The myth of the 'maddened crowd': class, culture and space in the revolutionary urbanist project in Barcelona, 1936-7


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This essay was one of a series of essays by leading scholars from Spain, the UK and the USA commissioned by CUP for a volume published ahead of the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish civil war. Ealham's co-edited book in which this essay appears was described in the Journal of Contemporary History as "ten elegant essays that tackle the big themes of Spanish history".

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imprisoned the rebellious, working-class ciutat vella, or old core of medieval-to-18th-century Barcelona - had never escaped them. And because of the explosive industrial growth of their city, conditions were getting worse all the time. He had the urbanist's dream, a blank slate. Cerda thought of each of his blocks as a social cross-section: there would be no "good" and no "bad" end of town, and the cellular plan could be expanded forever. Only a third of each block, about 5,000 square metres, would be built on; the rest would be patio and green space. In the last quarter of the 19th century, the Catholic church felt it was under siege from all those forces of atheism, scientism, disobedience and doubt that its hierarchy rolled together into the portmanteau word "modernism".