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THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE 1960S. A FRAGMENT OF THE HISTORY OF KRAKÓW AND OTHER POLISH TOWNS AND CITIES

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Modernism is the current moment¹

The architecture of Poland in the 60's of 20th century was simultaneously international and expressively romantic. These terms concern global tendencies observed in the activity of outstanding architects, as well as, the activity of artists contemporary to them. Many of them unfortunately treated these art currents too superficially and decoratively, what was especially visible in pseudo-functional elements. However, there were places in Poland, where exceptional works of art were erected. Many of these have now either been demolished or considerably transformed.

Post-war Poland (1945-1970), with the exception of the period of socialist realism (1949-1955/1956), was the embodiment of practical realisation of modernist dogmas such as: form follows function and

form follows construction. The year 1956 marks the end of classical monumentalism² and the years 1956-1967 were a time of revision of the leading role of function. Moreover, after 1967 (1967-1980) the leading role of construction was also revised³. A competition for the design of a 'house factory' was announced in 1967, which laid the foundations of industrialised construction and panel building. Poland experienced a sixteen-year gap in the realisation of modernist ideas promoted before 1939 and only after 1956 was access to the newest trends in architecture and art made possible. The historiography of architecture is dominated by perception and differentiation but the newest trends underline the importance of perceiving history as a form of narration, therefore it is difficult to precisely label the period in architecture that came after surrealism⁴. Many terms have

¹ Szymon Syrkus - the first representative of CIAM in Poland. See: M. Włodarczyk, *Architektura lat 60-tych w Krakowie*, Kraków 2006, passim.

² The 10th Anniversary stadium, completed in 1955, in Warsaw was the turning point of this era, starting in 1949, and the manifestation of this new/old trend in architecture.

³ J. Wujek, *Mity i utopie architektury XX wieku*, Arkady, Warszawa 1986, p. 234. The competition for a 'house factory' was announced in Poland in 1967 and Robert Venturi published

“Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture” in the USA, which started the era of postmodernist architecture in the West.

⁴ Socialist realism, also called 'soc-realism' was constituted in the 1930's as an artistic current shaping reality. It was the expression of a struggle for an art suited for the interests of the proletariat and linked to the Marxist doctrine, in: W. Szolginia, *Ilustrowana encyklopedia dla wszystkich, Architektura i Budownictwo*, Wydawnictwa Naukowo-Techniczne, Warszawa 1982, p. 330.

been adopted, e.g.: post-war modernism, modernism of the second half of the XX century or socialist modernism (also spelt: soc-modernism). The author of this paper has decided to use the name post-war modernism which seems the most accurate because, on design level, it is a continuation of pre-war modernism. Between the end of WW II in 1945 and 1949, that is, until the new socialist domination has been fully consolidated, work was being done on the basis of pre-war experiences. The newest trends and achievements from Western Europe and the USA were also put into practice. It was only 'Stalinism' (1949-1955) that once more interrupted the connection between Polish architecture and modernism⁵.

The style imposed by the socialist authorities was dubbed socialist realism, which is a peculiar variant of historicism in architecture. Architecture was ruled by the imperative to eliminate cosmopolitan forms in favour of so-called nationalist "cultural elements of the new working class culture", as well as the elimination of formalist solutions because form for form's sake excluded architecture from the influence of "the elements shaping society politically". Functionalism and constructivism were also unacceptable because they were said to 'fetishise' form and construction. The rule was that architecture ought to be socialist in content and nationalist in form.

The socialist realist doctrine dismissed all the characteristic elements of modernism in architecture, that is: form, function and construction. It searched for inspiration in the realist traditions of the XIX century and in the country's cultural heritage, which often lead to opportunism and eclecticism in bringing together different historical models. Forcing architects to draw upon the trends of centuries past in urban planning and architecture stemmed the natural development of architecture on the one hand and, because of irrational solutions and pretentious ornamentation, caused significant financial losses on the other. Earlier modernist designs (preceding

1950) were revised and modified at that time by addition of sculpted ornamentation, colonnades, attics, portals, arcades and vases, for example. Moreover, the new designs were governed by the rule of strict axiality and symmetry in buildings as well as in urban development⁶. An example of this may be the nearly rectangular Plac Centralny (Central Square) in Nowa Huta, new district of Kraków. Nowa Huta was one of Kraków's satellites and was built completely from scratch. It was planned to become the home of about 100,000 people linked with the newly developing metallurgical conglomerate plant in Kraków. The district was laid out on a geometric plan of three axes but five streets meeting at this polygonal square⁷. The General Plan of Nowa Huta prepared by Tadeusz Ptaszycki, an architect from Warsaw, anticipated a rigorously centralised urban arrangement and construction began in 1949. According to Jan Zachwatowicz in 1969, neither the communication system, nor the location of the plant justified this idea but the city had all the necessary facilities, such as: schools, kindergartens, theatres, cinemas, shopping centres etc.⁸

The 'political idea' was extremely important in the times of socialist realism, whereas in post-war modernism, which fully consolidated in 1956, 'function' and art with socially useful purposes dominated. Jerzy Hryniewiecki wrote: "[...] the moment freedom of creative thought was regained, the moment the merits of architecture stopped sounding like insults, was the moment our work was able to reveal a true diversity of forms"⁹. Eclectic forms were set aside after 1955 in order to facilitate the return of modernist ideas. Competitions and the utilisation of solutions found abroad have helped to solve the problems linked to urban development and building new housing estates¹⁰. The slogans of Le Corbusier were revived and have found recognition among designers yearning for modernity, as well as the authorities who saw the accomplishment of socialist ideas

⁵ The architecture of pre-war modernism lasted until 1949, excluding the duration of the II WW (1939-1945). Socialist realism predominated in the years 1949-1955/56 and post-war modernism spans over the years 1956-1970.

⁶ See: *Budownictwo i Architektura w Polsce 1945-1966*, ed. J. Zachwatowicz, Interpress, Warszawa 1968, p. 12-17.

⁷ The Main Designer of the 'Old' Nowa Huta, the first newly built socialist city, was T. Ptaszycki, who cooperated with a team that would later be known as 'Miastoprojekt Kraków' (City design Kraków). The Central Square, designed by J. Ingarden, was constructed in the years 1952-1956 but it was not completed.

See: T. Binek, *Śluby inwestycyjne Nowej Huty*, Towarzystwo Słowaków w Polsce, Kraków 2009.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

⁹ J. Hryniewiecki, [in:] *Wystawa Architektury 1956-1959, Katalog*, Zarząd Główny SARP, Warszawa 1960, p. 6.

¹⁰ E.g. Vaillingby, a satellite town of Stockholm in 1950-1956. Jerzy Hryniewiecki thought of it as model for Nowa Huta, an example of a modern complex surrounded by greenery. See: "Projekt", 1956, no 2, *Wzór nowoczesnego miasta*, Sztuka, Warszawa 1958, p. 63.

¹¹ Bricks were acquired from demolished buildings of the old, Austrian forts of Kraków Fortress, for example.

represented in the work of this architect. The call for standardisation was particularly popular because it answered the need for cheap and quick building, thanks to the use of prefabricated elements in standard sizes which could be easily manufactured by unqualified peasants, mainly so-called worker-peasants (*chłoporobotnicy*). This aspiration was connected with the experience of socialist realism, a time where buildings were erected 'by hand' and made of bricks, which were constantly in short supply¹¹. The introduction of standardisation was very unfortunate for architecture, as it became the foremost philosophy and led to significant reduction of creative possibilities¹². A good example of standardisation can be seen in the "Sady Żoliborskie" housing estate in Warsaw, designed by Halina Skibniewska.

The housing industry started developing in new areas designated by urban development plans in the form of organised housing complexes or neighbourhood units which led to the rapid development of towns and cities. Urbanism introduced the 'comb layouts' and construction noticed the dawn of cross-wall layouts¹³. For financial reasons, lower, five-storey buildings without elevators were constructed, as well as, so-called 'point blocks' (8-11 storeys), which enriched the artistic landscape of estates dispersed among the greenery. Industrialised, standardised and modular construction with the use of panel-building became common. This was in opposition to the traditional methods employed at the time of socialist realism. Because of restrictions resulting from the new norms and standards, buildings and housing estates were devoid of artistic elements with exception of balconies, loggias and terraces in terraced houses. Despite these restrictions the estates of that time stood out because of the meticulous planning of open spaces between the blocks of flats, commercial pavilions, landscape architecture and street furniture, as well as, composed greenery. Every new estate came complete with schools, kindergartens and crèches, commercial areas, medical complexes and clubs. Peripheral development and the block development principal, so typical of socialist realism, were abandoned in favour of the unrestricted expansion of new, modernist estates which broke free of the existing spatial models and building forms. This

was typical of the era, mentally connected to the interwar years, during which the principles of: greenery, air and space were ruling.

The new possibilities that appeared after 1956 and the political thaw that took place after the Poznań 1956 protests, allowed a greater freedom of thought and decision-making. They released a new creativity and a yearning for change that included the improvement of living standards and functionality of newly erected buildings. This was not a long period in the history of architecture and construction. Thanks to a lack of supplies and the poor financial state of the country, in addition to overinvestment in the industry and a deficit of flats caused restrictions and the expectation of lowering construction costs, while at the same time, maximising the number of buildings erected. This was especially noticeable in the entire country from around 1954. Even five-storey buildings did not have elevators in accordance to the norms because of the high costs of cranes and lifting equipment. The escalating deficit of national funds funnelled towards the housing industry brought about the reactivation of residential housing co-operatives which were organised in accordance to pre-war solutions but more cost-effective for the residents. Newly formed, large housing cooperatives began new investments.

Socialist realism entailed isolation from modern ideas and technical solutions found in countries of the West. This had a negative influence on the introduction of new, innovative solutions. Low living standards, an appalling resource base and the social-realist doctrinarism also had a great impact. Later architecture journals wrote, keeping in mind Le Corbusier: "In reality the binding doctrine and the one, true mode of socialist realism was substituted by a new movement with an equally strong doctrine but with a different dogma"¹⁴. One of the first buildings of post-war modernism and the first in the new district-city Nowa Huta was erected in the Szklane Domy estate. It was the so-called 'Blok Szwedzki' (Swedish block of flats) designed by Marta and Janusz Ingarden¹⁵. Crosswall constructions and braces allowed for the 'freeing of the elevation' and for unhindered flat sizing. Part of the ground-floor was designated as commercial premises with their own interior decoration

¹² See: S. Albrecht, *Problemy typizacji*, "Architektura", 1959, no 10/144, p. 427-428.

¹³ See: W. Adamski, *O piękno miast współczesnych*, "Architektura", 1959, no 3/137, p. 111-116.

¹⁴ H. Drzewiecki, A. Kowalewski, in: "Architektura", 1987, no 5-6.

¹⁵ See: B. Lisowski, *Nowa Architektura w Nowej Hucie*, "Architektura", 1960, no 1/147, p. 3-13.

and furniture design. The functional layout of the building and the external colour schemes attested to a significant inspiration by Swedish architecture, which originated in the architects' stay in Sweden. Eight-storey buildings that employed light-frame construction and deaerated concrete started appealing from 1955¹⁶. Buildings erected using these methods were called 'experimental' like the so-called 'Blok Francuski' (French Block of flats) designed by Krzysztof Chodorowski in 1957. It is still sometimes called the Experimental Block of flats and it is located opposite Blok Szwedzki¹⁷. The name 'French' was coined because of the avant-garde nature of the commercial interiors found on the ground floor. It was one of the first colourful buildings and it aesthetically leaned towards the post-war modernism of Warsaw. Constructional elements visible on the elevation, round pillars and curved glass panes in the corners, still existing, are the characteristic traits of the building. Beautiful and contemporary wall murals which were thematically linked to the purposes of the commercial space could be found on the ground floors in both buildings. Renowned artists and architects worked on the creation of the interiors¹⁸.

Housing estates were originally built using the large-block system and later in the standardised panel building system (from about 1967) employing the perpendicular-longitudinal mixed construction layout. Standardised construction intended to create prototypes of constructional elements and construction methods which would then, either directly or having undergone some changes, be mass produced. Thanks to this, buildings could be erected on the basis of 'progressive designs' and include innovative solutions based on modern materials and the industrialization of construction¹⁹. They were most often designed according to the imperatives of standardized housing development but there were exceptions to these rules²⁰. However, because of financial

restrictions, most buildings did not have balconies or loggias. There was no building developments called 'blokowsko' (a housing estate consisting of blocks of flats) until the 70's. This type of intensive development, mainly entailing tall buildings freely placed over a certain area, was to later dominate the Polish landscape and housing estates²¹. Prefabricated elements were introduced and housing became an industry aiming at the quickest possible development²². As a result, the newly developed estates all over the country started to be similar in architecture and urban planning. Regional standardisation, a new phenomenon on a national scale, had its beginnings in the designs of S. Golonko and K. Chodorowski for the "D" housing estates in Nowa Huta. Outside of industrialised development, buildings made of poured concrete in sliding frameworks were also erected. Another new trend, not seen before the II WW, was the perception of the large block of flats as a component shaping the urban environment. The greenery, so characteristic of developments in the 60's, was up-kept in the form of Culture and Recreation Parks, the largest being the park found in Chorzów. New church designs were also developed, e.g. the 'Arka Pana' (The Lord's Arc) church, designed by Wojciech Pietrzyk, was erected in Kraków-Bieńczyce in the years 1965-1977. It is example of late, supple and malleable, modern expressionism and, like Le Corbusier's Ronchamp chapel illustrates a harmony of form, construction and function. It was unbound by any norms and could be designed on a grand scale and with creativity that was impossible for cooperative housing development. The church also had a symbolic value – it rose from the struggle for the cross and church that were originally meant to be built in the Teatralne housing estate, and where a school was built instead²³.

The construction system of schools also changed. After 1956, schools were designed on a more open

¹⁶ See: W. Detko, *Z zagadnień prefabrykacji budynków szkieletowych w Nowej Hucie*, "Architektura", 1958, no 8/130, p. 340.

¹⁷ Nowadays, the 'Park Szwedzki' is smaller because it became the site of a Cistercian church and monastery.

¹⁸ See: *Nowohucki design, Historia wnętrza i ich twórcy w latach 1949-1959, Katalog wystawy*, MHMK, Kraków 2007, p. 12-18.

¹⁹ See: I. Rozenberg, *Nowej Huty – część II*, "Architektura", 1961, no 7-8/165, p. 296-299.

²⁰ The Council of Ministers passed resolutions concerning standardisation and prototypical construction in industrial and housing developments in 1959. For more on standard panel buildings see: "Architektura", 1961, no 6 /164, p. 213-236.

²¹ See: Z. Pawłowski, L. Słupcański, *Budynek wysoki kierunkiem rozwoju naszego budownictwa mieszkaniowego*, "Architektura", 1967, no 2/231, p. 62-65.

²² In 1957 'Miastoprojekt Kraków' was contracted to draw up typical housing sections and segments for the new housing estates: Spółdzielcze (D1), Kolorowe (D2) and Handlowe (D3). They were drawn up by the teams of: J.Ingarden, A.Fołyn and S.Golonko and K.Chodorowski. These designs were meant to take into consideration the current norms and trends. In: T. Binek, *Służby ...*, op. cit., s. 25.

²³ See: *Współczesna architektura sakralna w Nowej Hucie*, Katalog wystawy, ed. K. Jurewicz, MHMK, Kraków 2010.

and pavilion layout, which allowed for greater freedom in interior decoration and design, as well as, for more light and recreational areas. For example, the school on the Teatralne housing estate in Kraków, built in the years 1960-1961, was built as part of the ‘Tysiąc szkół na Tysiąclecie Państwa Polskiego’ campaign (Celebrating 1000 years of Poland with 1000 schools). It was one of the first schools of its kind in Poland built between 1956 and 1965 thanks to the Społeczny Fundusz Budowy Szkół (Social Fund for the Building of Schools), established especially for that purpose. The design of these new schools employed innovative architectural and spatial solutions²⁴. The architecture of post-war modernism is at present, in the greatest danger of destruction. The lack of recognition it receives is not just caused by a general aversion towards the raw aesthetic of concrete and glass of late modernism. The fact that these buildings are associated with the times of the communist People’s Republic of Poland (PRL) also plays an important role. Moreover, historians of architecture started noticing these buildings only recently so a method of description and classification has not yet been set down. According to David Crowley, post-war modernism which he calls soc-modernism, had two aspects. The first was the aim to produce cheap and undecorated ‘industrialised’ buildings. These were mainly housing developments and architects were expected to prepare designs similar to those prepared in state offices and the buildings were to be constructed out of elements produced in ‘house factories.’ Architecture ceased to be an art and merely became a branch of construction and engineering. The other facet of soc-modernism were the ‘prestigious’ buildings erected at the time, that is the dazzling examples of architecture as an expressive technology, designed by the same architects who designed ‘standardised architecture’ on an everyday basis²⁵. The establishment of the “Projekt” periodical after the thaw in 1956 was also a symptom of a new attitude towards architecture. The journal was supposed to be a “publication fighting for the advancement of art and technology” and contained designs representing post-war modernism, not only in architecture. In the introduction to the first

issue, the architect Jerzy Hryniewiecki wrote: “We must be modern”²⁶. During the thaw, as was promised by the authorities in 1956, the new phenomenon of a ‘free-time society’ appeared on the landscape of Polish post-war modernism. As a result cafes, bars, sport and recreation centres materialised, especially in estates linked to the key branch of the national economy, the heavy industry.

The city in a garden was the fulfilment of modernist ideas and predominated in large municipalities. Nowadays, new housing estates are not built with such attention to detail when it comes to space, greenery, recreation or cultural facilities, such as crèches, kindergartens, schools or outdoor monuments. The terrain is often not reinforced and there is a reliance on the existing infrastructure (from the times of the PRL). Architecture and urban planning now rarely take into consideration the social role, originating in the CIAM, that they fulfil and only cost-effectiveness is emphasized. New estates are no longer interspersed with green areas and recreation venues and are, most often, enclosed. This density is not pleasant and there is a lack of cultivated greenery. Furthermore, the concentration and large size of these estates is often greater than that of the “blokowiska” – “fields of blocks”. There remains the question whether the economic conditions and absurd political system of the 60’s did not destroy the noble ideas of those times and leave just ‘blokowiska’. It seems that the answer is “no”. The buildings and estates can be revitalised, as is being done in other countries. Flats can be conjoined, car parks can be constructed on ground floors or underground parking garages can be built and everyone could still benefit from the greenery and common areas. There remain many examples of exceptional architecture from the 60’s which were not just superficially modernist and these buildings should not be confused with later developments. I think that what the architect and urban planner Władysław Czarnecki said in 1968 still rings true: “A new cultural landscape is forming – the younger generation will grow into this environment, fall in love with it, [...] will return to it [...]”²⁷. Prof. Stanisław Juchnowicz, one of the designers of Nowa Huta, said more recently: “What

²⁴ See: D. Mieszkowska, “Architektura”, 1963, no 3/185, p. 62-63.

²⁵ See: D. Crowley, *Socmodernizm a architektura czasu wolnego i rekreacji w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w latach sześćdziesiątych i siedemdziesiątych XX wieku*, [in:] Kraków

i Florencja wobec dziedzictwa, ed. J. Purchla, MCK, Kraków 2008, p. 227-248.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 238.

²⁷ W. Czarnecki, *Planowanie Miast i Osiedli*, T. III, PWN, Warszawa-Poznań 1968, p. 601.

is amazing on a social level is the speed with which inhabitants of rural areas adapt to life in the city. The city is the outcome of the conditions in which it was created and the people who created it. The experience of those years would be difficult to apply in the current social and economic conditions in Poland. [...] The realization of socially comprehensive infrastructure is [...] commendable”²⁸

Many interesting developments unfortunately no longer exist. Poland’s first clear span supermarket, the ‘Supersam’ in Warsaw, built in 1962 using innovative pretensioned concrete (il. 1). It was designed by Jerzy Hryniewiecki, Ewa Krasinska and Maciej Krasiński. Similar was the fate of the Katowice Railway Station (il. 2), a fantastic example of *béton brut* architecture designed by Waław Kłyszewski, Jerzy Morzyński and Eugeniusz Wierzbicki (often called ‘the Tigers’) in 1964. Fortunately these were recently rebuilt to be a part of new building in 2012. One of the first examples of post-war modernism was, and still is, the Dom Towarowy (Department Store) in Poznań (il. 3), built according to the designs of Marek Leykam, a pre-war modernist architect. It was erected as part of the activity of a so-called ‘przemysłówka’ (industrial plant design), which was not governed by any standards. The Plush Factory in Kalisz (il. 4) is a prominent example of industrial architecture. It was built in 1962 and designed by Stanisław Sikorska and Jerzy Głowczewski. Another fine industrial building is a Furniture Factory in Wyszów (il. 5) designed by Andrzej Dzierżawski, Zbigniew Pawelski and Maciej Siennicki, completed in 1962. In Kraków, the ‘Cracovia’ hotel, with its curtain wall and kino ‘Kijów’ (Kijów cinema) (il. 6) with its string reinforced concrete roof and grand outdoor mosaic (Witold Cęckiewicz) were built. In order to celebrate the 600-year anniversary of the second-oldest university in Europe, the Jagiellonian University, many teaching facilities were also completed in Kraków at that time. The Biuro Wystaw Artystycznych (Art Exhibitions Bureau) (il. 7), an example of brutalism and modern conservation designed by Krystyna Tołoczko-Różyska and the first student dormitory complex in Poland, the Miasteczko Studenckie (Student’s City) (il. 8), designed by Tomasz Mańkowski, Zofia Nowakowska, Przemysław Gawor and Janusz Meisner in the years 1964-1975, were completed. The ‘Wenecja’ (Venice) bar in Warsaw (il. 9) designed by Zbig-

niew Ihnatowicz, Jerzy Sołtan and Adolf Szczepiński in the years 1958-1961 was also a novel design. The ‘Arka Pana’ (il. 10) church in Nowa Huta, already mentioned, erected in the years 1961-1965 according to designs of Wojciech Pietrzyk, is also an interesting example of unusual architecture. The Hala Sportowo-Widowiskowa (Sports Arena) “Spodek” (‘Sauser’) in Katowice (il. 11), designed by the team: Jerzy Hryniewiecki, Maciej Gintowt, Maciej Krasiński is admirable on account of its construction and decorative elements. The designer of most of the complicated constructions of some of the buildings listed here was the celebrated Polish constructor Waław Zalewski. Much sports infrastructure was completed during the period, prominent among these was the, now nonexistent, Stadion “Dziesięciolecia” (The ‘10th Anniversary Stadium) in Warsaw (il. 12) designed by Jerzy Hryniewiecki, Marek Leykam and Czesław Rajewski. The press-conference room found on the crown of the stadium had the form of a pavilion. Many original recreational facilities and leisure venues, especially in Zakopane and by the Baltic Sea, as well as, open food and shopping facilities were built. Light shell roofs were erected over seasonal cafes and recreational venues in the summer. Modern development systems and individual architectural solutions were employed in the construction of office building for departmental institutions. Naval architecture was a speciality of the times and there was a resurgence of architectural glass.

To sum up, architecture before 1956 cannot be called utilitarian as it was only directed at carrying out political ideas. Modernity became a symbol of democracy and freedom. The phenomena of architecture and urban planning in the years 1949-1955, the social role of an architect, the meaning of specialist knowledge, the changes in designing in studios and the architect’s role among them, standardisation and modern architectural education were looked at with hope. The period of isolation led to the retardation of architectural ideas and technological potential. As a result, imitating the attractive, modern forms built in the international and neoexpressionist styles abroad was a difficult task. Nevertheless, such buildings did exist. Quick and cheap housing development was expected in the 60s and the aim was to find low-cost solutions in construction and exploitation that could be taken up all over the country. New

²⁸ Nowa Huta, przeszłość i wizja – z doświadczeń warsztatu projektowego, [in:] Nowa Huta, przeszłość i wizja: studium

muzeum rozproszonego, Ed. J. Salwiński, L.J. Sybila, Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, Kraków 2005, p. 184.

technologies included: sliding formworks for the erection of walls, prefabricated frameworks, panel building, industrialised system and design elements which forced standardisation upon the designers. In consequence, individual designs were abandoned in favour typical studies, thus, there was a decrease in the diversity of components and a standardisation of repetitive buildings such as schools, blocks of flats etc. The architect's creativity was also hampered by these standard models and architecture was reduced to a form of construction engineering or a primitive form of architecture. Nowadays, all of Poland looks the same, what cannot be attributed solely to the architects. The need for a cost-effective and industrialised housing industry led to the substantial spread of standardisation. The decrees of 1959 were extended to include general and industrial construction, among others. Thankfully many of the industrial buildings of the time were important investments, as they were connected to the individual departments. These buildings are characterised by modern and interesting architecture, pioneering construction solutions and detailed decoration.

Artists maintained their interest in the avant-garde art of the 50's and early 60's and the new, universal currents influenced not only architecture and construction, but all branches of the fine arts. The good years of post-war modernism started in 1956 and ended for architects and the whole of society around the mid-60's. A retreat from the international style and functionalism took place and modernism was no longer observable in Poland in the late 60's. After modernism came the heavy brutalism of the early 70's, and postmodernism in the 80's. A quote from Le Corbusier may act as an excellent ending note: "City planning expresses the life of a certain era. Architecture uncovers its soul"²⁹

Translated by the Author

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²⁹ Quoted from: Ch. Jencks, *Ruch nowoczesny w architekturze*, Warszawa 1987, p. 172.