quote its editor. Here Williams’s allusions to Jim Crow humiliations are sharper and the demand that whites must “deal with me, and with other men and women of my race, as individual problems, not as a race problem” (59) is clear. Williams reveals himself in these pages as a man who is determined to force whites to treat him as an individual, a drive that may be second only to the desire to make buildings in fueling his career. In 1937 this consummate professional and family man felt he had to refuse social events that included white women. And he found himself explaining to a white client that, yes, he found intellectually satisfying friendships among his own people and was not “bitterly alone.” But harder to read now is the article’s lengthy resolution: while white people must learn to recognize individual black achievement, “white Americans have a reasonable basis for their prejudice against the Negro race” (161), leaving the burden on African-Americans to overcome these biases. Segregation, he wrote, would remain, the two races “forever divided, and rightly so,” an argument that ignores the core conflict between racial separation and the possibility of fair perceptions by and of individuals across such a divide. Williams was conservative in temperament and politics as well as in architectural manner and he accepted the era’s commonplaces of “white superiority” and “racial progress.” There is some comfort for us today that we now find such accommodations repugnant.

— Ellen Weiss, Tulane University
Also revealing is Allan’s analysis of Lubetkin’s involvement with the Modern Architectural Research Group (MARS). The architect’s disenchantment over the group’s unwillingness to formulate a specific set of aims is well known (see Peter Coe and Malcolm Reading, Lubetkin and Tecton—Architecture and Social Commitment [London and Bristol, 1982], 90–93) and was an important factor in his decision to establish the Architects’ and Technicians’ Organization, a more militant body with a wider social and political agenda. Such actions fostered the view that Lubetkin was an architectural outsider, a view that he himself liked to promote (Lubetkin, “Modern Architecture in England,” American Architect and Architecture 150 [February 1937]: 29–30). Allan’s research, however, indicates that the architect did more than just participate in MARS’s first installation at the Building Trades Exhibition held at Olympia in September 1934. He has uncovered evidence that Lubetkin attended numerous meetings of MARS and points out that he remained on the membership rolls until 1938, which strongly suggests that Lubetkin’s relations with other British modernists were more complex than previously supposed.

For this reason, one wonders if more should have been said about Lubetkin’s and Tecton’s relationships to the leading 1930s British architectural practice of Connell, Ward and Lucas. Both firms had misgivings about the MARS Group and both ran into trouble with other British modernists over their unorthodox use of traditional motifs. For Tecton, the controversy arose over its insertion of caryatids at the entrance to Highpoint Two, while for Connell, Ward and Lucas the troubles came from their decision to submit designs based on Ragnar Östberg’s Stockholm Town Hall in two civic competitions. Allan’s assertion—that if one subtracts houses from Connell, Ward and Lucas’s record “their oeuvre simply disappears” (161)—is incorrect. Two of the partnership’s most lucrative commissions—the Kent House blocks of low-income flats in Camden, London and the Sound City Film Studios at Shepperton—prove otherwise.

In the remaining two parts Allan turns his attention to the postwar years. The first chapter of Part III begins with an examination of the housing projects designed by Tecton between 1945 and the firm’s dissolution in 1948. Following this, the author chronicles Lubetkin’s attempt to design the new town of Peterlee near Durham in the late 1940s. His failure, coupled with the breakup of Tecton about the same time, are traditionally thought to mark the end of Lubetkin’s career, but in the third chapter Allan successfully argues that this was far from the case. Between 1950 and 1970 the architect continued to produce numerous designs, including a number of low-income apartments. The most impressive was the Cranbrook Estate (1955–66) where, on almost seventeen acres of land in East London, Lubetkin created a dynamic ensemble of interlocking tower blocks, four-story maisonette blocks, and bungalows.

Allan closes his narrative in Part IV with a single chapter on the last decades of Lubetkin’s long life. Although by 1970 Lubetkin had stopped designing, his critical fortunes began to revive. In 1982 the Royal Institute of British Architects awarded him the Royal Gold Medal, a gesture that helped to restore Lubetkin’s reputation as well as provide him with an opportunity to communicate his opinions to a wide audience.

It seems appropriate, therefore, that the RIBA should have associated itself with Allan’s book. Lubetkin: Architecture and the Tradition of the Progress, which is by far the most ambitious and comprehensive study on any modern British architect to date, represents a substantial contribution to the field and will surely serve for many years to come as the definitive word on this major figure.

— Robert Esau
Victoria University of Wellington

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RAZIONALISMO E ARCHITETTURA MODERNA: STORIA DI UNA POLEMICA

Francesco Tentori
P. M. BARDI

Among the protagonists of Italian architecture of the interwar period, Giuseppe Terragni has been the object of the most attention, with the international conference on the Como architect (held in Vicenza in June 1994) its most recent manifestation. However, it is heartening to witness the continuing critical reevaluation of many other, often equally central,