

New Dimension Perspectives and Limits

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To cite this article: DUARTE, Carlos S. – «New Dimension Perspectives and Limits», *Estudo Prévio*, 20. Lisbon: CEACTION/UAL – Center for Studies of Architecture, City and Territory of the Autonomous University of Lisbon, 2022, p. 45-57. ISSN: 2182-4339 [Available at: www.estudoprévio.net]. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26619/2182-4339/20.7> Published from *Arquitetura*, 84, 1964, pp.157-158.

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New Dimension Perspectives and limits¹

*Quelle est l'année la plus proche de nous : 1900 ou 2000?
Interrogés les gens dans la rue; la plupart répondent 1900.
Jacques Bergier*

Each new cultural cycle begins, as a rule, from the Critique of previous achievements and a polemic denial of the principles they justify. The newcomers discover, in general, many virtues in past generations, but very few in the previous one. In this regard, Corbusier and Gropius should feel largely compensated. They lived long enough (like Wright before them) to be understood and appreciated by the following generations. Because more than the neo-rationalism that some speak of, it is a matter today to remember, because they come to respond to the convictions and aspirations of the younger generations, many of the teachings of these two Masters of Modern Architecture – in their works, didactic action, and moral attitude.

The reason for this revaluation – not exempt, moreover, from large reserves – is justified by a set of circumstances, of which the ones that stand out are those more directly linked to the particular conditions of the professional activity in some countries, or rather, the feeling of frustration (translated albeit in an enviable critical lucidity) when the modesty of this activity is evaluated in comparison with what is believed to be the architect's action in contemporary society. No wonder, too, that it is the young Italian architects (as were the young "brutalists" in United Kingdom under conservative rule, before) who most acutely accuse the current contradictions: because Italy is one of the countries where theoretical activity in the field of architecture has been most brilliant and where real action, in a particular but vitally important sector, that of urbanism, has been most frustrated. Even in project, Cambernauld, Farsta, Toulouse-le-Mirail or the Languedoc plan have no correspondents in Italy, and no one who knows reasonably the big cities of that country ceases to be impressed by the urban chaos that reigns there.

The "new dimension" that the young Italian architects propose to us today is, thus, naturally, an urbanistic dimension, as opposed to the "housing" one of the poor "quartieri" for poor people of INA-CASA... But it is easier to overcome (or ignore) "community" and "regionalist" ideologies than to establish the strict terms of a new architecture. Architecture, everyone agrees, is done with projects, with works. Therefore, today, in the impossibility of doing so, the experimental projects, the figurative utopias of the new city, the contests of architectural ideas are multiplied.

Francesco Tentori (*Casabella*, 289, dedicated to the works of the young architects of Rome), rightly distinguished between figurative and positive utopias and pronounced himself the need for scientific deepening of the various disciplinary fields of "urban design" by the translation, without serious project work, of the themes of the New Dimension. In fact, he noticed the imbalance between theoretical and practical activities in that country, which at its best has been confined to the scale of the "quartieri residenziale", in a process of adding peripheral units to the urban fabric whose causes (political) and effects (urban, economic, social, and human) our Italian colleagues have often denounced.

But what do the defenders of the "new dimension" want after all? According to Carlo Aymonino, in that number of *Casabella*, the core of these proposals would be the adoption of a new working methodology (and before this, as we know, in a programmatic and operational dimension expanded to the scale of the city-territory and the large urban complexes). This methodology mainly calls for the formulation of initial architectural "hypotheses", taken as prefiguration of the spatial and plastic organization of the specific set of its three dimensions.

Apparently, this principle seems to be permissible only if the architect is supported from the outset by the many experts able to inform him of particular aspects of the programs, a wide range which will include, in some cases, administrative officers and the various entities interested in the enterprise, economists, sociologists, doctors, pedagogues, engineers of various specialties, in short, all participants, even if purely informative, in a town-planning plan. And so it must be, if the architect does not want to be simply the author of a figurative fantasy, quickly called into question, and certainly destroyed in his aesthetic intentions by the realities of the environment in which he decided not to meddle.

To these possible objections, Aymonino replies as such: "Interpreting the project as a program, the question of constructive typology (in all cases, "architectural", or only in part?) will necessarily be re-examined, and interviews an expansion of architectural interventions (the new dimension?) in the urban scene: that it can modify and resize what we now call "the interdisciplinary relations between architecture and urbanism", to transform them into dialectical relationships between planning (program) and design (architecture), reciprocally conditioned. "The great complexity of current life – Aymonino continues – excludes a defined hierarchical scale and the project can be understood as a continuous process, being verified at different levels, with diverse interventions and especially with diverse project objectives (understood as knowledge and fantasy)".

Obviously, the main intention is to overcome the usual gap between the activity of the urban planner and the architect, denying the role of the former or empowering the latter from an important part of his duties; the traditional organization schemes of two-

dimensional zonation of purely technical scope are, thus, surpassed, translated into a summary and discontinuous built typology, promoting a dynamic and fluid relationship of functions within large and spatially multipurpose architectural organisms. Aymonino confirms this when, speaking of the speech for the directional center of Turin, he states that "this is a new opportunity for the Italian architectural culture to imagine or design architectural complexes of multiple implications, as an occasion to dispose of undifferentiated areas, among certain possible but not strictly necessary ways. And this is because specific (elementary) functions can be replaced or integrated into specific (complex) relationships. At this point it would be necessary to examine the possibility that a program project such as that of the new Cabernauld center offers to determine a review of the traditional analysis of functions and to condition their variation over time. We, thus, return to the first point, namely, to the verification of the possibilities for the architect to be also the inventor of a method of organization of multiple activities, in close relation to formal expression, and to what extent this expressive result can absorb diverse and modifiable hypotheses over time".

Indeed, one of the characteristics of urbanism today has been to view the city as a static, ordered whole. Economic and demographic expressions are undoing these dreams of discipline. Large cities live in perpetual motion and this motion tends to accelerate. Probably, any future order will be based on the idea of permanent change, a dynamic of progress. The very idea of what today's city should look like, comes to some as methodological nonsense. A plan has not yet come to an end and its proposals have already lost its meaning. Sometimes the authors themselves are the first to recognize the inadequacy of their proposals.

Another young architect from Rome, Pietro Barucci, reinforces these positions when, during the debate to which Carlo Aymonino's text served as an introduction, he declares: "At a time when new demands of society are being asserted, when new planning criteria mature and technology is being enriched with new instruments and methods of realization, one can try to indicate the solution of some problems of the city structuring without abandoning the terrain of realities or, at least, of possibilities. Certainly, one of these problems is flexibility in general, which arises from the requirement to dispose differently of space in time, which gave rise to the concept of "contenant", that is, an indeterminate architecture, not deriving from the analysis of precise functions".

The transcriptions present here translate some of the essential ideas of the debate published by *Casabella*. Still, the ideas expressed by the new Italians are not original or isolated but are part of a current of international thinking and increasing influence². It should be noted, in this case, the high critical content of the statements. The Argans, The Bettini and the Tentori will certainly have their followers on the same level.

Then we will see, like everyone else, how close are some of his ideas to the ones Le Corbusier formulated many years before. It is certain that young people today do not dream of the images of yesterday's "Ville Vert" , but their disdain for "technical urbanism" is no less; the indeterminate space or multiple functions of which they speak is a natural extension of the concept of the open plant, now commonplace in some countries in certain types of construction (office blocks, for example); the total industrialization of the construction they defend is also a preview of the twenties, now close to becoming a

reality in the richest countries, due to the rarefaction of labor and its unaffordable cost; finally, in all that they propose, the idea of teamwork, of interdisciplinary collaboration in homogeneous groups of planning specialists, the master idea of Bauhaus didactics.

In noting the similarity of certain current positions with some of the postulates of rationalism, we do not intend to reduce the validity of those, referring them to the plane of a modern revivalism. Moreover, in this case, there is a fundamental difference: what forty years before was a revolutionary vision of the future world "can" today become a revolutionary act "without abandoning the terrain of realities or, at least, of possibilities", as Barucci wrote. Many of Sant'Elia's anticipations now relive in the possible projects of Tange, Kmokawa, Lubicz-Nicz or Goodman. Gropius' most ambitious teamwork proposals have been surpassed in Herfordshire's specific experiments, or in the MOE Development Group's project studies. Many more would be examples to remember. But the attitude of mind is the same – in the poetic (and monumental) images of the city of tomorrow (and not in a distant future); in the exalting and proud affirmations of man's renewal, in the rediscovered confidence in the ability of science to answer such questions and technology's ability to realize the most ambitious plans.

But all this can be translated into very little if the appropriate political, administrative, and legislative conditions for the planning of the city-territory are not met. Also, as Tentori stated, it will take a systematic effort to deepen, research, the subjects that are of interest to "urban design", some of which (such as infrastructure, for example) are moving at the slow pace of second-degree techniques.

The need for such research is recognized everywhere today, although the views from which it is viewed sometimes vary. Only recently, Paul-Jacques Grillo (in *L'architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, 115) proposed the creation of a pilot-city of international research, run by U.N.E.S.C.O, "où architectes, artistes, savants, ingénieurs et tous les autres poètes de la réalité travailleraient côte à côte à construire le monde nouveau". A project of debatable interest because here, too, several previous concerns are put. As John R. James wrote (*Journal of the Town Planning Institut*, January 64), "What kind of human society should be our goal in a future in which our land reserves shrink rapidly, but where the diverse needs of the population, economy and recreation continue to increase? What size and shape of the city and assignment of functions will ensure better living conditions?". And concluded: "We hope to be able to remake our cities, but we don't know what kind of city we want. Research cannot replace judgment or vision and give a definitive answer to these questions, but it can change and show the real implications of choice".

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What will the city of the future be like?

What are the unknowns? What are the concrete facts? Let us recall some general ones, which are often repeated. Firstly, those concerning demographics: it is estimated that by the year 2000, the population will have risen to about six to seven billion individuals. In 1961, according to the centralized censuses of U.N.E.S.C.O, we knew that it had already exceeded 3 billion. In 1650, according to credible studies, it was 515 to 530 million; at the beginning of the Christian era, it was between 100 and 320 million... we also know that this astonishing demographic increase will be achieved through an accelerated



urbanization process. In United Kingdom, where nine-tenths of the population already lives in urban centers, the population of cities will pass by the end of the century to about 66 million individuals.

But the phenomenon is not limited to the industrialized countries of the West; it also covers Asian nations: India, Indonesia, China, Pakistan. Studies by U.N.E.S.C.O predict increases in urban centers in those countries, up to 1975, from 75 to 300%. In India and Pakistan, large cities are filled with miserable homeless people from the fields. In United States of America and United Kingdom, gigantic metropolitan areas are formed, "conurbations", in which the limits of primitive cities are hardly distinguished. In many countries in continental Europe, the largest urban concentration is followed by the depopulation of the fields, where the mechanization of agriculture and the rationalization of production methods makes the need for labor smaller.

Everywhere there is recognition of the need to draw up development plans at national and regional scales, which regulate economic progress and enable the articulation of urban and rural areas of communications and industry, the preservation of national parks, tourism-free areas, and recreation. In practice, the results are deceiving. The overlap of private interests in the public interest, the reluctance of many people before new ideas, the lack of audacity and predictability of many, the shortage of technicians, and planning institutions, all ultimately conspire to perpetuate the routine scenarios.

However, energetic, and decisive interventions become more necessary on a day-to-day. It is now time to choose between possible paths.

In the restricted field of urban planning to which we speak of, there are two diametrically opposed extremist concepts that for the sake of simplicity are called the Anglo-Saxon and Latin schools: the first one advocates the preservation of certain rules of habitat in the cities, namely the existence within their perimeter of large green areas, the "control" of occupancy densities, the "human" scale of buildings, etc. The main criticism of this policy lies in the fact that the adoption of the low densities to which it is linked leads to uncontrolled peripheral expansion, with all the known drawbacks (increased distances from the center to the periphery, huge investments in transport networks and technical services, monotonous and flawed urbanity of residential areas, etc.). It is true that against these problems, British urban planners have sought to impose the concept of the limited city (case of the Abercombe Plan for Greater London) and the extension into new cities economically self-sufficient beyond the "green-belt", improving even in these conditions of ease, comfort, and sanity of which they are so proud³. But the problem arises in UK as everywhere else. And while it is true that many British urban planners continue to believe in the validity of the famous catchphrase of "sir" Raymond Unwin, "Nothing gained by overcrowding", it is also true that everyone wonders about the current and future problems of soil scarcity. And it is also in UK that we can observe some of the most innovative experiences in the organization of high-density housing centers (in Golden Lane, Park Hill, in the Hook and Cambernauld projects, where densities of more than 400 inhabitants per hectare were predicted).

But it is in other European countries – particularly in France and Italy – that the warmest advocates of the concentrated settlement policy are found. The arguments in this defense apply to a wide range of problems, ranging from those of a technical-socio-

economic nature, to those of a more subjective type (architectural expression, spatial environment, human experience, etc.).

Let us look at, in the first case, what is happening in the key sectors of industry and transport.

As for the first, industrial expansion within cities requires considerable soil availability, which in many cases require the contraction of areas destined for housing.

But let us take a closer look at this problem: as far as their relations with the city (location) are concerned, manufacturing facilities can be classified into two main groups: those that directly interest the cluster and those whose service extends to the region, the country, or live off export. The former includes, for example, certain support services for urban infrastructure (transport, electricity, telephones, etc.), some processing and food industries, numerous semi-industrial or craft activities, garages, service stations, warehouses, etc. Their location within the urban perimeter is acceptable and advisable because they vitalize the internal areas and they are close to residential neighborhoods, if no major inconvenience results from the points of view of health and traffic; on the contrary, industries of regional or national interest should be moved to the periphery and may even spread to agricultural areas, if they are served by appropriate roads, railways, or waterways. Its location within the cities, in addition to aggravating traffic conditions and being able to present health inconveniences, will rob important areas, necessary for housing and equipment (see, for instance, what is happening in the industrial strip of the riverside, in the eastern part of Lisbon).

Until a few years ago, few people doubted that industrial decentralization would inevitably lead (or was desirable to do so) to the relocation of families that were dependent on these activities to nearby residential neighborhoods, or to new industrial cities, as in UK. These human migrations were part of a regional planning perspective, in which the "population" factor was seen by the same scientific rigor as any other. Some authors, obsessed with the conditioning aspects of the economic dynamics of the moment, referred and refer with ease to the need to create new urban centers, to limit others and extinguish others, in a one-way perspective that makes the conditions of the human habitat depend decisively, if not exclusively, on the needs of the production of goods and services⁴. These enthusiastic technicians join, in a strange partnership and for very different reasons, the defenders of the "regional balance" and the garden city, one and the other ferocious opponents of modern megalopolises⁵. It is a coherent school of thought, of Anglo-Saxon origin, which had its initiators in Geddes and Howard, and which today has its most authorized defenders in Mumford, Stein, Hilbersheimer, Zevi and others.

For the case that interests us (and without entering a discussion of a problem about which there would be much to say), this principle today seems very controversial. Not only is industrial expansion, due to the progress of techniques and other economic and administrative factors, not always desirable in primitively established areas, but there are other factors that advise against population dissemination. One of them lies in the increase in specialized and university technical education.

Indeed, in all industrialized countries, higher education increases without ceasing, encompassing considerable layers of the population. In the USA or USSR, the number of university students reaches millions. But these educational establishments, due to their specific characteristics and operational dimension are not viable in small towns (except when, as in Cambridge or Oxford happens, they are their main "raison d'être").

The result of all this is that the proximity that is intended for the workers translates into distancing from students (often the workers themselves, when attending specialization courses or others), forced to take the opposite route from the peripheral nuclei to the center. A similar situation occurs, moreover, in relation to the other cultural and recreational institutions (auditoriums, theaters, museums, sports facilities, etc.). The result is that the housing centers of the periphery or small industrial cities become true centers of social and cultural segregation.

For these and various other reasons, many urbanism theorists today advocate concentrated cities, although limited in their expansion, if necessary, and "duplicated" in them by large "twin" nuclei (Paris-Parallele projects, Toulouse le Mirail), cities inhabited by all who, officials, technicians or employees, commute daily to the directional center, such as those that take the reverse direction, from the factories in the periphery. In many countries with a high standard of living, this movement is facilitated by the acquisition, by workers, of individual transport. For our part, we have had the opportunity to observe the immense number of cars (sometimes thousands) that are concentrated around some industrial units on the outskirts of Paris, Stockholm, Hamburg, and other cities.

It is worth mentioning some aspects of urban traffic: on this momentous problem, positions are today divided between those who, "in spite of everything", believe in a solution of the problem, without resorting to drastic measures; and those who deny this possibility, at least in central areas, without prohibiting or limiting the number of individual transports. This is possible – they admit – through random measures and with the damage or destruction of the civic character of the centers, as has largely happened in Detroit, Boston, or San Francisco, USA. For them, the car will change (small electric vehicles), or will be sooner or later expelled from the center into peripheral spaces until the weekend of three days that automation will make possible in the city in the society of abundance. To solve the problems of internal traffic, various solutions are suggested, ranging from the addition of traditional means of transportation (subway, buses, taxis), to air trains, helicopters, and conveyor belts. A world of hypotheses that the reader will properly find in the writings of Frei Otto, Friedman, Victor Gruen, the Japanese of the group "Metabolism" and many more. Predictions with a taste of science fiction that with all viability will become common place within 20 or 30 years⁶.

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Other arguments used to defend the principle of concentrated settlement and high densities boil down to one word: boredom. Boredom in this case is what is observed in the peripheral dormitories or in the satellite cities. It is the rarefaction of social life, rarity of meeting places, recreation and culture, the modesty of shops, the smaller scale of urban spaces and buildings, when compared to the bright lights of the city, to the avenues and streets rich in interesting motifs. It is also the neighborhood relations by obligation

and vigilance and the absence of great conquest of the city – anonymity – that provides a true individual freedom, a new morality based on free choice⁷.

On a sociological level, this antinomy is full of ideological implications; the concept of the community man, linked to the environment, opposes that of the social-human, aware of his rights and civic and trade union duties and active participant in the destinies of his country and his class. It also seems evident that the moral crisis that some sociologists have been denouncing (sometimes with lamentable narrow-mindedness), will not be overcome by the return to the "old and solid principles", but by the progressive transformation of the society in which we live, which will (certainly) cause the fall of many more myths. "La chute des mythes rend libre. Pour l'instant c'est une liberté carnavalesque. Mais l'énergie pure passe là-dedans, et elle restitue à l'homme une dimension oubliée. Bien sûr, c'est du carnaval. Vous avez les masques, les monstres, une musique assourdissante, des gens tombent, des gens se perdent, et les moralistes crient au scandale. Mais un certain ordre a fait son temps, et le carnaval veut mieux". Federico Fellini's words.



But the dissatisfaction of the populations residing in the peripheral neighborhoods also originates in the architecture itself, the spatial aridity – or negative space, as they say – resulting from the type of generalized volume-free deployment in recent years, in line with the concepts expressed in the Athens Charter (of which Roehampton and Marly-les-Grandes-terres are still, in our opinion, the most interesting examples). Now, as Alexandre Persitz has noted ("Vers un Urbanisme Spatiale", A. D'A., 101), man can admit that he is provisionally in a negative space and feel an aesthetic emotion before a work of art, a building, or a panorama. But this emotion is short-lived and is mainly verified from a defined point and great for the perception of the given object. But we know that man is mainly attracted and seduced not by an aspect, a view, a static perspective, but by the prolonged continuation of emotions caused by successive discoveries linked to the movements of the observer and, above all, to the feeling of being inside diverse and unforeseen architectural spaces. This is the case in Europe's historic cities, where houses line up in continuous bands, limiting perspectives and creating a permanent architectural engagement. It is the compact city, an organism created by man, an expression of its dominion over nature, as opposed to the green city, where the latter is the dominant and unifying landscape element. It is the awareness that the city, as architecture, is the spatial and plastic translation of concepts, human relations, and coexistence and not a mere functional organization.

Historically, we can perhaps mark the year 1951 as one in which these concerns have become thematic awareness or thematic consistency. Developed controversially, by Team X, from the CIAM Congress held that year in Hudston, in the outskirts of London (whose theme was the "Heart of the city", they conducted in the following congresses (Aix-en-provence, 53, Dubrovnik, 59, La Sarraz, 57), led to an acute crisis within that organism that was largely responsible for its extinction.

However, Team X – the so-called generation of 47, a group of young British architects, including the famous Smithson couple – did not allow itself to be led, in its criticism of the principles of the Athens charter (as Italy, in other countries happened), by the easy

pathways of revivalism and "discoveries" of spontaneous architectures. Peter and Alyson Smithson's proposals for Golden Lane (52) Hauptstadt Berlin (58) reflected several ideas aimed at vitalizing ancient cities and focused on aspects such as pedestrian movements, separative traffic, conviviality, continuity of the urban fabric and its growth process.

At the Golden Lane competition, a high-density residential group in London presented a solution of continuous buildings, constituting a series of courtyards, in which the pedestrian roads developed at the upper level, integrated into the buildings themselves and constituting real shopping streets and convivial centers. A solution, as we know, adopted later in the park hill set in Sheffield, and currently resumed in other urban projects with continuous developments at various levels, shopping streets, superiors, etc.

Golden Lane was a pioneer project, and its main interest lies in the fact that the solutions proposed in it apply to a housing program – type of high density. Other projects of the same era would also be worth of reference. Chamberlain, Power and Bon's Golden Lane project, the South Barbican project of the same team, and the new shopping center in Stockholm, run by Sven Markelinus and a few more. The first two projects of central areas predominantly or exclusively (such as the latter) were the first attempts on the path of structuring large urban centers, concentrated and directed and continuous spatial organization, the last two projects of central areas predominantly or exclusively (such as the last) destined to civic-commercial activities.

More recently, experimental projects have been multiplied for high density programs. It is not in the intentions of these notes – already extensive – to account for the many proposals that architecture magazines of the whole world are publishing. Even less to describe the numerous urban and architectural advances, with a research or simple figurative invention that are being produced. They are, as far as we are, the concrete proof of the enormous vitality and "youth" of today's architecture, and not, as some minds fear, mere manifestations of confusion and anarchy. This does not negate the need to distinguish between separate things, or once again, as Tentori stated, between positive utopias and purely figurative (or fanciful) utopias. We cannot resist, however, the temptation to remember some of these projects of greatest interest: it is fair to mention first the Toulouse-le-mirail project of the Candilis team, Josipa, Woods, already published in *Architecture*. One of the intentions expressed in this project was to re-establish the notion of street, thought of as a linear element of continuous development (rue-centre-linéaire), as opposed to the concept of the punctual concentration of collective equipment of most post-war achievements. Also important was the competition for the Directional Center of Turin, held this year. Important for the scale of the program and the variety and originality of many of the solutions. Another example, that of Hook, the satellite city of London, which economic reasons did not make feasible, and that among other reasons of interest developed the theme of the organization in "cluster" that the Amsterdam school, Aldo van Eyck, was a paradigm; some American achievements or projects, including the works of Lubicz-Nycz, which are published in this issue of *Architecture*; the projects of the teams of P. Goodman and Victor Gruen for Welfare Island in New York; the arrangement of Santa Monica Ocean Park, by W. Pereira, etc. All these are massive, true sets, concrete, and steel pyramids, where at the base are the various collective services, garages, offices and trade centers, and the upper floors are intended for housing. In Victor Gruen's design, the continuous undulating bands of varying heights



(between 8 and 30 floors) involve the large towers of 50 floors. One of the most curious aspects of this project is the accuracy of a longitudinal connection at the lower level by conveyor belts.

In Gruen's solution, the volumes are still isolatable, and the large equal towers allow a rhythmic reading of the whole. In the project of W. Pereira to Santa Monica (and we mention this case because it is typical of some recent achievements), the built mass is massive and practically indecomposable, constituting an authentic artificial hill. An aspect to retain in this project of great expressive power (because equally typical) is that of the whole construction is normalized and composed of "standard" elements.

To finish, we also remember the so-called current of "spatial urbanism".

The best-known project of this new trend is by a Japanese – Kenzo Tange – who imagined an archipelago city based on giant pillars, above sea level, on which large discontinuous volumes, large built masses, destined for housing and services. From Japan came later several projects gnawed at the same themes – those of Mosimura and Sone, by N. Kurokawa, from the members of the group "Metabolism", etc.

The same principles – liberation of the soil, volumetry freely arranged in space, exploration of the contrasts of full and empty – arise in the works of several European precursors – Schulze-Fielitz, Frei Otto, Rudolph Moser, and Edouard Albert, etc.



Let us recap:

At the beginning of these notes, we focused on some current aspects of the international controversy over the problems of urban design. We took as a starting point a debate recently held by some Italian architects published in *Casabella*. From this debate we highlighted the interventions that dealt with the search for a new methodology, response to the new dimension of the architect's work and the interdisciplinary relations between architecture and urbanism. We then tried to clarify some of the background aspects of this work, the perspectives it opens, the limits to which it will be confined. This has led us to extend the scope of these notes to the necessarily brief analysis of several data that force the current evolution of large cities. Finally, we have pointed out some examples, among the most relevant, that best translate the policies of concentrated settlement and high densities, increasingly adopted in many countries.

In a way, we took a course instead, in the exhibition, method, which appeared to us, however, more suggestive. Of some problems we can give little more than the utterance, sacrificing the time-consuming analysis they deserved to the need to synthesize a "situation" in its essential aspects. Others were even passed in the clear. It is a vast and complex subject, impossible to summarize in one paper alone. We hope at least having been clear in what we said.

Some final considerations:



The first concerns the professional training of architects, that play the role of architects-urbanists, as is the case here. We believe that, in this field, the activity independent of the isolated professional will become progressively less significant. Even private programs will tend to be "a chapter" of regional ordination plans to be met at all levels.

Its activity will be part of the whole that it will need to understand the process and last objectives. The dialectical understanding of a particular program on a progressive scale of relations, of which Aymonino spoke, in the plan of a flexible programming-execution, will only increase the difficulties and responsibilities of this integration.

All this leads us to the need to extend information to professional architects, so it respects the specialties of support and structuring of interdisciplinary action working method. Working methods that, in our opinion, will be based simply on "hypotheses" that the practice will define more rigorously. But – more important than everything else – is the global vision of the last objectives, which are not only practical, of what is intended to be achieved – an ideal of life and culture, which today, in most civilized countries, is situated in the possible field of the active and democratic coexistence of the various trends, oriented on concrete objectives of common interest.

In this framework of action, schools of architecture will also have a role to play – as trainers of technicians and civically conscious people. But a whole specialization effort remains to be done. In architecture, as in other professions, learning does not cease at the end of a course and self-teaching is not enough and does not give back. The problem of pure and applied research is also raised - and today with increasing reason. It is a world of trouble.



What correspondence can have such problems in the current activity of Portuguese architects?

We will not try to answer such thorny questions here. We will remember, however, that some attempts are underway in public bodies, integrated work, interdisciplinary, following processes successfully experienced out there – in the sectors of urbanism, social housing, and school construction.

There is also the effort of many architects in the liberal profession to rationalize working methods and organize workshops. It should also be noted the increasing intervention of architects in new sectors of activity.

Of course, much will be needed, particularly in the fields of organized post-school teaching and specialization. An effort that, of course, will be directed towards responding to the concrete and predictable demands of the environment, and not in obedience to abstract schemes.

On the other hand, schools of architecture are what they are – and what some try to be. Perhaps. And the rest (almost everything) does not fall within the scope of the specifically professional action of architects.



In a rapidly changing world – in which man himself does change – architects could not continue romantically to dream the aesthetic dreams of an art unrelated to life, as did those who in the last century were uninterested in the applications of new materials and left the "utilitarian" architecture in the care of engineers.

It is also possible that their proposals for a necessary and inevitable physical environment are not always understood. "But art – as John Lescure said – cannot be conciliatory. It is the dramatic imperative to restore man to his purest sense. And you cannot do it but within the bounds of disceptation".

¹ By editorial decision, the images of the original text were not included in this publication.

² Read, for example, "The city of the future", by Noburu Kawazoe (published in *Zodiac*, 9). This is where one finds the following paragraph: "For us who live in the contemporary era, the total and perfect image of the city – what we usually call the master plan should be rejected. What we need is to "a continuous program", that is at the same time understandable: in other words, a master part of the plan should be designed in such a way that profound metabolic changes can freely take place in it".

³ It is curious to note, meanwhile, that the goals of urbanism are defined in the Town Plan Acts of that country, as the creation of "Proper Conditions Sanitary, Amenity and Convenience". The late Patrick Abercrombie, on the other hand, proposed as an alternative to this too colorless formula to "Beauty, Health and Convenience" (in "Town and Country Planning"), although he hastened to express his revulsion at the urbanism of "Boulevard", by urban scenarios without adapting to the imperatives of sanity, economics, trade, etc.

⁴ Of course, we do not want to call into question the need to re-adjust the distribution operated in many countries. We also believe that the process will be less painful if it is dominated by all its implications, i.e., if planned. We simply want to stress the importance of the "Qualitative" and human, as opposed to certain authors who are also in this case situated in the restricted plane of the "quantity" and economic conveniences. Planning cities for 50,000 or 500,000 inhabitants are not just a problem of numbers. The resulting life forms and relationships will also be diverse. It is worth noting that the physical planning of the territory is seen by certain economists therefore because of or a complement to economic planning. This is a misunderstanding. Territorial planning is a whole where, for example, factors of pure industrial convenience may have to give way to concerns about human use of sites, landscape ordering, biological preservation needs, climate rectification, etc. In large maritime cities, it is frequent to observe the total occupation of riverside strips by port and industrial facilities that create a curtain of separation between the city and the river (as happens in Lisbon, Portugal) and the impossibility of their use for tourism, sports and recreational purposes (even, also, of economic interest); the same, or worse in other cases, for the pollution of the atmosphere of nearby housing areas; The same... we would not end up in this absurd statement to which limited sectoral planning cannot prevent.

⁵ Remember, actually: Megalopolis was a large city built in 370 BC. under the impulse of Epaminondas, to concentrate the entire population of Sparta. The Archaeans of the Peloponnesian lived in villages until the end of the century IV BC. when they started creating something like a city. They were in this embryonic state when Epaminondas compulsively concentrated 40 of these villages or small towns in the Great City (Megalopolis). This forced foundation and the resulting population transfers responded to political and military reasons. It was an artificial and extimed measure without justification on an ethnic or economic basis, given the large extent of the territory. Therefore, little by little the populations went back to their places of birth and the city lost its meaning and depopulated itself.

⁶ On this problem, we also recommend reading two papers published in the *London Architectural Review*: "The Urban Choice", by Raymond Spurrer, May 64; and "Speed the Citizens", by Reyner Banham, August 64. These are two studies on Colin Buchanan's report, "Traffic in Cities". Though the Buchanan report is limited to proposing a process of analysis and "control" of traffic, Mr Banham states that he accepts both of his conclusions leads in practice to the adoption of new types of public transport (conveyor belts, monorail).

⁷ Vicinal relations in the old quarters are, first, between-help or clan relationships (as Young and Willmott observed in Bettal Green). Men are the first to get out of the workplace. Then the help tends to lose



meaning in the countries with the highest standard of living and organized social assistance, even more so when women work outside home. The car is the final element, allowing a scattered selection of friendships. On the other hand, the possession of a wider and more comfortable house transforms foreign relations into visiting relations. The vicinal communities no longer make sense in this new socio-economic context and remain only impoverished in the small means.