Constructivist Architecture
Moisei Ginzburg (1892-1946)

Style and Epoch published in 1929 is an attempt to formulate a new architectural language, adequate to the new social reality in which the basic consumer of architecture is the laboring class.
Ginzburg founded the Organization of Contemporary Architects (OSA) in 1925 with architect Alexander Vesnin. This organization explored Communist ideas within housing such as apartments.

Their theoretical platform had three goals: radical transformation of current architectural concepts, command of the latest technical data, and form, which was derived from a mathematical solution of correctly stated problem.

These three goals were the basis of constructivist architecture and what Ginzburg believed in for the future of architecture. The group eventually receded in the 1930s as constructivist architecture also disbanded.
The Narkomfin was part of Russia’s constructivist movement. The architect, Moisei Ginzburg, built Narkomfin to solve the most pressing problem of urban planning—how to avoid the isolation that comes with living in a city.

He wanted to replicate the community of a village in the city. He designed a six-story apartment block and added on all things the inhabitants would need for daily living.
Narkomfin, Moscow 1929

There was a library and a shop, a communal kitchen and dining room, even a rooftop solarium for Moscow’s short, hot, summer. And there were meeting rooms to allow the people to meet together.

The corridors to the flats were big, wide and open, to encourage people to see them as the village street, and stop and talk with their neighbors. The result was “a six-story blueprint for communal living as ingenious as it is humane.”
Narkomfin, Moscow 1929

Le Corbusier’s 5 points of modern architecture
Gosstrakh Apartments, Moscow 1926

The Gosstrakh Apartments were designed for the employees of the Gosstrakh state insurance organization in 1926.

This building also combined apartments with communal facilities.

The first use of Le Corbusier’s Five Points of Modern Architecture in the USSR.
Gosstrakh Apartments, Moscow 1926

“In the machine there are no elements that are “disinterested” from the standpoint of aesthetics. There are no so-called ‘free flights of fancy.’ Everything in it has a definite and clear-cut constructive task.”
What does all this mean?

“Constructivists, beware of becoming another aesthetic school…Constructivism must become a higher form of engineering for our whole life.”

“Architectural methods should resemble those of the ‘inventor’, which means abandoning the recourse to borrowings from the past, whether in the field of architectural form or spatio-functional solutions. Research in architecture, as in any other field, should aim at organizing and formulating practical tasks which are dictated by the age and valid for the future.”
Sources

