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1947-1962

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A Window on the United States. The Image of American Architecture in West Germany's Journals: 1947-1962

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore how American architecture was presented throughout the pages of two main architectural journals published in West Germany in the very first years after the end of World War II. The selected journals, *Baukunst und Werkform* and *Baumeister*, are independent magazines with opposite positions – the first is extremely oriented towards modernity and the latter is deeply conservative. Although they cannot be considered as part of the cultural Cold War program, they testify how, in this particular period, it was impossible to avoid knowing, measuring and confronting the transatlantic world. Starting from two opposite points of view, these journals reflect the German reception of the American architectural culture.

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KEYWORDS:

Post-War Germany; Americanism; Architectural Journals; Baukunst und Werkform; Baumeister

Introduction

The complexity of the postwar period could not be understood without taking into account the contribution of mass media in the consolidation of the new global context, which was starting to emerge from the second half of the Twentieth Century. This article addresses this topic by tracing the circulation of ideas, theories and models from the United States to West Germany during the early postwar years. According to numerous studies on the two phenomena of Americanism, intended as a natural transfer of ideas within a certain disciplinary field, and Americanization, intended as the result of specific institutional policies, it is possible to determine a large influence of the American architecture in the European postwar reconstruction¹. In the intricate context of the transatlantic relations, professional journals played a crucial role in the diffusion of both imaginaries and practices. In fact, alongside the various publications intentionally intended as vehicle of exchange, like exhibitions catalogues² or periodicals, such as *Der Monat*³, *Die Neue Zeitung*⁴ and *Die Amerikanische Rundschau*⁵, it is important to take into account independent professional journals in order to assess the actual penetration of the American architectural culture in West Germany building practice.

In the early post-war period, a considerable number of independent journals either started to publish again or were newly founded⁶ and this article provides a detailed analyses of two: *Baukunst und Werkform*⁷ (*BuW*), the journal of the post-war modern par excellence⁸, and *Baumeister*⁹ (*BM*), an extremely conservative and traditionalist journal¹⁰. Since they were not directly bounded to any institution¹¹, the two editorial boards¹² could express their respective positions without any restriction or imposition. Therefore, studying the way in which the United States were presented in these particular journals gives a very realistic perception of the national discussion on overseas architecture. Starting from some simple questions, such as: how deep was the knowledge of the US architectural theory and practice? To which topics was given major attention? Which authors and projects were the most published? it is possible to compare the different attitudes of the two journals, recognizing the impact of the American architectural culture not only in terms of reception/assimilation, but also in terms of rejection. In fact, after identifying the most relevant themes, the most recurring ideas and the most prominent authors it is possible to measure their influence, or, on the contrary, to observe the production of opposing forces and elements of reaction or resistance.

The time frame that has been taken into account for this research spans from 1947 to 1962. These dates could sound unusual, considering that the focus of this work is intended to be on the very first years after the end of World War II, during the reconstruction, at the beginning of the Cold War. However, it is hard to tell exactly when the 'reconstruction' started and ended, or what can be precisely considered the 'post-war period'.

1. The role of the American culture in the development of modern architecture has been subject of a large number of studies, starting from the two seminal works: Jean-Louis Cohen and Hubert Damisch, eds., *Américanisme et modernité. L'idéal américain dans l'architecture* (Paris: EHESS/Flammarion, 1993); Jean-Louis Cohen, *Scenes of the World to Come. European Architecture and the American Challenge, 1893–1960* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995). On the same topic see the numerous publications of the German Historical Institute of Washington DC, such as: *From Manhattan to Mainhattan: Architecture and Style as Transatlantic Dialogue, 1920–1970* (GHI Bulletin, Supplement 2, 2005). For more national-oriented publications see, among others: Fraser, Murray and Joe Kerr, *Architecture and the 'Special Relationship': The American Influence on Post-War British Architecture* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2007); Paolo Scrivano, *Building transatlantic Italy: architectural dialogues with postwar America* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013); Caroline Maniaque-Benton, *French encounters with the American Counterculture, 1960-1980* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

2. See Elizabeth Mock, *In USA erbaut 1932-1944* (Wiesbaden: Metopen-Verlag 1948), which was the catalogue of the German version of the MoMa exhibition 'Built in USA' of 1944, and Mary Mix, *Amerikanische Architektur seit 1947* (Stuttgart: Gerd Hatje, 1951), which was the catalogue of the German version of the exhibition 'Contemporary architecture in the United States' organized by the American Institute of Architects in Havana, 1951.

3. Magazine intentionally aimed to construct a bridge between German and American intellectuals, financed through the 'confidential funds' of the Marshall Plan and CIA's capitals. See Francis Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 30.

4. The complete header of this periodical is *Die neue Zeitung. Eine amerikanische Zeitung für die deutsche Bevölkerung*.

5. See Erwin J. Warkentin, *The History of U.S. Information Control in Post-War Germany: The Past Imperfect* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2016).

6. Among the most important ones, see: *Bauen und Wohnen* (1946-1981), *Deutsche Bauzeitschrift* (1953-...) and *Deutsche Bauzeitung* (1921-1944, 1948-...) and *Bauwelt* (1910-1944, 1952-...).

7. Published in Düsseldorf from 1947 to 1962, when it was absorbed by *Deutsche Bauzeitung* (DBZ).

8. See Hartmut Frank, "La tarda vittoria del Neues Bauen. L'architettura tedesca dopo la Seconda Guerra Mondiale", *Rassegna* 54, (1993): 58-76.

9. Founded in München in 1902, still publishing nowadays. The publication was interrupted from 1944 to 1946.

10. See Torsten Schmiedeknecht, "Postwar editorial conversations in Germany" in Andrew Peckham and Torsten Schmiedeknecht, eds., *Modernism and the Professional Architecture Journal* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 32-55.

11. Unlike *Der Architekt*, affiliated with the BDA (Bund Deutscher Architekten), or *Werk und Zeit*, official journal of the Deutsche Werkbund.

12. In the observed time frame, BM editors were Rudolf Pfister (1947-1954) and Paulhans Peters (1959-1991), while *BuW*'s one were Alfons Leitel (1946-54), Ulrich Conrads (1954-1957) and Hartmut Rebitzki (1957-1962).

Periodization is always arbitrary¹³, but I symbolically decided to use the lifespan of the journal *BuW*, that was founded in 1947 and was absorbed by *DBZ* in 1962.

This article has been divided into different paragraphs, according to the major topics that emerged from the analyses of all the issues published by the two journals in the selected time frame. Each paragraph gives an idea of the journals' positions on the analyzed topic (the first part focuses on *BM* and the second one on *BuW*) and it follows a chronological order, so that it is possible to identify, in some cases, a change in their approach throughout time.

Architecture and Urban Planning in the USA

The general topic of American architecture and urban planning is addressed by a large group of *BM*'s articles which clearly reveals the conservative point of view of the journal. The article "Internationales und Regionales Bauen"¹⁴ by Hans Strobel, for instance, proposes a long reflection on the cultural roots of the two opposite approaches of regionalism and international style in architecture. The article ends with a direct attack on the extreme simplification promoted by the supporters of modern architecture, labeled as a neutral glazed shell. The author blames what he openly defines as '*Amerikanismus*', a phenomenon which, starting from the First World War and with a strong intensification after World War II, spread out in Europe, described as the victim of a senseless fascination for this "poor model without tradition".

A similar position can be found in the article "Ein Stadtbaurat sah Amerika mit offenen Augen"¹⁵ in which the author states that study journeys to the United States are becoming more and more frequent, not only among students but also among architects, who enthusiastically report their experiences to friends and colleagues. The journey of Professor Rudolf Hillebrecht, chief planner of the city of Hannover, on the contrary, gives back a series of negative considerations on the American architectural panorama, starting from the fact that most people live in temporary houses and do not seek stability, that the 80% of the houses are built of wood, that many apartments in the skyscrapers of the big cities are empty, that there are huge problems in traffic management and that America might be considered as a land of endless possibilities, but it is also the land of wasted opportunities. At the end of the description a comment of the editorial board concludes that this article finally gives a different opinion, far from what is usually published in newspapers and magazines, namely an idealized vision of America, presented as a model from which Europe has only to learn: "We are always ready to learn from abroad, but we must not fall into the 'barbed wire psychosis' that has spread since the end of the war: the tragic circumstances that led some German architects

13. The most common time frame adopted to study the reconstruction begins from 1945 (end of the war) and includes the whole Fifties, however if the focus is more on 'planning' the time frame should to be restricted from 1942 (first great air raid on Lübeck) to 1950/51 (approval of most of the *Wiederaufbauplanen*); nevertheless, if considering the actual reconstruction the time frame might include the *Wirtschaftswunder* or even expand further (Cologne finished rebuilding its Romanesque churches only in 1985). On the matter of periodization see, among others, Klaus Von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau. Architektur und Städtebaupolitik in beiden deutschen Staaten* (München: Piper Verlag, 1987), 340; Jeffry M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War. The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), xvi- xviii.

14. Hans Strobel, "Internationales und Regionales Bauen", *BM*, Heft 5 (1953): 337-339.

15. "Ein Stadtbaurat sah Amerika mit offenen Augen", *BM*, Heft 9 (1953): 610.

to emigrate in the United States must not diminish our culture, pushing us to import one that does not belong to us. And this has nothing to do with politics, nor with nationalism”¹⁶.

The position of Hillebrecht¹⁷, one of the most influential urban planners in West Germany, has to be contextualized according to his personal history and to his role in the debate on the postwar urban recovery. His previous activity in the office of Konstanty Gutschow and in Albert Speer’s *Wiederaufbaustab* during the period of National Socialism¹⁸ could be one of the reasons which motivated him to warn his colleagues against an uncritical application of the American model. On the other hand, Hillebrecht was extremely open to learn from abroad and made numerous study trips, not only in the US but also throughout Europe and even in the Soviet Union. As a result, his plan for the city of Hannover played a crucial role in the German debate around the concept of *Stadtlandschaft*¹⁹ and became a successful model.

The negative image of the American metropolises presented in the pages of *BM* is echoed by other articles like, “Bauprobleme und Verkehrsfragen in New York”²⁰, reporting that the heart of the city, Manhattan, is increasingly transforming into a *Bürostadt*, a city of offices, where fewer and fewer people are living, while a huge amount of workers (about 15 million people live between New York and its surroundings, almost a tenth of the entire population of the United States) are daily crossing it, causing enormous problems in traffic management.

Nevertheless, it is also possible to find articles reporting about positive practices, like “Niederlegung der amerikanischen Slums”²¹: the text opens by stating that the degraded, obsolete and dilapidated neighborhoods of the Baltimore suburbs are accountable for 45% of the city’s total expenses and only for 6% of its revenue and are the place where about half of the total crimes perpetrated in the city are registered. US government allocated one billion dollars to clear these slums, which spread on the fringes of America’s most populous cities. Due to the construction boom of the last few years, the problem has been delayed for a long time and has become really difficult to solve, also considering that the inhabitants often oppose to demolitions. However, Eisenhower’s Housing Advisory Committee conducted a detailed survey in ten cities, which demonstrated that after clearing the slums, revenues would increase up to ten times and the total expenses would be completely compensated in about 15 years, showing that the investment in the solution of this problem can actually become an extremely profitable economic strategy.

The approach of *BM* is certainly not representative of the general account of the American architecture that was given by the majority of the German architectural journals of the time. An article by Hans Frommhold, published on *DBZ* with the evocative title “Building in America. Small

16. “Ein Stadtbaurat sah Amerika mit offenen Augen”, *BM*, Heft 9 (1953): 610, translation by the author.

17. On Rudolf Hillebrecht see Ralf Dorn, *Der Architekt und Stadtplaner Rudolf Hillebrecht. Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der deutschen Planungsgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann Verlag, 2017).

18. On the continuity between National Socialism and the postwar period see, among others, “Entnazifizierung der Architekten und der Architektur?”, a paragraph in the book of Klaus von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau: Architektur und Städtebaupolitik in beiden deutschen Staaten* (München: Piper Verlag, 1987), 47-59.

19. See, among others, Andrea Maglio, *Berlino prima del Muro. La ricostruzione negli anni 1945-1961* (Benevento: Hevelius, 2003).

20. W. Schweisheimer, “Bauprobleme und Verkehrsfragen in New York”, *BM*, Heft 5 (1957): 330-331.

21. W. Schweisheimer, “Niederlegung der amerikanischen Slums”, *BM*, Heft 2 (1956): 110.

World – USA – Metropolises – Skyscrapers”²², illustrates a much more common view. The article opens with the consideration that traveling has now become so easy that the world seems to have become smaller. It follows a numerical comparison between the United States and Germany in terms of Countries’ surface and number of inhabitants, concluding that in America everything is on a different scale. The American metropolises, which have reached their current state surprisingly fast if compared to European cities, show recurrent characteristics: the orthogonality of the urban fabric (with the disadvantage of monotony and the advantage of an easy possibility of orientation), the vertiginous vertical growth of the central areas, problems in traffic management and degradation of peripheral areas. The skyscraper, defined as the most representative typology of American architecture, is actually the main object of the article, which proceeds with a description of the various structural typologies, coatings, dimensions, construction costs, staircases, elevators, escalators and air conditioning systems, accompanied by a rich repertoire of images.

This visual myth of Manhattan is not only to be found in the articles, but is additionally stressed throughout advertisement, where skyscrapers act as a symbol of modernity or intricate highways are used to signify dynamism and speed. Moreover, this kind of European fascination is fostered by American architectural Journals as well, where articles like “Europe Emulates American Skyscrapers”²³ state that “impressed by the efficiency and drama of the US skyscrapers, many European architects have been building their new apartment and office structures up to 20 stories high. [...] At first glance, this “baby skyscrapers” look like typical North or South American structures”.

In the journal *BuW* is similarly possible to find rather naive and simplistic articles, such as: “Eine Reise in die USA”²⁴, which portrays a journey to New York, Pittsburg and Detroit of the French architect Raymond Lopez, who describes his impressions about these cities and their new skyscrapers; or “Brief aus New York”²⁵, a letter with a list of enthusiastic considerations on New York City and, by the same author, “Brief aus Amerika”²⁶ another letter which briefly illustrates the use of laminated wood in American architecture. But these are only sporadic episodes, and the journal usually addresses the topic with a more detailed approach. For example, articles like “Neue Tendenzen im amerikanischen Städtebau”²⁷ offers a comparative description of the differences between Europe and America about the renewal of city centers. The article considers the two case studies of Chicago and Detroit as positive experiences from which Europe could learn.

Urban Planning is definitely a crucial theme. In the article “Großstädtische Planungsaufgabe”²⁸, after some general considerations, Ludwig Hilberseimer²⁹ describes his work for the city of Detroit and in particular the Plan for the South Side, the ‘Gratiot Redevelopment Project’ and the ‘Hyde Park Project’. On the same issue, the article “Verkehrter Verkehr”³⁰

22. Hans Frommhold, “Bauen in Amerika. Die Kleine Welt - Die USA - Die Großstädte - Die Wolkenkratzer”, *DBZ*, Heft 3 (1953): 15-21.

23. “Europe Emulates American Skyscrapers”, *Architectural Forum* (December 1951): 203.

24. Raymond Lopez, “Eine Reise in die USA”, *BuW*, Heft 7 (1957): 381-383.

25. W. Schweisheimer, “Brief aus New York”, *BuW*, Heft 3 (1958): 160-62.

26. W. Schweisheimer, “Brief aus Amerika”, *BuW*, Heft 8 (1959): 456-457.

27. “Neue Tendenzen im amerikanischen Städtebau”, *BuW*, Heft 7 (1955): 404-410.

28. Ludwig Hilberseimer, “Großstädtische Planungsaufgabe”, *BuW*, Heft 1 (1957): 13-18.

29. Ludwig Hilberseimer, one of the most influential figures of modern architecture and urban planning in the Twenties, author of numerous publications and professor at the Bauhaus, emigrated in the United States in 1938, where he became, thanks to his connection with Mies van der Rohe, a professor at the Illinois Institute of Technology and then director of the Department of City and Regional Planning. On the American production of Hilberseimer, see Francesca Scotti, *Ludwig Hilberseimer. Lo sviluppo di un’idea di città: il periodo americano* (Milano: Libraccio, 2008).

30. Martin Wagner, “Verkehrter Verkehr”, *BuW*, Heft 1 (1957): 48-51.

by Martin Wagner³¹ illustrates what Europe can learn from the USA about the increasing traffic issues, a topic which is further developed in "Verkehr und Stadt"³². The article traces a history of the role of transportation in shaping the cities. A large number of examples from the USA are here described to highlight the impact of the increasing use of automobiles on the cities.

The two authors, Ludwig Hilberseimer and Martin Wagner, are both German architects who spent the second half of their careers in the United States, but, unlike other figures who belonged to this group of emigrated architects, such as Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe or Richard Neutra, their American production has been less influential with respect to the German one. Nevertheless, they can be considered as Key figures, who acted as transatlantic bridges: in fact, their positions on urban planning radically changed after their arrival in the US. The redefinition of their research horizons started from dealing with traffic issues and with a profit-oriented urbanization: "The cities of our industrial age have not yet found the pattern adequate to their potentialities, according to their function and technological development. [...] The very forces which made those cities grow seem to be now working toward their destruction"³³. Presenting problems as starting points for improvements is in line with the approach of *BuW*, which offered them his pages as fertile ground for discussion.

Shifting from the urban to architectural scale is important to mention that the journal hosted one of the most intense debates, later denominated 'the Bauhaus debate', which started from an article by Rudolf Schwarz³⁴ on Functionalism in architecture and stimulated a number of reactions published in and outside the journal³⁵.

The energetic and fruitful environment of *BuW*, as well as its propensity to value even critical opinions, is fostered by many articles, like "Amerikanische Architektur unter den Zeichenstift genommen von Saul Steinberg"³⁶. A selection of Steinberg drawings is presented by an introduction that explains how architecture is usually portrayed by words and photographs, highlighting only the positive features of the building and avoiding mentioning any critical issue. On this regard Steinberg's sketches, drawn as a reaction to the MoMa exhibition *Built in USA*³⁷, are prized for their sharp and provocative meaning.

Another unusual way chosen to portray US architecture is the one of the monographic issue *BuW* Heft 7 1953, which is entirely dedicated to the American architect Bruce Goff. In the editorial introduction, *Anmerkungen zur Zeit*, Ulrich Conrads explains that the decision to dedicate the whole issue to this particular architect should be considered as a response to the position of Joseph A. Barry, who described 'a war between Europe and America' in two articles published on an American journal two

31. Martin Wagner, chief planner of Berlin in the Twenties, emigrated in the United States in 1938, where he remained until his death in 1957. In the US he became professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design thanks to his connection with Walter Gropius, but, lacking built work, his American production remained mainly theoretical. On the profound changes of Wagner's approach on urban planning after his American exile, see Álvaro Sevilla-Buitrago, "Martin Wagner in America: planning and the political economy of capitalist urbanization", *Planning Perspectives*, 32, n. 4 (2017): 481–502.

32. Kurt Leibbrand, "Verkehr und Stadt", *BuW*, Heft 7 (1957): 406-413.

33. Ludwig Hilberseimer, *The Nature of Cities: Origin, Growth, and Decline. Pattern and Form. Planning Problems* (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1955), 13-14.

34. Rudolf Schwarz, "Bilde Künstler, rede nicht", *BuW*, Heft 1 (1953): 9-17.

35. On the debate launched by Schwarz, see: Ulrich Conrads, Magdalena Droste, Winfried Nerdinger and Peter Neitzke, *Die Bauhaus-Debatte 1953. Dokumente einer verdrängten Kontroverse* (Braunschweig, Wiesbaden: Vieweg, 1994); Paul Betts, "Die Bauhaus-Legende: Amerikanisch-Deutsches Joint Venture des Kalten Krieges," in Alf Lütke, Inge Marslock, and Adelheid von Saldern, eds., *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), 271-4; Christian Borngäber, *Stil Novo. Design in den 50er Jahren. Phantasie und Phantastik* (Frankfurt: Dieter Fricke, 1979), 23-4; Joachim Petsch, "Die Bauhausrezeption in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in den fünfziger Jahren", *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Architektur und Bauwesen Weimar*, 26, Heft 4/5 (1979): 433-437.

36. Wolfgang Clasen, "Amerikanische Architektur unter den Zeichenstift genommen von Saul Steinberg", *BuW*, Heft 6 (1953): 316-321.

37. Originally published in Saul Steinberg, "Built in USA. Postwar Architecture 1945-1952", *ArtNews*, 51 (February 1953): 16-19.

months earlier³⁸. Barry accused the architects of the international style - referring to Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier in particular - of aggressively imposing their own aesthetic principles without taking into account the specificities of the different places. He invites the other modern architects to stand up against this 'dictature': on this regard Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture is indicated as the alternative to follow, as the true American national style. By dedicating this issue to Goff, *BuW* editorial board wishes that architecture will no longer be praised or attacked according to any kind of *Blut un Boden* feeling, or because it is 'miesian' or 'wrightian', but for its actual features. Conrad explains that there isn't any war between the two extreme positions of the so-called 'international style' and a hypothetical 'national anti-style': good architecture has probably to be found in a 'third position', far from any dogmatic approach. The selected works by Goff, - this is the first collection of Goff's projects, as pointed out in a letter written by the author himself, where he explains to be very proud to see that the first large publication on his work was published in Germany³⁹ except for some religious building, mostly portrays examples of organic housing.

Another very peculiar point of view on American architecture is offered by the article "Das Geld des Lebensversicherungsgesellschaften baut amerikanische Städte"⁴⁰, where it is claimed that there is no other kind of actor that, thanks to the investment of private capital, had a greater influence on the appearance of American cities as much as insurance companies. In fact, the boom in the American construction industry after the Second World War was mostly financed by insurance companies, which injected huge amounts of money into the real estate market. It is not only their role in operations of building speculation, but also the architecture of their own office buildings, often of great quality, such as the Phoenix Life Insurance Company in Hartford (Conn.) by Harrison & Abramovitz, that occupy a prominent place in shaping the skyline of American cities.

The role of the architect

In both *BuW* and *BM* is possible to observe a profound interest in the US bureaucratic apparatus, concerning not only the building practice but also the figure of the architect himself. In *BM* a large number of articles was published on this topic, especially at the beginning of the Fifties. For instance, "In Amerika gibt es keine Bau-Bürokratie!"⁴¹ offers an overview of the weaknesses in the law system that regulates American architecture: too outdated and backward-looking in some cases and too detailed and arbitrarily diversified from city to city in others, it is conceived as an obstacle instead of an helpful tool. Next to this kind of undetailed and almost provocative texts, in the same journal it is not rare to find articles that offer comparisons of countries, like "Die Ausübung des

38. Joseph A. Barry, "The Trend to Enrichment", *House Beautiful*, 95 (May 1953): 134-138; Joseph A. Barry, "Report on the Battle Between Good and Bad Modern Houses", *House Beautiful*, 95, (May 1953): 270.

39. Bruce Goff, "Brief an meine deutschen Freunde", *BuW*, Heft 7 (1953): 333.

40. "Das Geld des Lebensversicherungsgesellschaften baut amerikanische Städte", *BuW*, Heft 4 (1962): 214-216.

41. "In Amerika gibt es keine Bau-Bürokratie!", *BM*, Heft 2 (1950): 102.

Architekten-Berufs in den USA, England und Frankreich"⁴², which compares the different models and paths to get the title of architect in England, the United States and France. The same comparative approach is used in "Die ethischen Grundlagen des Architektenstandes"⁴³, in which the analyzed countries are England, USA and Germany and the focus is on the role and the duties of the architect in the society, according to the different law systems. In these cases, the tone is more neutral and the goal is just to give an idea of different approaches, rather than to express any judgement.

An article published the following decade in *BuW*, "Über die Ausbildung von Architekten in Nordamerika"⁴⁴, reveals again the totally different approach of this journal: by exploring the American model, the intention is to open a debate on how to educate architecture students. The article begins by tracing a history of the education of architects in Europe, starting from the Middle Ages and proceeding until the affirmation of study journeys, which in the Twentieth Century began to have the United States as one of the most preferred destinations. The second part is mostly dedicated to the analysis of the American schools' system, explaining every detail, from the structure of a typical study plan, to the requirements to become professor. The author gives a very accurate description, highlighting both the strengths and the gaps of the US system.

Shifting from education to the actual practice, *BM* published in 1957 a very dense article, "Planen und Bauen in USA"⁴⁵ written by W. Henn, professor at the University of Braunschweig, back from a long journey in the United States. The main thesis of the article is that, what allows American architects to shape their 'extraordinary buildings admired all over the world', is the technical organization of their design firms. The work group, in fact, is not only composed by architects, but also by structural engineers, who are experts in reinforced concrete or steel constructions, heating engineers and other kind of specialists, all gathered 'under the same roof'. For example, Albert Kahn studio counts more than 320 employees and is even possible to find some, whose staff exceed 500 units. This variegated structure in terms of competences, combined with a massive use of electronic calculators, allows American architects to manage extremely complex projects. Moreover, their firms are able to assemble, year after year, a sort of catalogue of already-tested construction details that can be reused, fastening the design process and allowing the saved time to be reinvested on new technological solutions, or on other kind of improvements. According to Henn, this scientific organization, however, often affects the architectural quality of the project. The text focuses then on other topics, such as the industrial architecture, characterized by large buildings on one level, completely artificially illuminated and ventilated, or residential architecture, where the dream of a single-family house is addressed with new neighborhoods entirely composed by poor-quality

42. "Die Ausübung des Architekten-Berufs in den USA, England und Frankreich", *BM*, Heft 4 (1950): 228-230.

43. Bernhard Gaber, "Die ethischen Grundlagen des Architektenstandes", *BM*, Heft 6 (1950): 390-392.

44. Article published in two parts: "Über die Ausbildung von Architekten in Nordamerika", *BuW*, Heft 5 (1961): 248-250 and *BuW*, Heft 6 (1961): 352-344.

45. Article published in three parts: Walter Henn, "Planen und Bauen in USA", *BM*, Heft 1 (1957): 33-35, *BM*, Heft 2 (1957): 98-99 and *BM*, Heft 3 (1957): 174-178.

prefabricated houses. Nevertheless, Henn identifies in prefabrication the future of architecture and states that it is only a matter of time before Europe will adapt to the American model. The article concludes with a provocative statement: the consumer culture has taken hold so much in America that people not only frequently change their cars and homes, but even the New York's skyscrapers will soon show a new 'make-up', totally changing the image of the city.

The first part of the same text, the one showing the benefits of scientific organization in architectural bureaus, was also published in *BuW*, in an article entitled "Amerikanische Ingenieur- und Architekturbüros"⁴⁶. Both of these texts are fragments of a book⁴⁷ by the same author, which offers a very accurate survey on the US architectural firms, analyzing every detail, from their professional ethics to their insurance coverage.

BuW insists on the importance of teamwork presenting different practical examples as well. On this regard one issue published in 1957 is almost entirely dedicated to 'The Architects Collaborative'⁴⁸ and their works. The article describes the origins and the operating principles of TAC⁴⁹, the architectural team funded by Walter Gropius in 1945, although the focus is mostly on their work and on the different typologies of their buildings.

The article "Von der Zusammenarbeit eines Teams"⁵⁰, instead, analyses the topic from a different point of view. Starting from a single building, the General Life Insurance Company in Hartford Connecticut by S.O.M., the focus is not anymore just on the structure of one architectural firm, but portrays a discussion between the different actors involved in the construction process (G. Bunshaft as architect, F. B. Wilde as client, F. Knoll as interior designer and L. Beall as graphic designer)⁵¹.

Housing

A first specific reflection on US residential construction appears in *BM* with an article entitled "Wie wohnt der Amerikaner?"⁵², which gives an overview of the different types of houses, starting from a differentiation between modern buildings - widespread only in the big cities of the West Coast and North-East - and traditional buildings. The article highlights details such as the fact that most of traditional homes are furnished in 'the typical American kitsch taste' or that the chromatic range of the interiors totally differs from the European one and is directed towards strong and brilliant colors, while artificial light always prevails over the natural one. The article concludes by stating that, in general, American residential architecture is increasingly oriented towards modernity, according to two main strands: that of 'German style', so-called by Americans themselves, to be understood as the ideal continuation of the Bauhaus school, and the one driven by romantic slogans such as 'return to organic constructions' and 'nature is our model', introduced by Frank Lloyd Wright.

46. Walter Henn, "Amerikanische Ingenieur- und Architekturbüros", *BuW*, Heft 6 (1960): 332-334.

47. Walter Henn, *Aluminum in der Architektur der USA* (Düsseldorf: Aluminum Verlag, 1960).

48. "The Architects Collaborative", *BuW*, Heft 12 (1957): 683-713.

49. On the works of Gropius and TAC see Arnold Körte, *Begegnungen mit Walter Gropius in "The Architects Collaborative" TAC* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2019).

50. "Von der Zusammenarbeit eines Teams", *BuW*, Heft 7 (1959): 351-357.

51. The article is the translation of the one firstly published in the American journal *Industrial Design*: Wilde, Bunshaft, Knoll and Beall "The Team Approach: A Round-Table Discussion Reveals how Connecticut General Got Just What it Wanted from Designers", *Industrial Design*, 5 (September 1958): 48-57.

52. Brigitte D'Ortsey, "Wie wohnt der Amerikaner?", *Baumeister*, Heft 4 (1951): 252-254.

Frank Lloyd Wright is certainly the most recurring name among American architects in the pages of *BM* and he is always defined as the most important master overseas. For instance the article "Zwei Schüler von Frank Lloyd Wright bauen Einfamilienhäuser"⁵³, after presenting Wright as *Seniorchef*, describes the work of some students and the kind of 'primitive' architecture, with a very bare, but certainly not economic appearance, which emerges from the single-family house projects presented in the following pages. An overview of the master works appears on the occasion of his death in the article "Zum Tod von Frank Lloyd Wright"⁵⁴, while an entire article is dedicated to the "Guggenheim Museum, New York"⁵⁵, presented as one of the most important buildings of the Century.

Coming back to the theme of housing, the article "Amerika _ Unmodern"⁵⁶ illustrates the surprising number of colonial houses, with echoes ranging from the Georgian to the Palladian style, especially in the Southern states. A wide variety of examples is proposed in terms of place, dimensions and type, highlighting, the painted wood coating and the typical grid framed windows.

With the two articles "Neue amerikanische Gartenmöbel" and "Neue amerikanische Leichtmöbel"⁵⁷ *BM* finally highlights some positive features, namely the innovative American design for indoor and outdoor furniture. It is emphasized that the extremely functional design, respectively by Van Keppel-Green and Charles Eames, is able to adapt to the 'modern Kleinwohnung' with comfortable, light and economic and solutions, already introduced in the offices and now ready to penetrate even the living rooms and the outdoor spaces.

American furniture is portrayed in *BuW* as well: "Amerikanische Serien- und Einzel Möbel"⁵⁸, focusing on Charles Eams and Eliel Saarinen, and "Amerikanischen Möbel"⁵⁹, inaugurate a long series of articles dedicated to Knoll International: "Knoll International. Ein Beitrag zum neuen Wohnstil"⁶⁰, "Farbe und Form als Mittel der Heilung"⁶¹, "Neues von Knoll"⁶² and "Creationen"⁶³. In an issue dedicated to schools and children facilities, moreover, an article on school furniture praise American examples for both classroom arrangements and design of desks and chairs.

Returning to housing, the *BuW* article "Siedlungs- und Wohnungsbau in den USA"⁶⁴ outlines the differences between the European and the American housing models, both in terms of urban arrangements and internal organization. The author is not only describing, but also trying to explain the reasons behind these different developments: for instance, in Europe there are mostly multiple-stories housing complexes, while in the US it is possible to find a great number of one-story houses because the new settlements are built further away from cities, thanks to a higher rate of motorization and a better traffic management. The role of the housewife is also a relevant factor in designing the new kind of American homes:

53. Rudolf Pfister, "Zwei Schüler von Frank Lloyd Wright bauen Einfamilienhäuser".

54. "Zum Tod von Frank Lloyd Wright", *BM*, Heft 6 (1959): 410-411.

55. "Guggenheim Museum, New York", *BM*, Heft 2 (1960): 98-100.

56. Matthä Schmölz, "Amerika _ Unmodern", *BM*, Heft 2 (1952): 101-104.

57. "Neue amerikanische Gartenmöbel" and "Neue amerikanische Leichtmöbel", *BM*, Heft 6 (1950): 374-376.

58. "Amerikanische Serien- und Einzel Möbel", *BuW*, Heft 1 (1949): 88-89.

59. "Amerikanischen Möbel", *BuW*, Heft 1 (1949): 90.

60. "Knoll International. Ein Beitrag zum neuen Wohnstil", *BuW*, Heft 3 (1956): 140-142.

61. "Farbe und Form als Mittel der Heilung. Aus der Einrichtung des M.D. Anderson Hospitals und Krebinstituts in Huston. Entwurf und Ausführung Planungsabteilung der Knoll Associates, Inc., New York", *BuW*, Heft 1 (1957): 44-45.

62. "Neues von Knoll", *BuW*, Heft 3 (1958): 152.

63. "Creationen", *BuW*, Heft 8 (1958): 456-458.

64. Fritz Jaspert, "Siedlungs- und Wohnungsbau in den USA", *BuW*, Heft 5 (1954): 293-301.

first of all, a one-story house is faster to clean; then, there is no more separation between the kitchen and the living room, so that she can watch over the children while cooking. The author's survey goes from the urban scale to the architectural detail and what he is describing are huge new peripheral settlements, like Holmes Run Acres and Levittown.

On the role of the housewife in the design of kitchens we can find another article, "Planung von Küchen für Wohn- und Ledigenheime"⁶⁵, which shows a number of possible solutions and arrangements, focusing again on the American model⁶⁶.

BuW also published different specific projects of American housing units, presented among other international examples in dedicated issues. The main protagonist in this case is Richard Neutra: in fact, *BuW* not only dedicated an entire issue to his work in 1955⁶⁷ and published many times his luxurious Californian houses⁶⁸, but also praised the approach of his architectural firm. In the article "Einige Innenräume"⁶⁹ many different projects are illustrated to demonstrate the advantages of designing every aspect of the project, from the structure of the building to customized furniture, without delegating anything to external specialized firms.

Shopping

Shopping centers proved to be one of the most representative typologies of American architecture even among the pages of *BM*, above all because of their discrepancy with respect to European models. The article "Neue Warenhaus-Architektur?"⁷⁰ reflects on the possible evolutions of commercial architecture. In particular, the author claims that in Germany, and generally in Europe, this typology of buildings tends to have a very thin structural grid in order to obtain the maximum glazed surfaces, which is functional to the display of goods. On the contrary, in America occurs the exact opposite phenomenon: almost inexistent openings and large walls that act as billboards, leaving to artificial lights and air-conditioning systems the task of offering comfortable spaces for shopping. The author also highlights some innovative parking solutions, such as the one in the Milliron's shopping center in Los Angeles by Gruen and Krummeck, located on the roof of the building.

The theme of advertising is again addressed in the article "Blick über den Zaun auf Geschäfts- und Ladenbauten"⁷¹, where, in addition to a series of images of American shops, there is a reflection on the fact that the advertising signs have interestingly transformed entire city fragments, otherwise anonymous and insignificant, especially at night. The article concludes by urging the architects in charge of designing a shop to deal in detail with its sign. The second part of the article, published in the subsequent issue, provides the description with formal and aesthetic suggestions, showing, in this case, European examples as well.

65. Karl-Heinz Schelling, "Planung von Küchen für Wohn- und Ledigenheime", *BuW*, Heft 5 (1956): 272-276.

66. On the diffusion of the American 'domestic landscape', see Beatriz Colomina, *Domesticity at War* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007), Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) and Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann, eds., *Cold War Kitchen. Americanization, Technology, and European Users* (Cambridge, Mass./London: The MIT Press, 2009).

67. *BuW*, Heft 6 (1955).

68. See, for instance, Richard Neutra, "House Joseph Staller in Bel Air, Californien", *BuW*, Heft 9 (1957): 505-508.

69. "Einige Innenräume", *BuW*, Heft 7 (1959): 351-357.

70. Matthä Schmölz, "Neue Warenhaus-Architektur?", *BM*, Heft 8 (1951): 522-525.

71. Matthä Schmölz, "Blick über den Zaun auf Geschäfts- und Ladenbauten Baumeister", published in two parts: *BM*, Heft 7 (1952): 468-471 and Heft 8 (1952): 620-623.

In an article dedicated to "Westmount Shopper's Park"⁷² *BM* published a detailed description of what is a 'regional shopping center'. This typology is presented as a decisive turning point for traffic congestion problems in city centers, offering a safe and easily accessible place, equipped with services and parking lots. The text deals with the fact that this new way of shopping, together with the invention of refrigerators, has radically changed the life of the American housewife, who is now shopping only once a week. The description then moves on to the specific building of Westmount Park, a center designed for 75 thousand inhabitants, which contains a bank, a hairdresser, a restaurant and a laundry, in addition to 42 shops. On the other side of the car park there are also a theater, a restaurant, a library and a polyclinic. The article concludes with other general considerations, such as the description of the project phases and the actors involved in the construction of the building.

72. "Westmount Shopper's Park", *BM*, Heft 1 (1959): 2-5.

BuW addressed the same theme in the article "Roosevelt Field – ein regionales Zentrum im New Yorker Umland"⁷³, where the authors explain the planning activities behind the construction of a regional shopping center, showing how it is connected to the surrounding cities and how its dimension are determined by studying distances and potential customers. The focus is on the roles of both the public and private actors of the decision-making process.

73. Harold L. Wattel and Rita D. Kaunitz, "Roosevelt Field – ein regionales Zentrum im New Yorker Umland", *BuW*, Heft 9 (1959): 500-508.

Office Towers

High rise is certainly one of the most representative themes related to the imagery of American architecture. *BM* confronts the topic with articles like "Bürohochhaus 666, Fifth Avenue New York"⁷⁴, which illustrates that there are two types of office towers: those commissioned by a single company, which invests in the architectural quality of every single detail to convey the idea of opulence and power, and those built to be rented, where every wasted square centimeter means less income for the owner. The tower presented here, designed by Carson and Lundin, belongs to the second category, and from the drawings it is possible to perceive how the aim of the project is to exploit all the available surfaces. In fact, the vertical elements, from the internal layout to the partition walls and the external cladding, have to be as thinner as possible in order to gain more floor area.

74. "Bürohochhaus 666, Fifth Avenue New York", *BM*, Heft 5 (1958): 321-323.

A greater attention is given to the construction technologies related to skyscrapers. For instance, the article "Entwicklungen im Stahlskelettbau"⁷⁵ proposes a history of tall buildings that, starting from the Chicago school, traces the development of steel framed structures. "Stahl im Bauwesen der USA"⁷⁶ narrows the focus on contemporary American buildings. The article analyzes some of the reasons of the success of this structural solution in the United States and not in Germany, including the lower costs of

75. "Entwicklungen im Stahlskelettbau", *BM*, Heft 4 (1957): 214-216.

76. "Stahl im Bauwesen der USA", *BM*, Heft 4 (1957): 217-222.

oil and electricity for heating, as well as differences in terms of climate and urban fabric. The article also reviews some technological innovations related to this typology, such as the 'Curtain Wall' and the 'Q-Floor'.

Concerning the materials, *BuW* offers instead an in-depth view on the use of aluminum, not only in high rise buildings. The article "Aluminium in Amerikanische Bauwesen"⁷⁷ explains how aluminum is one of the most used materials in the American construction industry, especially in warehouses and industrial complexes, but also in office buildings, such as the 666-Fifth Avenue and the Thisman-Bürohochhaus. This material is used in prefabricated houses as well: in the 'Viking Houses', produced by the National Homes Corporation, it is the main material for walls and roof. In 1959 this company produced about 24 thousand prefabricated aluminum houses, whose price could range from 8750 to 20 thousand dollars, with surfaces up to 1700 square meters.

"Der Baustoff Aluminium und seine Legierungen"⁷⁸ addresses again the different possible uses of this material, from claddings to structures. The article aim is to give an overview of the most innovative technological solutions and, beyond some examples from Germany, England and France, most of the presented buildings are from USA.

BuW attention to specific material and innovative technological solution is also to be found in the article "Ein Konstruktionssystem für Hallenbauten"⁷⁹, dedicated to the reticular steel system employed in the construction of light coverings in hangars, a technology, developed by Konrad Wachsmann⁸⁰ for the IIT Chicago.

Concerning the office typology, *BuW* portrays different case studies, but in an issue dedicated to this topic the only American office tower is the Seagram Building⁸¹. Mies van der Rohe is one of the main protagonists of the American architecture presented by the journal, which published an entire issue⁸² and several other articles⁸³ dedicated to his work.

Among the articles on individual buildings the "N. 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza"⁸⁴ by S.O.M. is described as the main example of the new typical towers with a structural steel frame, which redesigned the New York skyline. Nevertheless, the most interesting contribution about the office tower typology is "Vergleichende Betrachtung deutscher und ausländischer Beispiele"⁸⁵, which compares three towers, the Mannesman Hochhaus in Düsseldorf, the Grattacielo Pirelli in Milan and the Inland Steel Tower in Chicago, with particular attention to the technical aspects. The focus is on the different structures, not only in terms of materials and technologies but also of their behavior under wind loads.

77. W. Schweisheimer, "Aluminium in Amerikanische Bauwesen", *BuW*, Heft 5 (1960): 285.

78. Karl-Heinz Schelling, "Der Baustoff Aluminium und seine Legierungen", *BuW*, Heft 6 (1956): 326-335.

79. Konrad Wachsmann, "Ein Konstruktionssystem für Hallenbauten", *BuW*, Heft 9 (1954): 549-562.

80. On Konrad Wachsmann, another German emigrated architect famous for his pioneering works on prefabrication, see, among others: Marianne Burkhalter and Christian Sumi, eds., *Konrad Wachsmann and the Grapevine Structure* (Zürich: Park Books, 2018); Dietmar Strauch and Bärbel Högner, *Konrad Wachsmann: Stationen eines Architekten* (Edition Progris, 2013).

81. "Das Seagram-Gebäude in New York", *BuW*, Heft 10 (1960): 543-545.

82. "Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Bauten und Entwürfe 1911-1948", *BuW*, Heft 3 (1949): 10-40, composed by four articles: Philipp Johnson, "Leben, Entwicklung und Werk": 12-15; Louis Schoberth, "Wirkung gegen die Zeit": 16-24; Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, "Einige Aphorismen über Architektur und Form": 25-30; "Das Technologische Institut Chicago": 31-40.

83. Werner Blaser "Mies van der Rohe, Chicago 1938-1956. Stahl- und Glas-Architektur", *BuW*, Heft 1 (1957): 19-25.

84. "N. 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza", *BuW*, Heft 1 (1962): 30-36.

85. "Vergleichende Betrachtung deutscher und ausländischer Beispiele", Heft 4 (1957): 202-208.

Industry, Services and Hotels

Although the design of industrial plants does not play a privileged role among the American typologies presented in *BM*, it is the subject of some extremely positive articles. For example, in "General Electric Company Schenectady, New York. New Turbine Building"⁸⁶ the new plant designed by the Stone and Webster Engineering Corporation, is described as representative of the 'typical American industrial typology', developed on a single level and whose main features are: artificial lighting and air-conditioning systems, due the impossibility of having natural light and ventilation in such large spaces; parking lots for employees with a surface equal to that of the plant itself; administrative buildings placed in multiple-story buildings.

Saarinen's "General Motors Technical Center"⁸⁷ is instead described as a model of technical perfection on the one hand, and of great architectural quality on the other; while the article "Ausbesserungswerk für Eisenbahnwaggons in Louisiana"⁸⁸ praises the coverage of a wagon repair plant, considered the evolution of Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome.

On *BuW* the first article addressing a theme slightly related to industrial architecture is "Besuch in dem Aromstadt Oak Ridge"⁸⁹. The 'Oak Ridge atomic city' was built in 1942 as a secret settlement to accommodate the scientists and military experts working on the development of the atomic bomb and the article describes it in detail. Accessible from 1949, the site was still surveilled by the police in 1954, although it was completely updated with every service and facility (shops, restaurants, school, cinema, etc.), necessary to turn it into a 'normal' city. The atomic-related architecture is again addressed in 1959⁹⁰, when an article highlights the differences between nuclear plants in England (Hinkley Point, Calder Hall, Hunterston and Chapelcross)⁹¹ and in the USA (Dresden and Schippingport)⁹².

Concerning common industrial architecture, it is possible to find articles like "Produktionsgebäude der Sawyer Biscuit Company in Melrose Park, St. Louis"⁹³, which praises the S.O.M. fabric for the 'Horizontalfluß-System' with internal rails, used to move the product throughout the production phases within the factory.

Regarding services there are no articles related to the American world in *BM*, except for a single text, entitled "Neue Schulhausbauten in Amerika und Europa"⁹⁴, which proposes two models of school buildings, one in Geneva and one in the rural town of Clarksville (Albany, New York), presented as extremely different examples, but both considered to be valuable lessons for German architecture. In one case it is a professional institution of a large city, built according to a consolidated and traditional functional scheme; in the other, instead, a very small school presented as positive example because the commonly considered ideal solution

86. "General Electric Company Schenectady, New York. New Turbine Building", *BM*, Heft 9 (1955): 590-91.

87. "General Motors Technical Center", *BM*, Heft 2 (1957): 65-73.

88. "Ausbesserungswerk für Eisenbahnwaggons in Louisiana", *BM*, Heft 10 (1959): 632-634.

89. W. Peiner, "Besuch in dem Aromstadt Oak Ridge", *BuW*, Heft 7/8 (1954): 389-392.

90. Karl-Heinz Schelling, "Probleme der Energiewirtschaft", *BuW*, Heft 11 (1959): 607-610.

91. "Atomkraftwerke in England", *BuW*, Heft 11 (1959): 611-616.

92. "Atomkraftwerke in den USA", *BuW*, Heft 11 (1959): 617-620.

93. "Produktionsgebäude der Sawyer Biscuit Company in Melrose Park, St. Louis", *BuW*, Heft 11 (1958): 626-629.

94. "Neue Schulhausbauten in Amerika und Europa".

of having big South-East openings is here replaced by the use of small North-facing windows.

In *BuW*, on the contrary, there are many examples of American schools⁹⁵, but it is in the hospital typology that the United States really appear as a benchmark. In an issue entirely dedicated to hospitals⁹⁶, several American examples⁹⁷ are presented. The attempt is to delineate the peculiarities of health care institutions, as well as propose strategies for correct planning, taking into consideration the most diverse aspects, from the urban scale to the details of designing operating rooms. The article "Vergleich den Beleuchtungsstandards in Krankenhäusern"⁹⁸, for instance, compares the lighting standards of the different kind of hospitals' rooms in terms of lux, in America and in Germany. The article concludes that American standards are higher than German ones, highlighting the fact that the United States are not just taken into account as a term of comparison, but also represents an ideal to be followed. *BuW* also covers other kind of services, like museums⁹⁹ and airports¹⁰⁰, but no remarkable American feature is described in the articles.

Shifting to accommodation facilities, *BM* attention is given to the category of motels¹⁰¹, where the American model is considered the most advanced in terms of rooms aggregation schemes, distribution, pedestrian and car accesses, parking lots and rooms' design. Hotels, on the other hand, are only portrayed by a single design example, the "Hilton Hotel, Istanbul"¹⁰² by S.O.M., praised for its absolute modernity, which does not renounce the Turkish national roots, becoming a model of perfect balance between the two polarities.

BuW didn't publish any specific article on the features of American hotels, although it is possible to find some case studies¹⁰³ presented among others. Nevertheless, *BuW* is interested in the American model for a completely different typology: that of embassy buildings. The article "Von der Rapresentation des Staates"¹⁰⁴ introduces the general topic, but particular attention is given to US examples¹⁰⁵: the article "'New Look' diplomatischer Missionen der USA"¹⁰⁶ praise some new American buildings (Eero Saarinen in London and Gropius with *TAC* in Athen¹⁰⁷) as architectures that were inspired by the *genius loci*, but they didn't bend to it, maintaining their modern features.

News

Another interesting portrait of the United States emerges from the *Notizen und Nachrichten* section, composed by short announcements of few lines, placed at the end of each issue. Paradoxically, the attention on the United States in this section is much higher in *BM* than in *BuW*.

95. See *BuW*, Heft 12 (1957); Heft 1 (1961); Heft 9 (1962).

96. *BuW*, Heft 4 (1956).

97. Geogr Kohler, "Untersuchungen uber den Krankenhausbau", *BuW*, 4 (1956): 190-203. Hospital in Canton (New York) by S.O.M. and R. Cutler: 193; Hospital in Greenwich (Connecticut) by S.O.M., R. Cutler and G. Bunshaft: 194; Veteran's hospital in Brooklyn by S.O.M. and G. Bunshaft: 195; Mayo-Clinic in Rochester (Minnesota) by Ellerba & Co.: 199. Kaiser Foundation Medical Center in Walnut Creek, California By C. Mayhew, C. J. Sly, G. M. Simonson, W. L. Olds and S. R. Garfield.

98. "Vergleich den Beleuchtungsstandards in Krankenhusern", *BuW*, Heft 4 (1956): 216.

99. Philip Johnson, "Das neue Museum fur das Munson William Proctor Institute", *BuW*, Heft 6 (1958): 306-307.

100. "Der Internationale Flughafen Idlewild Bei New York", *BuW*, Heft 2 (1962): 88-90.

101. "Motels", *BM*, Heft 4 (1957): 41-48.

102. "Hilton Hotel, Istanbul", *BM*, Heft 8 (1956): 535-541.

103. Ludwig Schweisheimer, "Luxus Hotelbauten in Miami", *BuW*, Heft 9 (1960): 520.

104. Hartmut Rebitzki, "Von der Rapresentation des Staates", *BuW*, Heft 6 (1959): 303-307.

105. US Embassy in Accra (Ghana) by Harry Weese & Associates, US Embassy in New Dehli by Edward Durrell Stone and US Embassy in Karachi (Pakistan) by Richard Neutra.

106. "'New Look' diplomatischer Missionen der USA", *BuW*, Heft 6 (1959): 313-322.

107. previously published in *BuW*, Heft 12 (1957).

The news deal with a huge variety of different topics, as showed in the examples below. For instance “Amerikanische Versandwohnhäuser zum Selbstbauen”¹⁰⁸, literally ‘American shipped-houses for self-construction’, addresses the theme of prefabrication: thanks to the Superior Homes company, with 2500 dollars it is possible to receive the material necessary to build a five-room wooden house and, with the addition of only 50 cents, a manual with the plans of 21 houses and 38 room combinations. A sarcastic editorial comment follows: “Peferct! Finally, here we are! The money to pay the architect will now be spared; because for 25 cents he could never deliver 38 combinations of houses.”

108. “Amerikanische Versandwohnhäuser zum Selbstbauen”, *BM*, Heft 8 (1950): 543.

It is also possible to find a series of announcement addressing the theme of Americanization, such as: “Amerikanische Gelder für Flüchtlingswohnungsbau”¹⁰⁹, which notifies the allocation of funds from the Ford foundation for the construction of housing for refugees from the Soviet occupation zone; and “Bauhilfe durch das amerikanische Flüchtlingshilfsprogramm”¹¹⁰, in which it is stated that 300 thousand dollars have already been allocated to provide shelter to the refugees from East Germany and that the American Foreign Aid Office (Amerikanische Amt für Auslandshilfe) will provide additional 380 million Marks for direct and indirect support measures.

109. “Amerikanische Gelder für Flüchtlingswohnungsbau”, *BM*, Heft 3 (1953): 194.

110. “Bauhilfe durch das amerikanische Flüchtlingshilfsprogramm”, *BM*, Heft 5 (1955): 326.

Another common kind of announcements regards study journeys to the United States: for instance, “Studienreise nach dem USA”¹¹¹, which indicates that the Office for International Professional and Study Travels of Tübingen (Büro für internationale Fach- und Studienreisen) organizes for the third time a trip to the United States for architects and engineers, aimed at visiting the most important buildings of modern American architecture, as well as four leading universities; moreover, while visiting different construction sites, it will be possible to gather information on the construction technologies adopted in the United States. The same office published a full-page announcement on *BuW* as well.¹¹²

111. “Studienreise nach dem USA”, *BM*, Heft 8 (1955): 548.

112. “Studienreise”, *BuW*, Heft 9 (1954): 579.

One of the most widely spread kind of announcements are on the achievement of records. For example, “Das höchste Gebäude der Welt”¹¹³, where it is proclaimed that the tallest building of the world, the Empire State Building, will be replaced by a 486 meters high 80-story tower, built by the New York Central Railway System Society; or “Den nördlichste Hotel der Erde”¹¹⁴, which declares that the northernmost hotel on earth will be built by the Danish state in Søndre Stømfjord, on the West Coast of Greenland, as an airport stopover on the airline connecting Copenhagen to Los Angeles; and “Ein neues Höchsthaus”¹¹⁵, stating that in the city of St. Louis, whose tallest buildings are of maximum five stories, a tower of 120 floors with 18 floors of underground garage will be built at an estimate price of 200 thousand dollars.

113. “Das höchste Gebäude der Welt”, *BM*, Heft 11 (1954): 751.

114. “Den nördlichste Hotel der Erde”, *BM*, Heft 11 (1954): 750.

115. “Ein neues Höchsthaus”, *BM*, Heft 6 (1956): 426.

Finally, is not rare to find different kind of announcements strictly related to architecture, for instance “Amerikanische Bauprojekte”¹¹⁶, which reports a list of a great American building sites: the construction, in Boston, of a Motel and Hotel with the largest underground car park in the world; the demolition of the “Chinese Wall of Philadelphia”, a “horrible elevated railway”, in order to build a Penn Center, with shops and hotel rooms for the worth of 100 million dollars; the construction, in New York, of two new skyscrapers facing Central Park; and the construction of two new neighborhoods in Washington and Chicago.

Most of the news clearly reflects the topics analyzed above, like “Amerika baut gläserne Schulen”¹¹⁷ which informs of the construction of a school with entirely glazed classrooms in New Orleans; or “Auch in USA: Vermehrtes Interesse am Ziegelbau”¹¹⁸, which illustrates that even in America, as in the Federal Republic of Germany, the number of brick buildings is growing, as demonstrated by the 30% increase in their production in the first half of 1950, compared to the previous year; and “Baustatistik in the USA”¹¹⁹, which reveals that 10 million housing units have been built since the end of the war in the United States, housing 35-40 million people and employing one million workers. On the same topic “Amerikanischer Wohnungsbau”¹²⁰ states that 1.35 million housing units were built in 1959, according to a survey conducted by interviewing entrepreneurs from 35 different countries: this growth in the residential sector is to be explained as a result of the economic boom and of the ease in obtaining mortgages. Likewise, the following announcement, entitled “In den USA”, affirms that the 60% of American families live in single-family homes, whereas in 1940 only the 43% could afford it.

Conclusions

The image of the United States that emerges from the study of *BM* mirrors the editorial slant, showing a certain aversion against the modernist aesthetic. However, even this journal could not avoid participating in the debate on US models, which certainly represents one of the essential themes in the early years of the Cold War. Despite the general propension to highlight the critical features of the examined aspects, there is no lack of texts with an informative tone, when not even enthusiastic. The major criticisms are on the ineffectiveness of traffic management, the diffusion of a consumer culture and the sacrifice of the architectural quality in favor of an excessive prefabrication, especially in housing. The organization of American architectural bureaus, instead, is perceived as a positive model, although, in some cases, an excessive technicization is brought into question.

On the other hand, *BuW* offered a much closer and variegated look on US architecture, without presenting it neither as a model, nor as

116. “Amerikanische Bauprojekte”, *BM*, Heft 7 (1954): 471.

117. “Amerika baut gläserne Schulen”, *BM*, Heft 2 (1959): 111.

118. “Auch in USA: Vermehrtes Interesse am Ziegelbau”, *BM*, Heft 11 (1950): 754.

119. “Baustatistik in the USA”, *BM*, Heft 9 (1955): 710.

120. “Amerikanischer Wohnungsbau”, *BM*, Heft 11 (1959): 752.

something to reject: this journal gave space to multiple visions and always sustained the importance of confrontations, instead of following a pre-fixed idea or imposing a univocal position.

In both journals, however, it is possible to detect a major attention to certain typologies, which emerged as specifically representative of the American architecture: the skyscraper and the shopping mall are on the top of the list, but housing is also a highly investigated topic. Industrial buildings, hospitals and schools have been deeply explored as well, while other kinds of facilities are just sporadically addressed. Aluminum and structural steel are confirmed to be the most emblematic materials of the contemporary American context.

The awareness of the cultural debt that the American architectural culture owes to European models emerges in various texts in both journals, however they acknowledge the development of a technical advancement and of a new formal language, directly ascribable to the United States.

Although starting from the same premises, *BM* constantly stresses out a trait of 'otherness' and clear distinction between the architectural imaginaries of the two shores of the Atlantic: America is considered as a remote and foreign entity. In addition, the tendency to express personal opinions rather than attempting to provide an objective and complete description, can be considered as a sort of declaration of intents, intentionally and directly aimed to contrast the penetration of American models. In this sense, *BM* is extremely refractory to the phenomenon of Americanism, which is openly discussed in some articles¹²¹. Rare to be found are the traces of Americanization, just mentioned in the announcements section.

121. See note 14 of the present article.

BuW, on the other hand, reveals a profoundly different attitude, in which is possible to detect some traces of the rising global culture. The America of this journal is much closer to Europe. Since the early Fifties it is possible to notice an attitude of openness and curiosity towards the United States, that are even physically 'closer'¹²², thanks to the great strides of the transportation industry. Emblematical on this regard is the fact that in *BuW* monographic issues on a certain topic the American examples are often present in an equivalent number to the ones of other European Countries.

122. This perception is clearly expressed in "Die Kleine Welt", see note 12 of the present article.

In conclusion, despite the different attitudes of the two journals, it is possible to identify an undeniable penetration of the United States in the German architectural debate of the Fifties. Either if considered as an influential model or a neutral term of comparison, or even a threat to fight, overseas architecture actually played a crucial role in the most heterogeneous architectural circles of the post-war Germany.