

Regine Heß:

Yael Allweil has linked housing regimes to the systematic construction of the State of Israel, i.e. Zionist nation building through housing. David Kuchenbuch speaks of a German and Swedish social engineering that organises mass society into neighbourhood units.¹ This brings me to your statement in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) interview that modernism tried to «standardise and separate».² The type of single-family house on the Weißenhof estate certainly exemplifies this international housing regime well. The Kochenhof estate sets other forms and a nationally conceived regime against it. The small family dogma, however, persists and urban sprawl is accelerating. How strongly anchored is this single-family house and small-family regime with its concentration on the mother, who is at best employed part-time (Fig. 1)? What kind of housing regime are you confronted with in the run-up to the IBA'27³?

Andreas Hofer:

I now read the Weißenhof more as Toyland. I think these questions about lifestyle, family housing and minimum subsistence level housing came later. For me it is more a staffage, a 1:2 or 1:5 scale model of what modern architects actually wanted to show. That's why the single-family house remains as practically the smallest architectural unit – today it'd probably be Tiny Houses. I find this fascinating: the ambivalence of Mies'sche planning, which has something plastic, sculptural about it, made up of architectural pieces, but which I can't take seriously as a contribution to the housing discussion. After all, it's not a community.

There was this discussion: Is there an original state of the exterior space at the Weißenhof? There is not. They put it up in three and a half months and then half a million people [during the exhibition *The Home* in 1927] walked through the front gardens. It was probably very attractive as an exhibit, because you could move through these spaces and the architects' different statements as if you were on a plateau, but in permanent use you had to hedge it round artificially and partition spaces. The fact that it didn't really work is still evident today.

And that's why it's now a cumbersome thing. When we think about improvements, perhaps an approximation to the original spatial structure, we ask ourselves: What functions could new elements have? We certainly can't build single-family homes there in 2020, that makes no sense at all.

Many years ago I took part in the international *La Casa piu bella del Mondo*⁴ competition. We proposed a shared occupancy home as the most beautiful – a kind of post-industrial, residential-work landscape accommodating ten people, certainly



1 Paul Schmitthenner,
Living room, Exhibi-
tion *German Timber
for Utility and Home*,
1933, Kochenhof
Estate, Stuttgart, Pho-
tographer: Franz Fels

not a single-family house. I'm always amazed by the newsletters I get every day, where a considerable percentage are about villas in South America. I can no longer take the discussion of architecture on this scale seriously.

RH

This international housing regime of the villa or the petty bourgeois house is associated with forms of living together that entail a community or no community at all. But what about housing regimes in Stuttgart, for example, those of migrant families? Are you confronted with this in the *IBA* planning?

AH

Obviously, it has different strands and is simply a reality. Stuttgart is a city with a very high proportion of people from different cultures. People are proud that Stuttgart has a culture of integration. And of course such people will live in *IBA* projects.

In various places, like in the Rot district in the north of Stuttgart, *IBA* projects are directly concerned with questions of social mix and integration. In 1948, displaced Germans founded the *Neues Heim* cooperative here. The city provided the site and the people helped themselves.⁵ The whole neighbourhood later became one of Stuttgart's problem neighbourhoods. It declined in the 80s and 90s and has been somewhat given a facelift in the last ten years, with building interventions, replacement buildings, a lot of social work and urban development funding.

There's now a generational change in the houses and institutions there. I've witnessed this process in a similar way in Zurich. I've worked in similar neighbourhoods where the Swiss lower-middle class, the workers, died out as early as the 1980s and immigrant families who needed the cheap housing moved in. The old social democratic, male committee members tried to come to grips with the change. Then the milieu changed: the children of the first generation of immigrants joined the committees, became active in local politics and brought with them a new understanding of social space. Whole neighbourhoods suddenly became a resource

2 Exhibition *German Timber for Utility and Home*, Kochenhof Estate, 1933, Stuttgart, Photographer: Franz Fels



that had to be rethought. Cooperatives changed from merely providing housing as a social welfare service and asked themselves: Why is the infrastructure disappearing? In the past, we as a cooperative only did residential work. Commerce and work were as far away as possible – similar to the Weißenhof – and now we see ourselves as gardeners of a public space, curating, facilitating, designing. There's work coming in, neighbourhood infrastructure, why isn't your shop working? What could we do to make it work? Together with the question of forms of living: aging households, small households; how can we intervene in the generational cycles, so that older people move into accessible new buildings with small apartments and young families move back into the old building stock? In Stuttgart-Rot, a competition is currently being run by the municipal housing association SWSG, in which we, the *IBA*, are involved. The competition involves 300 apartments and housing for single men in need.

RH

With the Kochenhof housing estate, conservative «folkish» architects tried to visualise a narrative of living for German citizens, with regionalist, gable roof houses behind hedges and walls (Fig. 2). Has the production of a Württembergian-German identity been extended to the present day and in the meantime, for the other half of society, the mass housing projects of the *Neue Heimat*⁶ created? In other words, two housing regimes, one of which, however, is not considered by most to be identity-forming. Between these two regimes there are the so-called old towns, or new neighbourhoods like the Killesberghöhe in Stuttgart⁷, both of which have been enriched with fragments of identity and become expensive commodities. To what extent are such identity mixes reflected in the *IBA'27* projects being offered to you?

AH

The whole story is much more complex. I've just reread Werner Durth's *German Architects*, and it's not that straightforward.⁸ I think the Kochenhof estate is more of an attempt to take a counter position; since the Weißenhof was explicitly modernist, the Kochenhof was explicitly anti-modernist. In reality, however, this connec-

tion postulated by both sides, Bolshevik modernism or folk tradition, is all wrong. There were many overlaps and shifts, and that has a lot to do with superimposed images. The social model at the Weißenhof is actually the same. In other words, some differences were contrived in ideological battles and some personally, but there was also relatively frivolous switching of sides. Depending on the regime and the style of rhetoric you subscribed to at the time.

It's the same thing when people claim there's a world of difference between the bourgeois-traditional, single-family, dream homes and the large-scale housing estates. The discussion about the big housing estates of the 60s, 70s and the *Neue Heimat* is very pertinent. People didn't perceive those estates as degrading at the time. This also applies to the GDR, where large-scale housing construction was social progress back then but a part of the trauma now. So the debate about how degrading these large estates were is historically incorrect and is currently no less an ideological construct, to say the least. In my opinion, they represent perhaps the most equitable moment in German history. A social and democratic compromise: rebuild the country and become a leading industrial nation, but with labour law, trade unions and also something like a guarantee of housing – that was the successful model of post-war culture. And one has to ask oneself why it's now being so assiduously talked down. There are problematic examples, of course, such as Cologne-Chorweiler, but in the Märkisches Viertel in Berlin you can see that's no longer quite true. And when you notice that, you can't help asking yourself what's really behind the rhetoric. I think it has something to do with eroding social solidarity, with a process of becoming bourgeois and destroying social compromise.

Here in southern Germany you can see only too well what the model is at present: building group projects in Tübingen or Freiburg. To put it maliciously: middle-class occupational therapies for professional people who end up as property owners. This does nothing to solve housing problems. The plot of land, the manageable shared occupancy house, maximum 15 families. Everything nicely strung together, no neighbouring façade the same colour. Echos of Toyland again. But I don't want to talk it down because of course it's also a countermovement. The *Neue Heimat* brigade, they also got it wrong: the whole corruption of those structures, completely undemocratic and gender insensitive.

RH

Haven't citizens also emancipated themselves from this? A cautionary example: in Hilde Strobl's and Andres Lepik's exhibition catalogue *Die Neue Heimat*, I examined the construction of New Altona.⁹ What Ernst May did from 1949 on was to raze Altona and build a new housing estate complete with shopping streets on a green-field site. How can it be more than just a dormitory?

AH

It is not a question of right or wrong, but rather a collective learning process. In that sense, Kochenhof and Weißenhof are historical experiences and figures. What are the specific conditions and context of their production? I aim to learn as much as possible from this. When we talk about regimes, it's striking that these large-scale structures are only possible where there's a powerful state. I myself come more from the anarchist direction; we're against the state and we pursue our projects in opposition to it. These Tübingen and Freiburg projects also have this anarchist

component; we're looking to create counter-models, try out alternative lifestyles. This provenance is interesting and was important for the further development of society and the democratisation of society and ultimately in framing the question: Who owns and who actually shapes the city? On an urban scale, however, we now have to ask a great many critical questions, for example with regard to social representation: Who is actually building there? In building groups, residential interest is closely bound up with the property itself. This is both intensive and at the same time exclusive. We've learned in the Zurich projects that you have to consider a different scale and a perspective.¹⁰ We explicitly didn't build for ourselves, but rather considered who in society needs affordable housing. That's a completely different question.

RH

You mean on an urban scale, for communal living in the city?

AH

It's about the city as open space. The French Quarter in Tübingen is jokingly called a green hell. It immediately brings to mind a gated community for do-gooders. You've got to take a critical look at this and at the architecture. As a countermove-ment to the large housing estate, is the plot of land a good figure for housing construction? We also run up against economic problems here, which are partly the reason for the sharp rise in construction costs.

RH

Which can only exist as a new neighbourhood outside the city?

AH

I wouldn't say that. In Berlin or Hamburg, building groups have been successfully used as an instrument of urban development. Especially on difficult sites in difficult neighbourhoods. Admittedly, of course, with the knock-on effect that these neighbourhoods were then gentrified to a degree that triggered displacement effects.

RH

Are building groups in the Stuttgart region already thinking in terms of urban development or trying to stimulate it with the *IBA*: which is to say, thinking collectively in the process of creating solidarity?

AH

That's a very intriguing question – I'm not sure I have an answer to it yet. One hypothesis might be that in terms of the peripheral or suburban, Stuttgart as a state capital currently lags behind in this discussion. What residential models in Baden-Württemberg over the last 20 years would you want to look at from the outside? Since large housing estates were taboo, experiments with the models mentioned were more likely to be conducted in smaller and medium-sized cities, such as Tübingen and Freiburg.

Of course, there's also the Stuttgart 21 story.¹¹ This is the heroic, large-scale project that, like a black hole, sucked up all the energy. On the one hand, that led to a high level of urban discourse, but on the other hand, it has of course also opened

many wounds and provoked a great deal of scepticism about urban development and change.

RH

The expression *Wutbürger* (*angry citizen*) was even invented or at least made public in that context.¹² You said in the SZ interview that a forum was created to discuss the city. And now we also have an *IBA*.

AH:

I have a feeling that the *IBA* is an attempt to break out. It could happen relatively quickly now. In one of the largest housing projects in Stuttgart in recent years, the Olga-Areal, building groups have formed on one block but the majority of the homes were built by professional developers (Fig. 3).¹³ Based on the experience gained, the discussion has now begun as to whether it wouldn't be more sensible to merge building groups, perhaps work together with traditional cooperatives and think in blocks rather than houses. I was on the jury of the Rosenstein competition and I think that was where the limits of the system of small-scale building were seen (Fig. 4): If you want 100 hectares with 7,500 apartments, that'd be 350 building groups, but that's not possible. For such projects we need new urban planning and institutional forms and ideas.

RH

Should the *IBA* jump into the breach?

AH

Yes, perhaps we can play a role in precisely these discussions.



3 Olga-Areal, 2019, Stuttgart, Aerial view



4 asp Architects and Köber Landscape Architecture, 2018, Stuttgart, Development proposal for the former Stuttgart main station site, now Rosenstein district

RH

The *IBA* has a bottom-up strategy: teams apply with projects that are selected and supervised by you and your colleagues. You don't initiate projects top-down. Can new types of housing regimes be created in this process, on the part of users and planners?

AH

The fact that we have a bottom-up strategy at the project level has something to do with the framework conditions. At the *IBA Emscher Park* nothing would've happened by itself.¹⁴ The *IBA* was the driving force behind the development and injected five billion Deutsch Marks into the Ruhr area. Here neither money nor demand is the problem. You don't need the *IBA* as a source of inspiration at project level. The *IBA* is a conceptual, transformative instrument that brings commonalities, further developments, new processes and new ideas to these projects.

RH

Is the *IBA* an instrument of governance?

AH

You could put it that way. Along with the bottom-up or development process of the projects, which always involve a lot of money and stakeholders, we also have a citizen participation process with plenums, forums and working groups, where several hundred people take part. I didn't really understand this at first, but my thesis at the moment is that for the first time a regional meta-level is being adopted, which I hope helps in seeing the individual project in a larger social context. In recent years, a form of citizens' discussion has emerged that is often bureaucratised,

stuck in formal planning participation formats and destructive: someone wants to build something and then everyone who lives nearby comes to the workshop and says they don't like it... we'd rather counter this form of obstructive participation.

RH

Is this to do with mentality or building law?

AH

The two are difficult to separate and have probably grown together. We question both and create a cloud. What are the issues here in the region? What problems, what potential do we have? And that's a positive, proactive store of knowledge that then feeds into the individual projects. We're trying – and this has already happened – to use this participatory process to address the issues of the region, the issues of the future, in a productive, constructive way, and in that way to inspire projects.

RH

We discussed the IBA's projected use of the river Neckar for local residents with architecture students from the University of Kassel and concluded that it should be politicised. Is the IBA jumping into an existing breach here too?

AH

We're asking ourselves the same question in different places. Mobility is the best example: Please solve the traffic problem around Stuttgart now! We have to draw a line there. If the IBA undermines social and political decisions, we can only lose. Those are different planning processes, different timeframes, in which infrastructures are transformed. We can't do that. We're looking for the exemplary on site, and that's why we refer to the mobility issue in the context of the IBA as *Places for moving and meeting*. How might future mobility models affect built spaces, how do we make them sufficiently resilient today to cope with the changing traffic patterns of tomorrow? When it comes to the Neckar, we take a more active approach in our thinking. We're not devising a master plan for the Neckar, quite apart from the fact that one already exists in all its variants. We consider the landscape based on the example of the Neckar and its environs, because the landscape has no lobby (Fig. 5).¹⁵ We have many IBA projects that develop from a particular project logic. Plots of land that exist, industrial estates undergoing transformation. It's different with the landscape since investors don't care about the image of the region, which is why we said we'd use the Neckar to conduct this meta-discourse about the image of the region.

RH

So there is the absence of a commonly shared image of the landscape in which people live. And that's where the cloud comes in: You produce images that have definite appeal and that aren't city marketing (see Fig. 5). They carry a certain tension within them and generate identity-defining visualisations.

AH

Exactly. We're now pursuing these five themes [*The productive city, The future of centres, Places for moving and meeting, The Neckar as a liveable space, The legacy of*

modernism] which were deductively developed via the projects. We had to activate the regional landscape theme. This links up with other projects and that's what's happening right now. Working groups... people are beginning to think about these spaces and images. The Remstal Garden Show in 2019 wasn't unimportant in this respect because a landscape space immediately leads to inter-communal policy levels.¹⁶ We're working through it using this strong image of the Neckar River, which incorporates many problems...

RH

Such as industrialisation?

AH

There's that ambivalence again: In the 1990s, the talk at every urban planning conference was of water-front-development or port restructuring. These were post-industrial repurposing projects where the industry had died out. Here in the Stuttgart Region the picture is more complex because the industry's still there. How can we use a river that was solely a source of power, means of transport and disposal in a spatially different way? It's bordered by areas that are fenced off all around on a massive scale simply to prevent access. And then there's the duplication by roads and railway axes along the water. This is not about measures to beautify the landscape, about eventisation or the leisure society. It's about addressing the question: How can we rethink these spaces in an industrially productive way?



RH

So the focus is shifted away from living to communally used spaces?

AH

Of course, the question immediately arises: Can one live there? But the question isn't: Can I live in a disused factory in a stunning waterside loft? The question is rather: If I want to live by the water, can I, do I have to live in or above the factory? In the still functioning factory!

RH

This juxtaposition of photographs from 1927 and 2016, each showing a female Mercedes driver in front of the Le Corbusier House on the Weißenhof housing estate, was initially used by the Stuttgart Regional Economic Development Corporation (Wirtschaftsförderung Region Stuttgart) to promote the *IBA* (Fig. 6). You've taken great strides away from this, in my eyes, rather sexist image of the automobile. Does this change in the *IBA*'s image also have something to do with the change of government in Baden-Württemberg [which had already happened in 2011]? Because this comparison seems completely anachronistic today, what with the climate change debate, diesel scandals and concerns about particulates.

AH

Right, blink and you'll miss it! We have to put the point about economic development into perspective a bit, though, because economic development in the Stuttgart Region is an incredibly far-reaching and deeply embedded cultural institution. It's not about grey-suited captains of industry rolling out the *IBA* from the rear. The *IBA* came into being as a small team in the Economic Development Corporation, with whom I then set up the office. There's a legend about the founding of the *IBA* in Stuttgart: the Regional Economic Development Corporation is only a hundred metres away from the university's faculty of Architecture and there's a pizzeria halfway between where people used to meet for lunch... so a professor of architecture one day says: You know what? It's the centenary of the Weißenhof estate – we can use that.

RH

And then the picture was taken in this connection?

AH

I honestly don't know how the picture came about. In any case, it evokes all sorts of things. I've been publically taken to task for being sexist on account of it. But I think that this pair of pictures can also provoke some interesting discussions.

RH

How?

AH

Well, it wouldn't have been my choice, but to start with, it touches on the salient fact that the car was invented here. You can also read it as avant-garde and positive, because the woman in front of the car also stood for liberation. The woman



6 1927 / 2016

who, with the aid of technology, is establishing her own socially independent life, in her lightweight clothes, freed from bourgeois restraint, and who's now in control of this machine.

RH

And there was also a new residential model, where the woman was not condemned to the role of mother, where instead there was the home for the childless couple and new modes of living. Regarding the 2016 photo, I'd have to say that as a result of automobile marketing over the last fifty years, the car has merged with the goal of conquering a woman as a trophy. For me, this sends entirely the wrong signal, and wouldn't motivate me at all to take part in the IBA. It also completely bypasses reality.

AH

That's as may be but the change of images and attitudes always has to do with questions of style. The initial image presented architectural modernism and the technological and social avant-garde on one level. Le Corbusier explicitly referred to the technology of automobiles in his architecture with the Maison Citroën. The house remains modern architecture, the car has become a classic car. What is modern today? It's no coincidence that technology and fashion today are more reminiscent of space travel and have something Martian about them. We can no longer relate modernism to the improvement of our lifestyle as a matter of course, but perhaps only as a means of escape from a world destroyed by modernism.

RH

Nevertheless, for me it radiates such a sense of implied order, a regime where you say that basically everything's fine, the architecture's bearing up well, and you can

now also introduce a new type of woman, a new type of car. There's continuity, but it needs revitalising input – it can't just go on the same old way.

AH

No, but that would still be a layer of reading. One could also read the picture as a representation of criticism that the idea of depicting modernity with the strongly socially promoted single-family house, or more precisely a semi-detached house, has as little relevance to the future as the forlorn yearning for urban mobility in a thing that can probably do 300 km/h. And we all know what the traffic is like here. You could also see it as a form of avant-garde critique that plays with formal contexts and eschews the essentialism of roles and functions. Despite all the justified criticism, the fact that we can argue about the various aspects of it is also worthwhile in itself.

RH

The format of a building exhibition also entails festivalisation. Raquel Jaureguizar, project manager of the IBA'27, spoke of the happiness that can be experienced in mixed living, working and living which could be conveyed here. It's also about feelings of the new and festive, perhaps even about a new dawn. Do you think the building exhibition format is capable of this?

AH

So far, we do have the feeling that it could work. In Germany, the question is now: Is the IBA the better planning system? This is probably why there's this «IBA inflation» with various IBAs running in parallel. However, very few of them are able to meet the IBA claim (International, Building, Exhibition). If I compare this with the IBA Berlin '87, where the exhibition was part of the international architectural discourse, or with the Weißenhof, or with the *Interbau Berlin 1957* as a model for a society in the process of reconstruction and as a justification for large-scale housing construction and modern urban development... most exhibitions can no longer manage that. Then again, it's also partly a matter of promotion, of generating hope with the format of financial constraints. I find the planning theory aspect the most interesting: Do we need a faster, more playful format in addition to the formal, still very top-down structured planning processes, which years after lead to rigid, barely alterable sets of rules? And that's where the IBA is something like the promise that things can be done differently. The festive – which is why we cultivate it – the sensual, the amusing, the events that we stage very carefully, with great effort, where we try to introduce people to a viable future. To say that you *can* design, the city belongs to *us*, in the final analysis, does have a political component. What we're now doing is not merely driven by global financial flows and ensuing technological fantasies regrettably sweeping over us, and which we have somehow to deal with, but rather we're taking the future into our own hands.

RH

Thank you very much!

Translation: Karl Detering

- 1 Cf. David Kuchenbuch, *Ordered Community. Architects as social engineers. Germany and Sweden in the 20th century*, Bielefeld 2010 (in German).
- 2 Off to market! Interview with Andreas Hofer by Laura Weissmüller, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 29 January 2019, p. 9 (in German).
- 3 *Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) (International Building Exhibition) in Stuttgart 2027*
- 4 *The most beautiful house in the world*
- 5 On the building cooperative *Neues Heim*, post-war housing construction and social problems in Stuttgart-Rot: Ingrid Haberkorn, «I don't feel like a Danube-Swabian, I feel like a German.» On the integration of former expellees in Stuttgart-Rot, Gus Hagelberg a. Monika Jekelius, «Being at home, that meant: living in dignity.» The settlement Stuttgart-Rot: home for refugees. Experimental Field of Modern Architecture?, in: *Neue Siedlungen — Neue Fragen. A follow-up study on expellees in Baden-Württemberg*, ed. by Christel Köhle-Hezinger, project by the Ludwig Uhland Institute of Historical and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Tübingen, Tübingen 1995, p. 217-220, 221-232 (in German).
- 6 *Neue Heimat* was the largest and most prominent non-state housing corporation in post-war Europe.
- 7 <https://www.killesberghoehe.de/killesberghoehe/architekturkonzept.htm>, last accessed on 12 February 2020: «The developer Franz Fürst wanted the best in their field. And a team was formed: *Baumschlagerei Eberle*, Lochau; *David Chipperfield Architects*, Berlin; *KCAP Architects*, Zurich and *Ortner & Ortner Baukunst*, Berlin, responsible for the master plan. Their role model: On the doorstep – the *Weißenhof Estate*, an architectural legend to this day, teamwork even back then.» (in German)
- 8 Werner Durth, *German Architects. Biographical Interrelations 1900–1970*, Publications of the German Architecture Museum on the History and Theory of Architecture, ed. by Heinrich Klotz, Braunschweig/Wiesbaden 1986, 2nd ed. 1987, 3rd ed. Munich 1992 (in German).
- 9 *The Neue Heimat 1950–1982: A Social Democratic Utopia and its Constructions*, ed. by Andres Lepik a. Hilde Strobl, exh. cat., Architecture Museum of the TU Munich, Munich 2019, p. 126/127 (in German).
- 10 More than Housing: Hunziger Areal Zurich, The Beginning of a Cooperative Movement: Power Plant 1 Hardturm, Zurich, in: *No Fear of Participation. Living Today*, ed. by Andres Lepik a. Hilde Strobl, exh. magazine, Architecture Museum of the TU Munich, Munich 2016, p. 10-18, 26-31 (in German).
- 11 The rail and urban development project that prompted mass protests.
- 12 Hofer 2019 (as Note 2).
- 13 <https://olgaele2012.de/>, last accessed on 11 February 2020: «The construction of the new residential area on the former site of the Olga Hospital is almost completed. The Stuttgart Housing and Urban Development Association (SWSG), the housing associations *Baukasten*, *Baulöwen*, *GoWest*, *ImWestenwasNeues*, *MaxAcht*, *Olga 07* and *StadtHaus*, the *Siedlungswerk* and *Mörk-Immobilien* have built approx. 220 apartments, a day care centre for children, a family and neighbourhood centre, a playground, four underground car parks and commercial premises.»
- 14 The *International Building Exhibition Emscher Park* aimed to give the central Ruhr area impetus for a conceptual change, responding to the industrial decline of the area.
- 15 <https://www.iba27.de/portraet-der-stadtregion-stuttgart-von-max-guthier/>, last accessed on 12 February 2020.
- 16 <https://www.bwgruen.de/schauplaetze/gartenschau-remstal-2019/>, last accessed on 11 February 2020.