Materials   Workers' Party of Ireland

1991

Dublin 2000 : Draft Outline of Topics

The Workers Party

DUBLIN 2000

Draft Outline of Topics

1. The Road from Past to Present

A brief outline of Dublin's history covering the following areas: Foundation
and growth of Dublin as a port — Position of Dublin at the centre of supply routes —
growth of 'Administrative'. Dublin in the 18th century, ending with the Act of Union —
Foundation of the great industries (docks, foundries, food manufacture, distilleries,
breweries etc.) from the end of the 18th to the middle of the 19th century — The
decline of manufacturing and growth of service industries in the 20th century —
Social and demographic effects of rural immigration (Dublin has one-third of country's
population) — Effects on society and on infrastructure of the change from private
tenements to Corporation housing schemes in the 1950s and 1960s — Flight from
the Inner City to the suburbs in the 1970s and 1980s — Ensuing decline of inner
city areas — Social transformation from family unit to housing unit.

1991: Where are we now?

2. The City as Centre?

A short outline of Dublin's relationship to its surroundings incorporating the
following: Dublin as part of the county, province and country — The economic
relationship between Dublin and its surrounding areas — The social and cultural
isolation of Dublin from the rest of the country — The role of Government planning:
Does Dublin need seperate policies, administration and autonomous city government? —
Dublin as the seat of National government versus increasing de-centralisation of
the civil service.

3. Viewing Dublin

A brief survey of Dublin's architectural heritage and the city we see today:
Dublin is primarily identified as a Georgian city, and in the 1960s was still
considered the finest example of Georgian architecture outside southern England —
But the Dublin we see today is dominated by non-descript international architecture and,
in the words of one reviewer, O'Connell Street has been transformed from neo-Gothic
to neon-Gothic: How did this transformation occur, and how can such depradations
be avoided in the future? — The effect on the skyline of marauding architects such
as Sam Stephenson — Planning regulations and their implementation — Are the recent
attempts at restoration mere prettification (e.g. pseudo-Georgian shopfronts)? —
The role of tax incentives: Are they destroying Dublin's Inner City visually? —
The economic role played by Dublin's architectural past: heritage as tourist
attraction.   Do people want to live in a museum?

1991: Can — or should — a salvage operation still be mounted?

4. Houses are to Live in

A survey of past housing policies and their effects on the city we live in today:
The growth of housing estates and the increased emphasis on purely residential areas
rather than mixed residential/commercial — The need to integrate housing with other

facilities - The social problems caused in particular by tower blocks (some interesting work has been done on this in Germany and Austria) - The anomaly of a housing shortage on the one hand, and a plethora of empty/derelict houses on the other - The flight to the suburbs with the result that elderly people are left in Inner City areas with no family, no neighbours and no security - An analysis of the psychological effects of residential surroundings.

1991: Can the rot be stopped?   Demographic prognosis: What will our housing needs be in the year 2000?   Given that more people will be working from home, will there be a concentration on residential rather than commercial/industrial planning and building? What, if any, dangers does this hold?

The solution to all these problems must be cost-effective, people-friendly and environment-friendly.

How?

5. Going with the Flow: Transport Vs. Congestion

A survey of the main purposes of transport, and how Dublin's needs are currently served: Transport generally performs a dual function (transporting goods from source of supply to customer, and transporting labour from the home to the workplace) - Will this dual function still exist in the year 2000 (given the increase in people working from home) - Do more roads make for better transport? - Public transport: need for efficiency, cost-effectiveness and environmental consideration - Are busses outdated? - Should we go backwards (e.g. to trams/light rail systems) or 'progress' to a comprehensive underground system? - Is the current rationalisation of public transport routes an option or an imposition? - Should there be a transport ban within a specified radius of the city centre?

How will the transport needs in the year 2000 differ from those in 1991?

6. Organic Growth Or Bureaucratic Planning?

A survey of how cities develop and which methods best fulfill human needs. In the past, cities grew according to human and industrial/commercial needs. This parallel growth formed the face of Dublin up to the 1950s. Than the bureaucrats took over, developing satellite towns etc. and controlling development from the centre and according to abstract criteria rather than concrete needs. How effective is this?

Organic growth meant that dwellings were integrated into employment areas (for example, artisan cottages were generally situated a few hundred yards from the industry which they served). This was economically efficient, but did it fulfill human needs?

For the year 2000, should we be aiming for a synthesis of bureaucratic and organic planning, with central planning being subject to local and human modification?

Do people feel that they have any control over the way in which their environs are planned? Do they, in fact, want such control?

7. To Make or To Serve: The Economic Dilemma

Mirroring international urban development, the past decades have seen the transformation
of Dublin from semi-industrial base to service centre. Once booming industries
have either gone into a natural decline or been moved to lower-wage areas. In some
cases indigenous industries have either been bought out or entirely replaced by
foreign or multinational companies. Traditional 'large employers' of 100 years
ago - Guinness, Jacobs, Bolands etc. - have largely been supplanted by light
industry normally located outside the town in industrial estates, or by a
fluctuating service industry. These newer employers are rarely Dublin-based, nor
do they have any committment - social or economic - to the community. Once the
economic potential has been exhausted, they move on to greener pastures and lower
wages.

Labour-force trends: the trend is towards part-time work, job-sharing, 'flexi-time',
working from home, earlier retirement and later work-force entry following some
form of thrid-level education.

What do these and other factors mean for economic planning into the year 2000?

What does steadily rising unemployment mean for both the service industry (which
can only flourish in affluence) and manufacturing industry? To what extent should
future economic planning accept the prospect of permanent high unemployment?
Is the concept of industry being located outside residential centres, rather than
integrated into them, beneficial or otherwise?

8. Dublin at Leisure

A survey of Dublin at leisure - both voluntary and enforced (unemployment) leisure.
Traditional forms of recreation (group sports, communal entertainement etc.) have
largely been replaced by solitary recreation: videos and video games, solitary
forms of gambling like slot machines, lotto etc. rather than bingo or the betting
shop; solitary sports such as running and personal excercise regimes. This reflects
a general trend from the social to the individual.

At the same time, facilities for group recreation - playing fields, local cinemas
etc. - are being increasingly neglected, either due to economic factors (cinemas)
or state neglect (playing fields).

Recreation, or the lack of it, is affected by other areas of the city environment
and infrastructure - e.g. the environment (lack of green spaces etc.); transport
(inability to get to venues); economics (free forms of recreation decreasing and
others too expensive).

What pattern is likely to emerge by the year 2000?

To what extent should the need for recreation be integrated into general planning?

Arts: to be dealt with in cultural heritage section.

9. Young Dublin

A brief survey of Dublin as seen and experienced by young people. Dublin has one of the highest populations under 25 in the EC - partly indigenous, partly a result of student influx (3 universities, numerous other third level institutions). Dublin also has a large 'transient' population of students and young workers living in'flatlands' around the city: how does this affect young people themselves, and how does it affect Dublin as a whole?

Given the low pay and abominable living conditions experienced by many young people, is there a danger of an underclass being formed consisting of young people at the one end, and old age pensioners at the other?

A larger proportion than ever before of young people face long-term unemployment from the day they leave education: how does this affect them and how does it affect the city they live in?

10. Aged Dublin

What sort of city is Dublin for the retired and the elderly? How has the move from traditional family structures affected the elderly?

Demographic trends: What percentage of the population is likely to be retired/elderly in the year 2000? How will this affect us economically (pension burdents etc.)? Given the flight of younger people to the suburbs, to what extent are elderly people in danger of being left alone ir inner city areas?

Since people are leaving the workforce earlier - through earlier retirement, voluntary and enforced redundancy) should retirement options be integrated into economic planning?

11. A Stranger in Dublin

How do non-Dubliners view the city they live in? How is Dublin seen by foreignors, and by those from rural areas? Phenomenon of 'weekday Dubliners' who never spend a weekend in the city.

What percentage of people living in Dublin is likely to be 'native'/'foreign' in the year 2000? What does this mean for planning? Are trends likely to continue or to be reversed? Do 'strangers in Dublin' identify with the city?

12. Dublin: A Woman's View

What sort of a city is Dublin for women? In particular, what sort of a city for single women?

How are women represented in the labour force? To what extent does women's (low) economic power affect the facilities on offer for them? What are women's priorities when it comes to urban/economic planning? Security: can women identify with a city when they fear to walk its streets?

To what extent should seperate policies cater for women?

What percentage of the population will women form in 2000?

To what extent will present working patterns (entering workforce - leaving to have family - re-entering) continue?

Childcare: obviously necessary, but what forms should it take? Should it be responsibility of State or Corporation?

13. A Day in the Life of Dublin

Verbal and visual snapshots of Dublin in 1991

14. Conclusion

Synopsis of previous topics. Description of the city we want to have in the year 2000 - contrasted with the city we are likely to have if present trends continue.