LA VILLE RADIEUSE
(PLAN VOISIN)
LE CORBUSIER
1924-1935
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(Charles-Edouard Jeanneret-Gris)
1887-1965
Swiss/French
architect, urban planner, designer, writer, artist

In many interesting respects the various scales of design he pursued were all part of the same project. Both houses and cities were based on a sort of modern cosmology of rather abstracted concepts drawn from the natural world, like greenery and sky, light and form, the human body and the horizon. The degree of abstraction was part of the problem, but in any case what was brilliantly realized in a few individual houses was a fantasy at the scale of the

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Studied as artist before pursuing architecture
Published Vers une Architecture, compilation from l’Espirit 1923
Published Cities of Tomorrow 1924
Exhibited Plan Voisin & Ville contemporaine in Pavillon de l’Espirit Nouveau at Exposition des Arts Decoratifs, Paris 1925
First presentation of La Ville radieuse at CIAM meeting 1933
Published his ideas on urbanism in ‘La Ville radieuse’ 1935
Unite d’habitation, Marseilles 1952
Chandigarh, India 1950-60s
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Europe Post World War I - 1920s

European Cities - Dramatic expansion following industrial revolution- contemporary dilemma of overcrowding

France Post World War I - Economy attempting to regain prosperity

Le Corbusier as artist and idealist, believed capitalism would generate a better future for cities.
Proposes Ville Contemporaine (City for 3million inhabitants)
Proposes Plan Voisin for Paris

Europe 1930s

Political instability through Europe
Italy - Facism, Germany - Rise of Nazis, Russia - Stalinism
France feeling delayed impact of World Economic Depression

Le Corbusier now leader of the international modern movement.
The appeal of the city as a hotbed for social political and economical transformation.
Joined Congres Internationaux de l'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) 1930
Involved with French Syndicalists

Proposes La Ville Radieuse

Modern Movement was a revolution in social purpose, as well as architectural forms. It tried to reconcile industrialism, society and make projecting prototypes for mass housing and ideal plans for entire cities.... William Curtis
PLAN VOISIN

Direct urban proposal for Paris - demolish centre of Paris and replace with Towers in a Parkland.

Exhibited alongside Ville contemporaine in Pavillon de l'Espirit Nouveau at Exposition des Arts Decoratifs, Paris 1925

Linear plan (differing from the radial plan of Ville Contemporaine)

His view of the city of his time is very critical: he finds sick, chaotic, capable of triggering a revolution. Thus he seeks to define a rational urban structure in which the new industrial world could integrate harmoniously...
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Linear plan (differing from the centralised radial plan of Ville Contemparaine)

Four overaching ideas:
- centre of city must be de-congested
- density must be increased
- circulation and mobility must be improved
- parks and open spaces must be increased

18 cruciform glass office towers on a rectangular grid
 triple tiered pedestrian malls with stepped terraces
Low -rise residential, governmental and cultural buildings
Integrated with highways, train and subway lines and an airport

However these were only intended for business and social elite, with regular citizens intended to be removed to satelite garden cities

“The towns of today can only increase in density at the expense of the open spaces which are the lungs of the city. We must increase the open spaces and diminish the distances to be covered. Therefore the centre of the city must be constructed vertically. The city’s residential quarters must no longer be built along “corridor streets,” full of noise and dust and deprived of light.”
- Le Corbusier, City of Tomorrow 1924
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Plan Voisin 1925
LA VILLE RADIEUSE

Presented to CIAM in 1930, further refined and published in 1935

Rational Urban Structure

Extendible linear plan based on abstract shape of human body with head, spine, arms and legs

approx 1000 pax/hectare - 400 pax/acre

3-4 times density of existing cities
distances to be transversed in it - 3-4 times less
5-10% surface area built on within business centre
spacious parks remote from the busy hum of the autostrada

The city is highly centralized and densely populated, yet most of its surface is given over to zones of leisure, like parks and playing-fields. Le Corbusier created broad roads to facilitate rapid passage of traffic to and from the countryside and from place to place within the city.

No longer restricted to elite, with jobs in either city business centre or manufacturing centres equally accessible.

“The Ville Radieuse was dedicated to the idea that harmony could be found within industrialism by finding the right balance between individual, family and the public order of the state; between built form and open space; between city and nature.”
LA VILLE RADIEUSE

- business centre
- railway station and airport
- hotels and embassies
- housing
- factories and warehouses
- heavy industry
- satellite cities: seat of government centre of social studies etc
LA VILLE RADIEUSE

Transportation

Separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic through vertical levels:
- underground street for heavy traffic
- ground-floor level of buildings and streets for pedestrian traffic
- two great arterial roads for ‘fast traffic’ to bypass the city centre

Also include railway, subway and airport terminals
LA VILLE RADIEUSE

Skyscrapers

18 storeys tall (200m tall, 400m apart)
housing 400,000 office workers
LA VILLE RADIEUSE

Apartment Buildings
Laid out in long strips à redent
(step back and forth in indentations)
house 1200 inhabitants each (14m2/person)
Collective habitations with roof terraces similar to Swiss Pavilion

All buildings to have spacious roof gardens
- floral plantings, electric lights

Services for the apartment residents included meal preparation, laundry, saving families time and giving them the ability to spend more time for sport and leisure.
PLAN VOISIN

paris if it had gone ahead...