

Community Reading Group Annotations January 2024

City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles

By: Mike Davis

At baseline, the reading of a book manifests certain complexities about what community is. It conjures childhood: hiding under covers with a flashlight, connecting intimately with someone I will never meet while moving further from those to whom I am in physical proximity. CRG hides under the covers together, making discoveries we might not be able to access without borrowing language.

The books I am proposing span genres from fiction to history to philosophy to self-help. I would argue that they share an investment in a social concept of the personal that exists in the relationship between science and other fields. The term “trauma” is likely to play a role in our discussions. In studying one of these books, I hope to examine how stories embed in matter or matters either metaphorically or in some cases literally.

–Beth Fiedorek

City of Quartz: Prologue

With such malice toward the landscape, it is not surprising that developers also refuse any nomenclatural concession to the desert. In promotional literature intended for homebuyers or Asian investors, they have started referring to the region euphemistically as 'North Los Angeles County'. Meanwhile they christen their little pastel pods of Chardonnay lifestyle, air-conditioned and over-watered, with scented brand-names 'like Fox Run, Mardi Gras, Bravo, Cambridge, Sunburst, New Horizons, and so on.

But [developers] only expose the underlying method in the apparent madness of L.A.'s urban desert. The discarded Joshua trees, the profligate wastage of water, the claustrophobic walls, and the ridiculous names are as much a polemic against incipient urbanism as they are an assault on an endangered wilderness. The *eutopic* (literally no-place) logic of their subdivisions, in sterilized sites stripped bare of nature and history, masterplanned only for privatized family consumption, evokes much of the past evolution of tract-home Southern California. But the developers are not just repackaging myth (the good life in the suburbs) for the next generation; they are also pandering to a new, burgeoning fear of the city. (6)

Now and then, a philosophical temperament, struggling with the huge paradox of Southern California, rediscovers Llano as the talisman of a future lost. Thus Aldous Huxley, who lived for a few years in the early 1940s in a former Llano ranch house overlooking the colony's cemetery, liked to meditate 'in the almost supernatural silence' on the fate of utopia. He ultimately came to the conclusion that the Socialist City was a 'pathetic little Ozymandias', doomed from the start by Harriman's 'Gladstone collar' and his 'Pickwickian' misunderstanding of human nature – whose history 'except in a purely negative way . . . is sadly un instructive'.

Llano's other occasional visitors, lacking Huxley's vedic cynicism, have generally been more charitable. After the debacle of 1960s-70s communitarianism (especially the deadly trail that led into the Guyanese jungle), the pear trees planted by this ragtime utopia seem a more impressive accomplishment. Moreover, as its most recent historians point out, Huxley grossly under estimated the negative impact of wartime xenophobia and the spleen of the *Los Angeles Times* upon Llano's viability. There but for fortune (and Harry Chandler), perhaps, would stand a brave red kibbutz in the Mojave today, canvassing votes for Jesse Jackson and protecting Joshuas from bulldozers. (11)

On May Day 1990 (the same day Gorbachev was booed by thousands of alienated Moscovites) I returned to the ruins of Llano del Rio to see if the walls would talk to me. Instead I found the Socialist City reinhabited by two twenty-year-old building laborers from El Salvador, camped out in the ruins of the old dairy and eager to talk with me in our mutually broken tongues. . . . When I observed that they were settled in the ruins of a *ciudad socialista*, one of them asked whether the 'rich people had come with planes and bombed them out'. No, I explained, the colony's credit had failed. They looked baffled and changed the subject.

We talked about the weather for a while, then I asked them what they thought about Los Angeles, a city without boundaries, which ate the desert, cut down the Joshua and the May Pole, and dreamt of becoming infinite. One of my new Llano *compañeros* said that L.A. already was everywhere. They had watched it every night in San Salvador, in endless dubbed reruns of *I Love Lucy* and *Starsky and Hutch*, a city where everyone was young and rich and drove new cars and saw themselves on television. After ten thousand daydreams like this, he had deserted the Salvadorean Army and hitchhiked two thousand five hundred miles to Tijuana. A year later he was standing at the corner of Alvarado and Seventh Streets in the MacArthur Park district near Downtown Los Angeles, along with all the rest of yearning, hardworking Central America. No one like him was rich or drove a new car – except for the coke dealers – and the police were as mean as back home. More importantly no one like him was on television; they were all invisible. (12)

“Yet this very rhetoric (which infuses a long tradition of writing about Los Angeles, since at least the 1920s) indicates powerful critical energies at work. For if Los Angeles has become the archetypal site of massive and unprotesting subordination of industrialized intelligentsias to the programs of capital, it has also been fertile soil for some of the most acute critiques of the culture of late capitalism, and, particularly, of the tendential degeneration of its middle strata (a persistent theme from Nathanael West to Robert Towne). The most outstanding example is the complex corpus of what we call noir (literary and cinematic): a fantastic convergence of American 'tough-guy' realism, Weimar expressionism, and existentialized Marxism - all focused on unmasking a 'bright, guilty place' (Welles) called Los Angeles.

Los Angeles in this instance is, of course, a stand-in for capitalism in general. The ultimate world-historical significance - and oddity - of Los Angeles is that it has come to play the double role of utopia and dystopia for advanced capitalism. The same place, as Brecht noted, symbolized both heaven and hell. Correspondingly, it is the essential destination on the itinerary of any late twentieth-century intellectual, who must eventually come to take a peep and render some opinion on whether 'Los Angeles Brings It All Together' (official slogan), or is, rather, the nightmare at the terminus of American history (as depicted in noir). Los Angeles - far more than New York, Paris or Tokyo - polarizes debate: it is the terrain and subject of fierce ideological struggle.

With apologies for the schematic compression inevitable in so cursory a survey, I explore, first, the role-played by successive migrations of intellectuals (whether as tourists, exiles or hired hands), in relation to the dominating cultural institutions of their time (the Los Angeles Times, Hollywood, and, most recently, an emergent university-museum mega complex), in constructing or deconstructing the mythography of Los Angeles. I am interested, in other words, not so much in the history of culture produced in Los Angeles, as the history of culture produced about Los Angeles - especially where that has become a material force in the city's actual evolution. As Michael Sorkin has emphasized, 'L.A. is probably the most mediated town in America, nearly unviewable save through the fictive scrim of its mythologizers'." (18-20 PDF, 15-16 purple cover)

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“When Otis greeted the footsore Lummis, Los Angeles was just a back country town (the 187th largest in the 1880 Census) tributary to imperial San Francisco, with little water or capital, and no coal or port. When Otis died thirty-five years later, Los Angeles was the biggest city in the West, approaching a million inhabitants, with an artificial river tapped from the Sierras, a federally subsidized harbor, an oil bonanza, and block after block of skyscrapers under construction. Unlike other American cities that maximized their comparative advantages as crossroads, capitals, seaports, or manufacturing centers, Los Angeles was first and above all the creature of real-estate capitalism: the culminating speculation, in fact, of the generations of boosters and promoters who had subdivided and sold the West from the Cumberland Gap to the Pacific.

The first boom occurred a few years after Lummis's arrival and brought one hundred thousand fortune- and health-seekers to Los Angeles County. After the collapse of this railroad-engineered land rush, Colonel Otis - representing the toughest of the new settlers - took command of the city's business organizations on behalf of panic-stricken speculators. To revive the boom, and to launch a reckless competition with San Francisco (the most unionized city in the world), he militarized industrial relations in Los Angeles. Existing unions were locked out, picketing was virtually outlawed, and dissidents were terrorized. With sunshine and the open shop as their main assets, and allied with the great transcontinental railroads (the region's largest landowners), a syndicate of developers, bankers and transport magnates led by Otis and his son-in-law, Harry Chandler, set out to sell Los Angeles - as no city had ever been sold - to the restless but affluent babbity of the Middle West. For more than a quarter century, an unprecedented mass migration of retired farmers, small-town dentists, wealthy spinsters, tubercular schoolteachers, petty stock speculators, Iowa lawyers, and devotees of the Chautauqua circuit transferred their savings and small fortunes into Southern California real estate. This massive flow of wealth between regions produced population, income and consumption structures seemingly out of all proportion to Los Angeles's actual production base: the paradox of the first 'postindustrial' city in its preindustrial guise." (25 PDF, 21-22 purple cover)

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"Adamic's and Mayo's indictment of Los Angeles's 'fake urbanity', as well as the attack of the Group of Independents on landscape romanticism, simultaneously unearthed a truism and gave birth to a lasting stereotype. The anti-urban, Garden City ethos celebrated by the Arroyans was turned over to expose its malignant aspect. Intellectual emigres, beginning to arrive in numbers from Europe in the early 1930s, were particularly disturbed by the absence of urban culture in a City-region of two million inhabitants. Alfred Doblin - the famed literary portraitist of Berlin - would actually denounce Hollywood as a 'murderous desert of houses . . . a horrible garden city'. (When asked to comment on the suburban lifestyle, he added: 'Indeed, one is much and extensively in the open here - yet, am I a cow?')" (34 PDF, 30-31 purple cover)

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"Political observers inured to the bedrock conservatism of Southern California's Midwest immigrants were incredulous in 1934 when Upton Sinclair, the region's most notorious socialist, captured more than a hundred thousand cross-over Republican votes for his 'End Poverty in California' (EPIC) program with its quasi-revolutionary advocacy of 'production for use'. (In an interview thirty years later, Los Angeles EPIC organizer Reuben Borroughs confirmed that the movement primarily 'spoke to the broken down middle class' with little attention to labor or to the unemployed.) Four years later, journalists were warning of the potential for local fascism as the voting tide switched toward the shadowy 'Ham and Eggs' movement with its weird combination of pension reform and brown shirt demagoguery. Agitated middle-class voters also embraced the temporary sensations of Technocracy, Inc., the Utopian Society, and the

Townsend Plan. Symptomatically, the epicenters of this turbulence were the suburban growth-poles of the roaring twenties: Glendale (a hotbed of EPIC) and Long Beach (with 40,000 elderly lowans, the birthplace of the Townsend Plan and stronghold of Ham and Eggs).

These Depression-crazed middle classes of Southern California became, in one mode or another, the original protagonists of that great anti myth usually known as *noire*. Beginning in 1934, with James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, a succession of through-the-glass-darkly novels - all produced by writers under contract to the studio system - repainted the image of Los Angeles as a deracinated urban hell. 'Writing against the myth of El Dorado, they transformed it into its antithesis; that of the dream running out along the California shore . . . [they created] a regional fiction obsessively concerned with puncturing the bloated image of Southern California as the golden land of opportunity and the fresh start.'" (37-38 PDF, 34-35 purple cover)

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"Adorno, who wrote the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* with Max Horkheimer in Los Angeles during the war, said after his return to Frankfurt years later, 'It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that any contemporary consciousness that has not appropriated the American experience, even if in opposition, has something reactionary about it. In Los Angeles where Adorno and Horkheimer accumulated their 'data', the exiles thought they were encountering America in its purest, most prefigurative moment. Largely ignorant of, or indifferent to, the peculiar historical dialectic that had shaped Southern California they allowed their image of first Sight to become its own myth: Los Angeles as the crystal ball of capitalism's future. And, confronted with this future, they experienced all the more painfully the death agony of Enlightenment Europe.'" (48 PDF, 45 purple cover)

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"In the first place, virtually all the Europeans railed against Hollywood's proletarianization of the intelligentsia. Here the complaints of the Weimar and Bloomsbury groups echoed the already alienated writers' colony (the Screen Writers Guild had been formed in 1933), and retraced a theme, as I have argued, that was central to Los Angeles fiction. Thrown into a 'totally alien, opaque environment, where creative ideas, artistry and originality did not count, where everything was tuned to the ways one finds in workshops and offices', the exiles experienced artistic degradation amid affluence. Despite his initial euphoria about the cultural prospects of Southern California, Max Reinhardt found himself expected to punch a studio timeclock like any factory worker- - 'in 1942 he left dejectedly for New York City'. Brilliant, anti-fascist actors of the Weimar theater like Fritz Kortner, Alexander Grenach, and Peter Lorre were restricted by studio bosses to ridiculous impersonations of the Nazi leadership.'" (52 PDF, 50 purple cover)

City of Quartz: “Sunshine or Noir?” pt 2

THE SORCERERS

PDF p73 / Purple Cover p53-54

But Cal Tech itself was largely the invention of George Ellery Hale... Smitten with Pasadena and its extraordinary concentration of retired, 'surplus' wealth, Hale envisioned a vast scientific-cultural triangle around the Observatory ... the Institute, and the Huntington Library (whose creation he also influenced).⁹⁸ The indefatigable Hale (closely associated with the Carnegie interests) was also the chief catalyst in organizing the National Research Council in 1917 to support Woodrow Wilson's war mobilization. The NRC was the scientific-military-industrial complex in embryo, bringing together the nation's leading physical scientists, the military's chief engineers, and the heads of science-based corporations like AT&T and GE. Moreover it was the model for the triangular regional collaboration that Hale wanted to establish around Cal Tech, and whose ultimate offshoot was the Los Angeles aerospace industry.⁹⁹

In order to realize this dream, Hale convinced one of - his NRC (*National Research Council*) colleagues, and America's leading physicist, Robert A. Millikan.... Hale and Millikan shared an almost fanatical belief in the partnership of science and big business. It was their policy that Cal Tech be allied to 'aristocracy and patronage' and shielded 'from meddling congressmen and other representatives of the people'.¹⁰⁰

PDF p73 / Purple Cover p55

In his role as Cal Tech's chief booster, Millikan increasingly became an ideologue for a specific vision of science in Southern California. Speaking typically to luncheon meetings at the elite California Club in Downtown Los Angeles, or to banquets for the Associates at the Huntington mansion, Millikan adumbrated two fundamental points. First, Southern California was a unique scientific frontier where industry and academic research were joining hands to solve such fundamental challenges as the long-distance transmission of power and the generation of energy from sunlight. Secondly, and even more importantly, Southern California 'is today, as was England two hundred years ago, the westernmost outpost of Nordic civilization', with the 'exceptional opportunity' of having 'a population which is twice as Anglo-Saxon as that existing in New York, Chicago or any of the great cities of this country'.¹⁰²

PDF p76-77 / Purple Cover p58

Aside from being a world-famous rocket pioneer and a secret wizard, Parsons was also a devoted science fiction fan who attended meetings of the Los Angeles Fantasy and Science Fiction Society to hear writers talk about their books. One day in August 1945, to Parsons's delight, a LAFSFS acquaintance showed up at the Orange Grove mansion with a young naval officer, Lt. Commander L. Ron Hubbard, who had already established a reputation as a master of sci-fi. pulp. Captivated by Hubbard's 'charm' and expressed desire to become a practitioner of

Magick, Parsons welcomed him as house guest and sorcerer's apprentice. Hubbard reciprocated by sleeping with Parsons's mistress. Perturbed by this development, but not wishing to show open jealousy, Parsons instead embarked on a vast diabolical experiment, under Crowley's reluctant supervision, to call up a true 'whore of Babylon' so that she and Parsons might procreate a literal Antichrist in Pasadena.⁵⁹

THE COMMUNARDS

PDF p81 / Purple Cover p62-63

... For Coleman, Dolphy, and other local jazz guerrillas, that shared existential ground was Black Los Angeles's distinctive Southwestern blues tradition. Coleman had started his musical career honking out heavy, if slightly unorthodox, blues riffs in Texas and Louisiana juke joints, later playing the emergent 'R&B' sound that synthesized blues and swing.... However, with the slow decline of the Central Avenue scene, partly as a result of police antipathy to 'race mixing' in the clubs, and with Black musicians excluded from lucrative studio jobs, the music of the younger ghetto jazzmen became leaner and harder, seeking through introspection and experiment to fashion a hegemonic alternative to the deracination of the 'cool jazz' played in beach nightclubs.¹¹⁶

PDF 81 / Purple Cover 63-64

The art counterpart to the jazz underground (although never with such radical aspirations) was the informal cooperative organized by a score of younger artists during the late 1950s around ... Ferus Gallery on La Cienga Boulevard. 'A motley batch of beatniks, eccentrics, and "art types" ', they became the 'seminal source for the blossoming of modernist art in Los Angeles during the sixties'.¹¹⁸ ... were far too individualistic to form an identifiable 'L.A. school', but they were temporarily unified by common passions. One was their desire to break the academicist stranglehold over Los Angeles's backwater art world, although they differed on the means towards that end (abstract expressionism versus hard-edge abstractionism, for example). Another was a biographical and aesthetic camaraderie based on enthusiasm for the hotrod and motorcycle subcultures that had developed in Southern California from the 1940s.

In his talks with Lawrence Weschler, Robert Irwin (who had attended L.A. 's Dorsey High School with Eric Dolphy) repeatedly emphasized the importance of custom-car 'folk art' to the emergence of the Ferus group and the 'L.A. Look' which they eventually created.

PDF p 84 / Purple Cover p 65-66

... Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966) provided the ultimate freeway-map ontology of Southern California. A former technical writer in the West Coast aerospace industry (forced to produce eroticized descriptions of Bomark missiles and the like), Pynchon understood (better than some of the Ferus Gallery's Pop artists) that in Southern California custom cars and their makers grew up into ICBMs and *their* makers. As radically 'decentered' as any

contemporary Althusserian could have wished, *Lot 49* wastes no time grappling with the alienation of its subject (as in Joan Didion's ' L.A. car book', *Play It As It Lays*) but moves immediately into a postmodern lane. It maps a baroquely layered but ultimately one-dimensional reality (Marcuse à la Klein bottle?) 'in which the city is at once an endless text always promising meaning but ultimately only offering hints and *signs* of a possible and final reality . . . like a "printed circuit", - or a freeway. ¹²⁴

PDF p 84-85 / Purple Cover p 66-67

But the Endless Summer of the avant garde (expressed in the new painting as a 'bright ethereality') came to an abrupt end in August 1965. Southcentral Los Angeles exploded in rage against police abuse and institutional racism, creating for a few days the 'barricaded commune' (Plagens) and 'burning city' (West) that Los Angeles intellectuals had frequently dreamt about as a kind of liberation from the Culture Industry. In fact, the Watts Rebellion, as well as the police attack on peaceful anti-war demonstrators at Century City in July 1967 , politically galvanized artists and writers on the first broad scale since the Hollywood witch-hunt...

Most importantly, the Rebellion inspired unity and elan in Southcentral Los Angeles, giving birth to a local version of the Black Arts Movement across a full spectrum of practices from Tapscott's Arkestra to the rap poetry of the Watts Prophets. Bernard Jackson and J. Alfred Cannon founded the Inner City Cultural Center in 1966 which grew into a flourishing theater center with its own press and school. Wanda Coleman, Kamau Daaood, Quincy Troupe, K. Curtis Lyle, Emory Evans, and Ojenke established a distinctive Watts idiom in fiction and poetry, while Melvin Van Peebles pioneered an alternative Black cinema with his outlaw odyssey, *Sweet Sweetback 's Badasssss Song*.

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But the heroic moment of Underground Los Angeles Culture quickly passed. As a local art historian pointed out, 'the high-flying spirit of the '60s . . . crashed and burned. ' ¹²⁶ The local dearth of jazz clubs and modernist galleries/collectors irresistibly drove part of the late 1950s and early 1960s avant garde (including L.A.'s Ariforum magazine) to Manhattan (or, sometimes, in the case of experimental film and poetry, to San Francisco). After a student rebellion in 1966, Disney endowers moved Chouinard Art Institute, reborn as the California Institute of the Arts, to an isolated suburban fringe where their conservative proprietary interests would be maximized. Inner-city cultural institutions, meanwhile, were starved of financial support and media attention. Then, amidst the recession of avant-garde hopes, there were suddenly the seductions of Los Angeles's own emergent corporate arts nexus.

Maurice Tuchman, the curator of the County Museum of Art, 'conceived [in the late 1960s] the somewhat dubious notion of placing artists with corporate sponsors in a vast Art and Technology program' . ¹²⁷ With the patronage of 'Missy' Chandler of the *Times* dynasty, Tuchman 'married' seventy-six artists to forty major local corporations. ¹²⁸

The 'L.A. Look', which in the early 1960s suggested the possibility of a critical-artistic strategy that interpreted the city from an indigenous sensibility, progressively collapsed into mere self-affirming veneer, 'mock worship of California's earthly paradise'.¹³⁰ Christopher Knight, writing about the 1970s, has described the implosion of the Los Angeles arts scene as a febrile, Popish 'regionalism' - based on pastel sentimentality and 'a distrust of intellectualism' - which attempted to fill the cultural vacuum left from the defeat of the 1960s. But out of this 'morass of determined provincialism' no 'broadly convincing local aesthetic' emerged, only a 'gruesome' celebration of trivialized made-in-Los-Angeles productions.¹³¹

THE MERCENARIES

... Indeed the current continental and international shift of the intelligentsia to the West Coast invites comparison to the great Hollywood immigration of the 1930s. The 'push' factors of this migration are predictably diverse: ranging from the impact of Thatcherite cuts upon the British university system to the relative decline of architectural commissions in the rest of the Sunbelt. More important, however, is the major 'pull' factor: a boom in cultural investment at the level of the design professions, fine arts institutions, and elite university departments - as well as a new siren song from the studios. The broad trend of this immigration, moreover, is thoroughly mercenary, as the new wave of designers, artists and professors have come to praise Caesar - in this case, international real-estate capital.

The large-scale developers and their financial allies, together with a few oil magnates and entertainment moguls, have been the driving force behind the public-private coalition to build a cultural superstructure for Los Angeles' s emergence as a 'world city'. They patronize the art market, endow the museums, subsidize the regional institutes and planning schools, award the architectural competitions, dominate the arts and urban design taskforces, and influence the flow of public arts monies. They have become so integrally involved in the organization of high culture, not because of old-fashioned philanthropy, but because 'culture' has become an important component of the land development process, as well as a crucial moment in the competition between different elites and regional centers. Old-fashioned material interest, in other words, drives the mega-developers to support the general cultural revalorization of Los Angeles, and, more specifically, to endorse the concentration of cultural assets in nodes of maximum development.

...Chief ideologue of the 1950s British 'Independent Group' - the midwife to the Pop Art explosion of the 1960s - (Reyner) Banham had once defined Pop as a 'firing squad without mercy or reprieve' against hieratic art traditions.¹⁴¹ From this perspective, Southern California, with its aggressive Present-mindedness, was a land purified by an exemplary design terror.¹⁴² *Los Angeles: The Architecture of the Four Ecologies* (1971) found virtue in almost everything disdained by traditional critics, including the automobile,¹⁴³ surfboards, hillside homes, and something called 'Los Angeles architecture'. Rejecting the Exiles' criterion of comparability with 'classical' urban space, Banham claimed that Los Angeles's polymorphous landscapes and architectures were given a 'comprehensible unity' by the freeway grid in a metropolis that spoke the 'language of movement, not monument'. He found the city's 'essential dream' - 'the dream of the urban homestead . . . the great bourgeois vision of the good life in a tamed countryside' - a 'sympathetic ecology for architecture' and excoriated the elitism of critics who failed to consult the actual desires of the masses. Lest anyone mistake the punchline of his book, Banham also made a companion BBC television documentary, *Reyner Banham Loves Los Angeles* (1972).

Given this conjuncture of arts bonanza and scorched earth, it is not surprising that imported intellectuals feel like missionaries in a cultural tabula rasa. Peter Sellars, the_ director of the corporate-endowed Los Angeles Festival (which has replaced the more populist Los Angeles Street Scene), is a modal example of the new mandarins who are 'redefining' the city. His curriculum vitae modestly relates that 'in addition to the festival, he's visiting professor in the World Arts and Cultures Department at UCLA, an artist in residence at Northwestern University, writing a book of essays on contemporary performance and preparing to launch into cinema as director of his first feature film'. Although 'huge parts of the city are unformed and confusing', Sellars loves Los Angeles because it is 'the ground floor', 'a gawky adolescent . . . [full of] nascent energy'. 'There is certainly that sense of genuine immaturity, but . . . I don't think that's entirely to be deplored - I think it's interesting.'¹⁵³

Such condescending enthusiasm has become the hallmark of the colon intelligentsia (Sellars has been in L.A. two years). Yet, at the same time, the arts elites, without any concession to the have-not cultural world, have begun to recognize the evident contradictions in their nouveau riche strategy (followed by all Sunbelt cities) of buying Culture straight off the rack of the world market. Over the last few years strenuous efforts have been made to discover seductive motifs that can act as brand labels for 'culture made in L.A.'. As in the early 1900s when the Mission Revival helped dissimulate local class struggle, there is a many-sided effort to fashion a new, emollient ideology for 'postmodern' Los Angeles that emphasizes the glamorous upside of the current social polarization and stakes a claim for the city's cultural leadership.

... L.A. 2000: A City for the Future (1988), has become the manifesto of a 'new regionalism', aiming to forge a unity of vision between mega-developers and the haute intelligentsia.¹⁵⁶

Interestingly, the report's epilogue (by historian Kevin Starr) reminds readers that the last 'coherent' Los Angeles, that of the 1920s, found 'community on a civic level' because it 'had a dominant establishment and a dominant population'.⁵⁷ The report clearly implies that because of the decline of the Anglo herrenvolk - i.e., the absence of a dominant culture group in an increasingly poly-ethnic, poly-centered metropolis - a 'dominant establishment' is more essential than ever. While explicitly warning of the 'Blade Runner scenario' - 'the fusion of individual cultures into a demotic polyglottism ominous with unresolved hostilities' - the report opts for the utopia of the 'Crossroads City': 'an extraordinary city of cities, a congregation of liveable communities'.¹⁵⁸ Although it repeatedly points out the total failure to create a social infrastructure to integrate new immigrants or old poor, the social justice dimension of the report consists basically of low-cost, cosmetic programs with an occasional, half-hearted allusion to the daunting scale of effort required. The central thrust of the report is an emphasis on 'growth management' to be implemented through rationalized regional government agencies supported by state environmental planning and a regional 'goals consensus'. Symptomatically, the Southern California economy is depicted as a happy black box generating endless growth. There is no consideration whatsoever of possible contradictions within this perpetual motion machine.

This optimistic, technocratic vision of Los Angeles entering the new millennium received unusual intellectual reinforcement eighteen months later with the publication of Kevin Starr's whiggish history of the city's Promethean past: *Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920s* (1990). Elaborating the themes of his epilogue to *L.A. 2000*, Starr claims that Los Angeles was conjured out of the desert as a willed act of imagination by a visionary pantheon of artists, architects, engineers, and entrepreneurs. Although particular settings (for instance, Santa Barbara in the 1920s, the utopian beginnings of Los Angeles architecture, and so on) are brilliantly evoked, Los Angeles in the Open Shop era is depicted without a noir cloud on the horizon. There is no hint of class or racial violence, nor, for that matter, of any historical causality other than seminal individuals attempting to materialize their dreams. It is an account that begs comparison to the hagiographic 'brag books' - so common in the early twentieth century - that depicted local history as the heroic activity of the 'leading men of business and industry'. But Starr's evident concern is less to praise the forefathers than to encourage his contemporaries in the conceit that they too are fountainheads of the 'Southern California dream'. *Material Dreams*, by convincing us that its heroes 'designed' the city's past, offers a hubristic coda for today's mercenary intellectuals to claim that they are designing its future.¹⁵⁹

EPILOGUE: GRAMSCI VS *BLADE RUNNER*

PDF 100-101 / Purple Cover 83

... As Adamic and McWilliams in the 1930s and 1940s debunked the white supremacist pseudo-history of the Boosters, so today's oppositional intellectuals must contest the mythology of managed and eternal growth. As always, that contestation will be primarily a guerrilla war across a diversity of terrains, from UCLA to the streets of Compton.

One brave beginning has been made at UCLA - an institution otherwise more attuned these days to Paris than to Pasadena or Pacoima. The self proclaimed 'L.A. School' is an emerging current of neo-Marxist researchers (mostly planners and geographers) sharing a common interest in the contradictory ramifications of urban 'restructuring' and the possible emergence of a new 'regime of flexible accumulation'. Their image of Los Angeles as prism of different spatialities is brilliantly encapsulated by Edward Soja in an essay - 'It All Comes Together in Los Angeles', that has become the latter-day counterpart of Adamic's famous 'Los Angeles! There She Blows!'

One can find in Los Angeles not only the high technology industrial complexes of the Silicon Valley and the erratic sunbelt economy of Houston, but also the far-reaching industrial decline and bankrupt urban neighborhoods of rustbelt Detroit or Cleveland. There is a Boston in Los Angeles, a Lower Manhattan and a South Bronx, a São Paulo and a Singapore. There may be no other comparable urban region which presents so vividly such a composite assemblage and articulation of urban restructuring processes. Los Angeles seems to be conjugating the recent history of capitalist urbanization in virtually all its inflectional forms.¹⁶¹

PDF 101-103 / Purple Cover 83-85

During the 1980s the 'L.A. School' developed an ambitious matrix of criss-crossing approaches and case-studies. Monographs focused on the dialectics of de- and re-industrialization, the peripheralization of labor and the internationalization of capital, housing and homelessness, the environmental consequences of untrammelled development, and the discourse of growth. ... While surveying Los Angeles in a systematic way, the UCLA researchers are most interested in exploiting the metropolis, à la Adorno and Horkheimer, as a 'laboratory of the future'. They have made clear that they see themselves excavating the outlines of a paradigmatic postfordism, an emergent twenty-first century urbanism.¹⁶² Their belief in the region as a crystal ball is redoubled by Fredric Jameson's famous evocation (in his 'Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism') of Bunker Hill as a 'concrete totalization' of postmodernity.¹⁶³

...Yet, by hyping Los Angeles as the paradigm of the future (even in a dystopian vein), they tend to collapse history into teleology and glamorize the very reality they would deconstruct. Soja and Jameson, particularly, in the very eloquence of their different 'postmodern mappings' of Los Angeles, become celebrants of the myth. The city is a place where everything is possible,

nothing is safe and durable enough to believe in, where constant synchronicity prevails, and the automatic ingenuity of capital ceaselessly throws up new forms and spectacles - a rhetoric, in other words, that recalls the hyperbole of Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man.

PDF 103-104 / Purple Cover 85-86

The difficulties of breaking completely free of Los Angeles's ideological conceits are equally illustrated across town in the ghettos of Watts and Compton, with the emergence of 'gangster rap'. George Lipsitz, in his engaging 'Cruising Around the Hegemonic Bloc' (1986),¹⁶⁴ has argued that Los Angeles's spectrum of ethnic rock musicians, muralists, breakdancers, and rappers constitute a kind of 'organic intelligentsia' fomenting a cultural strategy for a 'historical bloc of oppositional groups'. Disdaining recent attempts to whitewash a musical style that was meant to be the authentic sound of the ghetto ('we make these records for our people first'), NWA are 'pushing the imagery much further than anyone before them'; '[they] feature sirens and gunshots as backdrops to their brutal and ugly X-rated tales of drug-dealing, gangbanging and police confrontations'.¹⁶⁵ As Eazy-E explains it, gangster rap has become Los Angeles's alternative press:

We're telling the real story of what it's like living in places like Compton. We're giving [the fans] reality. We're like reporters. We give them the truth. People where we come from hear so many lies that the truth stands out like a sore thumb.

But one of the most persistent 'truths' that NWA report is their own avarice: 'We're not making records for the fun of it, we're in it to make money.' In contrast to their New York Rap counterparts, Public Enemy (now defunct), who were tribunes of Black nationalism, Los Angeles gangster rappers disclaim all ideology except the primitive accumulation of wealth by any means necessary. In supposedly stripping bare the reality of the streets, 'telling it like it is', they also offer an uncritical mirror to fantasy power-trips of violence, sexism and greed. And no more than Charles Bukowski or Frank Gehry (other purveyors of L.A. 'social realism') have the gangster rappers managed to avoid retranslation by becoming celebrities. Surrounded by benignly smiling white record company execs and PR men, NWA brandish customized assault rifles and talk darkly about recent 'drivebys' and funerals of friends - a 'polished' image like any other in the business.¹⁶⁶

PDF 104 / Purple Cover 86

This apparent synergy between gangster culture and Hollywood (an old motif) raises some doubts about Lipsitz's thesis of a counter-hegemonic convergence. Writing about another of Los Angeles's outlaw subcultures, the punk scene of the late 1970s and early 1980s, David James expresses pessimism that any contemporary culture practice, however transitory or marginal, can escape 'virtually overnight' assimilation and repackaging by the 'hegemonic media'. The experience of NWA, and less subtly of the entire burgeoning Colors genre,

suggests that Hollywood is eager to mine Los Angeles's barrios and ghettos for every last lurid image of self destruction and community holocaust. If the dream factories are equally as happy to manufacture nightmare as idyll, what happens to the oppositional power of documentary realism (a question, of course, that transcends the class struggle over the ideological figuration of Los Angeles)? James's own bleak answer, informed by Los Angeles case-studies, is that 'exemplary moments' of negation can now only be visualized as transient skirmishes at the very margin of culture; resistance becomes permanently 'conjectural'.¹⁶⁷

PDF 104-105 / Purple Cover 86-87

Somewhere between Lipsitz's Gramscian optimism and James's Frankfortian pessimism lies the real possibility of oppositional culture in Los Angeles. As Gramsci almost certainly would have pointed out, a radical structural analysis of the city (as represented by the 'L.A. School') can only acquire social force if it is embodied in an alternative experiential vision - in this case, of the huge Los Angeles Third World whose children will be the Los Angeles of the next millennium. In this emerging, poly-ethnic and poly-lingual society - with Anglos a declining minority - the structural conditions of intervention in popular culture are constantly in flux. ... Equally, will the boundaries between different groups become faultlines of conflict or high-voltage generators of an alternative urban culture led by poly-ethnic vanguards?

City of Quartz — Power Lines

Who Rules Los Angeles?

Because mass politics are so extraordinarily stunted in Los Angeles, elite interest brokerage is transacted invisibly with minimum patronage costs or 'trickle-down' to inner-city or labor constituencies. **Except for the periods immediately following the defeat of the open shop in the late 1930 and the Watts Rebellion of 1965, modern Los Angeles power structures have not had to respond to significant reformist pressures from the left.** This is partly the perverse legacy of local, early-twentieth-century progressivism, which by eliminating partisan competition in city and county governments depreciated citizen participation. It is also the result of extreme racial gerrymandering, especially of the Chicano Eastside, which has historically diluted the political clout of the non-Anglo working class. More recently, **the tide of undocumented immigration from Mexico and Central America has magnified the discrepancy between who labors and who votes.** Despite the epochal demographic transition that has made Anglos a minority group in Los Angeles, the most significant constraint on elite decision-making comes from affluent Anglo homeowners whose electoral weight is greater than ever. *(92 book, 104 PDF)*

Otis & the Boomers — 1800s–1910

The railroad was at first a cruel disappointment, demanding much in tribute and delivering little in new trade...The completion of Southern Pacific's Sunset Route in 1883, followed by the arrival of the competing Santa Fe in 1886, transformed the geographic and economic setting of Southern California. With immense investments tied up in their new transcontinental lines, and as the region's largest landowners, the railroads acquired a huge stake in the rapid development of Los Angeles and adjoining counties. (Eager to show off the charms of its new fiefdom, the Southern Pacific once offered Oscar Wilde a special train and private car if he would visit Los Angeles.) On a scale hitherto not dreamt possible, **they created a growth blueprint based on the conversion of latifundian dry agriculture into subdivided irrigated horticulture. By the early 1880s, the railroads were the 'leading patron[s] of scientific farming in California.'** Citrus culture, especially, seemed an ideal development strategy: attracting thousands of affluent investors, raising land values, reinforcing the region's 'Mediterranean' image, promoting tourism, stimulating town-building, and, above all, dramatically raising the unit value of railroad shipments. *(99 book, 110 PDF)*

Critics (especially San Franciscans) mocked the hubris that declared Los Angeles 'one of the world's great cities in the making', yet **within twenty years a Bismarckian municipal will — manifest in both public works and private monopoly — had created the world's biggest manmade port, aqueduct, and interurban electric railroad system.** The same iron will also smashed the labor movement in Los Angeles with the aim of giving the Otis-organized Merchants and Manufacturers Association a competitive advantage over their regional rivals in union citadel San Francisco. **Permanent class warfare also reinforced bourgeois political discipline.** When middle-class Progressives (the Good Government League or 'Goos Goos') attempted to break away from the strictly 'Otistown' vision of Los Angeles's future, they were driven back into line by the dramatic electoral gains of the Socialist Party (which captured both working-class resentment against the open shop and anti-Progressive support from the Southern Pacific machine). *(101 book, 113 PDF)*

Harry Chandler's Town — 1920s-1940s

After the death of Otis, Harry Chandler — sitting on more than fifty corporation boards — emerged as the unquestioned leader of L.A.'s fourth generation Anglo power structure, 'the generalissimo of the forces that engineered the great postwar boom.' Indeed **Los Angeles in the 1920s was in many respects a de facto dictatorship of the Times and the Merchants and Manufacturers Association, as the LAPD's infamous 'red squad' kept dissent off the streets and radicals in jail. The social base of this authoritarian regime was the great influx of Middle Western babbity between 1900-1925 — one of the great internal migrations of American history.** In an era when transatlantic immigration was making most big US cities more foreign-born, Catholic, and Jewish, Los Angeles's non-Protestant white population was in relative decline. Moreover the new WASP ascendancy **found its essential economic support in the arrival of Mexican labor** in massive numbers after the fall of the Porfiriato in 1910. *(102 book, 113 PDF)*

Note: The fall of the Porfiriato in 1910 marked the end of Porfirio Díaz's long rule in Mexico and the beginning of the Mexican Revolution.

See also p 91 — "Elite genealogy in Los Angeles has reversed the typical American sequence of WASP dominance followed by Catholic and Jewish bids at power. Here the early preeminence of non-Protestant elites was superseded by a long era of WASP exclusionism as once cosmopolitan Los Angeles became, culturally and demographically, the most nativist and fundamentalist of big cities. The social and political purge of elite Jews in particular precipitated a bifurcated ruling class, perhaps unique in the United States."

'Hollywood' (encompassing also the movie enclaves in Burbank, Universal City and Culver City) exemplified this **growing disjuncture between regional economic power and the Downtown-oriented elite.** The most important fact about the movie colony was not so much its financial domination by Wall Street and the Bank of Italy, but simply that **it was headed by**

Eastern European Jews who, despite their legendary wealth and conservative politics, could not play golf or send their kids to the same schools with the Chandlerian elite. Even Louis B. Mayer, during the 1930s the chairman of the California Republican Party and the highest paid executive in the United States, was excluded from social inner sanctums enjoyed by middle-level WASP realtors and used-car dealers. *(107 book, 119 PDF)*

A City With Two Heads — The Westside Emerges (1950s)

Aided by local McCarthyism, the Old Guard was more successful in 1953 in restoring a pliant, Times-dominated regime in City Hall. **The pretext of their municipal counter-revolution was the 'creeping socialism' of Mayor Fletcher Bowron's low-rent public housing program,** especially where it cut across elite plans for Downtown. What Bowron would later denounce as 'a small, immensely wealthy, incredibly powerful group' — i.e., Chandler, Call, Petree and Beebe — drafted right-wing Congressman Norris Poulson as the torch-bearer of their crusade against 'socialism'. Poulson accepted the nomination only after being assured by Chandler that the mayor was 'entitled to strut around in a Cadillac and chauffeur supplied by the city'. With Norman Chandler's editorial pages pounding away at Bolshevism and public housing, Poulson got his ride in the Cadillac. **Within a few years, the Times-made mayor, in return, gave the Downtown interests what they really wanted: the removal of 12,000 low-income residents to pave the way for Bunker Hill redevelopment and Dodger Stadium in Chavez Ravine.** Exhilarated by their easy recapture of City Hall, Chandler, Palmer, Call and company combined forces with their traditional ally, the Knowland dynasty of Oakland, to carry the counter-revolution statewide. *(111 book, 122 PDF)*

Responding to Urban Crisis (1960-70s)

What eventually emerged, transcending the mass politics of Bradley's coalition between Southcentral and West Los Angeles, was an intricate citywide accommodation of elites. Bradley won over a hostile Committee of 25 with his promotion of Downtown redevelopment, rather than community development in Watts and East L.A., as the showpiece program of his administration. **Bradley supporters who had expected dramatic initiatives to address inner-city poverty and unemployment were shocked as mayoral taskforces headed by Asa Call, Philip Hawley (Broadway stores) and Red Schnell (Prudential Insurance) set corporate-oriented economic development and transportation goals.** By year three of the Bradley era even Henry Salvatore (godfather to Goldwater and Reagan) was forking out contributions to the mayor while the Chamber of Commerce sang the praises of an administration that it had originally denounced. Bradley's role as a bridge between Los Angeles's two elite cultures was symbolized by an extraordinary 1975 fundraiser on his behalf that was jointly hosted by Wasserman and Asa Call — the Mr Bigs of their respective halves of the city. **If not a reconciliation, it was at least a consummation.** *(117 book, 128 PDF)*

THE NEW SPRAWL OF POWER

THE NEW OCTOPUS

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By raising the stakes to such immense proportions, land scarcity has driven the baronial and fiercely competitive personalities that comprise the upper strata of the real estate industry to unite as an interest block to perpetuate the political conditions of growth. On the one hand, the long range, multi-phase nature of most contemporary projects imposes the need to stabilize land use zoning and ensure State support for infrastructure. on the other hand, Rising resistance to new development from homeowner-based slow growth movements has necessitated expensive investments in organizing political counter responses. this combination of exigencies has resulted in the creation of a vast lobbying and campaign Finance Network whose supply of juice exceeds anything ever offered politicians in the days of the Southern Pacific Railroad or Ahmanson and Unruh.

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Although political journalists have frequently compared the developers' role in corrupting the current state legislature to the pre-1910 Associated Villainies, The favorite habitat of the new Octopus is the county. this least Democratic unit of government has control over land use in unincorporated growth fringes and generally offers developers the biggest bang for their campaign buck. it is not surprising, therefore, that conservative, Pro-developer majorities control the boards of Supervisors in every Southern California county except Santa Barbara.

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If the Land Development industry is conceived as a regional, or even statewide, power structure superimposed on older and more parochial elites, what is particularly fascinating is the unscrupulous way in which developers' largess nourishes conservatives and liberals alike. one of the dirty little secrets of Los Angeles politics is that mayor Bradley — originally the standard bearer of the most liberal wing of Southern California democracy — shares to an astonishing extent the same developer Financial base as leading local republicans. thus Irvine company's Bren, Financial Godfather to Senator Pete Wilson and the largest Republican contributor in the state, has also been a major backer of bradley, as has Richard Riordan, downtown lawyer-developer-banker, who engineered the overthrow of California's liberal Supreme Court majority in 1986.

THE PERILS OF CO-PROSPERITY

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Of all the complex factors involved in the contemporary 'Nipponization' of the Southern California economy, two are particularly outstanding. first is the bizarre fact that the regions leading foreign export by volume is simply empty space; more than half the containers which arrive in San Pedro filled with computers, cars and televisions return with nothing in them. although it is impossible to know the regional balance of trade with any accuracy, in the mid-1980s the state as a whole averaged \$20 billion deficits in a Commerce of nearly \$30 billion with Japan. this one way trade generates both the need for huge onshore infrastructures of import services, finance and sales administration, as well as mechanisms for recycling the Japanese surplus.

THE PARADOXICAL TIMES

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An obvious result of growing financial integration is that control over the Los Angeles economy is being alienated, with incalculable consequences, to power centers 6000 miles away. The downtown 'renaissance', after all, is only a perverse Monument to US losses in the global trade war. when the Japanese economy seemed invincible and its supply of exportable capital infinite, this deficitary dialectic did not trouble local Elites. but 1980s blind faith in the ' Pacific century' began to buckle at the knees following the *kamikaze* dive of the Tokyo stock market in early 1990. Los Angeles is leaders were rudely awoken for the first time to the real nature of colonial subservience upon the inscrutable working of a Japanese economy bloated with fictional capital. for example, when the bank of Japan recently decided to raise its discount rate, it drove Tokyo investors to desert Disney corporation stocks *en masse* for domestic bonds. The result was unexpected distress and confusion in burbank. this was an infinitesimal foretaste of what a general real estate slump in Tokyo or a japan-centered recession might do to those sectors of the Los Angeles economy — like downtown or Hollywood — hopelessly addicted to ever-increasing fixes of recycled debt.

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...the underlying issue of these circulation wars transcends the competencies of the *Times* management or the competitive packaging of news entertainment. as one of the senior *Times* editors interviewed by Didion recognized, the paper has lost ground because of the ' aggressive disidentification with Los Angeles of the more recent and more uniformly affluent communities in Ventura and San Diego and Orange Counties.' Ironically, the once monolithically reactionary and middle brow *Times* — flagship of downtown power — is now at the receiving end of a regional backlash against the cultural and political liberalism of Los Angeles's west side. At the same time there is also a growing suburban estrangement from Los Angeles's inverse image of being an alien, third-world city. Yet the overly cautious and bourgeois *Times* has also had little impact upon the Latino Metropolis of 3 million people within Los Angeles county. Its desultory experiments with monthly bilingual inserts have only highlighted its lack of vision and audacity.

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Manatt's firm continues to specialize in marriage counseling between Democrats and big business (especially the entertainment and real estate industries), while it's Partners interlock comprehensively, and without scruple, with virtually every Democratic notable or coterie in the city. Thus in 1984 Manatt associate Mickey Cantor (formerly Jerry Brown's Chief LA operative) chaired Mondale's California campaign, while another Mannatt attorney, John Emerson (now Chief Deputy City attorney), ran Gary Hart's. This 'heads Manatt wins, tails Manatt wins' strategy was repeated in 1988 during the controversy over Occidental Petroleum's attempt to legalize oil drilling on the shores of Santa Monica bay. While Cantor extolled Armand Hammer's Oil rigs as a revolt against west side ' elitism', his colleague, Lisa Specht, represented angry homeowner and environmental groups with equal self-righteousness. Currently Manatt, Phelps is supplying the major legal muscle to defend mayor Bradley against sundry corruption and conflict of interest allegations, although it may be fairly surmised that the firm is also working to help groom his successor.

CRG March 17, 2024 - Selections from beginning of "Fortress LA" chapter

"This epochal coalescence has far-reaching consequences for the social relations of the built environment. In the first place, the market provision of 'security' generates its own paranoid demand. 'Security' becomes a positional good defined by income access to private 'protective services' and membership in some hardened residential enclave or restricted suburb. As a prestige symbol - and sometimes as the decisive borderline between the merely well-off and the 'truly rich' - 'security' has less to do with personal safety than with the degree of personal insulation, in residential, work, consumption and travel environments, from 'unsavory' groups and individuals, even crowds in general.

Secondly, as William Whyte has observed of social intercourse in New York, 'fear proves itself. The social perception of threat becomes a function of the security mobilization itself, not crime rates. Where there is an actual rising arc of street violence, as in Southcentral Los Angeles or Downtown Washington D.C., most of the carnage is self-contained within ethnic or class boundaries. Yet white middle-class imagination, absent from any first hand knowledge of inner-city conditions, magnifies the perceived threat through a demonological lens. Surveys show that Milwaukee suburbanites are just as worried about violent crime as inner-city Washingtonians, despite a twenty-fold difference in relative levels of mayhem. The media, whose function in this arena is to bury and obscure the daily economic violence of the city, ceaselessly throw up spectres of criminal underclasses and psychotic stalkers. Sensationalized accounts of killer youth gangs high on crack and shrilly racist evocations of marauding Willie Hortons foment the moral panics that reinforce and justify urban apartheid."

(224-226 pdf; 200-202 purple cover)

"Unsurprisingly, as in other American cities, municipal policy has taken its lead from the security offensive and the middle-class demand for increased spatial and social insulation. De facto disinvestment in traditional public space and recreation has supported the shift of fiscal resources to corporate-defined redevelopment priorities. A pliant city government - in this case ironically professing to represent a bi-racial coalition of liberal whites and Blacks - has collaborated in the massive privatization of public space and the subsidization of new, racist enclaves (benignly described as 'urban Villages'). Yet most current, giddy discussions of the 'postmodern' scene in Los Angeles neglect entirely these overbearing aspects of counter urbanization and counter-insurgency. A triumphal gloss - 'urban renaissance', 'city of the future', and so on - is laid over the brutalization of inner-city neighborhoods and the increasing South Africanization of its spatial relations. Even as the walls have come down in Eastern Europe, they are being erected all over Los Angeles." (227-228 pdf; 203-204 purple cover)

"The first militarist of space in Los Angeles was General Otis of the Times. Declaring himself at war with labor, he infused his surroundings with an unrelentingly bellicose air: He called his home in Los Angeles the Bivouac. Another house was known as the Outpost. The Times was known as the Fortress. The staff of the paper was the Phalanx. The Times building itself was more fortress than newspaper plant, there were turrets, battlements, sentry boxes. Inside he stored fifty rifles. A great, menacing bronze eagle was the Times's crown; a small, functional cannon was installed on the hood of Otis's touring car to intimidate onlookers. Not surprisingly, this overwrought display of aggression produced a response in kind. On 1 October 1910 the heavily fortified Times headquarters - citadel of the open shop on the West Coast - was destroyed in a catastrophic explosion blamed on union saboteurs."

(228 pdf; 204-205 purple cover)

"Photographs of the old Downtown in its prime show mixed crowds of Anglo, Black and Latino pedestrians of different ages and classes. The contemporary Downtown 'renaissance' is designed to make such heterogeneity virtually impossible. It is intended not just to 'kill the street' as Kaplan fears, but to 'kill the crowd', to eliminate that democratic admixture on the pavements and in the parks that Olmsted believed was America's antidote to European class

CRG March 17, 2024 - Selections from beginning of "Fortress LA" chapter

polarizations. The Downtown hyperstructure - like some Buckminster Fuller post-Holocaust fantasy - is programmed to ensure a seamless continuum of middle-class work, consumption and recreation, without unwonted exposure to Downtown's working-class street environments. Indeed the totalitarian semiotics of ramparts and battlements, reflective glass and elevated pedways, rebukes any affinity or sympathy between different architectural or human orders. As in Otis's fortress Times building, this is the archisemiotics of class war."

(231 pdf; 207-208 purple cover)

"Public toilets, however, are the real Eastern Front of the Downtown war on the poor. Los Angeles, as a matter of deliberate policy, has fewer available public lavatories than any major North American city. On the advice of the LAPD (who actually sit on the design board of at least one major Downtown redevelopment project), the Community Redevelopment Agency bulldozed the remaining public toilet in Skid Row. Agency planners then agonized for months over whether to include a 'free-standing public toilet' in their design for South Park. As CRA Chairman Jim Wood later admitted, the decision not to include the toilet was a 'policy decision and not a design decision'. The CRA Downtown prefers the solution of 'quasi-public restrooms' - meaning toilets in restaurants, art galleries and office buildings - which can be made available to tourists and office workers while being denied to vagrants and other unsuitables. The toiletless no man's-land east of Hill Street in Downtown is also barren of outside water sources for drinking or washing. A common and troubling sight these days are the homeless men - many of them young Salvadorean refugees washing in and even drinking from the sewer effluent which flows down the concrete channel of the Los Angeles River on the eastern edge of Downtown.'

(233-234 pdf; 210-211 purple cover)

"The cold war on the streets of Downtown is ever escalating. The police, lobbied by Downtown merchants and developers, have broken up every attempt by the homeless and their allies to create safe havens or self organized encampments. 'Justiceville', founded by homeless activist Ted Hayes, was roughly dispersed; when its inhabitants attempted to find refuge at Venice Beach, they were arrested at the behest of the local councilperson (a renowned environmentalist) and sent back to the inferno of Skid Row."

(234 pdf; 211 purple cover)

"Yet, as suggested in chapter one, Gehry's strongest suit may simply be his straightforward exploitation of rough urban environments, and his blatant incorporation of their harshest edges and detritus as powerful representational elements in his work. Affectionately described by colleagues as an 'old socialist' or 'street-fighter with a heart', much of his most interesting work is utterly unromantic and anti-idealist. Unlike his popular front mentors of the 1940s, Gehry makes little pretense at architectural reformism or 'design for democracy'. He boasts of trying 'to make the best with the reality of things'. With sometimes chilling luminosity, his work clarifies the underlying relations of repression, surveillance and exclusion that characterize the fragmented, paranoid spatiality towards which Los Angeles seems to aspire."

(236-238 pdf; 213 purple cover)

"But if the Danziger Studio camouflages itself, and the Cochiti Lake and Loyola deSigns bunch frontage in stern glares, Gehry's baroquely fortified Frances Howard Goldwyn Regional Branch Library in Hollywood (1984) positively taunts potential trespassers 'to make my day'. This is undoubtedly the most menacing library ever built, a bizarre hybrid (on the outSide) of dry-docked dreadnought and Gunga Din fort. With its fifteen-foot security walls of stucco-covered concrete block, its anti-graffiti barricades covered in ceramic tile, its sunken entrance protected by ten-foot steel stacks, and its stylized sentry boxes perched precariously on each side, the Goldwyn Library (influenced by Gehry's 1980 high-security design for the US Chancellery in Damascus) projects the same kind of macho exaggeration as Dirty Harry's 44 Magnum."

(239 pdf; 215 purple cover)

THE PANOPTICON MALL

The King center site is surrounded by an eight-foot-high, wrought-iron fence comparable to security fences found at the perimeters of private estates and exclusive residential communities. Video cameras equipped with motion detectors are positioned near entrances and throughout the shopping center. The entire center, including parking lots, can be bathed in bright four-foot candle lighting at the flip of the switch.

There are six entrances to the center: three entry points for autos, two service gates, and one pedestrian walkway. The pedestrian and auto entries have gates that are opened at 6:30 a.m. and closed at 10:30 p.m. The service area located at the rear of the property is enclosed with a six-foot-high concrete block wall; both service gates remain closed and are under closed-circuit video surveillance, equipped for two-way voice communications, and operated for deliveries by remote control from a security 'observatory'. Infra-red beams at the bases of light fixtures detect intruders who might circumvent video cameras by climbing over the wall.

The 'unobtrusive' panopticon observatory is both eye and brain of this complex security system. (In the Willowbrook center it is actually hidden above a public library branch.) It contains the headquarters of the shopping center manager, a substation of the LAPD, and a dispatch operator who monitors the video and audio systems as well as maintaining communication 'with other secure shopping centers tied into the system, and with the police and fire departments'. At any time of the week, day or night, there are at least four center security guards on duty: one at the observatory and three on foot patrol. They are trained and backed up by the regular LAPD officers operating from the substation in the observatory.

(PDF: 243; Purple Cover:)



Martin Luther King Jr. Shopping Center, 1985

(Source: <https://tessa2.lapl.org/digital/collection/photos/id/11748/rec/2>)



Martin Luther King Jr. Shopping Center, circa 2024?

(Source: <https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/1601-1673-103rd-St-Los-Angeles-CA/29508724/>)

These centers, as expected, have been bonanzas, averaging annual sales of more than \$350 per leasable square foot, as compared to about \$200 for their suburban equivalents. Moreover Haagen has reaped the multiple windfalls of tax breaks, federal and city grants, massive free publicity, subsidized tenants and sixty- to ninety-year ground leases. No wonder he has been able to boast: **‘We’ve proved that the only color that counts in business is green. There are huge opportunities and huge profits to be made in these depressed inner-city areas of America that have been abandoned.’**

Meanwhile the logic of **‘Haagenization’** has been extended to the housing as well as shopping areas of the ghetto. The counterpart of the mall-as-panopticon-prison is the housing-project-as-strategic-hamlet. The Imperial Courts Housing Project, just down the road from the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, has recently been fortified with fencing, obligatory identity passes and a substation of the LAPD. Visitors are stopped and frisked, while the police routinely order residents back into their apartments at night. Such is the loss of freedom that public housing tenants must now endure as the price of ‘security’.

(PDF: 244; Purple Cover:)

FROM RENTACOP TO ROBOCOP

Meanwhile the very rich are yearning for high-tech castles. Where gates and walls alone will not suffice, as in the case of Beverly Hills or Bel-Air homeowners, the house itself is redesigned to incorporate sophisticated, sometimes far-fetched, security functions. An overriding but discreet goal of the current 'mansionizing' mania on the Westside of Los Angeles – for instance, tearing down \$3 million houses to build \$30 million mansions – is the search for 'absolute security'. Residential architects are borrowing design secrets from overseas embassies and military command posts. One of the features most in demand is the 'terrorist-proof security room' concealed in the houseplan and accessed by sliding panels and secret doors. Merv Griffith and his fellow mansionizers are hardening their palaces like missile silos.

But contemporary residential security in Los Angeles – whether in the fortified mansion or the average suburban bunker – depends upon the voracious consumption of private security services. Through their local homeowners' associations, virtually every affluent neighborhood from the Palisades to Silverlake contracts its own private policing; hence the thousands of lawns displaying the little 'armed response' warnings. The classifieds in a recent Sunday edition of the Los Angeles Times contained nearly a hundred ads for guards and patrolmen, mostly from firms specializing in residential protection. Within Los Angeles County, the security services industry has tripled its sales and workforce (from 24,000 to 75,000) over the last decade. ***'It is easier to become an armed guard than it is to become a barber, hairdresser or journeyman carpenter'***, and under California's extraordinarily lax licensing law even a convicted murderer is not automatically excluded from eligibility. Although a majority of patrolmen are minority males earning near the minimum wage (\$4–7 per hour depending on qualifications and literacy), their employers are often multinational conglomerates offering a dazzling range of security products and services. As Michael Kaye, president of burgeoning Westec (a subsidiary of Japan's Secom Ltd), explains: ***'We're not a security guard company. We sell a concept of security.'*** (This quote, as aficionados will immediately recognize, echoes the boast of Omni Consumer Products' Dick Jones – the villain of Paul Verhoeven's Robocop – that 'everything is security concepts . . . sometimes I can just think of something and it makes me so horny'.)

[...] ***Although law-enforcement experts debate the efficiency of such systems in foiling professional criminals, they are brilliantly successful in deterring innocent outsiders.*** Anyone who has tried to take a stroll at dusk through a strange neighborhood patrolled by armed security guards and signposted with death threats quickly realizes how merely notional, if not utterly obsolete, is the old idea of the 'freedom of the city'.

(PDF: 248; Purple Cover:)

THE L.A.P.D. AS SPACE POLICE

[...] The confusing interface between the two sectors is most evident in the overlapping of patrol functions in many neighborhoods and in the growing trend to subcontract jailing (with the privatized supervision of electronic home surveillance as another potentially lucrative market).

In many respects this division of labor is more elaborated in Los Angeles than elsewhere, if only because of the LAPD's pathbreaking substitutions of technological capital for patrol manpower. In part this was a necessary adaptation to the city's dispersed form; but it has also expressed the department's particular definition of its relationship to the community. Especially in its own self-perpetuated myth, the LAPD is seen as the progressive antithesis to the traditional big-city police department with its patronage armies of patrolmen grafting off the beat.

(PDF: 251; Purple Cover:)

Chapter 4. Fortress L.A. Part. 2

[...] But this is hardly the ultimate police sensorium. As gang hysteria and the war on crack keep the city's coffers open to police funding requests, it is likely the LAPD will continue to win political support for ambitious capital investment programs in new technology. ***Having brought policing up to the levels of the Vietnam War and early NASA, it is almost inevitable that the LAPD, and other advanced police forces, will try to acquire the technology of the Electronic Battlefield and even Star Wars.*** We are at the threshold of the universal electronic tagging of property and people – both criminal and non-criminal (small children, for example) – monitored by both cellular and centralized surveillances. Of the latter, ex-Los Angeles police chief, now state senator, Ed Davis (Republican – Valencia) has proposed the use of a geosynclinal space satellite to counter pandemic car theft in the region. Electronic alarm systems, already tested in New England, would alert police if a properly tagged car was stolen; satellite moitoring would extend coverage over Los Angeles's vast metropolitan area. Once in orbit, of course, the role of a law enforcement satellite would grow to encompass other forms of surveillance and control.

The image here is ultimately more important than the practicality of the proposal, since it condenses the historical world view and quixotic quest of the postwar LAPD: ***good citizens, off the streets, enclaved in their high-security private consumption spheres; bad citizens, on the streets*** (and therefore not engaged in legitimate business), caught in the terrible, Jehovan scrutiny of the LAPD's space program.

(PDF: 252; Purple Cover:)

THE CARCERAL CITY

Nearly 25,000 prisoners are presently held in six severely overcrowded county and federal facilities – not including Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) detention centers – within a three-mile radius of City Hall – the largest incarcerated population in the nation. Racing to meet the challenge of the current 'War on Drugs' (which will double detained populations within the decade), authorities are forging ahead with the construction of a new state prison in East Los Angeles as well as a giant expansion of the County Jail near Chinatown. Both projects are vigorously contested by community coalitions opposed to further dumping of jail space in the inner city. Yet at the same time agencies like the Bureau of Prisons and County Jail, together with the innumerable private security companies, have become major community employers in the wake of plant closures and deindustrialization in East Los Angeles during the 1970s and early 1980s. Jails now vie with County/USC Hospital as the single most important economic force on the Eastside.

The conflict of interest between community and law enforcement land use is also sharply focused on the fate of Elysian Park, the home of Dodger Stadium and the Police Academy. Consisting of steep hillsides and ravines immediately northwest of the original El Pueblo de Los Angeles, Elysian Park was once upon a time a prime tourist attraction, one of the foremost 'City Beautiful' parks in the country. Through an extraordinary circum-vention of local government, the police department has managed to turn its occupancy of the 1932 Olympic pistol range (under temporary lease to the Police Athletic and Gun Club) into an occupation of the entire park. [...] ***To suggest an analogy, it is almost as if the San Francisco police were to occupy Golden Gate Park or the New York Police Department to commandeer half of Central Park.***

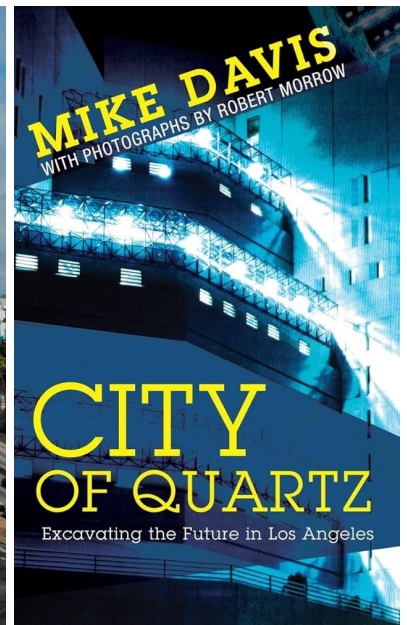
(PDF: 254; Purple Cover:)

Chapter 4. Fortress L.A. Part. 2

[...] If the jail expansion goes ahead, tourists and prisoners could end up ogling one another from opposed highrises. One solution to the conflict between carceral and commercial redevelopment is to use architectural camouflage to finesse jail space into the skyscape. ***If buildings and homes are becoming more prison- or fortress-like in exterior appearance, then prisons ironically are becoming architecturally naturalized as aesthetic objects.*** Moreover, with the post-liberal shift of government expenditure from welfare to repression, carceral structures have become the new frontier of public architecture. As an office glut in most parts of the country reduces commissions for corporate highrises, celebrity architects are rushing to design jails, prisons, and police stations.

An extraordinary example, the flagship of an emerging genre, is **Welton Becket Associates' new Metropolitan Detention Center in Downtown Los Angeles**, on the edge of the Civic Center and the Hollywood Freeway. Although this ten-story Federal Bureau of Prison's facility is one of the most visible new structures in the city, few of the hundreds of thousands of commuters who pass it by every day have any inkling of its function as a holding and transfer center for what has been officially described as the 'managerial elite of narco-terrorism'. Here, 70 per cent of federal incarcerations are related to the 'War on Drugs'. **This postmodern Bastille – the largest prison built in a major US urban center in generations – looks instead like a futuristic hotel or office block, with artistic charms (like the high-tech trellises on its bridge-balconies) comparable to any of Downtown's recent architecture.** But its upscale ambience is more than mere facade. The interior of the prison is designed to implement a sophisticated program of psychological manipulation and control: barless windows, a pastel color plan, prison staff in preppy blazers, well-tended patio shubbery, a hotel-type reception area, nine recreation areas with nautilus workout equipment, and so on. In contrast to the human inferno of the desperately overcrowded County Jail a few blocks away, the Becket structure superficially appears less a detention than a convention center for federal felons – a 'distinguished' addition to Downtown's continuum of security and design. But the psychic cost of so much attention to prison aesthetics is insidious. As one inmate whispered to me in the course of a tour, **'Can you imagine the mindfuck of being locked up in a Holiday Inn?'**

(PDF: 256; Purple Cover:)



Left: Metropolitan Detention Center in Downtown Los Angeles / **Right:** Book cover of City of Quartz, 2006 (on the 1992 cover as well)
(Source: <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/federal-officer-admits-to-raping-inmate-covid/2897880/>)

THE FEAR OF CROWDS

Ultimately the aims of contemporary architecture and the police converge most strikingly around the problem of crowd control. As we have seen, the designers of malls and pseudo-public space attack the crowd by homogenizing it. They set up architectural and semiotic barriers to filter out 'undesirables'. They enclose the mass that remains, directing its circulation with behaviorist ferocity. It is lured by visual stimuli of all kinds, dulled by musak, sometimes even scented by invisible aromatizers. **This Skinnerian orchestration, if well conducted, produces a veritable commercial symphony of swarming, consuming monads moving from one cashpoint to another.**

Outside in the streets, the police task is more difficult. The LAPD, true to its class war background, has always hated certain kinds of public gatherings. Its early history was largely devoted to bludgeoning May Day demonstrators, arresting strikers and deporting Mexicans and Okies. In 1921 it arrested Upton Sinclair for reading the Declaration of Independence in public; in the 1960s it indiscriminately broke up love-ins and family picnics in battles to control Griffith and Elysian Park. Subconsciously it has probably never recovered from the humiliation of August 1965 when it temporarily was forced to surrender the streets to a rebellious ghetto.

(PDF: 257; Purple Cover:)

CH. 5: The Hammer and the Rock

If anything made ghetto turf rivalries so much more deadly than the Eastside's during the 1980s, it was the incomparably higher economic stakes involved in control of the retail cocaine trade. 'Gangbangin', rose in a murderous arc from 1984 in rough synchronization with the emergence of crack as the narcotic equivalent of fast food and the rerouting of the main cocaine trail from Florida to Southern California via Mexico.

This very real epidemic of youth violence, with its deep roots in exploding youth poverty, has been inflated by law enforcement agencies and the media into something quite phantasmagoric.

Like the Tramp scares in the nineteenth century, or the Red scares in the twentieth, the contemporary Gang scare has become an imaginary class relationship, a terrain of pseudo-knowledge and fantasy projection. But as long as the actual violence was more or less confined to the ghetto, the gang wars were also a voyeuristic titillation to white suburbanites devouring lurid imagery in their newspapers or on television. (270)

[Following shocking gang violence that occurred right after his announcement of the success of GRATS,] Gates, frantic to keep the LAPD in command of events, announced that the full manpower reserves of the Department would be thrown into the super-sweeps called the HAMMER. Although one high-ranking LAPD veteran would later admit that the catch-as-catch-can strategy was just 'a hokey publicity deal', it was billed as L.A. law enforcement's 'D-Day'. And like the Marines hitting the beach at Danang in the beginning of LBJ's escalations in Vietnam, the first of the thousand cop blitzkriegs made the war in Southcentral L.A. look deceptively easy.

With legal opposition thus chilled out, the gangbusters had little reason to look over their shoulders as they started ransacking hootches and boosting body counts in the rice paddies of Southcentral. The raid on Dalton Street in August 1988, if not quite the My Lai of the war against the underclass (an infamy that better attaches to the 1985 MOVE holocaust in Philadelphia so much admired by Chief Gates), was nonetheless a grim portent of what 'unleashing the police' really means. A company-sized detachment of eighty-eight police from the Southwest Division – an outpost wracked internally by charges of racial abuse against Black officers – swooped down on a group of apartments in the 3900 block of Dalton Avenue, near Exposition Park and not far from the infamous 'Black Dahlia' murder site of 1946. Wielding shotguns and sledgehammers, as well as racist epithets and a search warrant, the assault force, as Chief Gates would later admit, 'got out of hand'.

In the meantime, as the HAMMER mercilessly pounded away at Southcentral's mean streets, it became increasingly apparent that its principal catch consisted of drunks, delinquent motorists and teenage curfew violators (offenders only by virtue of the selective application of curfews to non-Anglo neighborhoods). By 1990 the combined forces of the LAPD and the Sheriffs (implementing their own street saturation strategy) had picked up as many as 50,000 suspects. Even allowing for a percentage of Latino detainees, this remains an astonishing figure considering there are only 100,000 Black youths in Los Angeles. In some highly touted sweeps, moreover, as many as 90 percent of detained suspects have been released without charges – an innocent victim rate that belies LAPD demonology as well as evoking an analogy with inflated VC bodycounts in Vietnam. (275–277)

James Hahn is a chip off the old block who used his father's clout to win the city attorneyship in a bloody battle with a Manatt Phelps protege from the Westside. Like his predecessor, the current County District Attorney, Ira Reiner, Hahn is an ambitious, younger Democrat trying to turn the law-and-order tables on older Republicans by being an even tougher cop in the courtroom. This is not to say that the younger Hahn is without liberal scruples; in fact, he has compiled an extraordinary record prosecuting slumlords and other vampires of the poor. But since the scalps of gang members, not slumlords, are the current wampum of political fortune, Hahn has determined to make Los Angeles the showpiece of an unprecedented attempt (since emulated nationally by Drug Czar Bennett and HUD Secretary Kemp) *to criminalize gang members and their families as a class*. If Chief Gates sometimes seems too much like a Barnum playing at *Dragnet*, with his trickbag of rockhouse raids and mega-sweeps, Jim Hahn is, as they say on the street, 'serious as a heart attack'. Liberal conscience aside, he has probably traveled further than any metropolitan law enforcement official in the country towards establishing the legal infrastructure of an American police state.

[The] new iron heel of the war against the gangs, crafted by Reiner's and Hahn's staffs, and co-sponsored by two L.A. Democrats – state Senator Alan Robbins from the Valley and Assemblywoman Gwen Moore from Southcentral – is a state-level 'son of RICO'. Although state Senator Bill Lockyer (D-Hayward) warned that the bill 'would have justified the internment of the Japanese in World War Two', the 'Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act of 1988' (STEP) was passed with frenetic bipartisan support from Southern California. The law allows prosecution of 'any person who actively participates in a criminal street gang with knowledge that its members have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity and who willfully promotes or assists any felonious conduct by members of that gang'.

In their race to apply STEP against [parents of alleged gang members], Hahn's office and the LAPD anti-gang unit had only managed to reenact the moral equivalent of the Dalton Street raid against [innocent families].

Although the ACLU temporarily reentered the fray to denounce the use of 'headline justice to whitewash ineffective and constitutionally indefensible laws', City Attorney Hahn was undeterred. While STEP allowed his office to add centuries of additional jail time to sentences, new abatement laws authorized the City Attorney to drain 'cesspools of drug dealing' by suing landlords, evicting tenants and even bulldozing houses suspected of being 'drug nuisances'. [These] new abatement regulations, acting in concert with STEP and barricaded 'Narcotics Enforcement Zones', imply a 'West Bank' strategy towards the troubled neighborhoods of Southcentral L.A. The 'terrorism' metaphor has metastasized as Hahn and Reiner have criminalized successive strata of the community: 'gang members', then 'gang parents', followed by whole 'gang families', 'gang neighborhoods', and perhaps even a 'gang generation'. **(280–284)**

As a result of the war on drugs every non-Anglo teenager in Southern California is now a prisoner of gang paranoia and associated demonology. Vast stretches of the region's sumptuous playgrounds, beaches and entertainment centers have become virtual no-go areas for young Blacks or Chicanos.

As we saw in the last chapter, curfews have become essential weapons in the LAPD's campaign against the subversive crowd. Residential curfews are deployed selectively and almost exclusively against Black and Chicano neighborhoods. As a consequence, thousands of youth in Southcentral acquire minor records for behavior that would be legal or inoffensive on the Westside. During daylight hours, moreover, the post-Bird California Supreme Court has given police *carte blanche* to stop and search any youthful person for suspicion of truancy. As with the random drunk-driver checkpoints that the Lucas court has also authorized, or the random car weapons searches that the legislature has enacted as part of anti-gang legislation the 'probable cause' safeguard against capricious stop and search is rendered practically extinct. Police now have virtually unlimited discretion, day or night, to target 'undesirables', especially youth.

But the growing authoritarian reach of police control is nowhere as disturbingly evident as in Los Angeles schools. Another of Chief Gates's publicity-generating 'body count' projects is the so-called 'School Buy' program. Youthful undercover cops, in fact, infiltrate high schools, enticing students to sell them drugs. Howarth particularly denounces 'the exploitation of peer pressure to create narcotic offenses; in many cases the undercover police (male and female) exploit sexuality and attractiveness. For this reason, "special education" [educationally handicapped] students, approached for possibly the first time in their life by an attractive member of the opposite sex, are especially likely to become entrapped. The program is a complete fraud.' With little impact on the actual volume of drug sales and negligible success in capturing adult suppliers, the School Buy program is primarily a cheap source of the felony arrests that make the Chief look heroic in the media.

Processed by such 'justice' (which since 1974 has arrested two-thirds of all younger Black males in California), a flood of captives, four-fifths of whom are substance addicted and less than half of whom have committed violent crimes, overwhelm the state prisons – 84,000 inmates in a system with room for 48,000. **(286–288)**

Book- Pg 329 PDF 336

Yet the church itself is a contested terrain between different strategies of empowerment. On the one hand, Mahony's 1987 'Latino Aid Plan', together with single-issue campaigns organized by episcopally approved community groups, offer gradualist and legalistic approaches to Latino advancement in church and society. On the other hand, Father Luis Olivares and his fellow Claretian and Jesuit priests Downtown represent Liberation Theology's 'preferential option for the poor', emphasizing direct action in favor of the oppressed, even when this defies secular law.

Although the debate between Mahony and Olivares is rooted in local circumstances, many Catholics believe that it reflects global stakes - what the late Penny Lernoux called 'the struggle for the soul of the contemporary church . . . between the liberationists and the restorationists'. Not surprisingly, a portrait of Zapata and a quotation from Sandino hang over Olivares's modest desk, while Pope John Paul II smiles over the Archbishop's elegant writing table. It is the interplay of these local and international dimensions - the simultaneous salience of neighborhood organizing and church geopolitics - that makes the archdiocese perhaps the most fascinating institution in Southern California

Mission on the Rim of the World

Pg 330/337

To this day it retains a sense of being a missionary outpost ('on the rim of the Western World') with a hierarchy drawn from outside its majority communities.

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In the 1920s the archdiocese became a major support base for the Cristero revolt: a church-instigated guerrilla movement of Catholic peasants in the central plateau of Mexico. In a civil war without mercy on either side, Cristeros assassinated secular school teachers and blew up passenger trains, while troops of the 'Antichrist' (President Plutarco Calles) executed priests and their peasant parishioners. The defeat of the Cristeros in 1928 only hardened Cantwell's antipathy to the revolutionary-nationalist Mexican state. Following another wave of clerical expulsions from Sonora in 1934, he organized the largest demonstration in Los Angeles history: a giant procession of 40,000 people, many of them Cristero refugees, chanting 'Viva Cristo Rey' and marching behind banners that denounced the 'atheistic regimes in Mexico City and Moscow'.

Some contemporary critics smelled oil as well as incense in Cantwell's lobbying for US intervention on behalf of Mexican Catholics (Washington did move military forces to the border). The archdiocese's most generous endower - the builder of St. John's Seminary - was oil millionaire Edward Doheny, a papal count and the richest Catholic in Los Angeles. He is probably best remembered in American history for the \$100,000 bribe that put ex-Secretary of the Interior Fall in jail during the Teapot Dome scandal in 1921. But Doheny was also the original wildcatter of the Tampico oil fields, and, together with his partner Harry Sinclair, the biggest individual foreign investor in Mexico. He had an obvious personal stake in a Cristero victory or a Marine landing. “

The Quiet Man

Pg 336/343

"But Manning's own romanticized view of Irish-Mexican relations made it difficult for him to appreciate the urgency of Latino demands within the church. In a famous speech at McIntyre's installation in 1948, he had evoked instead a 'Celts-Californian' religious synthesis a 'blend of green and brown, rain and sunshine, a perfect mating of two traditions of faith' He clung to this personal version of the 'Mission Myth' for the next forty years; since the fusion of cultures was 'perfect', he saw no incongruity in the continuation of Celtic leadership over an archdiocese that in the last year of his reign was nearly 70 percent Latino."

The Mahoney Enigma

pg 342

It would be nonetheless misleading to suggest that Mahony is a mere lackey of the Vatican or a McIntyre redux (although their similar penchants for authoritarian management are often compared these days) Ideological cross-currents in the contemporary church are far more complex than they were in the 1950s. Wojtyla's rabid anti-communism, for instance, goes hand-in-hand with denunciations of free enterprise that would have scandalized McIntyre or Spellman as 'Marxist'. And unlike several Roman clones whom Rigali and Ratzinger parachuted into the ranks of the American -bishops during the 1980s, Mahony, though a papal loyalist, is a completely homegrown product of the US hierarchy.

pg 343

Yet, in summing up the qualities visible at the time of his appointment in 1985, it would be too easy to say that Mahony was a 'social liberal and doctrinal conservative' (a formula commonly used to characterize Catholic politics these days). On a scale of 'liberalism' - where many American bishops now stand to the left of the Democratic Party on crucial issues of peace and economic justice - Mahony leaned to the right, closer to old guardists like Cardinal Law of Boston than to Vatican II progressives like Archbishop Weakland of Milwaukee. Even his 'very liberal' stances on labor and immigration had been nuanced by his emphases on respect for authority and moderation of protest. Although he frequently criticized immigration officials, he insisted on compliance with the law and opposed the strategy of 'sanctuary'. A long-time supporter of the farmworkers, he became increasingly critical of their tactics after his appointment to the Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) by Jerry Brown, and, despite the endorsement of the Bishops Committee on the Spanish-speaking, he opposed the 1975 grape and lettuce boycott. "

THE LATINO AID PLAN

p. 344

"Charismatism was a deliberate and far-reaching adaptation of Catholic liturgy to Pentecostal emphases on scripture, personal devotion, and ecstatic celebration. Although the Charismatic movement in the 1970s and early 1980s swept through Anglo as well as Latino parishes, its spiritual epicenter was East Los Angeles and the estimated 60,000 Latino Charismatics participating in 140 Spanish-speaking 'prayer communities' ... 'Except for the manner in which communion is administered', an Eastside Charismatic revival 'could easily be mistaken for a Pentecostal service': participants 'clap their hands and sway while in song, they cry while praying with uplifted hands, they shout out hallelujahs during the sermon and occasionally - they speak in the tongues of the holy spirit'."

p. 348

"Admitting that ever-growing numbers of Hispanics [had been] marginated [sic] and alienated from the church', the archbishop claimed that 'no other diocese in the nation has a plan (the 'Latino Aid Plan') for Hispanics so definite, so concrete, so comprehensive'. The proposals included taskforces to deal with gang violence and the housing problems of undocumented immigrants; daycare centers for latchkey children and more Latino youth ministers for Eastside parishes; opening parochial schools at night for English and citizenship classes; and a sweeping plan of evangelization that included sending volunteers to every Latino household in the archdiocese."

p. 349

"Most telling, the Aid Plan, despite its rhetoric, has failed to redistribute power. The reorganization of the archdiocese in 1985, in fact only further centralized the archbishop's control. 'Consultation', together with what a disgruntled observer characterized as the 'papal-Maoism' of the Dodger Stadium rally, masked Mahony's relentless reassemblage of the authority enjoyed by McIntyre in his 1950s prime."

A TROUBLESOME PRIEST

p. 352

"Since assuming the pastorate of La Placita (a Claretian mission) in 1981, Olivares had made the old plaza church the city's major base of liberationist social practice, as well as a bustling civic center for refugee Central Americans. No parish in the country has a larger or more destitute congregation. On a typical Sunday 12,000 regular parishioners attend the daylong schedule of masses, which often spill into the courtyard, while another 100,000 or so 'constituents' visit La Placita occasionally for weddings and quinceañeras, ethnic fiestas, and processions, family counseling and political meetings. Publicly contemptuous of laws that 'criminalize the poor', Olivares has opened his doors as a sanctuary to undocumented immigrants and political refugees, allowed hundreds of homeless men to sleep on his pews every night, and declared the church grounds a 'zone of safety' for harassed street vendors."

p. 354

"As nearly half of the church processed applications for amnesty were disqualified by the INS, Olivares mobilized concerned clergy 'to close the gap between what the church says and what it sometimes does not do'. Pledging 'strong, concerted actions' to extend amnesty to all, or break the back of the law, La Placita moved into open civil disobedience."

p. 355

"The Lord's command is clear. In the Book of Leviticus, God says, 'When aliens reside with you in your land . . . you shall treat them no differently than the natives born among you . .' In the light of the Gospel call to justice, we find ourselves unable to comply with the current regulations regarding the hiring of undocumented workers. Today we stand with these people . . . to feed, clothe and house those rejected by the law. "

UNHOLY ALLIANCES

p. 357

"Although the Catholic church has supported the conservative wing of the American trade union movement since the 1890s, its own labor record is notorious. Considered as a single institution (although in law it is composed of myriad individual corporations) the church is the nation's largest private employer of teachers, hospital workers, housekeepers, and, in general, of low-wage service workers. It has been the rule, rather than the exception, for individual dioceses to operate as open shops, even while giving lip service to the ideal of unionism."

p. 360

"Flabbergasted progressive Catholics, meanwhile, have grasped at different explanations for Mahony's sudden antipathy to the labor movement. If some blame his vanity, others are inclined to attribute his intransigence to the growing influence of a 'million-dollar club' of wealthy, conservative donors, functioning as his informal lay cabinet."

p. 363

"The waxing offensive of the anti-abortion movement during the summer of 1989 provided an irresistible pretext for the hardliners to assert leadership, and, by focusing on an issue above debate in the hierarchy, to inflect the entire agenda of the NCCB. Indeed, in exactly the same spirit in which he had denied Father Curran's right to free speech, Mahony on 2 June notified Catholic public officials in his three-county archdiocese that 'there is no such thing as a Catholic, "pro-choice" elected or appointed official.' As Catholics, politicians (' Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives') did not have freedom of opinion, but only the 'moral imperative' to work for the repeal of laws permitting abortion. Although a few Catholic elected officials, including State Senator Diane Watson from Southcentral Los Angeles, challenged the archbishop's intimidating assault on their constitutional obligation 'to act free of personal religious bias', most maintained an embarrassed silence."

P. 368

"... in liberal church circles outside La Placita - amongst the religious orders, Catholic academics, and parish laity - there is widespread conviction that the chancery is adrift and that the Latino Aid Plan of 1986 has floundered. Some claim that Mahony's . permanent distraction with NCCB and Vatican politics has plunged the chancery into a profound crisis of direction. Others bemoan the absence of staff and resources to address the youth needs of the inner city, one of the supposed priorities set by the 1985 consultation process. All recognize that -the exile of Olivares is probably a fatal blow to any hope for a detente or modus vivendi between St. Vibiana's and the project of a liberationist ministry to the city's immigrant poor."

Junkyard of Dreams section 1

(381-382 pdf; 341-342 purple cover) :

“Fontana was envisioned as an unprecedented combination of industrialized plantation (Fontana Farms) and Jeffersonian smallholdings (subdivided by Fontana Land Company). Fontana Farms was a futuristic example of vertically integrated, scientifically managed, corporate agriculture. Its primary input was the City of Los Angeles's garbage which, from 1921 to 1950, it received in daily gondola car shipments by rail.

With an enthusiasm for mass marketing and production that clearly prefigured Henry Kaiser's, Miller aimed his promotion at precisely that middling mass of would-be rural escapists who had previously been cannon-fodder for Southern California's most ill-fated land and oil speculations. His 'affordable' Fontana farm idyll, by contrast, was designed to be assembled on lay away with combinations of small semi-annual installments and lots of sweat equity.

Colonists were urged to install chicken coops as soon as possible to generate reliable incomes. This famous 'Partnership of Hens and Oranges' was intended to stabilize the small tree rancher through the vagaries of frost and cashflow, while simultaneously guaranteeing the Fontana Company its installment payments. Ideally, it was supposed to allow the retired couple with a modest pension, the young family with rustic inclinations, or the hardworking immigrant, the means to achieve a citrus belt lifestyle formerly accessible only to the well-to-do.”

(385 pdf; 345 purple cover):

“Although his early background was as a small-town salesman, lacking any formal training in engineering or manufacturing, Kaiser by the mid 1940s had become the great problem solving magician of the war economy: mass-producing Liberty ships in four days and achieving other productivist feats worthy of Edison or Ford. Even better than Ford himself (who represented an earlier era of authoritarian engineer-capitalism), Kaiser personified the spirit of the war-generated high productivity, high-wage economy that later economic historians would refer to as 'Fordism'. But 'Kaiserism' would have been a more apt name for the postwar social contract between labor and management:

Production in the last analysis depends on the will of labor to produce . . . you can't have healthy and viable industry without, first, a healthy labor movement, and second, social insurance, community health, hospitalization plans, and decent housing. 'To break a union is to break yourself.' -The 'Kaiser Credo’

(393 pdf; 352-353 purple cover):

“As the experts had foreseen, the major difficulty in producing steel in Fontana was the organization of raw material supply. Kaiser could purchase limestone and dolomite flux from local quarries, but it had no alternative but to develop its own network of captive mines to source iron and coal. Although geologists reassured Kaiser that the nearby Mojave Desert contained enough iron ore within a three-hundred-mile radius to supply the plant for several centuries, exploitation of the richest deposits required costly investments in rail-laying and mining technology. Initially Fontana was supplied with ore from the Vulcan Mine near Kelso; after the war, the company developed the great Eagle Mountain complex in Riverside County with its own rail line and mining workforce of 500. Coking coal - the most difficult supply variable - had to be imported 800 miles from Price, Utah (in 1960 Kaiser Fontana switched to new mines in New Mexico). Overall, Fontana was refining low-cost iron ore with the nation's highest cost coal: an equation that left its furnace costs well above other integrated mills (including US Steel's coalfield plant in Utah).

Junkyard of Dreams section 1

Despite the burden of these supply costs, Kaiser by 1944 was making steel more efficiently than anyone had expected to build ships in greater tonnage than anyone had dreamt possible. He was also smelting aluminum, assembling bombers, mixing concrete, even producing the incendiary 'goop' with which the Army Air Corps was systematically immolating Tokyo and Osaka. At the pinnacle of his popularity, he was widely rumored to be Roosevelt's favorite choice for a fourth-term running-mate. Meanwhile, his alliance with the New Deal had catapulted the Kaiser companies to the top rank of privately-owned firms, and, unlike the California aircraft industry, his operations were totally independent of Wall Street and Eastern banks. (When he was not borrowing government money, his old ally Giannini made available the Bank of America's largest single line of credit.) Buoyed by the successes of his shipyards and steel and aluminum mills, Kaiser surveyed a bold, coordinated expansion into postwar markets for medical care, appliances, housing, aircraft and automobiles. In his wartime speeches, Kaiser was fond of adding a fifth 'freedom' to Roosevelt's original four: 'the freedom of abundance'."

(397 pdf; 357 purple cover):

"Equally reassuring, Kaiser Steel seemed to continue in the forefront of enlightened industrial relations. Although, unlike in 1946, Fontana was closed down during the long 1959 steel strike, it broke ranks with Big Steel to embrace the United Steel Workers' proposals for a gains-sharing plan to integrate technological change into the collective bargaining framework. First a tripartite committee, with a public member, was established to study conflicts between local work rules and the introduction of automation. Then in 1963 the company and union, with considerable ceremony, formalized the landmark Long Range Sharing Plan (loosely based on the so-called 'Scanlon plan'), whose complex formulae and provisions were supposed to fairly compensate workers for accepting rapid productivity advance. The Plan, whose original backers had included the elite of academic industrial relations specialists and two future Secretaries of Labor (Goldberg and Dunlop), became the Kennedy Administration's prototype for New Frontier-era collective bargaining, and was soon cited as such in every industrial relations textbook."

(401 pdf; 361-362 purple cover):

"The case became a brief national cause celebre after the Los Angeles NAACP, led by Lorenzo Bowdoin, hired renowned arson expert, Paul T. Wolfe, to sift through the evidence. Noting that the supposed cause of the fire, the kerosene lamp, had actually been recovered intact, he found compelling evidence that the Short home had been deliberately soaked in quantities of coal oil to produce an explosive blaze of maximum ferocity. He concluded that 'beyond a shadow of a doubt the fire was of an incendiary origin'. In the meantime, the Tri-County Bulletin discovered that the original sheriffs report on the fire had 'mysteriously' disappeared from its file, while the *Eagle* raised fundamental doubts about Short's purported testimony to D.A. Kavanaugh.

But it was hard to keep the Short holocaust in focus. Attorney General Kenny succeeded in temporarily banning the Ku Klux Klan in California, but made no attempt to reopen investigation into the Short case or expose the official whitewash by San Bernardino officials. The Los Angeles NAACP, spearhead of the campaign, quickly became preoccupied with the renewed struggle against housing discrimination in Southcentral Los Angeles. The Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party continued its own sectarian campaign through the spring of 1946, but used the Short case primarily to polemicize against Kenny (Democratic nominee for governor) and his Communist supporters. In the end, as protest faded, the vigilantes won the day: Blacks stayed north of Baseline (and in the coke ovens) for another generation, and the fate of the Short family, likely victims of white supremacy, was officially forgotten."

City of Quartz - 'Junkyard of Dreams', pt 2 to end

Drivn' Big Bess Down

417 PDF / 370 Purple Book

If Kaiser Steel squandered its once-formidable technical leadership, it was because it purposely diverted its cashflow into alternative accumulation strategies.

After Henry J.'s retirement in the mid 1950s, Kaiser Industries evolved as a family holding company with decreasing hands-on affinity for the world of production. **Orthodox financial management, not heroic technical problem-solving, became the order of the day.** From this basically **rentier perspective**, Kaiser Aluminum, with its consistently high profit margins, became the family's darling. Kaiser Industries' long-range planning focused on how to complement aluminum sales to the Pacific Basin with other primary-product exports. When, in the early 1960s, the Japanese demand for steel began to soar, **Kaiser Industries was more concerned about sourcing this demand with raw materials than with the future implications of expanded Japanese capacity for international competition.** ... with funds coerced from its basic steel workforce in the name of 'modernization', **Kaiser Steel was restructuring itself, with diverted capital improvements, to export resources to its principal competitor, while allowing its own industrial plant to become obsolete.**

420-421 PDF / 374-375 Purple Book

The Kaisers wanted the Japanese to take over Fontana while they restructured Kaiser Steel as a resource supplier. This was **the inevitable consequence of the company's long-term bias towards resources rather than steel products**... the Japanese politely declined... The negotiations collapsed in the face of the Volcker-Reagan recession, the US steel industry's worst crisis since 1930. The cherished goal of a resource-oriented restructuring was abandoned in favor of a staged liquidation of Kaiser Steel.

In order **to keep Fontana temporarily afloat, and to drive stock values up to assuage panicky stockholders**, the Kaisers sold off the Australian ore reserves, the British Columbia coal mines, and the Liberian ore shipping subsidiary. Barely two years after their 'rededication', BOF 2 [furnace] and the continuous caster were written off as scrap, a \$231 million loss.

Unscrupulous suiters

423-427 PDF / 377-380 Purple Book

The company promptly moved to claim tax write-offs by auctioning its primary steelmaking equipment for scrap... In late October 1983 the last heat of Eagle Mountain iron ore was smelted into steel; for another month a skeleton crew of 800 (out of a prior workforce of 9,000) cold-rolled the remaining slabs into coils, sheets and plate. At 4 p.m. on Saturday, 31 December, Kaiser Steel Fontana died. Derelict Eagle Mountain, has meanwhile been proposed

as a giant dump for the non-degradable solid waste being produced by the burgeoning suburbia of the Inland Empire.

Kaiser Steel was plunged into a chapter-eleven proceeding in order to liquidate worker entitlements. During the shutdown in 1983, workers had taken some solace in the assurance that cash-rich Kaiser would always be able to honor its obligations. Now, four years later, six thousand outraged former employees watched as Hendry canceled their medical coverage and pension supplements, while transferring part of the burden of their pension funding to the federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation.

THE MIRAGE OF REDEVELOPMENT

428-432 PDF / 382-385 Purple Book

The recycling of Fontana had begun in the mid 1970s after a clique of local landowners and city officials, led by City Manager, recognized that **residential redevelopment was a lucrative alternative** to continued dependence upon the waning fortunes of Kaiser Steel and its blue-collar workforce.

Fontana's particular riff on these redevelopment strategies was its creation of an open, some would say 'golden', door for developers. **Application and inspection processes were drastically streamlined to accelerate groundbreaking in the city that aspired to become the 'developer's best friend'.** They convinced the starstruck Fontanans that a simulacrum of Irvine could be developed in Fontana if the city were willing to provide adequate infrastructure and financing.

Journalists uncritically reproduced city officials' claims that Fontana would soon be wealthy from its soaring tax bases and profits on its equity position in different developments. Just as Kaiser industrial relations had once been a model, now Fontana's resilience was presented as laboratory confirmation of the Reagan administration's claim that deindustrialization was only a temporary and marginal cost in the transition to postindustrial prosperity based on services, finance and real estate.

By Christmas 1986 City's Finance Director resigned in face of charges that he had embezzled public funds and sold off city-owned vehicles to his friends and relatives. In August 1987 the release of an independent audit of the city's finances detailed that it was on the edge of bankruptcy. **With 60 percent of its tax base located in redevelopment areas, and obligated as payments or rebates to developers, the city could not afford to meet the needs of its expanding population.**

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Not surprisingly these revelations fueled a revolt-by embittered residents who demanded a moratorium on further growth, the recall of the council majority, and district elections.

Given the enormity of Fontana's suddenly exposed problems - the venality of its officials, its Andean-sized debt and the lien on its tax base until the next millennium, its underfunding of essential services, a growing mismatch between housing and jobs, and so on, **the voter revolt was strangely muffled**. Closure of Kaiser had dispersed much of the political base, while **the new commuter citizens had little time or focus for civic engagement**. As a result the growth coalition - minus a few leaders in jail or exile - handily dispersed its challengers.

SO WHAT'S LEFT ?

437-442 PDF / 391-394 Purple Book

Long the 'speed capital of the world', its meth labs have recently **diversified into** the mass manufacture of 'ice ' (crystal meth) and 'croak' (a smokable combination of speed and crack). For the most part this is **grassroots narco-patriotism**: drug addiction made in- America by small-town good old boys and distributed throughout the heartland by a vast network of motorcycle gangs and outlaw truckers. **From the standpoint of free enterprise economics it is also a textbook example of small entrepreneurs filling the void left by the collapse of a dinosaur heavy industry**. Speed, not steel, is now probably Fontana's major export.

The whole scene looks like Mad Max: a post-apocalyptic society of industrial scavengers and metal vultures. **Nearby commuter homeowners - no longer beguiled by the romance of chicken shit - are circulating petitions to close down this successful survival of the Millerian age**. The past generations are like so much debris to be swept away by the developers' bulldozers. In which case it is only appropriate that they should end up here, in Fontana - the junkyard of dreams.

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