

A HOME FOR THE U.N.O.

The people of the world are determined that the United Nations shall succeed in organizing the first successful cooperative movement on an international scale. The architects of the world must see to it that this organization is housed in the finest group of structures that the best designers in the world can produce.

Progressive Architecture continues actively to urge an international competition, properly conducted, as the only reasonable method of determining who shall design the U.N.O. headquarters, and to make sure that the best possible design is accepted.

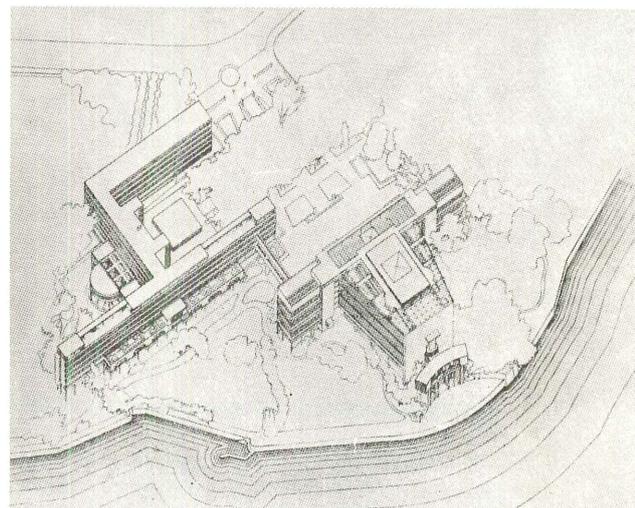
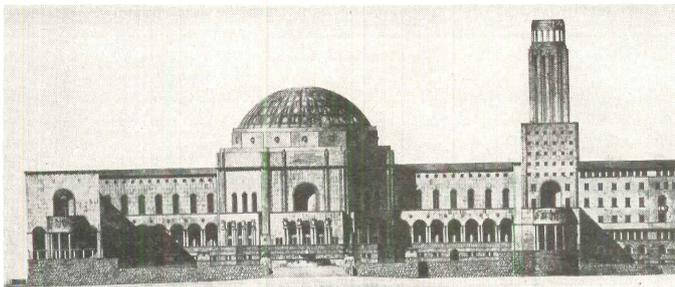
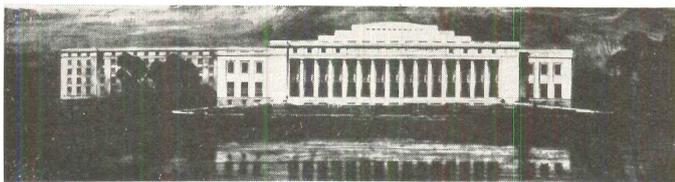
Cables and letters have been sent to the leading architectural magazines and the professional societies in the member nations of the U.N.O., asking them to support, in what ways they are able, the concept of an international professional competition. Within the United States, we have urged a definite stand in favor of such a competition on the members of the A.I.A. advisory committee. We have pointed out to President Truman, Edward R. Stettinius, Chairman of the American Delegation, and the proper U.N.O. committee heads the importance of a competition. We are printing the replies so far received on page 100.

Simply accepting the word "competition" will not be enough. The architects of the United States, with their established methods of fair, professionally conducted competitions free from political or individual pressure, have a definite responsibility to make sure that the result will be the most fit, the most progressive, the most handsome structures that our age can produce. There was a "competition" for the buildings at Geneva, too. Let's not fall into the same trap.

The most important immediate consideration will be the development of the program. This statement of needs must not be narrow, rigid, or inflexible. It must call for a headquarters unit which can grow and develop as the move toward international amity grows and matures. It must not

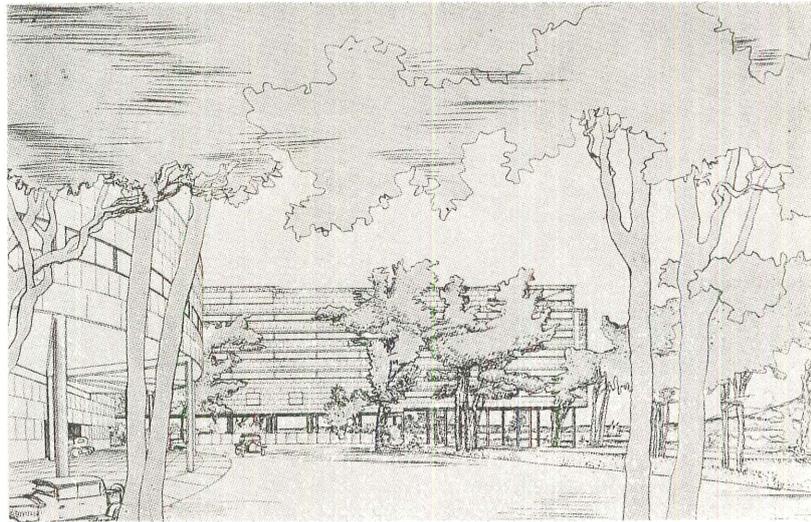
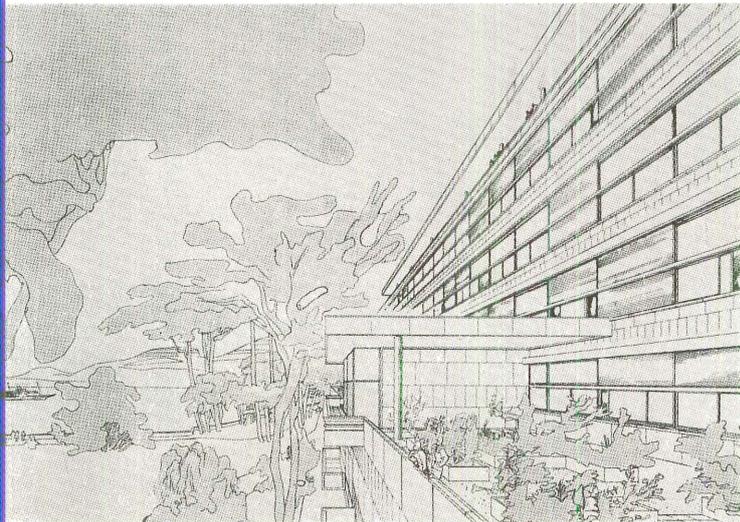


In 1926 a jury of nine architects threw away the opportunity to select a significant design as winner of a competition for the League of Nations headquarters. Stodgy classical designs, expressing in no way the aim for a saner world, predominated in the submissions. (Below, left.) Evading its assigned responsibility, the jury awarded nine first prizes, of which the only one to meet the requirements was the submission of Le Corbusier and Jeanneret. (Below, right.)



be a rigid description of a few buildings needed at the moment, but a description of those immediate requirements as part of an organic world capital capable of logical growth. With a program thus carefully studied, with a jury intelligently selected, with competitors chosen by the best possible means within each country, an international competition should succeed in producing a design which would rise above stylism and dated clichés. We cannot conceive of any other means of selection which would be free of design prejudices and political pressures.

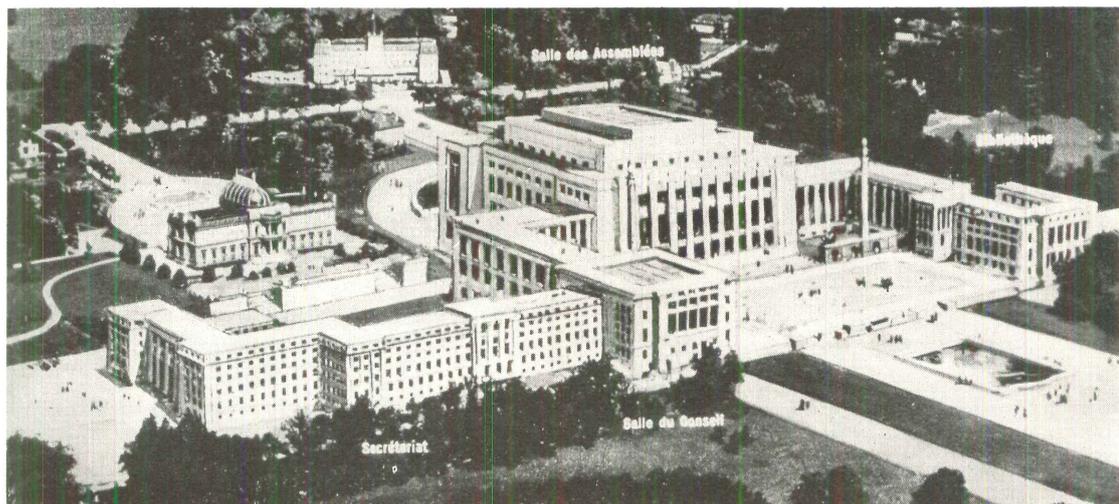
Progressive Architecture will continue to do everything within its power to promote the right kind of competition. Every architect who feels the importance of the matter should make his position clear.



Illustrations by courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art

The Le Corbusier design, only one of the nine which could be built for the stated cost, was copied in many respects in the final building.

A monument to architectural compromise, the final building was not significant. It typified a world organization which also hesitated, compromised, and died.



Architectural Review and **Architects' Journal** are both agreeable to the proposals for an international competition for U.N.O.

The Architectural Press
London, England

Fully agree on competition for U.N.O. headquarters bloc.

Architecture D'Aujourd'Hui
Paris, France

The magazine **Domus** is happy to join with you in backing the Museum of Modern Art's proposal for an international competition for U.N.O. headquarters, and is ready to support it and forward immediately this proposal in its March issue.

Ernesto N. Rogers
Architect, C.I.A.M.; Editor-in-Chief, **Domus**
Milan, Italy

We support proposal of Museum of Modern Art concerning international competition for U.N.O. headquarters. Letter follows.

Review Werk
Alfred Roth, Architect
Zurich, Switzerland

I am very much in accord with the idea of a competition for planning the U.N.O. headquarters. Kenneth Reid is quite right: the problem is, who are the jurors, who is the professional adviser?

I suggest that the jurors should each be paid for, and work out, a solution himself, to be checked by the professional adviser or advisers before judging the actual competition. Any juror who does not fulfill the conditions of the competition should be out and not paid.

This method would give us at least a jury which is thoroughly familiar with the problem (a desideratum which we nearly always miss, even with the "best" jurors).

Of course the projects of the jurors could not be entered in the competition or used later.

Marcel Breuer, A.I.A.
Cambridge, Mass.

Thank you so much for sending me the editorial on the U.N.O. selection of an architect. I believe the case is correctly and splendidly stated. I think an international nominating committee for invited participants might be helpful, but nobody—invited or not—should be excluded from participation at his own cost and risk.

Richard J. Neutra, A.I.A.
Los Angeles, Calif.

Thank you for your letter of February 13. Curiously enough, my President, Sir Percy Thomas, wrote several weeks ago to Mr. Noel Baker, Minister of State, who was one of the British representatives at the United Nations Assembly, urging that the British Government should make representations for the holding of an international competition for the design of the headquarters, and we heard from Mr. Noel Baker saying that he would bring the proposal forward.

I will lay your letter before my Committee at their next meeting to see whether they think it is possible for us to take further action.

C. D. Spragg, Secretary
Royal Institute of British Architects
London, England

I have read with interest Ken Reid's editorial concerning the national competition for U.N.O. headquarters, and I think that basically it is very sound if the mechanics can be worked out satisfactorily.

It appears to me, however, that if each nation designates a limited number of its top-flight architects for its entrants it might end up with a creditable group of competitors and with an inadequate jury. Possibly the most important part of the competition would be the determination of a jury of caliber and insight into architecture that

OPINIONS

A HOME FOR U. N. O.

Revista de Arquitectura de la Sociedad Central de Arquitectos acepta en principio concurso internacional U.N.O.

Federico de Chaval
Director
Buenos Aires, Argentina

The President has referred to Mr. Stettinius your telegram of February 14 referring to the recommendation of the architectural societies and magazines in various countries that an international competition be conducted for the design of the buildings for the United Nations headquarters. Mr. Stettinius is now en route to Washington from London where he has been attending the first meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations and I am therefore replying in his absence.

I am very glad to have your views with regard to the buildings for the United Nations and I am making your telegram available to the appropriate officials of the United Nations.

Hathaway Watson
Assistant to Mr. Stettinius
Washington, D. C.

We are entirely in accord with your conviction that the only possible way an architect can be selected for the U.N.O. buildings is through a well regulated, well paid, and well organized international competition.

John W. Root, A.I.A.
Chicago, Ill.

I am glad to hear that you favor a competition for the U.N.O. headquarters, and I am pleased to see **PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE** taking the lead in the organization of such a competition.

Such a group of buildings should inspire a real religious movement in architecture. The religion would be democracy. It has never been expressed in architecture, but today I believe that there are a lot of us to whom such an opportunity is a real inspiration. I think that such an expression should be one of the requirements set forth in the program. As such, this program would be the means of teaching the functions and potentialities of democracy which, after all, I believe is one of the functions of the U.N.O.

Alden B. Dow, A.I.A.
Midland, Mich.

May I add my own endorsement to your editorial suggestion that an international competition be held to select an architect for the permanent home of the United Nations Organization.

I believe that a preliminary selection of each national group of competitors could be held either by an open competition within each country or by government appointment. These chosen groups of competitors could then enter an international and final competition.

Morris Ketchum, Jr., A.I.A.
New York, N. Y.

would be most beneficial to the determination of the correct competitive results.

In this instance I might suggest for your pondering that a group of architects selected by each country be a pool from which **both** jurors and competitors be selected, the pool of architects, of course, to be the top-flight members of the profession in each nation, as suggested by Ken Reid.

In any event, I am wholeheartedly behind the basic premises outlined in the editorial for the forthcoming competition.

Ernest J. Kump, A.I.A.
San Francisco, Calif.

There can be no doubt whatever that an international competition is the only possible way for selecting the architect for U.N.O.—or should one say **architects**, about which more later. **PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE** should be commended for having taken an uncompromising stand.

As to the details, a good deal more discussion will be necessary than can be even remotely indicated in a letter. But at any rate, it is time to start free-for-all discussion—and for land's sakes, let us not restrict it to professional journals. With all respect to **PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE** and its fellow-publications, let us get it into the papers which are read in Congress and in the State Department.

Roland A. Wank, A.I.A.
New York, N. Y.