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Centre for Urban & Regional Studies
J.G. Smith Building
University of Birmingham
Birmingham
B15 2TT

Tel. 021-472 1301 ext. 2692

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Institute of Terrestrial Ecology
Monks Wood Experimental Station
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE17 2LS

Tel. 048 73 381
Telex 32416

Editor: John Sheail

Editor for the Americas:

Professor Donald A. Krueckeberg
Urban Planning, LSH-Kilmer
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, N.J. 08903

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PLANNING HISTORY BULLETIN

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CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

In the last number of **PHB** I gave the names of those elected to the Executive for the period 1984-86. For a number of reasons the beginning of a new Executive year made it a convenient time to make some new appointments and these are as follows:

- Dr. Michael Hebbert, London School of Economics, will take over from Dr. John Sheail as Editor of the **Bulletin**.
- Dr. Martin Gaskell, Liverpool College of Higher Education, is succeeding Philip Booth as Treasurer.
- Dr. Patricia Garside, University of Salford, becomes Membership Secretary, something which I have been undertaking in the past.
- Dr. Stephen Ward, Oxford Polytechnic, takes over from Tony Sutcliffe as Meetings Secretary.

Could I on your behalf pay tribute to the quite outstanding way **PHG** duties have been undertaken by these colleagues. Under John Sheail the **Bulletin** has gone from strength to strength and a publication of real merit has emerged. Philip Booth has quite admirably husbanded our slender financial reserves in collaboration with our long-suffering Manager of Williams and Glyn's Bank in Sheffield. Tony Sutcliffe's reputation has been made for all time by virtue of the two International Conferences (1977 and 1980) which he splendidly stage-managed. Thank you all.

Michael Hebbert is an elected member of the Executive. The other listed above will be joining the Executive as **ex officio** members. The full complement of the Executive now there reads as follows:

U. K.

G. E. Cherry
**Patricia Garside
**S. M. Gaskell
*G. Gordon
*J. C. Hancock
*M. Hebbert
*R. J. P. Kain
Helen Miller
J. Sheail
A. R. Sutcliffe
**S. V. Ward

Non-U. K.

*A. F. J. Artibise
*M. J. Bannon
Eugene Birch
*B. A. Brownell
*Christiane Collins
J. B. Cullingworth
*D. Hulchanski
*C. Silver
M. Smets
J. B. Smallwood
*S. Watabe

**ex officio

* one year to serve before election

I am pleased to continue as your Chairman.

Also hinted at in the last number of **PHB** was the Treasurer's concern over our deteriorating financial situation. Further thought has been given to this. The £4 annual subscription, augmented by income derived from the mailing of publishers' leaflets and occasional profits from meetings, is

simply insufficient to cope with rising costs of postage (we have a uniform international subscription rate and mailing is by air) and publication (University services can no longer be 'hidden'). The Executive acknowledged that it would be possible to increase the subscription rate by a series of incremental adjustments, but these are messy to handle and the decision has been taken to increase the rate in one fell swoop to a level where stability might be expected for some years. **From January 1985 the annual subscription rate will be £10.00.**

We are acutely aware that this might lead to a slight fall in membership in the short term; none of us likes to pay more for anything. But the three numbers of the **Bulletin** each year will continue and when the new International Journal **Planning Perspectives** is launched in 1986 members of PHG will receive very favourable discount subscription rates. Meanwhile, attendance at Meetings and Conferences, for which charges are made, will continue to cost less for PHG members.

There are reasons for thinking that production and mailing costs for PHB could be less. On the other hand, the format has been an agreeable one and lesser visual appeal would not be to everyone's taste. Members may rest assured that the new team of officers will keep this matter very much under their scrutiny.

There is some important documentation therefore enclosed with this number. **Please attend to your subscription renewal (note the new address) just as soon as you can.** If you can possibly pay by Banker's Order or Standing Giro Account please do so; it helps our administration tremendously. If you can make your payment at the beginning of the calendar year, rather than have to be reminded on occasions later, this is so much more helpful.

1985 dawns: one more year of planning history behind us! Every good seasonal wish.

GORDON CHERRY

MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

The Canadian Urban Experience

The Institute of Urban Studies is hosting the 1985 Canadian Urban Studies Conference in Winnipeg between the 14 and 17 August 1985. The conference, which will include several tours of Manitoba communities, will provide an opportunity for Canadian Urban Studies specialists to communicate their research results, and help promote interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives on Canadian urban topics. Conference themes will include housing and the built environment; social structure and action; government and politics; economic growth and development, and urban education and research. Accommodation will be in the historic Hotel Fort Garry. For further details, contact Alan F.J. Artibise, Director, Institute of Urban Studies, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 2E9 (tel. (204) 786 9211).

Regional Cities: 1890-1950

On 23-24 March 1984 the Department of Geography, University of Strathclyde, hosted a Planning History Conference on the theme, Regional Cities 1890-1950. Gordon Cherry (CURS) set the scene with an introductory paper surveying the development of settlement planning and legislation dealing with the distribution of population. Thereafter, attention turned to eight empirical studies of regional cities. Tony Sutcliffe (Sheffield) analysed the changing fortunes of Birmingham, the 'Midland' metropolis, and Peter Green (Strathclyde) discussed the planning history of the other contender for the title, Second City of the Empire, Glasgow. The opening day concluded with studies of two northern industrial cities, Leeds and Liverpool. Michael Bateman (Portsmouth) examined the role of particular individuals in the development of Leeds, whilst Colin Pooley (Lancaster) considered the history of local-authority housing in Liverpool.

The final day commenced with two papers dealing with contrasting shipbuilding centres, Newcastle and Belfast. Michael Barke (Newcastle) also stressed the importance of individual decision-takers and pressure groups in the development of Newcastle. That theme recurred in the analysis of Belfast by Fred Boal and Stephen Royle, but the overwhelming feature of the latter paper was the evidence of regional distinctiveness in housing policy and developmental history. The second session of the day considered two regional cities which also function as national capitals, Cardiff and Edinburgh. Harold Carter (Aberystwyth) outlined the emergence of Cardiff from the status of coal port to that of national metropolis for Wales, and George Gordon (Strathclyde) emphasised the longevity of Edinburgh's dual roles as regional and national capital. In the concluding session, Mike Cuthbert (Heriot-Watt) presented a paper on the Geddesian reaction to the metropolis and discussed the influence of these views in the evolution of planning thought.

In this brief report it is impossible to summarise the papers and the many fascinating points which emerged in discussion, but Harper and Row are shortly publishing an expanded version of the theme in **Regional Cities of the UK 1890-1980**, edited by George Gordon.

GEORGE GORDON
Department of Geography
University of Strathclyde.

REVIEWS

Stephen Holley (1983) **Washington: Quicker by Quango: The History of Washington New Town 1964-1983**. Publications for Companies, Cutting Hill House, Benington, Stevenage, SG2 8DJ, £9.95. ISBN 0 90492817 9.

This book is written as a laudatory proclamation of the triumphs and achievements of the development corporation and individuals who planned and administered the building of Washington new town. One indication of this is the prominent use of 'pre-publication comments' from James Callaghan, Jimmy Carter, John Silkin, Peter Hall and Brian Redhead (what a bunch of publicists!). The author was General Manager of Washington Development Corporation from 1965 (the year after designation) to 1980.

Holley discusses all the major areas of corporation involvement in the development of the town. There are chapters on employment, industrial promotion, housing, roads, amenities, 'social development and public relations'. None of the chapters is penetrating or critical of its subject matter. At best each reads as an interesting description of the activities of key personalities and of progress in building the town. At worst the chapters are glib and paternalistic.

Nonetheless, the book is a valuable document for what it tells us about the ideas, beliefs and practices of new town planners and administrators. Clearly students of planning history need to tread carefully in accepting at face value publicity statements of this kind. Interesting dimensions to what is sometimes termed 'new town ideology' are revealed. Until reading **Quicker by Quango** I thought that much of the Howard and Reith legacies to new town planning had disappeared by the mid-1950s. Not so - for example, residential areas in Washington are based around a 'village concept'. Holley tells us that, in his view, this system has been an unqualified success:

The size seems right. People can belong to, and build up a village community. In a population of 4-4,500 there are sufficient people to cater for a wide spread of interests. The village is readily identifiable and creates a sense of belonging and a local loyalty.

Clearly architectural and planning determinism survives despite the battering it has received in recent decades.

Exactly why such conceptual threads have been continuously woven into the history of new town planning in Britain has yet to be fully explained. In part the answer may be that many corporation officials were drawn from the colonial service (Holley himself previously worked in district and central

administration in North Borneo). Such backgrounds undoubtedly fostered common values and approaches. Another instance here is the attitude towards involvement by local people who might be 'consulted' through exhibitions and public meetings, while decision-making itself remains with the professional experts.

The book is sub-titled 'The History of Washington New Town'. Yet this status-quo account says little about the Washington experienced by local people in their daily lives. What exactly is it like to live, work or grow up in the town? Similarly, we do not learn how decisions were made within the corporation. It is as though ideas about what to build were conjured out of thin air, mutually agreed, and subsequently implemented to the benefit of all concerned. In a most partisan fashion, **Quicker by Quango** is pro-Washington and pro-new towns. As the title suggests, Holley also lauds the benefits of development corporations in planning and administration. No attempt is made to critically evaluate the uneasy place of such organisations in the relations between central government, private industry, local authorities and local people. What is now needed is a counter-balance to this book which looks at such issues, the experiences of local people, and at the nature of Washington as a mature new town today.

FRED GRAY
University of Sussex.

Martin Wynn (ed.) (1984). **Housing in Europe**. London, Croom Helm, 325 pp., £19.95, ISBN 0 7099 2708 8.

This book, says its editor in the introduction, 'sets out to examine housing problems, policies and products in selected European countries in the post-war era'. The nine countries studied are France, East and West Germany, Great Britain, Spain, Yugoslavia, Denmark, Italy and Portugal. One objective mentioned by several contributors, including the editor in his own essay on Spain, is to assess 'the influence of housing development in shaping the form of urban growth', a theme which should qualify the book for discussion in **Planning History Bulletin**. Others, besides planning historians, will like the sound of such a book. When our own housing system is under attack, it is important to know whether they really do these things better elsewhere. That must have been one reason for the success of two classic pre-war comparative studies by Elizabeth Denby and Catherine Bauer (1)(2). Neither of those books made any apologies for discussing the product in terms of housing standards, built form, and, especially by Bauer, the resulting urban fabric. Unfortunately this expectation, like others aroused by the promise of a comparative study, is hardly rewarded.

The evident failure in editorial direction, which might have achieved a consistency of approach, makes it fair to consider some of the contributions individually. They do succeed in conveying contrasting approaches to housing in the European countries discussed, and sometimes provide valuable and applicable insights.

Ian Haywood, writing on Denmark, places housing in the context of that country's short history and enlightened attitudes to social reform. Denmark's response to the housing crisis which followed the Great War was to subsidise the developing co-operative movement as the natural agent for the supply of social housing. That response was characteristic of the

Scandinavian countries, putting them in the position of possessing virtually no 'state housing', although paying large housing subsidies out of high general taxation. Despite this exposition of possibly the most successful, most humane, and most redistributive record of all the countries studied, Haywood records, in his account of the Danish government's efforts to withdraw from the housing commitments in the face of the financial crises of the 1970s and '80s, an 'increasing failure to meet real needs'. It was all said by Tudor Walters: when times are hard it is necessary to try harder.

In contrast, an essay by J.R. Lewis and A.M. Williams discusses one of the least affluent of European countries, Portugal. It begins with the revolution of 1974, with housing as a real political issue, 'Yes to houses: no to shanties'. It tails off in 1979, in an all too familiar tale of mortgage subsidies, renovation in 'historic centres', and the continuing problem of *clandestinos*, shanties semi-legalised through speculative sale of unserviced land. Thought-provoking, however, is the account of housing under the Salazar dictatorship. Uneven development between depressed rural areas and the urban and coastal districts and disgusting housing conditions in the metropolitan areas of Porto and Lisboa were to be expected, but more interesting are the ways in which state housing, always directed towards narrowly defined special needs, was used as a social control, in which peripheral land speculation distorted planning curbs on urban growth, and in which 'self-help' housing, now being sold by Western agencies throughout the developing world, provided consolidation to the corporate state, which controlled wages anyway, by providing 'a cheap safety valve to the accommodation shortages which existed in the Lisboa metropolitan area'.

Besides the extreme cases of Denmark and Portugal there are rewarding papers on East Germany by Gerlind Staemmler, and on Italy by Liliana Padovani, which come near to meeting the publisher's ambitions, but generally the book fails to explain and compare the housing systems in the countries covered, let alone discuss the quality of the housing product, or who gets what. Statistical data are not comparable, some tables are incomplete, and the illustrations not particularly informative or relevant. Roger Smith's contribution on Great Britain is particularly disappointing. His case studies of the cities of Birmingham and Glasgow could have provided exemplars of the proclaimed intention to demonstrate the relations between housing and urban growth.

Detailed knowledge, labour of love, and some pot-boiling have gone into this book. It has its values, as I have tried to show, but goes no way towards providing a comparative study of housing in Europe. That must be a corporate task, with careful planning and direction. The pity is that it has been started several times already, but abandoned, presumably for lack of funding (3). There is news now of an EEC sponsored project, based on case studies, but the best collection of work so far in Britain is probably the unconnected publications of the Birmingham Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (4). A project based on such a team's experience of policy analysis and the concept of housing systems could be the way to produce such a necessary work most quickly.

DAVID WHITHAM

London Borough of Haringey.

- (1) Catherine Bauer (1935), **Modern Housing**, London.
- (2) Elizabeth Denby (1938), **Europe Rehoused**, London.

(3) For example In Design Division of Building Research Station, Garston, 1970-72.

(4) See C.J. Watson (1971), Social housing policy in Belgium; John Greve (1971), Voluntary housing in Scandinavia; V.A. Karn (1973), Housing standards and costs: a comparison, all Birmingham; and Alan Murie et al (1976), Housing policy and the housing system, London.

David W. Lloyd (1984), **The making of English towns: 2000 years of evolution**. London, Gollancz, 290 pp., price £12.95, ISBN 0 575 03337 1.

It is clear from the bibliography that there is no shortage of books on urban history, whether considered from the point of view of different regions or periods in time. The reader is likely to compare the approach of this volume with that of the 'Making of the English landscape' series, largely edited or written by W.G. Hoskins. In terms of content, the volume is more akin to 'The landscape of towns', in the series of 'thematic' landscape histories published by Dent. Despite their being left out from the title, Welsh towns fall within the compass of the present volume.

The author's aim is to explain the development and present-day form of the towns and cities of England and Wales between Roman times and the beginning of this century, with an epilogue that brings the story up to date. Archaeologists and historians disagree whether there were any pre-Roman settlements which could have been called towns. By the time of the Norman Conquest, there were dozens of places, varying in size from London, York and Winchester down to minor market centres. Between then and the fourteenth century, numerous markets were founded, and towns created or greatly extended. Not all flourished. The six 'new towns' of the Bishop of Winchester had a very chequered history. Later chapters focus on the dynamic role of London, the distinctive visual qualities of ports and resort towns, the character of Georgian and Victorian towns, and the development of industrial Britain.

A typical town street of medieval origin is likely to be an amalgam of building work of many centuries, with each plot having its own history. The oldest feature is likely to be the alignment of the street, which usually remains through piecemeal rebuilding of the structures fronting it. Obviously, the proportion of surviving structures from later periods is likely to be larger the nearer one approaches the present day. But this will depend partly on the history of the town: a place which was rich in the sixteenth century but underwent a slump in the eighteenth century is likely to have more Tudor buildings, than one which was very prosperous in the eighteenth century. Disasters could also take their toll, whether they came in the form of the outbreaks of fire that razed parts of the City of London, Warwick and Northampton in the seventeenth century, or from the blitz of more recent times.

The text of the volume is concisely and lucidly written, and, for the most part, illustrated with fine photographs and reproductions of the Victorian editions of the Ordnance Survey six-inch to the mile maps. The informative captions help to bring out the salient points illustrated, and highlight the value of walking the streets with one's eyes open and of poring over old Ordnance Survey maps which are, in many respects, more detailed than their modern equivalents. There is only one map in the volume that predates the Ordnance Survey, namely Wenceslau Hollar's map of the City of London in 1666.

Other examples of early town maps might usefully have been included. The early chapters would also have benefitted from one or two plans, based on archaeological data, illustrating the early growth of towns and cities.

In order to give due weight to continuity and innovation in town design and construction, some background economic and social narrative is provided. Particularly in the chapter on industrial change, this becomes rather intrusive, particularly where there is so much more that could have been said of immediate relevance to urban life and wellbeing. The reader will find little, for example, on how the towns were watered, cleansed, lit and heated. In parts of the volume, the urban dweller, his family and local community, scarcely seem to feature. A table at the end summarises the changes that took place in the regional population between 1801 and 1921. With a little more enterprise, the author could have conveyed the significance of these demographic changes much more effectively, either in map or graphic form.

The fact that the volume ends with an epilogue might suggest an attempt at crystal-ball gazing into the late twentieth century. Instead the heading refers to a six-page summary (without illustrations) of all that has happened since the death of Queen Victoria and the foundation of Letchworth Garden City. It is as if, after writing a very long chapter on Victorian England, the writer had reached his word limit, or the time allocated for writing the book. The abrupt ending, and lack of interest in recent urban history, detracts from the value of the entire book. There is no opportunity to assess the achievements and failures of the Victorian period in a longer time perspective, or to indicate the degree to which the twentieth century was innovative in terms of town planning and construction. As a result, the author fails to demonstrate the relevance and intrinsic fascination of urban history to those who are otherwise much more preoccupied with the urban environment of today and the next few decades.

JOHN SHEAIL.

David Ward and John P. Radford (1983), **North American Cities in the Victorian Age**. Geo Books, Regency House, 34 Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 3AP, England. Historical Geography Research Series 12. 57 pp., ISBN 0 86094 151 5; ISSN 0143-683 X.

The adjective 'Victorian' has been applied to cities, not only in the United Kingdom, but also in North America and elsewhere. Is such an extension of use permissible? Should the usage be restricted only to British contexts? If we agree that a type of social structure and spatial form characterizes cities called Victorian, what historical forces have yielded this result? In what sequence? These are the principal themes addressed by David Ward in his essay 'Social Structure and Social Geography in Large Cities of the U.S. Urban-Industrial Heartland', which opens the publication under review.

His answers to the first set of questions suggest that, owing to socio-environmental parameters which differentiated North America from Europe, only cities in the Great Lakes-Atlantic Coastal heartland may properly be identified as Victorian. With respect to these, Ward identifies three ways to interpret the transitions in form and structure said to be Victorian:

The first of these processes defines Victorian growth as the initial and negative impact of the industrialization of urban employment. In the second process, Victorian urban growth is more loosely defined as one segment of a much longer and more gradual transformation of urban life. The third process views Victorian urban growth as a distinct phase of urbanization initiated by the transition from mercantile to industrial capitalism and terminated by the transition from industrial to corporate capitalism.

The concept of Victorian urban growth to be defined by these processes involves both the stratification of the labour force and filtration in the housing market. These contribute to urban form concentrically through residential differentiation in the manner of the Chicago school, and also to sectoral differentiation a la Homer Hoyt. In his critical analysis of these themes, the author has much of interest to say about filtration theory (he argues against its significance until late in the Victorian period) and sectoral differentiation of wealthy residential areas (he argues that they antecede the Victorian era in the American cities with which he is concerned). Finally, while rejecting the Marxist socio-economic programme as of dubious value, he finds much of merit in the Marxist critique of mainstream research on Victorian cities.

For this reviewer, the stimulating edge of Ward's analysis was somewhat blunted by the style in which the piece was presented. It seemed to lack focus and clarity, requiring the reader to provide editorial structure which the writer ought to have provided. Perhaps, this being a report of research in progress, Ward's own views are not completely crystallized, rendering a polished essay unachievable.

The Radford article, 'Regional Ideologies in Urban Growth on the Victorian Periphery: Southern Ontario and the U.S. South', is a shorter piece. I found it to be clear, interestingly written and informative.

Radford takes up where Ward leaves off. While Ward focusses on the U.S. heartland's expression of the Victorian city, Radford moves to the Canadian perimeter and to the U.S. South. He criticizes the extant urban literature for tending to 'extrapolate the experience of one regional variant over an entire continent'; for lacking a coherent sense of region, in terms of failing to recognize the ideological variation of norms and values over North America; and above all for expressing a deep-seated and ahistorical commitment to varieties of technological determinism.

In this context he is moved to consider questions such as, What was the nature of urban-industrial growth away from the heartland? Did ideological differences contribute to the observed discrepancies? Was the Victorian pattern followed when growth did occur? What methodological implications may be drawn from these considerations?

In the Canadian case, he uses the development of the Toronto street railway system to show that 'local transport in Toronto was a moral as well as a technological issue.' This reflected an ideological clash between a British oriented, Protestant middle class who endorsed values consistent with those of influential groups such as the Orange Order, versus an immigrant Catholic population, seen as a burgeoning threat. In his critical comments, he questions the views of Goheen, as lacking the key ideological dimension.

As to the cities of the U.S. South, he argues that the paternalistic ideology of the ante-bellum planter aristocracy was less disrupted by war and reconstruction than writers such as Woodward have supposed. This aristocracy, in fact, may have led the way to industrialization 'from above' via the 'Prussian Road' in cooperation with the northern financial elite. Borrowing a metaphor from Goldfield he speculates that the magnolias may have been taken from the plantation and placed upon Main Street.

This viewpoint parts company with the Marxists as well as with Woodward in favour of one emphasizing continuity of leadership, rather than disruption. Thus,

The Southern elite, defeated on the battlefield, embraced the formerly repulsive idea of 'Progress', but largely as a tactic designed to beat the Yankee at his own game, as a way of preserving Southern identity, and without any transformation in ideology.

It would follow, then, that if these re-evaluations have merit, there is need for a scholarly interest to focus on cities in the nineteenth century South as pivotal institutions. Perhaps the plantation has been overemphasized. Main Street needs more attention, the Old Homestead less.

These interesting views suggest that many urbanisms, not one, characterize North America, each requiring adjustments in methodology. Marxist approaches, useful as critique, do not pose a real structural alternative for building these interpretations, in Radford's view. He feels that it is necessary for cultural geographers, who have 'stopped at the city boundary' in deference to systematic urban geographers, to cross that boundary and bring their skills to bear upon issues which inevitably involve questions of values, perceptions, motivations and culture. Perhaps it is also time for systematists to learn from the approaches practiced by their cultural-historical geographical brethren.

PROFESSOR GEORGE W. CAREY
Department of Urban Studies
Rutgers University.

M.J. Daunton (editor) (1984). **Councillors and tenants: local authority housing in English cities, 1919-1939**. Leicester University Press, Leicester, 223 pp., price £22.00, ISBN 0 7185 1223 5.

Although society's commitment to public housing seems to be fast receding, the debate about its origins has only just begun. That public housing assumed such significance during the inter-war years can be accounted for by the tacit acknowledgment by governments of all political colours that the economic system could not provide the houses needed by the lower paid, especially the sort of houses that would discourage casual work and a way of life no longer appropriate to a consuming society. A more immediate cause was that the provision of housing just after the First World War was conceived of as a planning problem which could be solved through legislated rent restrictions, regulation of building resources, and judiciously applied subsidies.

In this volume of essays the editor, M.J. Daunton, challenges the

inevitability of the chosen solution to the housing crisis as it was perceived, and asks if public housing as it developed during the 1920s and 1930s was the most beneficial response. Indeed he challenges the very idea of a 'housing crisis' and suggests that before World War I the housing industry was in a period of cyclical slump from which it would have emerged if war had not occurred. The weak political position of the private landlord meant that after the war no-one was committed to re-establishing housing provision according to pre-1914 practice. The result was a housing system dominated eventually by owner-occupation and Council housing.

Historical landmarks such as the post-war 'housing crisis' and the government's response to it can be questioned only through the careful examination of contemporary documentation and the growing study of the local experience of various housing programmes. The three essays in this book admirably provide the basis for such questioning.

The three localities considered here, County Durham, Leeds, and Bristol, together provide a cross-section of housing experience between the wars. County Durham as Robert Ryder points out was predominantly a mining area where the mine-owners had previously provided much of the housing. With the increase in building costs the mine-owners were no longer prepared to build houses, a task many of the local Labour councils were willing to undertake. Low rateable values and the difficulty of raising private loans brought the councils, however, into conflict with the Ministry of Health, a conflict ably revealed through Ryder's careful pursuit of the minutes of the various Urban and Rural District councils throughout the County, and their correspondence with central government.

Leeds is not such unfamiliar territory. Robert Finnigan has already written about its housing policy in **Housing, Social Policy and the State**, (J. Melling, ed., 1980). In **Model Estate** (1974), Alison Ravetz introduced readers to the personalities who appear in this essay, which describes some of the internal conflicts that could arise within a city council over questions of housing, its type and location. Finnigan's strength lies in his ability to develop a social theory from a close investigation of the physical production of housing, and its documentation in council minutes and the local press.

Conservative Bristol was not over zealous in its public housing provision, but the information Madge Dresser has been able to gather from many different sources, including the Bristol Association of Building Trades Employers and the contractors they represented, makes a very rich contribution to our understanding of public housing production. Dresser's essay shows the range of issues which can arise when local records are pursued. All three essays continue their stories beyond the erection of the houses to the management of the properties and their tenants, but Dresser's contribution in this respect is most satisfying.

These three essays provide a very welcome opportunity to make comparisons between local conditions which prevailed while central government was formulating policy. Although much of the material covered by the three authors is similar, the approaches are different enough to show how aspects of social history can be clarified through a study of housing. For the planning historian, this book will illuminate many questions of government policy which at this date, with the fine grain of daily experience now lost, are obscure and problematic. And as Daunton remarks in his introduction,

policy-makers would do well to pay attention to past experience revealed in these essays in order to dispel the misconceptions upon which so much of the current housing debate seems to be based.

TANIS HINCHCLIFFE
Department of Environmental Design
Polytechnic of North London.

Anthony Sutcliffe (ed.), **Metropolis 1890-1940**. (1984). Mansell Publishing, London. 458 pp., price £28.50. ISBN 0 7201 1616 3.

This is a splendidly produced book, the product of a conference sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council. Unlike some books edited from conference papers this volume is a pleasure to handle and to read. Although considerable latitude has been allowed to the 15 contributors, their contributions provide a coherent review of the age of giant cities, of the ideas that influenced growth, form and planning and of the influence of the city upon intellectual life. The editor describes the work as a 'navigation' over the past course of urban and regional planning. It was a precept of one of the great modern interpreters of landscape, S.W. Wooldridge, that before taking the forward view it was necessary to look back over the way one had come. At a time when 'the ship of planning is awash on a storm-tossed ocean' retrospective views of the course may well help to chart new directions for the future.

There are three parts and a postscript. An introductory section is followed by six thematic essays on the portrayal and understanding of the metropolis in intellectual life. The third section comprises seven case studies of the world's great urban areas of the period.

While, as Anthony Sutcliffe remarks in his Introduction, the planning achievement of the period was restricted, certainly in comparison with that of the post-1945 years, it is the 'combination of rapid city growth and prolific planning thought that makes the 1890-1940 period so interesting'. Interesting, especially, for what can be learned, for example or for warning, about the emergence of urban planning as a coherent expertise. The 1890s marked a revolution in the perception of cities and city life: in etching out the story of subsequent growth the authors reveal the tensions between theory and practice, planning and politics, urbanism and anti-urbanism.

In the second of the introductory chapters, Peter Hall, noting the problem of comparing cities at different stages of evolution, draws, as probably only he could have done so well, a vivid portrayal of the sometimes conflicting responses to the problems of congestion, health and slum conditions, and of suburbanisation and outward growth.

Andrew Lees opens Part 2 'The Metropolis Portrayed and Understood' with a chapter on 'The Metropolis and the Intellectual'. Particularly interesting is his analysis of the observations of social scientists, illustrated by four clusters of writers from France, Germany, Britain and U.S.A. Words that struck home to me, remembering past experiences of early life in a great city, are quoted, not from a social scientist, but from the German art critic August Endell: 'there is hardly anything prettier than sitting quietly in the tram . . .'. Here, at least, is one reference to what is was actually

like to live in a growing giant city, and distinguished though many of the contributions are, there is too little in part 2 on the people who lived in the cities.

An exception must, however, be made for the editor's own chapter on 'The Metropolis in the Cinema'. If the average film-goer was not frequently confronted directly with the environment of the giant city, he argues that the occasional vivid scenes and elusive images struck deep into the public consciousness so creating emotional, if not intellectual, reactions which lie at the fountainhead of much modern planning. By contrast, the chapter on 'The Metropolis in Music' adopts a more narrowly intellectual perspective illustrated from composers such as Charpentier, Delius, Vaughn Williams and Varese and provides, through a rather stilted dialogue between Composer and Listener, a lesson in musical appreciation. Nothing here on the role of the city in the diffusion of music and musical ideas, of the influence of the great choral societies, of composers of the second rank whose portrayal of cities created public images, or of popular music. Was it only in British music halls that audiences joined in the choruses of songs that helped to make city life bearable and sang ' . . . if it wasn't for the houses in between'?

Lars Olaf Larsson in an interesting and, like most contributions, well illustrated chapter discusses 'Metropolis Architecture', in which he includes 'plans, projects and buildings whose designers sought . . . to express a distinct metropolitan spirit'. The ideas and plans he discusses come from Vienna, Berlin, Chicago and France. Is the omission of British work justifiable, or does it reflect the differences that were emerging?

Part 3 'The Metropolis Experienced and Planned' contains, in the editor's words, the 'core' of the book. Patricia Garside's analysis of the diversity of London, growing and re-shaping itself and exhibiting startling paradoxes, is a delightfully written essay. Her 'fundamental question' of the relationship between the constituent parts of the conurbation and its totality is of continuing interest. Paris, judges Norma Evenson, found the period a relative lull between the reconstruction of the Second Empire and the cataclysmic upheavals following the Second World War. It is a sympathetic, and at times evocative, treatment. Paris, she concludes, 'might benefit from another period of "nothing"'. Horst Matzerath writes of Berlin where the theory of urban planning reached a peak between 1890 and 1920. Street design was influenced by Paris while technical infrastructure drew on British examples. Such comparative observations are helpful. He writes too of modern divided Berlin, no longer a world city. Kenneth T. Jackson takes us to the golden age of New York, the 'captial of capitalism', to Edward Ewing Pratt's analysis of 1911, the 'brilliant breakthrough' of the Grand Central Terminal project, the influence of Robert Moses, and the utopian communities. Moscow is included, not as one of the largest cities of the time, but for its interest as the leading example of the coming socialist metropolis. R.A. French was wisely selected to discuss Moscow since 1917 as the exemplar for large urban centres in the socialist world. The years 1890 and 1940 are less significant here, as he shows. The Ruhr (discussed by Jurgen Reulecke) provides different problems: the theme of the essay is 'centralisation versus decentralisation in a region of cities'. However fragmented in form and administrative structure it is, he shows, a unity, 'the biggest city in Germany'. Shun-ichi J. Watanabe explains, in the case of Tokyo, how Japanese pioneering planners, with a strong urban tradition and centralised planning powers, fostered the growth

of the metropolis. Each of these chapters is worth much fuller discussion.

Peter Hall contributes the final chapter 'Metropolis 1940-1990'. 'The irony of history', he observes, is that 'metropolitan planners always fight the last war'. Belatedly, in the 1980s, are we coming to terms with 'a new reality of metropolitan decline'?

There is much to enjoy in this book. It opens up comparative prospects. The editor's hypothesis is borne out. The great city of the time did play a vitally important part in the formation of attitudes towards urbanism. And those attitudes continued to influence planning after the Second World War. There is, perhaps, too little on popular life and attitudes to the city. A separate treatment of transport and its influence on city form would have been justified. So too would a special treatment of technical change, especially in industry.

George Cadbury Junior, a municipal leader of vision, is not mentioned. Let us bring him, and his like, also into the picture. He wrote of 'days far ahead, when cities will be organised on comprehensive lines with due regard to the health and to the welfare of all members of the community but if this book (*Town Planning* 1915) can do something to suggest to the minds of public men that that future is worth waiting for and that its attainment is possible its purpose will be well served'. Let us wish *Metropolis 1890-1940*, through its reconnaissance of the past, success in prompting renewed attention to the urban problems of the future.

M. J. WISE
London School of Economics.

PUBLICATIONS

Colin G. Pooley and Sandra Irish (1984). *The development of Cble for 25 per cent of the city's housing stock*. Although Liverpool continued to experience acute housing problems, the heterogeneous nature of the council housing stock allowed careful selection and control of council tenants.

Liverpool was the first British city in which purpose-built council housing was constructed for the working classes. From 1869 to the end of the Second World War Corporation involvement in housing expanded dramatically: by 1945 Liverpool Corporation owned some 42,000 units and were responsible for 25 per cent of the city's housing stock. Although Liverpool continued to experience acute housing problems, the heterogeneous nature of the council housing stock allowed careful selection and control of council tenants.

This monograph, based on a major research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, describes the development of council housing in Liverpool before 1945 and explains and evaluates the changing policies of council house construction, allocation and management at the local level. Extensive use of Corporation archives and housing records has allowed the construction of a detailed picture supported by statistical analysis, of policy formulation and an accurate profile of the tenants who lived in the different types of Corporation property.

Following an introductory description of the nature of Corporation housing in Liverpool, the policy and practice of Liverpool Corporation is analysed: first, in the context of slum-clearance and rehousing in the central area and, second, with respect to the development of general-needs housing in the suburbs. A concluding chapter draws these two themes together and relates local policy to a broader theoretical and national perspective.

Philip F.A. Henslowe (1984). *Ninety years on. An account of the Bournville Village Trust*. Bournville Village Trust Estate Office, Oak Tree Lane, Birmingham B30 1UB. 26 pp., ISBN 0 905458 05 2, price £1.00.

George Cadbury always intended the Bournville Village Trust to be a focus for public opinion on housing and town planning matters. One way in which he achieved this goal was to instigate the publication of a series of illustrated booklets, of which this is the latest of a long series. Written by the Trust's Community and Information Officer, the booklet outlines and origins and development of the venture on the outskirts of Birmingham, and describes current endeavours in the field of housing and the community. Sections are devoted to the Trust's role in the field of architecture, estate management and research.

Christopher Chippindale (1983). *Stonehenge complete*. London, Thames & Hudson, 296 pp., price £12.50.

In this history of the world-famous ancient monument on Salisbury Plain since the time of its 're-discovery' in AD 1130, the author describes the way in which Stonehenge has been perceived by each generation. Not only has there been concern over the care and protection of the stone circle itself, but the popularity of the site for tourism and the suitability of the surrounding plain for military training and other purposes have at times appeared to threaten the monument and call for the intervention of some kind of regulatory body.

J.W.R. Whitehand & S.M. Whitehand (1983). The study of physical change in town centres: research procedures and types of change. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 8 (4), 483-507.

Examines the physical development of town centres in Britain since the first world war, and gives particular attention to the treatment of data sources, types of physical changes that have occurred, and the firms and organisations responsible.

R. Mellor (1983). The urbanization of Britain - a review. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 7 (3), 380-403.

Reassesses the history and circumstances of the British 'urban revolution'. Looks in turn at the pattern of urbanization and the building of towns.

M. Rodgers (1983). The Bronx parks system: a faded design. *Landscape*, 27 (2), 13-21.

The parks of the Bronx were established to lure residents to this borough of New York and to preserve large natural areas no longer available in Manhattan. The paper describes both the visions and the reality of the venture.

Stephen V. Ward (ed.), 1984, **Planning and economic change: an historical perspective**. Oxford Polytechnic, Department of Town Planning, Gipsy Lane, Headington, Oxford, England. Working Paper 78, 88 pp., £2.75 plus 50p p. & p., ISBN 086342 021 4.

Comprises the five papers prepared for the Planning History Group Conference held at Oxford in September 1983, which together explored the relationships between urban policies and economic change. Though empirically based, all the essays consciously apply insights derived from the new urban theorists of the 1970s, pointing to new interpretations of planning history. Taking the example of I.C.I. and interwar Tees-side planning, Gunby shows that the local planning process, while beginning as a challenge to big business priorities, was consistently amended by central Government to serve those interests at the expense of community priorities. In the same period Ward examines how and why local authorities themselves sought to attract new industries, showing how this local policy area was increasingly challenged by greater central control of local trading functions (especially electricity) and regional policy, so that land and building initiatives associated with local planning functions became the normal mechanisms of such promotion strategies.

Sutcliffe re-examines the origins of town planning in the late nineteenth century, rejecting the emphasis on progressive personalities, and detecting its origins in the changing world economy, which made a rationalisation of the workings of the urban land market appear a necessary option to business leaders. Brown by contrast examines the links between working class pressure and housing/planning policies in Coventry 1890-1939, implicitly challenging the 'capital-logic' interpretations of public policy evident in the other papers. Bacon argues this interpretation of council housing policy particularly strongly, using the example of the "homes for heroes" programme 1919-1921 and the deck-access "streets in the sky" programmes of the 1960s. Overall the papers challenge the prevailing orthodoxies of planning history with their emphases on personalities and planning innovators by seeking economic explanations for policy shifts.

Elizabeth Sharp, 1983. The implementation of land-use policy in the urban fringe: the North Middlesex Green Belt estates 1920-1950, in: **The changing countryside. Proceedings of the First British-Dutch Symposium on Rural Geography**, (ed. by Gordon Clark, Jan Groenendijk and Frans Thissen), Geo Books, Norwich, International Symposia Series, 261-76, ISBN 0 86094 155 8.

The nature of inter-authority relations had a considerable bearing on the processes responsible for shaping the form, area and land use of the London green-belt estates.

Stuart Gilbert and Ray Horner (1984). **The Thames Barrier**. Thomas Telford Ltd., 26-34 Old Street, London EC1P 1JH, 182 pp., price £12.50, ISBN 0 7277 0182 7.

A personal account of how this major piece of civil engineering came to be planned and constructed. Despite the stimulus provided by the East Coast floods of 1953, it was not until 1974 that the main contracts were let and construction work began. Planned to be completed within five years, industrial, rather than technical, problems meant that the scheme was not completed until 1982, by which time costs had reached £440 millions.

John Sheail (1984). Nature reserves, national parks, and post-war reconstruction, in Britain, **Environmental Conservation**, 11 (1), pp.29-34.

Highlights the role of ministers and their officials, the professional and voluntary bodies, and individual persons in influencing the decisions that directly related to nature conservation. Draws attention to the wider context of nature conservation during the 1940s.

NOTES AND NEWS

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY GROUP

The history of construction has largely concentrated on the study of buildings in terms of their patronage, design and materials. The importance of the social, economic and process aspects of their construction is now being increasingly appreciated. In November 1981 a small group of interested individuals formed the Construction History Group, and an inaugural meeting was held in 1983. The principal aims continue to be, (1) to identify those persons interested in the history of the building process, (2) to act as a focal point for those studying the history of construction, (3) to disseminate the results of investigations, and (4) to help track down historical records. For further details of the Group, its meetings and Newsletter, write to Peter Harlow, The Construction History Group Secretary, c/o The Chartered Institute of Building, Englemere, Kings Ride, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 8BJ, England.

THE RISE OF URBAN BRITAIN

Garland Publishing has announced the publication of a reprint collection of 35 important titles, originally published between 1837 and 1914, which describe and interpret city life during the period. All the titles have long been out of print. The editors of the series are Lynn Hollen Lees and Andrew Lees. As a special introductory offer, orders for the 30-volume set received before 1 February 1985 will be billed at \$950, a saving of 25% on the individual volume price. The books will be published over several months. The publisher's address is 136 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016; for the U.K., Hermione Hockliffe, Ashburn, The Green, Horsted Keynes, West Sussex RH17 7AW.

SCOTLAND'S FIRST NATIONAL PARK

PHB readers may have been surprised to see an advertisement in **Nature**, **New Scientist** and elsewhere, giving details of 'Scotland's first National Park'. Under an idyllic lochside scene, the advert recounted how 'this high amenity 120 acrea development is now under construction on a magnificent greenfield site overlooking the River Tay, Scotland's premier salmon fishing river. Within minutes of Dundee's teaching hospital, university and airport, the Park is designed to accommodate the needs of today's discerning technology-based industries'. Should readers of PHB wish 'to make the perfect investment in the perfect environment', they should write to the address given in the advert for more details of the Dundee Technology Park and Enterprise Zone. In the words of the advert, it is 'the next step for Scotland'.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Supplement 5

In this fifth supplement to 'Work in Progress' (PHB 4(3)), a distinction is again drawn between recent publications and activities (A) and work in progress (B).

Professor Roger E. Bolton, Department of Economics, Williams College, Fernald House, Williamstown, MA 01267 U.S.A.

- A1 Member of the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies, 1968- (currently I teach a multidisciplinary course in the Center on Environmental Planning). Visiting Professor of City Planning, University of Pennsylvania, 1981-82.
- A2 Co-author (with Greg Jackson, George Masnick, and others), **Regional Diversity**, Auburn House, Cambridge, MA, for the MIT-Harvard Jt. Center for Urban Studies, 1981.
- B1 Henry George and the Idea of Interregional Redistribution of Resource Rents.
- B2 The Portfolio Approach to Regional Diversification, theoretical and empirical.
- B3 The Economic Analysis of "A Sense of Place" as a Factor in Regional and Local Identity.

Mr. Stefan F.P. Fisch, Institut für Neuere Geschichte, Ainmillerstrasse 8/1, D-8000 München 40, West Germany.

- A1 Theodor Fischer in München (1893-1901) - der Stadtplaner auf dem Weg zum Beamten. Wie sich die kommunale Planungshoheit zur Institution verfestigte.
In: Ekkehard MAL, Hans POHL, Stephan WAEIZOLD (eds.), **Kunstpolitik und Kunstförderung im Kaiserreich. Kunst im Wandel der Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte. (=Kunst, Kultur und Politik im Deutschen Kaiserreich. 2)**
Berlin (Gebr. Mann Verlag) 1982, pp.245-259.
- B1 Ph.D. Thesis on the History of Town Planning at München in the 19th Century, especially on the work of Theodor Fischer who was the first full time town planning officer appointed by a municipality in the German speaking countries. (To be completed in 1985).

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF LEWIS MUMFORD'S REPORT ON HONOLULU

'Honolulu is the natural stage for a complex and beautiful human drama. The blue sea, the jagged mountains, the rhythmic roll of the surf over the coral reefs, and the tumbling clouds form a landscape that has few rivals as a setting for human activity. But the city has taken its splendid physical features in a somewhat casual fashion . . . Honolulu is now like a beauty passing into middle age . . . The wrinkles are beginning to show . . . More disastrous results may follow unless steps are taken at once to conserve Honolulu's peculiar advantages.' [1]

Honolulu enjoys a status unique among American cities. Because it is situated on an island, 2200 miles from the nearest continent, it presents an unusual opportunity to test out concepts of land-use planning and growth control. As a result, the city has been visited by a succession of outside critics (usually experts in some aspect of planning and architecture) who have assessed the city's development controls, plans and progress. Among the most prescient of these was Lewis Mumford. Having spent a few weeks in Honolulu during 1938, he was asked by the Parks Board to offer his opinion on the directions being taken by the city, particularly with respect to parks and town planning. Because so much of Mumford's subsequent work was visionary or theoretical, it is especially interesting to review his Report on Honolulu - to analyse how he dealt with practical problems, how the solutions he offered were received, and how well his recommendations have withstood the test of time.

Nobody could have foreseen the changes which took place after Mumford's visit. When he came to Honolulu it was a small city of 150,000 people, the major centre of the American Territory of Hawaii. Three years later the island was precipitously cast into the throes of total war which altered virtually all aspects of life.

After 1946 there was no turning back - the pace of change accelerated and Honolulu became more closely tied to the U.S. mainland. With the granting of statehood in 1959 the city became the focal point of a Pacific economic development thrust, accompanied by a prodigious influx of capital, dramatic improvements in airline transportation and commensurate increases in the number of tourists, accompanied by rapid population growth. The state now has a million residents, 85% of them in and around Honolulu on the island of Oahu. Hawaii is the destination of over 4 million tourists annually. On

any given day there are more than 100,000 visitors in the state, most of them in Honolulu. Waikiki's visitor plant, with Mumford found to be 'two gawky hotels' with a couple of hundred rooms in 1938, has grown to a total of more than 40,000 rooms in a highly concentrated 600-acre tourist zone.

Despite the drastic alterations in Honolulu's skyline and in the pattern of life, many of Mumford's observations were prescient and are still relevant. Mumford realised, unlike many other critics, that Honolulu had the potential to evolve as a commercial and industrial centre. His concern was that this process should occur in an orderly, planned fashion in keeping with certain design principles - based in large part upon his experience with Radburn and Sunnyside Gardens and his exposure to town planning in England.

The gradual movement toward collectivism was also recognised, as exemplified in education, recreation, hospital services and public health. Mumford understood that it was not possible to rely on the invisible hand of laissez-faire, the American society was undergoing a transition from a productive to a consumptive culture which would require careful planning for parks, playgrounds, museums, housing, and cultural pursuits. Yet the reality which he perceived in Honolulu was congested, sordid slums, makeshift urban services, and chaotic development patterns. An exponent of comprehensive planning, Mumford saw the role of housing as part of a larger process. He urged 'a comprehensive policy of city renewal' consisting of 'slum clearance, large-scale housing, neighborhood planning and park development'.

A number of observations in the Report on Honolulu illustrate Mumford's foresight with respect to planning and design: deploring the fact that the city had turned its back on the ocean he recommended opening up the waterfront to create seaward vistas through the town centre. Severely critical of urban sprawl, he accurately predicted that leapfrog subdivisions would create serious infrastructure problems for the city in later years. He advocated the comprehensive planning of Honolulu's central area (particularly those lands owned by the large estates) and wrote at length about the need for greenbelts to lend coherence to the city's neighbourhoods, to prevent encroachment, and to provide park space. Mumford also recommended the use of natural or man-made barriers (mountains

and drainage canals in the case of Honolulu) as permanent greenbelts or open spaces combining utilitarian and aesthetic attributes. This could be accomplished in part, he suggested, by placing 'park strips' alongside canals to serve as open spaces and to provide view corridors to the sea or the mountains.

Mumford was ahead of his time in advocating the inclusion of statistical data and surveys in order to strengthen arguments for planning innovations. At the same time he recognised the dangers inherent in over-dependence upon the 'numbers people' who were unable to think comprehensively about city problems. His prescription was to place considerable discretionary power in the hands of city planners who possessed 'a balanced view of urban life' and thus could forge links from planning to architecture, engineering and urban design.

What impact did Mumford's Report have and to what extent were his recommendations adopted? A number of his suggestions were eventually implemented by the city, although some were not undertaken until the 1970s. Among these were the creation of oceanfront parks, development of parkway arterials with planted medial strips, provision of buffers and green spaces along a few drainage canals, relocation of heavy industrial uses away from the downtown waterfront, and replacement of the city's 'pestilential slums' in central Honolulu with a limited amount of public housing.

Several omissions and shortcomings are, however, apparent in Mumford's Report on Honolulu. Among these was his failure to foresee growth in the city's size and population, perhaps reflecting his pessimistic state of mind in 1938. In spite of arguments by local planners that Honolulu was unique, he persisted in analysing the city from a 'mainland' perspective, comparing it to other American towns which had stabilized or were declining in size. Thus he did not perceive the need for, or the potential inherent in a plan for the Capitol District in Central Honolulu - though the opportunity for planning open spaces and the siting of buildings in the civic center was apparent to certain other planners at the time.

He also failed to appreciate Hawaii's unique position as the 'melting pot of the Pacific' and the effect this would have on population growth and the

visitor industry. Mumford simply generalised that Honolulu's economic opportunities - like those of other cities - were 'restricted'. He concluded that 'from the approaching stability of population' it followed that 'Only one real field of expansion remains - that of raising the standard of living.'

Mumford somewhat naively advised that 'all available legal means should be taken at once' by town planners 'to reduce land values to a saner level'. While acknowledging 'Honolulu's peculiar advantages' he insisted on comparing the city to older, larger and more stable towns in America and Europe, thus ignoring the inevitable impacts of restricted land supply and population increases on property values.

One must also question the depth of Mumford's understanding of Honolulu and the planning opportunities implicit in its multi-cultural heritage. If he fully appreciated the nature of local people, as he claimed, it is difficult to justify his falling back on such hackneyed racial stereotypes as 'puppet-wired Japanese' or his references to the 'indolent, haphazard . . . life-rhythm' of the Polynesians. It is particularly troublesome attempting to reconcile these statements with his exhortations in The City of History for urban centres which bring together 'within relatively narrow compass, the diversity and variety of special cultures . . . along with their languages, customs, their costumes, their typical cuisines.' [2] It appears that, while preaching cultural diversity on the mainland, Mumford may have failed to appreciate the advantages of a diverse ethnic society when he was in its midst.

Many of the proposals in the Report on Honolulu were ignored. This reflected not only the outbreak of World War II, but more fundamentally the approach of style of Mumford. While he helped to illuminate certain development and planning issues, and recognised the need for public support, he failed to bridge the gap between creative thinkers and those of a more pragmatic bend who would determine urban planning policy. By his own yardstick Mumford was found wanting: in the preface to his Report on Honolulu he wrote that 'The test of an idea consists in its ability to meet the issues of real life and provide a rational basis for planning and action.' Yet when Mumford presented his proposals to the Parks Board the

administrative and policy recommendations were totally ignored and not even publicly debated. Mumford, in fact, subsequently acknowledged that certain of his assertions were 'naïve'. [3] Although his imagery was vivid, his prose lucid, and his message reasonably clear, one cannot resist wishing that his advice had been directed, not so much at academics and professional planners, but towards the politicians and voters who would determine the city's future course. Like many visionary planners Mumford did not communicate effectively with the common man or with decision-makers - and thus his impact was limited.

As David Riesman observed:

'America has not had much use for prophets who have not also been politicians . . . Mumford is primarily a prophet: . . . But he does not suggest the actual political groupings that might accomplish the renewal that seems so near and yet so far, so hopelessly far. His weapons are not a call to the working class nor cagey counsels to adept city planners. . . . His weapons are as old as the story he tells: reason, exhortation, imagination and faith.' [4]

Nevertheless one cannot help but wonder why the problems and solutions identified and advocated by Mumford in 1938 were essentially the same as those cited recently in Honolulu by teams of visiting critics. [5] Does this represent an indictment of the city's institutional or political structure? Or has it to do more with the way in which Mumford and many planners have confronted urban problems and communicated their findings to the public at large? When one reviews the development of planning-related legislation in the United States, it is striking how little planners have contributed to the debate. They have sometimes participated in the drafting process but seldom in the formulation of those basic issues which were frequently developed within a political framework and debated on economic rather than social, aesthetic or planning grounds.

As a prime example of this phenomenon, Lewis Mumford advocated a drastic reshaping of society in order to resolve the crisis in housing and planning. He decried the efforts of pragmatists like Catherine Bauer who accomplished much but, in his view, became too immersed in politics or administration and thus 'wasted' her talents and sullied her reputation. [6] Mumford castigated 'the timid tabbies who have been governing the housing and planning movement' [7] but, in spite of his avowed role as a visionary, he

might also be challenged for remaining aloof from the hurly-burly of the political world where housing and planning decisions are taken.

Mumford's distaste for 'the log-rolling, the wire-pulling, the ineffectual jockeying and the massive inert mediocrity of American municipal politics' was painfully apparent. But his remedies, which he referred to as 'democracy's responsible alternative' [8], were not adopted or even seriously debated because they were predicated upon a drastic reorganisation of society, they ignored political reality, and were framed in terms and presented in a manner such that their rejection by politicians and voters was a virtual certainty.

GERALD P. DALY
4382 Kahala Avenue
Honolulu
Hawaii 96816.

References

- [1] Lewis Mumford, 'Whither Honolulu?', Parks Board, City and County of Honolulu, September 1938; condensed as **Report on Honolulu**, in **City Development: Studies in Disintegration and Renewal**, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1945.
- [2] Lewis Mumford, **The City in History**, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1961.
- [3] In the Preface to his **Report on Honolulu** Mumford noted that his patron in Honolulu, Lester McCoy, resigned from the chairmanship of the Parks Board 'when my own drastic proposals found no favor among his colleagues.'
- [4] **Washington University Law Quarterly**, Volume 1962, Number 3, June 1962, p. 293.
- [5] American Institute of Architects, Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team, 'Honolulu R/UDAT 1974.'
- [6] Lewis Mumford, **My Works and Days, A Personal Chronicle**, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, New York, 1982, p. 450.
- [7] Michael Hughes, ed., **The Letters of Lewis Mumford and Frederic J. Osborn**, New York: Praeger, pp. 286, 290 and 425.
- [8] Mumford, **op. cit.**, p. 126.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND PLANNING HISTORY

Just over a hundred years ago there was no public supply of electricity in Britain - or the rest of the world for that matter. Today almost every occupied property in Britain has a supply. If 'planning history' needs a perfect example of its presence then it is electricity supply in Great Britain. The writer can speak feelingly about this aspect because he was responsible for planning a 100% supply for two large districts, covering 400 square miles of the Don Valley in Yorkshire, after the electricity supply had been nationalised in 1948. It is pleasing to be able to say that the objective was achieved in a reasonable length of time in spite of capital moneys being severely restricted in the years following 1947 due to the effects of the Second World War.

It may be interesting to recall certain experiences of the writer when he became an apprentice electrician in 1921. At the local electricity works he saw reciprocating steam engines driving 200 kW dynamos. At one of the large local cotton mills the power to drive the machinery came from a 200 horsepower reciprocating steam engine which transmitted its power to the mainshaft of each of the seven floors by means of long cotton ropes - 35 in all. The purpose of going to the mill was to arrange for a section of the mill shafting to be driven by an electric motor so as to avoid having to run the huge steam engine when only that section was in use. This kind of steam engine is now a museum piece. The conversion from reciprocating steam engines to huge steam turbines in power stations, and the doing away with line shafts and belts in factories, involved a great deal of planning. It was in general more efficient, safer, and more convenient to distribute power by electric cables rather than by rotating shafts and belts. The upper power limit for reciprocating steam engines was about 10,000 horsepower, whereas it was over half a million horsepower for turbines. Progress in the writer's lifetime has been so great and so fast that many items of electricity supply plant and equipment are now the subject of industrial archaeology.

Let us now return to the origin of electricity supply. Following the initial tiny public supply undertaking at Godalming in 1881 other people set up small undertakings. Planning was involved right away because a choice

had to be made between low voltage direct current (D.C.) and low voltage alternating current (A.C.) for the supply to consumers' premises. In the early days D.C. had a number of advantages, such as the ability to operate carbon arc lamps (the most powerful light source) and to use storage batteries (which avoided the need to run the dynamos every hour of the day). Consequently D.C. was more often chosen than A.C.

It was very fortunate for the future of the industry that a young genius, Sebastian Ziani de Ferranti, became associated with one of the A.C. undertakings in London. This undertaking had accepted so many consumers that it was in dire practical and technical trouble. Ferranti's genius overcame the troubles. Through his planning it became the first undertaking in the world to use a high voltage A.C. transmission system. This was the famous Deptford Scheme which involved having a power station six miles from the centre of London so as to have a more economical site and to avoid smoke and dirt fouling the centre of the capital. The latter factor was important because Ferranti planned for a much greater volume of electricity generation than all the contemporary undertakings in London put together. The aim was to supply hundreds of thousands of lamps, not tens of thousands. In those days there was no transmission system. This was the famous Deptford Scheme which involved having a power station six miles from the centre of London so as to have a more economical site and to avoid smoke and dirt fouling the centre of the capital. The latter factor was important because Ferranti planned for a much greater volume of electricity generation than all the contemporary undertakings in London put together. The aim was to supply hundreds of thousands of lamps, not tens of thousands. In those days there was no electricity supply undertaking - an ambition which came to pass. Perhaps an anecdote will impress the reader more than a lot of statistics. At the time of the birth of the Deptford Scheme no cable manufacturer could make a successful 10,000 volt cable so Ferranti was compelled to make the cable in his own workshop. It was the first wax impregnated paper insulated cable ever made and it set the pattern for many years to come. The writer is very proud to display in one of his bookcases a mounted section of this original cable which was presented to him by Sir Vincent de Ferranti (the second son of Sebastian) who built up the Ferranti Company to international status. The cable was deliberately planned by Ferranti for a particular objective and cables of this type now exist in every country in the world.

The struggle between the exponents of D.C. and A.C. was so great in the early years of this century that it was called the Battle of the Systems. A.C. won the battle because it became clear eventually that it was the only system which could overcome three types of problem, namely distance, the size of generating unit, and the cost per kWh. There were, of course, many subsidiary advantages accruing from the use of A.C. One of these was that A.C. meters were far superior to D.C. meters.

The development of undertakings suffered a planning setback very early in the industry's life because in 1882 Parliament passed an Act which limited the tenure of a public supply company to 21 years. Six years were to pass before Parliament rectified this mistake by altering the tenure to 42 years. The constraints of the 1882 Act were due to pressure from the gas interests which realised that the carbon filament lamp was so superior to the fish tail gas lamp (the gas mantle did not come into use until 1893). In the writer's boyhood home were to be seen fish tail and gas mantle gas lamps, as well as carbon filament and vacuum metal filament electric lamps. The two types of gas lamps were so poor in comparison with the electric lamps that it is no wonder that progress in electricity supply surged on, despite the restrictions.

The ending of D.C. supply networks received a set-back due to the First World War and its severe economic aftermath. By the time the writer joined the electricity supply industry in 1926, active steps were again being taken to change-over D.C. networks. As the writer went around Manchester on his first job he saw many disconnected rotary converters in D.C. substations awaiting disposal. There was considerable pressure from consumers for A.C. supply because radio sets had outgrown the crystal set stage (the writer made his own crystal set in 1922) and needed an A.C. supply in order to run conveniently a loud speaker type of radio set.

It was in 1926 that Parliament passed an Act which involved planning on a large scale for the electricity supply industry. It had at last been recognised that the generation of electricity by hundreds of independent separate authorities was hopelessly inefficient. Although Parliament could not pluck up courage to nationalise the industry, it did set up the Central

Electricity Board to take control and rationalise the generating side of the industry. The ownership of power stations still remained, however, with the local authorities.

In order to appreciate the magnitude of the task facing the C.E.B. it should be realised that there were 588 undertakings in Great Britain. These were the C.E.B., 366 Local Authorities, 5 Joint Boards, 186 Distributing Companies, 27 Electric Power Companies, and 3 Joint Electricity Authorities. Supply was given at 37 different voltages, whilst the A.C. suppliers operated at 17 different frequencies. There were 314 authorities which supplied A.C. only, 251 which provided D.C. and A.C., and 29 which provided D.C. only. The sizes of these undertakings in area and maximum demand varied enormously. The C.E.B. decided on 50 cycles as the standard frequency, and on 132,000 volts for its interlinking three phase overhead lines - which became known as 'the Grid'. By 1939 the C.E.B. had completed its objective and the surplus of plant over the national maximum demand had been reduced from 100% to 25%. This success was of great benefit to the nation during the Second World War. The distribution authorities had not been so successful in getting rid of the old D.C. systems. The writer had the job of terminating two of these systems after the War was over.

Mention must be made at this point of an important improvement between the two Wars in respect of switchgear. Due to the growth in the size of load being handled by high voltage three phase power lines it had been found that many automatic oil circuit breakers were not capable of clearing system faults successfully. Some actually exploded when they tried to clear a fault - causing a lot of damage. So a great deal of testing and planning took place and as a result seven special switchgear testing stations were built after 1929. From the experience gained in these stations manufacturers were able to design switchgear which could definitely cope with faults up to specified top limits of fault kVA. As a result power stations and substation switchboards could be planned which were safe to operate.

After the War the industry entered a second phase of planned change. In 1947 Parliament passed an Act which nationalised (on 1 April 1948) the whole of the electricity supply industry. All the above-mentioned authorities were

replaced by the British Electricity Authority, 14 Area Boards, and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board. The B.E.A. had control of all generation as well as overall policy. (A subsequent Act changed the above organisations to an Electricity Council, the Central Electricity Generating Board, 12 Area Boards, the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, and the South of Scotland Electricity Board).

Planning action in 1947 was intended to ensure that everyone in the country could have a supply of electricity and to remove the host of anomalies created by having so many distribution authorities. Consumption of electricity was rising so fast that the only way of coping with the technical and practical problems was through nationalisation. A huge job was carried out and by 1960 the electrification of Great Britain was complete. Although everyone can appreciate the clear need for a universal supply of electricity it is not within every person's range of experience to understand one particularly vital need of industry, namely to have a huge supply available at a particular Works, backed by the national grid. The writer was associated with a District which contained a steelworks with six electric arc furnaces - each of which could take 40,000 kW at peak load. Because furnaces of this type were liable to cause severe flicker effects it was necessary to connect such a load to power lines of the highest available voltage - in this case 275,000 volts. With a nationalised set-up it was a straightforward matter to plan and carry out such an enormous development in a manner which ensured that the other consumers did not have their supply worsened.

Since 1948, many other changes have been affected through planning. Space prevents going into detail, but one might quote how nuclear power has been applied to the generation of electricity. Modern plastics have replaced cast iron and sheet steel in many types of electrical apparatus. Aluminium has replaced copper and lead in electric cables, and so-on. There is no doubt that the effect of planning on electricity supply has been enormous. The service has been greatly improved and the average cost of electricity has been reduced. The exasperating differences in costs and conditions of supply, which existed when there were 588 separate undertakings, have been removed to the splendid benefit of the public.

J. L. FERNS

2 Middle Lane, Rotherham, S65 2SN.

GEORGE ORWELL IS NOT HISTORY

Eric Blair died in 1950. His writings probe the issues and concerns of his time and reflect the intellectual themes which characterized Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. His most famous novel **Nineteen Eighty-four** warned of a future which has yet to materialize. One could thus easily amass evidence and construct a case for assigning George Orwell to history.

Such a position would be seriously flawed and ultimately untenable. Orwell speaks to us from the past about the present. His essays, journals and novels contain a rich lode of observations and opinions which contribute to the unraveling of the complexities endemic to the contemporary world (1). William Appleman Williams (2) once wrote that we study the past so that

we can come back into our time of troubles having shared with the men [sic] of the past their dilemmas, having learned from their experiences, having been buoyed up by their courage and creativeness and sobered by their shortsightedness and failures.

To label Orwell as history is to misinterpret the historical project.

In this brief essay, I want to present the living George Orwell and the insights he offers to both practising and academic planners. Planning theorists in particular too often ignore the streams of intellectual thought which meander through history. While we readily probe historical events and persons we fail to extend our explorations into the less familiar realms of political commentary, literature, and literary criticism, film and painting, and [less so] architectural movements. As a result, our sense of history is often without context. George Orwell is one of many fruitful possibilities for correcting this deficiency. Two Orwellian concerns, one major and one minor, aptly illustrate this position: the clash of postwar ideologies and the relation between the organization of society and the

environment.

George Orwell becomes important at this time in part because of **Nineteen Eighty-Four** (3). Published in 1949, it portrays a future which symbolizes the oppressiveness of mass institutions. All, without dissent, have found it abhorrent. But this symbol has been as frequently misinterpreted as correctly read, a fact recognized and contested by Orwell even as he lay terminally ill. In fact, I would suggest quite unscientifically that within the United States the book's themes have nearly always been distorted.

Nineteen Eighty-Four was published as relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were deteriorating rapidly. The Grand Alliance of World War II, based upon a mutual enemy, dissolved with the defeat of Germany. The long-standing animosity and distrust between the USSR and capitalist countries, Russia's establishment of the 'buffer states' in Eastern Europe, the threat of the atomic bomb (not developed by the USSR until 1949), and the Berlin Blockade of 1948, to mention just a few events, contributed to a Cold War mentality on both sides of the Iron Curtain (4). Orwell's book was thus adrift in an ideological current which ran counter to his basic theme and purpose. That current was a virulent anti-communism in the United States and Western Europe and the division of the world into two camps - the Free World and Communist countries. Anti-Soviet propaganda reached full bloom in 1950 with United States' Senator Joseph McCarthy's public persecutions of Communists and fellow-travelers. In this intellectual environment, **Nineteen Eighty-Four** was viewed as an expose and condemnation of the Soviet system under Josef Stalin and thus a critical dissection of how Communist and Marxist regimes violate human rights, manipulate and distort the truth, and control and oppress their citizens while maintaining low standards of living.

Orwell's purpose, however, was quite different. His intent was to warn people within capitalist democracies of the potential for these societies to squash civil rights, manipulate information, regulate human behavior, and institute a police state rationalized by a permanent wartime posture. Both capitalist democracies and communist countries with planned economies, Orwell argued, have the potential to become totalitarian. The evils of the Soviet Union under Stalin were obvious. Though the dangers were less

evident in the United States and Britain, they were no less possible and equally serious. As Orwell once wrote:

Capitalism leads to dole queues, the scramble for markets and war.
Collectivism leads to concentration camps, hero worship, and war. (5)

While this quotation reads fatalistically, such resignation was not part of Orwell's persona (6). What he refused to do was to choose between capitalism as it existed and socialism as it was practised.

The Cold War, having thawed somewhat since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, is currently undergoing a re-freeze as both President Reagan in the United States and Prime Minister Thatcher in Great Britain champion conservative politics, military superiority, economic protectionism, and unbridled capitalism. Their programs do not simply include these goals, but offer them as clearly articulated alternatives to the liberal-directed growth policies of the postwar era (7). Their words and related actions have reinvigorated the Cold War mentality, fueled the Moral Majority in the United States, and promoted the less extreme neo-conservatives who support the agenda. All of this poses a threat to the legitimacy of planning, and raises an issue which was once salient within our midst.

During the time when **Nineteen Eighty-Fours** do not simply include these goals, but offer them as clearly articulated alternatives to the liberal-directed growth policies of the postwar era (7). Their words and related actions have reinvigorated the Cold War mentality, fuelled the Moral Majority in the United States, and promoted the less extreme neo-conservatives who support the agenda. All of this poses a threat to the legitimacy of planning, and raises an issue which was once salient within our midst.

During the time when **Nineteen Eighty-Four** defenders of planning like Barbara Wooten, proponents of the Welfare State such as Richard Titmuss, and advocates of democratic socialism such as C.A.R. Crosland and Norman Thomas (9). For the latter it was the anarchy of capitalism which cried out for treatment. Planning was one remedy which could regulate the capitalist economy and harness the postwar affluence to a more egalitarian society.

Today the anti-planners are Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Milton Friedman and Irving Kristol while the pro-planners include Felix Rohatyn, Michael Harrington, and John Kenneth Galbraith. (Somewhere in there we must place Peter Hall whose enterprise zone proposal ostensibly clashes with his otherwise Fabian credentials.) Planners are being put on the defensive in public debates. The legitimacy of their contribution is being seriously questioned. Moreover, cutbacks in governmental expenditures on community development, economic development, publicly-subsidized housing and other programs through which planners work are further eroding the influence of planning and threatening planning jobs.

Orwell stood opposed to the basic cast of the debate. His work suggests that planners must not allow their trade to be seen as compatible only with one or another Cold War position. Rather, planners must construct a normative planning which is ideologically aligned neither with capitalism nor communism as they presently exist. The analogy might be made to E. P. Thompson and his comrades in the European Nuclear Disarmament movement who have made the neutrality of Western and Eastern Europe a major part of their strategy (10). Planning must be 'non-aligned' in order to create the potential for a more democratic and humanitarian planning, even while planners themselves continue to work for existing governments. Eventually what is needed, as Orwell wrote in a review of Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, is '... a planned economy [which] can be somehow combined with the freedom of the intellect, which can only happen if the concept of right and wrong is restored to politics' (11).

For Orwell, no 'solution' was intrinsically good or bad. Each procedure, each program, each organization, each society has to be assessed relative to the morality of means, the humanity of consequences, and the frailties of its members. Thus planning, simply described, could not be an answer to the problems facing modern societies, for it can never be separate from the form in which it is implemented and the context in which it is practised. Planning under capitalism takes on many of the traits of that political economy, while that under communism does likewise. As a result, a moral planner has to become divorced from the ideology and structural tendencies of the regime and function as critic rather than as collaborator. This

marginality of moral individuals permeated his novels (e.g. *Burmese Days* and *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying*) and his commentaries, including *Homage to Catalonia* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*. George Orwell never retreated from the complexities of society, and thus perceived no need to align himself with one ideology or another.

As well as speaking to us from the past of the ideological debates within and surrounding planning, Orwell, also comments upon substantive planning concerns. Generally as descriptive asides within his novels and journals and functioning to set the context for the characters themselves, he would comment upon the landscape, frequently pointing out how the unacceptable operations of the political economy were reflected in undesirable environments. Probably the most striking of these descriptions occurs as the story in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* begins to unfold (12). An Orwellian image deserving of the nightmare to follow introduces London, the main city of Airstrip 1, one of the three super-powers dominating the world. Picture a landscape of 'rotting nineteenth century houses, their sides patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy walls sagging in all directions'. Further envision this undifferentiated urban mass punctuated by four 'enormous pyramidal structure(s) of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, three hundred meters into the air'. These are the Ministries of Truth, Love, Peace and Plenty - the latter engaging in economic planning. Through these images, Orwell introduces us to the oppressive dominance of Big Brother, a dominance which is symbolized by these spatial elements and reinforced by a ubiquitous television system which penetrates to almost every public and private space.

Orwell was also attentive to the spatial arrangements of industrial towns and the proliferating inner and outer suburbs of the 1930s and 1940s in England. He denounces both for their 'planless chaos' and the latter for their uniformity. One quote from his commentary *The Road to Wigan Pier*, written for the Left Book Club in 1937, succinctly summarizes his position on industrial towns:

As you walk through the industrial towns you lose yourself in labyrinths of little brick houses blackened by smoke, festering in planless chaos round miry alleys and little cindered yards where there

are stinking dust-bins and lines of grimy washing and half-ruinous w.c.'s (13).

Of the suburbs, the main character, George Bowling, in the novel **Coming up for Air** makes a visually evocative observation:

I don't mind towns growing, so long as they do grow and don't merely spread like gravy over a tablecloth (14).

In other writings, Orwell expresses similar thoughts. Though they do not constitute a coherent and elaborated assessment of urban and regional development, they do convey a rudimentary understanding of an important relationship, that between the nature of the political economy and the form and development of space. For George Orwell, the 'planless chaos' was indicative of the same characteristic of capitalism. Capitalism was not concerned with the environment (the whole of **Coming Up for Air** exudes this position), nor with the quality of housing and neighborhoods for the working class (see **The Road to Wigan Pier**). Greed and the amorality of capitalism were thus reflected in the quality of the physical and natural environments.

George Orwell, then, is not history. He speaks to us in 1984 with the same fervor and pertinence as he did in 1948 when he wrote his final and most famous novel. He speaks not just through that book, **Nineteen Eighty-Four**, but through all of his writings and his life. Historical ideas not only provide the seeds for knowledge which only later flowers, but often those earlier ideas have their own contemporary significance. For planning theorists and practitioners, there is a rich lode of history to be mined, not just in the writings of the early planners (15) but also in those of social commentators, novelists, and intellectuals. Planning must be placed within society, rather than isolated in a space reserved only for planning thought and action. Reading George Orwell for his present voice demonstrates again the value of this fundamental truth of historical scholarship.

ROBERT A. BEAUREGARD
Rutgers University.

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