

INTRODUCTION

The publication of this volume of the *Berkeley Planning Journal* marks a turning point in the journal's history. The students who produced the first issue four years ago are completing their studies and moving on to various academic or professional careers. Their successors have not yet appeared.

The questions posed in our first issue by Hilda Blanco, the journal's founder and first editor, must be asked again: What purpose will this journal serve, and who will assume responsibility for its sustenance?

The journal was created to serve as a means for communicating thought and research within the Berkeley planning community and between that community and the profession at large. We have published student work along with that of faculty and outside contributors. Although our circulation is limited, the journal has served as a forum for quality articles, and has provided students with first-hand experience in the publication process.

A student-run academic journal can only be sustained by a constant replenishment of students willing to donate time to an enterprise which will bring no immediate professional benefits. Unlike law school journals, membership in the *Berkeley Planning Journal* is not an institutionalized badge of distinction. For motivation, we have relied on intrinsic interest in planning scholarship and the desire to develop editorial and publishing skills. When the journal was launched in 1983, it seemed axiomatic that the Department of City and Regional Planning at Berkeley had more than enough intellectual talent and organizational energy to produce a quality journal.

However, the pressures of dealing with academic demands at Berkeley, combined with students' considerable outside responsibilities to jobs and families, have made it more difficult to harness student interest than we originally anticipated. And as in so many planning departments, the diversity of pursuits corralled under the term "planning" frustrates efforts to establish a shared intellectual dialogue. The "community of scholars" seems an elusive ideal. In a decade characterized by privatism, professional specialization, and economic insecurity, students tend to plot straight-line courses toward their degrees, viewing their graduate education as a race to the finish line with no time for distractions.

So the future of the journal remains in doubt. We of the original staff hope that new volunteers step forward to carry on the *Berkeley Planning Journal's* nascent tradition, so that as we assume roles within the national planning community we can remain in touch with intellec-

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tual life at Berkeley, which offers so many opportunities for creative research.

At its best, the journal has served as a proving ground where graduate students could hone their writing and editorial skills. Its articles have expanded their authors' contacts with other researchers, and have paved the way for future articles accessible to a wider public. We like to think that the journal will serve as an incubator for intellectuals who will contribute forcefully to public policy debates in the coming decades.

Here the journal's dilemmas intersect with a wider cultural malaise, a distemper concerning the purpose and value of academic writing. Russell Jacoby has dissected this troubling issue in his recent book *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*,¹ and planning scholars should ponder Jacoby's indictment of academic insularity and narcissism. Planning, as an activity linking knowledge with action, can least of all afford to lose itself in arcane analysis which neither illuminates important issues nor generates improved practice.

Jacoby cites Lewis Mumford as an example of a vanishing breed of public intellectuals writing about urban and regional planning. Indeed, few thinkers in our discipline have tried to match Mumford's audacious explorations of urbanism, cultural evolution, and technology. Whatever we as planners may think of Mumford's intellectual legacy, we can only admire his ability to influence public discourse concerning the physical form and cultural vitality of cities. Mumford's deft skewerings of architectural and city planning follies reached a broad audience through more than five decades. Today, planners and planning academics should be concerned that members of their fraternity do not figure more prominently in crucial public debates.

The purpose of an academic journal should not be publication for publication's sake, churning out articles just because that's what academics do. Yet powerful forces continue to shape such an outcome. Jacoby targeted this problem in an earlier article published in *Telos*:

Even the trappings of academic thought distant from the immediate needs of monopoly capital take on the features of the commodity. Marxism not excepted, new schools, innovations, advances, breakthroughs, are announced like new brands. Everyone is out to corner a piece of the market. Interlocking directorates, intellectual holding companies and trusts leave tracks in footnotes of gratuitous commendations, dedications and recommendations.²

Future professors acquire many of their standards and habits in graduate school. What better place, then, to cultivate a well-

developed awareness of the *social context of knowledge production* and the role of academic scholarship within the social totality. Such an awareness might even contribute, in the long run, to spanning the rift that separates academic planning discourse from the political and economic arenas where the fates of cities and regions are determined.

The *Berkeley Planning Journal* will only be as lively and self-critical as the intellectual community which produces it. If that community is creative, disciplined, and self-reflective about the social import of its work, then the journal will also display those virtues. As we of the original staff move on, we hope that current and future members of the Berkeley planning community will shape the journal into the vehicle of critical inquiry it was originally intended to be.

Our lead article in this issue is an edited transcript of the "China Symposium" which was organized by the *Berkeley Planning Journal* in May 1987. Five Berkeley professors share their insights and questions about recent developments in Chinese society, focusing on the planning system. As Manuel Castells points out in his opening remarks, because China is such a vast and populous country, now on the verge of more intense involvement in the world economy, we must develop a deeper understanding of the Chinese system and the transformations it is likely to undergo in the coming decades.

In his interview in this issue, Ian McHarg shares his opinions on the American city planning profession. Particularly during the 1970s, McHarg filled the role of "public intellectual" which has eluded so many writers on planning topics. He has articulated a vision of intelligent planning for human settlements, in terms which can penetrate the public consciousness. Not surprisingly, conventional academic planning departments have never known quite what to do with his provocative ideas. In the interview McHarg explains his disagreements with the mainstream and advances his own ideas on city planning as a discipline.

The next two articles focus on urban transportation conflicts. Robert Cervero sketches the dimensions of the congestion problem and examines the policy options open to planners and other public officials. Jonathan Levine's case study of the Tunnel Road controversy in Berkeley shows how citizens and transportation planning professionals often frame problems differently, and therefore talk past one another instead of converging on workable solutions.

F. Steven Kountz's article critiques corporate strategies of economic restructuring which ignore disruptive social effects, and points out weaknesses in the mass production model of manufacturing. Kountz then examines two alternative strategies for higher productivity and

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increased flexibility: the Italian small-firm industrial districts and the producer cooperatives of Mondragon, Spain.

Planning education is the theme of John Landis's article, which challenges the conventional approach to teaching statistics in planning methods courses. For Landis, statistical methods should be much more thoroughly linked to the actual process of plan-making, so that they become usable tools rather than poorly assimilated, quickly forgotten abstractions.

Finally, Tim Strohane's review essay on Donald Worster's *Rivers of Empire* situates water policy in the American West within a broad social and historical perspective, showing the relationships between large-scale water projects, imperial ambitions, and political power.

As in past issues, our authors cover a wide range of topics, reflecting the inherently interdisciplinary nature of planning. This breadth is disquieting to some, but rather than worrying excessively about the defense of intellectual turf, planners should direct their energies toward having important things to say – and say them forcefully in words accessible to an educated public.

Cliff Ellis, Editor

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¹Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

²Russell Jacoby, "The Falling Rate of Intelligence," *Telos* 27 (Spring 1976): 144.