

The Question of Housing, Between Crisis and Opportunity. The Case of CIAM VI

Maria Tassopoulou

National Technical University of Athens, Greece
tassopoulou.ma@gmail.com

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Introduction

In recent years housing research has attracted the interest of many disciplines. Architects, urban planners, civil engineers, more recently psychologists, sociologists, doctors, and computer scientists are experimenting with the question of dwelling, combining their field's state of the art with technological advances and new digital tools. In 2020, the Covid-19 crisis and the cities' lockdown experience brought once more to the fore the current housing problems. The breakdown of the professional and production activities and the social distancing measures led to an obligatory "stay at home" and an everyday coexistence of all members of the household in the house for the whole day. A specific size of square meters had to host different uses, varied from professional, educational, leisure, and normal daily activities. As such, a lack of space was observed, a fact that greatly affected the quality of housing. At the same time in many parts of Europe, a real estate housing boom is observed, thus further contributing to inequity of access to proper housing quality, especially for the parts of society that need it the most. Given the fact that crises usually accelerate changes in affected fields, it is expected that the pandemic crisis will also lead to a change regarding the perceived ideas of housing and the discipline of architecture — or even the profession of architect — in both theory and practice. In the light of the Covid-19 pandemic, it can be expected that new questions and research agendas regarding housing will once more return to the epicenter of the architectural and urban studies interest. To contribute to the discussion ahead, this paper offers historical insight into relevant periods of crisis, focusing on the way architects responded to new needs and conditions, formed coalitions and groups, and managed or failed to provide relevant answers.

Accordingly, this article explores the ways architecture has responded to housing crises in the past, to better answer contemporary concerns on dwelling and the architectural profession. Such an example is the postwar housing crisis, as it happened on a global scale and affected almost all cities. How did architects prepare to respond to that housing crisis, and which were the main priorities established? Which is the thematic direction they put at the forefront and how do they manage their circle of influence? This article attempts to answer the above questions, to identify and understand postwar Modernism and specifically the efforts made to respond to a crisis and at the same time the effort to turn a crisis into an opportunity for ideological dominance. To do so, it focuses on CIAM as the main collective group representing Modernism in architecture and urban planning, and more specifically to the first postwar gathering, known as the sixth CIAM congress.

The International Congresses of Modern Architecture have been of great concern in the history of architecture of the 20th century. Alongside the publications of the CIAM members on the principles and the history of CIAM,¹ significant researches have been produced since 1979

¹ Indicatively mentioned: Le Corbusier, *La Charte d'Athènes* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1957); Jose Luis Sert, *Can our cities survive: an ABC of urban problems, their analysis, their solutions. Based on the proposals formulated by the C.I.A.M.* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1947); Jaqueline

up until nowadays.² The CIAM legacy in the direction of modern architecture and urban planning is universally accepted nowadays as a result of their international impact and the variety of related studies, often receiving mythical directions. For the past years though, with the advantage of time distance and maturity of the historical and historiographical methods, new approaches and findings have contributed to a more spherical and updated analysis of the movements' complicated history. For example, in the article entitled "The invention of the Modern Movement"³ Ciucci has launched a new way of studying the CIAM, where the research is particularly interested in the networks and the (unseen) factors that affected the direction of the congresses. Influenced by this research methodology and by combining primary archival material from the CIAM records, this article presents the evolution of the statutes of the Congresses. It links the changes occurring since the formation of the avant-garde fueled structure to the entry of new people who share common goals but have different backgrounds and altered ideas. The preparatory procedures, the unpublished reports of the commissions, the relevant correspondence, and the published statements are brought together under scrutiny to better understand the internal mechanisms of the CIAM that led the course of postwar modernity. The better knowledge of the past will contribute to the ongoing discussion on the innovative solutions that architects should think of in order to be part of the new chapter of housing arising after the pandemic.

Historical Background

The idea of a union for cultural integration in the arts, ethics, and politics emerged in the late 19th century in Britain, with the Arts and Crafts movement moving towards an effort to unite the opposing blocs.⁴ A few years later, attempts of grouping the action of the then rising Modern Movement were observed in central Europe, with the Germans, the French, and the Swiss taking the lead.⁵ The well-known La Sarraz congress in 1928 signals the first European avant-garde effort in joining forces towards a common goal: the prevalence of modern architecture. The belief that through collective action architecture could make great progress calmed the disagreements and the Swiss castle of La Sarraz paved the common ground of the new architecture. The newly emerged association was named *International Congresses of Modern Architecture*, abbreviated as CIAM and grouped under the presidency of prof. Karl Moser.⁶

The first congress was an international demand for a gathering of architects, whose work was based on the principles of Modernism, wishing to open them up to the public with a view of further implementing their theories. The organization, as a genuine formation of the European avant-garde, aimed at the integration of the new construction technics, putting at the forefront

Tyrwhitt, "History of the CIAM movement - An unfulfilled project," *Ekistics*, Vol. 52, No. 314/315, (1985): 486-487.

- 2 Indicatively mentioned: Martin Kohlrausch, *Brokers of Modernity. East Central Europe and the Rise of Modernist Architects, 1910-1950* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2019); Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000); Kees Somer, *The Functional City: the CIAM and Cornelis van Eesteren, 1928-1960* (Trans. Peter Mason. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2007); Martin Steinmann, *CIAM: Dokumente 1928-1939* (Basel: Birkhauser Verlag, 1979); Evelien Van Es et al. (eds.), *Atlas of the Functional City / CIAM 4 and Comparative Urban Analysis* (Netherlands: Thoth Publishers: GTA Verlag, 2014).
- 3 Giorgio Ciucci, "The Invention of the Modern Movement," transl. Stephen Sartarelli, in *Oppositions Reader: Selected Readings from a Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture, 1973-1984*, K. Michael Hays ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 552-575.
- 4 As a union is considered a coalition with the aim of promoting its activities. Other than the British efforts, a well-known attempt is the German *Werkbund*. For more information see: Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Modern Architectural Theory: A Historical Survey, 1673-1968* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- 5 See Nicolaus Pevsner, *The Sources of Modern Architecture and Design* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968).
- 6 For a detailed analysis on the first meeting see Steinmann, *CIAM*.

a thematic direction concerning the role of the architect both in the construction process and within society.⁷ The success of this union depended on the ability of the leaders of the local groups to cooperate and form a coalition, overcoming any differences and disagreements. The agreement described as the *La Sarraz declaration* defines four fundamental directions of the new architecture: a focus on the general economy, on the prevailing urbanization, and on cultivating relationships with both public opinion and politics.⁸ Taking into consideration the fact that modern architects emphasized formulating the architectural problem, it is crucial that they focused on the role architecture had to play in a wider economic and social framework, while trying to open their circle of influence by targeting the decision-making centers, such as the political authorities. However, this innovative joint initiative was not without difficulties. The different visions of the participating members and the gradual rise of uncontrolled conditions and agendas at the political and social level affected and eventually altered more than once the aims, the relations, and the expected results.⁹

The second congress took place in Frankfurt (1929). During its meetings, architects from eighteen countries studied the best balance between the smallest possible dimensions and the maximum possible comfort with a view to the then existing housing problem in the urban centers.¹⁰ The *Existenzminimum* was mainly a German initiative but also opened up to international thinking, with architectural and ideological influences from the Soviet Union to be evident. CIAM tried to get into the housing development, utilizing the then technological progress and proposing the innovative integration of all the necessary functions of housing. The Frankfurt kitchen, designed by Grete Schütte-Lihotzky, is still the most emblematic example of that era.

As congresses gradually attracted interest, they started forming a more formal statute. The first update of the La Sarraz Declaration is drafted after the 1929 congress, thus allowing a clearer definition of the objectives, the aims, and the internal CIAM structure. More specifically, four aims are articulated clearly in the voted statute, thus forming the congresses' conceptual and working framework, described as follows:

- a) to formulate the contemporary architectural problem
- b) to represent the modern architectural idea
- c) to make this idea penetrate the technical, economic and social circles
- d) to work towards the realization of the problem of architecture.¹¹

At that point, the dynamics of the organization were still limited but there was a remarkable effort in configuring the group's goals, trying to bridge utopia and reality, and in the attempt of projecting ideas into practice. The description of the CIAM aims focused on two directions: firstly, the recognition of the economic, design and social problems and the design method that are best able to answer them; and secondly, the rise of the dynamics of the modern devotees, a fact that will enable the diffusion and therefore the implementation of modern architecture. As such, the CIAM states that it is open to two groups of architects; "(a) the members of the regional groups of Modern Architecture, willing to adopt the principles of the La Sarraz declaration, and (b) the honorary members to be elected by the Congress."¹² These two ways of participation acted towards an extroversion potential and therefore increased the possibility of broadening the echo circle of modern architecture. Nevertheless, the grouping of the members in two categories could also be interpreted as an attempt of dividing the delegates, while

7 Mumford, *CIAM Discourse*.

8 As mentioned in the La Sarraz Declaration under the paragraph *aims*. Folder B006, seq. 13-18, *Papers of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), 1928-1970. Gifts of Josep LLuis Sert, 1981 and Jacqueline Tyrwhitt, 1982. Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Design*.

9 Ciucci, "The Invention of the Modern Movement," 552-575.

10 Mumford, *CIAM Discourse*, 34.

11 Harvard GSD, CIAM, B002-1 (original text in French).

12 *Ibid.*, B006-19.

labelling them “honorary” supported the argument of a conceptual yet existing separation. But still, at the beginning of the 1930s, modern architecture addressed a small group of people eager to fully cooperate with the leading committee.

The discussion on the reconstruction after World War One raised even more questions that eventually opened a new direction in modern urban planning. The third conference, taking place in Brussels, dealt with the rational design methods, a thematic direction affected by the promising terrain of the USSR, and the potential of designing the suburbs of Moscow. The Radiant City (*Ville Radieuse*) of Le Corbusier, as an initial effort in urban planning based on modern architectural principles, gathered the interest during the third meeting, a congress with an increased number of architects and specialists, which historically marked the milestone of the vertical habitat. The congress results were rather neutral and are rarely discussed in the international literature, but it is important to recognize the attempt in opening channels of communication with Moscow, a city that might have become a privileged field of implementing modern ideas. The shift in the interest from housing to urban planning widened the CIAM framework and influenced their structure, mainly by increasing the number of members willing to follow the CIAM principles.

This opening-the-circle strategy continued with the planning of the 4th congress in Moscow. Nevertheless, after a series of postponements and disagreements, the delegates finally rejected the Moscow proposal and preferred to sail on the Mediterranean, traveling from Marseilles to Athens and back, in a rather mythical congress. During the fourth CIAM on board of the SS *Patris II*, the interest focused on urban planning and the analysis of thirty-three cities aimed at discussing and designing a method of modern planning, towards a functional city. The fourth meeting bears similarities with the founding convergence in La Sarraz, while its impact overshadows all previous and subsequent meetings. According to Giedion, “the aim of the congress was not to find something new, but the common ground that will allow future cooperation,”¹³ collaboration that eventually lasted for 30 years, even though the structure of the conferences in 1959 was very different from the one in 1928.

An effort to clearly define the goals of the congress was present since the very opening of the fourth meeting. Cornelis van Eesteren, Giedion, and Le Corbusier, who took the floor during the first session, focused on the significance of producing a measurable result — like a publication that will feed the congresses’ public position. More specifically, Giedion stated that “we would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the purpose of the conference is not to offer a definitive solution to all the questions that may arise, but to act in a concrete way towards the authorities and the public opinion,”¹⁴ while Le Corbusier, talked about the “young people (at the congress), the ‘flower’ of architecture, which should bear fruit.”¹⁵ meaning that “there is the obligation of formulating the conclusions [...] translating our ideas into an understandable language.”¹⁶ Other than Le Corbusier’s rhetorical skills, all of the leading delegates stressed the significance of cultivating relations with the political authorities and within the society, thus influencing the public opinion for the benefit of modern architecture.

The venue of the congress encouraged indeed a friendly atmosphere and promoted the exchange of views among the delegates.¹⁷ More than a hundred participants from sixteen countries discussed the Functional City and shared the analyses of their home countries, but ultimately failed to reach a common conclusion. During the return trip, the mood changed and was often

13 According to a letter from Giedion to Gropius on 5/7/1928, as mentioned in Kees Somer, *The Functional City: the CIAM and Cornelis van Eesteren, 1928-1960*, Trans. Peter Mason (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2007), 25.

14 Fondation Le Corbusier, CIAM 4 archives, D2(4)82.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Harvard GSD, CIAM, B003, 32-33.

disturbed due to various disagreements and mostly due to the difficulty in communicating in many languages.¹⁸ It is clear that CIAM 4's discussions were paralyzed due to misconceptions.¹⁹

Yet, the CIAM papers show that the language was only a part of the problem.²⁰ The fourth congress was unique in CIAM history not only because it was held at sea, but also because it hosted for the first time groups of delegates who all believed in modern principles but did no longer share the same avant-garde roots. They came from different disciplines, different age groups, different beliefs, and different socioeconomic backgrounds. In this context, on the last day of the congress and while *SS Patris II* was slowly approaching the port of Marseilles, the executive committee promoted a restructuring of the congress in a process called *amendments on the statute*,²¹ which was voted on. There, they attempted a grouping of members based on their profession and their essential or supportive role for the congress, by creating three new groups other than the members of the CIAM. The first one, called *the friends of the congresses* was already participating during the fourth meeting and was supposed to be a group with limited obligations and a supporting role in the congresses. As far as the new members willing to join the CIAMs, they would be grouped as *collaborators* — a group including young architects and students — or as *experts* — a group including scientists and non-architects.²² This new structure aimed at forming working groups where the young architects worked along with local groups and scientists from the related fields of expertise, thus promoting an interdisciplinary methodology in answering the architectural problems. It follows that, as their influence was growing, CIAM attempted an opening to a more complex approach, thus expanding to close fields of research. They tried to merge the modern momentum of close disciplines in the working analysis of the CIAM, in the search for a modern and scientific methodology. At the same time, this objective worked towards the opening of their circle and the public opinion, thus increasing the CIAM sphere of influence, specifically on the authorities and bodies.²³

On recalling the La Sarraz aims, one can identify key similarities in the methodology of answering the problems and mostly, in the main target of reaching the policy makers. It follows that by the ending of CIAM 4, the congresses actively promoted mass participation and the risky targeting at the social aspect of urban growth.

The CIAMs resumed after five years in Paris. As the political situation in Europe worsened, the delegates met again at the La Sarraz castle in 1936, eight years after the first CIAM meeting, to work on the theme of the next congress. Despite the decisions of the La Sarraz meeting,²⁴ the theme was set as *Logis et Loisirs* (Dwelling and Recreation). Delegates of over twenty national groups were present at the fifth meeting, presided by van Eesteren, Gropius, Bourgeois, and Sert, but led by Le Corbusier who eventually signed the CIAM 5 publication.

18 Since the start of the congress, French is suggested as the “formal” language, while translation to other languages (English, German) was also provided.

19 Cornelis van Eesteren Archives, Het Nieuwe Instituut, EEST_4.87-65.

20 According to personal research in the following CIAM Archives: gta ETH CIAM Archives, FLC CIAM 4 Archives, Cornelis van Eesteren Archive Het Nieuwe Instituut, CIAM Papers 1928-1970, Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University GSD.

21 Minutes of the general Assembly, 13/8/1933. Archives van Eesteren, HNI, EEST_4.87-49.

22 *Annales Techniques: Organe Officiel de la Technique de Grèce*, no. 44-45-46, (Oct-Nov 1933): 1079. (Reprint: Athens: Technical Chamber of Greece, 1983). It is also mentioned that the experts group will have the same obligations and rights with those of the regular members, while as first member of the group is voted Dr. Otto Neurath.

23 This argument is also substantiated by the minutes held during the return trip, where with regard to the Resolution Committee, it is proposed that the drafting of the decision on the basis of the following three points: “(a) Definition of the current state of the cities, (b) Formulation of the requirements of the residents, (c) Monitoring and applying pressure on the competent authorities and bodies,” *Annales Techniques*, 1079.

24 The meeting was presiding by Cornelis van Eesteren, Walter Gropius and Sigfried Giedion. According to the La Sarraz decision, an implementation of a version of the Functional City exhibition for the 1937 Paris Exhibition was planned. For details see Mumford, *CIAM discourse*, 104-116.

For the years to come, the WW II crisis would change and influence the topics of interest and hinder the planning and construction potential. But at the same time, the destruction of cities — mainly European cities — caused by the war would change the balances yet again; as such, by the time of CIAM 6 being assembled, modern architects would be on hold for the anticipated great reconstruction ahead.

CIAM Bridgewater, 1947. Managing the Inner Balances.

CIAM 6 was the first postwar congress, preceded by ten years of interruption due to the unstable political situation and the war. It was initially planned to take place in New York, but economic factors cancelled the American venue in favor of the British Bridgewater.²⁵ Almost one hundred delegates representing Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, England, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, and the USA reunited to discuss the new ways and design methods of planning the cities.²⁶

The preparatory procedures started almost two years before, with the steering committee asking the members to develop and suggest the topic of the next congress. The intention of holding a conference in England in September 1947 was planned since January,²⁷ on a thematic direction close to the aesthetic approach of architecture.²⁸ The assembly of the delegates was to take place in Zürich in April or May to discuss the organization of the congress, a discussion that had started at least a year ago. A draft note sent from Sert to Le Corbusier in May 1947, entitled “Outline for a reinstatement of the purpose, program and policy of the CIAM,”²⁹ to be shared among the European groups of the Congress, described the working framework and tried to redefine the next CIAM steps after the ten-year interruption. It clearly stated that the purpose of the CIAM is “to set up universal standards for community developments,” and “to get them accepted,”³⁰ repeating once more that CIAM “has to concern not only with technical problems but also with economic, social, educational and political problems,”³¹ thus setting the tone of the social targeting and the integration of politics in the overall equation.

Three groups responded to the committee’s call and submitted thematic propositions: the British, the Swiss and the American group. Specifically, the Swiss group suggested “The relation between Architect, Painter and Sculptor,” the English group “The impact of contemporary conditions upon the architectural expression,” and the American group the “Community Development.”³²

More specifically, the Swiss group named the proposed congress *The integration of the three categories: Architecture, Sculpture and Painting*,³³ pointing out the need of building the cooperation of the Fine Arts, with a view of increasing the possibilities of participating in public affairs. It seems that their proposal was detached from the post-World War Two context and did not really focus on the technological progress that flourished in the intervening period from the previous CIAM meeting, but it was indeed following a thematic direction that followed the La Sarraz spirit in the collective action towards a common goal and was supported by S. Giedion. This aesthetic approach was discussed during the Bridgewater congress and was also part of

25 Mumford, *CIAM Discourse*, 168.

26 Harvard GSD, CIAM, B004, 47-48.

27 *Ibid.*, C004, 2-4. Letter from Giedion to Sert, 18 January 1947.

28 *Ibid.*

29 *Ibid.*, B004, 7.

30 *Ibid.*

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*, 22.

33 *Ibid.*, 29.

the CIAM 7, as a secondary subject,³⁴ chaired by S. Giedion and questioning mostly how the collaboration between the fine arts would be possible.

As far as the British group is concerned, a report of the MARS group³⁵ was submitted to the CIAM, entitled *Architectural Education in Great Britain* and signed by William Tatton-Brown.³⁶ Architectural education was often part of the CIAM thematic directions and especially from the postwar years onwards, clearly because of the CIAM growing influence in politics and social affairs, but also because of the increased need of having properly educated architects and planners during the reconstruction era. The MARS group raised the issue of CIAM's involvement in designing an educational system that would better meet the modern needs. In a well-written report, the group noticed the gaps and the weaknesses of architectural education and suggested that CIAM take the step forward in discussing the relationship of the "Architect" as a member of the construction industry. The importance of the proposed theme was discussed and acknowledged by the CIAM members during the 6th congress and as such, it was suggested as the topic of CIAM 8.³⁷

Finally, the American CIAM Group named *CIAM chapter for Relief and Postwar Planning*³⁸ submitted a proposal entitled "community development" back in December 1945.³⁹ As the title suggests, they put into the foreground the need for new community patterns that incorporate modern innovations and better answer modern needs. The topic and the proposed methodology were influenced by CIAM 4 as it was based on analysis (community types, activities, facilities), on the research of types of facilities (transportation, farming/manufacturing, housing, recreation, health, administration, etc), on conducting a questionnaire and — a new methodological tool — a checklist for information on community patterns (identification, essential facilities, economic control).⁴⁰ This theme aimed to include the new machines and technical innovation in everyday life, thus improving the new concepts and "embracing new social objectives for the welfare of man."⁴¹

The records kept in the CIAM folders identify the submitted "unrelated proposals" concerning the topic of the next congress while trying to bridge these proposals under the conceptual framework "of the growth of industrialization"⁴² and the possible research directions "in planning (new standards of values in community development), or in building design (new needs, new means and new forms) or organization (as a need for integration of specialists in various fields)."⁴³

These different proposals may be due to the lack of coordination between the delegates or it may be just a random choice. Nevertheless, the correspondence between the inner circle of CIAM shows that differences and disagreements existed and concerned both the structure of the conferences and its prospects. The core of the congresses seems to follow the technological, research, and business activities and move its base from central Europe to the US, a fact that created new prospects and definitely changed the balances. Sigfried Giedion, in a letter to Sert,⁴⁴ admits that although the time distance is close enough to the La Sarraz congress, "they

34 Ibid., B005, 54.

35 Modern Architectural Research Group or MARS Group. British architectural think tank founded in 1933 by Morton Shand, Wells Coates, Maxwell Fry and F. R. S. Yorke. Their contribution to the CIAM activities is considered to be significant, especially in the postwar period.

36 Ibid., B004, 12.

37 Ibid., B005, 54.

38 For the creation of the American working group see Mumford, *CIAM Discourse*, 142-149.

39 Harvard GSD, CIAM, B004, 1.

40 Ibid., 2-6.

41 Ibid., 2.

42 Ibid., 22.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., C004, 2. Letter from S. Giedion to J.L. Sert, 18 January 1947.

(themselves) have changed” and they “have not the time to work in the same way as before.”⁴⁵ He means that the goals have changed and the aim of CIAM is now to seek the support of authorities and the bodies with political power in the decision making and to leave public support in the background. Moreover, he emphasizes that the CIAM as an organization is based on individuals and suggested the selection of limited people taking part in the congresses⁴⁶ instead of mass participation of the whole supporters of modern principles, a fact that, in his opinion, is confirming the CIAM policies and guarantees their continuation.

A draft note sent by Le Corbusier to Sert in May 1946 also follows the same reasoning. After long years of efforts in gaining members and increasing the strength and the effect of Modern Architecture, it is time to re-scale the memberships and to invest in a very well-organized steering committee, which will guide the members rather than continuing to invest in mass member participation. Le Corbusier notes that “CIAM’s reputation is so big that memberships are offered everywhere,”⁴⁷ a fact that changes the congresses founding core, as “CIAM 1928 will transform,”⁴⁸ moving the General Assembly into being “a monster.”⁴⁹ He points out the significance of this transformation, suggesting that the next CIAM congress should discuss this fundamental topic.

The possibility of a reinstatement of the congress and the future policies were indeed discussed in May 1946, in the preparatory committees. It is of great importance that an enlargement of the CIAM circle was suggested, targeting technicians and advisors with links to the governments to be part of the congresses to facilitate the work of reconstruction — a proposition that Le Corbusier opposed.⁵⁰ Moreover, it is stated that the local groups “should establish contacts and active participation in the activities of civic organizations, labor unions and other groups interested in the problems of community development,”⁵¹ thus increasing the influence of the CIAM work, but outside the CIAM working group.

These suggestions seem to have reached out to the final CIAM 6 gathering. CIAM 6 ultimately takes place in Bridgewater, from September 7 to 15, 1947, under the main thematic direction of *Reaffirmation of the aims of CIAM*. Its development is divided into two parts: the first part concerned the reports of the groups and their discussion, while the second part concerned the preparation for the next 7th congress.⁵² The session started with a CIRPAC meeting and then opened up to the Assembly. It was aimed that the first five days were to be devoted to the 6th meeting and the last four days to the next one. It is worth mentioning that the sessions concerning the resolution reports and the reorganization of the CIAM meetings were private, meaning they were only open to the relevant commissions and not to all of the participants. The committees discussed their thematic directions in sessions and outlined the results in reports, submitted to the General Assembly. The report of the committee on the re-organization of the CIAM is structured in the following parts; (a) *an introduction*, (b) *the fundamental structure*, (c) *a general method of working*, (d) *a schedule* and (e) *the transition*. As far as the structure is concerned (part b), the groups were divided into three subgroups — the active members, the participating ones and the associated members,⁵³ according to their discipline. As such, architects and town planners belonged to the active group, whereas artists, sociologists, engineers, etc. were seen as participating and supportive members, and the associated ones as individuals contributing to increasing the impact of CIAM. The report also suggests that CIAM

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., 3.

47 Ibid., B005, 56. Letter from Le Corbusier to J.L. Sert, 3 May 1947.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., B004, 8. In the draft copy, Le Corbusier notes with big red letters ‘non!’ next to the enlargement proposal.

51 Ibid., 9.

52 Ibid., 47.

53 Ibid., 50.

should consist of the local groups, the General Assembly, the Working Congress and a Council, at the same time, in order “to make such changes workable.”⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the committee’s report had undergone some changes in the final revision of the CIAM statute. The overall structure was finally divided into two distinct groups: the local CIAM groups and the CIAM members.⁵⁵ The members’ group consisted of “individuals who contribute to the realization of the CIAM aims,”⁵⁶ elected by the Working Congress. As such, personalities with influence in politics and/or the arts could be considered as members and were working closely with the inner circle of the CIAM in promoting the growth of modern architecture. In the case of the local groups, things were quite more complicated. First, a local group could have members of any nationality, considering themselves committed to the ‘quality’ and ‘spirit’ of modern architecture and were willing to accept the general CIAM statutes, as established in La Sarraz and modified in Bridgewater. Moreover, the formed groups could be considered as having an interdisciplinary approach, as the associated members could also join (different from the active members, i.e., architects and planners). Towards the same direction, the participating members also broadened the interdisciplinary composition of the groups, as artists, lawyers, biologists and economists could represent their professions and work under the conceptual umbrella of CIAM.

Concluding, the work of the re-organization committee should be seen in accordance with the first committee, whose work concerns the *Restatement of the Aims*. In its report, it is stated that CIAM is bound to the relations established between architects and society, emphasizing the significance of maintaining and enhancing this binding treaty. Confirming the four aims of the La Sarraz declaration, it is clearly stated with capital letters, that the CIAM aim from the 6th meeting and onwards is redefined as follows:

“To work for the creation of a physical environment that will satisfy man’s emotional and material needs and stimulate his spiritual growth.”⁵⁷

At the revised CIAM statute, the “new” aims of the congresses⁵⁸ are identical to those of the La Sarraz declaration and differ only in the addition of *town planning* alongside *architecture*. Nevertheless, the overall structure has undergone remarkable changes, mostly regarding the activities of the members. It is therefore suggested that the broad circle of CIAM members undertake the implementation of modern architecture and urban planning, emphasizing the aesthetic approach of architecture, thus improving the built environment and increasing the quality of life. On the other hand, the old La Sarraz members form the inner CIAM circle, a leading group managing the CIAM strategy to promote the relations between the organization and the political realm. In this way, a rather complex structure is proposed and voted in the 6th CIAM, testifying perhaps to a difficulty in reaching a common agreement, satisfying all parties involved. The fragile balance between the inner and broad CIAM circle, the old protagonists and the younger generation is now evident and frames the end of the CIAMs.

54 Ibid., 51.

55 Ibid., 25.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 20.

58 The new aims of CIAM are described as follows:

A. *Formulation of the problems of contemporary architecture and town planning*

B. *Representation of the ideas of modern architecture and town planning*

C. *Encouragement of the adoption of those ideas in technical, economic and social activities*

D. *Encouragement of the realization of these ideas*

(These aims may be summarized as: *the satisfaction of the spiritual and material needs of man by the creation of an environment that conforms with the social, scientific, ethical and aesthetic concepts of architecture and town planning.*

To foster individual and development integrated with the life of the community, and harmony between the works of man and his natural surroundings). Harvard B004, 25. *CIAM Statutes, Revised in accordance with the decisions of the sixth congress taken at Bridgewater, England, 13/9/1947.*

Conclusions

The historical reading of the 6th meeting of the International Congresses of Modern Architecture, aimed at critically interpreting the reaction of the most successful architectural organization during a period of housing crisis. CIAM emerged out of a paradigm shift in the technological and productive chain and a changing social structure at the beginning of the 20th century, while it developed remarkably its activities during the interwar period and eventually implemented its theories during the postwar period. Therefore, CIAM can act as a relevant case study nowadays, as the changing contexts become the norm in the light of the post-pandemic future, in between housing, work and mobility shifts to new technological and social realities.

Despite CIAM's mythical legacy, modern historiography reveals an organization with communication problems, especially as far as political disagreements and age gaps are concerned. The first ones, particularly observed during the 4th CIAM, continued to increase, leading to distinct sub-groups which frequently challenged the meetings' resolutions. CIAM 6 is even more indicative of the generation gap that developed: the older group aimed at implementing their interwar ideas, while the younger aim in forming their ideas and strategies to be implemented during the postwar housing opportunity. A close look at the CIAM archives clearly shows the distinct motives that form a vague theoretical framework and do not allow for a clear expression of the thematic directions, of the issues to be discussed, and of the resolutions to be published.

The legendary CIAMs tried to cope with these problems by cultivating relationships with the decision-making authorities and bodies, assuming that a government agenda for promoting social welfare will ultimately be adopted. It seems that it was a correct choice, given the final course of events. The political decision on rebuilding the cities upon modern principles allowed modern architects to support their theoretical approach and implement their ideas, thus helping modern architecture and urban planning to take the lead in the postwar era, overcoming the inner disagreements and difficulties. Nevertheless, when the postwar construction boom was declining and the old CIAM generation was getting even older, the youngsters finally took the lead. The CIAM crisis and ending in 1959 opened the path of postmodernity, when the question of dwelling was again dominating the discussions.

CIAM initially started as a union of the central European avant-garde, and after World War Two quickly evolved into a global organization. World War Two acted as a historical accelerator at a social, political, and humanitarian level; it led to the destruction of parts of cities or even entire cities and at the same time the need to design the new ones. This unexpected turn of events brought CIAM to the forefront of history. In postwar recovery, modern architecture had already become the mainstream academia, and from 1945 onwards, cities explored the possibility of implementing modern theories in practice. Yet, the newfound popularity of the movement's ideas and the subsequent entry of more and more members in the CIAM affected the already difficult management of its structure and even led to opportunistic approaches. CIAM 6 marked the peak of the modernist influence, as well as a change of tide towards its final ending.

The CIAM ending in 1959 paved the way for a new breed of architects and urbanists who proposed new post-modern, post-CIAM, critical paths. The controversy over housing after the CIAM dissolution opened a new chapter in the 20th century architecture and urban planning theory, led to the revision of the modern principles, and a different kind of professional mobilization. It is therefore important to consider the end of CIAM as significant in the continuation of architectural thinking in both theory and practice.

Taking into consideration that crises often act as an accelerator of developments and that the post Covid-19 era will mark the vertical rise in the use of technological progress in our daily routine, architecture has the potential to evolve, coming up with new ideas in the next several years. Hopefully, the concurrent housing and urban crisis due to the Covid-19 dramatic experience will pave the way for a new start in the architectural field of research as well, thus again placing the architectural profession at the core of housing research.

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