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This Issue:

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A.L.P on Redevelopment and new Ministry

1/14/8 The Annual Conference of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Labor Party in June 1968 adopted a report on housing and related matters, mostly on redevelopment and a co-ordinating urban development ministry which the Government, planning circles and the labor movement would do well to study closely.

It is an unfinished job, as indeed was the 1967 A.L.P effort with the booklet entitled "Role of Townplanning", but none the less valuable for that.

We reprint in full the formal conference resolution summarising some of the main conclusions in the Report:-

"(1)

2/14/8 "That the report of the Housing Policy Committee be adopted and the Committee reappointed to continue its work.

"(2) That at both State and Federal level, future Labor Governments should create a Ministry ~~of~~ for Urban Development. Such portfolio to co-ordinate Town Planning, Housing, Redevelopment, Transport and Other major services, in conjunction with a Ministry of Social Welfare.

3/14/8

"(3) That Municipal Councils should not be required to contribute financially to the cost of redevelopment; that such costs are a State and Federal responsibility. That the rate revenue generated by redevelopment should be safeguarded for use by the Council to discharge its responsibilities to the increased population.

"(4) That the present ~~of~~ methods of assessing compensation should be reviewed and that provisions should be incorporated that protect individuals from injustice and exploitation.

"(5) Compensation be paid to home owner occupiers being dispossessed of their properties due to redevelopment programmes sufficient to ~~allow cover all expenses incurred~~ allow them to purchase adequate housing elsewhere, and to compensate totally for such expenses as legal, removal, land tax, estate agent fees, stamp duties etc. which are incurred during the ~~course~~ course of home transfer.

"(6) Compensation be paid to tenants who are dispossessed of their homes, due to redevelopment programmes; sufficient to cover all expenses incurred due to removal and that adequate alternative accommodation which is both suited to needs and income of the tenant be found by the redeveloper before tenants are moved.

"(7) That redevelopment programmes must be designed to offer to a neighbourhood about to be uprooted, the choice of suitable accommodation in an adjacent estate so as to disturb as little as possible the community fabric. And that apart from compensation mentioned in the foregoing recommendations a disturbance allowance must be also included in the compensation paid."

Homes for Elderly People
(by "Gamma")

4/14/8 This article does not deal with homes for frail or dependant elderly people. It deals with the increasing need for accommodation for elderly people who are in good health and who are quite ~~able~~ capable of leading independent lives.

and who are quite capable of leading independent lives. Trends in the Australian community, however, make it difficult for such elderly people to continue to be healthy and independent. For example:-

(1) The re-entry into the work force of women in the 35 to 40 age group results in fewer women of this age being able to help elderly relations.

(2) The city sprawl with its flats and houses built for family accommodation. The self-contained living conditions leave no room for grandparents, and the family-size home is too large for an elderly couple as sole occupiers.

(3) The redevelopment of areas of inner Melbourne is resulting in the demolition of homes many of which are occupied by elderly people who have tended to concentrate in these areas because the houses are small or because they have always lived there.

5/14/8 The Commonwealth Government, through its grants for aged persons Homes, the State Government, through the Housing Commission and Municipal Councils through their various welfare services have powers to provide much more adequately for the needs of elderly people. There needs to be much more co-ordination in the planning of community support for the elderly. The key to such co-ordinated planning could be the Municipal Council.

6/14/8 Commonwealth Grants of \$2 for every \$1 raised as donations have financed a net-work of Homes for the Elderly which have been ~~erected~~ erected mainly by Church organisations. The "donation" is usually raised by the elderly person paying about \$2,000 to ensure accommodation. This \$2,000 is then matched by the Commonwealth \$4,000. In 1966 the Homes Act was widened to provide for Municipal Councils to erect homes and to receive the grant. So far Moorabbin is the only Council to make use of the widening of the Act.

7/14/8 The Housing Commission build mainly for families. About 3000 lone elderly people are on the Housing Commission waiting list, and about 400 married couples. Where, as at most Church Homes for Elderly there are amenities such as dining rooms, craft rooms and libraries, etc. these are not built into Housing Commission flats for elderly people. If the Municipal Council donates the land for the Housing Commission to build flats for elderly people, the Council can allocate the flats to tenants of their choice and they can locate Council facilities close by to the flats: but such piece-meal provision of what should be essential amenities ~~built right into the flat buildings~~ is not good enough. The Housing Commission block of flats for elderly should incorporate in the buildings themselves the same facilities as are provided in the very best of the Homes erected under the Commonwealth Homes schemes

The Housing Commission flats are a much better economic proposition for the elderly people. There is no "in-going" "donation" and the rent is very low and reduced for those with less than \$419 in the bank. In the Homes built with the Commonwealth grant there is, in addition to the "in-going donation" a maintenance ~~charge~~ charge which is approximately the same amount as the Housing Commission rent.

8/14/8 What the Pensioners Say About Homes for the Elderly:

The views of the Combined Pensioners Association:-

(1) The Commonwealth Government should amend the Aged Persons Homes Act to provide the \$2 to \$1 to State Governments (including thus the Housing Commission) and Trade Unions.

(2) That homes which are built under subsidy for any organisation, on becoming vacant, should be let to tenants without the new occupier having to pay large sums as "in-going"

donation.

(3) That a definite proportion of Homes built under the "Aged Person's Homes Act" should be for ~~a~~ persons who have no wherewithall to make a cash donation to obtain a home.

9/14/8 Some Odd Information

The Combined Pensioners Association ^{aim} at "feeding back the Federal grants to the State Government."

Many pensioners favour pensioners homes scattered throughout the community. They feel that "age is catching".

At present there is a survey being made of elderly citizens living in the Hotham Estate. This has not yet been completed. At the Widows Consultation held in September 1967 and at the 1966 Conference of Social Workers a Scheme was suggested that Municipal Councils provide a service for maintaining the homes of elderly people---a sort of Maintenance on Wheels---for washers on taps, broken locks, light fuses etc., the service to be at minimal charges.

10/14/8 When Thompson Was Housing Minister

"The Commonwealth should grant \$2 for every \$1 spent by the States on housing for pensioners in elderly persons units", said Mr Thompson when he was Minister for Housing in June 1966.

Mr David Scott, Associate Director of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, supported the call made by Mr Thompson. He pointed out that even with two for one Commonwealth subsidy, Church and other voluntary organisations could not meet the demand. In 1965 for example, there was a drop of 50% in the Federal subsidy paid. This showed that voluntary organisations cannot cope. Mr Scott pointed out that "Many people would prefer to be housed by the Victorian Housing Commission than by churches or voluntary organisations. ("Herald" 8/1/66).

Many people still imagine that it is some dire tragedy to have to seek accommodation in some "institution". A visit to one of the new types of Homes would soon show a different picture.

This accommodation provides the greatest amount of security for elderly citizens, whilst at the same time their independence is ~~observed~~ preserved. In such places the elderly people can enjoy the companionship of others if they so desire, or when they need it they can have the greatest privacy.

As most of the buildings have been recently erected, they are especially designed for the elderly people. Pressure needs to be brought on the Housing Commission to improve their flats for elderly by incorporating some of the detailed conveniences which are a feature of the Homes which are provided by the Churches and voluntary organisations with the aid of the Commonwealth grant.

A Bevy of Books

(And A Few Comments on Each of Them)

1. "People in Melbourne", Researched by the Metropolitan Region Study Group of the Inter-Church Trade and Industry Mission
282 Little Collins Street, published June 1968. \$1.25.
2. "Ecumenopolis: Tomorrow's City" by C.P. Doxiadis in the
Encyclopaedia Britannica "Book of the Year" 1968 " pp 16-38.
3. "The City". A series of essays edited by Robert Park and Ernest Burgess re-printed by Chicago University Press; first printed 1925. Melbourne City Libraries No 301.36 Par.

11/14/8 1. "People in Melbourne"

A home-grown product of our own very city. A painstakingly

Careful analysis of what a "Melbournian" has come to mean, it is the result of a committee representing now 10 Churches. It is clearly a composite job, a committee job, with different sections written by different committeemen. This, together with using the methodological device of the "ekistics grid" of Doxiadis, etches in a thoroughgoing sort of portrait.

This is the strength of the effort, but all the facts and attitudes culled from life and statistics have hardly been raked over enough and synthesised enough to produce sufficiently detailed "goals" or "possible plans" (the two last and crowning sections).

Its committee character (God bless it, we are all for committee efforts!) nevertheless results sometimes in different factual material (e.g. on p. 12 we learn 70% own their own homes and on p. 19, 77%; on p. 11 we learn that Australia has third highest rate of car ownership after U.S. and N.Z., and on p. 25 it is said to be second highest after U.S.)

More serious is that there seems to be judgments stemming from different, even contradictory approaches.

For example, if an employer during moments of employer-mindedness hasn't written this passage, we'll write an Irregular!

"The situation of almost full employment brings with it discontent among the workers. Stoppages, strikes and demands for increased pay and for shorter working hours become prevalent. Inducements in the way of fringe benefits add to costs to the consumer. The trend towards increased leisure time is a problem in itself.

"The problem facing business in such a society is in knowing how to get the best productivity from a work force that knows no competition and where public apathy is more the rule than the exception" (p. 14). longs for the good old days

It doesn't quite say so but you can't help getting the impression that the author of this passage, when competition of unemployment kept the workers smartened up.

At the other extreme, we are urged (we think quite rightly) to establish "community goals" and turn our hearts against the acquisitiveness thrust upon us by the competition of the business world:

"The singular pressing need in Melbourne in 1968 is the establishment of community goals capable of enthusiastic support by the citizen body---" to offset the ---"seemingly selfish goals" of the ---"acquisition of material things---" leading to attitudes of "Blow you Jack" and "Keeping up with the Joneses". (pp 39-40)

"---our grandfathers", we are told, "accepted 'God, King and Country' as the unquestionable and inextricably linked sources of motive of all endeavour. A social and political vision strong enough to overcome the formidable barriers of ignorance and apathy must be found. 'Man, Society and Environment' would be a better slogan for today." (p. 40.)

There are other magnificent generalisations. For a sample; " 'Trend' planning has contributed to the lack of definition of communities by locality, each new area developing not by plan but because it is not undesirable." (p. 41.)

This double negative is a neat, and just, diagnosis of the current level of administrative zoning of land use. Unfortunately what is "not undesirable" and not-incompatible aggregated many times over without design and purpose becomes undesirable sprawl.

Finally, we advance a constructive criticism. We know a Committee cannot go on forever. A phase of study needs to be rounded off at some point, and it is good to have "people in Melbourne" this year to stimulate the general planning ferment. Yet the final section "Possible Plans" (pp 44-47) is far too superficial and scrappy a result to rest on such a mass of excellent material. Could we hope that the "Study Group" continue its research and bring out a companion volume, at least as long entitled "Plans for Melbourne's People" or some such?

Meantime, dear reader, there is an easier though no less essential task for you. Can you buy it, read it, enjoy and debate it?

12/14/8 2. "Ecumenopolis: Tomorrow's city"

Constantinos Apostolos Doxiadis, the famous Greek townplanner who has developed his own theory of "ekistics" or the ~~study~~ science of human settlements, and financed his own university to study this and kindred subjects, and whose planners operate in 30 different countries has condensed in 20 pages for the Encyclopaedia Britannica a stimulating examination of the ~~future~~ road ahead on a world scale.

For someone like the ~~reader, who~~ writer, who has not read this author before, these are some of the fresh ideas which stand out:-

13/14/8 (a) Stabilisation of World Population

"---the total population of the earth may stabilise one or two centuries from now at levels of 20,000,000,000 ; 35,000,000,000 or 50,000,000,000. On this basis the corresponding urban population will reach levels of about 17,000,000,000 ; 32,000,000,000 or 46,000,000,000 "

Our calculations make this to be from 85% to 92% predicted to live in cities.

14/14/8 (b) Ecumenopolis

Between now and then the prediction is (H-bomb war always excepted) for stormy accelerating growth of urban complexes which will be on such a ~~xxx~~ scale as we have never dreamt.

"---Such cities growing dynamically over the next two or three generations, will finally be interconnected, in one continuous network, into one universal city which we call the ecumenical city, the city of the whole inhabited earth, or Ecumenopolis---the unique city of mankind."

Thus there will be great bands of urbanisation, varying in density right across or around the seashores of every continent, and connected up too between continents better by air transport than they are now. These will not be cities, as now, belonging to different national, racial, religious or local groups, ready to fight each other.

15/14/8 (c) The Job Is Under Construction

When the population has stabilised, in say, 150 years there will be consequent stabilisation in the growth of urban complexes. We are therefore already laying the foundations of ecumenopolis. Like Mumford, Doxiadis warns us that we either write back humanity into this job, or these great complexes will become a Necropolis, Cities of Death.

(Both men impose on the capitalist system stupendous tasks it is simply not equipped to handle: it's a wonder both men are not outright socialists!)

"---The big question that arises is not about the dimensions, structure, and form, but about the functions of Ecumenopolis, the type of life that will be created within it, and the quality that Ecumenopolis will offer to man." (p.28)

There follows what he considers some basic principles of "human scale" and "human communities"

"---If we want to create a human scale, we must keep the automobile out of it. If we want our children to grow up safely, we must create streets and neighbourhoods where they can run freely to the corner shop, the playground and the school. If we ourselves want to enjoy a walk and really see beautiful streets and squares, to create art again that is not only for museums, we must not separate man from the car (how could we and why should we ?); rather we must separate the paths of man from those of the automobile" (p.29).

(How many times have we heard that ? Mumford, Ritter,

Buchanan, Doxiadis---when do we make a start in Melbourne?)

His idea of scale in a human community is 7,000 ft. X 7,000 ft., no more than 50,000 people with industry included. (Ballarat is about this number of people but "sprawlier", is it not, being not 1½ miles across but nearer three or four times this spread? Oakleigh, e.g. with 51,200 in 1964 averages about 4 miles across).

The connecting up of these "cells" is dealt with. "With proper organisation of transport and telecommunications network, the extra-human scale of the large city can be turned into a human one--".

16/14/8 (d) Dynametropolis

The connecting up of urban areas however will proceed ~~in~~ incorrectly if haphazard growth is permitted. Doxiadis favours unidirectional growth---growth in one direction no matter what the original shape of the city. This prevents its central parts suffering from too much pressure: areas growing up around a city in every direction stifles its centre so it cannot breathe, and attempts to cut through freeways to the centre only compound the congestion. So with a complex of cities, directions of growth for all must be planned to prevent the growth of one impinging on another.

(Note this concept is similar to the idea of a Geelong-Melbourne-Gippsland type of "Melbourne", or to the Town and Country Planning Board's report for corridor development towards Warragul, as against the MMBW and now the Government policy of western and northern development for a "balanced" Melbourne)

17/14/8 3. "The City" (or 1925 and Still Going Strong) !

An intensely interesting study with many lessons for us, facing in 1967, very similar problems to those faced in the USA in the 1920's. This book is perhaps one of the first attempts to make a scientific study. For example on the problem of migrant groups and how they adapted to American life. Mass migration to U.S. in the early part of the nineteenth century, examined in 1925 when the book was written, has many similarities to Australia today.

Similarly, the conditions of youth in a rapidly expanding city life in Australia today have much in common with US in the 20's. The book deals particularly with the social welfare of the people.

It is pointed out in the first essay "Human Behaviour and Urban Environment" that "Anthropology, the science of man, has been mainly concerned up to the present with the study of primitive people---" and later it states: "We are mainly indebted to writers of fiction for our more intimate knowledge of contemporary urban life". Remember, this was written in 1925.

Some of the titles of the essays will indicate the nature of the studies---"The growth of the City", "Magic Mentality and City Life", & "Community Organisations and Juvenile Delinquency", "Can Neighbourhood Work Have a Scientific Basis", "The Mind of the Hobo".

Although these studies show much that is evil in the life of large cities, on the whole an optimism predominates throughout the book. This confidence in the future is expressed in many ways. Perhaps one of the most concise statements expressing this optimism is this: "The city is the natural habitat of civilised man---all great cultures are city-born"

Have you got a pigeon-hole for "Irregular" ? You have ?

Well we take no offence at that, provided you read it before you put it in the pigeon-hole !

Is it too long ? Have you other ideas for material ? If you have please help the editor.