

Photograph by Megidovitch, Y. (1934).

Bauhaus in Tel Aviv and Herzl's Zionist Vision of a Modern Homeland

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Abstract

This thesis will research Tel Aviv and more specifically its 'White City Area', which is Unesco World Heritage due to a great number of International Style buildings and urban heritage, which is unseen anywhere else in the world. The research uses the Zionist vision of Theodor Herzl, described in his book *Altneuland* as a framework, who wrote, before the foundation of Tel Aviv, how he described the future of Israel as a Modernist country with many European influences. Tel Aviv, the first Hebrew city, was built by Jewish immigrants and with them also architects. The town planning was done by the British colonial Patrick Geddes. Both architects and Geddes implemented European ideology and technology. The research will be what the relationship is between the theory of Herzl, the planning of Geddes and the execution of the modernist architects, which were heavily influenced by the Bauhaus School founded by Walter Gropius. Herzl already referred to many characteristics of Tel Aviv and Israel which were later indeed implemented by the urban planners and architects. The research will be done using the book *Altneuland* historical books, imagery, maps, Israeli songs, secondary literature, archival material, interviews and own experience. This research seeks to add the theoretical ideas of Herzl to the analysis of how Tel Aviv became the buildings with the most International Style buildings in the world.

Keywords: International Style, Bauhaus, Tel Aviv, Israel, Patrick Geddes, Theodor Herzl, architectural history.

Foreword

Since my first trip with my dad to Tel Aviv in high school in 2017, I've been very interested in Israel as a country, its political situation, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, on a broader scale, the political situation in the Middle East. Tel Aviv draws my attention in many ways. For example, in the Middle Eastern sense, you get this because of the people, the food, and the climate, but somehow it feels surprisingly Western. Also, the architecture of The White City of Tel Aviv sparked my interest, having done a Bauhaus city tour during the visit with my dad. This, among others, sparked my interest to write my history thesis on this topic. Another exciting aspect of this topic is the colonial perspective. Tel Aviv is the first Hebrew city in the land of Palestine and was entirely built by immigrants in a geographical location claimed by different races and religions. Tel Aviv is a city in a region where the tensions are high, but walking along the streets doesn't give you this feeling. Researching this topic, I hope to find out more about one of my favourite cities in the world and dive deep into its architectural and colonial history.

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Introduction

Tel Aviv, being the main object of study in this thesis, is interesting to research because of multiple aspects. It is a city full of contrasts: It is a relatively peaceful city in a region known for its conflicts, mostly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Being the first Hebrew City of Palestine, it is entirely built by immigrants. The land where Tel Aviv is built has been inhabited by many different people from diverse religions, races, and descent, but the city itself is only a bit more than a century old. The Zionist Jews acclaimed the land, even though other religious groups already lived there. The Zionists believed the land of Palestine was their right to inhabit. Tel Aviv, being the first Hebrew city is the first manifestation of the Zionists (Levin, 2009). Architecturally, the city is fascinating because of the significant influence of architects schooled in Europe. With them, they brought their modernist ideas to architectural design and society. This led to Tel Aviv becoming the city with the most International Style / Bauhaus building of any city globally (Turner & Levin, 1988; Azaryahu, 2006; Fiedler, 1995).

In 1902, just before the foundation of Tel Aviv in 1909 and Israel in 1948, Theodor Herzl, seen as the founding father of Zionism, described his vision for Israel and Tel Aviv in his utopian book *Altneuland*. He described Tel Aviv as a modernist and open Jewish society with Jews and Muslims living peacefully together, with a lot of European influences. He envisioned a country living in peace with its neighbouring countries and Arab inhabitants. One of the first streets of Tel Aviv is called after him, Herzl street. This also happens to be the location where the first building of Tel Aviv was built, a kiosk on the crossing between Herzl Street and Rothschild Boulevard (seen on the image by Soskin, 1925) (Azaryahu, 2006). Tel Aviv is based on the book of Herzl, with the book becoming partly a reality, as Levin, an Israeli Bauhaus expert, talks about during an interview in the documentary *Stad van Verlangen* (2019).



1. A. Soskin (1925). First kiosk on Rothschild Boulevard. [photograph]. from Kamp-Bandau, 1994.

After the Second World War, the State of Israel was founded in 1948 on Rothschild Boulevard, a street that now is one of the main axes in Tel Aviv. After World War II, different (Jewish) architects, some of them schooled at the Bauhaus School in Dessau, fled to Palestine to build a city on their self-proclaimed promised land (Turner & Levin, 1988). Due to the immense influence of the Bauhaus School and the Western Modernist ideas on the city's architectural style, Tel Aviv now has the most International Style or 'Bauhaus' buildings of any city in the world. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee declared the White City of Tel Aviv World Heritage in 2003.



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Tel Aviv, Israel's primary city and largest metropolitan area, is based on the master plan by British colonial city planner Sir Patrick Geddes, who implemented European modernist ideas of the Garden City ideal (Hysler-Rubin, 2003). A modernist city with European influences was created in a completely different, Middle Eastern context by Western city planners and architects. The buildings, built in the International Style, were adapted to a hotter and dryer climate than that of Western Europe, but the architectural language largely stayed the same.

Having discovered these different topics creates the curiosity to see whether Tel Aviv lives up to how Theodor Herzl envisioned the new town. This will be researched along with the following research question: *How did Geddes' urban plan for Tel Aviv and the International Style buildings within adapt Western influences to its local context, and did this meet the Zionist vision described in Theodor Herzl's book Altneuland (1902) as a modernist Hebrew city with European influences?*

Academic context

Much has been written on the Bauhaus school, International Style architecture in Tel Aviv and Geddes' town planning. Subjects entailing these, like the Zionist vision of Herzl and his vision of modern society, the colonial and contemporary beliefs of (primarily Zionist) architects and planners, like Geddes, Ze'ev Rechter, Arie Sharon & Genia Averbouch and how they apply their vision in Palestine to realise a new land according to their European and modernist beliefs and values, are also researched in different academic works like reports and books.

This research is unique in the way it introduces Herzl's theoretical perspective. It researches the common ground between the theory and Zionist philosophy of Theodor Herzl and the architectural and urban design of Tel Aviv. This link hasn't been studied yet. It is interesting to discover whether and to what extent the modernist ideas of the architects and planners mentioned above meet the vision of the Zionist movement that started Israel as a country and, more specifically Tel Aviv as the first Hebrew city.

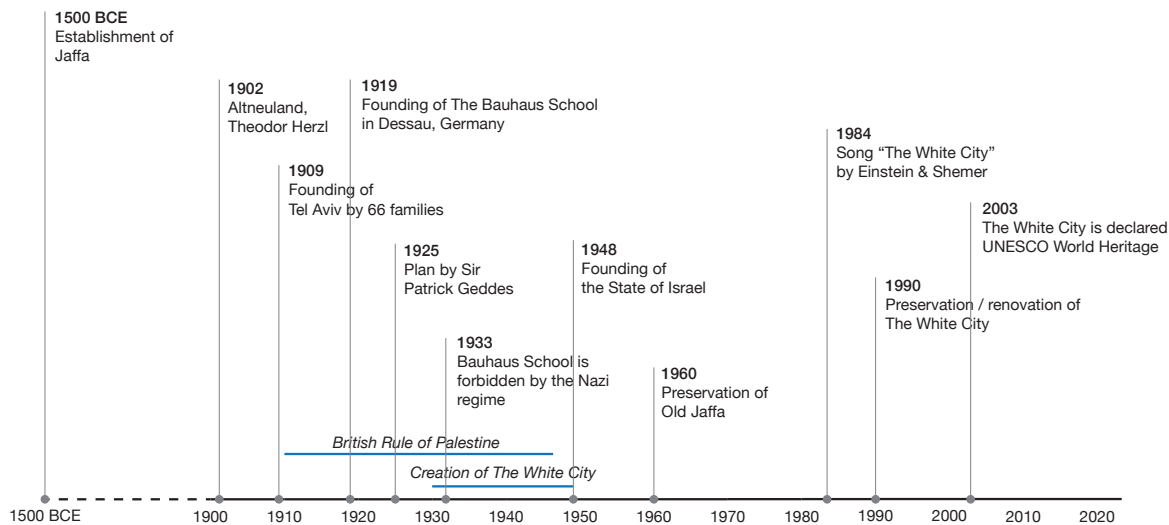
Methodology

The research is based on a range of different history books, including the book *Altneuland* written by Herzl, together with secondary literature about it, interviews in various documentaries, historical maps, archive material from the Israeli National Library and a variety of academic thesis published online and in magazines. Included in the analysis will be my own experiences from earlier visits to the area of Tel Aviv in 2017 and 2020 and an analysis of popular Israeli songs. A couple of experts wrote secondary literature on subjects within the thesis' topic, like Michel Levin, Sharon Golan Yaron, Maoz Azaryahu, Shlomo Avineri and Noah Hysler-Rubin, who will be referenced throughout this research.

Structure

The thesis will follow a structure by zooming in from vision to action and theory to execution. The first chapter will describe the historical context and developments of Israel and Tel Aviv, covering the roughly century-long period from 1909 to 2003. Chapter two explains the vision of Theodor Herzl for Tel Aviv and Israel, as described in his book *Altneuland* and by referencing secondary sources written about his vision. Chapters three and four will further dive into the different characteristics of the International Style that can be seen in the urban plan and built environment of Tel Aviv, respectively. In these chapters, various examples will be elaborated on and how these embody the influence of Herzl, Geddes' plan and International Style on a building and urban scale. The thesis will be concluded to answer the research question stated above.

Historical overview and context



Own work. Time line of main events. Based on Alfasi & Fabian (2009), Crucq & Veltman (2019), Unesco (2003), Kamp-Bandau (1994), Levin (2009) & Mualam (2017).

Israel

The area, illustrated in map 1 made by the United Nations (UN) in 2004, is referred to as either Palestine or Israel by different nations and is inhabited by other religious groups, races & cultures. The entire history of this area and the right of the Zionists, Jews or Israelis to call this place their country and homeland is, although fascinating, beyond the scope of this thesis. I will briefly go over the modern history of Israel for a general overview and understanding of the context.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I in 1920, the United Nations divided its territory (Britannica, n.d.). The Brits took over the rule over Palestine. In 1922, the part west of the Jordan River was split off as the British Mandate of Palestine. During the Balfour Declaration in 1917, issued by the British Government, they announced publicly to support the establishment of the “national home for the Jewish People” in what was then called the British Mandate of Palestine. After several clashes between the Arab and Jewish populations in the area, the Brits decided to end their rule over the region. Due to this, the United Nations issued a Partition Plan for Palestine, as seen in map 2. The Arabs, up until today, stand up actively against this plan, resulting in the outburst of wars and terrorist attacks. On the other hand, the Jewish were supported by the United States and embraced the project. This led to the declaration of the State of Israel on Tel Aviv’s Rothschild Boulevard at midnight on May 14, 1948 (archive.org, n.d.) This immediately started a war the day after, on May 15th 1948, and years of conflict followed.



Map 1. United Nations (2004). Map of Palestine. Downloaded from: www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/israel.pdf

Israel is a relatively young country that, because both the Arabs and Jews claim the land, isn’t recognised by all powers in the world as a sovereign state, including many of its neighbouring countries. Most Arab countries don’t recognise Israel as an independent country, such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi-Arabia, Syria and

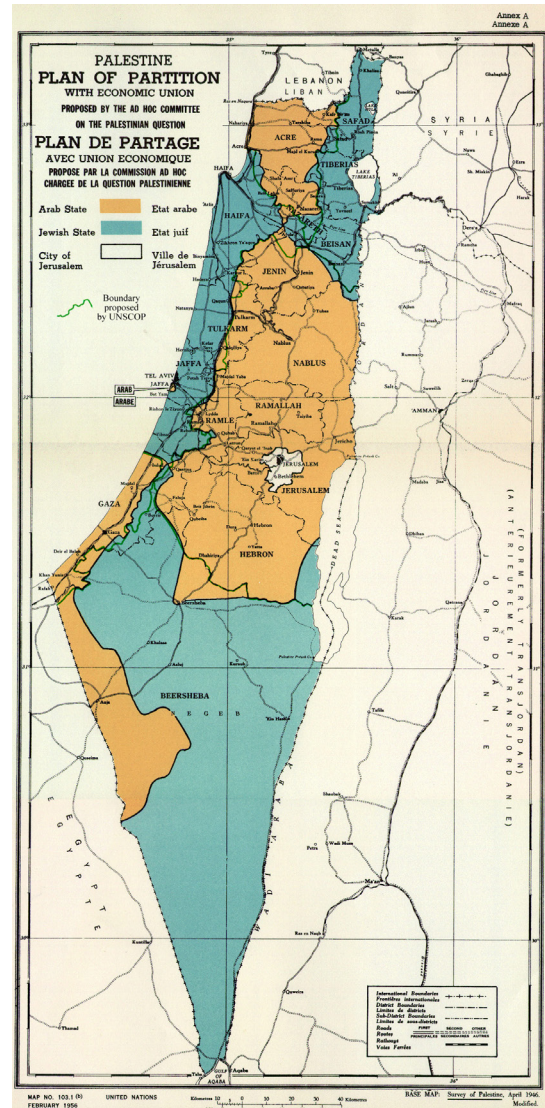
Yemen. This thesis will try to illustrate all findings objectively without making any political statements. This thesis will call the area shown in map 1 made by the UN in 2004, Palestine before 1948 and Israel after 1948.

Tel Aviv

Having an overview of the history of Tel Aviv, Hebrew for 'hill of spring', is fundamental to understanding the development of its architectural history. Tel Aviv was founded under the British Mandate of Palestine in 1909 and thus established before the State of Israel was declared a country in 1948. It started as a settlement on the dunes along Israel's Mediterranean coast, founded by 66 Zionist families. Zionism is defined as follows by the Oxford Dictionary:

a movement for (originally) the re-establishment and (now) the development and protection of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel. It was established as a political organisation in 1897 under Theodor Herzl and was later led by Chaim Weizmann.

Tel Aviv emerged just outside the northern wall of Jaffa, an already existing Arab port city. Jaffa is also referred to as the Hebrew 'Yafo' or Arabic 'Yafa'. Tel Aviv initially started as a neighbourhood of this town. Jaffa was built around the 15th century BCE (Britannica, n.d.). The built environment of Jaffa was in oriental Arabic style. Its population primarily consisted of Arabs, except for the northern neighbourhoods of Neve Zedek and Neve Shalom, both boasting a sizeable Jewish population. During the British rule in Palestine (1917-1948), Tel Aviv grew from a small neighbourhood of Jews to the north of Jaffa into a bustling urban area with a thriving economy and metropolitan allure (Unesco, n.d.). Because of the city's rapid development and increase in size, Meir Dizengoff, the first mayor of Tel Aviv, asked British colonial planner & theorist Sir Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) to make an urban plan for the city (Hysler-Rubin, 2011). This will be further examined in chapter 3.



Map 2. United Nations (1956). UN Partition Plan for Palestine. Downloaded from commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UN_Palestine_Partition_Versions_1947.jpg



Bauernfeind, G.. Market at Jaffa (1877). [digital scan of painting].



2. A. Soskin (1925). Foundation of Tel Aviv in 1909. [photograph] from Kamp-Bandau, 1994.

Development of International Style in Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv's built environment was initially constructed in an eclectic style (Whitford, 1984). This was until architects from Europe arrived, bringing the new International Style, also referred to incorrectly as 'Bauhaus', named after the famous design school first in Weimar and later in Dessau, Germany. Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus School in 1919 in Weimar, Germany. It established a new kind of education and society based on the 'learning by doing principle'. The concepts behind The Bauhaus School's way of teaching were shaped by the Industrial Revolution and the new technologies and methods of engineering it brought. According to The School, art, architecture, and craft had to reflect this new movement. The design language of the School's education was the use of new materials, simple form language and the lack of decoration. The school had a significant influence on the development of modernism. The school stood for delight, experiment and creative freedom (MacCarthy, 2019).

"The New Architecture throws open its walls like curtains to admit a plenitude of fresh air, daylight and sunshine. Instead of anchoring buildings ponderously into the ground with massive foundations, it poises them lightly, yet firmly upon the face of the earth; and bodies itself forth, not in stylistic imitation of ornamental frippery, but in those simple and sharply modelled designs in which every part merges naturally into the comprehensive volume of the whole. Thus, its aesthetic meets our material and psychological requirements alike." – Walter Gropius.

The Nazi regime forbade the school in 1933 due to its innovative nature. This is considered their first expression of political policy (Whitford, 1984). It started a significant migration of western architects to Tel Aviv, who saw Israel as an ample opportunity to apply new theories and design principles that they learned in Dessau, inspired by prominent architects of that era like Le Corbusier and Erich Mendelsohn. Bauhaus schooled architects and other architects influenced by the Modern Movement designed buildings in the city according to the design principles of the school, creating 'The White City'. Due to this development, Tel Aviv now has the highest concentration of Bauhaus buildings in the world. (Turner & Levin, 1988; Yaron, 2019; Unesco, 2003).

Unesco declared Tel Aviv, and more specifically an area within named "The White City of Tel Aviv", as world heritage in 2003, following restoration works of the municipality of Tel Aviv. According to him, Micha Levin 'invented' the White City because of his research work. Micha Levin, who is an expert on Bauhaus architecture in Israel, says in an interview in the documentary *Stad van Verlangen* (2019) that at first, the architectural heritage of Bauhaus in Tel Aviv wasn't talked about by anyone. The inhabitants of Tel Aviv didn't see it as an essential feature of their city. Azaryahu (2006) even states that until 1990, people regarded Tel Aviv being an 'ugly city'. No one recognised its architectural value. This changed from 1980 onwards when homeowners and the city department started renovating buildings constructed in International Style. The term 'White City' got, according to Azaryahu (2006 & 2009), stuck in the heads of the Tel Avivians because of the song "The White City" by Arik Einstein & Naomi Shemer (1984):

"From the froth of a wave and a cloud. I built myself a white city. Stormy, fluid, beautiful." (Translated from Hebrew).

"The White City of Tel Aviv" was declared UNESCO World Heritage in 2003, referring to an area within the city of Tel Aviv boasting the Bauhaus centre within the city, which can be seen on page 13 (Unesco World Heritage Committee, 2003).

The White City, which gets its name from the characteristic white plaster used on the buildings' facades. Tel Aviv being named 'The White City' is supposedly not only due to its Bauhaus architecture. A writer already in 1912 described the city as a white city:

"White. All are white. The air, the houses, the sand, the curtains, the clothes." Other descriptions of Tel Aviv as "our young white daughter of our youth" and "the white houses of the neighbourhood" arose in the 1920s. Essayist and poet Avigdor Ha'Meiri described the city as follows after flying over it in 1928: "How beautiful you are from above, white Tel Aviv, quiet, whitening in the sunlight, in the tiny pearls of your buildings." (Azaryahu, 2006).

The International Style was brought to Tel Aviv due to an influx of European architects that fled to Israel for various

reasons: seeking refuge after both World Wars, the ban on the Bauhaus School in Dessau and its beliefs by the Nazi regime, or to find opportunities in the White City. Because of its young nature, Tel Aviv was considered a relatively clean slate where (including women) architects got the chance to shape the built environment according to their new, innovative ideas (Yaron, 2019). Palestine's empty dunes provided the immigrants to construct whatever they thought was best to meet their standards and values. Unique about Tel Aviv is that a substantial portion of the city centre is built according to the International Style and the Bauhaus ideology. This contrasts with the way Bauhaus is expressed in Europe, mainly being works standing on their own. Tel Aviv's urban landscape became one coherent Bauhaus work. Within Israel, 'International Style' is incorrectly referred to as 'Bauhaus' (Turner & Levin, 1988). Bauhaus is the school, whereas International Style is the correct term for the architectural style. In this text, the term Bauhaus will refer to the design institution and International Style to refer to the architectural style.

Herzl's Vision

To understand the connection between the International Style and the vision of Herzl, it's essential to look at Herzl's utopian description of Israel & Tel Aviv. Herzl is considered one of the first political Zionists and the official founding father of the Zionist movement, even being mentioned in the Oxford dictionary as written before (Avineri, 2017). He was a philosopher, writer and political activist. He devoted his life to finding a solution to the Jewish problem arising from the Jews having lost their homelands multiple times throughout history. He wrote numerous books on the topic, one of which is *Altneuland*, written in 1902. He envisioned Palestine as a society where Jews, Muslims, Christians and people from all over the world could live in peace within what he called The New Society. This community shares many similarities with socialism and is built on new technological inventions brought from Europe and America, where according to Herzl, most immigrants would come from.

Interestingly, the title of Herzl's book, initially being *Altneuland* and written in German, was translated into Hebrew in 1902 by writer Nahum Sokolow as Tel Aviv (Tel = mound; Aviv = spring), translated according to the biblical contrast between old and new as mound and spring (Avineri, 2017). Meir Dizengoff later revealed that the name of his city came from the book by Sokolow (The Sentinel, 1936). The Jewish Garden suburb, built in 1910 by the Ahuzat Bayit (= "homestead") society, was named Tel Aviv after *Altneuland's* title translation. This neighbourhood eventually would become the first Hebrew City: Tel Aviv. Herzl didn't intend his book to be a utopian philosophy only. He created it as a plan of action for the Zionist movement. He didn't only describe The New Society as a perfect utopia but as a society with flaws (Avineri, 2017). With his proposal of The New Society, he wanted to solve the Jewish problem and, according to him, give their homeland of Palestine back to the Jews.

The book *Altneuland* is a novel, thus fiction, but portrays his vision of existing Palestine and how he envisions it through his Zionist spectacle. The main character is Friedrich Löwenberg, a young Jew living in Vienna, Austria. After leaving with his partner von Königshoff, a non-Jewish Americanized aristocrat, also known as mister Kingscourt from Vienna to Triest, they take a boat to bring them to a, as they talk about it in the book, 'New World'. They sail towards the port of Jaffa. Herzl's book *Altneuland* was based on his own experiences, sailing to Jaffa for the first time in 1898 to meet German Kaiser Wilhelm II during his visit to Palestine, as seen in the image shown on the right (Avineri,



Unknown author (1898). Herzl and the Zionist delegation en route to Palestine. From Avineri (2017)

2017). The fictional character von Königshoff could be interpreted as being inspired by Herzl himself, the book's non-Jewish main character. Herzl was also not Jewish. They both have little knowledge about Jewish subjects. The description of Jaffa portrays their view of Palestine at that time, which can be read as highly condescending. Herzl describes the country of Palestine and the people that at that time inhabited it, both Jewish and Arab, as very negatively:

"Kingscourt and Friedrich spent several days in the old land of the Jews. Jaffa made a very unpleasant impression upon them. Though nobly situated on the blue Mediterranean, the town was in a state of extreme decay. The landing was difficult in the forsaken harbour. The alleys were dirty, neglected, and full of vile odours—everywhere misery in bright Oriental rugs. Poor Turks, dirty Arabs, timid Jews lounged about—indolent, beggarly, hopeless. [...] The

landscape through which they passed was a picture of desolation. [...] "If this is our land," remarked Friedrich sadly, "it has declined like our people." "Yes, it's pretty bad," agreed Kingscourt." (Herzl in Altneuland, 1902)

Leaping to the future in 1923, Herzl writes about how, after being on sea for twenty years and away from the developing society, Kingscourt and Löwenberg come back to Palestine, witnessing how the land has been built up by Jewish immigrants coming from all over the world, bringing 20th-century technology with them and applying their new ideas to what they first called a blank-slate country. On arrival in the newly found country, Kingscourt and Löwenberg are surprised by the metropolitan character, the modern technology and well-dressed people in The New World.

"There were many Chinese, Persians and Arabs in the streets, but the city itself seemed thoroughly European. One might easily imagine himself in some Italian port. The brilliant blue of sky and sea was reminiscent of the Riviera, but the buildings were much cleaner and more modern. The traffic, though lively, was far less noisy. The quiet was due partly to the dignified behaviour of the many Orientals and the absence of draught animals from the streets. There was no hoof beat of horses, no crackling of whips, no rumbling of wheels. The pavements were as smooth as the footways. Automobiles speeded noiselessly by on rubber tires, with only occasional warning toots." (Herzl in Altneuland, 1902).

This is in sheer contrast to how Palestine was portrayed in the citation above, trying to make the reader believe the Jewish migrants brought a lot of positive things to the previously represented 'dirty and poor' country. Herzl cannot be read as a very objective writer since he takes a strong pro-Zionist standpoint, also describing Palestine as 'the old land of the Jews' and denouncing the indigenous people of Palestine. Herzl continues to write how upon return to Palestine, Kingscourt and Löwenberg found out the return of the Jews to the land of Palestine had been taking place. It wasn't only a place for Jews: Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and other houses of worship were built next to the synagogues. Herzl envisioned Palestine as a coexistent state. Since, according to Herzl, the land was still primarily uninhabited and old technologies didn't have to be replaced, modern technologies and ideas brought from the west could be easily implemented:

"Palestine now has the same comforts as in the large European cities. [...] Just because everything here had been in a primitive, neglected state, it had been possible to install the most up-to-date technical appliances at once. So it had been with the city planning, as they already knew; and so it had been with the construction of railways, the digging of canals, the establishment of agriculture and industry in the land. The Jewish settlers who streamed into the country had brought with them the experience of the whole civilized world. The trained men [who] graduated from universities, technical, agricultural and commercial colleges had brought with them every type of skill required for building up the country. [...] these desperate, educated young men had become a great blessing for Palestine, for they had brought the latest methods of applied science into the country." (Altneuland, 1902)

"And since we were about to build ourselves a home, we chose a 1900 model, not one of the year 1600 or 1800 or any other date." (Altneuland, 1902).

The Zionists' belief that Herzl proposes in bringing the progressive contemporary way of planning to the land of Palestine is in line with that of Geddes, who sought to introduce the modern Garden City model in Palestine (Allweil & Zemer, 2019). Because of the lack of historical heritage in the young city of Tel Aviv, there was a strong need for historical urban anchors (Hysler-Rubin, 2011; Levin, 2009). The only thing the Zionists would have to do is transplant the Western innovations to the Middle Eastern context. Herzl pictured the houses as white buildings, separately residential buildings with much green space around them and open-air balconies. This complies with Geddes' vision of the garden city and the International Style design principles of smaller buildings in white plaster, accentuating their horizontal shapes with balconies.

It's interesting how closely some parts of Herzl's book *Altneuland* predict events that would come after the release of his book, like the Jews being expelled from Europe and the introduction of the Shekel as the main coinage in Tel Aviv and the reintroduction of Hebrew as the primary language. Not everything became a reality. His dream of the Arab and Jewish population living together didn't come true (Avineri, 2017). His socialist vision partly became

a reality in Kibbutzim that were made after socialist beliefs. Israel became a capitalistic society. Besides that, the city planning and name of Tel Aviv are based on the book by Herzl. Also, concepts like the military service in Israel, both required for men and women, were already described by Herzl, stating that both men and women had to do two years of community service.

Altneuland wasn't a bestseller but was translated into many languages like Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino and others, showing its popularity worldwide (Avineri, 2017). *Altneuland* was also the name of a monthly German magazine publishing about Palestine's problems around the year 1905 (The Jewish Voice, 1906). This indicates how widely spread this term is for subjects related to Palestine and Zionism. The book *Altneuland* is the embodiment of Zionism in the written form.

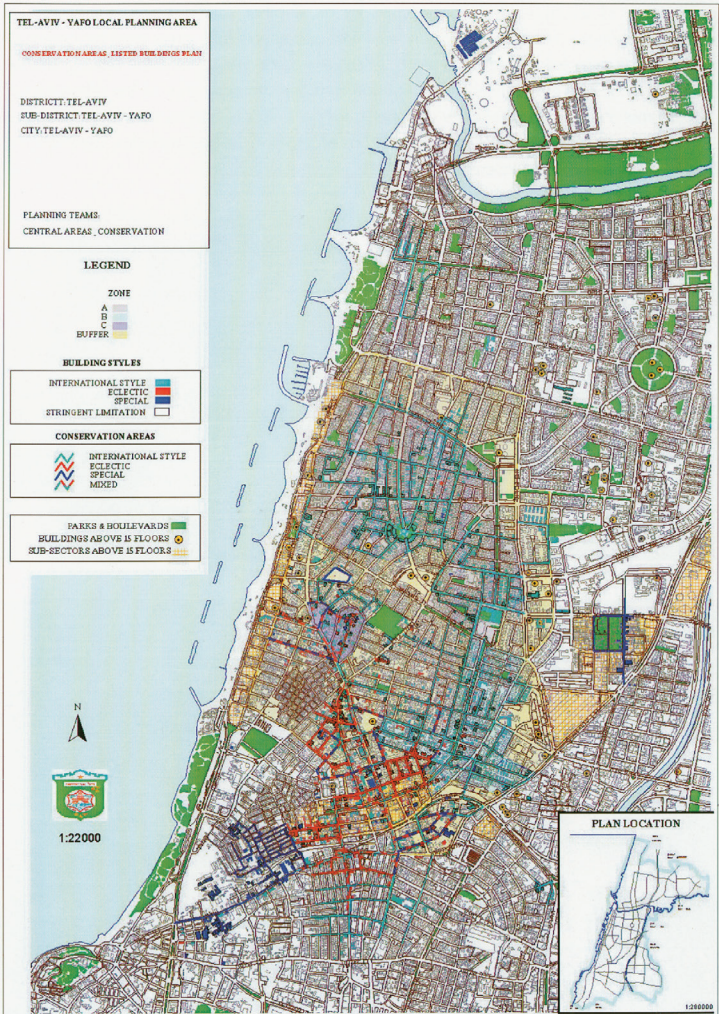
Herzl himself is still widely recognised in Israel: the Haganah ship Herzl used to get to Palestine in 1898 is now the name of the central train station in Tel Aviv. Herzl Street, one of the central axis in Tel Aviv, was named after him. After his death, he was saluted by a military collonade when his coffin arrived in Israel in 1949. His activism was crucial in creating the structure that helped bring the idea of a Jewish state to the attention of world leaders and the international public (Avineri, 2017).

Geddes' plan: International Style on an urban scale and Herzl's urban vision

Sir Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) was a self-educated British colonial town planner and biologist (Fiedler, 1995). He is considered the forefather of modern urban town planning. He worked for 25 years on plans for different regions within what were once British colonies, like India and Palestine. In Palestine, he was asked multiple times by the Zionist Commission to write about future opportunities for Haifa, Jerusalem, and Tiberias. After Tel Aviv's rapid expansion to the north of the existing Jewish neighbourhood of Jaffa because of the big wave of immigrants, Sir Patrick Geddes was asked by the first mayor, Meir Dizengoff, to create a plan that would be able to sustain the livability of the city (Allweil & Zemer, 2019). Since the start of the British Rule following the Ottoman Empire, the city's population quadrupled, and tents and shacks had to be built to accommodate the people. Geddes created his plan in 1925, and it is his only executed plan.

It is important to note that there isn't any written proof of Geddes being inspired by Herzl's book directly. He was indeed inspired by Zionism, which Theodor Herzl established. The two are thus not directly, but certainly in a way related. Geddes had professional and personal relationships with British Zionists, like his friend David Eder, who initially invited him to Palestine (Hysler-Rubin, 2011). Geddes envisioned the inhabitants of Tel Aviv sitting under their vine and fig trees, referring to the Ancient mind and the Zionist mind. A topic that Geddes and his Zionist colleagues didn't agree upon was how identity should be created for the new land of the Jews. He envisioned reviving ancient culture in the land of Palestine (Fiedler, 1995; Hysler-Rubin, 2003). The Zionists, on the other hand, wanted to bring European and modern ideas to the region.

Based on European standards, Geddes' urban plan of Tel Aviv was overall seen as a successful manifestation of the early Zionist intentions of the first Hebrew city in Palestine. Planners up until today are trying to read the plans' DNA to be able to reproduce and develop upon it. He was seen as an icon of Israeli planning and Zionist history and was even celebrated and known by the public (Hysler-Rubin, 2003). Geddes laid the foundation for the resettlement of the Jews in their homeland and to return to the 'essence of their culture' (Payton, 1995). Until today, plans made for the city incorporate his ideas of a pedestrian-scaled city, a mixture of land uses, active civic life, a great sense of community, and an abundance of public green space. Geddes' vision of a city with low-rise buildings and a low density wasn't sustainable. The high rise has become a more critical factor in Tel Aviv's urban landscape in recent history to battle the extraordinary high land prices and



Unesco World Heritage Committee (2003). Map of Tel Aviv.

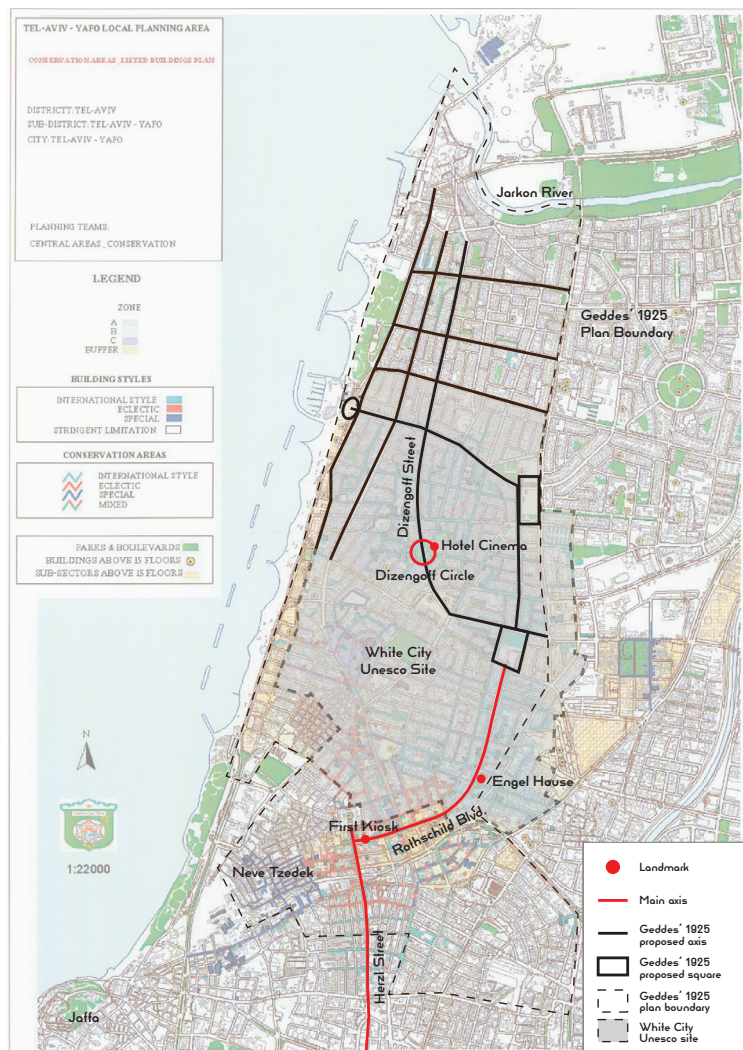
urban density.

As written before, Herzl envisioned Tel Aviv to become an oasis of green with white villas built within. It can be read as a plea for a garden city model, having the same characteristics as this model. The Garden city model wasn't only Geddes' plan; other (Zionist) planners, like Baerwald, Oppenheimer and Ettinger, presented an image of the future garden city on the shores of the Mediterranean. Oppenheimer also played an essential role in the Zionist colonisation of Palestine (Fiedler, 1995).

The architects of the modern movement highly criticised Geddes' plan. They found his strong division of individual building plots and alignment of the buildings too restraining (Hysler-Rubin, 2003; Allweil & Zemer, 2019). This was against the Zionist architects' belief of using the land of Palestine as a laboratory and playground to apply their modernist design concepts.

Geddes, on the other hand, didn't see Bauhaus as his preferred architectural style but envisioned the city to be built in the local Arabic style. He also had a natural colonialistic mindset, not interacting with the local population but imposing his ideas on the local inhabitants. He wanted to re-Hebraize the area and revive Hebrew identity in Palestine. He completely ignored the local people that lived in the land of Palestine, just like Herzl did in his book *Altneuland*. Geddes also mostly left out the old town Jaffa from his urban plan (Hysler-Rubin, 2011). His way of practice thus contrasts with how he saw urban planning, describing it in 1915 as a practice that came from studying "the local way of life, regional character, civic spirit and unique personality of the city" and not being made from above using general concepts.

Geddes' 1925 master plan was his only work ever realised. It was the only approved plan of Tel Aviv until the new master plan TA5000 in 2016 (Payton, 1995). He planned Tel Aviv as a city of 100,000 inhabitants, and one of the characteristics was his 'housing before street' principle, defining housing as the building block of the city. The city now has a population of 435 000, according to the latest measurements by the United Nations from 2016. Geddes' imagined the people to help build the houses and be responsible for the urban growth. This happened in the way that immigrants played an active role in building up the city. The blur between the top-down, bottom-up planners versus residents is the only example worldwide (Allweil & Zemer, 2019). An essential architect for filling in the housing blocks planned by Geddes was Arieh Sharon. This Polish immigrant studied under the supervision of Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus School in Dessau (Yaron, 2019). He was the architect of the first socialist cooperative housing blocks in



Own work. Tel Aviv map based on Rapaport & Schwartz (2009), Levin (2009), Metrany & Amit-Cohen (2009), Yaron (2019) & map of Tel Aviv by UNESCO (2003).

Israel. Sharon was later asked by Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, to make the first master plan for the newly established State of Israel, showing how closely connected the Bauhaus School and the foundation of Israel are. Arie Sharon designed several Tel Avivian buildings like House Arlozerov / Ohel Theater, Cooperative Housing Estates (Me'onot Hod) and the first Cooperative Housing Estates in Mandatory Palestine (Yaron, 2019).

Geddes' planned the house plot as 560 square meters and a maximum building height of 9 meters (Allweil & Zemer, 2019). This would contain a single house with no more than two residential units. The city council approved his town planning report on 6 April 1926, and the Technical Department of the Tel Aviv municipality incorporated it. Tel Aviv was built by negotiations between its residents, not by the urban planner's top-down approach. This is thus according to Geddes, who planned it this way. His plan had some other characteristics that resembled a socialist ideology. He wanted the land not to fall in the hands of the lucky few (Fiedler, 1995) but the green to remain in public ownership. He wanted a bottom-up approach, giving the workers in the city the means to build their own houses according to their wishes and wanted to decentralise the power (Allweil & Zemer, 2019).

Geddes' plan and the White City are 'inseparable terms in describing the celebrated city' (Hysler-Rubin, 2003). Geddes embodied both the idealistic values of the Zionists and the more neutral plans of action of the Modern Movement, with each of them envisioning a new egalitarian society, also mentioned in Herzl's book *Altneuland*. Geddes represented the connection between the Garden City Movement and the Modern Movement linked to Herzl's Zionist vision.

Dizengoff Circle

A prime example of the International Style integrated into the urban design of the White City of Tel Aviv is Dizengoff Circle, designed by women architect Genia Averbouch and built between 1935 and 1957 (Bauhaus Center Tel Aviv, 2019). Averbouch immigrated from Russia to Palestine and studied in Rome. Yaron (2020) describes Dizengoff Circle as the city's beating heart. Besides being built in the International Style, the square is also an excellent example of the opportunities given to women architects. The buildings along the square, two of which have also been designed by Averbouch, have typical Bauhaus elements like horizontal façade structures made from concrete. As a proper Israeli adaptation to the horizontal windows specific to the International Style, the implemented balconies function as a climate regulator (Yaron, 2019). Dizengoff Circle can be found halfway Dizengoff Circle, a street that Azarhahu (2006) calls a street radiating the glamour that reflected the city's aspiration to be considered on par with New York, London, Paris, or Rome—associated with pleasure, entertainment, fun and consumption. The street and square named after the city's first mayor reflect how intertwined the street and square are with the city. It became Tel Aviv's "Fifth Avenue.", being the home for Tel Aviv's bohemia and its main commercial street.



Unkown author. Dizengoff Circle competition by Genia Averbuch 1923, photographed 1983. [photograph]. From Levin, M. (2003)

The buildings: International Style buildings in a different context

Also found on Dizengoff Circle is the building that now goes by the name of Hotel Cinema, a prime example of International Style architecture. From its construction in 1938 until 1998, the building served as a cinema that accommodated up to 1000 visitors (Yaron, 2019). It features all the main elements of International Style buildings in Israel: the use of the column, the flat roof, and the curved facade, as seen on the image to the right (Levin & Turner, 1984). This is in line with Le Corbusier's description of the International Style: columns (*pilotis*), roof gardens, the free plan, ribbon windows and the free facade, as Le Corbusier writes in his "The Five Points of a New Architecture".

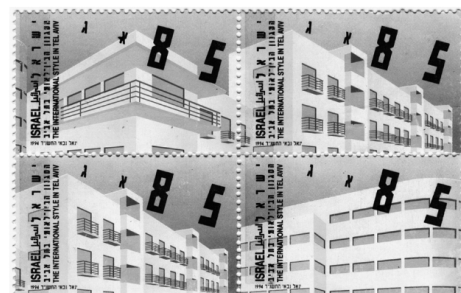


Unkown author. Hotel Cinema.

During the 1920s and 1930s, there were mainly two architectural schools in Palestine: Orientalism and International Modernism (or International Style) (Turner & Levin, 1988). Unique about the Modern Movement in Tel Aviv is that it's the only city almost entirely constructed in the International Style. Before this, International Style buildings would be mostly standing on their own in different European places, like the Schröder House in Utrecht, designed by Gerrit Rietveld in 1924. In contrast, another example of a neighbourhood designed entirely according to the International Style principles is the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart, Germany, constructed in 1927 (Kamp-Bandau, 1994). It is an ensemble of 33 houses designed by 16 architects. This resembles the way of organisation in Tel Aviv, where multiple architects also designed the ensemble of the White City.

In contrast to European examples of the International Style, few International Style buildings in Tel Aviv reached the architectural level of their European counterparts. This is because most of the buildings were built quickly and with little money and cheap materials to keep up with the pace of the ever-expanding population of the new city (Hysler-Rubin, 2003). Besides this, the harsh Mediterranean sun in Israel led to the deterioration of the plaster on the buildings.

Michael Levin, a Bauhaus expert and the creator of this exhibition, was one of the few creating awareness of the architectural heritage existing in Tel Aviv, starting voluntary research on the impact of Bauhaus architecture in Israel in 1984. He created a travelling exhibition hosted by the Tel Aviv Museum of Art regarding the Bauhaus School, and its architecture can be seen as a catalyst for the awareness that Bauhaus was so heavily intertwined with the built environment of Tel Aviv (Alfasi & Fabian, 2007). The international recognition of Tel Aviv as the White City started in 1994 with an international conference held by UNESCO and the municipality intended to raise awareness for the White City brand of Tel Aviv (Azaryahu, 2006). This would also begin the discussion on preserving the built heritage. This led the city council and homeowners to start a significant movement to modernise and renovate the White City and raise awareness by starting a promotional campaign, as seen a part on the image above (Azaryahu, 2006). The Ministry of Housing created the Lev Ha'ir plan (Hebrew for 'heart of the city'), designed by architect Adam Mazor, in 1981 to revive the city by giving a significant overhaul to traffic systems and



Unkown author. The International Style in Tel Aviv. A series of four postage stamps issued in 1994. From Azaryahu (2006)

restoring the International Style buildings in the city centre (Alfasi & Fabian, 2007). The city planners of the Lev Ha'ir plan focused more on urban revival than preservation. One of the results of this was their wish to add one to three floors on top of the existing structures. This plan was objected to by supporters of the International Style that wanted to preserve the original height and horizontality of the International Style buildings, also conforming to the prescribed maximum height of 9 meters by Geddes' plan.

The main characteristics of International Style buildings in Tel Aviv are described by Yaron (2020) as minimalistic and functional. Other features include new materials and shapes that resembled machine aesthetics and flat roofs, large windows, and white plaster on the walls (Turin & Levin, 1988). This is said to reflect the beliefs of the European Jewish (Ashkenazi) immigrants, embodying the European order, rationality and human progress in the built environment (Wilkof, 2015). The white colour of the buildings was already envisioned years before by Herzl in 1902, describing how south of Haifa (where Tel Aviv is), white buildings and villas arose within their green gardens—also relating to how Geddes' used the Garden City planning years later. According to Unesco, Tel Aviv's white city is an 'outstanding example of implementing modern architectural trends considering local cultural traditions and climatic conditions.' The buildings are all three to four stories high and emphasise their horizontality, primarily due to the horizontal windows and balconies introduced in the facade (Alfasi & Fabian, 2007). Herzl also described these balconies as 'frescoed loggias in the facade'. In many buildings, the ground floor is left open for a garden, and the rest of the building is lifted by columns (*pilotis*).

The fundamental tone of the city was apparent to anyone: *"the Jewish tone of Tel Aviv is glamour, the corona of glamour pouring down onto the roofs, flowing from the roofs unto the walls and the walls splashing young trees And glamour, a plentitude of glamour, is also the fundamental tone of life in Tel Aviv in general ... The Whole air is permeated with the glamour of hope, hope for the future."* (Azaryahu, 2006).

The use of Tel Aviv's architects of the International Style in the built environment embodied their opinion on architecture (Azaryahu, 2006). They consciously used the International Style, not developing a vernacular, local style. They intended to place their work at the forefront of modern Western architecture. Decorative elements were hardly used, and in contrast, functionality was an essential characteristic of the International Style. This is agreed upon by the Zionists, dreaming of building a modern European-like city that embodied their strong vision of a new society. The International Style was used as the architectural language to realise this. According to architectural journalist Esther Sandberg, the International Style embodied the secular, modernist, devoid of rituals and monumental lifestyle in Tel Aviv. This is in line with the vision of Zionists like Herzl.

One of the main challenges of the pioneering architects that moved from Europe to build the new city Tel Aviv was adapting the European Bauhaus building concepts to its new context. A major one of these challenges was adapting to Israel's Mediterranean climate. This was done by raising the ground floor of the building with *pilotis* and, as a result of this creating a garden that would let cool sea air through. A frescoed loggia was added to the typical horizontal windows of the European International Style, and the large windows that are very common within the International Style movement in Europe are not seen in the hotter climate of Israel (Benton & Benton, 1977).

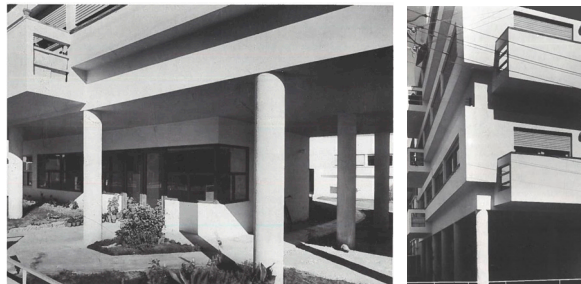
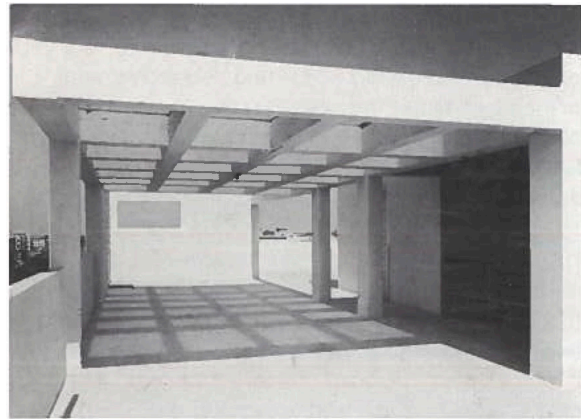
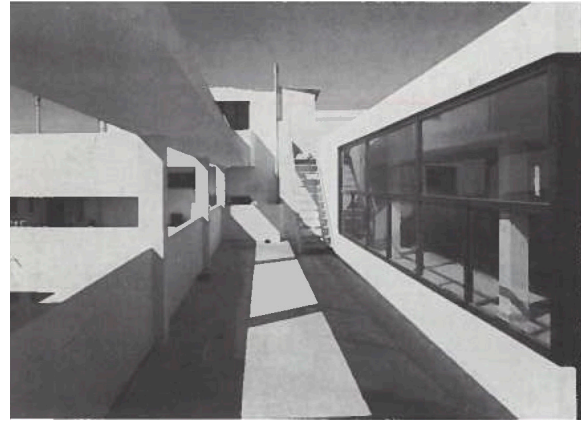
A reason for the success of the International Style in Tel Aviv was, according to Nerding (1993), the fact that the British Mandate government was open to the new architecture, the modern form language could be easily translated to the warmer climate and the availability of sand and gravel needed to construct the concrete structures. Because of the lack of existing architectural history where the new city was built, the modernist architecture gave the Jews a link to their European origin.

Engel House

An excellent example of an International Style building in Tel Aviv is the House Engel on Rothschild Boulevard. It was designed by Ze'ev Rechter and must be one of his best-known works, as Noam Dvir writes in Ha'aretz (2009). Rechter was one of Tel Aviv's many immigrants in 1920. He was born in Ukraine in 1899 and immigrated to Palestine when he was 20 years old. Rechter considered architecture as a central feature of Israel's lifestyle.

His social life was among Tel Aviv bohemians, poets, artists and actors. This higher group of society helped him attract wealthy clients (Dvir, 2009). One of these was Sarah Engel, a Jewish entrepreneur immigrating from England (Yaron, 2019). The local public describes this house as the building that put Tel Aviv on pillars, as said by architect Matanya Sack, referring to Le Corbusier's '*piloti*' design feature (Yaron, 2019). Because of Rechter, the use of *piloti* became a typical feature of the local Modernism style. Ze'ev Rechter is considered one of the big influencers of Modernism in Tel Aviv and largely influenced The White City. The building has all the typical International Style elements translated to fit Israel's climate: shaded accessible roof, horizontal form language, *pilotis*, horizontal windows protected by a horizontal frescoed loggia and the typical white plaster on concrete construction.

Because of the significant increase in the population, the columns that provided an open garden on street level were sealed off in this specific building. Very noticeable in Tel Aviv are these gardens created because of the lifted-off first floor by columns. This also gives the city much-needed fresh sea air that can freely enter through these gardens, making Israel's hot summer climate bearable (Yaron, 2019; Turin & Levin, 1988). To provide extra square meters of internal space, many typical International Style horizontal balconies were sealed off just like the street-level gardens. The implementation of these street-level gardens can be seen per Geddes' design of the Garden City. Important to note is that these gardens are privately owned and thus cannot be seen as purely a garden city aspect since the idea behind the garden city movement was to keep the green within the city publicly available (Fiedler, 1995). The British Garden city model was brought to Tel Aviv in typical Herzl fashion: bringing European ideas to Palestine.



Unkown author (1933). Engel House by Ze'ev Rechter on Rothschild Boulevard, corner of Mazeh Street. From: Turner & Levin (1984)

Conclusion

To conclude, much common ground has been found between the main subjects and people examined in this research: Herzl describing his Zionist vision, the 1925 urban plan of Geddes, and the western influence of the Bauhaus School and the International Style / Modern Movement architecture on Tel Aviv. The relationship between these is illustrated in the diagram on the next page.

Herzl was the visionary that started the Zionist movement; he claims he made a plan of action, not only a utopian dream. In his book, *Altneuland*, translated into many languages and heavily written about, envisioned a New World with white houses and much green space, all built with European technology and ideology. This way, he wanted the immigrating Jews to be able to hold on to their European roots after returning to how he put it: 'their homeland'. This described 'homeland', the land of Palestine, which he saw as an empty state, completely disregarding the already existing Arab population, cities and culture.

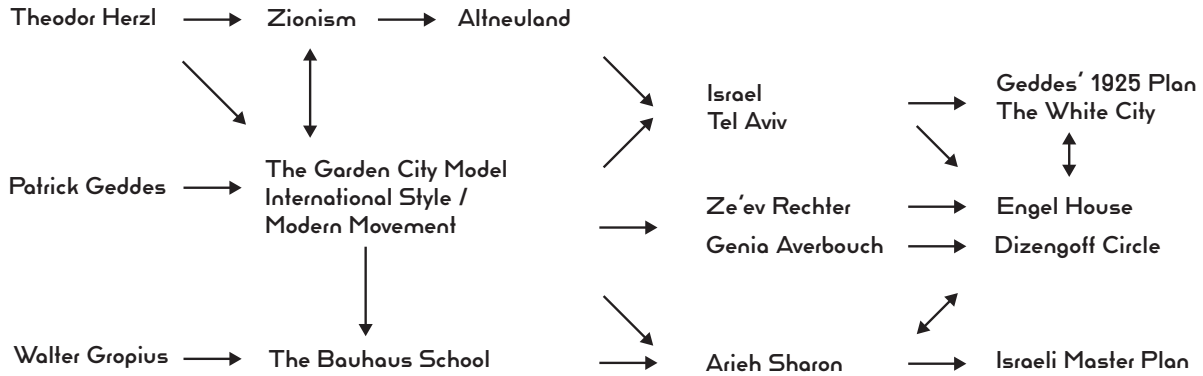
Not being a Zionist but greatly influenced by Zionists like his good friend David Eder, Sir Patrick Geddes made a plan for this new society. Even though it remains unclear whether he has ever seen, let alone read the book, he still made the 1925 plan in line with the Zionist vision of Herzl. Being a British colonial planner, Geddes' plan was based on the Garden City model of that time. He brought a European planning method to Palestine. This all being much like Herzl's description, he also ignored the existence of Jaffa's already existing port town and only dreamt about realising a new town with an egalitarian society. He wanted to re-Hebraize the land and revive ancient Hebrew culture. David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, asked the Bauhaus schooled architect Arie Sharon to create a first plan for the entirety of Israel, showing the close relationship between the movement's urban planning and the development of Israel.

The enormous immigration wave after the founding of Tel Aviv in 1909 and the forbidding of the Bauhaus School by the Nazi regime brought many architects to Israel, like Ze'ev Rechter, Arie Sharon, Genia Averbouch and many more, that were influenced by architects of their time and the architectural movement of that time: the Modern Movement. The Modern Movement was highly influenced by the Bauhaus School, founded by Walter Gropius. The Bauhaus school stood for delight, experiment and creative freedom. This was precisely why the Modern Movement architects disagreed with Geddes, his plan being too restraining. All schooled in Europe, these architects brought their European ideas to Palestine, which they saw as a clean slate. This all is in line with how Herzl portrayed his vision of the country. These architects brought a new type of architecture to the city that started in an eclectic architectural style. They used new technologies and materials, like concrete, which was easy to implement in Israel due to the availability of gravel and sand.

Examples given in this research on International Style urban planning and architecture are Dizengoff Circle by Genia Averbouch with its Cinema Hotel and the Engel House by Ze'ev Rechter. These embody the implementation of the International Style in Tel Aviv on an urban and building level, respectively. Dizengoff Circle, named after the wife of Meir Dizengoff, is in the area where Geddes' plan and the Unesco heritage site The White City overlap. Averbouch is one of the many women architects that got a chance in the unestablished order of Israeli town planning. Dizengoff Circle is situated on one of Geddes' central axis and boasts buildings built according to the International Style, like Hotel Cinema. This is a prime example of the footloose International Style architecture in Israel with its curved facade, horizontal balconies and *pilotis*. *Pilotis* were first used by Ze'ev Rechter in the design of Engel House, which according to the public, put Tel Aviv on pillars. This building also features a, as Herzl puts it, frescoed loggia in the form of a balcony and was built for one of the many immigrants. Other International Style characteristics are the lack of decoration and the simple form language, inspired by the industrial revolution of that time.

To answer the research question, there has been found a strong relationship between the vision of Herzl, the modern garden city plan of Geddes and the Modernist architecture of the European (Bauhaus) schooled architects that came to Tel Aviv. Herzl's vision did become mainly reality, and the influence is still apparent in modern-day

Tel Aviv, in its urban plan, architecture, contemporary urban planning and name references throughout the city. Geddes' plan incorporating green spaces, mixed-use of functions, an active lifestyle, a sense of community, and putting the pedestrian in a central spot is still used and looked back at by contemporary urban planners of Tel Aviv. Since the declaration of the Unesco World Heritage Committee, The White City has been heavily promoted by the municipality of Tel Aviv, rediscovering the architectural heritage of the city that was influenced by Herzl, Geddes, the Bauhaus school and the Modern Movement. The Modern Movement was the architectural language that was used to implement Herzl's Zionist ideology in the land of Palestine.



Own work. Relationships between topics and key people.

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