁷² Raphael Shen, *The Polish Economy : Legacies from the Past, Prospects for the Future* (New York: Praeger, 1992), 1.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹⁷⁴ Zbigniew Landau and Jerzy Tomaszewski. *The Polish Economy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 196.

from World War II as a nation with an industrial base.¹⁷⁵

The development of Poland's industrial potential into an economic reality relied on the aggressive policies of the communist government. As Shen wrote, "Poland's path of economic growth faithfully duplicated that of the Soviet Union."¹⁷⁶ The economy quickly became nationalized, drawing the key industrial complexes under the control of the central government, and in the autumn of 1945, the Central Planning Office under director Czesław Bobrowski, an economist who served as director until 1948. The Party suspended enterprises in the west and southwest territories without paying compensation to then-German owners, while Polish nationals received government bonds for their businesses.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, although the communist party's economic and political reconstruction of Poland remade the Polish design profession; the party also provided the resources necessary for industrial design and architecture.

The state allocated massive resources for industry, favoring heavy industry above that of light industry. In this hierarchy, inspired by the Soviet development model, consumer goods took the lowest rung and received the least capital.¹⁷⁸ But the party succeeded in expanding Poland's industrial sector. Shen confirmed this by showing an increase in two key economic indicators: the industry's contribution to the Gross National Product and the percentage of the labor force in that sector increased over time. Industry's contribution to the national income increased from 24 percent in 1950 to 44 percent in 1970, while industrial employment increased from 3.16 million in 1960 to 4.45

¹⁷⁵ Landau and Tomaszewski. *The Polish Economy in the Twentieth Century*, 194.

¹⁷⁶ Shen, *The Polish Economy*, 21.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 22.

million in 1970.¹⁷⁹

Given the political developments, which allowed Poland to create and organize its industry, *Projekt*'s first issues become a guidebook for the architect and industrial designer that directed both toward the use of industry. As demonstrated by the editorial and Hryniewiecki's first article for the magazine, *Projekt* recognized the possibility of constructing the living environment and addressing social concerns through the application of industrial technology.

Projekt's attempt to argue for the application of design toward industry and the return to functionalism centered around a series of articles that paraphrased Herbert Read's *Art and Industry*. The British art historian's book constituted a primary theoretical text for functional design and the integration of the graphic arts and industry. Jan Choruszka and Jerzy Olkiewicz paraphrased the book in five articles entitled, "The Rules of Industrial Design," (*Zasady Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*), spread across five *Projekt* issues. The authors themselves revealed that Polish design, "which [remained] completely industrial," meaning that Poland achieved a complete level of industrialization, remained in its "infancy" and the book, which in the rest of Europe served as a bible for industrial design, remained completely unknown in Poland.¹⁸⁰ These articles, or rather the language they chose to extract from the original material, argued for abstraction in design and the reduction of form, while arguing against the "revival of past styles" as lacking of any "economic and practical justification" that produced "fake and capricious" works.¹⁸¹ The authors pointed out that when concerned

¹⁷⁹ Shen, *The Polish Economy*, 22.

¹⁸⁰ Jan Choruszka and Jerzy Olkiewicz, "Zasady Wzornictwa Przemysłowego (The Rules of Industrial Design)," *Projekt*. 2(10) (1958): 25.

¹⁸¹ Choruszka and Olkiewicz, "Zasady Wzornictwa Przemysłowego (The Rules of Industrial Design)," 31.

with ornament for industrial products, Read stated the opinion that it should be “applicable and rightfully linked to the object’s function” and that the most fitting ornament for machine production proved to be “geometric ornament.”¹⁸² Therefore, the authors used Read in order to promote functionalism in design and to drive the Polish artist closer to industry, so that Poland could enjoy industrially made consumer products. This functioned as rapture from Socialist Realism and clearly the authors meant to use industry in order to make Poland comparable to the west.

The argument for a “functionalist” design as a method for the betterment of Polish industrial products appeared in other articles as well. Wanda Telakowska, the president of the Institute of Industrial Design (*Instytut Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*) or the IWP, an organization created for the advancement of artists in industry and the applied arts, argued for a “group of experienced coordinators” who could apply “their appreciation of artistic standards to trade and industry” as the cure for the “ugliness of...newly produced goods.”¹⁸³ The specific call for a group of coordinators, who could appreciate art in industry, stemmed from a separation of applied artists and the industrial administrators, the key roadblock in applying ‘functional’ design to industry.

As Telakowska’s article and adoption of *Art and Industry* demonstrated, *Projekt* desired to return ‘functional’ design into the Polish fold, because of the growing opportunities for mass production that stemmed from economic development. This drive towards mass-production and ‘functionalist’ design stemmed from economic change and the lack of explicit political control (as exemplified by Socialist Realist theory), rather than a purely “technocratic” bend. Rather than taking an empty, ‘technocratic,’ stance,

¹⁸² Ibid., 30.

¹⁸³ Wanda Telakowska, “Dramatic Contrasts,” *Projekt* 1 (1956): 11.

the *Projekt* of the 1950s sought to concentrate on social issues, reconnecting to the movements of the 1920s and 30s and reinstating ‘functionalism’.

Even if the translators argued mainly for an abstract ‘functionalist’ aesthetic and the connection between artist and industry, social consideration remained close behind. In “The Rules of Industrial Design, part 4” (*Zasady Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*) the connection to the Bauhaus and Le Corbusier, centered on the creation of a correct living environment and human well being. Jan Choruszka and Jerzy Olkiewicz showed that for Le Corbusier the “constructor [the architect and designer was] indented by the love and passion to characterize order, which [meant] harmony [and] beauty.”¹⁸⁴ They also pointed out that Read considered the Bauhaus “a laboratory” that “conscientiously” worked out practical projects for contemporary goods.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, Choruszka and Olkiewicz focused on the fact that Read called on the Bauhaus and the work of Le Corbusier to return Polish design to the theories of 1920s and 30s modernism, and that those focused on the betterment of human life. The ‘constructor’ or the architect and designer again took ‘harmony’ and ‘beauty’ as his goals for Hryniewiecki and the editors, and returned to the ideas that BLOK and Praesens advocated. As shown above, Praesens became a member of the CIAM, and remained theoretically close to Le Corbusier through the direction of Syrkus whom the French architect influenced. As Choruszka and Olkiewicz reported, Read proposed to “broaden the businessman’s mind” and bring it closer to ‘humanism.’¹⁸⁶ Hence, reporting on Read’s book, the authors pointed out the humanistic goal of “functionalistic” design. Rather than socially apathetic

¹⁸⁴ Jan Choruszka and Jerzy Olkiewicz, “Zasady Wzornictwa Przemysłowego(4) (The Rules of Industrial Design),” *Projekt* 4(12) (1958): 30.

¹⁸⁵ Choruszka and Olkiewicz, “Zasady Wzornictwa Przemysłowego(4) (The Rules of Industrial Design),” 26.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

‘formalism’ the magazine promoted a socially conscious ‘functionalism’.

In utilizing Read’s theoretical conception of the industrial designer and the profession’s role, the two contributors to *Projekt*, expressed an avant-garde notion of the industrial designer. By directing industrial design along functional lines that focused on restructuring the living environment in order to ensure well being, the articles that presented Read’s text to the Polish profession reintroduced the avant-garde notion of socially engaged art as a novel basis for life. In the second part of “Rules of Industrial Design,” the authors asked if the machine could provide the “aesthetic impulse...and the contentment that Read [saw] as a biological need.”¹⁸⁷ The authors translated Read’s opinion that “fine artists [were fated] to become scarce and as alien to the multitude as pure mathematicians, but needed to take a significant place in the aesthetic structure of the machine age.”¹⁸⁸ Hence, Read, as reported by the two authors, historicized the fine artist’s development in society in much the same way as Burger. According to Burger, art in a fully developed bourgeois society followed the tendency to lose its social function as a result of the changed techniques of production and the division of labor.¹⁸⁹ In the same article they stated their intent to “free the creative artist from his fate...and again include him in the real world.”¹⁹⁰ In the same vein, they cited Read’s prescription to end the artist’s exclusion from the factory, in the fifth part of the series of articles.¹⁹¹ In both instances, artist as designer took a role in society by performing his part and shaping the

¹⁸⁷ Choruszka and Olkiewicz, “Zasady Wzornictwa Przemysłowego(4) (The Rules of Industrial Design),” 24.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 32.

¹⁹⁰ Jan Choruszka and Jerzy Olkiewicz, “Zasady Wzornictwa Przemysłowego(2) (The Rules of Industrial Design),” *Projekt* 3(11) (1958): 29.

¹⁹¹ Choruszka and Olkiewicz, “Zasady Wzornictwa Przemysłowego(2) (The Rules of Industrial Design),” 30.

living environment, creating a new basis in life. Therefore, in the authors' view, following the avant-garde notion of negating the autonomy of art and the artist's reduced role in society that Burger observed, the artist as industrial designer rejoined society, providing a new humanistic basis for life. By setting the designer's goals as the "[characterization of] order, which [meant] harmony [and] beauty" the authors followed the avant-garde notion of directing art to influence life as to make it more harmonious and beautiful.¹⁹²

During the period of 1956-1972, the magazine published approximately sixteen articles that focused on the analytical approach to design and the application of scientific principles to the practice that design historians usually dubbed 'designerisms' and Crowley called 'abstractions' or 'buzzwords.'¹⁹³ Another thirteen articles focused on the prevalence and adoption of technology in the fine arts and modern society. Since the magazine averaged approximately 14 articles per issue, the number of articles that focused on such 'designerisms' exceeded an entire issue of *Projekt*. Clearly, the application of technology and science to the study and execution of design formed a large part of the journal's program in the representative period.

In the piece entitled "The Construction of Natural Form" (*Konstrukcja Form Naturalnych*), Duszan Poniż, an architect and engineer, began by stating that the article focused on the engineer's view "of the relationship between construction and natural forms."¹⁹⁴ This declaration indicated that rather than an aesthetic view of natural forms or even simply that of an 'architect' the author took a purely technological view that

¹⁹² Choruszka and Olkiewicz, "Zasady Wzornictwa Przemysłowego(2) (The Rules of Industrial Design)," 30.

¹⁹³ Crowley, "Building the World Anew," 198.

¹⁹⁴ Duszan Poniż, "Konstrukcje Form Materialnych (The Construction of Natural Form)," *Projekt* 6(8) (1957): 1.

applied directly to construction. This article focused on the idea that natural or biological forms provided valid and economic models for man made structures. A later article by Lech Tomaszewski, entitled “The Changing Nature of Structural Form” (*Zmienność Form Strukturalnych*), focused on modular elements and the forms that they created, dividing the process of recombining geometric forms into two categories. Tomaszewski titled one as ‘combinational,’ in which a new form was created from the same elements, and the other as ‘kinematic,’ in which a new form took shape through the movement or alteration of parts without the need to disconnect them. Although the magazine published articles similar to Poniż’s “The Construction of Natural Form” (*Konstrukcja Form Naturalnych*) and articles such as “One-Sided Surfaces” (*Powierzchnie Jednostronne*), “Structural Combinations” (*Kombinatoryka Strukturalna*), and “The Changing Nature of Structural Form” (*Zmienność form Strukturalnych*) by Lech Tomaszewski, which focused solely of abstract design ideas, the magazine also featured relevant architectural and design discourse that focused on social relevance and possible use of these designs.

Although the journal championed technical and scientific design, it also published articles concerning architecture and design that focused on the social relevance of buildings in the urban landscape and their use or function. Crowley argued that *Projekt* promoted a ‘de-politicized’ form of modernism, a point also made by Piotr Piotrowski concerning architectural practice in Poland in general during the period. I would like to argue that an alternative notion of ‘political’ defined the *Projekt*’s project. In the restricted political climate with some semblance of cultural freedom, Polish designers navigated a space between political and social engagement. The architects and designers that wrote for the magazine remained apolitical in the sense that they failed to undermine

the party's authority or legitimacy. Even if Polish designers neglected to strive for Political change and agitation that characterized the politically involved avant-garde of the twenties and thirties in Poland and Central Europe, they concerned themselves with the use of the building and its social function. They desired to impact cultural policy, building practice, and management, remaining closer to the socialist ideals relevant in the 20s and 30s rather than the Leninist-Stalinism policies of the Soviet Blok.

Despite the presence of these articles during the relevant run of *Projekt*, the magazine still published articles concerning architecture that argued for socially applicable 'functionalism.' In "New Traditions and the Perspectives offered by New Technology" (*Nowa Tradycja i Perspektywy Nowej Technnologii*), Jerzy Olkiewicz argued against empty technological formalism in architecture. He quoted the architectural writer and critic Peter Reyner Banham's thoughts on Mondrian; according to Banham, Mondrian originated the "objectivism" that became the basis of technologically driven architecture. Banham became a key figure by placing the development of technology ahead of structure as the driving force behind architectural practice as codified in his theoretical work, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (1960). By using Banham and his theory that the painter Mondrian originated the form of abstraction that then served as a basis of equally abstract and, at least theoretically 'objective' architectural forms, he characterized the contemporary search for objectivity in architecture in order to argue against it. In an architectural practice driven by technological development that attempted to use the kind of empirical objectivity found in the natural sciences, Olkiewicz saw the danger of devolving into empty, abstract formalism. He made this clear by observing that the lack of discipline in technologically

driven architecture may have led to “pseudo-original weirdness of individualized formalism.”¹⁹⁵

Olkiewicz also quoted from the Harvard speech by designer Serge Chermayeff (October 8, 1900 – May 8, 1996), a Chechen born writer, architect, and at one point Walter Gropius’ replacement as director of the Institute of Design in Chicago, criticizing the Seagram building in New York by Mies van der Rohe and John Johnson, and the entire throng of Skidmore, Owens and Merrill projects as a “symbol and monument to empty formalism.”¹⁹⁶ Criticizing the international style, which Mies and SOM, turned into an aesthetic style, Olkiewicz cited the work of Louis Kahn in the U.S. or the New Brutalists in England as relevant examples of proper, functionalist architecture. The English New Brutalism and esp. the work of Alison and Peter Smithson who coined the term and Louis Khan in America formed a front against the pre-war international style or modernism, which they saw as too rigid in its ideological formulations. Stylistically New Brutalist buildings exhibited varied geometries and attempted to expose service or use in the buildings in the exterior in an attempt to design a communal and protective structure. The work of Louis Kahn, while exhibiting interesting concrete geometries attempted to create functional spaces through the separation of service and served space. Both Khan and the Smithson as the members of Team X, the group of CIAM members who desired to find the alternative to the rigid formulations of CIAM in both urbanism and architecture. After praising Khan and the Smithsons, the article also praised the economic design of the *Wenejca* Bar, the Warsaw bar that Jerzy Sołtan and Zbigniew Ihnatowicz designed in 1959-61, as a proper example of architecture. It ended with an observation

¹⁹⁵ Jerzy Olkiewicz, “Nowa Tradycja i Perspektywy Nowej Technologii (New Traditions and the Perspectives offered by New Technology),” *Projekt* 5(32) (1962): 2.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

that in order to meet the needs of all people, builders must construct eighty to a hundred thousand homes.¹⁹⁷

By connecting the American and British architects with the team of Sołtan and Ihnatowicz who designed *Wenecja*, Olkiewicz connected the Polish architectural design to those western architects who undermined the ‘objectivism’ of formalistic modernism that SOM propagated. Like the Smithsons, Olkiewicz saw the Polish architects as designers who cared for the user and the buildings function, more than abstract objectivity. By ending the article on that note, Olkiewicz exemplified the social concern that *Projekt* editors’ architectural and design theory exhibited. By criticizing the work of Mies and SOM, Olkiewicz argued for design that remained conscious of function, so that it fulfilled its social role. Therefore, even if *Projekt* published articles that focused on technological “abstractions” it directed those abstractions towards ‘functional’ building, reconnecting the Polish profession with those architects who desired to move past purely abstract modernism. Sołtan and Ihnatowicz exemplified those architects who honed their modernist, functional practice for exhibitions abroad, unaffected by Socialist Realist theory. Promoted by *Projekt*, they exemplified those Polish modernists who desired to take advantage of the capabilities for architecture in industrialized Poland. Like the Smithsons and Khan they sought socially conscious solutions to post-war realities of their respected countries as the international style, which drew aesthetically from the 1920s and 1930s modernism, divoceded itself from ideology and urbanism of CIAM appeared too dogmatic.

Even the articles that discussed new structural possibilities rejected pure

¹⁹⁷ Olkiewicz, “Nowa Tradycja i Perspektywy Nowej Technnologii (New Traditions and the Perspectives offered by New Technology),” 3.

engineering fantasy. In “Structural Combinations” (*Kombinatoryka Strukturalna*), Lech Tomaszewski concluded that sometimes one came across objects made solely to observe “the charm of formal structural solutions...that exemplify contemporary geometric fantasy.”¹⁹⁸ He believed that in “conscientious” design the use of a “variety of elements” disallowed the use of “absolute structural systems.”¹⁹⁹ In “The Changing Nature of Structural Form” (*Zmienność Form Strukturalnych*), Tomaszewski admitted that the type of construction he discussed, a construction that could alter the elements of its structure in order to alter its form, presented construction challenges both in production and use. He believed that functional and economic considerations often made it impossible to construct such structures, and that such ‘biotechnics’ should best be left for a time when such structures become economical.²⁰⁰

In both articles, Tomaszewski, admitted the realities of implementing the structural theories that he proposed. In one he admitted that these structural theories might apply in actual construction if they are used “conscientiously,” in the other he admitted their theoretical nature and proposed their applications only if they proved economical. The last conclusion raised the issue that these theoretical writings remained idealistic and attempted to construct a future in which such structures became applicable. But, these conclusions showed that the authors that published in the magazine and its editors failed to reject functional application of architectural design and refused to practice structural fetishism.

The articles that discussed actual structures evidenced the idea of marrying

¹⁹⁸ Lech Tomaszewski, “Kombinatoryka Strukturalna (Structural Combinations),” *Projekt* 4(31) (1961):39.

¹⁹⁹ Tomaszewski, “Kombinatoryka Strukturalna (Structural Combinations),” 39.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

structural theory with function in service to society. In an early article entitled “BIOTECHNICS” (*BIOTECHNIKA*), which discussed Oscar Hansen’s exhibition Pavilion for Rio, Brazil, the author linked innovative structural systems to economy and function (Fig. 4.1). Tomaszewski, the author of the articles mentioned above, acted as the consulting engineer on the project. The article reported on the fact that the team responsible for its construction based the form of the structure on the organic cell.²⁰¹ After laying out the structural theory behind the pavilion, the article’s author pointed out that this type of construction saved “an immense” amount of materials, making the pavilion four times as economic in the use of steel as comparable structures.²⁰² Similarly, an article that discussed *Alga*, *Wenecja*, and *Supersam*, three supermarkets, which included self-serve bar restaurants, in large Polish cities, reported on the structural innovation of these buildings while focusing on their function and social relevance. The authors of the article praised the architects of *Supersam*, Jerzy Hryniewiecki et al, for creating a concept that fit the building’s function “masterfully.”²⁰³ The architects created a ‘bazaar’ like space that fit the way in which the clients conducted their shopping—the Polish shoppers were familiar with this type of experience, rather than the American form of supermarket—and allowed for the maximum utilization of space.²⁰⁴

The immense roof that covered an extended area without the use of pillars, necessary in “classic construction,” which undermined the openness of the plan, constituted the focus of the structure.²⁰⁵ Therefore, in discussing actual projects, that

²⁰¹ D.W., “Biotechnika (Biotechnics),” *Projekt 5*(7) (1957): 30.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Stefan Hołowko, “Alga, Wenecja, Supersam,” *Projekt 5*(32) (1962): 13.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 14.

exhibited these new directions in engineering-centered architecture, the authors judged the function of the buildings, the economy of their construction, and their role in serving the users. Because the magazine's authors concerned themselves primarily with these issues, the magazine's architectural theory centered on function and the social applicability of design. The contributors viewed the structural experiments that the magazine covered as a method to construct buildings that better performed their function and that remained socially relevant.

Therefore, *Projekt*'s relationship with modern architecture represented a 'pragmatic' notion of contemporary architecture. Clearly, in focusing on the possibility and expression of structural systems in length, both the contributors and editors focused on this new vein in architectural discourse and practice. The profession attempted to match Western and international developments in architecture, which included social relevance and ultimately, the focus on function. Therefore, the Polish designers and contributors to *Projekt*, promoted novel structural systems in architecture but focused on the economic validity and social function of these structures, or their applicability. Limited by economics and the unwillingness of the government as patron of most building projects to spend on structurally advanced systems resulted in a poorer version of modernism that appeared in the United States and Europe at the time. But, although the government viewed functionalism as formalism that remained devoid of social meaning or subversive intent, the designers argued for an engaged architecture, one closer to socialist values of the 20s and 30s than the Marxism-Leninism of the Gomułka party. Their architectural theory and reportage, which existed between social engagement and political disengagement, new structural theories, and poor economy,

functioned in a pragmatic state.

The editorial mission of *Projekt* as it applied to architectural and design theory centered on function, both in architecture and in industrial design. During the 1950s, the journal moved away from Socialist Realism in an attempt to create a ‘functionalist’ design fit for mass production, for which the economic situation following the war allowed, and it moved toward a theory concerned with design based on geometric and mathematical theories during the 1960s. However, it did not abandon functional and social considerations. The magazine’s editors still believed in the ability of design to effect the human environment in positive ways and that the designs and theories they promoted created a fitting environment for the user. This undermined the simplistic views of the magazine as a publication that dealt in ‘abstractions’ and ‘designerisms,’ developing into empty formalism after a knee-jerk reaction against Soviet Realism, a common misconception concerning Eastern European architecture and design. Even though both the magazine’s editors and contributors failed to agitate for political change, they remained concerned with social problems and the ability of design to shape the human environment. Even as technocrats and limited by the government’s unwillingness or the economic organization, the writers and editors who made up *Projekt* showed concern with an architecture that fulfilled its social function.

The type of architects and designers that *Projekt* featured evidenced an attempt to promote technologically based design and architecture without receding into pure positivism. In “Warsaw Interiors, the Public life of Private Spaces: 1949-65,” David Crowley, noted that most architects sought to “adopt the positivistic rhetoric of late modernism, avoiding theory and ideology,” and saw this tendency among the pages of

Projekt.²⁰⁶ Crowley cites the work of Oskar Hansen as one exception.

As Crowley revealed, Hansen codified a theory of ‘open form’ that allowed the user to design their living environment, undermining the Stalinist architecture, which “subordinated” the “interior” to the “exterior” and defined space in “narrow economic terms” as show above in the discussion of Socialist realism and its focus on the façade or rather the image that the building created in the city scape.²⁰⁷ Although Hansen first published his theory in Culture Review (*Przegląd Kulturalny*) in 1956 and showcased it at the 1957 Second All-Poland Exhibition of Interior Design, *Projekt* dedicated a considerable amount of attention to the architect. The magazine explored Hansen’s work in the above-mentioned article, “BIOTECHNICS,” which showcased his exhibition Pavilion in Rio, Brazil. The Pavilion represented one of his ‘Micro’ projects, a way in which he referred to smaller pieces of architecture as opposed to the total urban plans that he termed ‘Macro’ projects. The Pavilion represented one of his early built projects. It took shape at the end of the Socialist Realist period under the government’s patronage in its efforts to create an image of Polish architecture abroad without affecting the build environment at home. In the News Section (*Kronika*) from issue number five of 1957, *Projekt* also covered the individual exhibiton designed by and showing Hansen’s paintings, sculpture, and his conception of urbanism. While exhibiting his painting and designs for an estate that he submitted as an entry for a CIAM contest, he also utilized the idea of ‘open form’ in creating the design for the exhibition itself. Anna Król perceived the exhibtion’s use of ‘open form’ as a “method for creating a new work of art...an

²⁰⁶ Crowley, “Warsaw Interiors,” 197.

²⁰⁷ Crowley, “Warsaw Interiors,” 197-198.

environment...[in which] what the [the visitors were] going to do [was] up to them.”²⁰⁸

But as the architect himself explained in *Towards Open Form*, the ‘Choke Chain’ that he constructed and placed on the outside of the building and continued on the inside of the museum linked the exhibition space. It “[exhibited], the two-dimensional paintings on pedestals,” through the contrast of shape, synthesising the exterior and the interior of the exhibition in the same manner as his architectural design (Fig. 4.2).²⁰⁹ Therefore, it exemplified his overall design theory of ‘open form’ as the synthesis of interior and exterior.

As the architect himself reported, this exhibition became the first example of the designer’s theory at home, since he applied similar principles in the design of Pavillions abroad. Since Socialist Realism failed to survive the Stalinist period in Poland, the designer’s work appeared within the country.²¹⁰ Therefore, from its inception, following the period of Socialist Realism that informed architectural theory and practice, *Projekt* reported both on the exhibition Pavilion design for the the International Fair in Rio de Janeiro in 1957, his only building outlet during that time, and one of his first major exhibitions on Polish soil. As evidenced by their promotion of Oscar Hansen, *Projekt* became a champion of architects that became marginalized and sequestered to work abroad, during the period of Socialist Realism, reporting on avant-garde concepts in Polish architecture.

The magazine also reported on the urban design scheme, a cornerstone of Hansen’s career, the urbanistic concept he termed, the Continuous Linear System

²⁰⁸ Hansen, *Towards Open Form*, 139.

²⁰⁹ Hansen, *Towards Open Form*, 139.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

(*Linearny System Ciągły*). *Projekt* utilized his concept as a Polish example of sustainable, socially conscious urbanism, connecting with the Western European designers who concerned themselves with creating cities that promoted human well-being. In the “Continuous Linear System,” the editors of the magazine held a discussion with, among others, Hansen, Mieczysław Porębski, an art historian from the University of Warsaw, and Alexander Wallis, a sociologist. The magazine framed Hansen’s urbanistic scheme as the only example of futuristic urbanism in Poland, an example of city creation that the editors perceived as the “most pressing task that [faced] humanity.”²¹¹ The editors began the transcript of the conference by showing that the World Health Organization of the UN held specialized conferences of urbanists and sociologists to tackle the problem of future city creation. In this sense, *Projekt* connected with the profession internationally by following the trends in the profession apparent in the West.

The Continuous Linear System defined an urban conglomerate that stretched from the Baltic coast to the Carpathian mountains, the length of Poland, in three parallel belts. A belt of greenery separated the residential and industrial belt. According to the article, the plan preserved the traditional urban centers and lessened the impact of cities on the landscape in general.²¹² Therefore, by publishing a discussion on Hansen’s futuristic urbanistic plan, the editors of the magazine, chose to address the global concern of overpopulation. They provided their own input concerning the problem of creating a city that allowed for healthy living, especially the problem of reconciling industrial and residential areas while adding enough green space for healthy human living. They made their position clear by calling the creation of future cities “the most pressing task facing

²¹¹ Danuta Wróblewska, “Linearny System Ciągły (Continuous Linear System),” *Projekt* 2(64) (1968): 1.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 14.

humanity.”²¹³ By holding a discussion that included a sociologist, art historian, and the architect, the editors sought to create their own version of the specialized conference, connecting Polish and international problems in urbanism and showcasing a Polish example of the “most pressing task” that “[faced] humanity.”

By promoting the work of Oscar Hansen, from his pavillion projects for foreign exhibitions to his total urbanistic plan, the Linear Continuous System, *Projekt* promoted an architect whose designs and build projects became an antithesis of both Socialist Realist theory, the modern classicism that prevailed from the beginning of the century, and the perceived positivist or purely technocratic design. His theory of open form, which allowed the user to construct his or her own space and synthesised the exterior with the interior, represented an example of a functionalist, socially relevant architecture and design. Similarly, his total urbanistic scheme, dubbed the Continuous Linear System, presented a futuristic solution to the problems identified by the profession in Poland and abroad, such as overpopulation, the need for green space, and the reconciliation of the residential and the industrial sectors.

As *Projekt* promoted the work of Oscar Hansen in architectural and urban design, the magazine focused on the work of personages like Andrzej Pawłowski in industrial design. By focusing on the work of this progenitor of industrial design and design pedagogy in Poland and publishing articles on Industrial design that stressed social applicability of the profession, *Projekt* avoided the peril of falling on pure positivism or engaging purely technocratic banalities. The magazine first touched upon his work in “Forming Machines” (*Kształtowanie Maszyn*) by Janusz Bogucki. The article focused on

²¹³ Wróblewska, “Linearny System Ciągły (Continuous Linear System),” 1.

the creation of trained professionals and the formation of a work methodology in order to create aesthetic and functional products, following the fact that in the years before the writing of the article (the 1950s) the economic reality restricted the aesthetics of products.²¹⁴ The article reported on the department of Industrial Design at the Cracow ASP, where Pawłowski as the adjunct and secondary instructor created exercises that introduced students to the visual challenges concerning industrial forms.²¹⁵

Pawłowski's intentions as an industrial designer come out in this early article concerning the conception of the industrial designer in Poland. This early journal article communicated Pawłowski's theory and practical goals, informing the reader of his socially conscious conception of the profession. According to the article, Pawłowski believed that the best achievements in industrial design resulted from "a constant effect of art on the aesthetics of the objects [that man created]."²¹⁶ The article showed Pawłowski's belief that the industrial designer should have a complete knowledge of the art and use this knowledge to find the "proper shape" for the objects, rather than operate in "narrow categories of professional fashion and taste."²¹⁷ This approach to design education appeared in the article and the exercises described— in one exercise the student organized the entirety of elements into a cohesive plastic whole, such elements included a curved line on a plane or planes of cardboard. Such exercises meant to train a 'theoretical' or 'intellectual' designer with a social mission.²¹⁸ This lesson plan, which Pawłowski laid out in "Methods of Educating Designers in Institutions of Higher

²¹⁴ Janusz Bogucki, "Kształtowanie Maszyn" (Forming Machines)," *Projekt 4* (26) 1961: 18-21.

²¹⁵ Bogucki, "Kształtowanie Maszyn (Forming Machines)," 18.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

Education,” gave a “theoretical” designer the basic method to defining and solving a problem. The educator created a template to represent the problem solving exercise, which allowed a student to finalize a design. In contrast to the designer as problem solver, Bogucki reported on Pawłowski’s negative perception of a designer that operated in “narrow categories of professional fashions and taste.”²¹⁹ This conception of the designer as specialist, who limited his efforts to one type of object and followed fashion and taste, represented the kind of designer who Pawłowski viewed as ignorant of the profession’s social mission, a ‘stylist.’

Pawłowski’s approach to design education rested in the humanistic ideal of the profession that abstracted both from the reality of Polish socialism and the Western design practice, which focused on the commercial application of industrial design. In an article, “Concerning the Profession of the Industrial Designer” (*O Zawodzie Projektanta Przemysłowego*), originally published in “Literary Lifestyle” (*Życie Literackie*) from 1961, Pawłowski agreed with Thomas Maldonado, professor and director of the Hochschule fur Gestaltung in Ulm, whose referendum from the II ICSID Congress he referenced, that education could “explain the exact nature of the new profession.”²²⁰

For the Polish designer and educator, the profession rested somewhere between the disciplines of art and engineering. But, according to Pawłowski, Polish design moved far from its humanistic ideal because of a few ingrained misconceptions concerning the profession, which tore at it from both sides of the art and engineering spectrum, as envisioned by Pawłowski. In his view, the Polish idea of an industrial designer weighted

²¹⁹ Andrzej Pawłowski and Maria Dziedzic, *Inicjacje : O Sztuce, Projektowaniu i Kształceniu Projektantów (Initiations: On Art, Design and the Education of Designers)* (Kraków: Wydział Form Przemysłowych Akademii Sztuk Pięknych im. Jana Matejki w Krakowie, 2001), 71-72.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

heavily on the profession's commercial viability, and Pawłowski felt that in order to justify the need to design a product in the eyes of industry representatives one needed to use economic arguments. On the side of art, the design theories that called for a "continuation of folk art" or for satiating "the tastes of the broadest masses," which figured prominently in communist Poland, reduced industrial design to what Ernst Bloch, a German Marxist philosopher, termed "Chromed Poverty," a movement in design that concerned itself with "catering to shallow and pretentious trends."²²¹

Pawłowski on the other hand wanted to return to the humanistic ideal behind industrial design and desired to move away from the idea, prevalent in industry, that design constituted a kind of "panacea" for economic problems. In his attempt to return humanism to industrial design, Pawłowski's conception of industrial designer expressed avant-garde values as theorized by Burger. In his opinion, expressed in a referendum that the designer delivered as part of a seminar at the Institute of Industrial Manufacture (*Institut Obróbki Skrawaniem*) in Cracow in December of 1968, this idea of beautifying objects for sale moved away from the profession's ideology and belonged in the fields of fashion and advertising. He preferred a broad definition of design as a creative field that "[defined] a relationship between a cause and an effect."²²² In this sense, industrial design focused on creating a system rather than the act of creating products.

An industrial designer's mission centered on the "creation and organization of the constantly growing synthetic environment that [surrounded] the modern human being," the construction of a consumption model that outlined society's needs, and the means to

²²¹ Pawłowski and Dziedzic, *Inicjacje (Initiations)*, 22-23.

²²² *Ibid.*, 55-56.

satisfy them.²²³ This way of characterizing the role of the industrial designer, matched the avant-garde notion of art as the novel basis for life. By framing the role of the industrial designer as the creation and organization of a synthetic environment of the human being, Pawłowski claimed that the profession structured everyday life and the human experience. As Burger theorized, the historic avant-garde movements attacked art's disassociation with life and desired a return to socially significant art. They utilized art to organize a novel praxis for life.²²⁴ Therefore, Pawłowski, in his call to structure the human environment through the practice of industrial design, characterized the profession as following the avant-garde notion that undermined art's autonomy in society. Industrial design like art for the avant-garde, acted as the basis for a new life praxis.

Pawłowski believed that the creation of a socially conscious industrial designer became possible in a socialist country. He called for the creation of an 'intellectual designer' profession, borrowing the term from Jay Doblin, director of the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology (previously the Institute of Design in Chicago) from 1955, in an address to the meeting of secretaries from various arts organizations in Poland and the USSR, which gathered in February of 1972. Pawłowski hoped to move toward a profession that valued theoretical design, which stemmed from Russian Constructivism and theories of progressive Western designers like Maldonado and Doblin. He had little respect for the design "styling" that according to Doblin, whom he referenced in the article, constituted 80 percent of design in the United States. In his speech he put his faith in Thomas Maldonado's prediction at the Second (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design) ICSID Congress that the creation of a

²²³ Pawłowski and Dziedzic, *Inicjacje (Initiations)*, 57.

²²⁴ Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 49.

“theoretical” design profession proved possible only in socialist countries. Pawłowski urged his fellow attendees to put “theoretical” design into practice and “take part in the multidisciplinary realization of social needs...made possible by industrial development.”²²⁵

Pawłowski anticipated that the move in the direction of a socially conscious designer and away from the ‘stylist’ in his letter to Tapio Wirkkala, a pioneer in Finnish industrial art, concerning the creation of an inter Scandinavian design high school. In one part of the correspondence, the Polish designer speculated that the future of their mutual profession rested in its growing social role; he believed the designer would become the representative of social interest.²²⁶ The *Projekt* article followed this view. It reported on Pawłowski’s conception of designer as an “intellectual” with a social mission, rather than a stylist who concerned himself purely with aesthetic concerns and followed fashions and trends.

Similarly the author of the article, Janusz Bogucki, reported on another feature of Pawłowski’s pedagogical approach that fit into his conception of training the ‘intellectual’ or ‘theoretical’ designer. The author described the conception of design that Pawłowski and his students advocated. According to Bogucki, they created a design that combined “the logic of a mechanical diagram with human creativity [that preserved the] the integrity of its use... and expressed the internal logic of the system”.²²⁷ Bogucki characterized Pawłowski’s and his compatriot’s works as a “biologism” that allowed for a

²²⁵ Pawłowski and Dziedzic, *Inicjacje*, 86.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 94.

²²⁷ Janusz Bogucki, “Kształtowanie Maszyn (Forming Machines),” *Projekt* 4 (26) 1961: 21.

“clarity and precision of the system, enlivened by the fluidity and elasticity of form.”²²⁸

This conception of Pawłowski’s work as educator and designer connected to his theory of “naturally shaped form.” This theory formed part of Pawłowski’s attempt to approach the industrial product from the perspective of an intellectual designer, moving as far away from the concept of decoration or styling, which he relegated to the realm of fashion in his experimental practice.

The theory of “naturally shaped form” drew on physics to postulate that the perfect form contained the minimal amount of potential energy. In other words, a form shaped by natural forces, like a necklace forming a pointed parabola, because the gravitational force acted on its pendant, represented the best shape. In such an arrangement all the forces remained balanced without the need for additional support or force to penetrate into the system.²²⁹ This sort of experimental work informed the ‘biologism’ in design that Bogucki saw in Pawłowski’s work. The elasticity and fluidity of exterior form that revealed ‘the interior logic of the system,’ resulted from the principle of ‘naturally shaped form.’ The shape of the device came from the natural draping of material over the mechanical system, covering it in a fluid and fitting enclosure.

In another article by Wiesława Wierzchowska, “The Faculty of Industrial Design,” (*Szkoła Projektowania Form Przemysłowych*) of 1969 that marked the first graduation of students from the Department of Industrial Design at the Cracow Fine Arts Academy, which by 1963 separated from the faculty of the Interior design, the magazine made a clear elaboration of Pawłowski’s design theory, mentioning the idea of “natural form” by name and revealing that like the idea of the industrial designer, the theory originated as a

²²⁸ Bogucki, “Kształtowanie Maszyn (Forming Machines),” 21.

²²⁹ Andrzej Pawłowski and Maria Dziedzic, *Inicjacje*, 38.

formulation of American and British theoreticians. In this article, the magazine again aligned itself with Pawłowski and his idea of an “intellectual” designer—a designer who “[analyzed] man’s environment, which [opened] up” new possibilities of ordering and organizing the function of life.”²³⁰ By featuring Pawłowski and showing that his industrial design theory originated in the work of American and British theoreticians, the magazine aligned itself with the profession internationally and specifically in Western Europe and America.

In the article, a list of questions that tested a design revealed the commitment to a social mission, which characterized the “intellectual designer.” The questions framed a design as “the creation of the most rational conditions for safeguarding the biological and psychological existence of man” and the designer as “duty bound to represent society and not only to those of the firm which [commissioned] the design,” and someone who remained conscious of the role it was to play in man’s total environment.²³¹ Therefore, the article clearly reported on Pawłowski’s conception of a designer, propagating the idea of industrial designer as an ‘intellectual’ who shaped a fitting environment for man, rather than a stylist who designed commercial products according to perceived fashions.

In aligning itself with Pawłowski, the magazine aligned itself with an avant-garde conception of an industrial designer, rather than with the specialized stylist that Doblin perceived in most of American design or the more positivist conception of industrial designer that appeared in the Soviet Union. An intellectual designer who created the ‘most rational conditions for safeguarding the biological and psychological existence’ of human beings and who created ‘new possibilities of ordering and organizing the function

²³⁰ Wiesława Wierzchowska, “The Faculty of Industrial Design,” *Project* 4(72) (1969): 7.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

of life followed Burger's vision of an avant-garde artist. The promotion of well-being through design that ordered and organized the function of life met the avant-garde conception of undermining the autonomy of art. Like a socially engaged artist, the intellectual designer created a new basis for life. Therefore, by promoting Pawłowski and his conception of a designer, which originated in the design theory of personages like Maldonado, *Projekt* promoted an avant-garde conception of an industrial designer.

The magazine's patronage of Pawłowski and his efforts at the Cracow School of Fine Arts reveal its commitment to returning the avant-garde or at least a socially conscious conception of applied art and the creation of a 'intellectual' designer. As the magazine reported on the work of Hansen in architecture and urban design, focusing on an architect that argued for open form in design, it presented the work of Pawłowski in industrial design, the work of a socially conscious, theoretical designer.

The inclusion of Pawłowski into the magazine's coverage reflected the larger editorial program that the team wished to construct, aligning itself with Western avant-garde conception of the 'theoretical' or 'intellectual' designer. In "Shaping Industrial Designs" (*Kształtowanie Wzorów Przemysłowych*) by Stefan Hołówko from 1963, the author observed that the "role of an industrial designer [was] often unclear or misunderstood" and that it was too often treated as "solely the problem of aesthetics" or as the "beautifying" of the product's "exterior form".²³² Contrary to this point, the author's conception of the industrial designer matched that of the 'intellectual' or 'theoretical' designer expounded by Western theorists and Pawłowski. Hołówko believed that industrial design meant the "confrontation of the technical requirements

²³² Stefan Hołówko, "Kształtowanie Wzorów Przemysłowych (Shaping Industrial Designs)," *Projekt* 1(34) 1963: 28.

with the requirements that [stemmed] from the human being's physical and psychological nature."²³³ The author believed that by "forming correct interrelationships between man and machine" one could "ease the transition into the proper relationship [of man] to the mechanized world."²³⁴ The author believed that in the second phase of the industrial designer's development "every tool" became an "absolutely obedient and functional instrument" in human hands."²³⁵

In yet another *Projekt* article, "Present Problems of Industrial Design" (*Aktualne Zagadnienia Wzornictwa Przemysłowego*) Bogdan Czekaluk, presented industrial design as a profession concerned with society and the creation of a human being's environment, the sphere of the 'intellectual designer.' The article itself analyzed the nature of industrial design and the proper creation of products in Poland's command economy, especially as based on the synthesis of the work of research departments and the institutes responsible for technological research and its implementation in production. To the author of this article, the quality of an industrial design product depended on its material and emotional characteristics. For the author, the "emotional" quality of the object stemmed as much from the experience of using the product as from the aesthetic composition of the object. That experience resulted from the right balance of "proportion," "shape," the "technical design," the psychophysical characteristics of the user, and the requirements of use.²³⁶ The author's concern for the 'psychophysical' effects of the object on the user revealed the practice of the intellectual designer. The article's call to expand the research base of industrial design in order to include

²³³ Ibid., 28.

²³⁴ Hołówko, "Kształtowanie Wzorów Przemysłowych (Shaping Industrial Designs)," 29.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Bogdan Czekaluk, "Aktualne Zagadnienia Wzornictwa Przemysłowego (Present Problems of Industrial Design)," *Projekt* 3(36) 1963: 3.

disciplines that encompassed fields such as psychology, physiology, climatology, was based in the idea that the designer created products that correctly shaped the users environment.²³⁷ The author stressed that the “precise rigor” of a utilitarian solution, which stemmed from the “scientific knowledge of the process...subordinated” the aesthetics. The focus on the utilitarian value of a product and specifically one based on scientific research revealed a concern for the social value of the object evocative of the methodology of the ‘intellectual designer’. This perception of industrial designer matched that of the intellectual designer that Thomas Maldonado, Doblin, and largely the ICSID propagated in the 1960s.

This understanding of the industrial design profession, which Pawłowski propagated as well, following the theories of Maldonado and Dobin, rested in the avant-garde notion that centered on the negation of art’s autonomy and the use of art to construct a new basis for life. Although unlike fine art, industrial design remained connected to life because it created products of everyday use, the attempt to create products that structured human life in order to ensure well being instead of focusing on purely aesthetic qualities of said products, followed an avant-garde notion. Like the \ avant-garde 1920s and 30s that undermined the autonomy of art by connecting art to society in order to create a new basis for life, the industrial designer created products to shape the users environment and focused on solutions for use in order to ensure psychophysical well being.²³⁸ Therefore, the conception of the industrial designer that appeared in this article followed avant-garde notions of the artist and designer role in society.

²³⁷ Czekaluk, “Aktualne Zagadnienia Wzornictwa Przemysłowego (Present Problems of Industrial Design),” 3.

²³⁸ Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 49.

As the sixties progressed, *Projekt*'s alliance with Maldonado's conception of a designer and the theories advanced at the Ulm school became more pronounced. The translation of Hebert Read's text in the late fifties tied the Polish industrial designers back to functional, modern form and the priority of use value. In the 1960s, the magazine aligned itself with the theories of Maldonado and the Ulm school and to a lesser extent with those of Doblin as expressed by Pawłowski. The articles that tackled the theory of industrial design or the role of the industrial designer evidence that allegiance. In "Industrial Designer," Andrzej Jan Wróblewski, saw the design of industrial forms as a "process of humanizing an artificial material medium that had a most vital influence on...man's society."²³⁹ In the article, the author argued for the ecological or sustainable design that respected both man and nature. He cited ecologists Marston Bates who argued for a long-lasting system that "contained a compromise [between nature and man] to nature's advantage" and Charles Eaton who favored a "general principle" that ensured that "the activities" of design are "most favorable to man."²⁴⁰ The author defined design as the "search for moral and social significance in serial industrial production."²⁴¹ He later argued for the creation of institutes that could represent ecological interests.²⁴² This conception of designer stemmed from the research based model of the theoretical or 'intellectual' designer. The author, based on the citation from ecologists, argued for a 'long lasting-system' or general principles that ensured man's cooperation with nature, a system that in its goals resembled the theory that Pawłowski adapted.

Likewise in an article entitled, "Twenty Years of Industrial Design," by Jerzy

²³⁹ Andrzej Jan Wróblewski, "On the Definition of The Industrial Designer," *Projekt* 2(70) (1969): 29.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 29.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 30

²⁴² Ibid., 31

Olkiewicz of 1965, the author favored the theory of the *Hochschule fur Gestaltung* in Ulm and Thomas Maldonado. This minimal survey started by stating the opinion that architectural theory predominated in industrial design of the first three decades of the 20th century, given the fact that only architects received a technical education at the time. Different, field specific, theories in design replaced architectural theory in the 1950s. The author dismissed the “vogue” for Italian products, presenting it as “gimmicks” that yielded “scooter bodies” that in the end proved reproductions of Japanese design.²⁴³ It ended with a short discussion of the *Hochschule fur Gestaltung* in Ulm and the new trend represented by Thomas Maldonado, which the article viewed as “tremendously influential within the past years.”²⁴⁴ By citing the influence of the scientific and analytical methods of Maldonado, which he geared toward the production of objects of clear use and function, and which represented a young theory at the time, the article’s authors and the editors aligned themselves with this western design theory.

Rather than just articles on design theory, the reports on the Congress of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design revealed the editor’s alliance with the theories of the Ulm school and Maldonado. The fact that the magazine reported on the ICSID congresses, which in the late sixties focused on the theories that Maldonado advanced, attested to their approval for these theories in industrial design. The analytical theories of the Ulm school and the psychological and ecological concerns of the report obviously stemmed from the themes on which the ICSID chose to focus. For example, the sixth congress, which occurred from September 10-12th, 1969 in London, met under the title, ‘Design, Society and the Future.’ The appeal by Maldonado, called designers to

²⁴³ Jerzy Olkiewicz, “Twenty Years of Industrial Design,” *Projekt* 5-6(50) (1965): 75.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

“lead the process of growth,” as the West’s technological and economic expansion and its copious expenditure of resources was known, in such a way “as to correct the social and material quality of [human] environment.”²⁴⁵ But, the selection of speeches covered in the magazine revealed the magazine’s alignment with the theories that focused on the social mission of the designer and the creation of a healthy environment for humanity as a whole. The article mentioned a speech by Meredith Woolthring that spoke about the problem of the rising prices of technical goods and the fact that developing countries played a higher price for said devices than developed ones.²⁴⁶ The article cited the speech entitled “Art and Design in the Future Society,” which stated that “returning beauty to the natural environment [became] a social-artistic function”.²⁴⁷ The article quoted the USSR representative as expressing the opinion that the designer was responsible for the creation of an “integrated environment” in order to “[ensure] rightful boundaries for life in the social and the individual sense.”²⁴⁸ Likewise, the article quoted a U.S. company representative who prompted the designer to ask the question “should I” rather than “can I” upon producing designs for products.²⁴⁹ This showed a rare concern for the social function of design from a representative of a U.S. company, an entity that employed the ‘stylist’ designer.

Out of the twelve speeches given at the congress, these exemplify the ones that made it into the report. All the selected sayings and the citations that the author selected for the report related to design’s role in creating a fitting environment, both synthetic and

²⁴⁵ Ryszard Bojar, “The Future Begins Yesterday,” *Projekt* 1(74) (1970): 46.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

natural, for man of the developed and the developing world and the proper utilization of resources in the process of production. Even the responses of the USSR representative and the representative of the U.S. company fit along the same lines. The article's intention to focus on the social mission of design in analyzing the speeches at the ICSID congress became apparent in the introduction, which cited Buckminster Fuller from a Monograph of 1960 that characterized the mission of design in terms of "making a good life possible for every human being" by "utilizing the world's energy resources for the good of all."²⁵⁰ The introduction and the structure of the article showed that *Projekt* aligned itself with the conception of industrial design as a socially involved field responsible for the creation of man's environment according to ergonomic and ecological theories.

Włodarczyk argued that the ideals of a socially applicable art disappeared after the introduction of Socialist Realism in Poland as they disappeared at the end of the 1930s both in the West and East. He believed that the avant-garde lost its "viability" given the changes in the profession from 1950 to 1955.²⁵¹ Although in reality, the avant-garde failed to return to the ideal of socially applicable art, which it championed in the 1930s, fully, a magazine like *Projekt* promoted a design and designers, such as Hansen and Pawłowski, who retained the idea of socially applicable art.

Largely, the assessment of Crowley and Piotrowski proved true; the design and architecture that Poland produced following the thaw, reproduced the elementary and functional architecture that aspired to less than that of the Praesens group of the 1930s. However, attempts at the creation of a contemporary architecture that served its users,

²⁵⁰ Ryszard Bojar, "The Future Begins Yesterday," 46.

²⁵¹ Włodarczyk, *Socrealism (Socialist Realism)*, 129-130.

although few and far between, existed in post-thaw Poland. The *Przyczółek* Housing Estate in Warsaw of 1963 by Oscar and Zofia Hansen in collaboration with Marek Konieczny and Józef Staniszewski exemplified such architecture (Fig. 4.3.). It represented the few build estate projects that expressed Hansen's idea of open form. In the design of the estate, Hansen contrasted the continuous public space with the private space of the apartment, breaking up the public space into that of the building structure and natural greenery, allowing for various degrees of interaction between the two. Similarly, Hansen achieved a clear differentiation of service and serviced zones through the use of color.²⁵² Because it saw completion in the 1970s during a housing shortage with a restricted budget, the final product failed to meet the specifications of the design. It undermined the continuous public space that connected the alleys and buildings, allowing easy access to any point of the estate without exposure to the elements.²⁵³ Therefore, Hansen implemented his design theory of open form on a larger scale than the designs of the exhibition pavilions or exhibitions in Poland following the thaw, even if the final results failed to measure up to the initial design.

The industrial design profession saw a similar outcome as architecture, although the work of Pawłowski and the role of designer that the contributors of *Projekt* envisioned worked for the development of an intellectual' designer in Poland. Ironically, although the Polish government put its faith in industrial products, the works of the applied arts sold better as export goods than the products of industry. However, the foreign consumers' disregard for Polish industrial products affected the development of the

²⁵² Oscar Hansen, *Towards Open Form*, 97.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 100.

profession negatively, in exact opposite to the applied arts.²⁵⁴ During the 1970s, as Pawłowski related in “Of the Profession of the Industrial designer” (*O Zawodzie Projektanta Przemysłowego*), his profession became responsible for the marketability of Polish industrial products abroad in the eyes of industry.²⁵⁵ Similarly, in the domestic market, industry considered design a ‘panacea’ to its troubles. The producers of industrial goods considered it a way to make their products more desirable in the partial market economy that Gomułka instituted in 1957. To put it bluntly, producers wanted “styling” in order to compete abroad and maintain an edge on the domestic market, which counteracted the goals of Pawłowski, Poland’s premier industrial design educator, and the contributors of *Projekt*. Pawłowski as well as the contributors of *Projekt* wanted to create a profession of an “intellectual” industrial designer who catered to society’s needs, but the almost capitalistic concerns of industry made that realization impossible. Even in a socialist country in which, according to Thomas Maldonado, such a design profession appeared to thrive, Pawłowski’s goals remained out of reach.

Even though the ‘intellectual designer’ of Pawłowski and the ‘open form’ of Hansen met with varying degrees of success in post-thaw Poland, the ideal of socially applicable art and design from which it stemmed revived in the post-thaw period. By promoting such designers and focusing on the ideal of socially applicable art in articles that concerned design practice, the editors and contributors of *Projekt* fostered this ideal in design. *Projekt* contributed to the preservation of the avant-garde ideal of socially applicable art following the period of Socialist Realism, even if it failed to fully

²⁵⁴ Czesława Frejlich and Barbara Banas, *Rzeczy Pospolite : Rzeczy Pospolite, Polskie Wyroby 1899-1999 (Common Wealth, Polish products 1899-1999)* (Olszanica; Kraków: Wydawn. BOSZ; Rzecz Piekna, 2001), 184.

²⁵⁵ Pawłowski and Maria Dziedzic, *Inicjacje (Initiations)*, 22.

succeed.

Although under a command economy and the one-party authoritarian system, Polish designers promoted socially applicable design through their support of Hansen's open form and Pawłowski's support of the industrial designer, which derived from Maldonado's and Doblin's. Polish designers stayed away from political engagement in the sense that they failed to undermine party authority. However, as in the in-between-the wars period in which modernist groups believed in the social role of art, the journal followed the idea of the intellectual designer and favored the open form of Hansen, reviving socially conscious design and reconnecting the Polish profession to functionalism. Following these theories and architects such as the Smithsons and Louis Khan, it reconnected the profession to development's abroad, much like during the 1920s and 30s when Polish groups took part in the modernist architectural association, the CIAM, following the end of the short period of Socialist Realism. During the thaw, Polish design connected Louis Khan and the Smithsons, preserving social concern in architecture discourse while the main stream of modernists followed the international style, an aesthetic of modernism.

Designers who surrounded *Projekt*, a product of a state publisher, featured the design that put faith in modern technology to create a better living environment for human beings, hence accepted a pragmatic site advocating social involvement but failed to undermine the party authority and oppose its policy, retreating from politics.

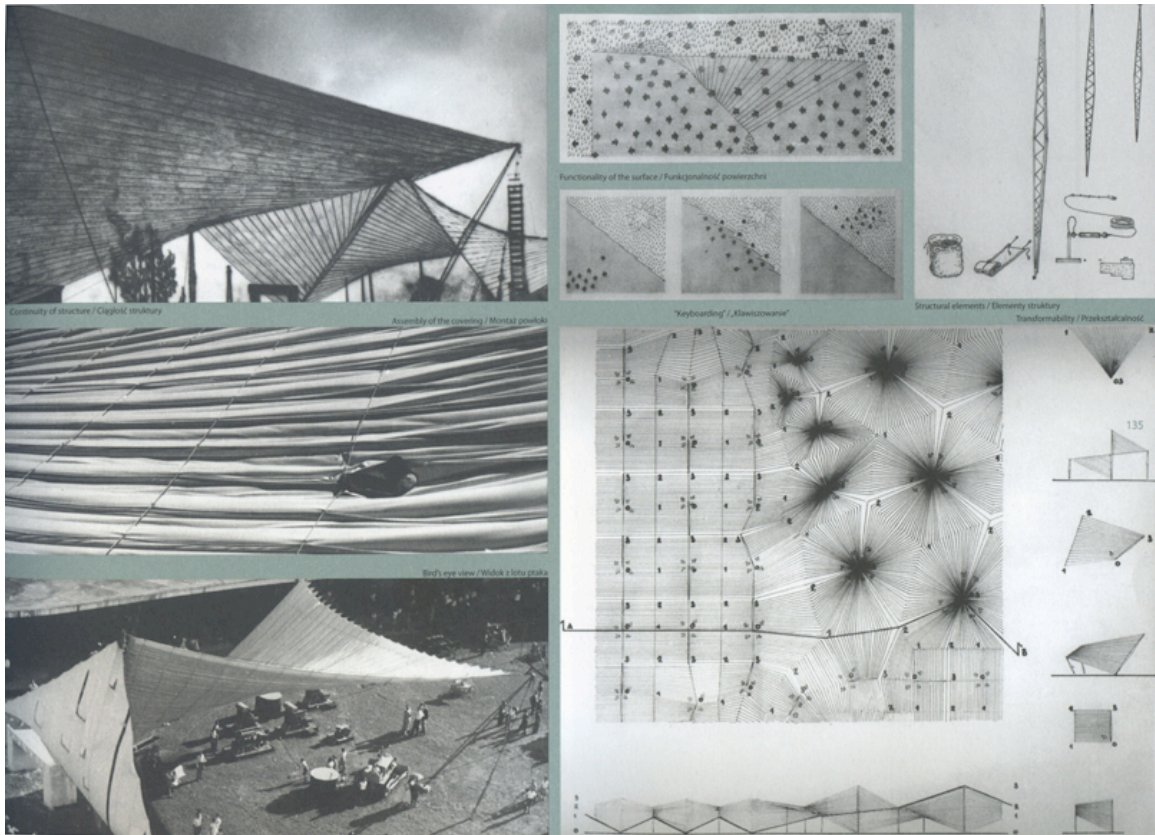


Figure 4.1. Oskar Hansen with Zofia Hansen and Lech Tomaszewski, “Fan,” Biotechnical Structures, Polish Pavilion in Sao Paulo, 1959 From Hansen, Oskar. *Towards Open Form = Ku Formie Otwartej*. Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2005, 135.

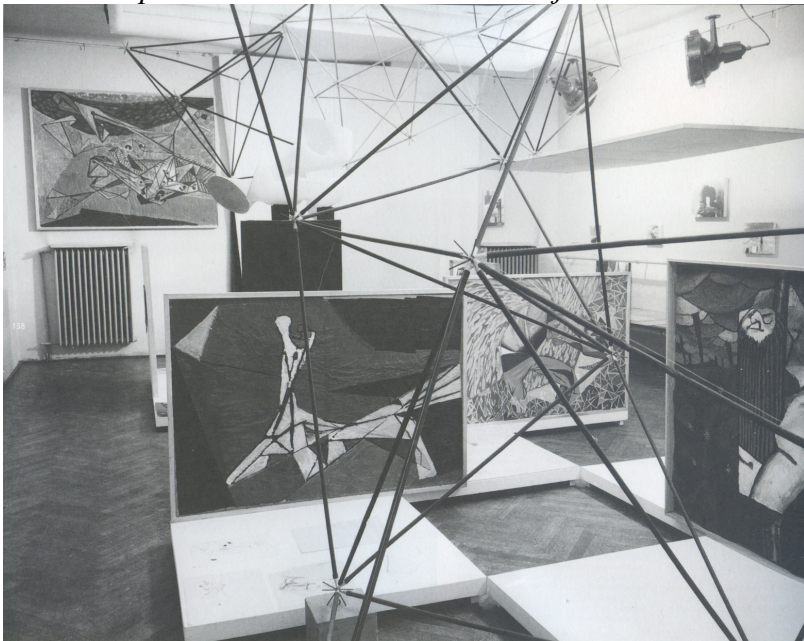


Figure 4.2. Oskar Hansen, “Choke Chain,” *Individual Exhibition*, Jewish Theatre Warsaw, 1957 From Hansen, Oskar. *Towards Open Form = Ku Formie Otwartej*. Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2005, 139.



Figure 4.3. Oscar and Zofia Hansen with Marek Konieczny and Józef Staniszewski, The *Przychówek* Housing Estate, Warsaw, 1963 From Hansen, Oskar. *Towards Open Form = Ku Formie Otwartej*. Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2005, 96.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

During the interwar period, the avant-garde Constructivist group, BLOK, and functionalist group, Praesens, as part of the international modernist community, took their place among larger international organizations such as CIAM and CIRPAC to promote modernism in Europe. These groups represented functionalist modernism as they drew upon the influences of architects like Le Corbusier and the German and Dutch modernists, concerning themselves with utilizing elementary forms to create basic structures, producing economical dwellings. These groups expressed avant-garde notions, subverting art's autonomy and promoting its ability to join other fields such as science or philosophy in setting a new basis for life.

In Eastern Europe, Socialist Realism, active in Poland in the years 1948-1956 as the official Stalinist method in architecture, subverted the modernist avant-garde project, which ended with the Second World War. Unlike functional modernism, this method in architecture utilized traditional forms that originated in classicism or Renaissance architecture. Even though Socialist Realism utilized traditional forms in architecture, it attempted to fulfill the 'realistic' expectations of architecture, providing its users with proper living conditions and functional spaces. As with other Stalinist policies this architectural method centered on the creation of utopia by reconstructing the lives of its citizens through the arrangement of space.

If Socialist Realism aimed to utilize architecture in order to form a new basis for living, did it continue the avant-garde project of the early 20th century avant-gardes? Given the fact that Socialist Realism utilized traditional forms, did it utilize the traditional architectural styles like classicism, which existed in Poland? In one respect, Socialist

Realism radicalized the avant-garde project. As the only client and political body the party possessed unlimited authority over the nature of building and could produce the utopian visions of Socialist Realism. Socialist Realism conceived of the city as a clearly zoned area that ensured the well being of its citizens, criticizing the chaos of developer centered urbanism. In this respect, it matched the CIAM's conception of urbanism, but the wide avenues and large squares for public celebrations again harked back to historical urban forms. Modernism and Socialist Realism differed in the form that the city or its architecture should take, attempting to provide users with fitting accommodation.

However, the uncertain conception of Socialist Realism's form in building and the lack of a consensus as to that form among the theorists, the party, and the actual architects caused confusion in the profession. The common critique of Socialist Realism in architectural history pointed out that Socialist Realism concerned itself with the image of the building while shortchanging the plan and misusing space. However, it would be better to view this as a process in which the inability to agree on the form that Socialist Realist buildings should take led to disagreements and hybridized construction. Because Socialist Realism rested heavily on classicism, classical architects employed their skills in its creation, but met with disagreement from theorists. Modernist functionalists on the other hand attempted to synthesize traditional styles with elementary forms in order to fit into the conception, which led to hybrid building. Architects that later became contributors and subjects of the *Projekt* magazine and whose practice stemmed from functionalism but abstracted from the possibility of hybridization worked abroad for the Chamber of Commerce on Pavilions for Polish exhibitions.

Following the death of Stalin and the thaw in Soviet politics, Socialist Realism dissipated as a cultural policy. The Polish Communist party under Władysław Gomułka allowed more autonomy in cultural practice. But the design discourse and practice in thaw Poland led to the creation of reduced functionalist architecture, one that suffered from the lack of wealthy clients or an opulent economy that could support the construction of lavish, expensive buildings. In terms of industrial design few actual consumer products saw production, although the Gomułka government promised to bring consumerism to the country in order to match the West and to showcase the success of socialist politics and cultural policy, opening the possibility for the creation of consumer products. As in the West, where functionalism became a style, losing the idea of social engagement, which originated in Eastern and Central Europe, Eastern European functionalism presented a depoliticized and economically restricted version of the former methodology. The communist party agreed to functionalism because of the depoliticized nature of the abstract forms of architecture, which expressed little social meaning, and attempted to use functionalism in order to prove itself against the technologically and industrially advanced West. By utilizing functionalism it sought to exemplify the success of socialism.

Following the autonomy of the Polish communist party, the shift to polycentrism in the Eastern Blok, and the end of Socialist Realism, an example of a utopian architectural program, the party accepted functionalism because of its depoliticized nature and because of its implementation in the West. Did the architects become aestheticians, practicing a depoliticized and economically restricted version of modernism, much like their western counterparts? Piotr Piotrowski argued this thesis

concerning fine art in his book, *Avant-Garde in the Shadow of Yalta*, while in “Modernism and Socialist Culture: Polish Art in the late 1950s” in *Style and Socialism* he viewed Polish design and architecture as restricted and positivistic in its scope. David Crowley, however, hinted at a pragmatic nature of design practice in Poland in “Building the World Anew” in *Journal of Design History*.

The nature of *Projekt*, a professional journal published by the main state-sponsored publishing house, the Graphic Arts Publishers or WAG, complicated this view. Sponsored by the state, this journal constituted a forum that advocated a return of functionalism, undermining the image and façade oriented design of Socialist Realism, the culturally enervated method in architecture of the Stalinist period. It revived the idea of socially engaged design and architecture, a design that centered on the user and attempted to create functional space.

The shift to polycentrism in Socialist politics following Khrushchev’s secret speech and the thaw resulted in the rise of the Władysław Gomułka party. It won partial autonomy from Moscow and embarked on its own cultural program, giving up on the utopian idea of structuring the life of its citizens from the ground up. This included a more open policy toward the West and cultural freedom to the extent that such freedom failed to impede on the actual authority of the party’s government. Following the end of Socialist Realism as a policy that structured artistic and design practice, *Projekt*’s editorial policy focused on reversing the Stalinist’s style’s effects, bringing functional modernism into the fold. In its formative years *Projekt* promised to shy away from theoretical musings, which disallowed Socialist Realism to pin point the exact form for it’s use in architecture. The journal utilized functionalist modernism in order to create

the industrial design profession in Poland and return architecture to user-centered and socially relevant design.

In the 1960s, the editorial policy of *Projekt* reconnected the Polish design scene to the profession internationally, especially with the West, joining the search for sustainable, socially relevant design while exploring high technology structures that found basis in geometry and advanced engineering. In reconnecting with the international scene it revived avant-garde notions in architecture and industrial design. The editorial policy expressed the need for social engagement and the articles that the journal published pushed for the establishment of universal well being through architecture and industrial design. The idea of functionalist design that the magazine promoted fit the avant-garde notion of subverting the autonomy of art, by making art socially relevant as a field that set a novel basis for life. In this way, *Projekt* reconnected with the functionalist modernism of the 1920s and 30s and the early avant-gardes that sought to rebuild the world in a different image, promoting universal well being.

The conception of the industrial designer as an intellectual designer who shaped the synthetic environment that surrounded human beings in order to ensure their well being, utilizing a system rather than styling certain products, fit into that avant-garde conception. It existed in Poland chiefly because of figures like Andrzej Pawłowski who adapted the concept from Western designers such as Jay Doblin and Thomas Maldonado whose analytic approach to design at the Ulm School rose in popularity during the 1960s. Like Pawłowski, *Projekt* featured another designer, the architect Oskar Hansen whose architectural conceptions moved beyond the simple functionalist modernism that rearranged certain abstract elements in plan to create a structure. Hansen's theory of

‘open form’ led to the integration of the exterior and interior of the structure, allowing the user an open interpretation of the construction. Hansen utilized the new structural possibilities to create economic structures that increased their functionality in his most basic of projects, such as the exhibition pavilions for Polish products abroad.

Projekt reported on the Continuous Linear System, a linear city plan for a carefully zoned sprawl that stretched across the county, in an article that represented a forum of individuals concerned with urbanism. The plan attempted to utilize zoning to promote the well being of its citizens by providing green space and separating residential from industrial sectors. The magazine framed Hansen’s vision as a Polish example of the effort to promote sustainable urbanism with which architects and urbanists worldwide remained concerned. By Promoting Hansen’s architectural conception of ‘open form’ and his large urban project and Pawłowski’s conception of the intellectual designer, the magazine promoted design that followed an avant-garde conception and connected the Polish professions to those internationally.

By featuring designers such as Hansen and Pawłowski and fostering avant-garde notions in design, *Projekt* attempted to reconnect the Polish design profession to its compatriots abroad and promoted a socially conscious design that fostered human well being. The notion of modernism and functionalism as first propagated by *Projekt* in order to move away from the decorative and image oriented Socialist Realism promoted the idea of design as the basis for a new life. Although it argued for socially conscious design, like the rest of the profession, the magazine, a journal of a state sponsored publisher, failed to agitate for political change, remaining in a depoliticized state. In this way, *Projekt* played into the party’s idea of allowing cultural autonomy as long as the

party's authority remained intact and fostered a depoliticized notion of the avant-garde and functionalism. It played into the party's goal of utilizing the functionalist aesthetic in architecture to appear successful in comparison to the West and valued its forms for lack of specific social meaning, which the architects could have utilized to subvert the authority of the party. But, by advocating for design that expressed avant-garde notions, specifically the ability of art to create a novel basis for life, as identified by Burger, the magazine attempted to foster a relationship with the profession internationally, especially with the West. Therefore, *Projekt* promoted a 'pragmatic' notion of modernism and functionalism. It subscribed to a pragmatic notion of the avant-garde as well. While attempting to theorize for socially conscious design that promoted general well being and build structures that met these conditions, the contributors of *Projekt* remained restricted by the party's economical and political goals. The architects and designers that made up the magazine connected the profession to its equivalent abroad, attempting to make Polish architecture relevant and therefore followed a similar path as the Blok and Praesens group.

Projekt could promote avant-garde notions of design and a socially engaged architecture without the party's direct control. Because it existed in a state with a specific cultural agenda, one that allowed for consumerism and promoted functionalism in architecture, it acted as a site in which avant-garde notions of design remained. The modernist functionalism of the 1920s and 1930s avant-garde ended before World War II, becoming an aesthetic style in America and Western Europe. In Eastern Europe, the political control over culture restricted design and architectural practice, but institutions like *Projekt* continued the work of the 1920s and 1930s groups such as Praesens in

fostering the avant-garde notion of art, which served as the novel basis for living.

Working towards a socially conscious and sustainable design, *Projekt* thrust Polish design into the larger international community.

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