"A small flock of female students"
Paul Schmitthenner's *Meisterklasse* in Tübingen, 1944-1945

Wolfgang Voigt

Today, in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the enrollment at architecture faculties reveals a conspicuous trend. The number of women students has risen steadily over the past decades, and now they are in the majority, a development that clearly demonstrates progress towards gender equality. Although we are accustomed to thinking of this change as a phenomenon of the 21st century, this is not quite correct. Throughout the 20th century, there have been other instances when women have made up more than half of a student body or had a strong presence at faculties of architecture or design. For example, as modernism was emerging around 1914 in the German Empire, large numbers of women were in attendance at some schools which offered courses in furniture, crafts and interior decoration, such as the Grand-Ducal School of Arts and Crafts in Weimar under the direction of Henry van der Velde.[1] For women, training in the applied arts was appealing, as they were not required to have an *Abitur*, that is, the rigorous high school diploma that was a prerequisite for entrance to a university. Although women were admitted to all German universities by 1909, few had the opportunity to attend an academic high school to receive the prerequisite education. As a result, for much of the 20th century, the universities were almost completely the preserve of men. Nonetheless, in 1919 and 1920, during the first two years of the Weimar Bauhaus, when fine arts and crafts took precedence and the administration did not conspire to keep their numbers low, women and men were enrolled in equal numbers.[2] And by the 1980s in the

1 Schulte (1992) 95–117, esp. 113–116; Hüter (1992) 285–340, esp. 320–324.

2 Rössler/Blümm (2019), 9; Droste (1991, orig. 1990), 40.

German Democratic Republic (GDR), female students outnumbered males at architecture faculties.[3]

Paul Schmitthenner and the *Stuttgarter Schule* during the Second World War

Another example occurred during the Second World War. At that time, the number of women studying architecture at German universities was relatively high. This came about for two reasons: young men had been drafted into the army and, beginning in 1936, restrictions placed on women students after the First World War were eased and their ranks increased.[4] In the 1944 spring semester at the *Technische Hochschule* (TH or technical university) in Stuttgart, just as many women as men were studying architecture. In the following winter semester 1944-45, although there were probably more male than female students, there was one class that was almost exclusively populated by women, a situation which appears worthwhile to look at more closely today.

Particularly in the interbellum period, the highly respected *Stuttgarter Schule* (Stuttgart School) attracted many students—almost all men, with many foreigners among them. The designation references both the location where the most prominent practitioners held professorships and the kind of architecture, based on regional forms and materials, that they propagated. At the end of 1918 and a few months before the founding of the Bauhaus in Weimar, the two leading protagonists, Paul Bonatz (1877-1956) and Paul Schmitthenner (1884-1972), took advantage of the political vacuum of the November Revolution to introduce radical educational reforms. The credo of the *Stuttgarter Schule* was simple: handwork was given a high priority in instruction and architecture should not result from abstract, aesthetic notions about design. Instead, it should arise from what Schmitthenner called *gebaute Form* (built form), namely that the means of construction must be adequate to the material used and that a building should always be developed with regards to a specific context, such as the landscape and local

3 Engler (2016), 8; Scheffler (2017).

4 Compare, the chapter by Annette Krapp about Maria Lang Schwarz and especially footnote 8 in this collection.

means of construction. Thus, experience was given preference over experimentation and practice was more highly valued than theory. The idea of an international architecture, as propagated by Walter Gropius, was an anathema to the *Stuttgarter Schule*.[5]

In the final year of the Second World War, this faculty of architecture, which had embraced Nazi doctrines willingly, lay in ruins, both physically and metaphorically. After extensive aerial attacks in the summer of 1944, only the exterior walls of the main building of the TH Stuttgart remained standing. The professors experienced the apocalypse as a double blow, as not only their university but also the majority of their private homes had been either destroyed or were badly damaged.[6] Their numbers had been reduced and the institutes of some tenured professors had been abandoned, due in part to injuries sustained in the war or because staff members had been drafted into the army.[7] In the summer of 1944, the last, prominent German emigrant, Paul Bonatz, left for Turkey. Although he did not join the NSDAP and had experienced difficulties due to a courageous and critical statement about Hitler, he nevertheless participated in the planning of important projects for the Nazi regime. In the final year of the war, the Turkish government offered him a contract to erect several schools, an opportunity which enabled him to flee his homeland and avoid the anticipated inferno there.[8]

In Stuttgart, the ranks of male students dwindled. Masculine youth born after 1918 were drafted and sent to the front lines; many were killed or were captured by the allies. Only "war disabled" men were allowed to study. As long as they were not forced to take a job in the armaments industry or related employment elsewhere, women could also attend universities. The desolate situation notwithstanding, Stuttgart was one of the few German architecture faculties that continued to offer instruction during the last year

5 For the *Stuttgarter Schule*, see: Voigt (2003); May (2010); Philipp (2012).

6 See: Executive Board of the Faculty of Architecture: Letter to the architecture students in the armed forces of the Technical University of Stuttgart, Stuttgart in February 1945, in the University Archive, Technical University of Stuttgart (hereafter: UaS), SN 64 Nr. 165. By November 1944 the residences of professors Bonatz, Janssen, Schmitthenner, Schmoll von Eisenwerth, Stortz and Wetzel were destroyed; the apartments of professors Hanson and Keuerleber were damaged; and only von Tiedje's house was intact. See: Faculty meeting on November 9, 1944, UaS.

7 Ibid.

8 Voigt (2010).

of the war. Substitute quarters were found in a school at the edge of the city that Paul Schmitthenner had completed in 1930.[9] Under increasingly difficult conditions, the few remaining professors took up instruction in the fall semester 1944-1945.

Paul Schmitthenner's own residence was destroyed in a bombing raid in September 1944. Built in 1922 and situated on a hill overlooking the city, the house was known as the legendary "Noah's Ark over Stuttgart" and was familiar to professionals and laypeople alike.[10] He fled the city taking only some salvaged household goods. In the village of Kilchberg on the outskirts of the old university city of Tübingen, he was able to rent a few rooms in a small castle to use as an apartment.

For Schmitthenner, the loss of his own house, which had seemed like an isolated idyll far removed from the political storms of the past two decades, was the final blow in his experience of war that had been marked by a growing estrangement from the Nazi regime. In the beginning of the 1930s, when he had hoped to be entrusted with the reform of German architectural education on a national level, he ostentatiously made a point of joining the Nazi party and appeared to his colleagues as being headed on the path to becoming the leading architect in Germany.[11] But when the desired career did not materialize because his deliberately unassuming design for the German Pavilion for the 1935 World Exposition in Brussels was not favorably received, his gradual aversion to the regime took its course.[12] In the summer of 1940, the architect received the news of the death of his younger son, Martin Schmitthenner, who had been drafted into the army during the campaign in France. In his youth, he was a follower of the poet Stefan George and had befriended Claus Count von Stauffenberg who attempted to assassinate Hitler in 1944. Shortly before his death, Martin Schmitthenner left a political testament which brutally described the bare truth about National Socialism and the nature of the war. Paul Schmitthenner printed an excerpt of this statement and sent it to a select group of friends. Shortly thereafter

9 The *Horst-Wessel-Schule* in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen was built between 1927-30 by Paul Schmitthenner as the *Hohenstein Schule*. Compare faculty meeting, November 9, 1944, UaS.

10 For Paul Schmitthenner's own house, built in 1922 (Am Kriegsbergturm 27, Stuttgart), see: Voigt (2003), 133–134; Schickele (1927).

11 Voigt (2003a); Voigt (1985).

12 Voigt (2003a).

he became aware of the systematic murder of mentally ill patients under the secret "euthanasia" program and composed a personal memo expressing his outrage at it.[13]

In 1938, with war imminent, Schmitthenner, wrote to a friend about the necessity of preserving one's true nature and artistic predilections for the aftermath of conflict.[14] Starting in 1942, as more and more cities were devastated by the aerial war and many of his own buildings were destroyed or damaged, he sensed the complete eradication of what he valued in architecture, where the ethic of handwork was central. The physical substance was annihilated, but he wanted to keep its values alive for the future. "Now would be a great opportunity," he wrote to a colleague, "that young people, from well-situated backgrounds do that, what one has previously considered to be a step downward, and take a step up to handwork, which one can raise to the level of art. That would be a renewal of the very nature of our people."[15]

By late 1944, he understood the total destruction as an opportunity, although the thought of continuing to hold university classes in the destroyed city of Stuttgart was absurd.[16] Considering the growing problems that the students faced, such as the need to find housing in the bombed-out city, he proposed that all classes be relocated to the countryside. In doing so, those students who had been injured in the war and now populated the lecture halls would be protected from the last phase of the air strikes. Each of the four remaining professors for architectural design should take a group of 25 to 30 students and settle in a small city in the region. The intact buildings and structures there were better objects of study than the rubble of Stuttgart. Instruction in additional subjects, such as architecture history, structural design and urban planning, was to be carried out in rotation by professors who would visit a group for four weeks. All professors were to meet with one another once a month to exchange information and compare experiences.[17]

13 Ring binder „Persönliche Dinge. Notizen 1938-1940," Undated entry, probably October 3, 1940. Archive Paul Schmitthenner (APS).

14 Paul Schmitthenner to Wilhelm Schäfer, September 30, 1938, in: Wilhelm Schäfer Papers, Heinrich-Heine-Institut Düsseldorf.

15 Paul Schmitthenner to Hermann Hampe, April 26, 1946, APS.

16 Paul Schmitthenner to Max Laeuger, November 16, 1944, saai | Archiv für Architektur und Ingenieurbau am Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (KIT).

17 Paul Schmitthenner: „Ein Vorschlag," undated (Fall 1944), UaS, SN 64 Nr. 165.

For Paul Schmitthenner, the crisis could enable a better kind of education to come into being: "When I oversee a seminar with 25 students, to whom I can totally devote myself and who, for their part, must focus on the teacher, the result is what a seminar always should be, the *Meisterklasse*."[18] By this time, he was living in the countryside near Tübingen and taking care of details, such as finding rooms at the University of Tübingen to be used as classrooms and dormitories for the students. In the end, of the four remaining professors for architectural design in Stuttgart, he was the only one who carried out this plan.

"A small flock of female students" in Tübingen

Interestingly, the authority responsible for university education in Stuttgart, the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Culture, agreed to this proposal but with a stipulation about gender. Whereas men would be instructed in Stuttgart, Schmitthenner was allowed to establish a special course, mainly for women students, to continue until May 1, 1945 and the completion of the final diploma examination.[19] Nothing has been handed down to explain why the genders were separated.

Faced with the coming Herculean task of rebuilding the country, the younger professors may have had doubts about the continuing relevance of Schmitthenner's approach to architecture. The guidelines issued by the Reich Commissioner for Social Housing or the information that was contained in Ernst Neufert's *Bauordnungslehre*[20] (architectural graphic standards) emphasized other methods of planning and construction, such as industrial prefabrication and standardization,[21] and gave no consideration to Schmitthenner's appreciation for handwork and the honest use of materials. Furthermore, when considering the disregard that women in the profession of architecture encountered, men probably did not trust them to be able to carry out the hard work needed in the immediate post war years. Viewed in this light, they were shunted off to Schmitthenner's class. Certainly, he

18 Ibid. *Meisterklasse* is translated as master class.

19 Compare the faculty meeting, November 17, 1944, in: UaS, SN 64 Nr. 165.

20 Here the reference is to the edition from 1943.

21 Voigt (1999); Harlander/Fehl (eds.)(1986).

did not view the "old-fashionedness" of his teaching to be a shortcoming, but rather, a particular strength.[22]

The archival materials from the *Technische Hochschule* in Stuttgart are fragmentary, and only schematic information about the composition of the class is known.[23] References to this class, in the form of drawings that are kept in Paul Schmitthenner's papers, record that nine women and four men, including one from Turkey and one from Holland, who participated without the goal of completing the diploma examination, took part in it. There may have been more students, but the fact of an almost women-only class has been orally handed down.[24] Furthermore, an official document refers to "our female diploma students" and to "a small flock of female students" in Tübingen.[25]

In the 1920s, Schmitthenner taught in a classical lecture format to overfilled auditoria. Now the small group permitted an intimate, interactive seminar: First "a general discussion [should] take place, and about the things that only have a direct connection to architecture. During this exchange, I let each person have enough space, get an impression of their way of thinking and level of education. As far as possible, collaboration should take place."[26] The facilities and equipment were poor: students drew on blocks of transparent paper, "without drawing boards and T-squares, [and] the blackboard had a surface area of 1½ square meters and a hole in the middle from a shell."

22 The conditions of Jože Plečnik in the 1950s at the University of Ljubljana are somewhat similar to the situation in Tübingen under Schmitthenner during the last year of the Second World War. See: Potočnik (2016).

23 List of students at the diploma course in Tübingen, Winter Semester 1944/45, in: UaS, SN 64 Nr. 165. The list, apparently compiled before the start of the course, records 14 women and 10 men. Concerning the men, only 4 participated. Documentation exists of nine women participants. Drawings in the Schmitthenner papers confirm the presence of seven women (Gerti Gonser, Ursula Heim, Margarete Köster, Marga Jäger, D. Langenbach, Waltraud Wing, V. Zarnik); the drawings in UaS indicate an additional female participant (Leonore Rosshirt). In addition, there are the recollections of a contemporary witness, Elisabeth Prüss Schmitthenner. Drawings in the Schmitthenner papers show three men (Henk de Bie, Mukkader Cizer, Hubert Roth) were in attendance, and drawings in the Archive of the Architekturzentrum Wien indicate that another man (Norbert Heltschl) participated.

24 Interview by the author with Elisabeth Schmitthenner, March 1, 1984.

25 Letter to the students in the armed forces; See, UaS, SN 64 Nr. 165.

26 Paul Schmitthenner, „Gedanken zum Unterricht in Tübingen," handwritten notes, Fall 1944, APS.

Because the rotation of the teaching staff remained a mere idea, Schmitthenner more or less taught all the courses alone. "I personally occupied all the professorial chairs, from architectural history to statics," he reported to Paul Bonatz, who was now living in Istanbul, when the long-interrupted mail service was resumed. "I was my own best student, and my teaching 25 years ago appears to me today like the mere attempt of a beginner."[27]

Schmitthenner's course in Tübingen offered instruction in applied arts, architectural typology, construction detailing, the measuring of historic monuments, the reconstruction of buildings and urban planning. Only one portfolio, containing examples of one exercise with 12 projects, nine by women and three by men, has survived. The theme was a "garden house" and, in light of the extreme need for housing for those who had been bombed out, could hardly be seen as relevant. It should be noted that the need for "temporary buildings" also appears in the course concept and the concern for the homeless was addressed elsewhere.[28]

"The tasks that remain, that allow us to keep living, lie in the depths and silences, …"

For the "garden house" exercise, the external dimensions and the plan were specified. Although the two-story pavilion should house a hermit and accommodate his small parties, the hedonistic purpose was not the most important problem to be addressed. Rather it was a variation of Schmitthenner's "constructive architectural design" which formed the core of his pedagogy. Depending on the means of construction and building materials (natural stone or stucco over brick or exposed brickwork or timber), all the relevant details of a simple, small building were drawn up. In the spirit of Schmittthenner's concept of *gebaute Form*, it was possible to learn how every building material required a suitable method of construction, and that works of architecture that are fabricated from different materials should be distinct from one another. Hence a drawing of a façade is accompanied by the most important details, for example, how a wall and roof are connected or

27 Paul Schmitthenner to Paul Bonatz, May 8, 1946, APS.

28 Paul Schmitthenner, See, UaS, SN 64 Nr. 165.

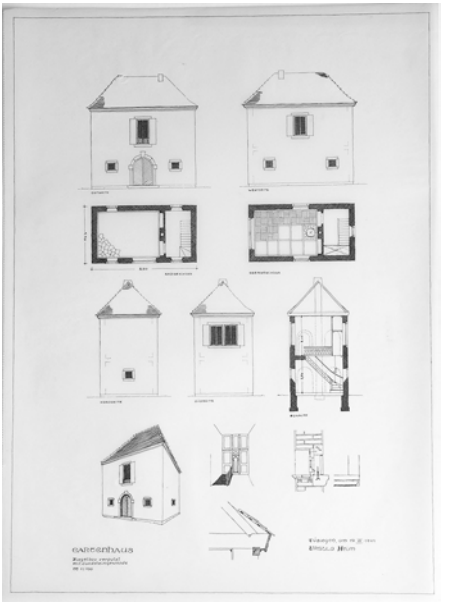

Figure 1: Ursula Heim, Garden House Exercise, TH Stuttgart under the direction of Prof. Paul Schmitthenner, 1944-45. Source: Archive Paul Schmitthenner, München/Johannes Schmitthenner.

how a window is placed into a wall.[29] The extant "garden house" projects follow this example and reveal a series of variations with great aesthetic appeal, as each student tried to give his or her design its own character. (Figure 1) Schmitthenner encouraged those who were not from Germany to develop a design based on the building traditions of their native country. We observe the work of V. Zarnik, who may have hailed from Yugoslavia, and who drew a house with a round-arch loggia and a flat, hipped roof that recalled architecture from the Mediterranean region; or one by Henk de Bie from the Netherlands, who designed a northern Holland brick building with curved gables.

It seems curious that the almost all women class in Tübingen took place during the last year of the war. Yet the course can be seen as a means to escape both the present, marked by need and violence, and the impending military defeat followed by a post-war period, which Nazi propaganda

29 Drawings of the *Gartenhaus* (garden house) exercise, APS.

painted as having barbarian punishments and the extermination of the German people in store. The final weeks of instruction took place within earshot of the approaching thunder of canons from the west. Schmitthenner brought the course to a conclusion when the occupation of Tübingen by the Allies appeared to be in a matter of days, and the women received their diploma certificates on April 15, 1945. Because transportation to Stuttgart had been severed and official documents were no longer available, the certificates were drawn by hand.[30] In Tübingen, the war ceased when French troops entered the city on April 19, 1945. How the women students survived the first days of the occupation, marked by plundering and violence, has not been handed down.

Paul Schmitthenner considered the women's course in Tübingen as an attempt to transition "his" *Stuttgarter Schule* pedagogy to a new phase. By testing a more in-depth method of teaching, he hoped to introduce the elite model of the *Meisterklasse*, that had been reserved for the art academies in Germany, to the architecture faculties at the technical universities. Furthermore, Tübingen was to mark the beginning of a new approach to architecture, which now had to divorce itself from the gigantism as propagated by Albert Speer. "The tasks that remain, that allow us to keep living, lie in the depths and silences, and have to be approached differently than the big things without foundations that were planned and built," he wrote in February 1945 to his friend Theodor Heuss, who would become the first president of the Federal Republic of Germany a few years later.[31]

But this experiment quickly came to an end. Due to his pro-Nazi stance from 1932 to 1934, the American occupation forces suspended Schmitthenner from his university professorship in the autumn of 1945. Like all those who had been a member of the Nazi party, he was required to undergo a denazification process which he successfully absolved, in part due to his open opposition to the death sentences handed down by the Nazi People's Court. Nevertheless, he was not allowed to return to the university, and the women's class in Tübingen became Paul Schmitthenner's final activity as a teacher. At his former university, newly recruited staff, such as Richard Döcker, the chief site supervisor at the 1927 Weissenhof Housing Estate, ensured that a second *Stuttgarter Schule*, now based on modernism, would take hold.

30 Sketch for the diploma of Ursula Heim, APS.

31 Paul Schmitthenner to Theodor Heuss, February 22, 1945, APS.

Power and pedagogy: The legacy of the Tübingen experiment after 1945

We can assume that the women in Tübingen, who received their diplomas and were taught by a professor, who was known for the theatrical posturing of an urbane gentleman, were daughters of bourgeois families. The extant archival materials about the women who studied architecture during the war years reveals that their fathers were architects, engineers, businessmen, factory owners, etc. The attraction of "New Tradition," that is, the kind of moderate, craft-based architecture that Schmitthenner and Bonatz propagated, for these female students is obvious. They were not adherents of modern, urban culture, but rather hailed from small or mid-sized cities and intended to build architecture that was suited to their social and professional circles once they returned home. Presumably, they had little interest in radical visions and the internationalism of Bauhaus-inspired design.[32]

Of the nine women students that are documented, little is known about them in later years. They probably left the profession of architecture for familiar reasons—marriage and motherhood—or perhaps they did not practice at all. There are, however, two notable exceptions. Elisabeth Prüss (1921-2017) was one of those courageous women who opened her own office and, with great tenacity, established herself professionally. Her family was critical of the Nazis and, in 1949, she returned to her hometown, Neustadt on the Baltic Sea, where she became a self-employed architect.[33] She was not readily welcomed in a profession that was dominated by men. At the time, the 28-year-old was also a single mother. One can hardly imagine the hostility that she endured in that remote provincial town. During her studies and the early post-war years, she had worked at Paul Schmitthenner's architecture office. Together they produced the images and texts to accompany the book *Gebaute Form*. (Figure 2) Her collaborations are identified with the abbreviation "P" which appears on many drawings. Initially this monograph remained unpublished. In 1959, she became Elisabeth Schmitthenner, the second wife of

32 Compare the discussions about the women students of Heinrich Tessenow at the Technical University of Berlin during the 1920s and 1930s in: Bauer (2003).

33 Ardito (2013); Norbert Becker, interview with the contemporary witness Dipl.-Ing. Elisabeth Schmitthenner on April 3, 2014 in Munich, transcribed by Katja Nagel. Typescript, file in: UaS; Voigt (2018).

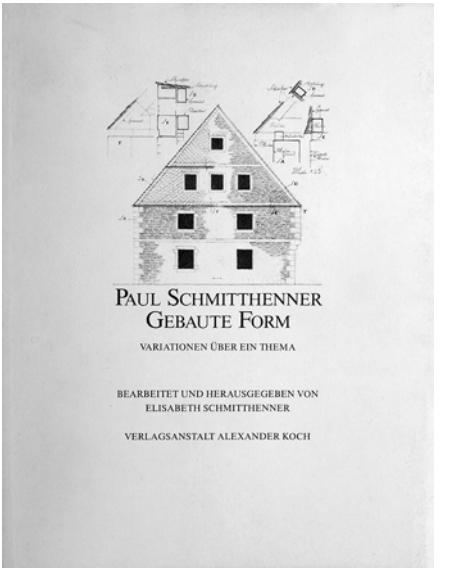

Figure 2: Paul Schmitthenner, Gebaute Form. Variationen über ein Thema. Bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Elisabeth Schmitthenner (Paul Schmitthenner. Built Form. Variations on a Theme. Compiled and edited by Elisabeth Schmitthenner). (1984). Source: Gebaute Form (1984)/Johannes Schmitthenner.

Paul. After his death, she sensitively edited the materials and supplemented the texts. In 1984 she published *Gebaute Form*, first in German and a few years later in Italian.[34] Although she never put her contribution in the foreground, the final publication is a wholly collaborative endeavor. (Figures 3–4)

The other woman from the Tübingen course who went on to practice is Gerti Gonser (1921-1997). To become an architect, she had to overcome resistance on the part of her family. Her father, an architect in civil service, did not think much of this idea. Because she did not have his official approval, she traveled to Berlin in 1940 to meet with officials at the Reich Ministry for Sciences and National Education and was able to secure admission to the TH Stuttgart. During her studies, she worked as a ticket collector in the Stuttgart streetcar system, a typical job for women during the war.

34 Schmitthenner (1984)(ed.); Schmitthenner/Frank (eds.)(1988).

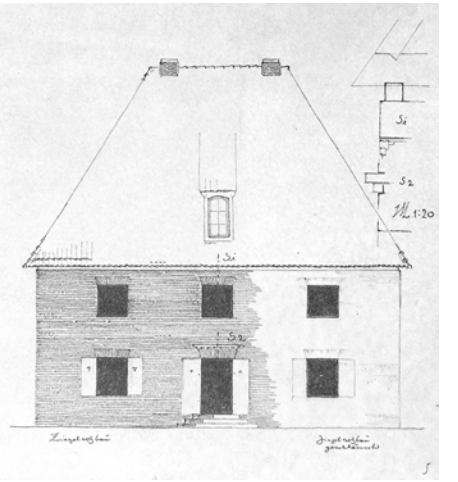

Figure 3: Paul Schmitthenner, Ziegelmauerwerkbau, aus Gebaute Form (brick masonry house, from Built Form) (1984). Source: Archive Paul Schmitthenner, München/Johannes Schmitthenner.

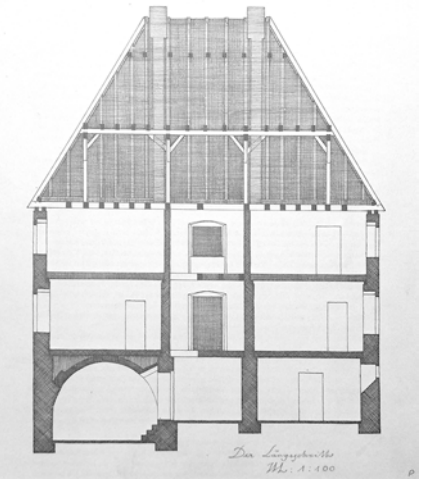

Figure 4: Elisabeth Prüss Schmitthenner, Der Längsschnitt, aus Gebaute Form (longitudinal section, from Built Form) (1984). Source: Archive Paul Schmitthenner, München/Johannes Schmitthenner.

Figure 5: Gerti Elliger-Gonser, Glücklich Wohnen mit Kindern (Living happily with children) (1983). Source: Glücklich Wohnen mit Kindern/Ulrike Elliger.

She returned to her native city of Münster in Westphalia, married and, as Gerti Elliger-Gonser, had a successful career, establishing her own architectural office in 1949. Two of her brothers, who also studied in Stuttgart after 1945, became her employees—an atypical constellation in the 1950s.[35]

In the late 1970s and early 1980s she became known as the author of popular advice books about themes like "living happily with children." (Figure 5) As a mother and a wife, she was well qualified to write about these issues.[36] Like Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky a generation earlier, she found it necessary to perceive the spaces of everyday life through the eyes of children. Gerti Elliger-Gonser recommended that every child should have their own room and made proposals for furniture to suit the dimensions of children. While the standard living room planning at this time called for a seating area with a television and a dining table, she drew up proposals that, as a minimum,

35 Information cordially conveyed to the author and Mary Pepchinski by Stefan Rethfeld, Münster and the family of Gerti Elliger-Gonser.

36 Elliger-Gonser (1979); Elliger-Gonser (1979a); Elliger-Gonser (1981).

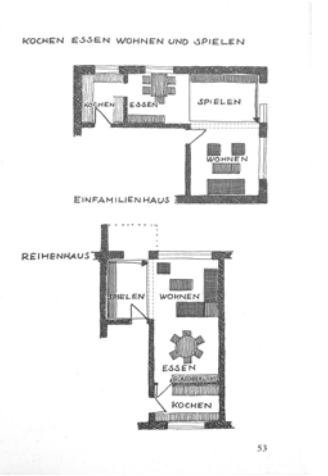

Figure 6: Gerti Elliger-Gonser, Glücklich Wohnen mit Kindern (Living happily with children) (1983). Kochen Essen Wohnen und Spielen (cooking eating livng and playing); Einfamilienhaus (single family house), Reihenhaus (row house). Source: Glücklich Wohnen mit Kindern/Ulrike Elliger.

displayed a separate zone for children to play. Her drawings were intentionally simple and schematic to be accessible to everyone. (Figure 6)

It is noteworthy that two women, who emerged from this short, intense educational experience, later went on to engage in architectural theory. The work of Gerti Elliger-Gonser was directed towards laypersons, while Elisabeth Prüss Schmitthenner's book can be understood as a contribution to intellectual discourse, which presented a school of thought about architecture that had long been sidelined and was intended for architects working in local and non-globalized contexts.

Beyond details of individual biographies, glimpsed through the framework of gender analysis, Paul Schmitthenner's architecture class in Tübingen points to other relationships of power and pedagogy as well. During the final months of war, the sites of the two architecture faculties (Stuttgart and Tübingen) can be viewed as gendered, binary opposites. Stuttgart, albeit in ruin, remained "masculine": it was a large city, the location of the university where the remaining male students and teachers endured. Tübingen was "feminine": situated in the countryside, it was populated by those considered to be weak, that is, women, foreigners and wounded men, and instruction

took place under the direction of a figure who was considered politically disposable and professionally antiquated.

Even if the class did have less status, Schmitthenner was committed to teaching this group in Tübingen. Why? On the one hand, he was a passionate educator. On the other, when his willingness to place his architectural vision in service of the Nazis in the early 1930s is considered, the heterogeneous class, comprised of students who were female, war injured or non-German, presents an unconscious foreshadowing of the make-up of post-war society. Imparting his kind of architectural knowledge to them can be seen as an attempt at absolution, like a washing away of sins through baptism, and an attempt to restart it with a different public for a post-war context.

When describing this class, Schmitthenner identified it as *Meisterklasse*, a form of teaching that implies a hierarchical relationship where an older male directs the intellectual and artistic development of a group of young acolytes.[37] With this in mind, the format of the *Meisterklasse* could be understood as a vehicle for Schmitthenner to regain lost status, if only briefly, and assert his control over a less authoritative group.

Nonetheless, despite Schmitthenner's fondness for it, the appellation *Meisterklasse* is perhaps somewhat misleading. As mentioned above, the notion of the master class is inherently gendered male, as there is no feminine equivalent (*Meisterinklasse?* mistress class?) and the students, like dutiful sons—but never dutiful daughters—are expected to perpetuate the master's tradition once they depart the class.[38] What happens to this appellation and the implicit gender dynamic when women replace the men? Although the class was clearly following Paul Schmitthenner's lead, the balance of power here was less explicit, and the Tübingen students should not merely be seen as a passive "herd." With the group's intimate scale and isolated location, toiling against the backdrop of deep anxiety, they should be considered as engaged participants in an intense, shared dialog. In this brief time, as war raged and no one dared contemplate the terrible aftermath, both sides,

37 Pollack (1988), 20–24.

38 Ibid.

infused with equal levels of passion for architectural education, contributed to the process and the results.[39]

Translated by Mary Pepchinski

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