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An irregular publication for members of the Town Planning Research Group (not for general publication or republication).

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3. Institute of Architects Quiz Political Parties.

I/33/ C. Fitzroy Feels Its Way Forward/
Or. Can a Local Plan for the People by the People Emerge ?

"The Age" 23/5/'70 reported that the North Fitzroy Residents Action Committee, fighting to save 170 homes " are planning their own redevelopment with the help of architects." "Irregular" investigated.

There is an area about to be proclaimed by the Housing Commission in North Fitzroy called the "Brocks St. Reclamation Area" bounded by Nicholson St., Reid St., Church St., and Rae St.,. We shall call it "the block" for short. In the block there have blossomed on the houses the posters "This house is not for sale to the Housing Commission". In acreage the block is nearly as big as the Edinburgh Gardens which lie to the other side of St. George's Rd and which adjoin the Fitzroy Cricket Grounds.

That is news, maybe, but old type news.

Richmond, South Melbourne, Carlton, North Melbourne, Richmond again and now Fitzroy prove that the owner-resident and shop-keepers of the 1960s and the 1970s do not want to be acquired.

Fitzroy may prove something a little more. It could supply some new-type news.

The North Fitzroy Action Committee consists strictly of residents of the affected block and on it are representatives of most of the nationalities who reside there... Greeks, Italians, Maltese, Yugoslavians, and Australians.

The convener of the Action Committee, Mr. Martin Jansen, asked the Fitzroy Residents Association (F.R.A.) which is itself a fledgling organisation (akin to but born after the Carlton Association) whether F.R.A. could enlist the support of architects to help prepare some sort of alternative plan for the block.

F.R.A. have had further talks about this problem and have set up a specialist sub-committee to work on a plan, the object of which would be to retain anybody living or working in the block who desired to remain there.

This sub-committee which includes professionals such as engineers, architects and sociologists have decided that whatever alternatives are worked out, they should be worked out at all stages in conjunction with the people affected in the block, and should include :

- * deciding what areas (if any) within the block need ~~redevelop~~ redevelopment.
- * The type and character of such redevelopment.
- * Procedures for re-settlement within the block of any desiring it.
- * Attention to ~~improving~~ ^{improving} community amenities.

The sub-committee of the F.R.A. do not see their role as decision - makers but rather as advisors presenting alternatives for the block residents to decide. Nor do they see their role as selfishly block-minded. Whilst not sympathetic with the methods of the Housing Commission they are conscious of the re-housing needs of the people which the Commission has to solve.

One of the problems they are grappling with is therefore how to provide within such a block -redevelopment a degree of extra, suitable accomodation, although they do not acknowledge that so much of the Commission housing should be in the inner suburbs. They believe that they can demonstrate that worthwhile redevelopment including such increased accomodation can take place without wholesale destruction and without disturbing the lives of the people there. They believe that the residents could work wonders with only a fraction of the financial assistance involved in bull-dozing the block and block reconstruction.

"Irregular" adds a hope , which we hope will not be a pious ~~one~~. We hope that the Government and the Commission will have enough sense and sensibility to permit this experiment to proceed. We hope that all other authorities and do-gooders will have enough sense and sensibility not to interfere or to try to interfere, and only give assistance if asked.

Planners everywhere talk of the primacy of the people themselves participating in the planning process. So! Hands off! Give them a go !

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2/3/0.

2. BOOK REVIEWS.

2/33/0

(a) "Let's Be Human"
A.L.P.'s new deal for Social Welfare.

"~~Every~~one has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social service, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age and other lack of livelihood beyond his control"

Article 25, (I) Declaration of Human Rights.

This quotation heads one of the chapters in the booklet "Let's Be Human". This booklet which has been produced by the Social Welfare Committee of the Victorian Branch of the Labor Party, will become a text book on social welfare.

"Let's Be Human" contd.

This prophesy is made for three reasons.

1) Discussion on policy to continue.

For the past three years drafts of this policy have been discussed widely by a cross section of the community. In 1968 it was revived and adopted by the Victorian A.L.P. as its state policy and then in 1969 the Federal Conference of the A.L.P. also adopted it.

At the launching of the book, Mr Gough Whitlam (Federal A.L.P. Leader) called on the general public to examine the document critically and constructively and expressed the contention that social welfare should be modified as society changes/

2) Respect for Dignity of People.

The program probes deeply into poverty and the remedies which are proposed are such as would add dignity to human life to the extent that poverty would be removed.

It asserts the fundamental concept that welfare must not only be decentralised but must be placed on a regional basis, with the Federal Government guaranteeing the finance to enable local health and welfare schemes to be firmly established with services at the local level integrated as part of the total welfare system.

3) A Program in Detail .

The recommendations include a Ministry of Social Welfare at both State and Federal levels, a Royal Commission to investigate and report on social services, a Social Welfare Planning and Research Secretariat, the employment of social workers by municipal councils with salaries subsidised by the Government, the liberalisation of social welfare payments, the development of "one stop" welfare programs centred on Family Advisory Councils.

Consideration is also given to such controversial aspects of social welfare as the abolition of the means test, the introduction of "negative income tax", a national superannuation scheme,; but no definite policy on these matters has been stated.

Comment... Such a program indicates that to date the A.L.P. Welfare Committee has directed its main attention to considering how to promote the economic well being of the people, and on how to adapt the political institutions to integrate such a scheme.

Because, in the past social services have mainly been confined to welfare (meaning mainly economic welfare) and health (meaning mainly deviations from health) , this booklet mainly deals with these two aspects of the human problems in our community. However, social services in the future can only be effective if the existing community facilities (pre-school centres, domiciliary services, recreation centres etc) are updated to meet modern needs. There is very little consideration of this aspect of social welfare in "Lets Be Human "

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"Lets Be Human " costs \$1.00 and is obtainable from the Australian Labor Party, 54 Victoria St. Melbourne.

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3/33/10

(b) " Plan for Melbourne Part 2 "

On community services, transport, urban renewal, by I.R. and M. McGrow.)

No Starry Eyes on the Millionaire's Mansions.

An unusual document has been published by the Modern Melbourne Committee of the Communist Party of Australia.

From some past samples of community publicity it would be expected that a policy on town planning would be an attack on the big, bad capitalist and a call for revolution so that the mansions of the millionaires could be handed over to the toiling masses. This would be coupled with a starry eyed description of the Elysian life in the Soviet Union.

Nothing of the sort! Far from caricaturing the capitalists, "Plan for Melbourne" is a plan for all people; and there is no eulogy of any socialist country.

The second unusual feature of this book is that it projects seemingly simple solutions to many complicated town planning and social problems.

On first reading, it may appear over simplified... because so much seems to depend on common sense, but a more careful consideration of the facts, and figures and arguments, indicate that the authors have studied and discussed the problems they have written about.

Three Sections.

"Plan for Melbourne Part 2" deals with only three topics... Updated Community Services, Urban Renewal, and Transport. an Alternative. Other parts are planned for the future.

So topical are these subjects that the publication of the book, written before the close of 1969, was delayed so that an addendum could be added dealing with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan which appeared just before Christmas. Although the adjourned debate on the Urban Renewal Bills had not commenced when the book went to press, the Section dealing with Urban Renewal is completed by an appendix on the Bills.

Similarly, the first section Updated Community Facilities & Services deals with such current problems as the pre-school care and working and student mothers, domiciliary services, the problems of the lone parents... all of which are currently in the news.

Unexpected Angles.

Unexpected and no doubt controversial arguments crop up, for example, that the real needs of the biggest corporate interests of the central business district (C.B.D.) are for low density around the Golden Mile. and not as popularly believed for high density and conversely that the C.B.D. protects small enterprises and creates diversity which makes the city attractive to ordinary citizens. The concept of a "c-operative area" in renewal projects has a smack of originality but could well answer some perplexing problems. Proposals for overcoming the blight of mediocrity in low density areas for children's recreational activities are interesting as are the solutions suggested for pre-school centres for the children of working or student mothers.

"Plan for Melbourne Part 2 " contd.

The bold concept of the character of metro-town-urban-social-centres around selected railway stations and off-loading from freeways onto pedestrian platforms on the Yarra Bank opposite Flinders St., station is another thought provoking suggestion.

A word should be said about the addendums and prefaces. Some of the most interesting material in the book is to be found here. To date it appears to be the only publication which makes any fundamental critique of the Wilbur Smith methodology on transportation which is to be found in an addendum. Of the appendices some deal with usefu; figures, e.g subsidies for private developers, but others with analytical and philosophical subjects. Appendix 8, for example, "Theories Against Redevelopment " deals extensively with Jane Jacob's ideas.

Historical Gaps

Some of the best parts of the book are the sections in which current solutions emerge from an analyseis of historical growth.. e.g. the history of the various pre-school services, the changing attitude to the C.B.D, the evolving re-assessment of what now constitutes "sub-standard " housing etc.

The historical materialist approach is a natural for Communist authors but from the standpoint of their own methodology, there are serious gaps which weaken the text in parts. There is not, for example, a consistently strong historical examination of the nature of child-hood and youth-hood, nor the transport system, nor of the Housing Commission and policies on these subjects, although feasible sounding, nevertheless seem to "hang in the air " and lack the strength of inevitability which seems to emerge from other sections where such historical examinations have been made.

The lack of attack on the millionaires mansions robs the publication of some "nostalgic" "colour". In its place, the authors would no doubt defend themselves, is a set of policies which constitute an attack on the millionaire's powere to determine the quality of life.

"Plan for Melbourne" is priced \$2.00 and can be purchased at the International Bookshop, 17 Elizabeth St. Melbourne. "Plan for Melbourne" Part I. which was published in 1969 is also available. It deals with facts and principles of town planning and is priced at 30 cents.

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4/ 33/ 0

"Ideas for Australian Cities", by Hugh Stretton.

In the first chapter of his book "Ideas for Australian Cities" Hugh Stretton speaks out for "more equality.... I'm for the poor against the rich, unless the rich have exceptionally productive excuses.... also for women and children against men"

In the first chapter too, he lists his conclusions some of which will become a framework for thinking about our cities of the future. He singles out two hindrances which are preventing his proposals from being put into pracise.... " the first is the shortage of educated skills in the state' and cities' public services. The second is that some rich and cultivated minorities would be better pleased by a huge single centred cities, and they may be powerful enough to make sure that these are what we get."

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"Ideas for Australian Cities " contd.

With a wealth of factual material and a vivid imagination of how humans could live together in the future, Mr Stretton critically examines Canberra, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. As the author himself says of his book "It is an impressionist essay"

The big question is.... Is Mr Stretton's inspiration infectious? Will the reader be encouraged to find some way to actively participate in realising some of the " Ideas for Cities " ?.

No doubt he will infect many. But, the book could have been an even more powerful inspiration for action if he had reported some of the new types of activity which are now taking place in the community. A new force, expressed in various words.... participation in planning, planning should be for the people and by the people, democratic planning processes, consultative planning..... but, more importantly the mushrooming of new types of local organisations, perhaps the best known examples being the inner suburban groups in Melbourne and in Sydney, but also other groups in outer and middle suburbs are also beginning to be active. Such organisations are being formed to campaign on specific local problems, but more and more of them are beginning to be concerned about the wider issues of public participation in planning. so that the ordinary citizen can take some part in determining his social environment.

Mr Stretton explains in the second paragraph of his book "This book reports an attempt to find out, chiefly by asking planners themselves." Perhaps as the book makes its impact on the Australian community, the author, or someone he may have inspired, will write a companion study based on asking the people who are attempting to participate in the planning process.

"Ideas for Australian Cities" is already being discussed by many different groups of people. In fact it may well replace "Life and Death of American Cities (Jane Jacob) which Mr Stretton describes in these words as "The book is the bible of the Carlton and Richmond intellectuals who read claret stained copies of it (sometimes I do hope, by the light of candlesticks in bottles) in their refurbished terrace house under the shadows of the Housing Commission towers."

To their credit, some of the claret stainers are grappling with the important practical town planning problems of their suburbs. they may over-simplify some problems. over-emphasise others, but a growing number are active participants in local organisations as well as absorbers of theory.

It is unfortunate that Mr Stretton has angled his book on a crude dichotomy of rich and poor... reminiscent of the Ragged Trousered Philanthropist of last century ... in so doing he tends to gloss over the needs of the whole work force and its many segments which are being increasingly diversified and which consequently are throwing up increasingly diversified styles of living.

"Ideas for Cities " teems with ideas, the author has the gift of being able to "interst and surprise and hold people, second by second, step by step, page by page, from image to image, from room to room, through doorways and around curves" (to quote from "Ideas for Cities" out of context ... page 296) He involves the reader in intimate discussion, referring to experiences which many may have shared, probing deep seated prejudices, exposing some of the sources of inequality, and above all else placing man and his human needs as the central purpose of cities.

"Ideas for Australian Cities" contd.

It is inevitable that in such a book many ideas discussed and conclusions reached will not meet with full agreement... even from those who also want planning to meet human needs, The significance of Mr Stretton's book is that it is a challenge to rethink some of our town planning ideas.

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"Ideas for Australian Cities " by Hugh Stretton, 1970, published by the author for the benefit of the urban social services of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence , Melbourne... price \$1.95, obtainable at most book shops.

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5/33/03

Institute of Architects Quiz
Political Parties.

The Victorian Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects published a half page "Age" advertisement on Saturday May 23 setting out A.L.P D.LP. and Liberal answers to 6 searching town-planning questions. Excellent ! This serves to raise the public consciousness to a level which these subjects have long had in real life.

We invite "Irregular" readers to use our columns for their own analysis and comment on the analysis by the various parties.

We will "kick-off" the controversy with four comments.

(I) The Architects' Questions.

The first question seemed to be cast in too stiff a framework, making alternatives either contrived "peripheral growth " or a "green belt surrounding the present metropolis"

How does one classify , for example linear corridor growth with "green" either side ? By "containing" the physical size do they mean with dormitory satellites the other side of the green belt or with new cities so far away that commuting is out of the question and which must therefore have their own complex of industries, commerce and culture.

Again, question 4... Will you allow the public greater opportunity to participate in the precise location of future freeways. ... " Are the public then, not to be permitted to participate to the extent of proposing alternative transport systems which which may make particular freeways entirely unnecessary ? Giving the public the sacred right of a voice on a particular freeway location is like a husband giving his wife a voice on the curtains but not on the design of the house.

(2) The A.L.P.

A big leap forward by the A.L.P on planning approaches is apparent. Yesteryear the style of the A.L.P. policy on such matters was cramped and pre-occupied by habit of mainly proposing some different administrative machinery from the Liberals. ... as if, given the machinery, mysteriously , something good was bound to eventuate.

A.L.P. Answers to Architects' Quiz contd...

For example of the improvement. "Labor does not desire pseudo-participation but a living involvement in any matter which affects the daily lives of Victorian citizens. This sort of participation is an important counter-balance to the alienation factor so prevalent in modern Western Societies "

"People must have some real power over their own destinies and life style if feelings of social alienation are to be conquered.... "

But just the same, although strengthened out of recognition on the democratic procedures, Labor policy still tends to side step what sort of renewal policies it favours. (although in turn the architects question No 3 did not try to probe this all important object, but placed the emphasis on research. However, necessary research is, it is also a convenient shelter for politicians to hide behind!

3 The D.L.P.

The D.L.P. certainly does not hide behind tomorrow's research as an excuse for vagueness today.

Instead they have made a leap for the popular band wagon and multiplied what they think is popular by ten to make sure of their place on the wagon.

In doing so they have produced pure "Clarkism".. the father and son team of Colin Clark and Nick Clark seem to be the theoretical mentors of the D.L.P. in this field. Dr Colin Clark, former economic advisor to the Cain Government is now Director of Economic Progress, Mannix College Monash University. His son is Nick Clark, Head of the Transport Section, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Melbourne.

In December 1967. Colin Clark advocated 10 new industrial cities each with at least 250,000 people. one new city every two years. He strongly criticised the Town and Country Planning Board's proposals for corridor development saying this would create a deplorable drift in the current urban sprawl (see Cross Section Dec. 1967 or Irregular No 7. ref. 21 /7./ 8.

At the "workshop seminar" on the Melbourne's Future Growth 7/10. '67 Mr. Nick Clark gave a pronostication of transport in 1980s.... 250 miles of freeways. everyone with a car except the aged, infirm and children. Public transport only for these exceptions and to include express buses in priority lanes on freeways. Thus there will be a "phasing out" of some sections of railways and trmways, the city underground loop would be unnecessary and the inner suburbs, apart from a few high rise offices or residentials would give way to parking and freeway requirements (for further information see Irregular No 21. ref, 13. 21. 9.)

In the "Sun" 5. i. '70 it was reported that Dr Colin Clark in "Meet the Press" had considered the underground would not be justified and that Melbourne's transportation plan was founded on the basic error of an increased working population in the central business district. and he instanced U.S.A. cities to "prove" that the C.B.D' would decline (Naturally, they decline relatively anyway, the bigger the city gets, but even decline absolutely because of the freeway system. The Clarks advocate a radial freeway and predict a decline. Then use

D.L.P. Answers to Architect's Quiz contd.

the prediction of a decline to advocate freeways instead of public transport!!)

The D.L.P. reply to the architects' quiz that they believe in 20 new cities of 200,000 to contain the size of Melbourne they even talk of reducing Melbourne's size!!! It criticises the Metropolitan Transportation Plan because it would "only serve to enhance Melbourne's centrality and the importance of the C.B.D. to the detriment of the rest of the state "..... " the easiest and most economic way of preventing Melbourne from becoming a "car dominated city while simultaneously encouraging decentralisation is by not providing multi, million dollar freeways or underground railways, but rather utilising this for new town development "

Makes decentralisation seem quite easy ! Would some economist please explain what industries are to locate where, as a basis for 20 cities each the size of Geelong in 30 years!

4. The Liberals.

Some of the material sounds good. The thing is can you believe it ?

One example. "We accept the findings of the committee (ie the Metropolitan Transportation Committee) based on exhaustive study and research over four years..... Melbourne is not a "car dominated city" It has a higher proportion of commuter travelling by public transport than most other cities, and our aim is to increase that proportion by extensive improvement in public transport services (our emphasis)

Here by contrast is the "Transportation Plan" prediction Vol III, page 22. ... "because of the predominance of car travel the public transport component of all trips in 1985 is expected to be 21.6 % . In 1964 public transport accounted for 37.7 % of all daily trips " !!!

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All readers of "Irregular" are invited to send in articles for publication. Please send articles to the editor by the 20th of the month, if it is desired that the material be published in the "Irregular" of the following month.

If you have not enough time to write an article send comments or ideas for articles to the editor.