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The Dominant Trend is to a Sinister Urban Form:

A quote from Manuel Castells' essay "The Wild City".

"So unless the progressive forces of the U.S. are able to develop major movements, with enough social and political support, to rectify the dominant trend in forthcoming urban policies, what could emerge from the current urban crisis is a simplified and sharpened version of the exploitative metropolitan model with the addition of mass police repression and control in a largely deteriorating economic setting.

The suburbs will remain fragmented and isolated, the single family homes close over themselves, the shopping centres a bit more expensive and a lot more surveyed, the highways more crowded and less maintained, the central business district still crowded during office hours and more deserted and curfewed after 5 p.m., city services increasingly crumbling, public facilities less and less public, the surplus population more and more visible, the drug culture and individual violence expanding, gang and high society ruling the bottom and the top in order to keep "the top and bottom" social order, the urban movement depressed and discouraged and the urban planners eventually attending more international conferences on the outer safer world. What would emerge of a failure of urban movements to undertake their task, is a new and sinister form . . . the WILD CITY" .

\* MANUEL CASTELLS was born in Spain in 1942. He has taught in Santiago - de Chile, Madison, Wisconsin, Montreal and Paris. He is described as . . . "writing out of a vast familiarity with literature and a close observation of salient developments on the urban scene, particularly struggles, in at least three continents" . . . The strong theoretical aspect of his work distinguishes him among a group of influential Marxists scholars which includes Poulantzas, Althusser, Balibar, Badiou, Bettelheim and Palloix". Most of Castells books have not yet been translated into English except "The Urban Question" which is available at the International Bookshop for \$18. 00. In the Canadian Magazine "New Generation" Fred Caloran has written an article entitled "The Urbanism of Manuel Castells". Caloran explains that Castells "attempts to exploit the marxian legacy of material and class-determined shape of urban society". He points out that Castells warned that "a party erected on a limited base of urban issues, without a footing in the broader, more general social contradictions, will inevitably crumble." Caloran writes about the conclusions Castells has drawn from his experience in urban struggles. Here is a summary of the four points of this conclusion . . . .

1. There is no such thing as the urban struggle. Each movement is specific to the particular structural situation which produces and nourishes it.

2. The stakes in urban struggles are of second-level importance . . . they do not directly put into question the mode of production of society or the political dominance of its controlling classes . . . thus necessary dependence between urban struggles and other social struggles.
3. The effects of an urban movement on power relations between classes in a concrete situation are decided above all by linkages of the urban contradictions with other contradictions of the social structure. The success and extent of these linkages will depend to a significant degree on the capacity of the State Apparatus to absorb and integrate.
4. These absolutely crucial linkages and passages from one sphere of the social structure determine whether a struggle becomes part of the dynamic for radical change . . . this depends on the process of the urban struggle itself . . . the role of organisation is decisive in the orientation . . . organisation of the struggle will determine whether the movement is a source for social change or a tool of participation within the framework.\*