

between the 'non-contemporary' and the 'contemporary' been so inescapable everywhere, especially in cities where different phases of history have so uneasy a coexistence. You can already go on a time-travel tour in any capital of the world, and you will have many companions. Never before have the dispossessed been able to look both backward and forward so clearly, and felt so acutely that they are left behind by others who live nearby in the same calendar year. How long will Harlem remain outwardly patient with midtown Manhattan? And this is only one of the future urban trouble spots which can be identified. There will be turmoil in and around many cities of the world even before 1984.

As the historical element in stratification has become closely enmeshed, or even coincident, with social, ethnic, racial and territorial stratification – within nations and on the world scene – it sharpens all the other cleavages. Such socio-historical divisions will be increasingly visible in comparing cities of rich and poor nations, and also within cities, not least in those of developing countries where already old problems of poverty and new problems of affluence tend to reinforce one another.

It is the prospect of such developments which appears to be significant, much more than that of any novel blueprints of civic design. Twenty years hence the world – presumably still divided into poor and rich nations, and struggling for new concepts of existence – will still have to be preoccupied with achieving the distribution of basic necessities. Except in some experimental cases, it will hardly be ready for a cross-national series of sophisticated technological 'package deals' which might produce brand-new forms of habitat. And this is not wholly regrettable. We know far too little as yet about the cumulative effects of specific technical innovations, or about the dislocation and obstruction which can be caused in the initial stages of their use. Our knowledge of 'social ecology' in that sense is still very primitive. And we can hardly assume that by 1984 we shall have learned to write a program for a computer that can provide some of the answers.

Meanwhile, when we look ahead, it is clear that the modifications of cities as artifacts will be far less important than the accentuation of their essential economic, political and ceremonial functions. Cities can thus also be expected to retain their individuality and their capacity for self-expression. In some respects, 1984 may not be so remote from 1789 or 1917.

London: Aspects of Change

London can never be taken for granted. The city is too vast, too complex, too contrary and too moody to become entirely familiar. And there are moments when well-known features of her townscape stand out surprisingly, as they might to a foreign tourist or to the expatriate who at last comes home.

From Kensington to King's Cross early on a June morning the sights and sounds of London just awakening have a novel clarity. The roads of Georgian and Victorian houses converted into flats are still packed with parked cars; the Espresso bars are still locked up; the new underpass (or rather bottleneck) at Hyde Park Corner is still empty; the tall Hilton Hotel at Park Lane, recently finished, stands out clumsily; Marble Arch and Grosvenor Square, now deserted, where the American eagle is so conspicuous, are a reminder of days of international crisis, of protest demonstrations, of bewilderment and fear. In this region of 'high-rise' office blocks, apartment houses, genteel shop windows and an occasional supermarket, prosperity is freshly painted on: there is an air of expectancy. But all that is left far behind already ten minutes later in the peeling plaster zone of Euston, where the monotony of narrow back streets, grimy and dreary, is only rarely interrupted by a once-Italian café or a more recent Indian restaurant; and then again by glimpses of a remarkable 'vertical feature' – the Post Office tower off Tottenham Court Road. Nor has King's Cross acquired a look very different from that it had 20 or 30 years ago. And

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yet it works differently. The armies of commuters who arrive every morning to work in central London have grown steadily. And nowadays most of the porters are black or brown men from the West Indies.

At any hour, London in 1963 shows the juxtaposition of new and old, both in the fabric and in the structure of society. The innovations, just because they are unequally distributed and often apparently incongruous, are more visible than the old patches. Even so, they might well be deceptive. And for those of us whose own personal history is entangled with London's post-war history, it may be rather difficult to recognize all the signs of ageing, as well as of rejuvenation, in the face of the city. But some of these changes are unmistakable.

There is a gleam of affluence in most of central London and in many of the suburbs – of a much more widespread affluence than has ever been there before. At least so it seems at first sight. It shows itself in an abundance of goods and gadgets, of cars and new buildings – in an apparently mounting flow of consumption. There are far more soft and hard drinking and eating places than there used to be (and they are open for longer hours). The shops are crammed with personal and household paraphernalia which had previously been neither in mass production nor for mass use. The wrapping and labelling of commodities – small or large, practical or ornamental, frozen or fresh, dehydrated or puffed up – have a new gloss. The luxuries of yesterday, or the imitations of yesterday's luxuries, have become the necessities of today for large sections of the population.

Together with – or rather because of – this new diversity of consumption, there is also, apparently, a new uniformity. Superficially, class distinctions in looks, clothes and in domestic equipment have narrowed considerably: differences in many of these respects are now more noticeably determined by age than by social status. Conventional terms of social categorization, such as 'black-coated worker' or 'white-collar worker', no longer have a straightforward descriptive value.

It is often said – by anyone who sees contemporary London after a considerable absence – that the city is in the process of being 'Americanized'. Indeed, judging from general impressions of the city's looks and standards of living, the contrast between central London and midtown Manhattan, for example, is no longer as striking as it used to be before, and immediately after, World War II. London is now decidedly a representative of the affluent Western world, with fewer individual characteristics than she had in a previous period. But in being just that, London is also experiencing, increasingly, the hard-

ships inherent in that affluent world. And – typical again – it seems that she is not making a good job of coping with them.

As a place in which to settle, to work, to move about in, London has become acutely harassing and highly inefficient. This is largely the result of a long history of trial and error in urban development. The various notions or measures which have been adopted at different stages to make London smaller, and which in some respects have succeeded in doing so, have also made London larger. Just because the population size of the County has steadily declined – through both a voluntary and a planned dispersal – the size of the metropolitan area has been steadily expanded. People have been sent, or have wanted to go, farther and farther outwards, though many of them are still dependent, directly or indirectly, upon the employment and services located in central London. All sorts of factors have contributed to this process of suburbanization – the increasing mobility of labour resulting from improvements in employment conditions and in transport; the general rise in standards of living; social aspirations (in particular, the frequent association of the idea of suburbia with that of 'respectability'); as well as general policies and schemes. But the total effect upon London has hardly been a satisfactory one. The problems of 'bigness' have not been solved; they have been shifted and changed.

Even now, the County is still losing population, while the number of jobs in central London is still growing; and thus also the number of commuters who work in the centre. Their daily journeys are still becoming longer, more awkward, and more expensive in terms of individual and social costs. And these long journeys every morning and evening – whether of people or goods, by rail or road – impede short-distance traffic in the central area. In fact, though communications have become faster, more convenient and more varied, they have also become slower and more cumbersome. All day long, central London is a zone of bottlenecks, of standstills, of almost frozen traffic. Any of the special occasions, special and yet part of the metropolitan routine – a Buckingham Palace garden party, a fall of snow, a State visit, the Chelsea flower show – can produce utter chaos. There is no room for manoeuvre.

But the traffic problem – the Number One problem at first sight – is only the most overt symptom of new incongruities in the habitat and society of London. Socially and ideologically, too, communications are strained: they have been both speeded up and obstructed. People travel about more; they see and hear more of events at home

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and abroad. And yet, driving in their cars, sitting in front of their television screens, they are more on their own than they used to be. While knowledge of science and technology is expanding rapidly, though at an unequal rate in different fields, it does so within the framework of a society which is remarkably slow in developing its capacities for self-recognition and rational organization. The acquisition of knowledge, moreover, in advancing as in stationary disciplines, is arranged so as to put a premium on departmentalization. Already, before his career has started, the sixth-form schoolboy or the student finds it difficult to leave his cell. On balance, have our horizons been widened or narrowed?

Social distances have become simultaneously both shorter and longer. There is a good deal of movement – pedestrian, vehicular, occupational. With the advance of technology, with the increase in the division of labour and of consumer expenditure, new occupations have developed, especially middle-class occupations. (Look at the advertisements in the 'quality' newspapers. Wanted: project engineer, production executive, systems analyst, computer shift leader, sales promotion specialist, aptitude tester, beauty operator, public relations manager, window-dresser, and many more of many different kinds.) Some of the old menial occupations are becoming extinct, or are likely to disappear. There has been some re-shuffling of social groups, mainly again among the middle classes. New minority groups have appeared. But none of this movement is matched by an increase in genuine social mobility. The old class alignments are being maintained – or copied. And they may even at times be more noticeable, and be less taken for granted, than before, just because some of the conventional status distinctions have become blurred. Altogether, is there more or less social claustrophobia than there was in a previous period?

Although such questions have become commonplace, they cannot be avoided. We meet them wherever we go, certainly in London. All around us, we see so many contradictory tendencies; and the same phenomena are subject to contradictory interpretations. Perhaps this was always so, and it is the sharpened awareness of history in the making – on a scale, with a speed and complexity visibly greater than ever before – which directs the attention of some contemporary 'participant-observers' so strongly to the equivocal aspects of the current situation. But, be that as it may, if one does look at society as one

finds it, here and now, as closely and widely as possible, one cannot help being preoccupied with the ambiguities in its conditions and prospects.

It could be said, for example, that Britain, in general – or London, in particular – has more social homogeneity than in the inter-war and immediate post-war periods. Millions of people from different social classes and localities consume the same diet of radio and television programmes, advertisements and films; they are subject to a national network of retail outlets, newspapers, public services, institutions and organizations; they uphold the same national symbols. Differences between modes of life in city, suburb and village have become fainter. There are not only daily, but also weekly and seasonal journeys to and fro – as a result of the increasing use of private transport and of holidays with pay. There is also more sameness in the physical environment both between and within areas of the country than there used to be. Urban diffusion – in economic and cultural terms – was preceded, and is still accompanied, by the vast spread of suburbia, some of whose characteristics have been introduced in or near urban centres, as well as in the countryside. It had been the dream of nineteenth-century British reformers – a dream revived and translated into concrete plans during the inter-war and immediate post-war years – to re-make cities in the image of idealized rustic settlements, and to introduce urban amenities into rural areas. This dream has not been an idle one. Urban, suburban and rural areas have thus been encouraged to merge into one another; and they have lost some of their differentiating features.

Similar effects have, moreover, been brought about by a combination of deliberate and incidental developments. The large programme of urban reconstruction and re-building since World War II has had the result of reducing the contrasts between rich and poor districts within the boundary of the present County. Indeed, some of the conventional distinctions have been reversed; the new homes of working-class and lower-middle-class people, who are municipal tenants, are frequently superior in design and appearance to the older 'luxury flats' and expensive houses of private tenants or owner-occupiers. Local authority housing and ancillary schemes have so much improved the looks and amenities of several districts – in sections of Paddington, Kensington, Westminster and elsewhere – that private developers have been prompted to renovate adjacent streets. The days when the building of a

municipal estate in a 'respectable' area was bitterly resented, and when such an estate was ostracized by its better-off neighbours, are now past – at least in and around central London.

When the *New Survey of London Life and Labour* was carried out in the late twenties, it was found in its review of 'forty years of change' – the 40 years which had gone by since Charles Booth's voluminous first survey was begun – that the reduction of poverty had been greater in the western than in the eastern area.¹ In general, the distinction between east and west had been accentuated. But since then, this process has, apparently, not continued. Large areas of the East End have been transformed – in a manner which contributes a good deal to the prestige of municipal architecture, even if it is not invariably of a high standard. And while planning and public enterprise have played a positive part in diminishing the outward differences between London's residential districts, laissez-faire has played a part also, though in the long run a negative one.

One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and two down – have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period – which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise in multiple occupation – have been upgraded once again. Nowadays, many of these houses are being subdivided into costly flats or 'houselets' (in terms of the new real estate snob jargon). The current social status and value of such dwellings are frequently in inverse relation to their size, and in any case enormously inflated by comparison with previous levels in their neighbourhoods. Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced, and the whole social character of the district is changed. There is very little left of the poorer enclaves of Hampstead and Chelsea: in those boroughs, the upper-middle-class take-over was consolidated some time ago. The invasion has since spread to Islington, Paddington, North Kensington – even to the 'shady' parts of Notting Hill – to Battersea, and to several other districts, north and south of the river. The East End has so far been exempt, although before long some of its districts, too, are

¹ Hubert Llewellyn Smith, (ed.), *The New Survey of London Life and Labour*, 9 vols: London, 1930–5. See vol. VI, *Survey of Social Conditions, the Western area*, pp. 1–28.

likely to be affected.) And this is an inevitable development, in view of the demographic, economic and political pressures to which London, and especially central London, has been subjected.

Competition for space has become more and more intense in London. Various factors combine to sharpen this competition – the 'natural increase' of commerce and related economic activities; the emergence of new occupations and pursuits; the demands for travelling and parking space made by the rapidly growing motorcar population;² the improvements and consequent spatial expansion of social, educational and ancillary services. The upward swing in standards of living, moreover, not only contributes to all the other space requirements, but also increases those of individual households, and helps to create more households. As real incomes and aspirations rise, as people get married earlier and live longer, existing households split up, and there is a higher ratio of households to population, with a consequent increased demand for separate dwellings.³ Last but not least, the competition for space thus produced is bound to get out of hand, and lead to a spiral of land values, if it is neither anticipated nor controlled. And this is precisely what has happened.

The Greater London Plan of 1944 was prepared in a restrictionist mood – on premises inherited from a period of economic depression, when there were fears of, and also neo-Malthusian hopes for, a population decline; and when it was thought that the metropolitan area could be rigidly contained.⁴ The plan did not take either demographic or economic facts of life into account: it was based on the assumption that there would be a stationary population, economy and culture. It has

² During the past 12 years, the number of motor-car licences issued by the London County Council has more than trebled: from 128,575 licences (one per 8.7 households) in 1950 to 408,830 (one per 2.7 households) in the old London County area (now called inner London) in 1962.

³ From 1931 to 1961, average household size declined from 3.69 to 2.89 persons per household in the County of London, and similarly in Greater London (the Conurbation). Thus while there was a decrease of 27 per cent in the total population of the County during that period, there was only a decrease of 7 per cent in the number of actual separate households – quite apart from that of 'concealed' households who could not establish themselves as separate units because they could not find separate dwellings of their own. (If most of the latter had in fact split off, the total number of households in the County would have remained stable, or would even have slightly increased.) During that period of 30 years, the population of the London Conurbation has remained almost stationary (there was a drop of 1 per cent only); but the number of actual separate households (excluding 'concealed' households) has increased by 25 per cent.

⁴ Patrick Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan, 1944* (HMSO, 1945).

hardly been a suitable framework for the guidance of development in a period of expansion. And while it has been (and is still) used as such, with various qualifications, its cardinal positive concept – that of genuine ‘planning’ in the public interest – has been increasingly abandoned. Since the fifties, town and country planning legislation has, in essence, been anti-planning legislation: the 1947 Act has been drastically amended; development rights have been de-nationalized; development values have been unfrozen; real estate speculation has thus been ‘liberated’. These measures, together with the relaxation of rent control, have given the green light to the continuing inflation of property prices with which London, even more than other large cities, is afflicted.⁵ In such circumstances, any district in or near London, however dingy or unfashionable before, is likely to become expensive;

⁵ The Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, nationalized both development rights and post-1947 development values; through various devices, it stabilized land values at the 1947 level; it stipulated that a ‘development charge’ had to be paid into the public purse for the ‘betterment’ of land values accruing from post-1947 ‘development’ in the statutory sense. These measures helped to create a coherent planning system: they were essential counterparts of the provisions for development control laid down in the Act. Without them, such control is bound to defeat its purpose: in particular, the permissions for ‘development’ (given by local planning authorities) would be bound to lead to land speculation; to a rise in the value of any land whose development has been sanctioned, and can be profitably carried out; and thus also, of course, to the build-up of considerable pressures to modify the operations of development control so that they yield, generally, the maximum private profits in the use of land. Subsequent legislation amending the 1947 Act has had the very effect, first, of inviting such pressures; and then of giving way to them. Following a White Paper issued by the first post-war Conservative Government (in November 1952), the Town and Country Planning Act of 1953 abolished the development charge (and also certain compensation provisions of the 1947 Act). The amending Act of 1954 provided (with a number of exceptions) that compensation would be payable for the prevention or severe restriction of development imposed through planned control. This legislation was the first step in the de-nationalization of development rights and values; and in the restoration of a free market in land. The Town and Country Planning Act, 1959, completed the process. While previously the principle of stabilizing land values at the 1947 level was still maintained – though with significant modifications – the 1959 Act abolished the principle. In essence, the Act stipulated that land bought by public authorities through compulsory acquisition – or by agreement instead of compulsory acquisition – should be paid for on the basis of the full current market value of the land, including its full development value at the time of acquisition. This was not (as it seemed to many people at the time) a highly technical, rather innocuous measure. It has had, predictably, far-reaching consequences. Since then, the free market in land has been generally restored. Similarly, a free market in rents has been largely restored, mainly through the Rent Act, 1957. The weakening of public control in all matters of urban development (in the broadest sense) brought about by this legislation has been accelerated, moreover, by a variety of other statutory

and London may quite soon be a city which illustrates the principle of the survival of the fittest – the financially fittest, who can still afford to work and live there.⁶ (Not long ago, the then Housing Minister advised those who cannot pay the price to move out.) Thus London, always a ‘unique city’, may acquire a rare complaint. While the cores of other large cities in the world, especially of those in the United States, are decaying, and are becoming ghettos of the ‘underprivileged’, London may soon be faced with an *embarras de richesse* in her central area – and this will prove to be a problem, too.

But whatever the consequences of such a surfeit of honey, the fact remains that the social geography of London shows some signs of a drawing together – the broad divisions are less striking than they were 20 or even ten years ago. And yet there are also contrary signs of a moving apart – of a new kind of diversification, which may well be equally, if not more, significant.

As standards of living rise and land values even more so, as old working-class districts are reconstructed, and others are increasingly hemmed in, the remaining pockets of blight become denser. Some of these quarters, off the beaten track – which are low on the list of municipal development and not ‘ripe’ for private investment – are left to

and administrative measures – such as reductions in the real value of Exchequer contributions to housing subsidies (for municipal housing); by the increasing stringency in local authority finance; and by the growing tendency to delegate various functions, including planning functions, to the smaller local authorities. (The Town and Country Planning Acts here mentioned, together with other relevant statutes or sections of statutes, have been consolidated in the Town and Country Planning Act, 1962. The provisions concerning compulsory acquisition are also consolidated in the Land Compensation Act, 1961.)

⁶ This kind of trend has cumulative effects. As land values rise, the scarce expensive commercial space has to be allocated increasingly to the higher levels of managerial and executive staffs. Thus already in 1951, Central London had a disproportionate share of jobs for men in occupations classified in the Census as belonging to social classes I and II. These were the people who at that time still lived predominantly in the suburbs, and had to travel daily to their places to work in the centre. Consequently, the proportion of these ‘upper’ social classes was then considerably higher among the daytime male occupied population of the central, East End and South Bank employment zones than among the night-time resident male population of these areas. But as journeys to work become more harassing, it is such upper and middle class people, especially, who think of acquiring – and who indeed need and can afford to acquire – some sort of a home, if only a *pied à terre*, near their places of work. Hence there is a mounting spiral: the competition for both commercial and residential space is bound to grow; and land values and rents are bound to rise still further – so long as they remain decontrolled.

statisticians; through fascist newssheets and 'nigger-baiting' scrawls on the walls of back alleys; through unsavoury court cases or complaints before rent tribunals; in reading Press items about witch rites, ghost hunts, visits from Martians, and take-over bids. And then again, we may hear of the 'hidden' societies through reports of hospital almoners, inspectors who deal with cases of child-battering, or through the records of social workers who bring 'meals on wheels' to lonely old people. It is an amazing, still largely obscured, panorama that thus begins to be visible – a conglomeration of groups who move, so to speak, on separate tracks, even if they do meet occasionally at a station. And in this assembly, it is not only marginal men who appear to be segregated – the atavistic, the cranky, the lunatic fringes, the various 'security risks', the backroom boys of business tycoons – but also the many inbred intellectual and artistic circles; the fraternities of the young; and large sections of the population whose mode of life is unknown because they live, anonymously, in secluded domesticity. They are not represented in the popular or highbrow serials.

There are those who are in darkness

And there are others in the light

And sure one sees those in brightness

Those in darkness are out of sight.⁷

What is this new pattern, and is it in fact new? There is some interlocking of social groups. Even so, the impression remains – and often it is the dominant one – that there is increasing segmentation. It seems that what is happening is neither an obliteration nor an accentuation of long-established class cleavages, but the superimposition of a criss-cross web of social divisions, which has as yet been hardly recognized.

Indeed, it is difficult to trace this pattern just because it is so ambiguous and incoherent, neither tied together nor sharply divided. It is the pattern of a society which lacks both deliberate concord and straightforward conflict: it seems to consist of a tangle of sub-groups and sub-cultures which, however dissimilar, manage to coexist, without much mutual awareness, in fairly self-contained compartments. Apparently, they can do so, at least at present, because they are lodged in a setting which is by and large sufficiently spacious to accommodate disparate elements, with partitions solid enough to muffle dissonant

⁷ Bertold Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*, the final verse of the Moritat. (My translation.)

decay. They have been neglected for so long that they are taken for granted. Others, nearer the main routes, adjacent to expanding middle-class areas, become lodging-house districts, where all sorts of people who have to keep, or who want to obtain, a foothold in central London are crammed together – and frequently have to pay exorbitant rents for the privilege. Such districts cannot be so easily bypassed: they are quite often in the news; they figure in crime statistics; they are the places where the most notorious shark landlords operate; their mobile population, and especially the owners of their 'widowers' houses, have connections with social groups at all levels, from the top to the bottom of the social scale. Not all the inhabitants of these 'zones of transition' are in fact poor. Here are people who must stay near their work in the centre, or who cannot afford to move to the suburbs. Here are families who are at the tail end of the municipal housing queue; and also those who are not eligible for such housing, or who cannot pay local authority rents. Here are immigrants from other parts of Britain or overseas who nowadays can find hardly any open doors – especially if their skin is dark – and who have to take the left-overs of accommodation, however dingy, however expensive. They go to houses which are already crowded; several of them share a room to meet the cost. It is a motley collection of people who are pushed into these 'twilight' zones – long-established Londoners and newcomers; Europeans and Asians; the Irish, the West Indians, the Poles; families of 'respectable' manual and clerical workers; students; delinquents and prostitutes. All of them have one thing in common: their housing needs are being exploited; and the very frictions which their crowded, insecure situation creates tend to be exploited, too. It is in such districts that the many sub-cultures of London come together and yet remain estranged.

But the anachronistic slums and the tense zones of transition are not the only places in which the tensions of London society are visible. Wherever we go, we can get glimpses of the many unfamiliar worlds in this one metropolitan constellation. We can see them in the mean streets, in luxury flats, along the roads of suburban ribbon development; in places like Eel Pie Island, where various cliques of teenagers congregate; in jazz clubs, coffee bars, and expense account restaurants; in the withdrawing rooms of earnest religious or political sects; at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park or the Earls Court Road; at meetings in Trafalgar Square; in public libraries, senior common rooms, and at soirées of the Royal Society. We get an inkling of the existence of other remote and yet nearby worlds through migration

noises; which is sufficiently well provided with standardized supplies – of commodities, newsprint and verbiage – to camouflage differences among the consumers; and which is believed to be sufficiently hygienic to prevent epidemics of physical or social pathology. Such are the comforts of society in an ‘advanced’ industrial economy, as seen nowadays in the largest city of the Commonwealth.

This society has been characterized by various adjectives – affluent, open, irresponsible, sick. There is inertia and complacency; there is also a good deal of talk about social malaise, decline of morals, lack of purpose, disintegration of ‘community’. Dichotomous terms are fashionable once again – the ‘two nations’ (used nowadays in referring to the south and north of Britain); the ‘two cultures’. Even the alien word *Angst* has been introduced into the vocabulary of editorials. No doubt, it is a confused society, or rather a series of societies – both anxious and self-satisfied; and the various epithets applied to it do not make confusion less confounded. They have quickly gained currency as clichés and even as *idées fixes*, which can be dismissed, or which can be accepted as substitutes for more thorough, perhaps more unpalatable, analyses. Anyhow, the need for such analyses is only intermittently evident: in general, confusion is more real than is apparent. It tends to be concealed by the whole apparatus of communications that gives the impression of clarity, candour and close-ups. The apparent mobility of passengers, goods and news; the weighty comments and tactful gossip in some sections of the Press; the intimate ‘revelations’ in others; the presence of faces and places from near and far at the domestic fireside – all this has promoted illusions of ‘togetherness’; of ‘mingling with the mighty’; of watching a full display of the social scene.⁸ And as the image of the frank and free society is so assiduously promoted, there is bound to be severe disappointment whenever it is manifestly fictitious. But it is only on rare critical occasions that more than a few even begin to know what they do not know.

The major influences to which we are nowadays subjected can have, and do have, both integrating and divisive effects. And it seems that it is the latter, however disguised, which are predominant.

⁸ In some circles – well beyond Fleet Street, Soho and Bloomsbury – the revival of political satire, a by-product of the current period of transition as it has been of similar periods elsewhere, also contributes to such illusions. Satire, though by no means the same as political critique, can so easily be regarded as evidence of uninhibited critique – by and for ‘insiders’.

It seems so. But we cannot be certain. The place and time – London in 1963 – make it exceptionally difficult to weigh up current trends. Post-war history has followed a zig-zag line, and may well before long take another turn again. Its course has been, and is still, so erratic that it is hardly possible as yet to gain a proper perspective. Within 18 years, we have moved from rationed to competitive consumption; from policies designed to strengthen public ownership and control to the dilution, or even the abandonment, of such policies; from bold slogans, ‘let us face the future’, to much meeker ones (to be interpreted as ‘let us tidy up the future’), and more recently to a smug assertion of the *status quo*. During this period, there have been phases of a narrowing, and then again of a widening, of party-political differences; methods and channels of political pressure have been re-fashioned; a new massive political movement has developed with great speed – the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, with its various offshoots. There have been marked shifts in ideology; there has certainly been no need to speak of ‘the end of ideology’.

Yet the awareness of all such shifts is blunted, not only because we ourselves are caught up in them, but also – and primarily – because they have been so haphazard and uneven; and thus old and new are so much intermixed. It is difficult to follow the successive changes of scene on the public stage so long as the principal cast remains essentially the same. While the inner and outer circles of the élites have admitted some newcomers (including real estate, commercial and advertising entrepreneurs whose names have only recently become household words), the old men of power, from the old schools, have taken over once again. In general, the longevity of people in British public life has been remarkable; most of the leaders (and of course all the elder statesmen) of today – in politics, administration, law, the arts and sciences – were already on top many years ago. Similarly, for better and for worse, the conventional institutions of government have shown great tenacity, despite temporary setbacks, and despite their infiltration by various upstarts. Long established and *ad hoc* authorities, elected and appointed agencies, are now interlinked; the system of public administration has certainly not become more systematic.

All these tendencies, and their manifold ramifications, are reflected in London – more plainly and thus also more confusingly here than elsewhere in Britain. London’s physical structure has been influenced by the ups and downs of post-war history – by the earlier spurts of planning in the public interest, and by the later phases of *laissez-faire*,

But whatever administrative devices are adopted, and even if London is held back in some respects, she cannot be compelled to remain stationary. The whole expanding region within the metropolitan sphere of influence has had, and still has, a disproportionate share of economic and technological advance. Although Greater London (however defined) so far has depressed areas, the region has remained comparatively immune to the bouts of unemployment which period-

London, made in their report, published in 1960. These were subsequently, with some modifications, adopted in the Government's White Paper of December 1961. The Act provides for a complete re-casting of the local government structure of 'Greater London' (roughly the area of the present Conurbation as defined in the Census). The London and Middlesex county councils will be abolished; the 'metropolitan' sections of Essex, Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire will be taken away from these counties; an elected Greater London Council will be set up, which will have a limited range of functions, while 32 Greater London boroughs (including newly combined metropolitan boroughs), each with a minimum population of about 200,000, will be the 'primary units' in this new system. (The City of London, with a population of under 5,000, remains, however, unaltered.) In essence, the Act sets up a three-tier system of government with a highly complex division of functions (such as planning functions) among the Ministries, the Greater London Council and the primary units. There was little opposition to the idea of a 'radical' re-organization of local government in Greater London while the Royal Commission was sitting. On the contrary, most professional organizations and indeed most political bodies, from the Conservatives to the Communist Party (except of course the major county councils and borough councils directly concerned), welcomed the idea of 'regionalism'. (The very term 'region' had acquired a rather glamorous connotation – that of large-scale administration, with an eagle's eye view, combined with all the comforts of 'grass-roots democracy'.) It was only after the Government's White Paper was issued that it began to be realized that these proposals did not, after all, represent the best of all possible systems: the irksome features of the old one – the division of powers between different authorities and levels of government – were maintained, or even accentuated; while the positive features – the advantages of a long-established, experienced, and on the whole efficient, administrative machinery – were thrown overboard. Hence most of the previous partisans of regionalism had second thoughts. Protests against the Bill were mounting – in number and intensity. Various concessions had to be made. The Government agreed to allocate the educational functions, previously exercised by the London County Council, not to the individual boroughs, as originally proposed, but temporarily, at least, to an *ad hoc* committee of the Greater London Council, composed only of representatives of the 'central area' (roughly the present London County Council area). The size of the new 'region' has been further reduced, though it was already, as laid down in the Royal Commission's terms of reference, considerably smaller than that of a realistically defined contemporary 'Greater London'. A large number of amendments were introduced, moreover, in the course of the Bill's passage through Parliament. On the other hand, as could be expected, the Bill has also given rise to speculation on, and the advocacy of, the general transformation of local government in Britain into a new system of 'federal' government, so as to produce a 'United States of Britain'.

ically afflict the northern parts of Britain.¹⁰ Throughout the post-war period, London has retained and accentuated her status as the capital city.

As London becomes 'greater', the dislike, indeed the fear, of the giant grows. And this is bound to happen. For despite London's exceptional position and special fortunes, she has not 'fallen out' of Britain. The metropolis has continued to represent the state of the nation. London's own importance within the country has increased; but she now represents a nation whose status in the world has weakened – and which has to come to terms with a world that is itself fearful, and still rather oblivious of the consequences of the phenomenal expansion of its horizons. Perhaps more than ever before, London shows up the condition of Britain, and thus the uncertainties of Britain.

More than ever before, London is vulnerable; she knows that she is largely dependent upon decisions made elsewhere; her conditions and prospects are now evidently linked to those of places all over the world. The city is no longer the 'Heart of the Empire',¹¹ nor can she now be truly called the 'Capital of the Commonwealth'. And while old imperial accounts still remain to be settled, new commitments have to be incurred. All this is visible in London. There is a succession of colonial independence conferences; the descendants of slaves and indentured labourers from the sugar colonies have joined the local labour force; the legacy of imperial rule abroad, and of its attitudes, has created a 'colour problem' at home. Statesmen and cosmonauts visit the city; every week, the responses of Londoners to world news – to news of space exploration, international tensions, H-bomb tests and political upheavals abroad – are demonstrated in the streets. It is in

¹⁰ At the peak of the last period of serious unemployment, in mid-February 1963, for example, the London and South-Eastern Region had a lower proportion of unemployed people than any other region of Britain, and a considerably lower one than the northern regions. In the London and South-Eastern Region 1.4 per cent of the labour force had then (on 11 February, 1963) been wholly unemployed for two or more weeks, as compared with 4 per cent in Wales; 4.6 per cent in Scotland; 4.8 per cent in the Northern Region; and 2.4 per cent in Great Britain as a whole. (Data from *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, March 1963.)

¹¹ *The Heart of the Empire* was, appropriately, the title of a symposium by C. F. G. Masterman and others, published in 1901, with the subtitle: *Discussion of problems of modern city life in England, with an essay on imperialism*. The latter essay, by G. P. Gooch, was included as 'a natural pendant to a volume that attempts to deal with the problems that face us at the Heart of the Empire'.

London that the voice of the new political movements is strongly heard; and that elements of integration are visible. And yet here also the signs of disintegration are particularly noticeable; and so is the strait-jacket of old alignments, vested interests and prejudices.

London's problems are no longer primarily those of poverty and economic insecurity. The main problem nowadays is that of incoherence – of incoherence in the economy and society, in the culture and environment of the metropolitan region. There is cause for anxiety – and it is that which is resented, and for which the city itself tends to be blamed, rather than the influences that makes it what it is.

All societies and all large cities have multiple patterns of differentiation; and there are always multiple factors, old and new, which determine such patterns. But in London, such multiplicity has been particularly marked; for long there have been many different Londons for different purposes, and as seen from different points of view. There have been villages in the metropolis; many of the parishes, as well as various districts and boroughs, have retained their individuality, while the larger entity – roughly the London of the present County – has also acquired an identity of its own. This kind of Chinese box arrangement provides ample reasons for disputes between students of London – between historians, geographers, sociologists, anthropologists and town planners – who draw different lines of demarcation, broad and narrow, more or less generalized, more or less precise. And yet, although London's pattern is rather baffling, its main features, and the influences which have shaped them, can be traced.

Already in the nineteenth century – when employment was less concentrated in particular districts than it is now, and the workers were less mobile – the question of the different Londons was an important one. But even then the metropolis was already a recognizable economic personality – a labour market with specific wage rates and forms of organization, despite the fact that this market had also distinct and variable components. And already then, long before the term 'conurbation' was invented, London was a 'real' entity, not by virtue of possessing a definite boundary, but for the opposite reason – just because the city was amorphous, and extended its influences over a wider, and again not clearly delineated, area. And we can see that this is still the case, when we look at the analysis of Greater London's contemporary structure. Nowadays it is the centre of London with its pull, drawing in people from ever-widening circles, and exercising its influences in other ways, which is the maker of a 'Greater London' that

neither has, nor can have, a fixed frontier. Hence the current pastime of re-drawing local government boundaries – in the belief that London can be contained by authorizing it to be a 'region' – is liable to be futile. It is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the metropolis and its interdependence with the rest of Britain. Any administrative line is bound to be an arbitrary one, already out of date even before it is established; and so a new line is not necessarily preferable to an old one, nor is a bigger administrative authority for London necessarily a better one.

It has to be admitted, however, that London, like most other large cities, is easily misunderstood: there are difficulties in recognizing the total metropolis. While the outer limits of London and the metropolitan spheres of influence were and are fluid, the internal divisions have been far sharper, more rigid and more visible. The resulting pattern of sociogeographical units and sub-units can be seen in different combinations. (There was, and is, an East End, for example; but it was never an entirely homogeneous area. Its component boroughs still have individual characteristics; and so have various sectors within each borough.) Nevertheless, although this pattern, too, is a relative one – depending on the indices of differentiation applied – it is more clearly defined than the total configuration of successive 'Greater Londons'. And it is not surprising, therefore, that there has been a tendency to forget that London is more than the sum of its parts.

The individual parts of the metropolitan pattern, however subdivided or combined, have remained so distinctive as a result of *the interaction of several main factors*. The various branches of development – those of transport, housing and industries – were only partially or sporadically coordinated. Nevertheless, they have tended to move along parallel lines – not least because they have been subject to the same dual influences of private interests and public control which have for long been a characteristic feature of London's history. Since the nineteenth century – which was certainly not a century of 'pure' *laissez-faire* – neither the assertion of private interests, though powerful, nor that of public control, though elaborate, has ever been, by itself, sovereign for a considerable time.¹² There has been more or less

¹² There was, of course, a recent period – initiated during World War II – when public control was predominant in urban development. It lasted for about 14 years – from 1940 to 1954, when the first post-war Conservative Government began to introduce significant amendments to the planning machinery established in the mid-forties and late forties. Since 1959, private interests have definitely been again in the ascendancy. (See also n. 5.)

subordination of one by the other at different phases. Private interests have been influential in grouping like with like – poor with poor; rich with rich; public control has had the effect of introducing some coherence into the operations of diverse separate elements.¹³ And as this mixture of private and public enterprise has, until recently, determined all the different branches of development at successive stages, the socio-geographical distinctions created by any one of them have been reinforced by the others.

Local government, one of the agents of public control, has played an important part in maintaining such distinctions. The names of many London boroughs and districts have represented (and still represent) particular settlement 'personalities'; the traditions and sentiments associated with these names have helped to keep the personalities alive. Although many aspects of local administration have been standardized as a result of central government direction, local authorities still have considerable opportunities for self-expression. Their decisions (or indecision) are stamped upon the areas within their jurisdiction. Thus while many of the administrative units are no longer 'natural areas', but merge into others or are in turn divided, local government boundaries are still by and large coincident with the social contours in the townscape of Greater London.¹⁴

¹³ It should be emphasized, moreover, that in Britain public control has not merely fulfilled a minor 'policing' function, imposing some constraints upon the operations of private enterprise, and yet acknowledging the supremacy of the profit motive in urban development – as was, and is still, the case in the United States. Public enterprise in British cities has had a policy of its own, based on the 'public interest' (however hesitantly interpreted at various times). This can be seen clearly when municipal housing in Britain – particularly in Greater London during the post-war period – is compared with past and current 'public housing' (or 'urban renewal' schemes) in the United States. Public housing in US cities is usually located on sites which are patently unsuitable for residential development, next to railway lines or factory chimneys – on the 'reject' parcels of land which are not profitable for private enterprise. By contrast, the location of post-war New Towns, new estates and smaller enclaves of municipal housing in Greater London (as elsewhere in Britain) has been determined largely by straightforward criteria of suitability. Accordingly, such schemes are frequently on sites which would have been highly profitable for development by private enterprise. And for that reason too (as was mentioned before), recent municipal housing schemes in inner London have in fact attracted, rather than deterred, adjacent private development.

¹⁴ The imprint of local councils on their areas is noticeable especially in the case of those councils which do not stay aloof from party politics (and do not call themselves 'independent'); which have definite political views and fairly stable majorities of one of the major political parties. The fact that local councils in the Greater London area – not least the London County Council – have had, and still have, such characteristics thus

Despite the considerable shifts of population, of fortunes and of policies, the socio-geographical pattern of Greater London has, therefore, been a rather stubborn one. It still presents the divisions inherent in a society with an acknowledged class structure – and in a society, moreover, whose inherent conflicts have been averted or softened because upper-class modes of living were regarded less with enmity than with curiosity; they were taken as models to be imitated, and handed down from the middle to the lower groups of the social hierarchy. London's suburban sprawl is indicative of such imitations. Already during the nineteenth century, the main status symbol of the aspiring middle classes was some version of the aristocratic country house (or better still the acquisition of the genuine article); later on, white-collar and manual workers in steady employment asserted their position in a suburban villa – or in a substitute for a suburban villa. It was mainly the poorer sections of the metropolitan working class – especially the people of the East End and of the southern riverside boroughs – who wanted to stay behind in 'good old London', and who have throughout retained their loyalties to their own districts. But even they have had to participate increasingly in the suburban exodus.

So London has grown in a conservative fashion, by a process of aggregation, producing more of the same. In the course of expansion, the old social boundaries have been perpetuated and extended. Indeed, in general both the scale and nature of London's expansion have had the effect of inhibiting, rather than of encouraging, radical changes in socio-geographical alignments.

Recently, however, there have been signs of new tendencies, and thus of new combinations and of new splits in the established pattern. Upper-class standards are seen to be more ambiguous, and are no longer so widely accepted as models as they were before. There are, moreover, shifts in the orientation of the upper and middle classes themselves: their anti-urban bias, in particular, has been substantially modified. Similarly, the higher ranks of the working class, whose ambitions were previously focused upon suburbia, have begun to change their minds. The alterations in the domestic economy of all

helps to explain why the administrative boundaries within the area are not merely spurious ones. Nevertheless, the London County boundary has become blurred in various places at the borders of Surrey, Kent and Middlesex; and there are also various 'split' metropolitan boroughs. The most striking example of the latter is Kensington, where the division between the prosperous South and the poor North has until recently been very clear-cut.

these groups; the earlier establishment of households as a result of younger marriages; the growing proportion of married women in employment; the difficulties and rising cost of journeys to work – all these factors contribute to a switch from suburban to urban aspirations.¹⁵ Especially among the vast contingent of commuters who arrive every morning in central London, there are many who would now much prefer to live nearer to the core of the London labour market. Thus although the drift to suburbs is continuing, it has become to a considerable extent an involuntary one – dictated by the increasingly acute shortage of reasonably priced accommodation in or around inner London.¹⁶ In current circumstances this new demand for homes near the metropolitan centre is bound to remain largely unsatisfied. For it has arisen, and it is growing, at a time when the de-control of property values and rents has made private enterprise predominant in urban development;¹⁷ and when the resulting new spurt in real estate speculation has greatly intensified the competition for, and the pressure on, space.

The new, or newly visible, trends are changing not only the orientations of Londoners, but also those of students of Greater London. It is only during the last few years that the social character of whole districts has altered, especially in inner London. Previously, the coincidence between metropolitan social and territorial stratification was

¹⁵ This change from suburban to urban aspirations is, moreover, both reflected and accentuated by a corresponding (though not unanimous) trend in the attitudes of architects and town planners. (This latter trend gained strength mainly through the Festival of Britain in 1951 – through its exhibitions at the South Bank and in Lansbury.) And the varied examples of genuinely 'urban design', which have accordingly been provided by architects – especially by those working for public authorities – have in turn encouraged pro-urban orientations among groups of potential 'clients'.

¹⁶ The steady decline in the population of the County of London has continued in the decade 1951 to 1961; and it is apparently still continued. During this last decade, the out-county rings of the Conurbation (and the Conurbation as a whole) have also begun to show a population decline – for the first time in this century. The Conurbation itself has become an 'inner' area. The frontiers of the still-expanding 'Greater London' are being pushed even further outwards.

¹⁷ Private enterprise is certainly predominant in non-residential development, and increasingly also, once again, in the provision of housing. In 1951, 12 per cent of all new permanent dwellings built during the year were provided by private enterprise; in 1961, the comparable figure had risen to 64 per cent. (Thus conversely, the share of public authorities in the provision of new housing had dropped from 88 per cent to 36 per cent.) So far, the increase in the share of private enterprise housing has not been quite so steep in the London Conurbation as in the country as a whole; nor has it been equally distributed throughout the Conurbation.

a familiar one. It was, therefore, both convenient and useful to examine the social structure of Greater London within a geographical framework. Moreover, during the first post-war period (and still until the later fifties), investigations of the socio-geographical pattern of Greater London, and of its development, appeared to be of special importance. For that was the period of search for a progressive definition and interpretation of the 'public interest'; the period – continued longer in London than in many other parts of the country – of ambitious town planning and municipal housing schemes. Significant shifts of population were initiated. Accordingly, it was appropriate to examine the habitat and characteristics of the population thus affected; and also more generally to pursue social studies which were relevant, directly or indirectly, to the preparation and evaluation of planning schemes.

The very fact that such links between social research and social policy then existed – as they had existed during previous pioneering phases of social reform – was in keeping with the mood of that period. There was then, apparently, a considerable measure of agreement on major objectives of social policy. There was certainly far less vagueness, vacillation and dubiety than there is now. It thus seemed well worth while to investigate the premises, procedures and results of planning, and to consider also details of design and administration.

Several surveys of new housing estates belong to that category of investigations. They are, in a sense, examples of the optimism of the immediate post-war years – though their enquiries extended beyond those years, and also pointed to reasons for pessimism, which have subsequently become more prominent. Such surveys show that even in the confident post-war days, town planning – by definition a deliberate, rational pursuit – tended to be afflicted by the hangover of haphazard, arbitrary, outdated ideas and procedures. And while these reports present examples of the considerable achievements of municipal enterprise, they also confirm that town planning, by itself, is a misnomer: without the backing of comprehensive social and economic planning, it is bound to be rather slow and incoherent, and is not likely to go very far. Nor has it gone very far: since the mid-fifties, 'planning' has been compelled to retreat.

Even so, the experience gained in the building of the post-war estates has by no means become merely a matter of historical interest. Sooner or later, housing will have to be regarded as a social service; in some form or other, the ambitions which such estates represent will

have to be revived; and so the lessons learned through them will be topical again. Despite their shortcomings, these 'new' communities – no longer new, though of recent origin – are a positive legacy of post-war policies. Indeed, they serve as a reminder of the speed with which the social climate has changed in the last few years – for better in some respects; for worse in many others. Standards of living have risen markedly, if unequally; standards of social responsibility, as acknowledged by the 'body politic', have markedly declined. Though poverty, depression and blight have by no means been eliminated, there is apparently in the metropolitan area more individual economic security than there was five or ten years ago. Yet there is also far more social insecurity – in the widest sense of the term.

Hence a different set of pervasive questions has recently come to the fore – the consideration of social and cultural cleavages which cut across particular locations in space or time. In social research, as in other spheres, concern with such matters has developed, explicitly or implicitly, not least because the experiences of recently arrived minority groups have revealed the fissures – actual and potential – in the British social structure. The presence of coloured people, in particular of West Indians, Indians and Pakistanis, has created a sense of disturbance – usually the symptom of 'native', inherent social anxieties, rather than of troubles imported by 'foreigners'. It is not so much the migrants from the Commonwealth who have difficulties of adaptation: they can become 'insiders' in any one of the many sub-cultures which exist in the big city. But it is they who show up the dark patches in British society; they point to the difficulties which the British have in adapting themselves to their own domestic changes and to the post-colonial world of today. And it is because these migrants are doing this at a particularly awkward moment of history that their colour makes them so visible, and their presence is strongly resented.

The current experiences of urban minority groups are not unprecedented in Britain, nor have the manifold problems of social pathology exposed by them arisen suddenly during the last few years. And yet such problems have only recently acquired some prominence – mainly because of the special constellation of circumstances in which the arrival of a considerable (though often exaggerated) number of black/or coloured people has occurred.¹⁸ For the same reason, it is now also

¹⁸ As there is no 'colour' classification in the Census, estimates of changes in the number and proportion of the coloured population have to be based on the birthplace statistics of the Census. (The latter do not show British-born coloured people, nor do they differentiate between white and non-white West Indians, for example.) Table 11.1

TABLE 11.1 Distribution of population in London A.C. by their places of birth (excluding those whose birthplace was not stated or who were born at sea).

Birthplace	Census 1951		Census 1961	
	No. (in 000's)	(%)	No. (in 000's)	(%)
India, Pakistan, Ceylon (Sri Lanka)	19,001	0.6	31,350	1.0
Africa (except Republic of South Africa and UAR)	4,335	0.1	16,273	0.5
British Caribbean	4,216	0.1	70,523	2.2
Sub-Total (A)	27,552	0.8	118,146	3.7
Ireland (B)	111,671	3.4	162,141	5.1
Middle East, Cyprus, other Asian countries	17,509	0.5	45,773	1.5
Europe and USSR	124,128	3.8	121,637	3.8
Other Continents (America, Australia, New Zealand, Republic of South Africa and UAR)	26,842	0.8	34,988	1.1
Sub-Total (C)	168,479	5.1	202,398	6.4
All Foreign-born	307,702	9.3	482,685	15.3
All Born in Great Britain	2,996,642	90.7	2,674,805	84.7
Grand Total	3,304,344	100.0	3,157,490	100.0

evident that the investigation of these matters, here and abroad, cannot be confined within the department of 'minorities' or 'race relations', but must be regarded as an integral part of the comprehensive, comparative study of social stratification. Minorities – whatever their colour and antecedents – are, so to speak 'critical instances' of the operations

shows the position in 1951 and 1961. The approximate number of 'coloured' people (that is, of those born in the predominantly coloured countries of Asia, Africa and the British Caribbean) was 27,552 in the County of London in 1951; and had increased to 118,146 by 1961. The proportion of people from these countries in the total London population had risen from 0.8 per cent in 1951 to 3.7 per cent – still a rather small proportion – in 1961. The proportion of all foreign-born people (including the Irish) in the County increased from 9 per cent in 1951 to 15 per cent in 1961. During this decade, the increase in the foreign-born population of London has certainly helped to offset the decrease in the British-born population. Even so, despite immigration from abroad, the County still lost a net total of some 150,000 people. (The loss is slightly greater than shown in table 11.1 when people who did not state their birthplace are also taken into account.)

of the social system within which they exist. They show up the major tendencies of the system, and cannot be ignored wherever and whenever such tendencies are considered.

The surveys of old and new 'white' minorities help to put the widely publicized and racial problems associated with the recent arrival of Commonwealth migrants into perspective. In the past, British society has 'accommodated' itself more smoothly, and certainly more quietly, to stresses and strains which were similar to those aroused now (as in previous periods), or discovered, by black people.¹⁹ Prejudice against the Irish and the Jews has caused no guilt feelings; it was, and still is, largely taken for granted. It is true that the Commonwealth migrants, and especially the West Indians, are not as obliging as other minorities: they do not readily accept their minority status. While the Poles, for example, settled in this country as a transitory political minority – as an exile group looking to its national home elsewhere – and still keep themselves conveniently apart, the West Indians have had no such notions. Until the passing of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962, they tended to regard Britain as their 'mother country' (as they had been taught to do), and claimed equal rights as British citizens. But such attitudes, too, are only one element in a chain reaction of frictions which occur regardless of black migrants, though they tend to be sparked off more noisily, and are more frequently observed, when strangers arrive on the scene. Unlike the West Indians, the Irish, the Indians and the Pakistanis have strong national allegiances of their own. Like the West Indians, many of them (though by no means all) tend to be 'marginal men', who belong to the lower ranks of unskilled labour, and live among other 'marginal' men at the periphery, or in odd corners, of society. All these groups, regardless of their national, social or colour differences, tell similar tales of troubles. Nor is this surprising. For ultimately such troubles originate not in Jamaica or Barbados, not in the Punjab or County Cork. Their causes can be found, and may indeed be increasingly found, in British history – past and present.

¹⁹ It has to be remembered that the Notting Dale 'race riots' in 1958 were certainly not the first of their kind in Britain. Racial disturbances, directed against coloured people, generally more violent than those of 1958, occurred before – especially after World War I in Cardiff, Liverpool and in other ports which then had small colonies of coloured people; and again during and after World War II in Liverpool, Birmingham, and in parts of London. Although the coloured 'colonies' which existed in Britain before the recent flow of immigrants were smaller and less widely dispersed than the present ones, their difficulties were no less, and at times even more, severe.

12

The Mood of London

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It is an awkward period to talk about 'planning' in London – or rather to make plans for planning. The more reason, perhaps, to talk about it. In the context of our society and political system planning is based on the assumption that three prerequisites exist: first, a considerable measure of consensus on major decisions affecting land-use and the economic and social organization involved; second, a widely accepted definition of the 'public interest', in terms of which these decisions are supposed to be made; third, the conceptual, institutional and technical equipment which would enable us to apply such a definition in practice to plan-making and development control. In short, planning as an institution, and as a process, is supposed to be essentially 'rational' (in terms of a collective rationality) and also seen to be rational; and such rationality, in turn, rests upon a demonstrable 'objectivity'. But are these attributes actually in evidence in the current London planning scene – on paper or on the ground? There can be little doubt that the answer to that question would be generally negative. Indeed, this is one of the very few observations which would nowadays be regarded as an objective one.

What then is wrong? Why is it now, and will be for some time to come, so exceptionally difficult to make sense of planning; to develop an agreed definition of the 'public interest' – or even to agree to differ?

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