

quake, lower Manhattan residential districts over the past several decades, and East and West Berlin during their reintegration after 1989.

A destroyed city calls forth a space of competition. The question of what will be reconstructed by whom, for whom, and for what purpose gives rise to socially and politically competitive relationships. Land where a now-vanished building once stood is not a pristine empty lot. Whose place is it? What is to be constructed there? What will new construction contribute? This series of questions drives the dynamics of friction. . . .

In any experience of “destruction/construction,” the question arises: how are the myriad views voiced in the “space of competition” to be respected? As long as, and precisely because, the city is incomplete, emphasis on any particular direction calls forth dissent and challenges; that in turn opens up new possibilities. If the presence of large numbers of human beings is a necessary condition of the city, all persons ought to have the right to be heard in the “space of competition.” Tolerance of myriad views is indeed a distinguishing characteristic of the city.¹

Half a century after CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne) drew an ideal image of the city in its Athens Charter, we find a more complex and conflicted urban image emerging.

The Legacy of the 1956 Urban Design Conference

In 1952, I left Japan, a country still bearing the scars of World War II, to study in the United States. Four years later, while in a postgraduate program at Harvard, I attended the First Urban Design Conference. I was able to participate in several of the subsequent annual conferences, but the 1956 conference left the deepest impression on me. One reason was that a heady atmosphere was created by the gathering of leading figures in architecture and urban design such as Richard Neutra. Another was an awareness shared by all that in attending the first conference of its kind in the United States, we were most likely participating in a pivotal event. I was especially impressed by Jane Jacobs’s passionate plea on behalf of endangered neighborhood districts in New York and the energy exuded by the lean Edmund Bacon as he explained the redevelopment plan for Philadelphia.