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THE UTOPIA OF PERSONALITY: MOISEI GINZBURG'S PROJECT FOR THE MOSCOW PARK OF CULTURE AND LEISURE*

This article focuses on Moisei Ginzburg's competition entry for the Central Park of Culture and Leisure in Moscow (1931), assessing its nature as a utopian landscape. It demonstrates how the program of the project emerged from the debates on modernist town planning as an attempt to adapt ideas developed in the course of these debates to existing urban context. Emerging prior to the rest of the modernist urban environment, the park assumed the role of representing the settlement of the future within the city of the past, while simultaneously forming a part and parcel of the urban system to come. It was both inscribed into the modernist system of the zonal division of the city as the recreation zone and itself divided into separate zones, becoming a miniature model of an ideal modernist city of the future. The project was based on the principles of "disurbanism," an approach to town planning, which Ginzburg earlier developed in his project of the Green City near Moscow (1930). Following the theoretician of disurbanism Mikhail Okhitovich, Ginzburg declared the individual (rather than the family or the group) the basic unit of society, and consequently, personal development became the major mission that his park was to perform. As a result, the Park of Culture and Leisure became not a site, but a mechanism of personal and urban transformation.

Keywords: Moisei Ginzburg, disurbanism, Moscow Central Park of Culture and Leisure, urban planning, landscape architecture, public parks, social condenser, Green City, modernism, utopia, zoning.

Статья посвящена заявке Моисея Гинзбурга на конкурс проектов Центрального парка культуры и отдыха в Москве (1931), рассматривавшей природу как утопический ландшафт. Автор показывает, каким образом программа проекта возникла в дебатах о современном планировании городов в качестве попытки применить идеи, развитые в ходе этих дебатов, к существующему городскому контексту. Возникнув прежде окружающей современной городской среды, парк принимал роль представителя поселения будущего внутри города прошлого, одновременно формируя

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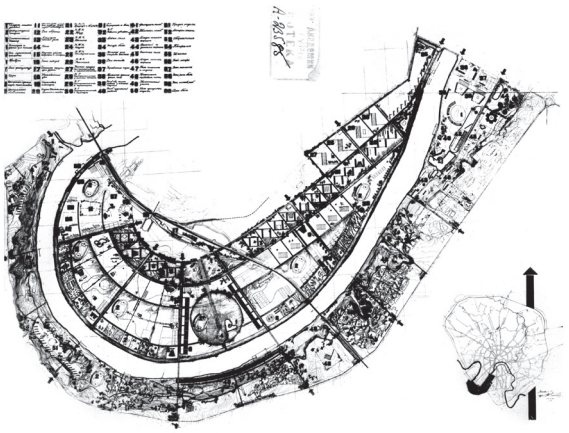
частицу грядущей городской системы. Он вписывался в рамки модернистской системы зонирования города как рекреационная зона и одновременно сам дробился на меньшие зоны, сделавшись миниатюрной моделью идеального модернистского города будущего. Проект опирался на принципы дезурбанизма – подхода к планированию городов, который Гинзбург ранее применил в проекте Зеленого Города под Москвой (1930). Следуя теории дезурбанизма Михаила Охитовича, Гинзбург провозгласил индивида (но не семью или группу) базовой единицей общества, и, следовательно, развитие личности сделалось основной миссией, которую парк должен был исполнить. В результате парк культуры и отдыха должен был стать не местом, но механизмом персонального и городского преображения.

Ключевые слова: Моисей Гинзбург; дезурбанизм; Московский центральный парк культуры и отдыха; городское планирование; ландшафтная архитектура; общественные парки; социальный конденсатор; Зеленый Город; модернизм; утопия; зонирование.

In 1931, architect Moisei Ginzburg (1892–1946), the leading theoretician of Constructivism, submitted an entry to the competition for the redesign of the Central Park of Culture and Leisure in Moscow (Fig. 1). Opened three years earlier on the grounds of the former All-Russian Agricultural Exposition, on the Vorob'evy Gory south-west of the city center, it was to become the major public park in the country and a prototype for socialist public parks of the future. The design had to transform the Park of Culture and Leisure into "a powerful cultural complex [*kul'turnyi kombinat*], which would combine political, scientific-popular, art-spectacle, and physical-cultural and health-related work with the masses, and which intends to attract tens and hundreds of thousands of workers throughout the year" [Цит. по: Глан, с. 3]. A total of ten ambitious projects were submitted by major Soviet architectural organizations, and several more were prepared as diploma projects by students who



1. M. Ginzburg. Central Park of Culture and Leisure. Moscow. General Plan. 1931 // Image courtesy of Shchusev State Museum of Architecture (MUAR)

were graduating from Moscow VKhUTEIN in 1929[1]. However, no winner was selected in the 1931 competition, and none of the submitted projects were realized, with the exception of the entrance parterre that formed a part of the project of Konstantin Melnikov, the chief architect of the park. If all the submitted projects were, one could say, utopian–unrealizable in their giant scale and unprecedented ambition – it was, perhaps, because of the competition brief, which called for a park that could host 150,000 people daily. In this article, I focus on Ginzburg's competition entry in order to assess its nature as a utopian landscape and demonstrate how its program emerged from the debates on modernist town planning as an attempt to adapt ideas developed in the course of these debates to existing urban situation.

Landscape, Urbanism, Utopia

In popular interpretations of landscape traditions as distant as medieval Persia and eighteenth-century Britain, parks and gardens have often been elevated from the level of the mundane and connected to the world of fantasy and dream. A microcosm or even a sacred space, the garden has been a classic example of what Michel Foucault defined as a heterotopia – a real space (as opposed to the unreal utopia) that was essentially different from all other [Foucault, p. 22–27]. In modern Western society, the enjoyment of garden heterotopias remained a privilege of the elite, and when nineteenth-century philanthropists developed a model for a park for the masses, it became pragmatically delineated as a space of hygiene and entertainment, which complemented rather than opposed workers' everyday lives. Not a counter-place, the nineteenth-century public park was equally distant from a no-place, or utopia. For philosophers from Plato to Thomas More and on, the concept of a utopia suggested a model of ideal societal organization, which in the nineteenth century, following the development of capitalism and the accompanying growth of proletariat, acquired a distinctively critical character and was transformed into a tool of class and ideological struggle. In contrast, nineteenth-century *Volksparks* attempted to mitigate the brutality of early capitalism by offering spaces for physical and moral recuperation of workers. Rather than a model of a different social or urban system, a *Volkspark* functioned as a bandage on the sick body of the modern metropolis.

[1] The projects were submitted by Scientific-Technical Society of Construction Workers (NTO Stroitelei): L. E. Birykov, L. B. Velikovsky, N. S. Zarubin); ARU: V. P. Kalmykov, V. I. Fidman; The Brigade of Central Park of Culture and Leisure: L. S. Zalesskaya, I. P. Kychakov, M. I. Prokhorova; ASNOVA: T. N. Varentsov, S. A. Geldfeld, A. I. Repkin, S. B. Bekker; VOPRA: P. I. Goldenberg and V. I. Dolganov; ASI: A. V. Natalchenko, P. P. Reviakin, K. Ia. Rogov; SASS (Sector of Architects of Socialist Construction, *Sektor Arkhitektorov Sotsialisticheskogo Stroitel'stva*, as OSA was renamed in 1930): I. U. Bronshtein; Moisei Ginzburg; Konstantin Melnikov; I. I. Klang and A. S. Korobov. Most of the students who chose the Park of Culture and Leisure as the subject of their diploma projects studied in the workshop of Nikolai Ladovsky. Among them were: Lyubov Zalesskaya, Vitaly Dolganov, Mikael Mazmonian, Karo Alabian, Ivan Bolbashevsky, Oganes Balian, and Sergei Matorin. Mikhail Zhirov studied under Aleksandr Vesnin.

Whereas nineteenth-century public parks were designed in opposition to the concept of utopia, modernist town planning embraced it as a viable model. The boundary between early modernist urbanist theory and the idea of utopia was often imperceptible, making it impossible to neatly assign such projects as Ebenezer Howard's *Garden City* or Le Corbusier's *Ville radieuse* to one or the other. Having emerged as an alternative, radical – utopian – response to the infamous filthy slums of the industrial city, modernist town planning placed the problem of hygiene at the very heart of its program. Little wonder, then, that public parks were not to be seen on most of these projects: there was no need for them in the picture of ideal green, clean, and hygienic modernist settlements, hovering above forests and meadows.

However, the potential of public parks as large open spaces capable of hosting thousands of people was soon noticed and appreciated by modernist architects. Parks turned into spaces of recreation and of leisure – understood both in the broad sense of the term as time spent outside of work and in the narrow sense as active satisfaction of one's intellectual and creative ambitions[2]. This new role of public parks became part of CIAM's doctrine of urbanism, which was created with the active participation of Ginzburg, the Soviet representative in CIAM from 1928 to 1932. Codified in the Athens Charter, published by Le Corbusier only in 1943 but incorporating materials from the 1933 CIAM IV conference (which was initially scheduled to take place in Moscow) as well as the experience of designing public parks in the USSR, this doctrine proclaimed that parks and gardens had to become a sort of social infrastructure: "The new green areas must serve clearly defined purposes, namely, to contain the kindergartens, schools, youth centers, and all other buildings for community use, closely linked to housing" [Le Corbusier, 1973, p. 69]. Public parks supplemented functionalist housing, making it livable and thereby preventing modernist utopia from degrading into a dehumanizing dystopia.

No longer trying to solve the problem presented by the old metropolis, the park, although still physically located within it, addressed itself to theoretical (and often utopian) modernist models of town planning. In post-revolutionary USSR, where radicalism was normalized on all levels of discourse, the utopianism of these models was uncompromising, provoking Ginzburg famously to accuse Le Corbusier of not being consistent enough in his destruction of the old city:

> You, the best of surgeons of the contemporary city, you want to cure it by all means. This is why you elevate the city on poles wishing to solve the unsolvable problem of movement in a metropolis, a movement in the absence of space.

[2] The potential of leisure for creativity had been part of the Marxist tradition, exemplified by, among other texts, William Morris's utopian *News from Nowhere* (1890). In Russia, it was explored most notably by the Soviet minister of culture and education (*narkom prosveshchenia*) Anatoly Lunacharsky, who stood behind the concept of the park of culture and leisure [Луначарский, с. 26–27].

> You create magnificent gardens on the roofs of multi-story buildings wishing to give people an extra bit of greenery, you create charming villas, giving their inhabitants ideal conveniences, peace and comfort. But you create all that because you wish to **cure** the city, [you] attempt to essentially **preserve** it the way it was created by capitalism. <…> We diagnose the contemporary city. We say: yes, it is ill, mortally ill. But we do not want to cure it. We prefer to destroy it and want to start working on the creation of a new type of human settlement, which would be devoid of internal contradictions and which we could call socialist [Гинзбург, 1930a, с. 61][3].

Addressing itself to this "new type of human settlement," the park was to become part and parcel of its structure, acquiring a particular function within the new urban system. At the same time, emerging prior to the rest of it, the park assumed the role of representing the settlement of the future within the city of the past. If it were realized, it would become both a utopia – a model of the urbanism yet to come – and a heterotopia – a material counter-space.

Modernist Urbanism and the Park of Culture and Leisure

The term "park of culture and leisure" was an invention of Soviet bureaucrats. It reflected the dual task that new public parks had to perform: on the one hand, to provide facilities for rest and recreation while, on the other hand, to become spaces of propaganda and education – the latter within the framework of the "culturedness" (*kul'turnost'*) campaign that aimed to adapt new townsfolk to life in a metropolis (on the notion of *kul'turnost'* see: [Kucher, 48–68; Volkov, 1996; Volkov, 1999; Kelly, Volkov, 291–313]). A space where one could spend hours or days (a hotel was provided for out-of-town guests), in its scale and complexity the proposed Moscow Park of Culture and Leisure presaged post-war Western theme parks. The competition brief, announced by *Mossovet* (Moscow Soviet of the Working People's Deputies, the municipality of Moscow) in 1931, specified a list of required zones and facilities:

> 1. **The Main House**, the administrative center of the park.
> 2. **Children's Village**: a). nursery, b). kindergarten… with a kitchen-garden and a flower-bed, c). Children's Club, with a gym, a theater, a library, and a space for games… Also there has to be a pond for sailing, tracks for running competitions, a stage for performances and music.
> 3. **Physical Education Base**… with winter gyms, a sports library, a swimming pool, resting rooms, etc. The building has to be surrounded by open sports grounds and a bicycle track; a station for river swimming… has to be nearby; a site has to be determined for a skating rink and for skiing in the winter.

[3] For the debate between Ginzburg and Le Corbusier and the latter's position in Soviet debate on urban planning, see: [Cohen, 1992].

4. **Club Base**, a club with an auditorium, a library… rooms for chess and checkers, table tennis, billiards… bowling … a tearoom, etc. Around the house, spaces for summer outside rest with flowerbeds, lawns and stages.

5. **Military Village** for getting theoretical and practical military knowledge… For summer use, there also has to be a network of tents and barracks, and a site for military engineering works.

6. **Artistic-Performative Sector** includes: a). drama and opera theaters for five to six thousand spectators each; b). children's theater for three thousand spectators, c). open-air theater for ten to fifteen thousand spectators, d). circus for ten to fifteen thousand spectators, e). cinema for four to five thousand spectators, f). various attractions on the ground and water for both summer and winter periods, g). …stages for mobile troupes and concerts.

7. **Food Facilities**. …Several permanent restaurant-cafeterias, tearooms and cafes, kiosks and pavilions near the sites of mass gatherings.

8. [**Exhibition**] **Corners**-ethnographic… zoological, botanical, regional studies…

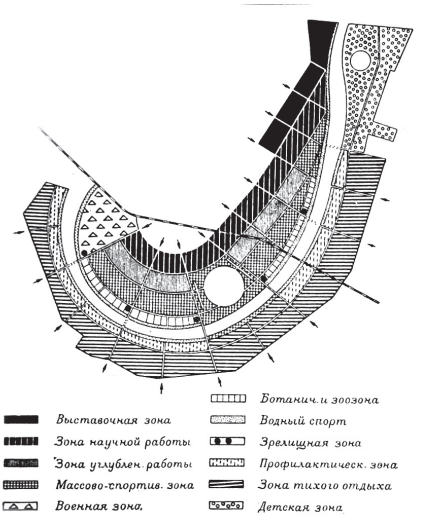
9. **Spaces for Rest**… for those who wish to have quiet rest.

10. **Exhibition Hall…** for periodical exhibitions.

11. **Residential Houses**… for the employees of the park… [and] since the park is going to become a resort zone in its own right, a hotel for visitors.

[Лавров, с. 14–16].

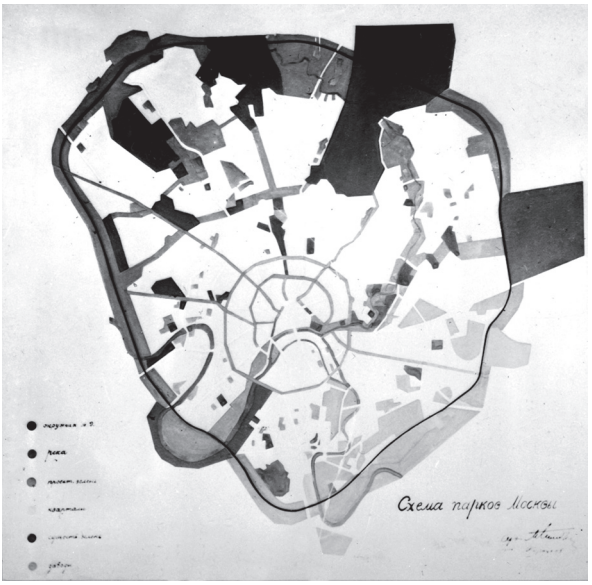
Responding to this program, Ginzburg's project presented a sequence of linear functional zones. Although showing basic routes and some terrain relief, the general layout of the plan was highly diagrammatic, representing each zone symbolically rather than topographically: instead of depicting the design of different segments of the botanical zone, for instance, he only included schematic drawings of grasses and palm trees. Ginzburg further developed this principle of economy of representational means, bracketing all topographic and architectural information, in the zonal division map, which was sometimes used to represent the project in press instead of the general plan [Лунц, 1935, с. 212; Лунц, 1932, с. 28–29] (Fig. 2). All that was left here was a schematic diagram of the park's zones and the circulation of visitors, superimposed upon the contours of the park. Quite an unusual representational technique in landscape architecture, this diagram



2. M. Ginzburg. Zonal Division Diagram for the Central Park of Culture and Leisure. Moscow. 1931 [Лунц, 1935]

style resembled contemporaneous urban planning projects, such as Ivan Leonidov's design for Magnitogorsk, underscoring that for Ginzburg, the park of culture and leisure fell within the discipline of urban planning – a discipline that had its own goals, tasks and methods, very different from those of landscape architecture. Within the discourse of CIAM, urban planning emerged as a subfield of architecture that was, first and foremost, capable of solving the social challenges that it faced, and as such acquired a predominant importance.[4]

Supplementing Ginzburg's general plan, a proposal for the "Park System of Moscow" demonstrated the role of the park within the urban context of Moscow (Fig. 3). The Park of Culture and Leisure emerged as a key part of the green belt, which embraced the city using the grounds of the circular railway created around Moscow in the 1900s. The railroad enabled movement within the park and connected the park to the city, at the same time protecting residential areas from transport noise and pollution. Although similar to nineteenth-century urban greenbelts, such as the Vienna Ringstraße and the Boston Emerald Necklace, but, most importantly, complementing the Moscow Garden and Boulevard rings (which appeared after the demolition of military fortifications during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), Ginzburg's project placed the railroad in the center of the urban greenbelt, merging the traditional concept with such recognized examples of advanced, modern infrastructure as contemporaneous American and Canadian parkways and railway landscapes and, of course, Howard's *Garden City*, also surrounded by a circular railroad (on the role of railroads in modern landscape imagination, see [Davis; Lam]).



3. M. Ginzburg. Park System of Moscow. 1931 // Shchusev State Museum of Architecture (MUAR)

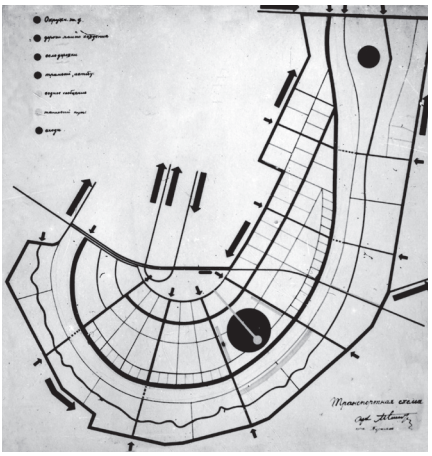
[4] The *Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne* (CIAM, 1928–1959) was an international organization that united radical modernist architects. Among its founding members were Le Corbusier, Sigfriend Giedion, André Lurçat, Ernst May, Hannes Meyer, Hans Schmidt, and Mart Stam. The Soviet Union was to be represented by E. l. Lissitzky, N. Kolli and M. Ginzburg.

A more radical – perhaps, utopian – proposal was made by Mikhail Zhirov, a member of the OSA and a student of Alexander Vesnin in VKhUTEIN, where he defended it as a diploma project in 1929 [Жиров, с. 172–175]. Published in *Sovremennaia Arkhitektura* (*Contemporary Architecture*), the journal of architectural Constructivism edited by Ginzburg, Zhirov's project interpreted the park as a two-kilometer-wide series of circular zones that surrounded the city center. The first internal circle was allocated for government offices; the second was devoted to physical culture and children's villages; the third was to be occupied by gardens and scientific centers; while the fourth peripheral circle encompassed existing fields and kitchen gardens. Several round "park-cities" – giant parks that swallowed whole areas of Moscow, in particular those already rich in vegetation – were beaded on the thread of this multi-layered ring. Adapting the ideal scheme to Moscow's concrete situation, this scheme, in which rings and circles of parks were superimposed upon the urban texture, looked as if Howard's *Garden City* was turned inside out.

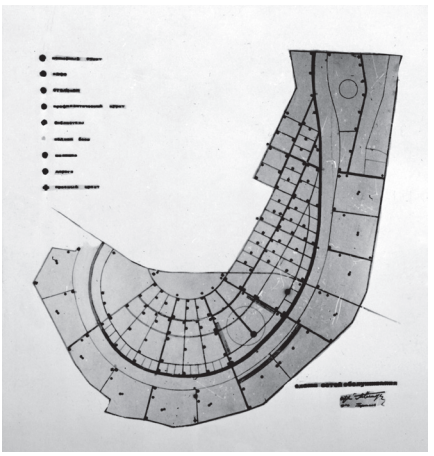
Comprising the core of Moscow's recreational zone, Ginzburg's and Zhirov's projects for the Park of Culture and Leisure endowed it with a central importance within the CIAM-promoted segregation of four functional areas within a city: living, working, recreation, and circulation. Furthermore, the park itself was subdivided into several sub-zones: the exhibition zone, science zone, "advanced work zone," mass-sportive zone, military zone, botanical and zoological zones, zone of water sports, spectacle zone, preventive medicine zone, zone of quiet rest, and children's zone followed each other as a series of narrow, gently curving stripes. Repeating the curve of the Moscow river in their semi-circular outline, the zones radiated from the invisible center – a preexisting railway station left beyond the boundaries of the park. They were sliced by perpendicular walking alleys, which allowed the visitors, depending on their goals and expectations, to either explore one zone in detail or receive an experience across all of the zones.

In the CIAM theory of urbanism, living, working, and recreation were to be separated not only functionally, but also spatially, and subsequently reconnected via a circulation zone. Transformed into the blood artery of the city and enabling zonal division, circulation, which had previously been neglected by architects and town planners, acquired a central importance for modernist urbanism and architecture. "*Circulation* is a word I applied unceasingly in Moscow to explain myself, so often that it finished by making some representatives to the Supreme Soviet nervous. I maintained my point of view. A second outrageous fundamental proposition: *architecture is circulation*," Le Corbusier argued, recalling how he defended the concept of his *Tsentrosoiuz* building [Le Corbusier, 1991, p. 47; Cohen, 1981, p. 96–99]. Perhaps as a result of Le Corbusier's sermons, the idea of architecture as circulation firmly asserted its place within Soviet architectural theory, and Ginzburg expanded it to architecture's other subfields. "Landscape is circulation," he could have said in relationship to his project for the Park of Culture and Leisure. In two supplementary drawings demonstrating the Park's

transportation system and facilities network, cafes and dining halls, libraries and sports bases were concentrated along an extremely diverse system of communication lines: the railroad, pedestrian and bicycle paths, streetcar and bus routes, water transport, and even a "tank way" for military pa-



4. M. Ginzburg. Central Park of Culture and Leisure. Moscow. Transportation Scheme. 1931 // Shchusev State Museum of Architecture (MUAR)



5. M. Ginzburg. Central Park of Culture and Leisure. Moscow. Facilities Network. 1931 // Shchusev State Museum of Architecture (MUAR)

rades (Figs. 4, 5). In the absence of a distinctive center (the "Main House" requirement of the program was ignored by the architect), this preexisting railroad, which partly bound and partly traversed the Park, became its true heart, the meeting point of all the radial paths.

The two cornerstones of modernist urbanism, circulation and zoning informed the emerging modernist approach to public landscapes and, in particular, to the Moscow Park of Culture and Leisure as a prototype of a socialist park. In Ginzburg's project, the park was both inscribed into the system of the zonal division of the city as the recreation zone and itself divided into separate zones, becoming a miniature model of an ideal modernist city of the future.

The Green City and Disurbanism

As the symbol of modernity and promise of social change through technological development, the railroad attracted modernists and more traditional social reformers alike. Shortly after the publication of Howard's *To-morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform* in 1898 (which due to its emphasized social mission was well familiar to Russian readers) Russian architect and town planner Vladimir Semenov set out to develop a garden city for the workers of the Moscow-Kazan' railroad society near Prozorovskaya station to the southeast of Moscow. Although its

implementation was interrupted by the revolution of 1917, a significant part of the project was realized, and the construction was widely publicized in Russian architectural press. Similar to Ginzburg's later Park of Culture and Leisure, Prozorovskaia was to acquire the shape of an ideal circle radiating from the train station – its functional and symbolic center, which reminded the residents of the meaning and significance of their work, promised a better, modernized future, and connected the village to Moscow. Semenov continued to enjoy a prolific architectural career after the revolution, acting as the chief architect of Moscow from 1932 to 1934, and his model of a garden city that existed in symbiosis with the railroad informed much of Soviet modernist town planning even though it was often accused of responding to the conditions of the old capitalist society.

The competition for the "Green City," which was announced in 1929, aimed to adapt Semenov's idea to the new political situation. Four leading architects – Melnikov, Ginzburg (together with his student and frequent collaborator Mikhail Barshch), Nikolai Ladovsky, and Daniil Fridman – were invited to participate. According to the competition brief, the Green City was to become a major short-term vacation resort connected to Moscow by a preexisting railroad line (and thus also available for weekend visits), which would house as many as one hundred thousand residents at a time. The challenge that the architects faced was how to provide the visitors with a rural, green, and hygienic environment while preserving the protected forest that occupied the major bulk of the city's territory.

Similar to the Park of Culture and Leisure, the Green City was to be divided into several zones: those for culture, physical education, residence, preventive medicine, children, personnel housing, communal services, and a model agricultural farm that would employ five thousand people and supply the city with fresh produce. The Green City was not intended to merely mitigate Moscow's detrimental effects upon workers' health, but also to become a model for urban development of the future.

The competition became an opportunity for the participating architects to make statements of their positions within the discussion on modernist town planning. The challenge lay in the need to combine the utopian statement with a viable solution for the practical task posed by the organizers. Referring to the garden city concept, Ginzburg suggested making the Green City Moscow's first "satellite," but his ambition went further: to transform all of Moscow, which he believed ought to become a giant park of culture and leisure. To this end, he proposed three radical measures: remove all administrative, industrial, and higher educational institutions from the city; relocate the remaining population along the lines of transportation connecting Moscow to nearby cities; and ban all new construction in Moscow, consistently planting over all territories vacated as a result of the natural destruction of houses [Барщ, Гинзбург, с. 17–18].

This utopian part of Ginzburg's proposal aimed to illustrate his embrace of "disurbanism," one of the two conflicting approaches in Soviet modernist town planning thought at the time. The so-called "discussion of socialist

settlement," which revolved around the interpretation of Marx's claim that communism would eliminate the distinction between the town and the country, split the previously united camp of modernist architects into two hostile factions. The urbanists, led by Leonid Sabsovich, proposed the creation of a network of small towns connected to each other by roads, which would replace old capitalist agglomerations. Big apartment blocks, where every worker would receive at least one furnished room, would replace individual housing in these new towns, allowing for the collective satisfaction of mundane needs through a creation of large factory-kitchens and centralized factory-laundries. On the opposite side of the divide, disurbanists, whose major spokesman was Soviet economist and sociologist Mikhail Okhitovich (1896–1937), were convinced that the development of individual transportation was a death sentence for the old city as agglomeration, and prophesied the creation of settlements according to the principle of maximum liberty: individual houses connected by highways and a developed network of distribution centers could, they believed, provide a more hygienic and efficient infrastructure for living.

Famously disagreeing with their idol Le Corbusier, who aligned himself with the urbanists, the Constructivists adopted the disurbanist program. Starting with the premise that, unlike production, *consumption* was always individual, Okhitovich developed a theory of individuality as a product of socialist proto-consumer society. Since basic consumer needs (which Okhitovich identified with physiological functions: being born, eating, sleeping, making oneself warm) could be satisfied only individually, Okhitovich believed that individual consumption led to the development of individuality, and more complicated and sophisticated consumption produced better, more developed personalities. Thus the goal of socialist society was, according to him, the satisfaction of the consumer – and since consumption was best satisfied through individual housing and networks of small distribution centers, these formed the core of his disurbanist program [Охитович, с. 7–16].

Ginzburg further developed Okhitovich's idea. Small individual houses (42 square meters of living space) in his Green City each consisted of one room with toilet and shower cabin. Attached to one another, the units created a 90-kilometer-long and potentially endless structure that presaged Constant's *New Babylon* and Superstudio's *Continuous Monument*. Interrupted only by firewalls between every several units (to make houses cheap and easy to construct it was proposed to make them of wood), it followed existing highways and thoroughfares, cutting through villages and towns and transforming their social character along its way. A 250-meter-wide strip of greenery separated the line of housing from the highway, whereas the other side was occupied by a vast park with freely scattered "cultural" and educational institutions. To provide access between the two sides of the strip, the houses were elevated on *pilotis* [Гинзбург, 1930a, с. 14–20; Барщ, Гинзбург, с. 20–36].

A characteristic – yet unexpected, given the communist convictions of its creator – feature of Ginzburg's Green City project was the complete iso-

lation in which it placed its residents. Even spouses were placed in adjacent but separate units, divided by soundproof walls. "Let the husband and wife live next to each other in two adjacent [living] cells. Between them is the door, through which they can communicate. But the presence of separate entrances in each of the cells guarantees that they also can **not communicate** if they do not want to," Ginzburg argued [Гинзбург, 1930б, с. 18]. Used by Ginzburg in relation to this and other projects, the use of the term "cell" [*yacheika*] to describe individual apartments resembles the definition of a family as the cell of society, which was proposed by Auguste Comte and widely used by Marxist sociologists. At the same time, working from Engels's idea that in a capitalist society family created the basic framework for the exploitation of women and children by men, Ginzburg called for the dissolution of family and for the basic social unit instead to be the individual.

Social Condenser

This isolation at home, exacerbated by the suburban character of the settlement ribbon, necessitated the design of special spaces for communication within the city. It was just that function that the Park of Culture and Leisure acquired in Ginzburg's thought. In the Green City, the park, which also assumed a ribbon shape, housed the town's administrative institutions as well as facilities for sports and education: two sports centers, a stadium, two auditoriums, "the central base of socialist education," "the center of cultural provision," and, last but not least, exhibitions of consumer objects, the differences between which, Ginzburg clarified, helped to develop the individuality of the consumer [Гинзбург, 1930б, с. 14–15]. This complicated system of exhibition, educational, and sportive zones of the Park of Culture and Leisure became an agent of personal development, and, perhaps not coincidentally, in 1931 the park in Moscow received the name of Maxim Gor'ky – the author of *The Destruction of Personality* (1908), a Romantic ode to the new, fuller and richer, individual that the socialist society was to produce.

In his surprising desire for the individual, rather than the family or the group, to be the basic social unit, Ginzburg relied on the thinking of Okhitovich, who argued that neither the collective nor the individual could be dominant in a socialist society and proclaimed the individual "not an arithmetic, but a social unit": "…An individual is a product of technological, not social, division of labor. Not accepting the collective while proclaiming *the individual*, as Max Stirner does, would be admiring a result while despising its reason. Exalting the collective while ignoring the individual would be [the same as] praising Russian language while prohibiting using Russian words. This is what is done by our contemporary Stirnerians turned inside out, the adherents of a special branch of Proudhonian communalism. Individuality cannot be juxtaposed to the collective, and vice versa" [Охитович, с. 13].

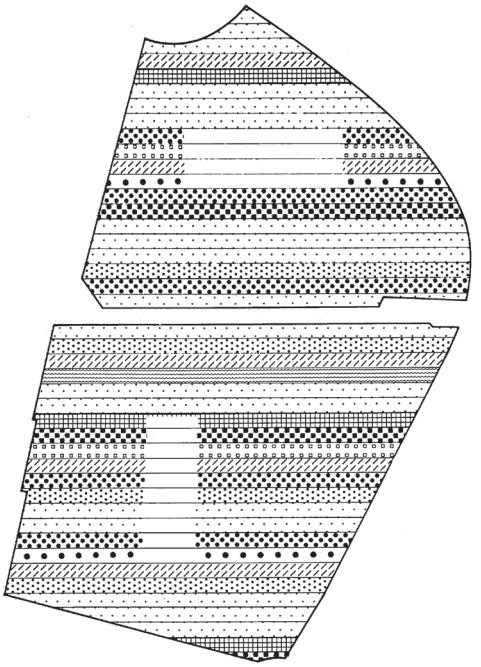
Since in Russian, the notions of the individual and personality share the same word (*lichnost'*), Okhitovich's statement can also be read as pertaining to personality. Not individualism, but the uniqueness of talents, abilities, and tastes were to be developed by individuals within the collective.

This preoccupation with issues of collectivity and personal development, demonstrated by the project for the Park of Culture and Leisure, was also characteristic of Ginzburg's other designs and concepts, most notably, for his notion of the social condenser, which became seminal for subsequent Western architectural theory. In 1927, he argued that "the purpose [that a] Soviet architect [faces lies] in the creation of social condensers of our epoch, the purpose that distinguishes our constructivism from all leftist movements and groups of Western Europe and America" [Гинзбург, 1927, с. 111]. This concept is often associated with Ginzburg's work on the so-called "house-commune" of the Soviet ministry of finance (*Narkomfin*), completed in Moscow in 1932 as a prototype for standardized mass-produced housing. In fact, Ginzburg and his team developed the Narkomfin not as a house where all activities of daily life were collectivized – a "house-commune" proper – but as a "house of transitory type," in which plentiful public space and small individual units were complemented by larger, more traditional, apartments for families with children not yet ready to dissolve within the collective. Similarly, the Park of Culture and Leisure with its segregated and reconnected functional zones could be seen as another example of a social condenser. As Zhirov explained in regards to his project, unlike the old, "aristocratic" or "bourgeois" parks, the Soviet park of culture and leisure did not offer a means of glorification of a king's power or a solipsistic escape from society; instead, its prime function was the meaningful and creative interaction of the masses:

> Park of a feudal society, e. g., in Ancient Egypt. The palace, vineyards and the shrine are major means of the organization of the enslavement of the people; all paths and alleys lead to these centers, there are no spaces for a free organization of the masses. In the Modern period: "the Bois de Boulogne" in Paris – a park, accommodating up to 200,000 people. Here there are no elements encouraging the unification and collective creativity of the masses, and everything is intentionally entangled in narrow paths. The squares are accommodated for racing and other recreations of just one social class. In both cases, the class character of the park's organization is clearly pronounced [Жиров, с. 173].

The potential of Ginzburg's Park of Culture and Leisure for becoming a social condenser was understood by architect Rem Koolhaas, who used Ginzburg's project as a model for his contribution to the 1982 Parc de la Villette competition, a similarly ambitious, large-scale, socially oriented, and state-funded project (Fig. 6). Koolhaas referred to his project as a "social condenser," which he defined as "programmatic layering upon vacant terrain to encourage dynamic coexistence of activities and

to generate, through their interference, unprecedented events" [Universal Modernization Patent, p. 73]. Formal similarities between the two projects are hard to miss: both comprised a diagrammatically represented sequence of narrow horizontal zones to be traversed by visitors. In each project, the horizontal division of the plan allowed for a certain democracy of planning: in the absence of a central alley or a prescribed route, the park could be crossed via any of the multiple possible trajectories.



6. OMA. Parc de la Villette. Paris. "The Stripes" diagram. 1982. Image courtesy OMA

Unlike Koolhaas, Ginzburg did not aim to provoke novel, unexpected events and activities. Instead, the modernist architect created infrastructure for events that were carefully controlled and orchestrated. Moreover, if activities in Koolhaas's Parc de la Villette were small in scale (engaging groups, but not masses of people), the activities envisioned by Ginzburg brought together thousands of people. To host these mass events – parades and spectacles – the project transformed the landscape of the site, turning a steep bank of the Moscow river into an open amphitheater of a giant stadium. This complex and uneasy amalgamation of a dystopian program of militaristic physical preparation and political propaganda on the one hand, and utopian development of individual talent and personality on the other became the major practical task that the Park of Culture and Leisure was to perform in contemporary and future Moscow.

In addition to the mass scale of events and their programmed character, another feature distinguished Ginzburg's project from that of Koolhaas. Koolhaas's Parc de la Villette was connected neither to the transportation system of Paris nor to the topography or history of the site. According to Koolhaas, it occupied a "vacant terrain" – in other words, it was, quite literally, a u-topia. To assert its utopian status, Koolhaas straightened the curves of Ginzburg's plan, transforming them into ideal straight lines. In contrast, Ginzburg's Park of Culture and Leisure was tightly connected to the materiality of its site on Vorobyovy Gory

and the social geography of Moscow. A product of a unique political, historical, and geographical situation, it did not intend to transcend its context, but on the contrary, fully embraced its position in time and place, connecting to it by means of a diverse system of transportation lines. Not a utopia of social activity like Koolhaas's Parc de la Villette, which it inspired, it was equally far from the utopia of an efficient and hygienic urbanism to which it responded. Designed not as a place but as a process of the development of individual personality and its urban context, Ginzburg's Park of Culture and Leisure, instead, became the mechanism of *change* – an ephemeral moment of transformation from the past into the future.

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