ERNST MAY HOUSING POLICY OF FRANKFURT ON THE MAIN

BURAK AĞBULUT – MEHMET AKÇAKOCA
Ernst May was born in Frankfurt am Main in 1886. He was a city planner and architect. He spent his time from 1908 to 1912 for education under Raymond Unwin. He took education from Raymond Unwin about garden city movement. After the graduation from Technical University of Munich, he worked with Friedrich von Theirsch and Theodor Fischer and he was student of Theodor Fischer. Raymond Unwind and Theodor Fischer worked about garden city concept, they have unusual ideas. He impressed from garden city movement and he applied this ideas to the Frankfurt on the main project. In the 1918, he started to work Silesian building department in Breslau. Silesian building department is the first experience for him with working the prefabrication method in multi family housing.
THEODOR FISCHER

He was the architect and founder of Deutscher Werkbund. He worked on public housing projects. He was the first chairman of Deutscher Werkbund. He was the teacher of Ernst May, Bruno Taut, Paul Bonatz...etc. He is the member of German city garden movement and he has specific style which mix of historicism and art nouveau.

RAYMOND UNWIN

He was an English architect, city planner and engineer. He focused to work about improvements in working class housing. John Ruskin’s and William Morris’s lectures attracted his attention. He worked for popularising the Art and Craft movement and lots of buildings created according to his ideas.
The garden city movement started according to ideas of Ebenezer Howard in 1898 in United Kingdom. This movement is related with city planning. This city planning has proportionate areas of residances, industry, agriculture and surrounded with green areas. With these parts, this city plan is self-contained. Howard’s garden city idea has 32,000 people, concentric pattern with open spaces, public parks and six radial boulevards.

In 1904, Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker won the competition of first garden city ltd.. They planned the Letchworth according to Howard’s large green area design and they shared the idea of working class deserved better and more affordable housing. They designed symmetrical but architects changed the project organically.
Town: It created for job opportunities and high wages, social level and fun for community, lighted streets. Dirty air and unhealthy life.

Country: offered natural beauty, fresh air, healthy life, low rents but had low wages.

Town-Country: Combination of both of them. Healthy life but high life standard.
Ernst May was successfull for managing the Silesian building department. He used a new style which includes classical and modern (Anti-Modern Modernism). He prepared for a competition. He won the competition with decentralized planning concept. He used garden city movement for his competition. After the win, he hired by Mayor Ludwig Landmann for the city architect and planner of the Frankfurt. Government gave him power for zoning, financing and hiring. He had power during 1925-1930 in Frankfurt and he used all the facilities for example copious fundings and labor pool. He used standardization and prefabrication concepts in the modern buildings.
Ernst may worked with Frederick Winslow Taylor about housing problem. They created maximum efficiency in the small spaces. They designed spaces carefully while using elements. Frankfurt kitchen is the most important example of showing efficient usage of space. Margarete Lihotzky designed kitchen for only woman. People can use cupboard as an ironing board. Taylor is the pioneer of the industrial engineering.
Kitchen design developments started with the new settlement programs. Frankfurt Kitchen is the most important kitchen plan. There were some principle while designing this kitchen; less wasting time for cooking, saving time for all the house Works, minimize the human labor, order and decrease the cost in the kitchen. Also, this kitchen famous with material, texture and colour. They used yellow, blue and green while designing. They focused function and hygiene while choosing material.

*I was part of a group that stood up for certain principles and architectural ideas, and fought for them uncompromisingly.*

—Grete Lihotzky
Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky was the designer of the Frankfurt Kitchen and the first female Austrian architect. She was the first female student of the University of Applied Arts Vienna. She said 2 sentences in her 100 years celebration and this sentences shows the role of the woman in 1920’s.

"in 1916 no one would have conceived of a woman being commissioned to build a house not even myself"
"You'll be surprised that, before I conceived the Frankfurt Kitchen in 1926, I never cooked myself. At home in Vienna my mother cooked, in Frankfurt I went to the Wirthaus [restaurant/pub]. I designed the kitchen as an architect, not as a housewife "

Frankfurt kitchen plan applied in Römerstadt Houses in 1926. In the promotinal video, they showed how a housewife use the furnitures and elements in the kitchen easily.
https://vimeo.com/67820175
https://vimeo.com/67820174
All the units have relations each other and all of them are the part of the space organization.
1,2 and 3 parts used for the gas stove, board and cooking unit. Owens started to used in kitchen with this design. 4 part used for collapsible ironing table. 6 part used for chair and it located near the cutting board and ironing table. 5,7 and 8 parts used for modular working board, food cupboard and cutting board. In the part 8, little gap used for garbage. 9 and 10 parts used for washing and it located near the cutting board also, has a part for the draying. Other parts used for furniture; storage, modular table and aliminum spice and legumes container. This is the first example of usage of electirical household appliance;electric owen, toaster and hand blender.

Comparison between classical kitchen and Frankfurt kitchen according to steps
In 1927, Ernst May did not invited to Weissenhof exhibition about housing issues. He created low rise town houses with gardens and communal green spaces. Frankfurt was the choosen place fort he Congres International d'Architecture Moderne or CIAM with the suggestion of Ernst May, in 1929. In the congre, there was 28 delegates including Gerrit Rietveld, Mart Stam, Hannes Meyer, Hugo Haring, Hendrik Petrus Berlage and El Lissitzky. After designed houses according to that ideas, he proposed model of housing to CIAM in 1929 second conference in Frankfurt. He created good quality cheaply with the industry. When he desinging or create goods, he think about mass consumption.Frankfurt CIAM congre's topic was housing with low-cost (Existenzminimum). Delegates visisted the Ernst May’s projects and they also showed their designs with drawing, elevations and sections with the same scale according to CIAM standarts to compare eachother.
Ernst May founded a magazine for the Frankfurt of the Main. He wanted to inform people about the project and ideas. This magazine shared its name with the city project. Sharing ideas, answering questions of project and educating people were important for Ernst May. It published from 1926 to 1933. Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer wrote regularly for this magazine.
After the World War, government create new city planing for Frankfurt. Problem solving techniques and new design approaches for the city planing is the pioner of the modern architecture.

After the World war, Germany has lots of problems. Frankfurt’s population was increased and citizens have problem to find houses. They did not satisfy their basic needs. Germany has economic crysis and they did not built new homes. For that reasons, government make a law for reviving the construction sector. Hauszinssteur law support the local municipalities. As a result of this, Ernst May become a directore of city planning of Frankfurt.
In the 1920’s and beginning of 1930’s city planning of Europe was focused on the creating social neighbourhood. Ernst May wanted to create social community and he gave the name of this Project «wohnkultur».

«Three central ideals were incorporated in these social neighbourhoods:
1. Social and Political Ideals, emphasizing the rights of the working-man to a roof over his head, "New dwelling" even if this required society to build housing for the low income groups
2. Reform and Liberal Ideals, phrased as the emergence of the "New man", the "New culture" and the "New lifestyle" (Neuer Mensch, Neue Kultur, Neues Wohnen), in a "New society"
3. Architectural Planning Ideals, such as "Neo-realism" or "Neo-functionalism" ("Neue Sachlichkeit"), creating a "New»

(HOUSING PLANNING IN THE INTER-WAR YEARS. THE HAIFA-BAY AND THE FRANKFURT "WOHNKULTUR". by IRIS GRAICER)

«New people create new buildings, but new buildings also create new people» Fritz Wichert
“(1) To build as much housing as possible within the funding limitations of the Hauszinssteuer.
(2) To build this housing to fit the needs of the people of Frankfurt. The Hauszinssteuer in such a way that the maximum utilization of all housing was attained.
(3) To select sites that were the least expensive and that, in the short run, would not cause an increase in the demand for existing housing.
(4) To develop plans for housing that were designed as functionally as possible and that were for the minimum existence.
(5) To create housing that was as inexpensive as possible, but that would reflect the values of the new society while not destroying community icons.
(6) To develop housing that would be healthy and sanitary.
(7) To develop settlements that were as completely independent as possible, providing for places of living, learning, working, and recreation. “

(From City Planning in Frankfurt, Germany, 1925-1932, A Study in Practical Utopianism, by JOHN ROBET MULLIN, Michigan State University)
Basic reason of the Project is the residential housing needs in the Frankfurt. Project focused on the small families and their needs. While designers creating something, they have to be careful because of the economic reasons. They choose cheap areas because of the limitation of the budget. They created new concept while creating this Project. People lived dirty places and new Project will be clean and healthy. Also, they created social places for the community. They thought about education, living, working and reaction. Basic needs are fatal points of the design. They finished the Project less than one year.

Why they need this Project?
Römerstadt is the new settlement of the Frankfurt of the main. This settlement is the most known place. It settled on the north side of the Rhine. It has large area of two kilometers. It settled on the slope. Buildings have harmony with the slope. Curvilinear shape of the buildings creates curvilinear pattern. Houses are parallel to narrow streets. Houses designed modern by Ernst May and have harmony with the nature. In the settlement, two-storey narrow houses were preponderant. Sharp borders create strong relations for community.
This settlement is a solution for nature and modern house harmony. Houses designed with electricity, cable radio and modern kitchen. Houses have same elements, flat roof, bare facing and multi colored walls. All the houses have a living room, a kitchen, a toilet and a bath. This kind of settlement is the new fort he modern living in europa. Ernst approach new things fort he building. Frankfurt kitchen is the most important and new thing for house design. Streets create a natural border between neighbours.
Praunheim was settled near the Römerstadt. This settlement includes two parts and it has one and a half kilometer long between Römerstadt and Westhausen. In the project, prefabrication used successfully. With dimensions of 3 by 1.1 by 2 meters planners helped to finishing build in two days. The settlement were mainly two story row houses and buildings were red, gold and blue.

In the Praunheim 2, they used different design ideas. Zilenbau or superbloc concept mainly used in Praunheim 2 according to German privacy, air conditions, sun and green spaces. Main streets settled parallel to the structures.
Westhausen is located parallel to one of the main streets of Frankfurt (Ludwig). There were borders (West cemetery and garden complex) between Westhausen and Praunheim. Westhausen included 1100 dwellings and all of them designed according to zilenbau concept. This settlement’s row units used sunlight effectively. Zilenbau concept creates open-ended courtyard, for this, movement of air was successful in the settlement. They created Vista conditions with the balconies.

https://vimeo.com/67820286
https://vimeo.com/67820286
Sources
Printed books
-A New History of Modern Architecture by Colin Davies
-Modern Architecture Since 1900 by William J.R. Curtis
-A Critical History Modern Architecture by Kenneth Frampton
E-Book
-City Planning in Frankfurt, Germany, 1925-1932, A Study in Practical Utopianism, by John Roberts Mullin, Michigan State University
-“New Building Create New People”: The Pavilion Schools of Weimar Frankfurt as a Model of Pedagogical Reform, by Susan R. Henderson, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Design Issues, Volume 13, Number 1 spring 1997
-Savaş sonrası Modernizm: Römerstadt Konutları ve Frankfurt Mutfağı, by Nilay Özşavaş Uluçay, Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi, Online Journal of Art and Design volüme 6, issue 2, April 2018
-Housing the Single Woman, The Frankfurt Experiment, by Susan R. Henderson, Syracuse University
- The New Woman's Home, excerpt from Building Culture: Ernst May and the New Frankfurt Initiative, 1926-1931, by Susan R. Henderson
- HOUSING PLANNING IN THE INTER-WAR YEARS. THE HAIFA-BAY AND THE FRANKFURT"WOHNKULTUR".by IRIS GRAICER
- Urban Forms: The Death and Life of the Urban Block, by Ivor Samuels, Phillippe Panerai, Jean Castex, Jean Charles Depaule, CHAPTER 4 THE NEW FRANKFURT AND ERNST MAY: 1925–30

Webpages
https://monoskop.org/Das_neue_Frankfurt