

Thursday, 14 June
14.30-17.15

Track: Body and Mind
Room: *National Library, Cupola Hall*

SPACES FOR CHILDREN AS 'CITIZENS OF THE FUTURE' IN THE SERVICE OF TWENTIETH CENTURY POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

Session chairs: Alexandra Alegre, Universidade de Lisboa
Yael Allweil, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology

The recognition of childhood and the autonomy of children since the eighteenth century resulted in the provision of distinctive spaces specifically designed for them. Schools, medical facilities, playgrounds, orphanages, cultural spaces, sports facilities, among other typologies, were created during the twentieth century, envisaged by Ellen Key as the *century of the child*. In the last decades, both architectural historians and museums (MoMA, Vitra Museum, RIBA) focused on the theme of material culture of children from an architectural perspective, leading to the attention of this theme from a wider audience.

The condition of children as a significant means to transforming human condition was understood by pedagogues and also realized by different political regimes and ideologies along the last centuries. Regarded as the 'citizens of the future', children were one of the main focuses of political, social, and health/sanitary campaigns: as active agents in the execution of political and ideological values of distinctive regimes and communities. Children's spaces were meant to play an active role in the pursuit of those aims.

This session intends to discuss the relationship between the architecture of children's spaces and the ideal of childhood of different political ideologies that looked at children as active agents in the shaping of new citizens and society. Different children's spaces from the twentieth century were considered as means of social change, serving at the same time as symbols of propaganda and as images of strong political and social ideology (dictatorial regime, totalitarian regime, democracy, social democracy, communal societies, etc.). The session aims at gathering case studies from different geographical areas, providing a basis for reflecting on the historical significance of children's spaces within an international framework.

The design of children's spaces in the twentieth century poses a particular challenge for the history of architecture by invoking visions of the future, and points to a number of research questions:

- How did political visions for ideal society reflect themselves in children's spaces in different, often competing, international contexts?
- How have ideological societies experimented on visions of the ideal future via children's spaces?
- How did the architecture of children's spaces attempt to educate and shape future citizens, using the architectural means of typology, materiality, etc.?
- In retrospect, what is the meaning of these 'spaces for the future' today for the identity, values and visions of society?
- What was the impact of these spaces on their societies for different generations, and how have 'future citizens' historicized them?

PAPERS:

From Social Spaces to Training Fields: Changes in Design Theory of the Children's Public Sphere in Hungary in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

Luca Csepely-Knorr, Manchester School of Architecture
Maria Klagyivik, Independent researcher

The first half of the twentieth century brought turbulent changes in the political and

social scene of Hungary. From being a partner of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the country's status changed first to Hungarian Soviet Republic, then to Kingdom of Hungary, to Republic of Hungary, and finally to People's Republic of Hungary within a few decades. These political changes strongly impacted the main ideologies of all fields of life in the country, including architectural and educational theory. This paper will examine how the various schools of thoughts affected ideas about designing special places for children, including playgrounds in public areas and schools.

In 1919, during the period of the short-lived 'Hungarian Soviet Republic', prominent architect Bela Rerrich (1881–1932) published his pamphlet entitled 'Play areas as social duty in town planning and garden design'. Rerrich had been working on a plan to create a number of play areas in Budapest for several years by then, but the political change acted as the trigger for socially inclusive, healthy places for children. Between 1919 and 1935, nearly sixty children's playgrounds were created throughout the city. However, the change in political ideas from the Soviet Republic to the Kingdom of Hungary and the rise in revisionist political thoughts (with the ever-increasing possibility of another war) altered the main aim of creating playgrounds. It was widely accepted that these places were instruments in the disciplined training of future soldiers of the country.

This paper will discuss the relationship between the design theory of children's playgrounds and the socio-political changes in Hungary during the period between 1914 and 1945. We will contextualize this reflecting on the international development of design theory, and will analyse how mid-war guidelines laid the foundation of design theories on children's spaces in the twentieth and even twenty-first centuries.

Constructing Childhood: The Development of the Summer Camp in the Fascist Era

Stephanie Pilat, The University of Oklahoma

Paolo Sanza, Oklahoma State University

During the more than two decades of Fascist rule in Italy (1922–43), the regime sponsored and encouraged the construction of hundreds of children's summer camps or colonie (singular colonia) as part of a mission to shape the physical bodies of the youngest citizens of the nation. Although the colonia building type developed in the 19th century, the regime adapted the type to their aims and constructed new camps throughout the peninsula. Between 1929 and 1933 the number of colonie nearly quadrupled from 571 to 2,022. By the end of the Fascist era, some 3,800 projects dotted the Italian landscape, from the Alps, to the plains, to the shorelines of rivers, lakes and seas. Some were tiny, no more than basic shelters, others resembled small cities. Many are known for their simple lines, profound conceptual gestures, and for fostering majestic and memorable childhood experiences.

This paper analyses three colonie, in Cesenatico, Cattolica, and Legnano, to understand how the regime's desire to create the fascists of the future was translated into built form by an array of young architects. Drawings and documents related to the design and construction of these projects shed light on the intentions of the architects and political leaders who sponsored their construction. Representations of the projects in the press, medical journals, government publications, and promotional materials illustrate how the projects were presented to the public and connected to health concerns, especially tuberculosis. Together the projects and documents illustrate how the architects translated the regime's vision for children into design through choices regarding the relationship between the building and nature, materials, and the arrangement of spaces. The public and private spaces of these complexes and buildings reflect different understandings of the relationships between the individual child and the collective body of the nation under Fascism.

Building Soviet Childhood

Juliet Koss, Scripps College

Published in Moscow for distribution at the New York World's Fair in 1939, the pamphlet

Children in the Land of Socialism proudly declared that 'even in the most remote regions of the Soviet Union, the population sees from its own experience that care for the children is the prime concern of the Socialist state of workers and peasants.' In the annals of Soviet propaganda, this concern was usually described in relation to the unprecedented program of reconstruction in the first two Soviet decades, and particularly those spaces intended explicitly for children, for example in schools or communal housing projects. The discourse of architectural history has likewise concentrated on intentional and sometimes experimental spaces for childcare, as in the Narkomfin Building designed and built in Moscow by Moisei Ginzburg and Ignaty Milinis (1928-1930). Soviet spaces designed for children reveal concerted and ongoing efforts regarding the care of children as well as the Soviet reinvention of childhood more generally. But the imagery of Soviet architecture and design also suggests a story of makeshift arrangements and long-term temporary fixes reflecting not only economic constraints but also a notion of play inflected by Soviet values of productivity and labor. Children both benefitted from and helped create the new Soviet world, they played as architects and engineers and often proved useful in delivering the ideological messages of architectural photography. Whether as toddlers enjoying building blocks, adolescent builders of model ships, or small-scale figures playing near massive new buildings, they often played at construction within extant pre-Revolutionary buildings repurposed to accommodate new models of Soviet everyday life. In doing so, they became model citizens: small-scale versions of their future selves and idealized creatures in the ongoing construction of a better world.

Spaces of Empowerment: Architecture of Israeli Youth Villages, 1930–1960

Ziv Leib, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology

During the first decades of the twentieth century, a framework of youth villages was established in Israel and became the typical model for residential education. The sole purpose of these institutions was to rehabilitate Jewish orphans who immigrated to Israel, by using a 'powerful environment' to mold their characters so they could fulfil Zionist ideals. This transformative strategy was based on segregating the students and exposing them to new models of behaviour through community life and agricultural education. These institutions, which are absent from architectural discourse, expressed a distinct perception of the modern movement and the new pedagogy.

This research focuses on the cultural landscape of two such youth villages, Ayanot (1930) and Hakfar Hayarok (1950), both spaces of empowerment whose transformative ideals were incorporated into their physical environments. The research examines how different architectural models were used as tools for implementing a social-educational ideology, and locates their application in relation to Zionist perceptual shifts. This historiography analyses architecture through body practices, activity arenas, and institutional layout.

Ayanot, originally established as a women's training farm during Israel's pre-state period, was transformed into a youth village expressing the assimilation of rational and social ideals. This powerful environment and its dialogue with rural architectural design assisted in the creation of an integrated space. This space is defined by continuity and by interactions among different activity arenas as part of resocialization processes.

Hakfar Hayarok reflected the adaptation to the state's ideals of life and the institutionalized designs used in the public housing environment. These spatial qualities were expressed by rigid functionality and standardization, both aimed at integrating the users into the state. These modern design practices also reflected a tension between scientific functionality and pastoral ideals.

Educating a 'Creative Class': Anti-Disciplinary School Architecture in the Early 1970s

Anthony Raynsford, San Jose State University

During the counterculture revolts of the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially in Western Europe and North America, a new generation of architects began to take aim against what they considered to be the repressive ideological apparatus of the classroom, with its rigid seating arrangements, furnishings, lesson plans, and hourly divisions – in short, the whole pedagogical apparatus of what Michel Foucault referred to as the 'disciplinary society.' Thus, radical pedagogy joined together with radical architecture to construct what reformers hoped would be a new species of 'free' citizen – creative, autonomous and spontaneously cooperative. In 1970, Sim Van der Ryn, professor of architecture at the University of California in Berkeley, together with a group of collaborators, who included the schoolchildren themselves, embarked on a series of experiments in alternative school designs. Hierarchies between designers and clients, as well as between teachers and students, were abolished. Children were asked to design and construct their own classrooms, often using found materials. The emphasis was on breaking down the institutional spatial order into smaller, ad hoc, personalized spaces, or else spaces for unexpected encounters. The collaborative design, folded into the learning process itself, was never thought to be complete or final. Failure and experimentation were encouraged. While this and similar experiments, I argue, had limited effect on subsequent school buildings, most of which remained institutionally conventional, they had an enormous effect on the work spaces of new companies in Silicon Valley and elsewhere that promoted creativity and collaboration among elite employees. Beginning in the early 1980s, such companies began to commission office environments qualitatively similar to the radical school experiments of the early 1970s, generating enclaves of highly paid creative workers. Far from the egalitarian political vision of the counterculture, these environments formed the architectural template for a new class division under late capitalism.