

knowledge that the inner might of a community is also conditional upon its outer strength. The relation of centralism and decentralization is a problem that, as has been said, is to be dealt with not fundamentally but, like everything that concerns the traffic of the idea with reality, with the great tact of the spirit, with the untiring weighing of the legitimate How Much. Centralization, yes, but only so much as must be centralized according to the conditions of the time and the place; if the high court that is summoned to the drawing and new drawing of the line of demarcation remains awake in its conscience, then the division between base and apex of the power pyramid will be entirely different from today's, even in states that call themselves communist, which certainly still means striving for community. A system of representation must also exist in the form of society that I have in mind; but it will not present itself, like those of today, in the seeming representation of amorphous masses of voters but in the work-tested representatives of economic communities. The represented will not be bound with their representatives in empty abstractions, through the phraseology of a party program, as today, but concretely, through common activity and common experience.

But the most essential must be that the process of the formation of community must continue into the relations of the communities to each other. Only a community of communities may be called a communal being.

The picture that I have hastily sketched will be put on the shelf of "utopian socialism" until the storm turns over the leaves again. Just as I do not believe in Marx's "gestation" of the new form of society, so I do not believe in Bakunin's virgin birth out of the womb of the revolution. But I believe in the meeting of image and destiny in the plastic hour.

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT

IF ONE SEEKS to transport the great social question from its sublime dialectical abstractness into the concrete language of the reality in which we live, it turns out that the various formulations of this question without exception have an essentially quantitative character; for example, "What is, with the greatest possible productivity of the total economy, the maximum share of the working man in the fruits of his labor, and what measures shall be taken in order to let him have this maximum?" Through the intellectual and material power which this kind of question and its consequences have assumed in our age, a series of fully concrete "little" questions have been pushed aside or suppressed, questions of an eminently qualitative character, such as, "How does the worker work at present in a factory highly developed in the techniques of work? As a man or as an external part of a machine? And how in the future can technique be set the task of including man as man in its calculations?" For him who is concerned that man live in the whole context of his existence as man, these "little" questions—which will continue to exist however those others are solved—are great ones, and he is concerned, each in his own sphere, to point out the direction and to guard it.

One such question goes: "How are the men of the modern civilization housed and how must they be housed in order to live as men?" There is no more concrete and current question.

I remember having read more than forty years ago in a book of Chesterton's (not word for word but approximately) that the solution of the social question is to be found in each

having a house of his own. These days I read in the newspaper that the prime minister of Burma has promised his people a welfare state in which each citizen shall have his own house. This sort of statement rings in our ears like a romantic utopia, hence like a utopia which lacks the most precious quality of a utopia: to be unromantic. But it is not so romantic and also not so utopian as it sounds; for it is bound up with one of those primal demands of the human heart which at any moment, overnight, will break through to actualization and become self-evident. Man not only *must* have a dwelling, he also *wants* it. And he wants to dwell in a house. But in the imperishable primal language of the human heart house means my house, your house, a man's own house. The house is the winning throw of the dice* which man has wrested from the uncanniness of universe; it is his defense against the chaos that threatens to invade him. Therefore his deeper wish is that it be his own house, that he not have to share with anyone other than his own family.

All this, nonetheless, is still only the presupposition for what is most important, when we finally attain to the knowledge that the essential human reality is no longer to be regarded as one of the individual life (even as little as one of the collective life), but as something that takes place between man and man, between I and Thou. For the house of man about which he is concerned no longer stands just anywhere, no matter where, in a splendid isolation for example, as long as he can easily get from there to his place of work, where he must perhaps for so and so many hours share a space with "strange" men, in order then quickly and completely to leave them and to go home [*nach Hause*]. Rather the house of man about which he is concerned now stands

* The German original—*der feste Würfel*—contains a pun. The word for dice also means cube, while *feste* means both winning throw and firm. Hence "winning throw of the dice" equals "a firm cube" equals "a house"—M.F.

between houses, between neighboring houses, between the houses of his neighbors.

The unavowed secret of man is that he wants to be confirmed in his being and his existence by his fellow men and that he wishes them to make it possible for him to confirm them, and, to be sure, the former and the latter not merely in the family, in the party assembly or in the public house, but also in the course of neighborly encounters, perhaps when he or the other steps out of the door of his house or to the window of his house and the greeting with which they greet each other will be accompanied by a glance of well-wishing, a glance in which curiosity, mistrust, and routine will have been overcome by a mutual sympathy: the one gives the other to understand that he affirms his presence. This is the indispensable minimum of humanity. If the world of man is to become a human world, then immediacy must rule between men, and thus also between human house and human house. And as in everything else, so also here the institutional and the educational influence must supplement each other. The secret longing of man for a life in reciprocal mutual confirmation must be developed through education, but the external conditions it needs in order to find its fulfillment must also be created. The architects must be set the task of also building for human contact, building surroundings that invite meeting and centers that shape meeting.

This book wishes to serve the rebirth of the human dialogue from the standpoint of architecture. Therein lies its importance.

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