

HOUSING, NATIONALISM AND SOCIAL CONTROL: THE FIRST YEARS OF THE PORTUGUESE *ESTADO NOVO*'S AFFORDABLE HOUSES PROGRAMME¹

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In 1933, the dictatorial regime imposed in Portugal after the coup of May 1926² lost its military status. The government, since 1932 headed by Oliveira Salazar,³ wrote a new constitution, which was published in April 1933, and in the following months prepared a set of legislative orders that became the fundamental decrees of the new corporative state, the *Estado Novo* (New State). The drafts of those decrees were published in the newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, to allow the several social forces to react and propose changes to the legislation before it became official.⁴ One of those decrees established the principles of the construction of affordable houses by corporative or public institutions, with the support of the State. The Affordable Houses Programme was, from the start of the *Estado Novo* (New State), seen by the government as a central initiative in the framing of a new social order, and built over sixteen thousand houses across the country until the end of the regime in 1974.

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² See José Mattoso, *História de Portugal – Vol. VII – O Estado Novo (1926-1974)*, 1994.

³ António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970) was Minister for Finance (1926, 1928-40) and President of the Ministers' Council (from 1932 to 1968).

⁴ *Diário de Notícias* 24. 249-24. 254, 5-10 August 1933.



Figure 1. Archts. Raul Lino and Joaquim Madureira, *Affordable Houses Neighbourhood of Condominhas*, Porto, 1934-36. The archetypes of the small Portuguese house and of the rural village are the basis to the neighbourhood design. (Source: Sistema de Informação do Património Arquitectónico, <http://www.monumentos.pt/>)

Salazar himself highlighted the main purposes of the programme in March 1933, in a speech about the economical principles of the new constitution, placing family and private property in the centre of a reinvented society. For Salazar, the individual house, the family's own house, was the only solution for "life's intimacy".⁵ Even before the decrees were finalised, a speech by the newly vested Undersecretary for Corporations and Social Welfare, Pedro Teotónio Pereira,⁶ listed the housing issue as one of the priorities of the government: "as much as possibilities allow it, it will be sought to fill with sun, air and light the home of those who work".⁷ Housing had already been a concern for the

⁵ António de Oliveira Salazar, "Conceitos Económicos da Nova Constituição", in *Discursos*, Vol. I, 1961.

⁶ Pedro Teotónio Pereira (1902-1972) was Undersecretary for Corporations and Social Welfare (1933-36), Minister for Commerce and Industry (1936-37) and Minister for the Presidency (1958-61), and was the Portuguese Ambassador in Madrid, London and Washington. He is considered one of the main developers of the corporative organisation of the *Estado Novo*.

⁷ Pedro Teotónio Pereira, "Corporações e Previdência Social: Primeiros Aspectos", in *A Batalha do Futuro: Organização Corporativa*, Livraria Clássica Editora, Lisbon (1937), 62.

previous regime, which had launched a similar initiative in 1918, and the *Estado Novo* used that legislation as reference for the development of its own housing programme. Although actual initiatives of housing construction only started in Portugal then in 1918, the discussion on the subject started as early as 1884, still under a monarchy, when a proposal for a law was presented to the chamber of deputies by Augusto Fuschini (1843-1911) that intended to promote the construction of houses for the poor. That discussion restarted in 1914, already under a republic (after the coup of 1910 that deposed the king), but it was only in 1918 that the government was able to start building.

Of the three neighbourhoods that were begun by the First Republic – the republican regime that would be substituted by the military dictatorship in 1926 - not even one was completed. The initiative was halted in 1922 and, after attempts to sell the houses at the end of the decade, the dictatorial regime took control of the construction, finished it and presented them as works of the new regime – already stating how the National Revolution had come to solve the problems that the previous regime was not able to solve.⁸

The housing initiative of the First Republic was structured according to principles that would serve as bases for the Affordable Houses programme. For the *Estado Novo* there was, however, a need to make its power noticeable in the new communities to be created. The set of decrees that became official on 23 September 1933, is no coincidence as they all relate to the organisation of work forces within the new corporative logic.⁹ The Affordable Houses decree established a complex bureaucratic network of institutions that would be

⁸ For more information on those neighbourhoods and their appropriation for propaganda purposes, see Maria Júlia Ferreira, “O Bairro Social do Arco do Cego: uma aldeia dentro da cidade de Lisboa,” 1994 in *Análise Social*, vol. XXXIX (127), 1994, 697-709 and Maria da Conceição Tiago, “O Bairro Social da Ajuda-Boa Hora: Um projecto da República Nova e uma realização do *Estado Novo* 1918-1935”, Master Thesis in Contemporary Social History, Instituto Superior do Trabalho e da Empresa, Lisbon 1997.

⁹ Decrees 23.048, 23.049, 23.050, 23.051 and 23.052, *Diário do Governo*, Série I, no. 217/33. The decrees 23.048 to 23.052 establish, respectively, the general laws of work – *Estatuto do Trabalho Nacional*, the guilds of employers – *Grêmios*, the Unions of Workers – *Sindicatos Nacionais*, the organisation of rural and agricultural workers – *Casas do Povo* – and a programme to build houses for public employees or unionised workers – *Casas Económicas*, or as we will call them, Affordable Houses.

responsible for the programme. The promoter would be the government itself, with the support of or supporting initiatives by city councils or corporative institutions (such as the Guilds or Unions)¹⁰, and for each group of houses the cost was to be divided in half by the government and the respective institution. The projects were designed by the SCE¹¹, a section of the national entity in charge of public buildings and monuments, DGEMN.¹² The financial management was centred on the FCE¹³, a fund created at and managed by the public bank, and the houses were distributed by the RCE¹⁴, a section of the INTP¹⁵, the institute that was also created in 1933 to regulate work relations. The SCE reported to the Ministry of Public Works and Communications, which had to approve every project, and the FCE and RCE reported to the Undersecretary for Corporations and Welfare. It is interesting that, through this organisation, several national powers – the administrative, the economical and the *de facto* legislative power, the cabinet of Salazar – influenced the development of the Affordable Houses Programme. What could be seen as an overlapping set of responsibilities was, in fact, a steep bureaucratic pyramid that was headed by Oliveira Salazar, who had a say in almost every aspect of the programme's organisation.

The decree created two types of houses, A and B, to be distributed according to the income of each family, and each type had three versions, with varying sizes according to the number of children in each household. Although the decree established a minimum number of 25 houses and a maximum of 100 per neighbourhood, those limits were never taken into account in the development of the programme. The Affordable Houses decree, as many laws created by the *Estado Novo*, is as important for what it says as for what it implies.

¹⁰ The Portuguese corporative state had many similarities with the Italian fascist structure, particularly in the bureaucratic organisation of work forces. The Portuguese “Estatuto do Trabalho Nacional” (National Work Statute) was coincidental in many points with the Italian “Carta del Lavoro”.

¹¹ Secção das Casas Económicas (Affordable Houses Section).

¹² Direcção-Geral dos Edifícios e Monumentos Nacionais (General Directorate for National Buildings and Monuments).

¹³ Fundo das Casas Económicas (Affordable Houses Fund).

¹⁴ Repartição das Casas Económicas (Affordable Houses Department).

¹⁵ Instituto Nacional do Trabalho e da Previdência (National Institute for Work and Welfare).

Ownership and Behaviour

By focusing the Affordable Houses programme on a principle of ‘resoluble’ property - in which a monthly rent included the payment of the house instalments and life and fire insurance - the regime was putting in writing some of its fundamental principles. The term ‘resoluble’ is self-explanatory: the property is permitted by the state, under some conditions that, if not strictly followed, could imply the loss of that property, and in several cases it did. This notion of impending threat was an instrument to which the Portuguese regime resorted not only with the Affordable Houses programme, but also can be seen as an example of social control.

Fernando Rosas¹⁶ has recently described the importance of this “preventive violence” as a kind of “silent” pressure which implied the constant surveillance of behaviours. This surveillance was developed by several branches of the regime either through the censorship of information or through the reorganisation of police forces. But what is perhaps more important to the analysis of the Affordable Houses Programme is a secondary kind of preventive violence, one that was not so direct in its actions and yet was able to develop some degree of omnipresence. Rosas notes the role of several institutions “that had as a mission, in the family, in the school, in the workplace (...) to supervise daily life and to inculcate”¹⁷ the new social values that recovered traditional roles for the man and the woman, and their obligation to raise a family accordingly.

The Affordable Houses decree also required the institution of a ‘homestead’ principle (*casal de família*), using a law from 1920¹⁸ aimed mainly at protecting farmers’ properties. This law determined that the family house could not be used as collateral to pay potential debts, and suggested a concern for the stability of the family, seen by the regime as the basis of society.

This is a particular aspect of the programme that must be underlined. The

¹⁶ Fernando Rosas, *Salazar e o Poder: A Arte de Saber Durar*, Tinta da China, Lisbon 2012.

¹⁷ Rosas, *Salazar e o Poder...*, 199.

¹⁸ Decree 7.033, in *Diário do Governo*, I Série, no. 298, 16 October 1920, 1356-1358.

importance of keeping the house is a reflection not only of political, but also economical beliefs, and in a regime built by scholars (such as the economist Salazar and the mathematician Teotónio Pereira) those two aspects are intertwined and must be read together. The facilitation of private property was certainly read as a strong opposition to the collectivisation trends that had been felt in Europe in the previous years; in a way, it is the antithesis of the revolution¹⁹ that the regime saw as its own hypothetical nemesis. The political war on communism is one of the constants of the Portuguese regime's evolution and one that dictates not only the several periods of hardening of the political persecutions and State laws, but also the evolution of the foreign affairs of the State. It was, in fact, the only thing that could allow for somewhat stable relations between the regime and both Nazism in the 1930s and the USA in the 1950s. Teotonio Pereira was a key figure in this management, serving as the Portuguese ambassador in particularly critical contexts – at the start of Franco's regime in Spain from 1937 to the end of the Second World War and in Washington both from 1947 to 1950 in the early years of the Cold War, and from 1961 to 1963 during John F. Kennedy's presidency. So, a refusal of collectivisation is masked as a social intervention as the regime announced the housing programme as being destined for the very poor.

When the Affordable Houses decree's draft was published in *Diário de Notícias*, that priority was readily advertised: “the first experience to be carried out under this decree intends mostly, as it would be logical to suppose, to favour the working class, not just devoid of comfort, but of normal living conditions”.²⁰ However, the decree did not mention this goal and in the list of selection criteria, salary came in fifth place. Not only were the priorities the stability of the applicants' jobs and their moral and professional behaviour but the monthly

¹⁹ Mark Swenarton has described the English case of a similar view of investment in housing as a preventive measure. See “An insurance against revolution”, in Mark Swenarton, *Building the New Jerusalem*, Watford 2008, 41-57.

²⁰ *Diário de Notícias*, no. 24.248, 5 August 1933, 6.

rents established were too high for most of the working class. The target seems to be an educated middle class, of higher income, that the regime had to keep satisfied.

When the bureaucratic network that was to be responsible for the Affordable Houses Programme was set, it was time to create the house that fitted the programme and the beliefs of the regime. This implied the selection of an image for the programme, which had to be a reflection of how the regime saw itself.

Nationalism and Industrialism

The creation of the State image of the Estado Novo revolves in the first years of the regime around one name, Antonio Ferro.²¹ He was a part of the first generation of modernist Portuguese artists and developed a system of propaganda for popular consumption that used historical figures and anecdotes as well as popular beliefs and traditions and masked under a modern approach to graphical design. These references were shared by the most conservative factions of the regime. Timid initiatives of an industrialist faction were not able to unsettle the strength of a traditionalist belief in a rural mythology as the basis of society. This belief took over the regime's propaganda in the 1930s and was a central factor in the delays that kept Portuguese society, and particularly its industrial sector, largely stagnant during that decade.

Similar to other authoritarian regimes of the time, the Portuguese dictatorship resorted to reinforcing nationalist beliefs, which was achieved by highlighting simultaneously two dimensions of Portuguese history. Those parallel dimensions were represented by an elite – be it military, in a retelling of the historical battles, or governmental, in the person of the Portuguese kings and princes – and by the people, seen as following a stable, quasi-eternal structure that had to be

²¹ António Ferro (1895-1956) was the Director of the *Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional* (Secretariat for National Propaganda) from its creation in 1933 to 1949. The Secretariat was renamed *Secretariado Nacional da Informação* (National Secretariat for Information) in 1945 when it absorbed the censorship services for publications and spectacles. See Jorge Ramos do Ó, *Os Anos de Ferro*, Lisboa 1999.



Figure 2. Arch. Jorge Segurado, *Portuguese World Exhibition – Popular Villages Section*, 1940. (Source: Biblioteca de Arte, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/biblarde/>)

protected from sudden transformations for which it would not be prepared. These parallel ideals formed the two subjects of the celebration of the regime's mythical year of 1940, when combining anniversaries celebrating the crowning of the first king of Portugal, Afonso Henriques, in 1140 and the independence from Spanish rule in 1640. The Portuguese World Exhibition was one of the great works of the regime's propaganda and was supported by those two realities. On the one hand, the stability and homogeneity of popular life, represented in the Popular Villages Section designed by architect Jorge Segurado, on the other hand, the work of the chosen elite that ruled the country through its epic past, represented in temporary buildings with such apt names as the Honour Pavilion, Independence Pavilion, Formation and Conquest Pavilion, etc. Luis Cunha²² has used the Portuguese World Exhibition, as well as the "Most

²² Luís Cunha, *A Nação nas Malhas da Sua Identidade*, Porto 2001.

Portuguese Village” Competition, also in 1940, and the Colonial Exhibition of 1934 to analyze the construction of a State image, noting also how the Portuguese World Exhibition was a reflection of two confronting views inside the regime, of modernity versus tradition.

Daniel Melo²³ has also noted the formation by the regime of a common identity in which popular culture is constructed by resorting to historical references. Traditional building techniques were also seen as a historical reference, as was perceptible in the Popular Villages Section, simulating a bucolic rural life, not at all coincidental to the difficult life of the uneducated and poor agricultural populations.

This opposition between the need for an update of the Portuguese industry is paralleled by a devotion to the belief that the general population should be kept distant from modernisation. That distance would create a stagnant and therefore quiet crowd, ideologically pure and uninterested in the politics that were to be managed by an intellectually superior caste. The rural setting was the model, but there was a faction of the regime that did not see things the same way. Using the “Most Portuguese Village” Competition as an example, in 1945 Ferreira Dias²⁴ criticised the glorification of backwardness that the competition represented by selecting the fairly isolated village of Monsanto²⁵.

Another member of the industrialist faction of the regime was José Araújo Correia, who was a Minister for Commerce and Communications in the military dictatorship’s cabinet of Vicente de Freitas in 1928, the first to include Salazar as Minister for Finances and Duarte Pacheco as Minister for National Instruction. From 1929 to 1964 Correia was an administrator of CGDP in charge of the analysis of the state’s yearly finances for more than two decades. He

²³ Daniel Melo, *Salazarismo e Cultura Popular (1933-1958)*, Lisbon 2001.

²⁴ José Ferreira Dias (1900-1966) was openly critical of the traditionalist propaganda of the first years of the regime. He was an Undersecretary for Commerce and Industry (1940-1944) and Minister of Economics (1958-62).

²⁵ Melo, *Salazarismo*, 223-224.

is considered to be one of the pioneers of industrialist beliefs within the regime²⁶ and proposed in 1935 a law to improve the education of rural populations. That proposal - in which Daniel Melo has noted the confusion between “popular culture”, the expression that was used in the title, and “rural culture” - and his role in the first steps of the Affordable Houses Programme, are symbols of the contradictory views inside the regime that, as we shall see, would eventually force a transformation within the state that would be reflected in the Programme.

Study Missions and National Solution

In August 1934, Araújo Correia was commissioned to visit Germany, Austria and Hungary to study methods currently in use in affordable housing. From very early on, the dictatorial regime developed a practice of sending emissaries - mainly architects and engineers - to different parts of Europe on missions to study the various solutions used in the design of public buildings. It is curious that the selection of the destinations was not, in most cases, related either to the proximity between political regimes, or to similar conditions in which the buildings were created. It is, instead, a very wide selection of locations. For example, Porfirio Pardal Monteiro (1897-1957) visited Spain, France, Belgium, Holland and Italy to study current developments in maritime station design, as he was developing the projects for the stations of Alcântara and Conde d’Óbidos in Lisbon, and Guilherme Rebelo de Andrade (1891-1969) visited Spain, France, Belgium and Holland to study the design of theatres and museums. It must be stressed that Pardal Monteiro, a key figure in the construction of a state image in the *Estado Novo*, had visited Russia in 1932 as the Portuguese correspondent of *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* and would visit Italy in 1937, with

²⁶ Mattoso, *História de Portugal*, 265-266.

Duarte Pacheco²⁷ to see the new university buildings in Rome.²⁸

Although at the time of Araújo Correia's visit, those countries were under authoritarian rule, both Germany and Austria had been, until very recently, socialist regimes, and in both cases housing had been a subject of large investment. Arriving only close to one year after those regimes had been deposed, Araújo Correia had nothing to see but the results of socialist housing policies. In December of that same year, the assistant director of the SCE, Francisco Almeida Garrett, was in Italy for nearly a month to visit affordable housing examples – in this case, the products of a stabilised authoritarian regime with close similarities to the *Estado Novo*.

What must be stressed is that, when preparing and developing the Affordable Houses programme, the Portuguese regime had knowledge of the latest developments in housing and was certainly aware of the debates it had stirred up across Europe in the previous decade. The choice for the single-family house was informed and a reflection of the regime's core beliefs; Jácome de Castro,²⁹ head of the SCE, said it best in a 1935 lecture, stating that it seemed “complicated, that a machine, as some want it so strongly to be, could satisfy such demands”³⁰ as those of an Affordable House.

That rural mythology is reflected in the choice for the independent house with a kitchen garden that was the core of the Affordable Houses Programme. The most conservative wing of the regime's nationalism resorted to the model of the rural village, the small house and the small yard where the family could grow its own food. The independent house, or at least the semi-detached house, was a

²⁷ Duarte Pacheco (1900-1943) was Minister for National Instruction (1928) and Minister for Public Works and Communications (1928-36 and 1938-43) and Mayor of Lisbon (1938-43).

²⁸ See João Pardal Monteiro, *Para o Projecto Global - Nove Décadas de Obra: Arte, Design e Técnica na Arquitectura do atelier Pardal Monteiro*, PhD Dissertation on Design, Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, 2012.

²⁹ Fernando Galvão Jácome de Castro (1892-1964) was a Civil Engineer, chief engineer of the SCE and member of the Public Works General Council of DGEMN.

³⁰ Eng. Jácome Castro, “Bairros Económicos”, 26 January 1935, in *Problemas de Urbanização: Conferências Realizadas no Salão Nobre dos Paços do Concelho*, Câmara Municipal, Lisbon 1936.

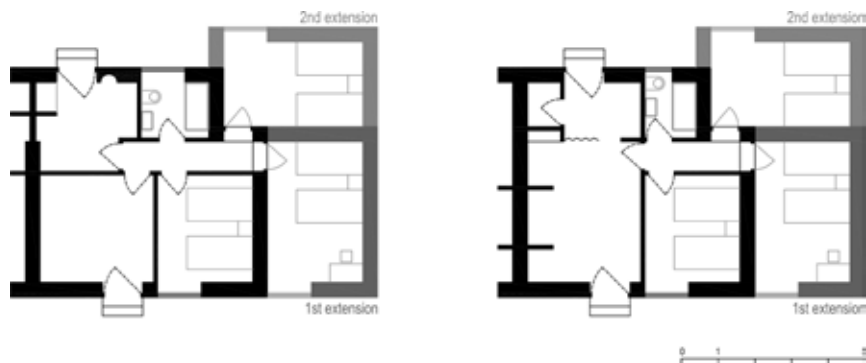


Figure 3. *Affordable Houses “City Type” and “Rural Type”*, developed by Arch. Raul Lino in 1934

metaphor for the priority of family over community and of private over public. The house inevitably had to be Portuguese, even if there was not a consensus on what that meant.

The debate on the Portuguese House starts in the transition from the 19th to the 20th century³¹ and is in tune with similar contemporary discussions born of a Romantic view of nationalism and building tradition. In the Portuguese case, one name stands out, that of Raul Lino³² as a theoretical leader in that debate, not so much because of his architectural production as for his bibliographical production, as he wrote several books³³ that were, somewhat to his dismay, frequently seen as catalogues of traditional buildings’ elements to be used uncritically.

³¹ Rui Jorge Garcia Ramos, Eliseu Gonçalves and Sérgio Dias Silva, “From the Late 19th Century House Question to Social Housing Programs in the 30s: the Nationalist Regulation of the Picturesque in Portugal”, *DOCOMOMO Journal* 51, 60-67.

³² On Raul Lino (1879-1974), see Pedro Vieira de Almeida, “Raul Lino, Arquitecto Moderno,” in *Raul Lino: Exposição Retrospectiva da Sua Obra*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon 1970.

³³ *A Casa Portuguesa* (1929), *Casas Portuguesas* (1933) and *L'évolution de l'architecture domestique au Portugal* (1937).

The First Affordable Houses

In 1934, Jácome de Castro proposed to Duarte Pacheco, Minister for Public Works and Communications since 1932, the name of Raul Lino, stating specifically that Lino was considered an expert on the subject of the Portuguese House. This was, naturally, not a casual choice. Lino was seen as an intellectual, educated abroad in romantic Germany, and his commissions by the state at the time included the refurbishment of national palaces, one of the first investments of the Portuguese dictatorship in the forging of a nationalist 'self-respect'. Before, in 1932, Duarte Pacheco had asked Porfirio Pardal Monteiro to develop a type of house to serve as a/the model for the government's initiative. A letter from Pardal Monteiro to Duarte Pacheco reveals that study's goal, proving the principles of the programme were established long before the decree was published: "a kind of cheap dwelling, independent home, which could even, through conditions to be established, become the tenant's own property".³⁴ Pardal Monteiro had been the regime's choice to establish an official image of the state and by 1934 he had already completed the designs for the *Instituto Nacional de Estatística* (National Institute for Statistics) and the *Instituto Superior Técnico* (National Technical Institute, a public college mainly focused on engineering). When it was time to create an image for the Affordable Houses programme, the modernist practice of Pardal Monteiro was perhaps not what the regime was hoping for, and it was Lino's work, or at least a superficial reading of it, that matched the regime's vision.

Lino developed an expandable house, able to be enlarged if the family's needs so required. The basic model was a single-floor house that included the minimal spaces for a small family. The main entrance was through a large family room for the family to get together in during meals. This area was connected, in the 'City Type', to a small corridor that granted access to a small kitchen, one full

³⁴ Porfirio Pardal Monteiro, "Carta a Duarte Pacheco sobre Casas Económicas," in Monteiro, *Para o Projecto Global*, vol.2, (1932), 28-30.



Figure 4. Arch. Joaquim Madureira, *Affordable Houses Neighbourhood of Braga*, 1935-39. The model developed by Raul Lino was repeated in neighbourhoods across the country until the end of 1930s. (Source: Sistema de Informação do Património Arquitectónico, <http://www.monumentos.pt/>)

bathroom and one room. This model could be enlarged by the construction of two more rooms according to the number of children in the family.

This example was repeated in the first neighbourhoods through all the continental territory, either in Vila Viçosa or Bragança. It had, however, small variations according to its location. Lino developed a ‘City Type’ and a ‘Rural Type’, and the difference was in the size of the family room, which in the rural type was slightly bigger and had a large fireplace. Following a similar logic, the neighbourhood of Olhão was the only one where there was not a pitched roof but a terrace, not only mimicking the traditional building techniques of the Portuguese South, but also adapting to a mass construction plan; a pragmatic use of the way the locals knew how to build.

When presenting the Affordable Houses Programme in lectures across Brazil, Lino quoted Salazar and his speech of 1933 that we have mentioned before. The “individualist character” of the Portuguese people was, to Lino as to the regime,

enough for them to decline collective housing.

When Lino describes the process of designing the Affordable House, he notes the steps taken to allow, as much as possible, for the standardisation of construction elements in order to reduce construction costs. Simultaneously, he notes the studies developed to reduce the areas to a comfortable minimum. These studies are perfectly in line with the development of modern housing in the previous decade, even if Lino himself would not acknowledge it. When describing the exterior – where the likely work of Lino is more noticeable – he states that “everything possible was done to disguise the indispensable standardisation”, as the worker arriving home “should certainly cherish not seeing around him industrial aspects that remind him of the mechanical processes and taylorism he must be sick of”.³⁵ As a result, the Affordable House resorts to the archetypes – the pitched roof, the little porch and the small window.

Even with those archetypes, the Affordable House design has certainly more elements of modernity in it than the programme’s developers would be able to publicise. It is not clear if the plan is the result of Raul Lino’s work or the product the first study by Pardal Monteiro. The latter is apparently more likely, but nonetheless this is a design that works around an ideology to create a balanced plan.

The study of minimum spaces and the planning of future expansions are inevitably paralleled to the debate on the standardisation of construction techniques and reduction of the housing areas to a functional minimum that Karel Teige has described.³⁶

This constant contradiction between modern design and an obsession with an image that could be understood by the general population as truly Portuguese

³⁵ Rui Jorge Garcia Ramos and Marta Rocha, Reconstruction of the lecture “Casas Económicas” given by Raul Lino at Instituto de Engenharia de S. Paulo, Brasil, in June 1935, Marta Rocha Archive [digital document], 2011.

³⁶ Karel Teige, *The Minimum Dwelling*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2002 (originally 1932); see also Christine Collins and Mark Swenarton, “CIAM, Teige and the *Existenzminimum*,” in Swenarton, *Building the New Jerusalem*, 85-93.

is clearly noticeable in the Affordable Houses Programme as in much of the architecture sponsored by the state during the dictatorship.

Stagnation and Sufferance

As we have seen, if the first intention of the programme was to build houses for those who could not afford one, that intention was swiftly bent as the Affordable Houses decree itself prioritised job stability and moral behaviour. In 1934, when the programme was barely starting, an architectural competition was prepared, but not launched, to create a large neighbourhood of 1050 houses in a part of Lisbon that corresponds roughly to the area that was, more than a decade later, subject to Faria da Costa's plan of Alvalade. The competition brief³⁷ is a statement on the regime's view of the Affordable House as an instrument, and particularly of the reflection of ideology in architectural practice.

The brief states the importance of the backyard as a kitchen garden to “stop the waste of free time from work in places of pernicious activities for intellectual life”. Not that intellect was something to be developed, as the “new inhabitant [would] be saved from the effort of thinking where the domestic activities will take place”. The way of life would be imposed on the inhabitant, stressing the educational role of the house. That educational role had, inevitably, a social charge. We have stated that the difference between the rural type and the urban type was related to the way the main room was to be used, that is, the way the family lives. This implied clearly a stagnation of a way of life: to each its place in society, and each should accept the sufferance his or her place in society demanded.

There is a constant contradiction in the development of the Programme that is no stranger to the contradiction in the distribution of the houses. One must wonder if the full bathroom and the large family room implied, as advertised,

³⁷ *Realização de Concurso para o Anteprojecto de um Bairro de Casas Económicas do tipo de Cidade Jardim, a construir em Lisboa pela Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Crédito e Previdência*, Oliveira Salazar Archive – Torre do Tombo, PT/TT/AOS/D-G/2/1/8.

the educational role of the house for the less educated classes - supposedly the target of the programme – or if they existed, instead, because the growing middle-class would not accept less than those “luxuries”, as those who criticised the programme called them.

It is clear, however, that for at least a sector of the state responsible for the Programme’s development, the educational and moral factors were fundamental elements of the design of the Affordable Houses. The regime feels the need to create the post of Neighbourhood Controller (*Fiscal*), to serve as a representative of the regime inside the community to control the behaviour of the other inhabitants. The Affordable Houses neighbourhoods would be simultaneously apolitical, as discussing politics was forbidden, and symbols of the regime and of the regime’s beliefs. The social role of the Programme was developed and clearly advertised.

The investment of the State in the propagation of an ideal way of life for the Portuguese people is reflected in the development of several institutions devoted to that propagation, particularly to the stabilisation of the role of the woman in the family and in the house. Those institutions, such as *Obra das Mães para a Educação Nacional* and *Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina*³⁸ saw the woman as the ‘mainstay’ of the family and of family life, and educated young women to become, what they believed, were the perfect housewives. The *Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina*’s bulletin even published an article defending the single-family model as the perfect example for the Portuguese way of life and citing the Affordable Houses Programme as the correct option.³⁹

Commemoration and Transformation

One of the links between the Affordable Houses programme and the regime’s

³⁸ Mothers’ Work for National Education and Portuguese Female Youth; for more on the development of these institutions, see Irene Flunser Pimentel, *A cada um o seu lugar: a política feminina do Estado Novo*, Círculo de Leitores e Temas e Debates, 2011.

³⁹ Francisca de Assis, “Um Problema,” in *Boletim da Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina*, no. 51-52, July-August 1943.



Figure 5. *The Affordable Houses Neighbourhood of Belém behind the Monastery of Jeronimos, Lisbon, 1938-39. Construction works for the Portuguese World Exhibition of 1940 are visible on the bottom right. (Source: Biblioteca de Arte, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/biblarde/>)*

view of it as an ideological instrument and propaganda feature is its presence at times of commemoration. The inaugurations of newly built neighbourhoods were used as celebrations of the regime's work and, particularly in the first decade, presented stages in which prominent figures of the regime could express their beliefs in speeches to be featured in official publications and in major newspapers. Also interesting is the effort made to complete neighbourhoods in time to stage those inaugurations on celebratory dates. The 1934 Lisbon competition brief stated that the large neighbourhood was to be inaugurated on the 28 May 1936, the tenth anniversary of the "national revolution"; and, in 1938, a broad-reaching plan was launched by the government to prepare the celebrations of the already-mentioned regime's mythical year of 1940, and again the importance of the Affordable Houses Programme is noted. In the same year of 1938 a decree by Duarte Pacheco forbade the construction of single-floor houses, basically eliminating the model developed by Raul Lino. That model

represented poverty, it was now believed, and the Affordable Houses Programme had to stand for dignity and quality of life. Again, it is unclear if this was meant as a moral factor or as a way to make the programme more attractive for families of higher incomes. What is clear is that at the end of the 1930s a second stage of the Programme was launched which announced a transformation as neighbourhoods were expanded with two-floor houses (the B type house had practically not been used until then), new neighbourhoods were planned, and new types of Affordable Houses were designed.

The Portuguese dictatorship's investment in housing, not only in the Affordable Houses Programme, but also in other initiatives of similar goals, is commonly recognised, but paradoxically, underrated. The true dimension of that investment is, however, unknown as the information of the several institutions responsible for its development is scattered through more or less organised archives. A broad analysis of this information is necessary in order to develop a real understanding, not only of the importance of the housing problem during the dictatorship, but also, and particularly, of the use of housing as an instrument of political pressure and social control and of the effects of this use in architectural design. By broadening the scope of what architectural history considers relevant, in order to encompass such initiatives that could be, and have been, deemed as minor or inferior architecture, it should be possible to create a reinterpretation of several loose ends of the genealogy of modern architecture in peripheral countries. There is a clear perception that there was, as we have stated, a somewhat deep knowledge of the development of what architectural history has reviewed as the canonical architecture of the Modern Movement, and of its ramifications throughout Europe in the first decades of the 20th century, both by architects and by senior figures of the regime. This knowledge implies causality, not an uninformed option, in the development of publicly funded architectural design. When the Affordable Houses Programme entered its second decade, the world was different, and the regime was forced to adapt. The allies' victory in the Second World War was likely, and, as the Portuguese government realised its

inevitability, the Affordable Houses Programme itself was transformed. In 1943, the decree 33.278⁴⁰ ordered the construction of 4000 new Affordable Houses and established two new types of houses, C and D, of larger areas and for families with bigger incomes. It could not be a coincidence that this decree was published at the height of the difficulties caused by the rationing brought on by the war economy.

We have seen how the investment in housing by the Portuguese regime was sustained in its first years by the same beliefs that structured the regime's propaganda. The ideal of a traditionalist way of life that could be crystallised in planned and controlled communities adjacent to city centres, took form in small neighbourhoods where modern approaches to housing design developed single-floor houses to which traditional building elements were superimposed. As the war drew to a close, the regime tried to adapt to the victory of democratic regimes and to the start of the transformation of the USA as a world power. The investment in Affordable Houses in that moment and the transformations in the Programme, proved simultaneously that not only was it distancing itself more and more from the small salaries of the working class, but that also the new middle-class was going to be a harder class to tame than was initially supposed. The modernising forces within the regime – which had representatives, as we have seen, with connections to the development of the Affordable Houses Programme – took control of the economic policy of the regime and moved it towards a long overdue industrialisation. The world was different, society's demands were different and, by 1943, Nationalism was no longer enough.

⁴⁰ Decree 33.278, in *Diário do Governo*, Série I, no. 256, 24 November 1943, 823-827.