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[sic] effect of most buildings must be to *contrast* with their terrain," it emphasized, "not to grow out of it."[26]

Englishman, publisher, wanderer, writer, and Gurdjieff "student" Stanley Nott remembered the event. Olgivanna had invited him to the lectures and sat at his side. Nott recalled that the "lecture room was packed" with mostly "young men." He found Wright's talks "extraordinarily stimulating, full of ideas"; films were shown of "students working at Taliesin," and so forth. At the end of at least the first lecture "the applause, as they say, nearly lifted the roof."[27] Architect Lionel Brett also remembered the event well. The RIBA, he said after the war, "seldom finds itself the scene of a revivalist meeting, yet Frank Lloyd Wright's appearance there in the hectic summer of 1939 turned out to be nothing less. . . . No one enjoyed the atmosphere of lese-majeste more than Wright himself. 'Architecture', proclaimed the leonine figure with its mane of white hair, eyeing the youthful and rather grubby audience, 'architecture; my lords, ladies and gentlemen, is poetry'. . . . We were carried away."[28]

21 Reaction

The book containing the four Watson lectures was released in early 1940 by Lund Humphries. Before its release, however, there was a reevaluation, or rather those who were not so enamored of the living legend began to assert themselves. Since extensive extracts of the lectures had been published in *The Builder* a few days after each was delivered it was possible for those who had attended the lectures to test their first impressions and for those who had not attended to evaluate what they may have heard from others.[1]

Sculptor Naum Gabo remembered studying Wright's architecture after leaving Russia and attending a polytechnic in Munich. After Wright departed England Gabo had discussions at the Architectural Association that were of confusion and disappointment, to use his own words. The sculptor attacked Wright's concept of a new city and evaluation of the old and implied that Wright was hiding from life at Taliesin. Gabo also stated that "there are lots of young architects today who build quite good houses, and I can say that anybody of the MARS group, if he were given the means to build *as he liked,* would do a house *just as well* as Wright is doing it now, if not better"[2] (emphasis added). How very naive. He then reversed his view, stating that cities are indeed evil places but that smaller urban communities are the answer.

Measuring responses to Wright is usually rather easy; as Harry Seckel suggested, people either loved him or hated him. In the case of his London lectures there was ambivalance. Apparently some leveled criticism that did not surface in the public or architectural press; only the ramifications

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were revealed. The nature of the reproof can best be understood by a series of letters and by Wright's attempt in response to clarify what he thought he had said.

The letters disclose four important points. First, John Gloag was the inspiration for and organizer of Wright's visit. Second, people were confused; some felt bamboozled. Third, his architecture as proposed or as built was a far more eloquent synthesis of his ideas than his quirky words and phrases. The fourth needs little amplification—Wright's "spontaneous" style of lecturing was not all that he might have hoped for. To understand more completely the reaction to Wright's London visit it seems important to quote most of the content of the letters, which also rather nicely reveal attitudes and personalities. The correspondents were Gloag and Patrick Abercrombie with the *RIBA Journal* as intermediary where they were given public air.

Dear sir,—I had sailed for the United States [on 6 May] before Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright had concluded his visit, so I was unable to follow all the reactions here to his lectures; but among a few ill-informed and vocal exponents of what used to be called "the modern movement" (which ceased to move a long time ago in the matter of imagination) I detect a tendency to belittle Mr. Wright's influence, and to suggest that he is merely romantic.

It is inevitable that people from whom the gift of imagination has been withheld, and who hide the nakedness of their inspiration in reach-me-downs, copied from Corbusier fashion plates, should misunderstand the rich humanism of Mr. Wright's work and teaching.

It would perhaps have been better if he had confined his reply to the statement that he had outgrown "functionalist" childishness about 1900. That is the real answer to his uncomprehending critics.

Yours faithfully,

John Gloag (Hon. A.)[3]

Exactly what provoked Gloag is not clear, but in his letter he was concerned about two things. One was that the modern movement was aesthetically sterile. The other was more serious: that Wright was not merely idealistic but rather had practical ideas that would enrich everyone's life. Gloag's letter was published in November of 1939. Response was less than a month in coming, and it would appear that Abercrombie was speaking not only his own thoughts—and prejudices—but was spokesman for the opposition, so to speak, although not necessarily those supporting the Central European architectural theorists.

Sir,—I had begun a humble contribution to the Frank Lloyd Wright affair when the word Marxian was applied to the pattern of his philosophy by a writer in the Journal: but I desisted—it seemed

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a little discourteous to our visitor. But now that Mr. Wright has written and Mr. Gloag has spoken, something may be said. Mr. Gloag is really to blame. For years he had punctuated nearly all of his delightful writings and talks on architecture with the three magic monosyllables; he had built up a wonderful legend, and then, when the Prophet was to be displayed, Mr. Gloag skipped off to America without acting as producer, with that inimitable flair for publicity for others which he possesses. Never has a Prophet been worse treated by his disciple; perhaps he thought the figure so impressive (and indeed it was) or the English architectural public so stupid that no preparation of utterance was needed. For I can tell Mr. Gloag that "Romantic" was one of the milder descriptions used. This gives some measure of the disservice which Mr. Gloag's doubtless unavoidable absence in America did to his Prophet.

Perhaps Mr. Gloag had suggested the titles of the four discourses, which promised a closely argued philosophy. He should have carefully supervised their contents as well. For there was a first-rate audience, receptive and highly favourably disposed. But Mr. Wright, the descendant of preachers, forgot that he was not at home! The extempore preacher relies upon his own congregation, which glows as each disjointed phrase falls from the beloved lips: excellent phrases, true fragments of doctrine (often, of course, contradictory); but how worthless for the stranger who has come to listen. . . . And we were nearly all strangers. . . .

When the first Lecture dried up abruptly after half an hour's talk, punctuated by the declaration of independence . . . enlivened with some well-worn jokes at Renaissance architecture . . . and enhanced by the display of an impressive personality, I said to myself: "Ah, the Rheingold, the preludian opening of the Tetralogy! The Leitmotifs will be woven into a coherent pattern, the whole will be presented, not indeed as a formula (or reach-me-down) but as a vast cosmology; and for a conclusion, instead of the Twilight of the Gods, the 'Dawn of a new Era.'"

The second Lecture quickly dispelled any such illusions. The prophet-preacher had clearly made no preparation for his sermons. He gave us first some pretty, flimsy but . . . unsatisfying moving pictures made by one of his "Boys" . . . then a further instalment of the Rhein-maiden's song, whose haunting strains again intoxicated the few Complete Wrighterians present (no development, no emergent Siegfried); and, lastly, to eke out the time he called for questions. This part was the least satisfactory: the questioners were mostly young and serious and they very thoroughly searched his material. Mr. Wright, who has a distinct gift for wisecracks, set himself to score off them and to raise a laugh at their expense, which he easily did. But he didn't face up to a single point and the questioners showed great restraint and politeness

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under equally great provocation. Mr. Gloag cannot have heard these questions or he would not have thought (if these are the reactions to the Lectures he refers to) that there was any attempt to belittle or misunderstand Mr. Wright. It was a genuine desire for elucidation of the Lecture which was displayed.

There were, perhaps, two special features that caused puzzlement in the audience. Firstly, the paradox that an architect doesn't need to learn anything: schools are useless . . . but remember you must be equipped with all the latest scientific knowledge of materials and their possibilities; secondly, the difficulty of applying Mr. Wright's theory of scattering the population over the face of the land . . . with the needs of industry and a densely populated country. . . . I did not dare to ask a question as to how the architecture of Democracy came into the picture, for he appeared to work for a clientele of millionaires. But perhaps in the Marxian future we shall all be able to afford Hollyhock Houses or Ranunculus Villas or, at any rate, Forget-me-not Flats.

At this point Abercrombie spoke of Wright's architecture.

But, seriously, the best antidote to these Lectures was a visit to the small but beautiful exhibition of the drawings of his buildings. It was there seen that Mr. Wright is a first-rate architect working in a rich and (in spite of Mr. Gloag) romantic medium, well tuned to a highly emphatic natural surrounding. . . . In one example the trees, the rocks, the rushing stream were all taken into consideration, even to the extent of preserving a surface of living rock for a hearthstone. In others he exploits to the full the contrast of textures and the juxtaposition of a geometrical form in an irregular surrounding.

No, sir, I repeat that Mr. Gloag is to blame for the misunderstandings that quite naturally occurred. He should either have kept Mr. Wright, a mythical figure, in his remote Arizona, or he should have carefully staged and produced him. Let us hope that in the books which we have been promised Mr. Wright will be able to demonstrate that he is a coherent thinker as well as a logical architect.

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

Patrick Abercrombie[4]

"A mythical figure": nice.

If one reads the lectures as reprinted a few days after each was offered, and the questions and the book, it seems that in spite of his wanderings in paragraph five Abercrombie was closer to

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the truth about the lectures than not. His disgust with the American's flippant, casual, almost insulting presentation was directly put. The Watson Chair was, after all, an honor carrying certain expectations. Abercrombie was also having it both ways: Wright was a charlatan but his architecture was great, and Gloag was irresponsible but thank you for inviting the American. To some extent Abercrombie echoed Carter's more measured response put in the foreword to Wright's book of lectures. Gloag's reply to the professor's long letter suggested that his reading of the lectures may not have been too dissimilar to Abercrombie's. Gloag did not take up the challenges presented by Abercrombie. Rather, he maintained that the talks were stimulating and well attended.

Sir,—I don't want to prolong a correspondence about Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright's visit to England, but I feel that Professor Abercrombie's letter in your issue of 11 December demands a reply from me. In making this reply I find myself in some difficulty, for my respect for Professor Abercrombie's judgement equals my admiration for . . . Wright and his work.

So far as my movements are concerned . . . I didn't skip off to America until the programme of Mr. Wright's visit was well under way. . . .

I was not wholly unconcerned with some other items in the programme of his visit, and I had many talks with him, although it was not possible for me actually to attend any of the lectures, for I sailed to the U.S. during the week they began. But if the lectures were as queerly obscure as Professor Abercrombie implies, I can't help wondering why they were so well attended. I have heard from reliable sources that they were packed. Apparently they exercised a strange fascination for Professor Abercrombie, because he seems to have sat through all of them; but I doubt whether anybody would have taken the trouble to attend a second, let alone a third or fourth, lecture if they had been as dull and complex as he suggests.

Yours faithfully,[5]

Word about the rumblings and "misunderstandings that quite naturally occurred" reached Wright in Spring Green soon after his return. Wright's concern that he may have been—was—misunderstood was evidenced in a short statement received in London in early October. Abercrombie was probably referring to the publication of Wright's statement rather than his lectures when Abercrombie said he could air his views "now that Mr. Wright has written." Wright extracted some comments about stylism of the fifty-eighth variety from his lectures (one more than Heinz 57 Varieties?) and entitled his rejoinder "To the Fifty-Eighth." It was published by both *RIBA Journal* and *The Architectural Review.*[6] Did he clarify his position, or positions?

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In his first line he confessed the obvious, that he was not a lecturer, "no speaker really," he said. In truth he did not enjoy giving lectures or talks. He did so and very often in the 1930s just to bring in money. But they were rather tedious affairs for him, and often for his audiences. In his foreword to the publication of the lectures, dated 20 May 1939, he admitted that the talks were spontaneous and not lectures: "Had I been commissioned to give them by the Royal Institute of British Architects instead of the Sulgrave Manor Board they might have been, properly, so limited." Why that might have altered his attitude or encouraged him to be more thorough in preparation was not made clear. Later in the foreword he offered a perceptive note that should have guided him more often. "I find it safer to try to build it rather than to 'say it' because in construction sophistry falls down whereas tactful language has the disconcerting knack of outliving itself."[7] He was saying, of course, that architecture was his forte and that it came easily to him. Words were another medium, and so therefore speech.

Next in his letter "to the fifty-eighth" he mentioned published responses (few in number, as we have seen) to his talks. He noted that he had succeeded in getting himself "misunderstood and well disliked." He challenged the notion that his Taliesin was the refuge of an "escapist." In support of his contention he suggested to his contemporary architects that he was the seed of their theory and thus that "their own European creed, every form they use at least if not their every way they use it, came either directly or indirectly from my own 'escape'." And further: "Can they believe that we at Taliesin advocate a 'back-to-the-land' movement? Do they really imagine that I build self-indulgences for capitalistic parasites in the name of esoteric philosophy and work for the rich, that my buildings are expensive, etc., etc. . . .? I would like to compare the cost of them with the cost of theirs." (If such a comparison were made, the architects who made the accusation would have been somewhat embarrassed.) He then picked up the arguments of the political left. "Is the idea that good architecture must be, first of all, good building and the architect a master-builder first and an aesthetician afterward—heresy? Is the idea that good community life is the life of the individual raised to the nth power rather than the life of the individual reduced to the lowest common denominator—idealistic hallucination? Cake?"

In this connection I ask MARS . . . again . . . which came first—hen or egg? Well, if the egg is the *Idea* then the egg came first—and, just so—society. First the great individual (the Idea or Egg) then Society (the Hen). After that what have you? . . .

All great cities are slums now—communism or no communism. They like them. Why?

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Perhaps they (the Communists) like them, he suggested, because they do not see them as cities but only as laboratories for theoretical study. "Are they so in love with intellectualisations they can't see any true surface, or see any surface true, because of obliterating reflections? Then what hope to escape some universal pattern for the individual human soul named after some European?"

When he talked about his architecture and their reaction to it he became more lucid, or at least less emotional. He suggested that his architecture was obvious. So too his talent: "concerning this constantly repeated reference to my contribution to Architecture as a kind of romanticism . . . they drag in the term 'Romanticism' to conceal their own impotence whereas it really only explains it." He offered that it should be evident in the "revelations of principle eternally fresh and new in every building I build." (Wright enjoyed promoting Wright.) He was saddened to learn that people misunderstood him; that people thought "because we are not newspaper addicts" that life at Taliesin was monastic; that imitations of his work had become what was called the International Style, a style he believed "could never be Democratic because it is *the use of man by the machine,*" he emphasized. "Are 'they' striving to perfect that?"

"To the Fifty-Eighth" vaguely and partially summarized his talks to the London audience and partially answered his critics, though it was illusively pedantic, rather abusive, and lacked precision. Wright was slightly more intelligible in a lecture at Hull House, Chicago (an old venue for Wright) soon after his return to the Midwest, or in about July 1939. The subject occupied only a small portion of what was obviously another off-the-cuff talk, idiomatically Wrightian and difficult to reduce a resumé. He repeated the beginning of his first lecture in London: "England had had a Declaration of Independence from us, July 4, 1776, concerning taxes and now England was going to have another, May 7, 1939, concerning the spirit. (A minority report I confessed), and I politely invited cultural England to get off our cultural chest." He declared that Americans "had been harrassed long enough by English 'old Colonial' and that I didn't think it was ever worth much even to them because it was the dwindling end of a decadant French culture when they got it and it was all certainly worth less than nothing to us when we were confronted with the building of a new nation." Surprisingly he believed the English not only understood him but shared his opinion, for his next and last line on the subject was: "Well strange to say, they readily agreed with me."[8] His sword of gentle confrontation was, of course, double-edged: the art of architecture (new) and the politics of colonialism (old). While in Russia both Wright and the Soviets also presented a double edge: architecture and nationalism (or republicanism) but also new versus new, that is, new art versus new power.

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It can be seen that the motivations of the British to invite Wright were more involved than those of the Russians, yet they seem more easily described. Wright's reasons for going to London were less complex.

Was there a Russian or Communist connection to his invitation to London? From the evidence, no. Influence yes, but not directly. The invitation was a reaction by certain sections of the architectural profession who held concerns somewhat similar to Wright's. Those who were involved with promoting Wright were moderates, interested in Wright's theories about architecture and the city and his concern about the impact of Central European architectural styles on the English scene. They were also intrigued by his positive, uplifting attitude. Berthold Lubetkin—as individual in England in his demands for a socialist architecture as Wright was for a freely individualist architecture—and other architects with socialist ideas were not included in promoting Wright's presence in London.[9] MARS and Lubetkin's followers were probably too divided on ideological issues. The English architectural left was anything but a coherent or cohesive lot. And in any event Wright and his architecture would have been more of a curiosity than an intellectual threat to their ideas, diverse as they were. In opposition Wright confused issues to such a degree that he was indeed a more usable foe than reliable friend.

Wright did not believe that radicalism was necessarily the province of the political left. On the contrary, he viewed his own position, as outlined in some arguments above, as closer to that of a revolutionary. Certainly he came to that conclusion about his architecture at the turn of the century in reference to his prairie houses and those monumental theses, Unity Temple and the Larkin Building. "I used to wish they would dub me 'radical', and let me go home today," he said in his 1943 autobiography. It was a comment not found in the earlier 1932 edition. So his problem with radicalism was induced by events in the 1930s, by the misunderstanding he thought others had of his continuing influence through design, theory, and education. He thought "radical" a good honest word. "It means of the root"; radical to the academic usually meant "red" because, he said, "the hypocrite instinctively hates the radical in the United States." He concluded the statement with a tinge of elderly concern: "But if so, was I no longer radical, or were they overtaking me?"[10] He argued with Hitchcock and others that he was not overtaken as much as they thought. In England he declared that they had not overtaken him but were regressively eclectic, their "European creed," every form of architectural design "they use at least if not the very way they use it, came either directly or indirectly from my own 'escape'." He was the source, the root of European radicalism in architecture.

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Later in his 1943 autobiography he restated his case, again in a passage not found in the 1932 edition. His various polemical arguments put around 1940 were induced in part by his financial difficulties and to some degree resulted from the problems he saw with American capitalism, Roosevelt's centralized government, and taxes. In the late 1930s he tried to gain tax exemption on the grounds that Taliesin was an educational institution, but without success. At Taliesin "We have . . . been compelled to work for the construction of an indigenous Architecture as revolutionaries in a far too uncommon War. . . . Yet, never really having any money. No . . . throughout these forty-five years an out-and-out culture-bootlegger, forced by the nature of our national tumbled house to work and live under the banner of a bandit: that is only to say, the banner of the Radical!"[11] He wanted to be radically different but not tainted by the word's common meaning, that of a left-winger. Being a bandit of taxes was somehow also acceptable.

Set aside the fact that Wright patently did not give the care and attention to the Watson lectures that he lavished on the Kahn Lectures for Princeton University in 1930. From Wright's affairs in London and immediately afterward, two impressions arise. One is more a question: had the man and his ideas not kept the promise of conceptual stamina and intellectual vigor that sustained him through 1932? It would appear this was the case. Wright in his late sixties and seventies was more flippant than in younger years. His remarks in the 1920s and early 1930s (often uttered to attract attention) had devolved in the late 1930s to caustic, even mean comments, especially when spoken in his own America. Where there was once a rather provocative mix of genius strained by vanity, that vanity attracted its usual ally, arrogance, and together they assumed command. He seemed unable to control his "wisecracks" and derogation. Did he honestly and consciously believe that he would influence a nation or its intellectuals or even gather a following about him larger than a handful with such a course of action?

The following is a by-product of his London adventure, and another example of incidents to come to the public's attention off and on throughout his life but especially in the thirties. *Time* magazine reported that

In Williamsburg, Va., Architect Frank Lloyd Wright told a dumbfounded audience that the only value of the town's restoration by the Rockefellers was to "show us how little we need this type of architecture now." Said he: "What has been done for you, or to you, here in Williamsburg, has advanced our cause of modern, organic architecture greatly, but not in the way it was intended. It shows how narrow, how shallow life was in Colonial days. I have long ceased

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to take off my hat to our forefathers, seeing what a mess they left us." Up in arms, as one man, rose Colonial-conscious Virginia.[12]

The themes are recognizable. Sadly, the genius of architecture was not the genius of diplomacy when facing what he believed was an ignorant, intolerant if not hostile mobocracy. His objective was obscured by abuse, even vitriol. After the chilling years of the 1920s overbalanced by successes that followed 1935, and his frustration with his audiences of all social kinds and levels, such displays of his own intolerance and animosity may be understandable: not acceptable, but understandable. It also was a conscious program as revealed in Chapter 25.

The other impression is that again his visit as an important guest in a foreign city was moderately successful, if socially very pleasant, while his professional engagement was not a success and not a failure. As a public relations exercise he thought it was great. On his return he wrote Dr. Ludd Spivey at Florida Southern College that "London and Paris 'signed on the dotted line.' We had a grand reception everywhere. Gene [Masselink] is sending you copies of a telegram and letter from the Earl of Spencer just to show you how it all turned out."[13]

The book *An Organic Architecture* is a better retrospective of how it all turned out. In fact the book, which is very close to a verbatim record of his talks (not "formal lectures") and answers to questions from listeners, is a good outline of many of his ideas as of 1939, and they did not much alter—except about the USSR—after 1939. And for a close insight into the personal manners of his verbalizing the book is indeed most interesting.

While in London a representative of Parisian interests (of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the "president of the International Society of Architects," and the mayor) dined the Wrights and invited him to give lectures in the French capital. He declined to lecture: dinner yes, "in my honor, yes," lectures no. "I will lecture in no language but my own, distrusting interpreters almost as much as stenographers" (was this an oblique reference to Moscow?). And so Wright visited Paris. He was thoroughly impressed with the architecture he was guided to by his hosts. "I saw many extraordinary modern buildings there as I had also seen them in the Balkan cities. I don't think we have many as genuinely advanced as those. I was surprised because I was familiar only with reactionary Beaux-Arts attitudes in the schools of my country, I saw I would have to reverse my feeling about the Paris Beaux-Arts. Said I, 'I have never thought much of the Beaux-Arts training in our country.' Said the president and the director-general, 'We don't think much of it in your country, either.' They probably didn't realize the brick they were handing me."[14]

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Actually Wright had briefly visited Paris on his way to Moscow in 1937. He saw the Paris exhibition and in a press release published in August 1937 revealed his liking for the Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Polish, and Russian pavilions, which, he thought, incorporated "to some extent his teachings of the past twenty years."[15] Shortly after Wright's visit in 1939 and with probably no connection, Jean Prevost published a book he called *Usonie*. It was a series of essays about American civilization, at least so he said. One chapter was about Wright, the next about Walt Disney. "Usonia" was a word contrived by Wright, not by Prevost, a word to symbolize a revitalized USA/America.

The trip to France gave Olgivanna a chance to visit Gurdjieff at his Paris apartment. Stanley Nott was also visiting the mage and his recollections of Wright are quite revealing. They tell us much about the great architect that is often only implied or assumed as a result of scattered evidence. Nott expected Wright to ask interesting questions of Gurdjieff and then Nott would listen and watch the ensuing discussion. But Wright's behavior was like a "brilliant under-graduate" who "understood nothing" of Gurdjieff's ideas. It was a difficult evening. During a toasting Wright said to Gurdjieff he found his "idiots" (students? or Gurdjieff's "group of women" who were then in attendance?) "very interesting." He then told the occultist he should be a cook, that he could earn good money cooking.

Later in the evening Gurdjieff produced a chapter from his book manuscript later published as *Meetings with Remarkable Men,* which he was then laboring. He asked someone to read from it, so Wright began because he did not wish to "hurt the old man's feelings." After reading for a while he told Gurdjieff he found it "very interesting," but it was "a pity" it was so poorly written. "If I had the time you could dictate to me and I would put it into good English for you." Wright resumed reading but soon feined tiredness for himself and Iovanna. Better stop, he said, for his daughter's sake. Gurdjieff agreed, saying that she was still young and "only begin," but Wright was an "old man" whose life was finished. Wright got "red in the face" and angrily stated that his life was *not* finished, that there was plenty he could "do yet!," or words to that effect. With family he left in "high dudgeon." Nott observed of the evening's events that he found it "gratifying to discover that 'great' men" have weaknesses, that they possessed "vanity and self-love" like everyone else, and remarked that when Gurdjieff "provoked Wright's prickly vanity, something malicious in me had a feeling of mild satisfaction."[16]

Wright's fondest recollection of the visit to England was of luncheon at the country home of Charles Ashbee, then also in his mid-seventies, "my one friend in England" said the American wistfully. On a visit to Oak Park Ashbee and his wife had witnessed and were attentive to both

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Wright and his first wife during the difficult months before Wright fled to Europe with Mrs. Cheney. And then in 1932 Wright had asked Ashbee to add his name to the list of Friends of the Fellowship. The only other Britisher invited to be a Friend was DeCronin Hastings who was then deeply involved with the RIBA and headed the Architectural Association. As part of the public relations designed to coincide with Wright's visit, Nikolaus Pevsner reported Ashbee's claim that "amongst his other titles to fame" was that "of having discovered Frank Lloyd Wright for Europe."[17] Wright also enjoyed other private engagements particularly with Luytens and Voysey: "loved them both," he said. He met Voysey for the first time when introduced at a private London club. Gloag and Wright remained friends and Gloag sent his children to Taliesin during the bombing and war.[18]

The mission to London had taken its toll. The sojourn and its business were almost too much. He was nearly exhausted; "frankly, I am getting tired," he said, "I've been so rushed to and fro giving four hard lectures" and other talks. He confessed that tiredness made him "bored and want to escape." So the last two lectures and his hassles with the slightly antagonistic MARS people were difficult exercises for the seventy-two-year-old architect.

On the evening of 11 May 1939 the Wright family, Frank, Olgivanna, and Iovanna, took the night train to Paris. They remained there as guests for three days, resting, dining, talking, and regenerating. Then they traveled to Dalmatia for another day or two of relief and sight-seeing. Wright made his comments about his tiredness and desire to escape London in a letter to Ashbee.[19] It was written from the Garland Hotel, London, on 11 May just before departing for Paris. Ashbee and Wright first met in Chicago during the winter of 1900. The spring of 1939 was their last meeting for Ashbee died in 1942.

Soon after returning to Spring Green Wright received a visitor from Europe who was on a mission. Sigfried Giedion had been appointed Norton Professor at Harvard University for the 1938–39 academic year. The subject of his lectures he described for Wright as a study of the "formation of architecture since the Renaissance, with stress on modern architecture and urbanism."[20] They met in July 1939 and there can be no doubt that Giedion probed Wright's thoughts and furthered his knowledge by visiting the architect's many works in the northern midwestern states, not only then but later. Giedion's thoughtful, perhaps revolutionary lectures were published in 1941 as *Space, Time and Architecture.* The book presented the first synthetic and historical study of Wright's architecture, providing cogent analysis and stimulating analogies. The influence of Wright's words during interview and discussion is apparent throughout the relevant text of Giedion's book. But this

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does not detract from Giedion's independent evaluation. Wright "belongs among the great preachers of his century," Giedion said and then specified which century was Wright's. Wright

has by nature the will and the courage to protest, to revolt, and to persevere. He carries on in architecture that tradition of sturdy individualism of which in the middle of the last century Walt Whitman and Henry Thoreau were the literary spokesmen. He regards this tradition as part of himself. As prophet, preacher, and agrarian individualist, he preaches hatred of the city and return to the soil and to the productive, self-sufficient community.[21]

And further, Wright's "real influence, his great and educative influence . . . is that of his methods and ideas, as they are reflected in his work." Giedion then noted that Wright's conception of space "was developed and changed in the hands of [Europe's] leading figures." Since Giedion was an intimate of most of those leading figures, that was a note of some importance as was the following: "This may explain why Wright is somewhat repelled by what has been done in Europe since his appearance."[22]

After an active but tiring trip to Britain and Europe those must have been stimulating days talking with the Central Europeans' chief propagandist.

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The 1930s

By: Donald Leslie Johnson

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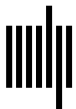

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