Building the Dream:
The Politics of Housing and the Urban Plan in 1930's Tel-Aviv

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In responding to historicist critiques of Modernism, it has become a truism to say that the multivalent tendencies of early twentieth-century architecture cannot be defined by the hegemonic discourse of the International Style. This is particularly evident if one considers how Modernist practices were transformed through processes of cross-fertilization between existing and new centers of Modernist activity.

The city of Tel-Aviv is such a new center. Largely planned and built in the first four decades of the twentieth century, it affords means for studying the genesis of a city in which Modernism was adapted to the colonial Mediterranean context.[1] Upon closer examination, however, we will see that Avant-Garde practices were not the only European imports involved in shaping the city. In contrast to the Modernist idiom of 1930's Tel-Aviv architecture, its urban plan hearkens back to more traditional Garden City models.

In this paper I consider how and why these two networks—"progressive" architectural practices and "conservative" planning schemes — intersect in 1930's Tel-Aviv. While these divergent strategies are neither entirely distinct nor mutually exclusive, they were conditioned by different social and political interests at work in the city. To understand the particular character of Tel-Aviv Modernism, I will examine the city's architecture and urban plan in the context of contemporary social and political conditions. After a discussion of political constituencies, I will consider political debates within the architectural profession and conclude with examples of Modernist domestic architecture inserted into the contested ground of the city.

Tel-Aviv's development was conditioned by the diverse currents of early twentieth-century Jewish Nationalism and colonization of Palestine. Tel-Aviv was located on the fault line between divergent Liberal Zionist and Labor Zionist conceptions of a new secular Jewish society, city and state. Bourgeois and working class interests maneuvered aggressively to realize their contrasting ideologies in the very fabric of the city.

Tel-Aviv's foundations were laid by Liberal Zionist merchants who, in 1906, decided to establish a new Jewish suburb to the north of the politically volatile port city of Jaffa.[2]

Led by Meir Dizengoff (later the first mayor of Tel-Aviv). The Housing Association based the program for Ahuzat Bayit ("Homestead") on Garden Suburb ideas then current in England and Germany.[3] They envisioned a planned residential community of single story houses set in gardens, embellished by a public park and community buildings, with an educational institution as its centerpiece.[4] Founded in 1908, Ahuzat Bayit's modest single family homes and garden lots attested to the primacy of individual property and private life. The town was to be a small scale community of bourgeois private landowners, free from the pressures of industry and commerce and lacking the conflicting constituencies and class rivalries of modern industrialized metropolii.[5] It was just such a community that the journalist Theodore Herzl envisioned when he first formulated the Zionist idea. In his utopian novel Altneuland, Herzl depicted Zionists as transplanted members of the European bourgeoisie who create a new Jewish center based on the values of their class."

Successive waves of Jewish immigration introduced a population whose diverse political and social interests complicated the urban structure of the town, renamed Tel-Aviv (figuratively, "old-new"ʷ — the name derives from the Hebrew translation of *Altneuland*) in 1910.[7] An influx of middle class immigrants spurred private sector growth.[8] As leader of the Liberal coalition that dominated municipal politics until the thirties, Dizengoff campaigned to turn Tel-Aviv into a major metropolis founded on a European model of the entrepreneurial city with a specifically middle class urban culture.[9]

Economic prosperity, peaking in 1925, brought a new wave of construction.[10] Multi-tenant dwellings replaced single-family homes. But with the housing stock still in private hands, the economy of housing remained unchanged. Increasingly established architects built in a variety of styles ranging from academic classicism to a romantic orientalizing idiom. Yet while they may be seen to manifest the search for a collective cultural and national identity, these idiosyncratic works still adhere to middle class values of private property and individualism.

In the urban realm, new plans for Tel-Aviv reiterated Liberal Zionist values. Both the *Kauffman* Plan (1921) and

the Geddes Plan (1925) were based on European Garden City models." Building on the existing urban framework, both envisioned a growing settlement oriented towards the sea. Geddes' plan for a low-density Garden City of 100,000 was organized around groups of two-story houses and private gardens set within residential blocks linked by an hierarchical circulation network. With the adoption of Geddes' plan as a guide for future growth, the Liberal Zionist preference for private development was cemented into the city's structure. Subsequent architectural and urban endeavors must be understood in this context.

LABOR ZIONISTS AND THE HOUSING CRISIS IN TEL-AVIV

With the expansion of industry and commerce the early 1920's, Tel-Aviv's growing working class — the largest urban labor force in the colony — became a major factor in shaping the politics and architecture of the city.[12] Real estate speculation and high labor and material costs, led to a severe housing shortage." This crisis catalyzed the reaction of Labor Zionism to the dominant bourgeois vision of the city and its privatized model of urban development.

Lacking institutional support, Labor had to draw on its own resources in the struggle to integrate into the urban setting.[14] The Histadrut's ("General Federation of Jewish Labor" founded in 1920) Merkaz le-Shikun Poalim ("Center for Workers' Housing," founded in 1928) was responsible for workers' housing construction and social organization.[15] Like the bourgeois landowners of early Tel-Aviv, members of the Histadrut sought inspiration in the Garden City model. In it they found a confirmation of their collectivist, anti-capitalist leanings.[16] The Histadrut's workers' housing complexes were to be autonomous communities of workers in which the "Histadrut experience" would nurture the "New Man" of Labor.[17] Housing estate choirs, theaters, youth groups, party cells and innovative educational programs formed an institutional structure designed to create ideal Labor Zionist personalities.

As Tel-Aviv grew into a metropolis in the thirties, both working and middle classes employed an increasingly diverse and vocal community of architects.[18] Trained in the architecture and technical schools of Germany, Austria and France, Russia, Hungary, Belgium and Italy, these architects introduced Modernist principles and practices current in Europe in the previous decade.[19] They engaged in extensive and animated debates regarding the future of Tel-Aviv.

A core group of this new generation organized the Chug ha-Arkhitektim ("The Architects' Circle") — a professional lobbying group and gadfly of the architectural old guard.[20] It was in the Chug's journal, ha-Binyan ba-Mizrach ha-Karov ("Building in the Near East") and other publications that the architects and planners of 1930's Tel-Aviv worked out their politically laden visions of the city and its architecture." Despite their predominantly middle class status, their diverse ideological positions ranged from advocating the status quo

capitalist metropolis to proposing new models of collective living based on Labor politics. These positions were clearly expressed in debates regarding housing and its relation to the urban plan.

The traditionalist arguments of Liberal Zionists abounded. Sidestepping the political controversies of the housing crisis, M. C. E. Pataky engaged in an anachronistic defense of a 'Hebrew National Style.'" Jacob Zimmerman proposed municipal sponsorship of multi-family dwellings as a solution for both the housing and employment crises but rejected the concomitant politics of Municipal Socialism.[23] As the municipal architect of Tel-Aviv, Jacob Shiffman was similarly careful to support the political status quo, expressing a strong preference for semi-private development.[24] His vision of a "new urbanity" of easy commerce individual privacy embodied in "well-bred" architecture reflects the culture of bourgeois Tel-Aviv and the political and social conceptions of its Liberal leadership.[25]

Other architects articulated a position that was much closer to that of the Labor. Leo Koffman argued that architects should devise technical and design strategies suited to the struggle for equity in housing.[26] Among the most vocal proponents of radical housing reform, Arieh Sharon shared Koffman's interest in collaborating with the Histadrut to combat the housing crisis. Rejecting the individualistic Modernism of his conservative colleagues, Sharon promoted a system of minimum flats whose flexible design would suit the needs of working families while responding to the rigors of climate and hygiene.[27] In this way he articulated the architectural program of the Histadrut's collectivist social agenda.

HOUSING IN 1930'S TEL-AVIV: LIBERAL AND LABOR POLITICS IN PRACTICE

In Tel-Aviv residential architecture of the 1930's, the divergent visions of Liberal and Left-leaning architects and their clients are materialized in a shared Modernist formal vocabulary mediated by local environmental and material conditions. Private apartment buildings exhibited the political and cultural aspirations of their middle class occupants, while villas in the surrounding suburbs catered to a wealthier clientele. The Histadrut's efforts manifested themselves in new workers' housing estates.

Ze'ev Rechter's[28] *Engel* House (1933) epitomizes the most common type of private dwelling in 1930's Tel-Aviv. It housed heirs of the bourgeois urban culture expressed in Dizengoff's policies and the Geddes plan. Rechter's assimilation and adaptation of Modernist forms and techniques to local conditions was typical. The *Engel* House wraps around a private garden, turning its main facade to Rothschild Boulevard. Rechter's pioneering use of *piloti* as responds to climatic conditions and enhances domestic privacy. Floating above the ground plane, its stucco-clad concrete block walls are animated by an asymmetrical composition of protruding

balconies, essential for shading and ventilation. Heightened by the play of light on whitewash, offset volumes disrupt the building's corners in an elegant juxtaposition of solid and void. Human scale is established with the minimal means of tube railings.

While the *Engel House's* flats were luxurious by contemporary standards,[29] they are not radically different from other domestic types. Inside the apartments, public and private spaces are separated by a service axis. Like the basic parti, the modest materials used could be found in both luxurious private villas and *Existenzminimum* workers' housing. Furthermore, despite the individualism of Rechter's bold compositions, and the middle class standards implied in his generous apartment plans, in the *Engel House* the interest in private luxury is mitigated by shared spaces. The iconic Modernist flat finished roof is a site for the extension of private family life into the collective life of the city. By moving private domestic life out of doors into the urban sphere, Rechter's roof—like his balconies—reflects the public, communal orientation particular to domestic life in 1930's Tel-Aviv.[30]

Like Tel-Aviv's urban apartment blocks, its suburban villas can be read as architectural manifestations of Liberal bourgeois aspirations. Here again, the formal vocabulary and production practice of Modernism were accepted by a broad based portion of private clients, rather than being the province of a small cultural elite, as they were in Europe.

In Sam Barkai's[31] (1889-1975) work, Modernist practices were transposed onto the local environment and grafted into a pre-existing Garden Suburb framework. Given his sojourn in Le Corbusier's studio it is not surprising that Sam Barkai endowed his *Lubin House* (1937) with the trappings, albeit modestly interpreted, of a Corbusian villa of the late 1920's.[32] The *Lubin House* is actually a double villa comprising residences for the painter's mother and brother, as well as Lubin's own studio apartment. Garden paths link the buildings' ground floors and a bridge accessed by an exterior stair connects their two finished roofs. The asymmetrical play of strip and standard windows, solid projections, punched openings and elevated masses involves a complex if derivative deployment of Corbusian elements. The projecting balcony, steel tube railings and nautical door lights are all assembled on a heavily grounded small-scale armature, making Barkai's reworking of his master's ideas seem almost quaint.

The interior is more in keeping with the villa's modest circumstances than with its grand pretensions. The disposition of spaces follows a pattern familiar from the *Engel House.* Similarly, materials and finishes are like those used in more modest dwellings. Regardless of his aesthetic cosmopolitanism, Barkai was subject to the material limitations common to all Tel-Aviv architecture culture. Like Rechter, Barkai tried to make the most of his material circumstances with strong formal moves. Inasmuch as it was feasible, both architects served the aspirations of their clientele by mimicking the standards and quality of middle class life in Central European metropolii.

This was not true of Arieh Sharon (1900-1984).[33] In *Hod*

Workers' Housing (1934-36), designed for the *Histadrut,* Sharon deployed Modernist formal elements within a planning strategy based on Labor Zionism's collectivist ideals. Unlike Tel-Aviv's freestanding private apartment buildings, Sharon's stacked dwelling units are assembled into long slabs that wrap around a wide garden court incorporating a number of city blocks. Sharon insisted on the rationalism and economy of setting minimum housing slabs on large lots.[34] Yet his break with the established urban grid of Tel-Aviv must also be seen as a calculated political gesture. The monumental wall of flats is a "Workers' Fortress" declaring its autonomy from the Garden City grid of bourgeois Tel-Aviv.[35] At odds with Geddes' privatized plan, *Hod Workers' Housing* is a container for a distinct social entity—a planned community whose members shared the values and goals of the Labor movement.

Yet despite its defensive stance towards the bourgeoiscity, *Hod Workers' Housing* engages the urban setting. Sharon's design recognizes the street as a center of social and cultural activity. Staggered massing and syncopated fenestration relieves the monotony of the street facade. *Piloti* raise the central wing off the ground, creating a flow of circulation from the street into the yard, while sidewalk and stairwell plantings turn the exterior facade into an extension of the interior garden.

Inside the shared territory of the yard, public services and amenities enhance communal life and nurture Labor's "New Man," reinforcing resident's collective identity and shared culture.[36] More than on the rooftops of middle class Tel-Aviv, it is here that architecture participates in the construction of community. Ironically, the courtyard and its communal services echo the institutional sectors of Geddes' plan, pointing to a paradoxical affinity between Labor politics and the Garden City movement.[37] In the verdant courtyard, Sharon's *Neue Sachlichkeit* housing plan gives way to the hygienic model of the Garden City.[38]

The rationalism of Sharon's site plan is reiterated at the scale of the individual units, where the standardized disposition of functional elements produces a pared-down plan. Floor-through apartments are divided into two distinct zones: the public "day" zone of living room, kitchen and balcony faces west, while the private "night" zone of bedrooms and bath faces east to catch the evening breeze.[39]

In Sharon's *Hod Worker's Housing,* diverse Modernist practices—from experiments with new social organization of housing to rationalized planning and production techniques to pared-down machinist imagery—are enlisted in the service of the ideal of a collective society based on Labor-oriented principles. The paradoxes of its affiliation with the Garden City model and its elite tenant population notwithstanding, it is here that an alternative vision is presented as a challenge to the dominant middle class capitalist agenda of Liberal Zionist Tel-Aviv. This challenge is embodied in the architectural form of the housing, in its urban stance, and in its institutional and social program.

CONCLUSION

We have seen how, in 1930s Tel-Aviv, "conservative" planning strategies and "progressive" architectural practices were enlisted in the service of diverse political agendas and social constituencies. Both Liberal Zionists and Labor Zionists found something of use in the Garden City model, as well as in the Modernist idiom. In Tel-Aviv's Garden City plan Liberals found a framework for individual expression, private property, and entrepreneurial values. The Left found a guide for a planned collective community whose cultural and hygienic features could contribute to the formation of a new society. In the formal language of Modernist architecture, the bourgeoisie of Tel-Aviv found an expression of a rejuvenated and modernized 'National' culture that was adequate to the economic and material conditions of the local environment. The Modernist formal vocabulary also served as a vehicle for a strongly felt nostalgia for Europe. The working classes were similarly moved by associations with Europe, but the models that they aspired to were different. Like Garden City planning ideas, Modernist architectural practices were seen by Labor as new forms in which a new social structure could take shape.

A study of domestic architecture in 1930's Tel-Aviv reveals similarities in scale. organization and form, regardless of housing type. However, these commonalties are superficial — a result of a modest economy of scale based on limited resources. Similarly, the parallel social programming of space in different residential types — the communal finished roof, the extroverted domestic space of the balconies—points to superficial correspondences that have more to do with material, climatic and cultural conditions than with the values and goals of individual constituencies within the urban sphere.

In 1930's Tel-Aviv a Garden City plan which initially appears synonymous with Liberal middle class values was clad with a layer of Modernist architecture that seems at first glance to be synonymous with the aims of Leftist interests. However, beyond the undercurrent of nostalgia for European metropolii, and the slippages that are involved in the creation of a 'National' architectural idiom from imported practices, one finds that the political dynamic implicit in the superposition of architecture over urban plan is more complex. This superposition exposes a shared European heritage serving the conflicting constituencies involved in building Tel-Aviv. It reveals the ways in which intersecting "progressive" and "conservative" attributes of Garden City ideas and Modernist architectural practices are further complicated by the political context of the Jewish colonization of Palestine.

In the end, neither side of the political spectrum can claim total responsibility for the physical form of Tel-Aviv. The initial bourgeois vision came up short against the realities of industrialization and the limited resources of a developing country. Labor, on the other hand, could not undo the Liberal capitalist origins of Tel-Aviv, nor fully overcome the effects of overcrowding and rising land prices.

Both political constituencies continue to contest the future of Tel-Aviv. as their historical legacy continues to condition the city's outward form. Tree-lined boulevards recall the middle-class aspirations and nostalgic yearnings of Tel-Aviv's earliest European inhabitants. Machine-Age details on peeling stucco walls and shuttered balconies stand as reminders of the progressive idealism of many who participated in building the city, and the state.

NOTES

[1] Recent monographs on Tel-Aviv architecture address the relationship between architecture culture in Europe and Palestine in terms of the material appropriated, but fail to fully explore the mechanisms of transfer and adaptation of Modernist practices to the Palestinian context. See Michael Levin, *White City: International Style Architecture in Israel* (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv Museum, 1984), Nitsah Metsger-Samok ed., *Batim Min ha-Hol: Adrihalut ha-Signon ha-Beinleumi be-Tel-Aviv, 1931-1948* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Development Fund, Ministry of Defense, 1994) and Winfried Nerdinger ed., *Tel Aviv Modern Architecture: 1930-1939,* trans. Michael Robinson (Tubingen: Wasmuth, 1994).

[2] Pe'era Goldman, "Tel Aviv: Transformation of a Suburb Into a City, 1906-1935," in *Tel Aviv Modern Architecture: 1930-1939,* 18, and S. Ilan Troen, "Establishing a Zionist Metropolis: Alternative Approaches to Building Tel-Aviv," *Journal of Urban History* 18:1 (November 1991), p. 23.

[3] For a review of the connections between planners and architects in Palestine and the English and German Garden City movements, see Gilbert Herbert and Silvina Sosnovsky, *Bauhaus on the Carmel and the Crossroads of Empire: Architecture and Planning in Haifa During the British Mandate* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzchak Ben-Zvi 1993).

[4] Goldman, p. 18.

[5] Gidon Beiger, "The Planning of Ahuzat Bayit," *Adrikhnlur* 9 (March 1987), p. 17.

[6] See Theodor Herzl, *Old-New Land,* trans. Lotta Levensohn (New York: Bloch Publishing co.. 1941). The new world that Herzl described originated in the experience of middle class Jewish Vienna. Troen , p. 25.

[7] Goldman, p. 18.

[8] The ban on industrial production in the newly independent municipality of Tel-Aviv was lifted in 1921. A. Ehrlich, "Architecture in Tel-Aviv — The 1920's and the 1930's," *Adrikhnlur* 9 (March 1987), p. 24. The Third and Fourth *Aliyot,* along with Jewish flight from Jaffa sparked by the riots of 1921, introduced a new diversity into the population of Tel-Aviv. Immigrants of the Third *Aliyah* (early 1920's), disappointed by the failure of the Revolution to adequately address the needs of the Jews, strengthened the existing labor constituency in the *Yishuv.* The Fourth *Aliyah* (1925) was a middle-class immigration that introduced more capital into the country. Metzger-Samok, pp. 19,241. Tel-Aviv's ensuing growth was critical for Liberal Zionists, for according to their vision of Jewish colonization, only an urban industrial society could resist the onslaught of other contestants to the land. Troen. pp. 26-27.

[9] Troen, pp. 28-29.

[10] 80% of imported Jewish capital was invested in Tel-Aviv. Troen 13. The economy of Tel-Aviv expanded at a steady rate until late 1925, when a sudden and severe depression brought building to a standstill and caused a wave reverse immigration. The city was on its way to recovery by 1929. Metzger-Samok, pp. 19-20.

[11] The Tel-Aviv city council first approached Geddes during his 1919 visit when, at the invitation of Haim Weizmann, he proposed a plan for Hebrew University. Goldman, p. 21.

[12] Fed by the immigrations of masses of young pioneers following

the end of World War I, the population of workers and artisans in Tel-Aviv had risen to 75% of all Jewish labor in Palestine by 1922. 1920's Tel-Aviv became a center of the fledgling Labor movement in Palestine. Metzger-Samok, p. 240.

[13] In the mid 1920's housing costs rose 100% and land prices doubled or tripled annually. Working class boarders crowded into private apartments which were built for middle class families. Troen, p. 15. By 1934, 75% of urban working-class families lived in one-room apartments. See Leo Koffman, "Tafkidei ha-Adrikhal ba-Shikun ha-'Amami," ha-Binyan ba-Mizrah ha-Karov 1 (December 1934), p. 15. Contemporary accounts note that due to high costs, apartments were designed with the eventuality of subletting in mind. Julius Posener and Sam Barkai, "l'Architecture en Palestine," Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, VIII:9 (September 1937), p. 14.

[14] Mainstream Zionists and some parts of the Labor Zionist movement viewed rural development as a priority. For help in the urban sphere, Labor turned to the Histadrut. Troen, p. 14.

[15] From 1931 through 1934 the Center built over 1,500 suburban and urban units in Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel-Aviv, supplementing its investment with funds from the residents themselves. Koffman, p. 16.

[16] Garden City ideas coincided with Central European Municipal Socialism in the hygienic design principles and collective organization of the Viennese Wohnhofe which served as additional models for the 1930's workers' housing projects of Tel-Aviv. Troen, pp. 17-19.

[17] According to Troen, this Labor Zionist vision was akin to the Viennese Socialist philosophy of Der Neue Mensch, and to the Wohnkulture advocated by Leftist European architects. Troen, p. 20.

[18] Among the Eastern European professionals, intellectuals and artisans who immigrated in the mid 1920's were young architects who would make up the core of the profession in 1930's Tel-Aviv. Many sought training in Europe during the depression of the late 1920's, returning to Palestine when the colony's economy revived. The Fifth Aliyah (mid-1930's) brought Central European architects steeped in the culture of the Avant-Garde to Tel-Aviv. Ita Heinze-Greenberg, "Immigration and Culture Shock: On the Question of Architectural Identity in Alteneuland," in Tel Aviv Modern Architecture: 1930-1939, p. 37.

[19] See Gilbert Herbert and Ita Heinze-Greenberg, "The Anatomy of a Profession: Architects in Palestine During the British Mandate" Architectura: Zeitschrift fur Geschichte der Baukunst 22:2 (1992), pp. 149-162, for a quantitative study of the training of these architects.

[20] The Chug was modeled on the Berlin architect's group Der Ring. Irmel Kamp-Bandau, "Tel Aviv, Modern Architecture in the Middle East," in Tel Aviv Modern Architecture: 1930-193, p. 35, note 17. Its members condemned the lack of vision in the previous twenty five years of Tel-Aviv architecture culture, calling for the institution of a competition system for public projects and the inclusion of the young generation in municipal building departments. Israel Dicker, "Ptikha," ha-Binyan ba-Mizrah ha-Karov, 5-6 (December 1935), p. I, and Ze'ev Rechter, "le-Pekudat Binyan ha-'Arim, 1935," ha-Binyan ba-Mizrah ha-Karov 4 (November 1935), p. 8.

[21] The journal appeared intermittently from 1935 through 1937. Called simply ha-Binyan ('Building') in its later less diverse incarnation, it was edited by Israel Dicker with help from Julius Posener and Sam Barkai. For a discussion of the journal's evolution and its increasing institutionalization of International Modernism, see Alona Nitzan-Shiftan, "Contested Zionism-Alternative Modernism: Erich Mendelsohn and the Tel Aviv Chug in Mandate Palestine," Architectural History 39 (1996), pp. 147-180.

[22] M. C. E. Pataky, "Yaffo-Tel-Aviv," ha-Binyan ba-Mizrah ha-Karov 2 (February 1935), pp. 4-5. In an article revealing the conservative bent of his own view of domestic architecture, Julius Posener echoed Pataky's interest in the Mediterranean courtyard house type. Julius Posener, "Batim Bnei Dira Ahat be'Eretz Israel," ha-Binyan 2 (November 1937), p. 1.

[23] Jacob Zimmerman, "The Municipality as Builder," Binyan ve-Haroseth 3-4 (March-April, 1927), pp. 8-9.

[24] Jacob Shiffman, "Tel Aviv the Metropolis: Towards a New Urbanity" Palestine and Middle East Economic Magazine 5 (1937), p. 240.

[25] Shiffman, p. 242.

[26] Koffman, p. 16.

[27] Arieh Sharon, "ha-Dirah ha-Minimalit be-Batim Meshutafim," ha-Binyan ba-Mizrah ha-Karov 3 (August 1935), p. 6, and "Tikun Batim Meshutafim," ha-Binyan 1 (August 1937), p. 1. Sharon's rationalist emphasis on minimum housing closely resembles that of the German Functionalists.

[28] The Ukranian-born Rechter immigrated to Palestine after the revolution. Leaving the Palestine during the 1926 depression, Rechter sought further education in Rome and in Paris. In Paris, Rechter studied at the École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées. He returned to Tel-Aviv in 1932, to profit from the local building boom. During the 1930's Rechter built villas and apartment houses for Tel-Aviv's fledgling bohemia and its middle class entrepreneurs. He confirmed his own position in Tel-Aviv's urban bourgeoisie when he moved his family into the Engel House. With Arieh Sharon and Joseph Neufeld, Rechter was a founding member of the Architect's Chug. Ze'ev Rechter biography from Ran Shechori, Ze'ev Rechter (Jerusalem: Keter, 1987), pp. 9-14, 23, and Metsger-Samok, p. 182.

[29] Urbanized middle class immigrants who joined Tel-Aviv's tenant population in the 1930's expected a high standard of living, including luxuries such as electrical refrigeration, large kitchens and numerous rooms. The presence of a garage in Rechter's preliminary scheme is a further testament to these aspirations. Shechori, p. 23.

[30] This last feature of the Engel House points to the paradoxical relationship between private middle class apartment buildings and the urban plan—namely the crowding of multi-family apartments onto lots which were intended for private suburban dwellings.

[31] The Russian-born Barkai immigrated to Palestine in 1920, leaving in 1926 to study in Venice and Paris. In 1933 he worked for Le Corbusier. Returning to Palestine in 1934, he practiced in Tel-Aviv. As a corespondent for L'Architecture D'Aujourd'hui and co-founder of the Chug group, he was a central figure in contacts between architectural circles in Europe and Palestine. Barkai biography from Winfried Nerdinger, "Sam Barkai," in Tel Aviv Modern Architecture: 1930-1939, p. 237. Determining how much Barkai actually brought with him from Le Corbusier's office, and how much information he diffused on the local scene is dependent on more research.

[32] The Lubin House was located in Tel Benjamin ('Benjamin's Hill'), a suburban extension of the city. The painter Ariyeh Lubin was greatly influenced by the purism of Le Corbusier and Ozenfant and it is thus fitting that he commissioned Barkai to build a home for his family. Levin, p. 25.

[33] Born in Poland, Sharon immigrated to Palestine in 1920. An autodidact builder, he left Palestine in 1926 to study at the Dessau Bauhaus, where he apprenticed under Gropius and Hannes Meyer. In 1929, he worked in Meyer's Berlin office. In 1931 Sharon returned to Palestine where his practice focused on workers' housing and public buildings. A co-founder of the Chug group, Sharon promoted Modernist architectural practices and wrote frequently on the planning, design and construction of housing. Sharon's biography from Winifried Nerdinger "Arieh Sharon," in Tel Aviv Modern Architecture: 1930-1939, pp. 244-

245, and Levin, *White City*, pp. 30-35. See also Arieh Sharon, *Kibbutz + Bauhaus: An Architect's Way in a New Land* (Stuttgart: Kramer Verlag, 1976). Among the European schools whose students practiced in Tel-Aviv, the Bauhaus has often been cited as the most influential. Seven of the seventeen Bauhaus students who settled in Palestine were architects. Winifried Nerdinger, "Architecture of Hope: Modern Architecture in Tel Aviv," in *Tel Aviv Modern Architecture: 1930-1939,* p. 12. Functionalist principles and a 'machinist' image of modernity that character-ized many of the later Bauhaus experiments in architecture can be traced, less than a decade later, in the architecture of Tel-Aviv. The rationalized production values and *Existencemininzum* stan-dards foregrounded, after 1926, by Bauhaus masters, were im-ported to Palestine by their students. As was the case with Le Corbusier, the Mediterranean associations found in the work of European Bauhaus architects must have acted as a conceptual link that facilitated the transfer of this idiom to Palestine.

[34] Among the advantages of this strategy, Sharon listed increased light and ventilation, privacy and economy. In his extensive writings Sharon advocated rationalized planning, design and construction as the key to the improvement of the general housing stock. Sharon "ha-Dirah ha-Minimalit be-Batim Meshutafim," pp. 6, 8.

[35] Samok compares this to the ways in which the monumentality of the *Wohnhöfe* of 'Red Vienna' was a foil to the grandeur of bourgeois Vienna. See Metsger-Samok, pp. 245-247.

[36] Troen, p. 20 and Metsger-Samok, p. 241.

[37] Despite his resistance to the capitalist economy and bourgeois culture embodied in the Geddes plan, Sharon praised what he sees as the functional aspects of its design. Arieh Sharon, "Tikun Batim Meshutafim," p. 2.

[38] Sharon's rationalist approach and emphasis on *Existenzminimum* standards recall the planning and design principles of Ernst May's *Neues Bauen* architecture. Given high urban land costs and the economic limitations of the Labor movement, it should not come as a surprise that these principles found fertile ground in the collective housing developments of Tel-Aviv. Metzger-Samok. p. 241. Despite a fee schedule that allowed residents to make small regular payments towards the acquisition of their apartments, the effect of higher land costs was to place urban workers' housing units out of the reach of low-income laborers. Thus, projects like *Hod Workers' Housing* were inhabited by very established workers, and more notably, by *Histadrut* activ-ists and by artists and intellectuals affiliated with the labor movement. Posener and Barkai, p. 17.

[39] Balconies are once again exploited as functional elements, shad-ing living spaces and accommodating evening gatherings— bringing communal life into the home.

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