

The Early Design Globalization Exploration of the Deutscher Werkbund

Xiaonan Zhang
College of Arts
Sichuan University
Chengdu, China

Abstract—By reviewing the art education reform and industrial policy of Germany in the early 20th century and the art education work of the Deutscher Werkbund before the first world war of German foreign policy from 1907 to 1914, this paper tries to understand the background and original intention of the Deutscher Werkbund. By the study of the early design globalization exploration of the Deutscher Werkbund, we can clearly sort out its development process, as well as its influence on modern design and its inspiration to the development of contemporary design in China.

Keywords: *Deutscher Werkbund, design, globalization, revelation*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Deutscher Werkbund was the first design organization in Germany, founded in 1907. While working to improve the international reputation of German products and redefining "made in Germany" through industrial design and architecture, the Deutscher Werkbund was already at the center of the design reform movement in the early 20th century. In the years before the first world war, the modernist design pioneer Peter Behrens designed the plant for AEG and the overall corporate image have become the model of the modern corporate visual identity system. At the same time, Walter Gropius's modern glass-and-steel factory in Alfeld, Walter Gropius, and Bruno Paul's modularization of furniture designed for industrial mass production were both efforts to explore a new turn in architectural and industrial design. In 1910, the Deutscher Werkbund participated in the world exposition "German space art and applied art" in Brussels. By 1914, the Deutscher Werkbund had 1,870 members in six countries. Germany's total foreign trade doubled between 1894 and 1904, and by 1913 it had overtaken Britain as a share of world output. Industry is critical to the German economy, and because they do not have access to cheap materials, they must focus on improving the quality of their products. Different from the British arts and crafts concept, architects such as Herman Muthesius in Germany began to think that mechanization was necessary, and that a new and confident German national spirit should be expressed through architecture and design. In terms of product culture, architecture, advertising, product display, the development of corporate image, quality awareness, and the fundamental reform of the training in the

application of art colleges, these changes may have reached the peak and merged together, which is the emergence of the "German manufacturing union". It has a far-reaching impact and has prompted similar action in Austria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEUTSCHER WERKBUND

From 1903 to 1907, the ministry of commerce of Prussia institutionalized a veritable catalogue of modernist design through the reform of its top three dozen schools of art, craft, art history and trade, with the aim of integrating economic development, design aesthetics and educational reform. From 1904 Herman Muthesius of the Prussian Ministry of Trade is in charge of the academy of Arts School development and reform. Two decree of the Prussian Ministry of Trade have facilitated this reform, the first is On Arts and Crafts Education in Teaching Studios, issued on December 15, 1904. Its goal is to learn about materials and skills in specialized teaching studios, thus foreshadowing some of the ideas of the German Manufacturing Alliance and the Bauhaus studio later on. The second is the Act of "On Drawing Lessons at Schools of Further Education in Commerce" issued on January 28, 1907, its purpose is to further promote the representation of objects and natural hand-painted art paintings, as well as decorative forms development of independent creation.

Under the supervision of Hermann Muthesius, a government architect and veteran of the Prussian civil service, the ministry's reforms transformed the theoretical value of British arts and crafts from the western university of Aachen to the eastern university of Königsberg, from Flensburg in the north sea to the university of Breslau in Silesia, into specific practice of technology in early industrial design in schools. The reform completed the task set forth by Theodor Moller, commerce minister in the Prussian government, Muthesius's superior. Moeller explicitly sought to train a new generation of craftsmen, construction workers and other members of the Prussian traditional "old" middle class to serve the modern consumer economy. By granting artisans what they call "advantages enjoyed by large enterprises", the ministry hopes to revolutionize the design and production of German applied art products and improve Germany's competitive position in the international market.

The ministry of commerce of Prussia was not the only national institution to begin exploring new directions in arts, crafts and trade at the beginning of the twentieth century. On the contrary, the German state of Bavaria, state and Saxony, Hessian, Weimar witnessed a highly personalized private design and public design reform efforts to explore, these efforts helped the Deutscher Werkbund in October 1907, the German design. On the 5th and 6th of October 1907, the German manufacturing alliance was set up in the Munich "Four Seasons Hotel" (Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten), which consists of about 100 companies and artists. The founding members included 12 architects, craftsmen and 12 entrepreneurs. The architect, Peter Behrens, Theodor Fischer, and Richard Remesik (Richard) (Riemerschmid), Fritz Schumacher, Peter Bruckmann, a tableware manufacturer from Heilbronn, and Dresden, (Deutsche Werkst. f. r Handwerkskunst), Eugen Diederics, Yena. Offbakh, on the River Klingers Brothers and Gottlob Wundlich weaving factories.

III. THE DEUTSCHER WERKBUND BEFORE WORLD WAR I

Before the First World War, the Deutscher Werkbund was a private, non-profit, middle-class design reform association, which was undoubtedly the most advanced organization in promoting new design methods in all of Germany. One of the early slogans of the Deutscher Werkbund, a diverse team of artists, artisans, architects, manufacturers, entrepreneurs, cultural critics and government officials, was to provide multiple platforms for "improving German products through artistic intervention". Between 1907 and 1912, major figures in the design league met frequently to discuss how commerce, applied arts, and industry could best reform and modernize production, distribution, and consumption in Germany. Beginning in 1912, the design alliance began to actively establish an external design network that was appropriate to meet the changes taking place in foreign countries. However, this is not a simple "normal" stage in the development of private, non-profit associations. It is the full mobilization of the German design alliance in the Wilhelm empire era under the background of global commercial expansion.

Wolf Dohrn was replaced as managing director in April 1912 by Jäckh from southern Germany. The move was seen as crucial to expanding the Deutscher Werkbund's international reach because Jäckh maintained close ties with the German foreign ministry and newspaper editors across German-speaking Europe. It is no coincidence that Jäckh's debut at the organization's annual design conference in June 1912 coincided with the first truly "expansionist" conference of asean members. Naumann is considered one of the most prominent liberal politicians in the German parliament. With his ideals of social liberalism, he deals with quality issues and work of the Deutscher Werkbund, and makes relevant foreign and economic policies relevant to high-quality German products, which contributed to the positive impact of exports. Naumann participated in the drafting of the regulations, he brought many political supporters to the Deutscher Werkbund, and many young followers, such as

the first general manager Wolf Dohrn, and Theodor Heuss. Peter Bruckmann, a silverware maker in southern Germany, has been the group's President since 1909. In a speech entitled "the next task of the Deutscher Werkbund", it was announced that the Deutscher Werkbund would become the official representative of Germany's foreign trade and finished products industry.

In 1912 profound political changes took place in Germany, which catapulted the Deutscher Werkbund to the forefront of German business and foreign policy. That winter brought a series of events in German history that the distinguished historian John v. Maciuika Thomas Nipperdey called "the crisis of stability". The socialist Democrats won a majority in the January 1912 parliamentary elections, despite the existence of a discriminatory three-tier voting system that put the party's non-property owners at a distinct disadvantage. The German government hopes to break the deadlock in domestic policy by actively promoting social democracy through business expansion at home and abroad.

In 1913, the prime minister's office and the ministry of foreign affairs with the main design alliance member Jäckh, Naumann, Muthesius and Gustav Stresemann and other cooperation were enlarging the Deutscher Werkbund's network by contacting German embassies and consulates around the world. In Rio DEjaneiro, Beirut, Calcutta, Genoa and other cities of Germany's foreign stations received instructions about design alliance, and affirmed the design alliance by artists, manufacturers and businessmen cooperation in improving the quality of German products and support play the important role of German culture. German prime minister's office also requires the consulate to provide all the foreign business German companies and professionals to address these companies and professionals can design alliance as an important publicity channels, the Ministry of Commerce hope to conduct business in these countries as widely as possible. At this moment, Germany's foray into the world market is known as the "world politics", namely global politics, designed to ensure that the elaborate design of German products in the world economy or the world economy".

IV. THE DEUTSCHER WERKBUND IN "MOROCCO CRISIS"

The Krupp Iron and Steel Plant, one of the largest companies in the Deutscher Werkbund, is a typical case that took full advantage of the government's economic expansion policy at the time.

In 1914, the company's veteran Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach cooperated with the German government to serve as Brazil's new Minister of Transport and former military attaché Joao Simplicio de Carvalho, they arranged a luxury ship from South America to Germany to let him free to visit the exhibition design alliance. Major Simplicio de Carvalho visited the best-designed locomotives, coaches, cars and airplanes in German industry at the time and was treated by the respected Minister of State during his visit. As the Chancellor of Germany pointed out in a letter to the German consul in Brazil, Krupp is the only heavy

industrial company in Germany to join the Deutscher Werkbund. They led Major Carvalho to visit the Krupp Steel Plant, a legendary global German company with a family background and 80 factories near Essen alone. Here, the family patriarch Gustav Krupp introduced the production process of Krupp Steel to the senior Brazilian official, and then led him to visit the finest steel-plated armor, naval guns, artillery, railways on display in Germany wheels and rails.

During the Design Alliance exhibition and Krupp tour, Foreign Ministry officials said they believed that the profound impact of Major De Carvalho's visit to the Design Alliance would soon benefit German business, industry and shipping from a large number of contracts in Brazil. Colonial expansion and some sort of Orientalism made Germany try to gain influence on the territory of the Ottoman Empire, because it was one of the few regions on the planet that was not yet under the control of another colonial power. Jäckh, the managing director of the Deutscher Werkbund, extended his network to the Ottoman Empire, where he served as diplomat for many years. While managing the Design Alliance, he was active as the leader of the Deutscher Werkbund. His office and the Design Alliance are located on different floors of the same Berlin building. In line with official policy, Friedrich Naumann, and especially Jäckh, stepped up measures to draw a pre-war roadmap for William II world imperialism in the backyard. Friedrich Naumann basically "takes a strong imperialist line" in his "Die Hilfe" weekly magazine "Assistance", and regular contributor Jäckh has initiated a series of other publishing projects to clarify bold, expanded ally terms led by Germany. In 1913, the German-Austrian Economic Association, which was established just one year after the Deutscher Werkbund Conference in Vienna, promoted Jäckh's idea of building a huge trading bloc led by Germany politically and economically.

Until the First World War, the propaganda and policies of the Deutscher Werkbund leadership pointed the way for Germany to formulate far-reaching manufacturing, production, and export planning. However, wartime prerogatives, a militarized economy, and growing international isolation will prevent the ambitious plans of the Deutscher Werkbund before the war. Following the First World War in the Weimar Republic, the first generation of leaders of the Deutscher Werkbund was replaced in 1919 by a younger force, and the design concept of the alliance, especially Friedrich Naumann's focus on quality and good design. After his early death he received his students Theodore Hawes and Ernst Jackh's support.

V. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEUTSCHER WERKBUND

From the perspective of the development of the formation of industrial design ideas, the establishment of the German manufacturing union foreshadowed the arrival of a new era of design, which had a huge impact on the development of German industrial design.

First, since the inception of the German manufacturing union, the design and production of high-quality products was an important factor in the economic development and cultural reconstruction of Germany. Through the artistic value devotes itself to the mass culture construction, changes the social atmosphere, guides the noble labor, pursues the harmonious life, establishes the lofty spirit which takes the quality consciousness as the center and the cultural connotation, then develops the competition with other countries, realizes its "national conscience" the goal, becomes the manufacturer and the designer the consensus. From then on, paying attention to product quality is not only a technical concept, but also a value concept in German culture, forming the unique industrial culture of Germany.

Second, with the development of the British conservative, and before all the design group, the difference is that the German manufacturing alliance can accept the inevitable change by the king of the industrial revolution and the revolution in social objective reality, art and culture, design with culture, design and business, arts and crafts workers and factories king, positive attention related product design and new technology progress under the principles of the standardization of the big industrial production, mass, satisfy the need of product design, developed by the mechanical technology not only makes the industrial design has been made on the real breakthrough in theory and in practice, and has laid the solid foundation for modernism design with color of democracy.

Through the reform of applied arts colleges, the collaboration between artists and major industrial companies, education, publicity and exhibition projects were carried out at the same time, and a new product culture with brand characteristics and quality awareness was established. This success was due to a collective political, macroeconomic, economic and educational offensive by the reform-oriented sectors within the Deutschland union. A few years later, German design became competitive in the global market, "made in Germany" the label became a quality assurance that still exists today.

The establishment of the Deutscher Werkbund marked the transformation of the new German movement from the original efforts of individual artists or small groups to the organized, large-scale and influential social organizations. If the arts and crafts movement in Britain had been driven from beginning to end by a handful of artists, or through the efforts of John Ruskin and William Morris and others who won historic significance, the establishment of the Deutscher Werkbund made the new German movement become a broad social movement. In addition, if the "arts and crafts movement" in Britain focuses more on aesthetic values, the new German movement emphasizes more on social, cultural, economic and political values, so aesthetic values are placed in a relatively minor position, or only discussed within a limited scope. Although the leaders of the new movement, including Muthesius, and the founders of the Deutscher Werkbund never ceased to think of art as a transboundary force, pragmatism and quality-oriented ideas gradually gained the upper hand in practical work. Indeed, although the

German new movement seemed to lack some artistic aura, because it formed a real connection with the large-scale industrial production mode, it surpassed the British innovation movement in terms of the development of modern civilization.

VI. CONCLUSION

How can a country build its core competitiveness? The only way is by creating. Creativity is the greatest power of mankind. Design is the most direct manifestation of creativity. In such an innovative era, the contemporary society is a new era of humanities day, is also an era of increasingly fierce national competition, but also an era of innovation, design has become a huge driving force of economic development and the first vivid expression. In the context of today's globalization era, the great value generated by design has a profound impact on the development of economy, culture and society, and has become a symbol of a country's modern civilization and scientific and technological level. In order to realize the transformation from a big trading country to a strong trading country, China needs to improve its industrial development level.

The government should play an active role in intervening and guiding the development of industrial design in China. Industry associations should play a good role as a bridge between the government and enterprises, and actively promote industrial design to serve economic structural adjustment. At the same time teaching quality and level of industrial design specialty in higher education should be greatly improved.

The prosperity and development of German industrial design cannot be achieved overnight. The development of German industrial design depends on the support of the government and the close cooperation of the people. As contemporary college students studying industrial design, we should recognize our direction and responsibility, to promote the development of China's industrial design to a force.

REFERENCES

- [1] Tongji university. History of modern and contemporary foreign architecture [M]. Beijing: China building industry press,1982.53-55.
- [2] Manfredo taffi, francesco darko. Modern architecture [M]. Beijing: China building industry press,2000.80-85.
- [3] Nicholas pevner, j. m. Richards, Dennis sharpe. Anti-rationalist and rationalist [M]. Beijing: China building industry press,2003.7-15.
- [4] https://under1roofdesign.com/modernist_deutscher.html
- [5] <https://pigeonsblue.com/2014/01/07/a-very-brief-guide-to-design-movements-deutsch-werkbund/>
- [6] <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1368>
- [7] Joan Campbell, Der Deutsche Werkbund, 1907-1937, Stuttgart 1981, S. 17ff.
- [8] Ebenda, S. 24-29. Theodor Heuss, Was ist Qualität? Zur Geschichte und zur Aufgabedes Werkbundes, Tübingen, Stuttgart 1951.
- [9] Angelika Thiekötter, Erste Kontakte, in: Hermann Muthesius im Werkbund-Archiv.Eine Ausstellung des Werkbund Archivs im Martin-Gropius-Bau vom 11. Oktober bis11. November 1919, Berlin 1990, S. 21-32, S. 21-25.
- [10] Theodor Fischer, Die Veredelung der gewerblichen Arbeit im Zusammenwirken von Kunst, Industrie und Handwerk, in: Die Veredelung der Gewerblichen Arbeitim Zusammenhang von Kunst, Industrie und Handwerk. Verhandlung des DeutschenWerkbundes zu München am 11. und 12. Juli 1908, Leipzig 1908 S. 3-17, S. 9 u. 17.
- [11] Gerda Breuer, Die englischen Vorläufer und die deutsche Kunstgewerbe-
- [12] Reformbewegung um 1900, in: Winfried Nerdinger (Hrsg.), 100 Jahre DeutscherWerkbund 1907/2007, München 2007, S. 15-19, S. 18.