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**Workers' Welfare Centres**

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by *Alfred Roth*

The need to provide the workers with social amenities is of long standing, but it is more acute today than ever before, whether a complete centre is required or only one particular amenity such as a refectory, a canteen or a crèche. These workers' welfare centres must be constructed in such a way that they can answer different purposes; here we shall deal only with those whose realization involves various types of architecture. Apart from canteens and refectories a welfare centre will house other amenities such as for instance reading and lecture rooms. It may also contain crèches for the young children of women workers, a facility that is of the greatest importance from the human and from the social point of view as also from that of the working capacity of the mothers, which is greatly increased when they are relieved of this anxiety. Another point is that industrial accidents legislation makes compulsory the provision of first-aid posts that in the bigger businesses may be extended to include a medical service and an infirmary. And finally we must note facilities for baths and showers and sports grounds. Whilst pointing out these functional considerations relating to industrial social amenities we shall also state certain general principles governing their architecture and form. If it is natural and desirable that workers' social amenities should be as near as possible to nature in order to break away from the barrack conditions of modern labour, it is on the other hand unfortunate that some have thought to fulfil this purpose of psychological relaxation by constructing certain social institutions of this kind in a pseudo-rustic style. In actual fact a workers' welfare centre built today should be conceived in the architectural idiom of our times. That is the only condition under which it is possible to produce results of genuine value in this domain as well as in others.

**Some Examples of Industrial Welfare Centres 141-160**

1. Electrical apparatus factory, Horgen. Refectory for 80 to 100 workers and staff, with self-service buffet. Arch. H. Fischli; wooden skeleton; kitchen and cloakroom with solid walls. 2. Welfare centre of Therma S. A. Schwanden. Arch. H. Leuzinger. The buildings constructed to serve a maximum of 430 lunches, also provide tea and coffee and may be used for courses, lectures and meetings. Masonry, reinforced concrete, wood. 3. Crèche at the firm of Lindt & Sprüngli S. A. Kilchberg. Robert Winkler arch. For 30 to 40 workers' children (some children may spend the night there); reinforced cement and wood. 4. Welfare centre of the machines factory of Escher-Wyß, Zürich (under construction); unit of a whole of which the main part will be an administrative building. Cloakroom, refectory for workers (service staff), refectory for employees, library and social service, roof terrace. Reinforced concrete, yellow brick walls. 5. The "green factory" of the chemical products firm Maag, Dielsdorf, arch. Debrunner and Blankart; this manure factory has successfully effected an ideal synthesis of the constructive elements and nature. Numerous plantations enable the workers to observe the results of the manures they have produced. 6. Spinning-mill at Tenay, near Lyon, arch. Suter and Suter, rebuilt after having been war-damaged; "shell construction" in reinforced concrete, coated in aluminium sheets. 7. Workers' welfare centre of the firm of Bührlé & Co Oerlikon, Machine-Tool factory, 4 self-service refectories, assembly room, showers, workers' homes, in reinforced concrete, masonry, wood.

**The Frescoes in the Oerlikon Machines Factory's Welfare Centre**

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by *Heinz Keller*

The Oerlikon machines factory has, to a greater extent than any other undertaking in Switzerland, taken advantage of the fine arts to add beauty to – or rather to add the human touch to its offices and welfare centre. The centre's four dining rooms contain frescoes which have been completed

in three of the rooms. The main aim was to paint frescoes that had a refreshing effect on the workers; therefore technical subjects were to be avoided. Ernst Georg Rüegg has taken inspiration from country life as has Walter Clénin also, whilst Karl Hügin has treated symbolical themes and Max Truninger has painted the town and the country and also a group of musicians. To the north of the Alps combinations of frescoes are not often to be found, and the principal formal problem to be solved was how to avoid excess in the monumental, which does not harmonize with the simple movements of daily life. Perhaps the frescoes of Hügin have been the least successful in avoiding this danger by reason of their symbolical subject and their "fresco buono" technique. The frescoes of M. Truninger, who belongs specifically to the "Zürich school", have something more intimate. Contrary to all expectations the size of the workers' dining rooms have facilitated the task for W. Clénin who has subdivided the surface to be painted, and for E. G. Rüegg, whose work may be signalled for a conscientious discretion in the use of colour.

**Unity in the work of art**

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by *Hans Purrmann*

Each of the old masters had his own "system" and form which were even crystallised in schools and in the collective work of studios. Our age, on the contrary, is distinguished by the fact that the modern artist must find a form for each production and has recourse to different forms. Thus Picasso in certain works uses Ingres' mode of expression whilst at the same time following Cézanne. After the anarchy of a low and formless naturalism modern art may be defined as the exploration of all mediums of expression and the search for unity in a work of art. In truth it may be said (Th. Hetzer) that the degeneracy of the big composition begins after Tiepolo. Yet Rubens' vision lives on in Delacroix, Velasquez' in Manet, Raphael's in Ingres (and Renoir is to Ingres as Titian is to Raphael). Unity in Rembrandt is the chiaroscuro, which is, as it were, transposed into greys in Corot. But as the 19th century progresses, the most popular painting becomes bogged in an insipid imitation of nature. The painters who tried to react were "cursed". Certain of them (Manet, Leibl) whilst trying to recapture their creative freedom, preserved what was effective in their canvases thanks to a tradition still to be learnt in the art galleries. A conscious effort towards restoring unity to art only appears with the compositions of Hodler and Rodin; both of them working more by "recomposing" the parts, a technique Maillou was to surpass. H. P. recalls from his personal acquaintance with Matisse the importance ascribed by the master to unity in a work of art, almost the only point of view that interested him and that dominates his own creations. But the real founder of unity in the modern sense is Cézanne, of whom one may say that he has given life to the highest form of painting, at once sensitive and supra-sensitive, that has ever been practised in Europe. A Picasso and a Matisse, each goes the same way in his own manner. (Is it necessary to say that Picasso shows us the way beyond Cézanne?) But the challenge answered by these masters may be fatal for others – may lead to a doctrinaire mannerism. If working according to nature is no longer to be our ideal we should nevertheless try not to forget that Cézanne insisted that our theories should be elaborated with our eyes on nature.

**Martin Lauterburg**

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M. L., son of a parson, was born in 1891 at Neuenegg near Bern. He took his maturité at Bern and in 1900 decided to become an artist, studying under Robert Engels at the Munich "Kunstgewerbeschule" until 1914. After a year in Switzerland (1914 to 1915) he returned to Munich until 1935. Showed works in numerous exhibitions including the first important one at Bern (Kunsthalle 1930). He had works in public collections in Bern, Geneva, Zürich, Munich, Stuttgart and Paris.