

## Inura BULLETIN 12

January 1997

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bulletin compiled by  
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# Inura

International Network for  
Urban Research and Action

Bulletin 12

January 1997



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cover: Poster from UK Commission for Racial Equality campaign 1996/7  
"Unite For Equality - young people today are growing up in a diverse society.  
They know no other."  
"All Equal All Different" is the EU Youth Group campaign banner for 1997

## PARTICIPANTS at INURA 1996

The Exodus Collective, Glen Jenkins, Marvi Maggio, Claudia Schwarz, Mark Saunders  
Ute Lehrer, Roger Keil, Philipp Klaus, Andreas Hofer, Richard Wolff, Andreas Schnelder  
Arie van Wijngaarden, Christian Schmid, Hansruedi Hiltz, Jussi Jauhialainen,  
Rose Marie Buys, Karl-Heinz Deventer, Bob Colenutt, Geraint Ellis, Fred Robinson,  
Raffaele Paloscia, Umberto Blumati, Daniel Dorling, Michael Edwards, Keith Halfacree,  
Stefan de Corte, Hilary Wainwright, Allan Cochrane, Louanne Tranchell

London  
January 1997

Dear Friends

Greetings and Very Best Wishes for this New Year 1997.

In this INURA Bulletin there are summaries of some of the presentations and the events of our 1996 annual meeting, as well as the invitation to INURA 7 in Zurich in June 1997.

This year we were not among the wonders of Florence and Siena, organised for us by Giancarlo Paba, Raffaele Paloscia and Daniela Poli. We were not in the delightful city of Amsterdam or in the countryside of Holland, as last year, organised by Annemarie Dekker and Arie van Wijngaarden. We were visiting Luton, Letchworth and Milton Keynes and we were organising it - Bob, Geraint and Louanne - with support from Michael Edwards.

There were good reasons for these three locations: Luton is a modest town, but a notable transport intersection for motorways, rail and airport. It is a car/brewery town with expanding *Vauxhall* and the original HQ for *Whitbread* brewery. It is also the base for the EXODUS Collective, a group of young people who gave us a brilliant welcome and the use of their HAZ Manor where we held most of the conference this year.

The theme "Self-Help and Utopias" led us straight to the struggles of young people trying to provide for themselves what those in authority deny them, or do not deliver for them. EXODUS and other groups throughout the UK and the EU can and do identify worthwhile projects that will accommodate their needs, but it is a difficult process to see them through to completion.

We visited the first Garden City in Letchworth and stayed there one night in an old English Manor House where we enjoyed our annual dinner. We sped around the strange settlement of Milton Keynes where the flat tree-lined grid road and roundabout pattern removes any hierarchy that usually gives you your bearings. This is indeed a New Town, and you are dependent on V and H signs to direct you Vertically or Horizontally on the numbered grid.

It is also home to the Open University, and Allan Cochrane gave us a good introduction to New Towns in the Luton Town Hall. Hilary Wainwright led another discussion session later in the conference which addressed a range of alternative "DIY" projects and movements in the Red-Green alliance.

The assembly point this year was in London by the River Thames, in one of the oldest pubs, the Anchor near Southwark Bridge. It was good fun to see INURA members drifting in, a few at a time, until they filled a few tables. Before we left for Luton we did a Marx walk through Soho and Highgate cemetery, with well-informed guides and a good bright Sunday lunchtime.

We have many acknowledgements to make. First to all of the EXODUS Collective and Glen and Jacky Jenkins for their hospitality and participation in the Conference. They have since gone as a group of 70 to Zurich in September and put on a successful event in the Rote Fabrik. Many in the Collective helped in the catering, but a special thank you to Mrs Taylor, the mother of Biggs in EXODUS, both for the food and your thoughts, and to Lennie and Imogen for the good evening meals.

Roger Kell and Ute Leher were with us at the start of the conference and they gave us a comprehensive talk on the areas of work in which they are involved in Toronto, Frankfurt and Los Angeles. It was also very good to meet Rosemarie Buys again since she had her son, and also Stefan de Corte from Brussels. Louanne and Bob have since been to Brussels and Stefan was much appreciated as an alternative guide to this emerging EU capital.

Arie cycled again from Amsterdam and Raffaele came from Florence. Fred Robinson joined us in Letchworth from Durham, and Daniel Dorling from Bristol University and Keith Halfacree from Swansea were very welcome to their first INURA Conference. Claudia Schwarz had visited India and worked with a group there. Geraint was back from two years as a planner in Lesotho, and he had travelled through South and East Africa.

The locations and the theme may have been modest, but this assembly of people and experiences resulted in another meaningful INURA Conference.

At the turn of the century, for the first time in history, more people will live in cities than in rural settlements. With unemployment statistics predicted up to 30 million in the EU, and a growing awareness of the needs of young people and minorities, and the chance to celebrate diversity, the EU has designated 1997 as the Year Against Racism, Xenophobia and Anti-Semitism.

INURA is **"Re-thinking the City"**. Hope to see many of you in Zurich in June 1997. The mailing list is being circulated; please check the details and update if necessary.

Louanne Tranchell, Geraint Ellis, Bob Colenutt.

## THE UK'S URBAN UTOPIAS

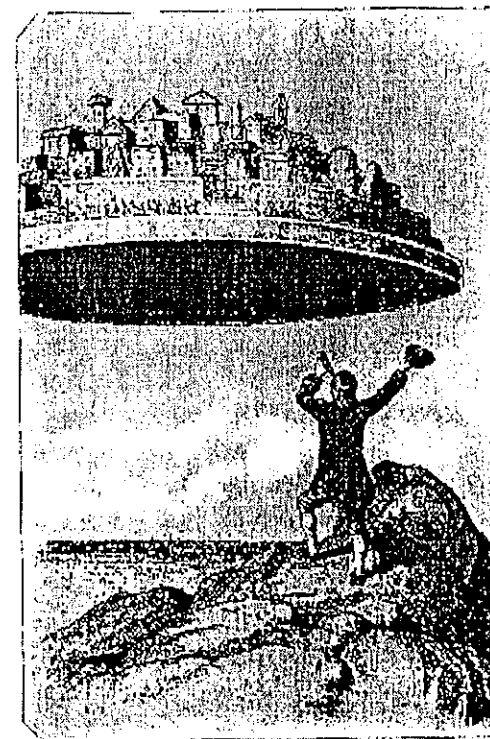
by Geraint Ellis

Within the theme of the 1996 INURA meeting "Self Help and Utopias" are two contrasting approaches for improving the urban built environment. Both cover a wide range of social movements and there are good examples of both around the area of Luton. The collective EXODUS has achieved all of their projects at HAZ Manor, the Farm and their dance events through self help. Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities and the New Town of Milton Keynes are local examples of utopian planning.

The two approaches have different scales and philosophies. While self help initiatives are usually small-scale, pragmatic responses to specific issues which arise as a way of meeting immediate needs, they can be empowering and liberating for those involved. In contrast utopianism is a theoretical, all-encompassing vision of a whole city system that promises to solve all existing problems. The physical outcomes - if you can call New Towns that - are often undemocratic and paternalistic even though they are successful in many other ways.

Historically, utopianism has played an important role in the politics of the left. It provides a unique method of reflecting on society; a way of seeking the perfect model of community. Unburdened by existing institutions, it can illustrate a more radical form of social vision. Most utopian writing has offered an egalitarian vision of society with idealised living conditions where benevolent dictators or experts have maintained stability. This also appeals to urban theorists and planners. In the UK it is within the urban planning system that utopianism has its greatest interface with reality. By contrast, many activists in self help schemes find that they are in conflict with planners and official development plans. While utopian thinking has been a perfect vehicle for projecting the best ideals of a society, it is subject to criticism as not sufficiently grounded in contemporary reality.

While the positive and political value of self help was obvious during our stay with

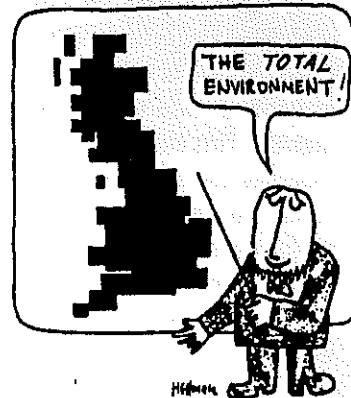
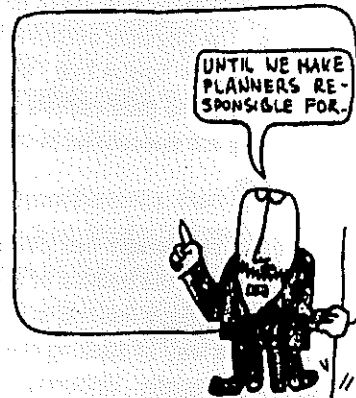


EXODUS, the broader political context of the concept of urban utopias was introduced by Allan Cochrane of the Open University. He described how South East England became the home of some of the most fully developed experiments in urban living in Britain.

The Garden Cities of the 19th Century were a reaction to mass industrialisation; the political threat as much as pollution and health. Milton Keynes, the largest New Town was conceived as an antidote to post-war urban congestion and has grown into one of the 1980s neo-liberal settlements for white semi-skilled workers.

Letchworth was the brain child of Ebenezer Howard. He developed his vision of small, decentralised, self-contained towns as an alternative to the socialist approaches that were emerging at that time. His seminal book titled "Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Reform" said each settlement must combine good housing with green space and a mix of work opportunities. His vision took shape in 1902 in Letchworth, 30 miles north of London. It was based on the plans of Raymond Unwin. It became a famous example of urban reform but today it increasingly feels sub-urban.

Allan Cochrane went on to explain the striking influence that the "Garden City" concept had on government policy, through the lobbying of the Town & Country Planning Association. It helped to shape the modern notion of a belief in "planning". The political context of the Garden City philosophy changed as it became incorporated into a broader social democratic agenda. This new and rationally organised future would improve on the damaged and decaying conurbations.



In 1946 the New Towns Act provided a legislative framework for the development of these towns by appointed development corporations - they were not elected. Eleven of the twenty one New Towns in England were built in the Greater South East, the region around Luton. These were generally built on the British tradition of relatively low density single family suburban housing combined with post 1945 expansion of light engineering industry. This ensured that the workforce and the industrial units were provided close to each other, and that both were alongside the public infrastructure.

The ideology of the Garden Cities survived in the New Towns in the form of the emphasis on green open space and a commitment to self-contained development in discrete settlements. They promised social improvement rather than socialism. They were overseen by Boards of dignitaries and so continued the paternalistic approach of the garden city movement - and the earliest utopian thinking such as Plato's Republic. The New Towns were state-funded, not independent, which meant that any financial gains were returned to the state and not to local communities, in contrast to the original Garden Cities.

Milton Keynes was the last New Town to be built and it was designated in 1967. It now has a population of 160 000 and 3 million metres of commercial floor space. Like all the other New Towns it was seen as a project of social democratic modernisation with its development being dependent on public sector investment in housing and other infrastructure. Its initial economic boost was based on railway manufacture and light engineering. By the early 1980s unemployment in the town had soared to unprecedented levels as these traditional industries were hit by recession. The post-industrial years therefore necessitated a redefining of the image of Milton Keynes. It is now highly recognisable from marketing campaigns as an entrepreneurial city which combines the English Imagery of quasi-rural suburbs with American icons of highways and drive-through restaurants: a Garden City for the late twentieth century.

The New Town Act is 50 years old and the British Press is full of speculation on whether another programme of new settlements should be launched to address the growing problem of accommodating continued urban growth in a sustainable way. Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose....

The UK government target is 4.4 million new dwellings by ten years into the 21st Century. Some of these will come from conversions of existing property, but most will be newbuild. It took Milton Keynes 25 years to reach its present population. At the Visitors Centre the director spoke of hosting groups from the tiger economy of South East Asia where their interest in this leisurely old New Town could inform their decisions on their New Cities programmed to exceed the present population of London soon after the Millennium.

## AUTONOMOUS YOUTH CENTRES

by Bob Colenutt

Exodus is one of many similar self help centres related to youth and cultural action that have sprung up across Europe. Experiences of other centres, particularly in Italy and Switzerland, were discussed at the INURA meeting.

These centres, and the collective actions that bring them about, often arise from squatting and occupying old factories and redundant buildings. They are generally places where youth have established their music, arts and life styles to express their own definitions of useful work. Most meet needs that are unmet in a world of youth unemployment, commercialised leisure provision, and high property prices.

### Success & Failure of Urban Self Help Projects

Philipp Klaus from Zurich took as his starting point the increasing amount of time available for leisure activities. This coincided with the large number of abandoned industrial buildings, both of which are the consequences of de-industrialisation.

Philipp put forward a typology of what he calls "leisure factories"

1. *Self help cultural factories*
2. *Mono-functional factories such as heritage museums*
3. *Mixed leisure/residential developments*
4. *Pure commercial leisure complexes*

Commercial leisure companies and other uses are bidding for former industrial sites to turn into leisure parks and multiplexes. Self help movements cannot afford to pay market prices and are often not given much help by local authorities as they may be seen as anti-social uses. Adequate levels of revenue funding are difficult to sustain. Continuity of management and structures are a challenge and sometimes the cause of failure.

There appears to be a common experience of these autonomous youth centres country wide and across Europe. They include the necessity to squat buildings and organise campaigns for cultural centres. They accommodate vibrant and stylish activity and are often the venues for a wide social mix and fusion.



### Rote Fabrik - Zurich

Richard Wolff relayed the story of the Rote Fabrik ("Red Factory") a cultural centre beside the Lake in Zurich. Formerly owned by Standard Telephones, it was bought by the local council in 1972 with the aim of knocking it down and creating a park. It was saved from demolition by a referendum in 1977.

In 1980 the building was given to youth-groups to open as a cultural centre following major youth riots in that year. The radical Autonomous Youth Centres were vulnerable, easy to target, and had been closed by the authorities. Rote Fabrik with its democratic structure was more of a survivor. It became the prize for the struggle. A referendum in 1987 guaranteed a yearly contribution of funding from the local authority of SFr 1.6million (US\$1m) and a lump sum of SFr 10million (US\$7.7m) for renovation.

The building now houses a kindergarten, artists workshops, rehearsal rooms for music and theatre, a community centre, a co-operatively run restaurant, and a sailing school.

It is managed by an association of 15 work groups which cover all the areas of arts and culture.

A comprehensive programme of events takes place in Rote Fabrik.

In 1994 it received 94 000 visitors:

53 000 for concerts

2 600 for theatre

4 400 for childrens' theatre

Remarkably, the original plan for the building that was put together by youth groups in 1980 has been almost completely implemented. The combination of youth power and local state aid - won by referenda which expressed wider community support - has worked.

# KraftWerk The project

## Fighting and Inventing Kraftwerk

Andreas Hofer, a leading activist in the creation of the Kraftwerk project explained how after several years of negotiation, consultation and campaigning his collective has bought an abandoned factory in the former industrial area, west of the centre of Zurich. They aim to transform it into 150 housing units, workshops and community facilities. It is known as *Stein-Fels* (Stone-Rock) and a contract with the owner has now been signed, with work starting on site in 1997.

The Kraftwerk project, in an open, democratic process, tries to conceive of solutions for the old industrial neighbourhoods. Actual present day problems - ecological, social, economic - and possible answers to these problems, are central to the project.

Each member of the collective is paying equal contributions. Special funds will be created so that any social and ethnic group will be able to join Kraftwerk. At least 50% of all administrative boards and committees will be made up of women. There will be an attempt to solve the crisis of a society based on waged work which it is less and less able to provide; new forms of making a living in a social context will be tested experimentally. The project will have links to farm producers in the region.

Andreas argues that the regulation of space through planning is in crisis. Planning categories cannot manage actual needs. They lack flexible adaptability; they cement modernist principles of segregation and fragmentation.

"Alternative" strategies on the other hand, like that pursued with such determination at Kraftwerk, establish methods of integration and negotiation that are near to the needs of the people. But these strategies are often restricted to opposition against the planning process, or to establishing small self contained communities.

He says it would be fascinating to link the two sides of Market and Alternative in order to address major urban problems. The developers would have to accept a reduction in their influence and the alternative groups would have to agree to be part of a decision making process, which would lose them their right of fundamental opposition.

## ITALIAN ACTION CENTRES

Marvi Maggio from Turin presented the case of "Self Action in Italian Urban Centres", particularly focussing on the youth movement of 1977 and *Leoncavallo* in Milan. She made a comparison with the urban and social centres that have grown up in the 1980s and 1990s.

Italian Youth Movements also used the squatting of decayed buildings to create urban social spaces that offer opportunities for social relations, grass roots action, political discussion, entertainment, self-managed art, culture, and some workspace. These are the needs that are important for young people and that do not easily find space in the capitalist property market.

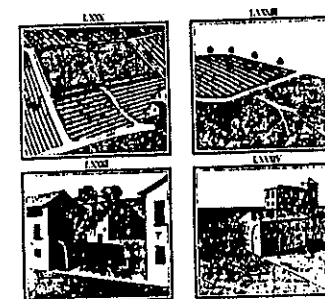
Around fifty of these "social centres", as they are called, have sprung up in Italy. Some explicitly act as a space for political resistance - a product of the 1977 Youth Movement, others are more centres for theatre, song and music, held both inside the buildings and out on the streets.

During the 1980s when communist politics was in retreat in Italy, youth cultural action developed as a form of alternative political action. Some local authorities agreed to negotiate with youth groups for the temporary or permanent occupation of vacant buildings for youth centre activities.

*New Publication*  
Email labins@cesit1.unifi.it

Raffaele Paloscia brought this recently published *Manifesto* to the meeting. It is the result of joint discussions from the universities of Firenze, Pisa and Siena; plus agronomists, forestry experts, economists, physicists, geographers & geologists, historians and town planners. Three experimental areas have been agreed, where the planning methods & procedures will be tested against the principles of the *Manifesto*: the ecological transformation of the territory, sustainability & harmonising the social and productive requirements.

## Agricoltura e territorio: un laboratorio per lo sviluppo sostenibile della Toscana



Manifesto per la sperimentazione di nuovi criteri di progettazione pianificazione e regolamentazione degli spazi aperti





## EXODUS: MOVEMENT OF JAH PEOPLE



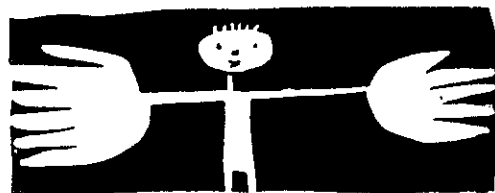
This video was made by Mark Saunders of SPECTACLE (VHS 26mins) and shown on UK TV in November 1995. Mark has been filming additional material and he recorded much of the INURA 96 meeting and discussions.

"Exodus is a unique urban phenomena who do not simply confront but intelligently challenge society's assumptions and values. They offer working, viable solutions to many of society's stated ills; poverty, crime, drugs, homelessness, unemployment and the break down of community. Exodus blend a volatile mixture of rastafarianism, new age punk and street smart politics. *We are not drop outs but force outs.* This remarkable film is an antidote to the dereliction and paranoia on Britain's streets. Squatting and renovating decayed buildings, Exodus pursue a mutually agreed quest to regenerate their disaffected community. Their regular free raves bring people together - a dance with new direction...."

Squall 95

SPECTACLE Tel -71 498 5994 Fax -71 978 1361

Exodus Collective HAZ Manor Bramingham Lane Barton Road Streatley Nr Luton UK



PURE GENIUS - Building an eco-Utopia in London SW18 (The Land Is Ours campaign)

The land activist community that recently squatted Guinness's 13acre disused site raised issues that will not go away. Their action was about the environment, housing and development for *the people*; about challenging the decision-making processes that appear to lead to increasingly large chunks of city centre wasteland ending up as superstores and carparks rather than, for example, community housing.

That they failed comes as no surprise - they lost their court battle to stay but they sent an application for their vision of an eco-friendly redevelopment scheme to the local planning inquiry. Their encampment was receiving thousands of visitors a day, and their temporary plumbing arrangements impressed a health inspector.

## THE GRASS ROOTS AND BEYOND

The broader context of these centres and grass roots movements like Exodus was given in a talk by Hilary Wainwright, the editor of "Red Pepper", a British Red-Green radical monthly magazine founded in 1994. In a review of current grass roots movements, Hilary made comparisons with movements from 1968 onwards and the democracy movements that grew up in the 1980s, "the velvet revolutions". All these movements are characterised by their confidence and optimism which contrasts with the pessimism and defeatism of much of the left.

The movements in Eastern Europe and the '68 grass roots movements share a belief in releasing and developing the knowledge of ordinary people instead of relying on the established knowledge of the Market, Church or State. However the movements outside Eastern Europe have been more concerned with developing and sharing collective skills, using individual knowledge for collective, not just individual empowerment.

There is no clear view of what will be the cumulative long term impact of the movements outside Eastern Europe, but it is apparent that there are important differences with the '68 movements in terms of class, political and the economic context. One significant difference is that the '68 movements were aimed at "changing the system" by participating in the process of wider political and institutional changes.

Contemporary movements, such as the "Do-It-Yourself" politics in the UK are more likely to be directed to meeting more immediate and specific needs for jobs, housing or cultural development rather than seeking to change the state by getting involved in local or national politics.

The main points raised in the discussion afterwards were:

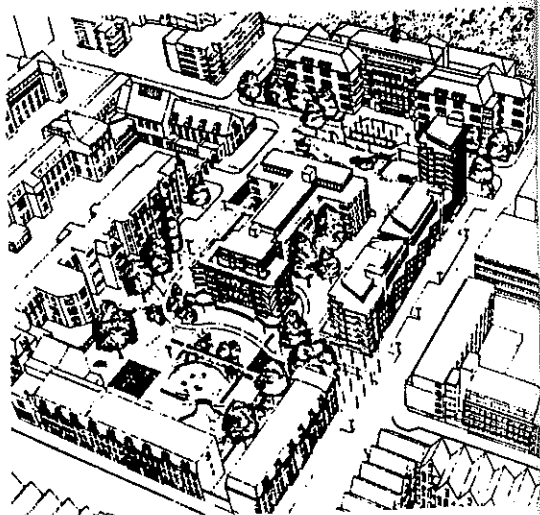
- \* The special nature of movements like Exodus that are totally disillusioned with local and national politics
- \* The importance of making contacts and networking between groups involved in movement politics - this being one of the aims of "Red Pepper"
- \* The "Third Sector" may be a way forward for linking movements and expressing them as a wider political programme.



## EXAMPLES FROM AMSTERDAM

Arie van Wijngaarden spoke of similar self help projects in Amsterdam. They are often organised by young people who can harness the redundant buildings in the old harbour area, for culture housing and workspace.

The re-use of the old hospital which we visited in 1995, Wilhemina Gasthuis, also illustrated a large scale project which combines housing and workspace in the same complex. This scale of project is aided by young professionals' involvement.



## PLANNING FOR REAL

Claudia Schwarz gave a presentation with slides on the sessions of "Planning For Real" that she had worked on with Tony Gibson, in her local project in Berlin. This is a practice which includes a number of stages, one of them the making of a large scale card model of the area, another conducting a skills-survey of all the people in the area. With these and other tools local people can run consultation sessions on their own terms.

Tony Gibson draws on a long lifetime of first-hand experience of working alongside self help community groups, around the world. He has recently had a book published (by John Carpenter ISBN 1 897766 28 9) "The Power In Our Hands" in which he describes many of these initiatives. He developed the practice of "Planning For Real" to help ordinary people to identify, prioritise and then negotiate for the needs of their community and environment.

The different stages of this practice build the capacity of the local group to work together. It gives them an anchor for the discussions with "outsiders" and it focusses the importance of each element from the local point of view. It is also good for media coverage.



## OUR TURKU REVISITED: The politics of urban space

by Jussi Jauhianen

The development of Turku in South West Finland, a town with a population of 164 000, can be described as a curious, intricate story of buying/selling and construction/demolition of the inner city and suburbs by an urban regime of the major power holders in local business and politics. Some cases of corruption were discovered in the 1980s, yet the same regime continued until the early 1990s with only minor changes in the people involved. In 1995 however, it all suddenly changed. The city mayor was dismissed and jailed; the head of the planning department retired; a major architectural practice was downgraded and a number of developers were declared bankrupt. So what exactly happened in this small town?

Restructuring and transformation towards post-industrial land uses in the 1980s released a significant amount of urban space for redevelopment in the inner city of Turku. Speculative urban development was based on confidence in continuing economic growth and land values. Investment was put into the second circuit of the built environment capital which facilitated easy and quick economic profits. A shift in local urban governance, planning and policies encouraged the market-led approaches and public-private partnerships which lead to a "sharing of interests" between the business and political regimes.

However, the serious economic decline in the early 1990s made such speculative development unprofitable. This caused some political changes, pushed out some key players and stopped the process of corruption. A special role was played in this by *Meldan Turku* (Our Turku), an initiative of ordinary local people. This new urban movement was founded in 1993 to fight against underground parking malls in the city centre, but it later identified other local problems of urban planning and policy and discussed them with a wider audience. The group extended its activities to seminars, reports, petitions, and publications with the aim of promoting more efficient administrative practices and safeguarding citizens' rights on issues concerning urban planning in Turku.

It seems that the economic downturn was the major pressure for change in this local policy, but the group *Meldan Turku* also played an important role. The group has both realistic and utopian views about the future of Turku. The relative success encourages moderate direct action and self-help strategies in redefining local urban policy. However, leading issues such as the construction of the underground parking malls in the city centre and a motorway that would pass through the inner city are still unresolved. It will take a few more years to see whether there has been a real change in local urban policy.



It is too simple to confront "evil" state promoted visions with "good" community lead ideas. Not every community is even able to develop adequate grass roots movements, particularly in the peripheral regions, where local people do not have the potential to develop contemporary self-help strategies. This was the hypothesis at the beginning of my rather pictorial presentation at Letchworth Hall. I tried to illustrate this through the example of Leuk, where we worked in the winter of 1995 with our post-graduate planning students.

Leuk is a village in the Swiss Alps, with a population of 3 000, situated in the south-west of Switzerland. Living conditions in these mountains are reasonable, but the economic weakness of these peripheral regions is intensifying. The inhabitants are trying to do something to counteract this, but the strategies that they have implemented are taken from those used in urban regions some decades ago. For example:

Major improvement of the transport network (new motorway N9, altered railroad line, improved main road) has been enthusiastically welcomed. People think that better access will bring them jobs.

16 The best agricultural land - the so called "Leukerfeld" has been zoned with the aim of increasing the 300 jobs in Leuk itself. The intention was to attract labour-intensive and high-salary paying companies. What they have attracted so far are a depot for building material, a beverages market, a fire-station and a gravel plant. Yet, there are even more plans for this area. There seems to be a lack of any high-level tourism infrastructure, like a golf course which can be used all year round. So now a golf course is planned in the "Leukerfeld" - just next to the industrial zone.

With the intention of increasing the reserve of development sites, the zoning which has recently been completed allows for a total population of 11 000, instead of the existing 3 000. Even based on the growth rate that Leuk has had in the last decade, this would be sufficient for centuries.

From the moment we started our project people already partly realised that the traditional pattern of "providing land and transport infrastructure" along the lines of Leukerfeld is no longer successful. However it needed our analysis to show the community where their best chances for improving their present and future living conditions lies.

The only real strengths Leuk has are the natural resources, the richness of landscape and biosphere. All previous development has endangered this very resource.

Contrary to the perceptions of local politicians, for decades, Leuk has been mainly a place of residence, not of employment. Residents profit from picturesque plots of land and good transport infrastructure.

Most of them commute by car to the nearby town of Sion.

The more service-orientated economy becomes, the more jobs will be concentrated in the strategic centres.



The small number of jobs which were created in recent years were not in the industrial sector. They were in social and commercial services such as children's and elderly people's homes, and in communication. These land uses were looking for almost the same qualitative location advantages as residents.

Out of this we found three aspects which the people of Leuk could prioritise themselves. Most important was to take more care of the genuine value of the landscape and biosphere.

The second field is in promoting residential development.

The third field is the development of cultural amenities and small scale quality tourism.

The analysis and proposals were presented in Leuk in the Spring 1996. Although it was an almost total re-orientation of their approach to development, the reactions of local people were positive, even enthusiastic. What people appreciated most was that they were convinced that we understood their problems so that the proposals that we made, they could relate to.

(Arrogant advisors from urban centres are quite disliked in the periphery)

## **INURA 7 CONFERENCE in ZURICH June 16 - 18 1997**

from the Zurich conference committee

With the INURA 7 Conference we will return to Zurich where we launched our International Network of Urban Research and Action in 1991. This will give us the chance to review the first seven years and to develop a new programme of future projects.

To celebrate this anniversary we will open the conference to a wider public. Invitations will go out to our network and others, to contact professionals, activists, academics, students and those who are interested in the future of cities. We want to discuss contemporary processes of urbanisation and develop common perspectives for good urban practice that is alternative, democratic and responsible.

We have made a reservation in the Swiss Alps for a retreat after the conference, to continue the traditional combination of the previous INURA annual meetings. We will be able to review the conference, discuss the next seven years, renew friendships, walk, enjoy the violin and other media exchange. There are only a limited number of places so register soon.

"Re-thinking the City" should be a lively and unusual three day conference. The main aim is to bring together urban theorists with local practitioners and activists to exchange knowledge and experience. It will be held in two contrasting venues, starting in the prestigious School and Museum of Art and Design (Schule und Museum für Gestaltung) and moving to the cultural centre Rote Fabrik, which was achieved through the youth movement of the 1980s. There will also be a city walk with site visits and introductions.

We intend to emphasise the opportunities for informal talks and personal contacts and it is part of the integral concept of the event that all participants attend for the full three days. We would like to finish with a public meeting in Rote Fabrik and a discussion that summarises the findings of the three days.

## **DETAILS OF PRESENTATIONS**

Conference contributions and discussions should focus on the analyses of current conditions, processes and trends in developed or developing metropolises. They should outline perspectives for urban social movements and critical urban research. Studies should concentrate not only on the analyses and the theoretical explanations of these processes but also on the scope of action for social movements.

Alongside the models of local practice which frequently result from specific and urgent needs for housing, paid work, cultural and community facilities, to combat poverty, discrimination and pollution, this conference will seek to develop the links with wider topics within emerging theoretical frameworks and systems.

The following topics are of particular interest:

- current restructuring of the urban economy
- social polarisation versus inclusion and cohesion
- the rise of neo-liberal urban policy and reduced social welfare
- the changing meaning of "the urban"
- territorial reorganisation of urban regions

There will be five key speakers, who are each a leader in their respective theoretical field, to help the discussion to develop. We are making a call for contributions from activists and researchers through this bulletin. In this way we hope to identify a kaleidoscope of successful experiences from many different sources.

Limited travel assistance could be made available.

A detailed programme will be part of the next INURA Bulletin to be published in April 1997.