



The National Federation of Town Planning and Housing (1939-1954): A Network of Urbanism in the Spanish Post Civil War Period

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In the post Spanish Civil War period, the autarchy system established by the new dictatorship claimed the reconstruction of the destroyed towns and housings as a Renaissance based on the idiosyncratic Spanish values. There were some official bureaus which assumed the responsibility of the cities and housing reconstruction. There were also some advances in the town planning practical development like the town planning of Madrid or the town planning of Valladolid, or assemblies like the First Architects Official Meetings in 1939. But one of the most singular experiences was the creation of the private society The National Federation of Town Planning and Housing. The aim of the National Federation of Town Planning and Housing (Spain, 1939-1954) was to create the social environment appropriated to let the human and dignity development in the habitability conditions. These society ideals were inspired in the work of the Inter-allied Conferences of Paris (1919) and London (1920), in the context of the First World War European reconstruction.

The objectives were very ambitious about town planning diffusion. The instruments for obtain the objectives were: Publishing books and magazines, exhibitions, congresses and centre of information inside and outside Spain including a library for architectural and engineers students. At the beginning the geographical extension of the Federation included besides Spain, Latin American and Portuguese countries, but political conditions didn't let Latin American countries to participate just in a few cases. Even though, in the symbolic 12th October, day of the commemoration of American discovered, the first Congress was inaugurated. Many authorities attended the conference and the Spanish newspapers referenced the activities about the Congresses. The first words of the inauguration session of the society were pronounced by the President, César Cort, who introduced Ildefonso Cerdá as the referent of the town planning culture.

The most known activity of the society was the organization of congresses. Seven congresses were developed from 1939 to 1954 and became the forum of debate on the Spanish town planning problematic. The treated topics at the congresses were presented marked operatively and practically, that were going from the management of the housing up to the management of the industrial land or to the problematic of the rural emigration. They took place in different cities in Spain and Portugal: Madrid, Barcelona, Sevilla, Palma de Mallorca, Oviedo, Santiago de Compostela, Oporto and Lisboa. Under the President of the architect César Cort Botí, the main names in Spanish town planning, as architects, engineers, or municipal technicians participated in the Congresses.

Although there were almost no practical results, the congresses let us see the main social aspect of the worries about town planning in each moment, mainly because the proceedings were published by the Federation. The Federation also published the first book about town planning in the post Civil War in 1941 and later on some pamphlets of another diffusion experience, the World Town Planning Day from the Argentinean Carlos María della Paolera.

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