As I began to reflect on a possible approach to addressing a conference linked to a laboratory for projects about social housing, among the many alternatives I was drawn to one related to the semantics, that is to say, the understanding of architecture as a discipline capable of communicating content through signs, to develop a certain "mark of identity". Professor Orsina Simona Pierini and I decided to orient our interventions with this common approach, while focusing on two distinct historical moments: I would focus on the interwar years, a period in which social housing programs were consolidated in Europe with heroic projects of an undeniable protagonism in the architectural panorama, while her conference would address the analysis of some examples closer to our time, mainly Dutch architecture projects from the last two decades. As such, both topics fall within the realm of architecture with a certain "mark of identity". And now, I'll try to make a brief summary of my lecture.

Two of the most intense experiences resulting from the debate referred to the planning and the implementation of European cities in the first decades of the twentieth century occurred in the heart of Europe, in the Austro-Germanic cultural milieu. Both are of great significance in the consolidation of the working-class housing models of the 20s and 30s, and represent worlds which are 'apparently' opposite, but which undoubtedly share the common primary objec-
tive of defining a certain identity, of blazoning an image, of tracing a hallmark, that would open the way for the working class to become the "new masters of architecture", or to put it another way, to proclaim the new situation of the dominant social class through the definition of an influential housing model. Rarely have housing and society joined forces in a way so organized as to be able to transform the image of the city. It is difficult to find a History of Architecture that overlooks these models but to this day no study has approached or exploited the potential generated by the rivalry between these opposites.

This conference proposes to make a parallel dissection of both experiences, the Viennese Hof and the Berlin Siedlung, which became models of a very specific mark of identity. Making use of some concrete examples, an analytical comparison will be made focusing on aspects which in both cases contributed, from antithetical positions, to define a very marked character.

These aspects can be summarized in 5 points: the propagandistic bias, the urban design and planning, the dwelling types and their degree of compromise with 'modern militancy', the way in which iconography was used and the terminological significance of the terms Volkspalast and Siedlung.

Propaganda. The way in which each model was spread is eloquent: the program defended by the Höfe or Volkspaläste was broadcast with a chauvinist and demagogic propaganda apparatus, in the way of a political pamphlet designed to magnify the activist nature of the socialist Viennese administration; the Siedlung, on the other hand, was "sold" linked to deeper, more conceptual information, with concern for the education of the workers about the new forms of living (in the purest tradition of Heidegger), as demonstrated in the work carried out in the Werkbund exhibitions, within a framework of intellectual elitism.
Urban design. The Höfe of Red Vienna, also called "Volkspaläste" (palaces for the people), with its strong urban character, large scale, high density and whiff of monumentality occupied the lots delimited by the infrastructure built in the Gründerzeit, producing a larger impact on the morphology of the city and erecting towering facades with different appearances: cubist, national romantic, expressionist..., formal bastions for the working-class. The Siedlungen, however, placed on the periphery, employed fragmented models of small scale, with the humble dimensions of the Garden City: small machines forming harmonic colonies of abstract objects.

Dwelling types. New Volkswohnpaläste or Superblocks worked on a model inherited from the Gründerzeit, streamlining and improving the hygienic conditions of housing, with slight increases in size and equipped with toilets and running water, but without proposing a new typology. On the other hand, Siedlungen experimented with innovative ways of living, some truly revolutionary, as Le Corbusier's houses in the Weissenhofsiedlung, designed with the standardized measures of a train car. It doesn't come as a surprise, since the projects of most Höfe were developed by architects belonging to the Wagnerschule tradition, whereas the Siedlungen were entrusted to the most outstanding and innovative architects of that moment.

Iconography. In opposition to the proliferation of towers, loggias, balconies, porches and sculptures of triumphant peasants that populate the Höfe (an obvious appropriation of dreamed models associated to the architecture of the high bourgeoisie and the nobility), the Siedlungen work with a purified iconographic program, filtered through the provocative abstraction of the Modern Movement. We see the contrast between the epic of the "red bastions" and the lyric of the "conceptual cell".
**Terminology.** The word *Hof* (also called *Mietwohnpalast* in the 19th century and *Volkswohnpalast* in the Red Vienna) is linked to a revealing sequence of terms that produces an interesting equation:

- *Kaserne* (barracks) | *Mietkaserne* (rental barracks) > *Mietwohnpalast* (rental housing palace)
- *Palais* (baroque palace) | *Adelpalais* (aristocratic palace) > *Volkswohnpalast* (housing palace for the people)

The term *Siedlung*, however, has no semantic content apart from settlement. Only the projects developed under the *Werkbund*, the *Werkbundsiedlungen*, alluded to this unique brand of intellectual quality.

The final picture after this analysis will allow the results obtained in each case to be measured, almost a century on, a reconsideration of the critical significance of both models and, what is more important, to reflect about what has transcended of these legendary experiences. Apart from technical considerations and criteria of standardization and systemization, can our cities boast the bright abstraction of the *Siedlungen* or the semantic mark of the controversial *Höfe*? Can it be said that the longings for the artifices of modernity in the heroic *Siedlungen* in Berlin have left a greater heritage in the modern city than that the reviled Viennese *Höfe*? Has our society successfully distilled the symbols of power claimed by the iconographic architecture of the *Höfe* in favor of the linguistic purity of the *Siedlungen*? Or, though in different languages, have we been seduced for nearly a century with the same semantic? This conference aims to incite the students to think about these questions by dealing with their projects. As we could see in the workshop, all the developed projects showed from the first stage clear marks of identity...