

THE FIFTH COLUMN

CALL FOR ARTICLES Winter Issue 'Politics and Architecture'

The Summer issue of the Fifth Column is finally in your hands. The Fall issue, Rational Architecture, is in the works and the article deadline should have passed by the time you have received this. In an effort to promote the input from across the country, we are making a call for articles addressed to all our readers for the Winter issue, Politics and Architecture.

In most respects, the two fields seem to be totally unrelated. Nonetheless the two continue to weave through a collision course that has been at least explosive and often ruinous. The subjects that are to be raised by this relationship are too many to be addressed in a single issue. To ensure some degree of completeness, we have decided to concentrate on three basic themes.

1. Architectural Expression of Political Ideas

The 'pure creation' of any architectural style has usually been prompted or adopted by a parallel political development. On one hand, the architecture can be seen as a purely natural embodiment or reflection of the overall values of a society. Our concern here is the enforced or conscious adoption/invention of an architecture consistent with a political ideal. The examples are fascinating - Jefferson and the Greek Revival, the Fascist architecture of the thirties, the 'dissolution' of the Bauhaus and the Russian avant-garde, etc.

2. The Architect as Politician

The first theme focuses on the imposition by political thought of an ideal which in turn is adopted by architects either in search of a commission or a consistency with their own age. This second theme deals with the political concerns of an individual or group of architects evident in their approach and work. Politics, particularly in Europe, have recently added a complicated new wrinkle to design. Yet, throughout history, architects have realized or theorized about projects with stern political overtones - Ledoux's Salt Works and LeCorbusier's Plan Voisin to name but two. Apart from their obvious social concerns, both projects predated their parallel developments in politics.

3. The Politics of Architecture

This theme intends to deal with the inner workings of the architecture/politics relationship. During a period of economic hardship, architects look to the government for major commissions and the ensuing process is full of tragedy and scandal. This is an issue that struck home earlier this summer. Questions of political patronage, the commission and the selection process, as well as the onus of architectural judgement are all inflammatory and as yet, unanswered.

The deadline for the receipt of material in Montreal for the Winter issue is November 15, 1982. We are also seeking material for the regular sections of the magazine - Making Plans, News and Reviews, Archives, Drawing, Student Work, and Critique. Contact your regional editor or The Fifth Column.

The Editorial Board
The Fifth Column