

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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ABSTRACT

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 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.

In the middle of the Spanish post-war period, forums for debate on housing and its role in society proliferated. The subject arose in the context of the need to find a practical and effective solution to the demand for housing which had emerged. Various official organisations were created with the aim of solving the problems of housing and town planning, questions which were considered closely related. These organisations reflected the position taken by the several powers and authorities of the new regime. Their functions were not clearly defined, and the responsibilities assigned to each often overlapped.

The debate also served to put into practice the ideal pursued by the new regime based on values endemic to Spain, both in a rural and urban context. The *Asambleas Nacionales de Arquitectura* (National Architecture Conferences) introduced by the Spanish Phalange —The official political party—under the direction of Pedro Muguruza, the first *Federación Nacional de Urbanismo y Vivienda* (National Federation for Housing and Town Planning) congresses, instituted by César Cort and the articles in journals such as *Reconstrucción* (Reconstruction) or *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura* (The National Journal of Architecture), successor to the journal, *Arquitectura* (Architecture), all constituted some of the principle means of discussing these issues. The context of these deliberations was limited to Spanish territory, only occasionally extending as far as a consideration of Portugal or Latin American countries. The experiences of other countries were transmitted indirectly, through communications or exhibitions which were reported in specialist journals.

The daily press reported these meetings, and occasionally gave in-depth coverage of the issues discussed. The first publication by an organisation concerned with town planning in the post-war period was *Campos urbanizadas y ciudades*

zurizadas (The urbanised countryside and ruralised towns) by César Cort, published in 1941. The second Spanish publication was the work of Gabriel Alomar, *Teoría de la ciudad. Ideas fundamentales para un urbanismo humanista* (Theory of the city. Fundamental ideas for humanistic town planning), published in 1947. There were some advances in the practical development of town planning like the Plan of Madrid by Pedro Bidagor or the Plan of Valladolid by César Cort.

Meanwhile, Europe was suffering his own disaster. The hurts it seemed to be very deep, but the American help and technical development caused the economic expansion and the social changes. The countries confronted the reconstruction of a different way. Great Britain and URSS developed a huge effort to fit the planning programmes to the urban reconstruction. The building reconstruction in Italy, France and Germany didn't stimulate a parallel town planning development. In Italy the problem was serious due to the weakness of the planning institutions. In Germany the instrument of planning control was strong. France was lacking the tumultuous Italian edification industry. Once again, the Scandinavian countries and mainly Holland developed a balance between architecture and town planning.

The Hispanic Federation for Housing and Town Planning.

In 1939, César Cort proposed the creation of the Hispanic Federation for Housing and Town Planning. This Federation was based on the ideals inspired by two inter-related conferences, which were also the first international conferences he attended, held in Paris (1919) and London (1920) in the context of reconstruction following the First World War. The principle of economic autonomy from the authorities which marked the Federation from its inception enabled him to implement his aim of creating an organisation which would serve as the focal point for the existing conglomeration of official organisations and approaches which never fully satisfied his purposes. Although a high esteem for all things Spanish impregnated the atmosphere of the times, it is not possible to establish a relationship in Cort's thought between this esteem and the autarchic approach of the times, an attitude which he rejected.

The Hispanic National Federation for Housing and Town Planning was soon obliged to drop "Hispanic" from the name, by order of the authorities. Nevertheless, in spirit at least, the Federation maintained its concern and links with the Latin American world. It also maintained a presence in Portugal, one of the countries with which Spain still had political relations and two of the Federation's conferences were held there. César Cort's close relationship with this neighbouring country was influenced both by commerce, through certain aspects linked to his business activities, and by emotional attachment, given that he was still in contact with the exiled royal family. His frequent visits even led him to occasionally take up residence in Lisbon, and his command of the Portuguese language was of great service.

The aims and objectives of the Federation were clearly stated in the articles comprising its regulations:

"Article 1: Under the title of Federation for Housing and Town Planning, this Society is hereby established in Madrid which the aim of contributing to the study and dissemination of town planning precepts and resolving associated general problems, together with those related to housing.

Article 2: In order to fulfil its social and teaching mission, the Federation will give priority to the following activities:

- a) The organisation of conferences, discussions and debates concerning topics related to those disciplines which form the basis of the Federation's work.
- b) Participation in Congresses and Conferences organised by other national and international organisations concerning housing and town planning.
- c) Organisation of information from Spain and abroad concerning the current situation of basic housing and town planning problems, with the aim of acquiring criteria with which to assess such problems.
- d) The organisation of national and international conferences to facilitate the exchange of opinions and information between the individuals and Organisations concerned, in order to clarify and resolve housing and town planning issues.
- e) The organisation of exhibitions respecting housing, town planning and the services which affect the formation and function of local organisations.
- f) The organisation of study centres and experimental laboratories to undertake a teaching role with respect to personnel in community and provincial Administration, Architects, Engineers and others who wish to enhance their understanding of subjects pertinent to local government in villages.
- g) To publish pamphlets, books and, circumstances permitting, a journal, dealing with topics related to the Federation's activities.
- h) To create a library for the use of members, to which university students at Schools of Architecture and Engineering will also be admitted".

The Federation achieved most success with the organisation of congresses. These were held biannually between 1949 and 1954, in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Lisbon, Asturias, Galicia, the Basque Country, Porto, and Palma, Majorca. The other initiatives, such as editing publications, awarding prizes or participating in other congresses were less successful, although the Federation did publish its own congress proceedings.

After 1954, the Federation virtually disappeared. César Cort's attempts at dissemination focused on publicising International Town Planning Day, an initiative which was launched in Spain in 1950. Projects such as the publication of a journal, for which the title, *Campo y ciudad* (Country and City) had already been decided, or the city exhibitions which had been discussed at the first congress, were never implemented. The most important study published by the Federation was César Cort's own book, *Campos urbanizadas y ciudades rurizadas* (The urbanised countryside and ruralised towns) in 1941. In subsequent decades, the Federation published some of the commemorative publications concerning International Town Planning Day.

The inauguration of the Hispanic Federation for Housing and Town Planning was held on the 20th February 1940, and on the 21st February 1940, the newspaper *El Alcázar* published an article entitled "Política urbanística (Town planning policies)", in which the following appeared:

"Sr. Serrano Súñer, describing the mission of the Town Planning Federation, emphasised that the key to town planning policy was sanitation. Given that "the existence, strength and health of the nation come first", aspirations to national greatness should be based on achieving a strong, healthy Spanish citizen, in a salubrious and comfortable home, in a hygienic city or village." (...) The State powers have entrusted most of the responsibility for construction-related matters to the municipal powers; and he solemnly declared that all architectural undertakings should inescapably, necessarily and obligatorily be subject to Political approval".

Reports in newspapers such as the *ABC* or *La Vanguardia Española*, gave a full account of the activities of the National Federation for Housing and Town Planning, as they were to do later concerning another initiative aimed at dissemination which has continued to the present day, International Town Planning Day, and César Cort was frequently referred to in his role as President of the Federation. However, in contrast to the International Town Planning Day, the National Federation never transcended its status as a personal project on the part of César Cort, and did not enjoy any level of continuity except in terms of recognition for the efforts ventured.

The National Federation for Housing and Town Planning Congresses.

In 1940, the Federation's first congress was held in Madrid. It brought together all the movements of the time, which were still waiting for the new regime to define its position. Pedro Muguruza, whose position in the Dirección General de Arquitectura (Council for Architecture) accorded him political leadership, was among those who attended the congress. The inauguration ceremony was a solemn event which took place in the historic Palacio del Senado (Palace of the Senate) and was presided over by the then Minister of the Interior, Ramon Serrano Suñer. The date chosen for the congress coincided with the so-called Columbus Day (then known as the "Day of the Race" or "Fiesta de la Raza") on the 12th of October, a date charged with symbolism which continued to be a point of reference for the congresses, with the exception of those held in Portugal.

In César Cort's inaugural speech to the Board of the Federation for Housing and Town Planning, he emphasised the need to reclaim the figure of Ildefonso Cerdá, in many ways the father of Spanish town planning culture. Firstly, Cort highlighted his pioneering approach, including Cerdá's repeated attempts in the mid-20th century to convince the authorities of the need to establish guidelines and precepts for city construction, together with his approach to problems concerning communication techniques, his belief in the social implications of town planning, and his role as an educator. Recognition of Spain's role in the creation of American cities, and a tribute to José Calvo Sotelo as the author of the Municipal Statute (1924), which was still in force, completed his presentation.

Among the list of member architects and attendees were Ricard Giralt Casadesús, Javier Goerlich, Modesto López Otero, Pedro Bidagor and Pedro Muguruza. Speakers' names began to recur at subsequent congresses, such as Guillaume Busquets Vautravers, José Paz Maroto, José Fonseca, Mariano García Cortés, José Gascón y Marín and Gonzalo de Cárdenas, giving an indication of the different professional profiles involved in the initiative. Architects were necessarily included within this concept of the diversity of town planning, but so too were engineers, lawyers, and municipal councils, and Federation congresses always enjoyed the active personal participation of various technical or political representatives.

The published proceedings offer a very full picture of the perspectives on town planning issues according to the various contexts in which they arose. The topics initially considered were simplified in later congresses, as were the corresponding conclusions reached. The congresses were organised as is habitual for these kinds

of meetings, that is, there were various days of plenary sessions where papers were presented and discussions and debates held, together with excursions to sites of interest supported by the active participation of the local authorities acting as host. César Cort participated actively in inaugural speeches, closing speeches and some debates. His papers, in contrast, were limited to his participation in the first and the last congresses. In the first, which was held in post-war Madrid in 1940, his theme was housing, whilst at the last, in Palma and coinciding with the introduction of structuralist economics, he spoke about the links between landscape and city, the metropolis and the countryside.

The issues addressed were of an eminently practical and contemporary nature, pursuing concrete solutions to concrete problems. Based on the specific social and political characteristics of Spain during the period when the congresses were held, no significant conceptual advances were made in the approach to town planning, except in the last congress where the issue of open spaces was the dominant theme. The conclusions repeated ideas and arguments, some of them proclaimed since the 20s. The invariable, repeated focus was housing in all its aspects, from a general overview to modest homes, rent, the value of urban land, the role of housing as an adjunct to industry, and minimum acceptable conditions.

The relationship between the rural context, small municipalities and the rural exodus raised in the 1940 congress recalled the arguments of the Italian *fascio*, which had been under scrutiny in Spain since before the Civil War. The teaching of town planning was also considered, aimed more at training municipal technicians than at a university education. At the Barcelona congress in 1942, industrial development and modest housing, together with cemeteries, reflected the predominant concerns in Catalonia. Although the relationship between town planning and historic and artistic heritage had been addressed since the first congress, conservation of architectural heritage received a more in-depth consideration at the 1947 congress in Lisbon. In 1951, the congress touched on the subject of surveying as a fundamental tool for appropriate urban development. At the congress in Palma in 1954, all attention was focused on open space; open spaces and the incorporation of landscape into urban perspectives constituted the principle topics addressed. The American influence in the training of the Majorcan architect Gabriel Alomar, an active participant at the event, became patent.

A final attempt to revive the Federation was made by José Fonseca in 1961¹. At the first meeting of the Board of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning in Spain, in Santiago de Compostela, he proposed to the Spanish delegates attending—who included César Cort as President, and Rafael de la Hoz, among others—that the role the National Federation for Housing and Town Planning had played for years should be revived. Although his proposal was accepted, it went no further.

First Congress, Madrid, 11th to 18th October 1940.

Institutional delegates attending the first Congress included delegates from county councils, town councils and various corporations all related in some way with housing, delegates from Schools of Architecture, professional colleges, the Association for Municipal Architects in Spain (the *Cuerpo de Arquitectos Municipales*

de España, or CAME), including Ricard Giralt-Casadesús, and the Chambers of Urban Property, whilst independent delegates included Amadeo Llopart, Juan de Zabala, Rey Pedrera, Modesto López Otero, Pascual Bravo Sanfeiú, Gaspar Blein, Gonzalo de Cárdenas, Javier Goerlich, Pedro Bidagor, Pedro Muguruza, Guillermo Busquets Vautravers, José Paz Maroto y José Fonseca, among many others.

At the inauguration of the first Congress, the minister for the Interior, Ramón Serrano Súñer, praised its “Hispanic” nature, considering it an indication of the responsibility to include those who were joined by a common language and the underlying Spanish culture implied by the town planning regulations established in the Laws of the Indies, in the push towards improving quality of life. As in the 20s, César Cort once again made a claim for Ildefonso Cerdá as the creator of town planning. In the rest of the speeches, the importance of the role of the municipal councils in land management was highlighted.

The conclusions of the papers were clear. The small municipal council, as a natural entity transcending the family, had become the basis from which to undertake appropriate actions. The implementation of incentive measures –rather than taxes– was proposed to encourage and control occupation of rural areas and curb the effects of the rural exodus. Support was given to the idea of creating an official housing organisation with responsibility for the supervision and inspection of existing residential stock, despite the existence of the Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda (National Institute for Housing) under the direction of José Fonseca.

As regards the structure of cities and districts, the need to establish a relationship between road infrastructure capacity, including motorways, and the actual number of cars on the road, was highlighted. In this way, planning for the road infrastructure would have a solid base on which to work. The creation of an Institute for Local Administration (the Instituto de Administración Local) was applauded, but concern was expressed over the deficiencies apparent in town planning teaching in the university system. Thus the interest of practitioners in dignifying and organising rural life, and defining a municipal structure, was made patent, together with the need to disseminate town planning science.

General observations on the housing problem and a proposal for their solution, a paper by César Cort.

César Cort’s approach to housing was based on technical knowledge, but also on the role of housing as an economic asset. He viewed renting as a system which gave the working classes access to housing, making a clear distinction between access and use of the property, and possession. Thus, making landlords’ profits compatible with working class access to housing posed an intractable problem. Such accessibility was based on the need for rent to strike a reasonable balance between the total income of the family nucleus —the family represented the basic unit in the social structure— and the money destined for housing.

As regards land value, of which the town councils were among the most active regulators, Cort felt that the value of construction in terms of the materials, the construction workers’ pay and maintenance costs should define the actual value of the building. Once the problem had been framed, concrete proposals were

established, amongst which precedence was given to private initiative as a solution. This conclusion was not unrelated to the fact that César Cort had been a property developer since the beginning of his professional practice. In the liberal context which informed his speech, and falling back on the conclusions of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning Congress held in Rome in 1929, he opted for an attempt to balance building costs and rents with the aim of stimulating private capital, rather than State intervention through coercive measures or direct or indirect subsidies for building. The State's failure to produce cheap housing through subsidies had already been amply demonstrated. The proposed aim was based on reducing costs in order to increase landlords' profit margins, thus attracting private capital to the sector. Specifically, Cort proposed:

- “1.- It is of the utmost interest for town councils to implement land use policies which reduce the price of building plots and prevent chaotic construction with no concern for the overall effect and lacking structured stages of development.
- 2.- Attempts should be made to construct entire neighbourhoods where elements suggested by economic principles are repeated, applying pertinent aesthetic foresight to avoid monotony, and pursuing the conceptual unity necessary to achieve coexistence of diverse social classes guided by a common ideal.
- 3.- It would be advisable to undertake a scientific study of the organisation of the construction industry in order to increase work force efficiency, make better use of materials, avoid unnecessary or unsuitable technical interventions and establish the length of the working day according to season, consistent with the greater interests of the nation.
- 4.- As long as production continues to raise prices, rents should also be progressively increased in order for construction to attract private capital, until such time as the number of fitting homes available in all centres of population renders the number of urban leases unnecessary”.

The solution to the price of housing took an eminently municipal approach: the town councils' responsibility in their role as land use managers rendered them one of the main regulators. Other factors mentioned, which contributed to determining the price of housing, were very specific: increasing the level of professionalism and the efficiency of all participants in the housing construction process, from project stage through to technical management and the construction industry. Nevertheless, his insistence on reducing daily work force wages, rises in which had provoked a corresponding increase in the price of housing, aroused a controversy which other contributions concealed.

Second Congress, Barcelona, 21st to 30th October 1942.

On the 26th of June 1942, César Cort visited the mayor of Barcelona to discuss arrangements for the Federation's Congress which, at the invitation of the city, was to be held in Barcelona. The inaugural session was held on the 21st October, and in his lengthy opening speech, César Cort, normally sparing with references, cited Raymond Unwin, who said “towns are what their inhabitants want them to be; throughout the ages, towns have been a faithful reflection of their residents, politically, socially and individually”, and José Ortega and Gasset, who said “Democracy loses its meaning outside politics; it only makes sense in terms of representing equal rights and exemption of privileges, but one cannot presume that democracy permeates all aspects of life”, to illustrate his understanding of town planning. His speech ended with a depiction of town planning as a tool to overcome class divisions, a position which he reiterated and which was very similar to the Phalangist vision of the city described in the Burgos meeting in 1938.

“Future towns should be constructed and arranged so as not to perpetuate separation by social class, avoiding the development of working class neighbourhoods and residential divisions based on caste, in order to create a veritable Christian community where everyone interacts with each other and thus arrives at knowledge, the basis for firstly, respect, and after, esteem”.

Simultaneously with the congress, the Federation organised an exhibition of town planning projects in which the Guipúzcoa district plan was presented, together with a study of housing for fishermen, the reform of Madrid districts around the Oriente palace, a project for the monument to the fallen, and Devastated Regions, which described the work being carried out in Catalonia. This exhibition overlapped in time with the inauguration of the Exhibition of German Architecture at the Parque de la Ciudadela Palace of Modern Art, which also hosted the Congress plenary sessions.

Guillermo Busquets, Jerónimo Martorell and Paz Maroto participated in the round table on the structure of districts in Barcelona in terms of industrial zones. As regards modest housing, the topics raised included the importance of the town council as regards land use management for the construction of modest housing, incentives for housing construction and a proposal for creating Town Development Boards to supervise development proposals which affected inner city reform and the extension (“Eixample”) and enlargement of the city. Speaking on cemeteries, José Paz Maroto described the need to clarify and simplify the numerous and diverse regulations in force governing a complex issue in which town planning, construction and religious factors all held sway. He suggested the creation of a green belt, one hundred metres wide, to isolate cemeteries,

Third Congress, Madrid-Sevilla-Lisboa, 3rd to 16th October 1944.

The Federation’s third congress was inaugurated in the Madrid City Council building, the Patio de Cristales. Present were representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Portuguese authorities, and César Cort presided. Pedro Muguruza and Francisco Moreno Torres participated in the inaugural session, together with the professor for Administrative Law, José Gascón y Marín. The session concerning “modest housing in big cities” was held at the Seville City Council on the 12th of October, and delegates also visited an exhibition of municipal and provincial projects.

The issues addressed represented a continuation of those established during previous congresses. As regards modest housing, the need to integrate the social classes was emphasised, as was the importance of housing construction. In terms of protecting the countryside from substandard urban development, conserving the aesthetic qualities of the environment were seen as being of more importance than the aesthetic values associated with construction.

Congresses held in Portugal: Fourth Congress, Lisbon, 28th June to 6th July 1947 and Sixth Congress, Porto, 17th to 23rd June 1951.

On the 12th of January 1946, César Cort travelled to Lisbon in order to organise the congress which the Federation had decided to hold there. However, by request of the Portuguese president, Oliveira Salazar, the congress was postponed

until the summer of 1947, in order to coincide with the centenary of the recapture of Lisbon from Muslim rule. And thus it was that the delegates attended the celebrations of the anniversary, which culminated in a lavish firework display. The Congress was inaugurated on the 30th June 1947, presided over by the Portuguese Minister for Public Works, José Federico Ulrico and Federico Mayo, Director of the Spanish Institute for Housing. Participants included Gaspar Blein, director of the Madrid City Council Urban Development Service, José Fonseca, head architect at the National Institute for Housing, and Juan Guerrero Ruiz, technical secretary at the Local Administration Authority. They all had close ties with César Cort and had coincided with him at various times in their professional careers.

Adolfo Florensa presented a communication in which he gave an exhaustive description of his interventions in Barcelona in terms of respecting the artistic and historic values of the city's heritage. He highlighted the broad meaning given to the term, which included the landscape beyond the city, urban landscapes, and entire neighbourhoods and towns. In order to protect the artistic and historic value of towns, proposals included the need to define the responsibilities of official organisations and to educate the public.

Mariano García Cortés and José Paz Maroto gave papers on renting and the economy. Promoting renting and cooperation through individual initiatives as a means to construct new housing, together with a minimum of State control, with measures enabling the mobilisation of capital in such a way that allowed subsequent self-regulation of rent between landlords and tenants, comprised the initiatives that were proposed.

The closing session on the 5th July, presided over by the Portuguese Minister for Public Works, brought the week of hospitality on the part of the Portuguese authorities to a close. The sixth Congress, from 17th to 23rd June 1951, was held in Porto, marking the continuity of the Portuguese presence. At this Congress, which was held the year prior to that of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning in Lisbon, the two topics discussed were the information necessary for urban development and the minimum acceptable conditions for housing. In the words of Gabriel Alomar, this Congress marked the beginning of visits abroad by Spanish architects to this kind of professional convention.

Fifth Congress, Galicia, Asturias and the Basque Country, 20th September to 4th October 1948.

José Fonseca, Vice President of the Federation, and Gonzalo de Cárdenas were responsible for the organisation of the congress held in the north of Spain. The interest shown by the Council for Architecture, the Devastated Regions Authority and the Institute for Housing in doing their utmost to facilitate the success of the congress was noteworthy. The contribution of Devastated Regions to the north of Spain, and the visits to Protected Housing constructed by the National Institute for Housing comprised the two most significant features of this meeting.

Visits of a strictly professional nature included a visit to Gijon, where Valentin Gamazo, author of the General City Plan, Bilbao, acted as guide assisted by Pedro Bidagor, author of the District Planning Programme for Bilbao and Guernica, and a

visit to the reconstruction carried out by Devastated Regions of these latter two towns. Such visits were complemented by others of a more social nature, such as a trip to Covadonga, where delegates were accompanied by the conservation architect Luis Menéndez Pidal, a personal friend of César Cort. On the 23rd September, the closing session was held in the Salón de Fonseca at the Pharmacy Faculty in San Sebastian, and presided over by Francisco Prieto Moreno, Director General of Architecture following the death of Pedro Muguruza in 1948.

The *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* published the report of a delegate from Puerto Rico, Santiago Iglesias, on the congress, who saw it as an official national congress of town planning in Spain. Holding Spanish town planning in high esteem, he particularly highlighted his admiration for the protected housing projects being carried out, which incorporated services such as child care, schools, shopping centres and parks, and for the directive laid down in terms of the obligatory and systematic study of costs and materials in construction. He also remarked on the high standard of cities visited, such as Oviedo, Gijon, Bilbao and Madrid.

Seventh Congress, Palma, Majorca, 10th to 17th October 1954.

The most interesting feature of this Congress was the presence and active participation of Gabriel Alomar Esteve. In the inaugural speeches, he called for the generous provision of open spaces and gardens in cities, to be designed from a social as well as aesthetic perspective in order to meet citizen demands for recreational spaces. The President of the Institute for Gardening and Landscape Studies, the forester Gabriel Bornás y de Urculla, attended the Congress, and his intervention was focused on gardens and plant species in the city.

Gabriel Alomar began his speech by supporting César Cort's argument for ruralising the city and urbanising the countryside. He focused on the social aspect of green spaces, looking at access to the various functions required by different age groups, for example children's playgrounds or predominantly sporting facilities in the case of adults. He finished his talk with a discussion of large, protected green spaces, including the national parks. He introduced the idea of park-ways as serving both as access routes and boundaries.

In the closing session, Pedro Bidagor, National Head of Town Planning, committed himself to trying, as far as he was able, to implement the agreements reached in all Federation Congresses, not just the present one in Palma, using them as a point of reference for the practical measures carried out by his organisation.

The landscape viewed from the city, the city viewed from the countryside, a speech by César Cort.

In his speech given at the seventh congress, César Cort proposed an ideal for viewing the natural landscape, calling for the right to access for all city residents. The way in which interventions were carried out in the city was of great importance in order to conserve views and thus give visual as well as physical access. The positive assessment given at the Lisbon Congress to the possibility of viewing the River Tagus, or Edinburgh Castle, from their respective city streets contrasted with the possibilities lost in Granada of contemplating the Alhambra from the Darro River.

This ideal of perception could not be achieved without “the stimulus of the spirit, which enables us to attain the concept of beauty”.

Cort frequently employed the example of Goya’s 1787 oil painting, *La pradera de San Isidro*, to illustrate what he felt the image of a city should be. In the painting, Goya captured the feeling of the life and bustle of the crowd seated in the field, using Madrid as a backdrop, opening out to the Manzanares River. The background shows a panoramic scene of Madrid in which the beauty of light and colour is united with topographical precision, where the Royal Palace, the Seminary, the great dome of San Francisco el Grande and other completely recognisable towers which formed part of the scenery of Madrid at the time, are clearly identifiable.

He put forward the idea of a landscape viewed from the city, and a city viewed from the countryside, expanding on his arguments concerning the countryside-city relationship which he had presented in his 1941 book, *Campos urbanizados y ciudades rurizadas*. Understanding the land surrounding the city was crucial to gaining an understanding the city itself, and thus, for proposing any improvement which to a lesser or greater extent influenced the established relationship. Citizens needed to have access to this information in order to achieve awareness of the reality they inhabited.

This was the last congress of the National Federation of Housing and Town Planning.

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