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Team 10: Debate and Media in Portugal and Spain

This issue of JOELHO is published in association with the International Conference “Team Ten Farwest: Critical Revision of the Modern Movement in the Iberian Peninsula, 1953-1981”. For the preparation of this conference – held in Porto in November 2019, in the year that marks the 60th anniversary of the last CIAM meeting of Otterlo in 1959 – two preliminary meetings were held, where several contributions of Portuguese and Spanish academics were presented – in Guimarães, December 2017, and Barcelona, June 2018. Many different historiographical perspectives were centred on subjects like the protagonists, the processes, architectural works, urbanism, and representation – from anthropology to cinema, from pedagogy to research, from architectural language to theory, from housing to tourism, from image to criticism.

After these two meetings, the guest editors of JOELHO challenged the academics interested in this subject – whether they had been in Guimarães and Barcelona, or not – to submit full papers that could contribute to deepen the knowledge about the means of diffusion of the ideas coming out of the Team 10 meetings, both in Portugal and Spain. Although not exclusively, the proposed articles could be focused on publications in all forms – architectural

magazines, books, manifestos, television shows and documentaries; meetings, congresses and exhibitions; or individual personalities.

All the papers here published result from that open call for papers.

The title of this issue is composed by three moments of focus: Team 10 / Debate and Media / Portugal and Spain. The main focus addresses Team 10 as a group of architects who were dealing with the renovation process of Modern Architecture after the Second World War. Known as an informal group, Team 10 was however a platform of discussion, based on a complex network of several individual links with schools of architecture, architectural magazines, editors, writers and artists. That network is analysed in the second moment of focus. The last moment is a cultural and geographical one. In part because of their specific languages and political situations, Portugal and Spain were two countries geographically and culturally far from the centre of Europe. Although, despite that distance, there were many architects who managed to break this cultural detachment.

As suggested by Peter Smithson, Team 10 represented a change of sensibility which resulted in a new understanding

of cities, human patterns and collective built forms. If Team 10 can be understood in a wider sense, as an idea built up over time, on a collective interpretive palimpsest, the aim of this issue is to understand the way in which Team 10 was critically interpreted, disseminated and assimilated in Portugal and Spain through the different platforms of debate and media.

In a synthesis form, we can say that all the articles published in this issue of JOELHO are constructed from a historiographical perspective. All the authors share the same common concern to try to understand better today the importance of the debate about the proposals extracted from the Team 10 meetings, and the influence it had for Portuguese and Spanish architects.

They all seem to acknowledge the advantage of analysing this phenomenon from a distance of more than half a century, and to benefit from the access to more systematic sources of information, and better organized documentation, so that they can interpret how this influence can be recognized in its contemporaneity, and how these proposals had the capacity to materialize over time, and to affirm themselves historically.

Although risking a certain oversimplification, we can also say that all the articles seem to suggest two main conclusions.

Firstly, the debate produced at these meetings, and some of the proposals put forward by some of their most notable members were, in fact, reflected in the thinking and work of the Portuguese and Spanish architects, especially among the late 1950s, and the early 1970s. And that is manifested in a dimension that surely surpasses the generalized image of a certain indifference, which has been spread over the last decades, and which has been based on a merely empirical knowledge.

Secondly, the articles published in this issue of JOELHO also seem to suggest a more or less silent spreading of the debate produced by Team 10 as a group, in a collective sense, and they seem to point to a greater attention to the authors individually. A greater attention to some individual works, and a certain identification with some isolated proposals, seems to prevail over a much assumed identification with the group activity, or with some generic theoretical principles, which could be recognized as conclusions drawn from their meetings.

Both Ana Esteban-Maluenda and Salvador Guerrero agree to recognize that there is no relevant diffusion of

Team 10 proposals as a collective institution in the Spanish published press, or in the main publications of the second half of the 20th century, in historiographical terms.

Ana Esteban claims that there is rather a particular attention to each of the protagonists, and that is perfectly clear right from the title, “Team 10 absent - The individual architects rather than the collective in Spanish journals of the 1960s”.

This seems to mean a certain lack of recognition that Team 10, as a collective movement, could represent the necessary evolution that would allow the Modern Architecture program to overcome the difficulties it faced, considering its philosophical ambition, and social dimension. And, as a consequence, a certain lack of recognition that Team 10 meetings could fill the void left by the end of CIAM.

In any case, that void was already being filled by a widening of the architectural debate to a range of new cultural and technological possibilities. And by the intersection of that architectural debate with other important areas of human knowledge – humanities, philosophy, exact sciences, etc. That coincides with a

historic moment when the Modern Architecture project had already acquired an important capacity of affirmation, both in Iberian Peninsula, and all the western world.

The paper by Alba Zarza Arribas helps us to confirm that, after the late 1950s, the ideas contained in that project are no longer exclusive to an elite. They cross different cultural levels of the Spanish society and confirm that unmistakable signs of this modernity can be recognized in all means of cultural diffusion.

By reading the papers published in this issue of JOELHO it is, in fact, possible to conclude that some of the most influential Portuguese and Spanish architects cite architectural references from the work of Team 10 members and the principles that came out from their meetings.

Salvador Guerrero claims that when we analyse the work of some of the most prominent figures of Madrid, we understand that, not only they were receptive to Team 10 ideas, but also that “these ideas were essential to their taking on the new challenges arising in a society that was transforming at a fast pace”. Prominent figures, such as Sáenz de Oíza, Cano Lasso, García de Paredes, Vázquez Molezún, Aracil, Leoz, “and other members of the so-called Third Generation”.

Jaime J. Ferrer Forés is also very enthusiastic in arguing that there is indeed a conscious assimilation of the Team 10 principles in the work of Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oíza for “Ciudad Blanca”.

In fact, a large part of the articles now published is centred in the work of individual personalities – Jaime J. Ferrer Forés, on Sáenz de Oíza, as referred; but also Carlos Machado e Moura, on Luiz Cunha; Silvia Balzan, on Pancho Guedes; and Susana Lobo, on Francisco Conceição Silva.

Susana Lobo also states that “although no concrete evidence of any personal or professional relation has ever been established between Conceição Silva and Coderch or Candilis, it is interesting to note the coincidence of design methods concurrently developed by the three architects for seaside tourism related projects.”

However, as said before, it seems that these references are often very explicit in form, but equally very silent in the speech.

As João Cunha Borges and Teresa Marat-Mendes state, “the influence of Team 10 in Chelas is noted by several scholars, although it was not a conscious influence for planners”. And that is declared quoting a testimony by Francisco Silva Dias, responsible for the urban plan of

Chelas, in Lisbon. And the authors go on – “That the [plan of Chelas] still resonates with Cluster City principles, indicates that more than a model by Team 10, the Cluster City belongs to a wider cultural sensibility of 1950s and 1960s, to which Team 10 gave the most emblematic expression.”

In “The Team 10 on Pancho Guedes - An energy from the New world that has European roots”, Silvia Balzan recalls that “Team 10’s discourse situates itself between two significant paradigm shifts: the rupture with CIAM and the advent of postmodernism in the 1970s.” Although we can agree with the author, recognizing that there is a certain convenient simplification in this statement, it can help us to better understand the historic framework of many of the articles published in this issue of JOELHO.

The article, “Luiz Cunha, ‘international but brief’ [and pop!]”, is certainly one of them, and the author, Carlos Machado e Moura, often reminds us of that throughout the text.

That is also the case in the article by Leonor Matos Silva. When, in 1981, a small group of notable elements of the vanishing Team 10 visits the Lisbon School of Architecture, the reality of the architectural debate that had

defined the CIAM period was merely a historical vestige. It was already very difficult, at that time, to speak of large collective movements.

We hope that the reading of all the articles now published in JOELHO 10 will help us to understand why this widening of the architectural debate to a larger range of culturally possibilities, and this intersection with many other fields of knowledge, have made it so difficult to assess accurately in what extent the debate produced around these Team 10 meetings could be interpreted as a successful evolution of the Modern project. Finally, we expect that JOELHO 10 will also contribute to evaluate to what extent the uptake and assimilation of architectural ideas of Team 10, under the critical revision of the Modern Movement, can be recognized as a crucial influence for the architectural debate produced in Portugal and Spain between 1950's and late 1970's.

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