

## **Brendan McLaughlin (1990)**

### *Glasgow's Not For Sale.*

Before 1954 the only houses to be seen in Castlemilk were a few cottages and the imposing Castlemilk House, the family seat of the Stirling Stewarts.

Cathkin Braes was gifted to Glasgow in 1886, by James Dick, 'to be held in perpetuity for the people of Glasgow as a health resort'. At that time, it certainly did no one any harm to sit up there and take in the breathtaking views of the City. Among the mills and factories, grand churches and great mansions were prominent as they spread out from the tollbooth at Glasgow Cross. From its centre, the eye could wander along the thin lines of roads as they wound their way through the many villages which bejewelled the picture and it wouldn't take the mind of a poet to understand why it was called 'The Dear Green Place'. Gorbals, Bridgeton, Springburn, Partick, Anderston and Govan were already in the City's embrace but further out, were the delightful dots of Drumchapel, Pollok and Easterhouse, almost untouched by the grasp of the City. Indeed the sight of Glasgow and its environs would have ended the travels of many a worthy journeyman. However, as the stranger crossed the Glasgow Bridge, it would quickly become apparent that hidden among the Victorian wynds and the ancient feudal-strips, were horrors of human degradation which would shock even the most hardy individual.

The mansions had been vacated by the merchants and Mill owners, who had them built, as they fled the pollution of their own factories. From around the Glasgow Green and Calton, they had moved up to and beyond the new Merchant City which they had designed to keep the ordinary Glaswegian out. They didn't just leave their old houses empty but had them divided up so that as many people as possible could get into them. This way they not only covered the cost of removal but created a lucrative room-letting business. There was no shortage of people to rent these rooms due to the massive surge of immigrants throughout the early and mid 19th century.

Although the City had rapidly expanded in size and population since the 1707 Act Of Union with England, through the import of tobacco and the proliferation of cotton mills, as the 19th century rolled on it became the centre of iron and steel making and industries related to these. As colonial markets opened up and domestic consumption increased, shipbuilding and heavy engineering became prominent, to serve the manufacturing and export of an incredible range of goods made in Glasgow. The City soon became known as the work-shop of the world. Glasgow, then, owed its very existence, as a major city, to colonialism and the Industrial Revolution both of which were brutal, exploitative and finite.

Industry never did manage to absorb all the people who flooded into Glasgow and it was those who were excluded that had to live in the filthy 18th century closes and dilapidated mansions of the old merchant city around Glasgow Cross and Glasgow Green. However, no one among the ordinary people could assume a safe distance from such deprivation because of the downward moving trade cycles. People only worked when the employers needed them and were laid off when they didn't. Also, in the latter part of the century, there occurred the first really serious economic depressions and unemployment was never far from any door. Conditions in these

warrens of human indignity were horrendous often with no sanitary facilities at all. In one close in the Calton, there were six entrances of four stories with six doors on each level housing over six hundred people. A series of photographs commissioned in the latter part of the 19th century, by Thomas Annan, records all these closes but could never convey the unspeakable horrors of such a way of life.

The unbelievable thing is that these people had to pay rent for the privilege of living in such wretched holes while their landlords strutted about the new merchant city or up at the new town of Blytheswood. It was only after outbreaks of cholera and typhoid, diseases with no respect for social class location, that concern grew about the living conditions.

In 1863, the Town Council appointed Glasgow's first Public Officer of Health, Dr. William Gardener, and it was he who introduced the 'ticketing' system of controlling the number of people who could live in one roomed houses. These 'single ends' as they were known, often slept up to thirty people at a time and were regarded as the hotbeds of disease. In 1866, 'The City Improvements Act'... unique to Glasgow, commanded the setting up of a trust to demolish the worst of the slums and provide new housing for the poor. Although the slums seemed to shift around in the wake of demolition, the Town Council built many fine tenements some of which are still lived in today. The first of these was opened at the Saltmarket and represented the first municipal housing development in the world.

By the turn of the 20th century, all the owners of commerce and industry had moved westward, well away from the City Centre up through Park Circus and along Great Western Road. In effect, they abandoned it to the people by selling many of their interests to the Glasgow Corporation which had established a very strong and far reaching relationship with the ordinary folk of Glasgow through their municipal responsibilities.

By now, all the inner villages and their networks of social and industrial infrastructure had developed into one another creating a solid working class belt which surrounded the City.

Glasgow had truly become the Worker's City.

Uncertainty, however, never lifted its cloud and continued to tyrannise Glaswegians as they struggled to maintain a decent standard of living. Although it is argued that Glasgow was the product of the Industrial Revolution many say that it was also the victim. Its fortunes were inextricably linked to the British Empire which was, by the beginning of the 20th century, on a steady decline. Foreign markets vanished at an alarming rate as more and more countries became industrialised and international trade became more competitive.

In Glasgow this meant the depression of wages and the loss of much that helped to make life just tolerable. In the struggle with the employers who complained of dwindling profits and insisted on cut-backs, lay-offs and wage-cuts, the Clydeside workers organised themselves in Trade Unions and generally became a highly politicised community. But while the 'Red Clydeside' was busy challenging employers and landlords through a series of bitter strikes, plans were being made to

deal with inner-city populations all over Britain. It was thought that they presented a problem to the stability of British society because of their history of militant political action and a lawlessness among those who were never really assimilated into urban industrial society.

Some argue that it was the Clydeside itself that prompted the debate on inner-city problems due to the intense concentration and solidarity of an intelligent urban working class. Just as in 1866, a special case was made for redeveloping Glasgow; in the inter-war period, as quickly and cheaply as possible, over 54,000 houses were built with public assistance.

The New Town Act of 1946 introduced a new way of thinking in which people would be enticed to leave the urban areas for new houses in healthier environments in 'garden cities'. Investment would inevitably follow due to inducements of low rental commercial and industrial units with a cheap local workforce. East Kilbride and Cumbernauld were to become examples of this. However, at an astonishing pace, the building of council houses continued to consume the peripheral green-sites.

That such a programme would split the urban population, to a large extent, into economically homogenous groupings, is a fact of history. That it was designed to do so is a subject that Social Historians will argue over for years to come. This was done by building schemes of houses of varying standards and differential rating in order that people on similar wage levels would automatically come together. It achieved a number of very far reaching effects, simultaneously. It began the process of breaking up the old system of private-factoring, where the young people got houses to rent next to their parents. This caused the first signs of breakdown in the complex matrilineal system of social relations, causing many young families to become isolated in their own homes. It breached the integrity of the collective consciousness which tolerated the diverse human characteristics within the community and gave it a sense of solidarity. Perhaps the most striking consequence, however, was the corrosion of the cohesiveness of an industrial proletariat which had always demonstrated the potential to be a major political challenge.

Blackhill and Milton were some of the first schemes to be built and these were quickly occupied by low income families, while those with higher incomes began to move out to Knightswood and Mosspark. As the demolition derby of the 1950's and 1960's started to take its toll, population movement gained greater momentum and there was an inordinate rush to build more and more high-density council houses. Drumchapel, Castlemilk and Pollok began to take shape and a myriad of contiguous developments appeared in the northern and eastern areas of the City.

Initially, folk were delighted to move out to what must have seemed like the countryside. Some had back and front doors with gardens and others had verandahs, but all had inside toilets and bathrooms. It was a great joy for most to finally get away from the single-ends and room-and-kitchens with their outside toilets and legacy of T.B. and rickets.

It wasn't long, however, before the problems of many of the schemes began to show prominence. There was no integrated structure with a striking absence of all the amenities that had been enjoyed in the old communities.

People more and more resisted being moved to the schemes but it was too late demolition had been so frantic and thorough that places like the Gorbals, Govan and Anderston didn't really exist anymore

It would seem that Glasgow has always had a housing problem and the authorities were given much sympathy as they appeared to be fighting a losing battle in the face of an ever increasing population and a declining industrial complex. They were not culpable, it was argued they did not invite the immigrants, nor cause the industrial decline and how else could they house a massive population? However, what most people were never aware of was an enduring debate on how best to develop Glasgow in the inevitability of it becoming a post-industrial society. There were two dominating schools of thought and these represented more than just a concern about how to house people or improve the City: the Clyde Valley Plan and Bruce Plan. The Clyde Valley Plan, drawn up in the late 1940s, was based on the principle that Glasgow should try to keep within its pre-1945 boundaries. It was consistent with the New Town Act' in so much as it advocated that places like Cumbernauld and East Kilbride should develop while opposing the idea of having large schemes built on the edge of the City. Glasgow Corporation was hostile to these proposals wanting instead to maintain a high population level within the boundaries as population drift would have diminished it's position as a major City.

The Bruce Plan was the brain child of Robert Bruce who was impressed by the rebuilding of those European Cities most affected by bombing during the second world war. Cities like Dresden and Hamburg which were devastated, had to be built again from scratch... a town planners dream. These were developed in a manner which abandoned the old Greek and Roman Grid-system adopted by most cities in the world. With the exception of a few historical buildings, Bruce wanted Glasgow to be totally demolished and rebuilt along these new lines. For him it was perverse that the people lived in the City Centre and travelled out to their work, unlike most European Cities where the populace lived on the outskirts. What he, and most planners that followed him, were totally insensitive to, were the reasons why Glasgow was not like other cities. It never had a settled or 'total' community, like most major cities, but was more a dormitory-town for the workers... the key factors in its industrial development. To a large degree also, during the Industrial Revolution, the upper and middle classes moved away from its centre leaving it to those who worked there and the unfortunates, caught up in the poverty trap, scraping a living in the streets. Glasgow was not a glorious City, it was populated by poor people whose struggles for a bit of stability in their lives forced very deep and dear roots establishing a very tough and widespread undergrowth of common culture. But it was regarded by those with power and authority as being a culture without credit... as transitory as the industrial processes that brought it together. And, therefore, expendable.

Unfortunately for Glaswegians, their characteristics of political dissent and solidarity, which appeared to so worry Parliament, depended on the vagaries of industry and continued investment. When the relationship between these began to crumble, with Britain's decline as a trading nation, so too did the community. As investors took their money elsewhere, to developing countries with no advanced workforce and where cheap labour was plentiful, real long term and biting poverty became prevalent once again. Dereliction became more extensive among the tenements, many of which had

been allowed to fall into disgraceful levels of disrepair, and by the 1950's and 1960's comprehensive development plans were drawn up to radically change the demographic structure of the City. Once again the people of Glasgow were singled out for positive discrimination. Glasgow Corporation, without the slightest consultation with the people they were supposed to represent, were bent on a programme of urban clearances and the creation of a belt of bleak homelands for the industrial refugees of the Clydeside. In many respects, the 'Bruce Plan' must have guided their hand as they all but totally de-populated the inner areas of the City while banishing the people to the peripheries. This was carried out with no real consideration for any social or community imperatives.

Although places like East Kilbride were developing apace, tenants had to have employment in the area of the New Town to qualify for a house. This was designed to avoid the establishment of the kind of problem-populations that were considered to have appeared in the new schemes with the increase of structural unemployment.

That there were no realisable human characteristics in these comprehensive plans was observable early on in the construction of schemes, yet they kept on building. With demolition and building contracts already having been signed, it was probably impossible for the Corporation to halt the process.

There was, however, a recognition that despite this grand scale of redevelopment, it was not enough to cope with the masses of population ... and still Glasgow Corporation wanted to keep to the scheme of high-density house building within its boundaries. In the 1960's and early 1970's, pre-cast concrete fabrications were being used to build those high-rise blocks which became prominent in every city in Britain. It is hard to believe, but these were regarded as the solution to the problems of housing families for whom there was always a major shortage of accommodation. By the mid 1970's almost all of the old communities had vanished, either up the scheme closes or out of sight up the heights of high-rise flats.

With these anti-architectural and anti-social developments, there was the loss of a finely tuned and closely integrated community with a history of stoutly defending its hard and honest working-class identity ... social-dynamite to social junk.

Amid much talk in the City-Chambers of building a City fit for our children to live in, there was never any thought to genuine ways of creating the conditions for nurturing children to live in the new City. You either lived out in the owner-occupier leafiness of the likes of Bearsden or Bishopbriggs or were forced to endure the skyscrapers or schemes.

After the spectacular failures in their pathetic attempts to re-introduce cheap housing into areas like the Gorbals and Springburn, such as the Hutchie 'E' and Balgray Hill disasters, Glasgow Corporation seemed to give up trying. Some argue that they never did really try anyway, but others are prepared to accept that there was a genuine attempt to solve the problem of housing a concentrated urban population which no longer had a definable function in post-industrial society. Neglect turned into abandonment with over 150,000 people living in desolate schemes and many more than that stranded in tower blocks. Not only was Glasgow left with the biggest and

most problematic housing schemes in Europe, but, in the Gorbals, it also had the most concentrated level of high-rise living than in any other city in Britain.

Just as in the previous times, the people's communities had been destroyed, but the difference was that this time it was murder under trust. The great Labour traditions that became established on the Clyde assumed that the Council would always be controlled by the 'Labour Party', democratic and committed to the principle of municipalism. For an almost unbroken period of 30 years this trust gave the Labour-controlled Corporation full reign to re-develop the City without fully realising there was never any recognisable coherence in their policies.

When the Glasgow Corporation changed to Glasgow District Council, in 1975, the attitude of Councillors seemed to change with it. Although, increasingly, they never showed much consideration for the people, now it was as if they were out to persecute them. This was most poignantly observed during the deplorable fiasco over what was responsible for the endemic levels of dampness in the Hutchie 'E' complex. Although they knew that the design of the flats did not include adequate dampproofing for the climate in Scotland, the Council blamed it on families and their breathing habits as they slept at night. This seemed to usher in a new and cynical approach which had the effect of kicking people's teeth down their throats then blaming them for being gumsy.

The Council had gambled, again, the welfare of the people against cheap housing... and lost... but were not prepared to admit it. Glasgow was left with the insuperable problems of a public housing stock much of which was 'impossible to let', a shortage of private rented accommodation and the need to refurbish all those larger tenements which had survived the bull- dozers. Then, in 1969 with the, 'Government Grants (special needs) Act' the new horizon appeared... in the shape of the 'Urban Renewal Policy' which, surprise, surprise, made Glasgow its chief focus with the £100m G.E.A.R. Programme.

The G.E.A.R. programme concentrated on the East End of the City, with the notion that, by doing so, the whole of Glasgow would benefit. Although many new and better designed houses were eventually built, it had no real long term effect in terms of social or employment infrastructure. It certainly never had much effect on the City Centre.

Glasgow had been left with an inner-city area which resembled any of the bombed-out cities of the war. It was often heard said, 'what Hitler couldn't do, the Council did'. This was how the greatest Municipal City in Britain met the 1980's.

All that and an ever increasing level of long term, structural unemployment.

Its heart ripped to pieces and its veins sucked dry, the once proud City was elbowed into its own rubble and left to die.

Then, in stepped the extravagant swagger of the private-sector developers and the New Glasgow had begun its ascendancy.

Already well versed in the Government grant-system through the urban Renewal programmes such as the vast range of house-improvement grants, they were expert in manipulating the local authorities into assisting them in their rape of Glasgow.

With the legislation that forced District Councils to adopt the council House sales policy, much of the better public development areas 'to let' fell deeper into neglect, private development companies offered to take them over, restore them, and sell them off. In July 1982, one such company 'Barratts Urban Renewal', was expressly set up for that purpose. Already the Parent Company was building houses on every available gap-site it could get its hands on. Despite there being a declared principle amongst certain elected members of the District Council not to sell off any Council property, these developments went on unabated. With so many of the tenements outside the schemes, now in private ownership or control, people excluded from the job market, the young, the old, the disabled, widowed, and so on, continuously find themselves being shuffled out to the very worst housing areas in the City.

The very serious questions here are, what will these people on State Benefit, and who do not qualify for mortgages, do when all the good council houses are sold to tenants and the undesirable ones sold to the developers? Will they live in Government-controlled hostels... or worse? Is that to be the final solution to the problem of the industrial refugees of Glasgow and their children?

In 1982 also, a new kind of housing development had reached completion and this seemed to herald a new age in urban-renewal. The Albion Buildings at the corner of Albion Street and Ingram Street had been totally refurbished and where there once sat an old disused commercial building now proudly stood a beautifully designed block of houses. They were quite expensive but 'what the hell', how else could one buy a desirable domestic property so close to the City Centre?

There was a genuine, positive reaction by the people of Glasgow to this type of rehabilitation as for years these areas were dead. Just down the road at Bell Street, there was rejoicing in the market place as stall-holders at the new Candleriggs Market awaited an increase in business.

This new shopping complex was in the old Glasgow Fruit-Market which had been leased from Glasgow District Council for at least thirty years by W.W. Promotions, a Southern-English based operator who then rented it out to the traders.

Things were looking up for the City.

It would be simple to say, 'no one could have guessed what these two developments were to lead to' but this would be to completely underrate the foresightedness of its architects.

Immediately following this, the Houndsditch Department Store in Ingram Street was closed down to be transformed into houses. In Wilson Street, too, a fine refurbishment was being carried out while other projects were being undertaken in Bell Street, Montrose Street, High Street, Blackfriar Street and different properties all the way along to Queen Street. Building after building in the area was renovated into domestic property.

The District Council was delighted with this injection of investment into what was once a rapidly decaying part of the City. Where there were spaces, new building took place in such a way as to fit into the area. Meanwhile at Cowcaddens, Govan, St. George's Cross, Govanhill, around the Glasgow Green and many different parts of the City, new, private housing was being built by many different contractors. The old name of 'Merchant City' was unearthed from where it had been notionally dumped and given a new lease of life. Indeed, it became the catch-phrase for the new epoch of regeneration while much of the rest of the City was in a state of degeneration. Just over the river there were many campaigns to get the houses brought up to minimum legal standards. Queen Elizabeth Square was one of these complexes only fifteen years after it had opened. Even worse, a demolition-hammer's throw away, was the decomposing Hutchie 'E' where the last of the residents were holding their breath in anticipation of a move to a dry house.

But where would they go?

In every scheme there were cries of dampness, rotting window frames, downright illegal electrical systems, leaking roofs, etc. etc. Who in their right mind would accept any of these? Needless to say but it took years and concentrated campaigns to see the last tenant in Hutchie 'E' rehoused, a period during which they had become worse than animal hutches.

Meanwhile Paul Mugnaioni's office in promoting the 'Cyclical Repair System', was to prove once and for all that the ability of Glasgow District Council to maintain its housing stock was now non-existent. Not only did he see the graffiti on the wall, so did all the big developers. He resigned from his immensely well-paid job as director of housing with Glasgow District Council, to help form 'Quality Street' which was set up to buy the most dilapidated houses, do them up and rent or sell them.

Plans were drawn up to redevelop the derelict Hutchie 'E' site and after a public row about which developer should get the contract, it was decided that none of the plans were suitable. The Council did not want another public scandal like the heavy breathing allegations. It was crucial to ensure the return of the tenants was to a properly thought-out and constructed layout of houses and amenities.

None of the proposals which the developers submitted were thought to come up to the required standard and were rejected. The concerned public were informed through the local media that the whole issue was to go back for further consultation and that was the end of it for now.

Back in the Candleriggs Market there was great concern as the traders received the news that their landlord had gone into liquidation. However, there was relief all round when they learned that the lease was being taken over by another Southern-English operator, Graysim Holdings. What was even better, although many thought it was rather sinister, it turned out that they just happened to share the same address and staff as W.W. Promotions, so thankfully there was to be no change. Nevertheless, there were many other changes happening in the City Centre which did worry them.

Down at the Briggait another big market was being constructed in the old Glasgow Fishmarket by the Briggait Company Ltd., a subsidiary of Prudential Insurance. Moreover, there was a strong rumour that the Cheese market, across the road from Candleriggs, was to become a shopping mall. What worried them most was the proposed developments down at St. Enoch Square and up at the top of Buchanan Street... multi-million pound shopping malls.

One consolation they felt was the new S.E.C.C. which hosted a new market at the weekends. Unfortunately this arrangement didn't last long and the stallholders had to drag all their stuff back to their vans under the shadow of yet another new hotel...the Forum, moving in while the market- place moves out. 'Very confusing' one trader was heard to say, 'far too many hotels and shopping-complexes already'.

It seems he was right, as the St Enoch Square Centre was being bolted into position the Briggait closed down for want of customers and was eventually sold to The Glasgow Briggait Company Ltd, a subsidiary of The Noble Leisure Organisation Ltd. One bankrupt trader spoke angrily about it being rather strange that the Council was selling off its historical assets like those old markets. He went on about how the town was full of nothing but fancy hotels, expensive shopping centres and huge car-parks and that there were no ordinary people left. 'How can small businesses like mine survive', he lamented, 'when the Council let the whole City Centre be taken over by big speculators who close some parts of it down in order to create interest in their new developments elsewhere? Where will it all end?'

These are not the only questions that should be asked. Why is it that with the lowest level of car ownership in the U.K., Glasgow has got the highest number of miles of urban-motorway in Britain? Why has Glasgow got the greatest number of Local Authority housing in Europe crammed just inside its boundaries on desolate peripheral sites? Why, more than any other City in the British Isles, has there been a preoccupation with massive urban renewal? Why do Glaswegians have to tolerate the manipulation and disruption of their everyday lives as housing plans change and landmark buildings like the St. Enoch's Hotel and Boots' Corner vanish almost overnight? Why does there have to be the seemingly endless forest of scaffolding in the City Centre, and the deliberate creation of large gap- sites, as in the Gorbals, which then lie for years awaiting the further development of the motorway system? Most importantly, how is it that in a Labour-controlled, renowned City like Glasgow, which has always prided itself on democracy and has just recently reaffirmed its pledge to Open Government, is there apparently carte blanche for private speculators and developers? The clue to this might appear to lie in the principles of the 'Act' which commanded penetrating levels of urban renewal, but it could just as easily be to do with the Council's willingness to abandon municipal responsibilities and certain councillors' *desires* to get in on the act of development. This was to be achieved through a commitment from Central Government and Local Authorities to work in 'partnership' with the private sector for regeneration of urban areas.

Not since the days of T. Dan Smith was there such an open invitation for councils and councillors to work with the business community and facilitate their projects. These 'partnerships' were established all over Britain and were dependent on the willingness of Local Authorities and developers to work closely together.

Glasgow District Council came to accept these urban 'partnerships', ultimately with enthusiasm and great commitment. As one observer commented, 'when developers visited the City, they used to creep in at the side door, now the councillors bring them in at the front door, one on each arm' Not only had it become respectable for councillors to be seen with developers, it soon became imperative to be involved with them. Indeed it got to the stage where councillors and developers became indistinguishable. The only real way they could be told apart was that the developer was always talking and the councillor was forever nodding his or her head

By the mid 1980's while more and more Glaswegians were slipping into the mud of hopeless poverty, there was much celebrating going on in the City Centre. Struthers Advertising and Marketing Ltd. had discovered a way to make Glasgow miles better. 'Better than what'? some people asked.

For helping them think up this idea Michael Kelly was immortalised as the wee, yellow, smiling Glasgow man. Perhaps Sir Michael does not take a tippie because most Glaswegians who smile these days are 'mortal' or getting richer, like Struthers who made great commercial mileage out of the Glasgow's Miles Better franchise.

He never did tell us what was hidden behind this wee cheeky slogan but it soon became patently obvious ... BETTER THAN IT USED TO BE.

This gave the Council leaders even more reason to get out there and get among them with their Glasgow's Miles Better bunnets in their hands.

At last they could throw off the chains of municipalism, it belonged to the past. Tweed jackets and scruffy shoes were left in tailor's waste-bins as the double-breasted suit and shiny leather slip-on took over. A new image for the councillors and a new image for the City

Corporate plans were drawn up with almost anybody who wanted a piece of the action. Glasgow became known as the city where everything moves...when, where and whoever the new Glasgow demanded. The District and Regional Councils joined up with local businesses and the Scottish Development Agency and called themselves 'Glasgow Action'. Through this, chances would not be missed as information would run freely between all the agencies. The seeds of opportunity would be sewn during the Garden Festival, tracks would be laid for the race ahead. The engine of change was revved up and ready to go into top gear, all they were waiting for was the starter's flag.

Glasgow, 'European Capital of Culture 1990', at last the 'red flag' has been lifted...they're off.

From all over they came to play with the new Glasgow. They flew up from London and jetted in from New York. Saatchi and Saatchi made certain that everybody that was anybody knew about the new consumption palaces and grand concerts.

Champagne corks popped and budgets were chopped. Diners and dancers and Corporate chancers flung themselves into the fling. Never before did savoir-faire have such a field day.

Glasgow was on the skite... but only the chosen few got a bite of the cherry.

'But what about this Red Clydeside we hear so much about' shouted a breathless young thing. 'You're dancing on it' replied an ageing, silver-headed devil in a double-breasted suit, 'We just haven't got around to having the grave stone inscribed yet.'

The municipal Jewels had been lodged in the pawn and the Glasgow folk could just stand and look on. Almost as if they had got the last party-hat the S.D.A. announced, on the first of April 1990, that they were changing their name to 'Scottish Enterprise'. Was it a coincidence that this just happened to be April Fools Day?

A lot of Glaswegians don't think so, but they're not laughing.

That the developments in Glasgow have no respect for the people and the future welfare of the City can be seen when parallels are drawn with similar developments in the U.S.A. From these, a new form of developers-hype took over which imitated what was going on in many American Cities, especially along the lines of 'We Love You New York'. This was coined to promote New York out of a bankruptcy in which poverty and homelessness littered the streets with its human baggage.

Recent reports on these speculations indicate that there was a disastrous level of over-accumulation and wasteful investment. Similar to the Wall Street Crash in 1929, which was caused by overproduction and no ability for the public to buy goods and services, these experiences will have very long and damaging effects on the economies of such urban communities. These have become 'dual' Cities where the skyline is painted with gold and the pavements are coloured with the cardboard and begging cups of modern poverty.

In Glasgow, in 1990, this type of economics has a linguistic mask of success which hides the ghostly profile of a murdered heritage and a bloodless imported culture.

With its concentration on building this new image, there has been an accelerated downward spiral of social and economic decline in the schemes. Although the District Council claim that the promotion is financed with special funds, they cannot deny that increasingly scarce resources are being used to capture development capital. For the economist this is, in effect, the multiplier in reverse in favour of speculators who will take the profits and move on to other cities. Along with them, they will take free-hold or very long-term lease-hold rights to many of Glasgow's municipal treasures.

As mentioned before, the Fruit and Fish markets are gone and it was only after an independent survey valued the Cheese Market at £2m that it was not sold for £640,000 as was planned. It is still on the market and is scheduled to become another Merchant City upmarket shopping housing/restaurant complex. 'A' listed buildings and vacant ground in Howard, Osborne and Stockwell Streets have recently been sold to speculators. Indeed Granite House at Argyll and Stockwell Streets was sold secretly for a price of £6.5m to Harry Clapham of Credential Holdings, who then trebled the rent for the different tenants who had been operating small businesses there for years. Almost all of them had to move out. Similarly the building on the corner of Howard and Stockwell Streets, was sold to Windex for £1.7m who also

forced out most of the businesses. The list is never ending and that is despite the insistence of the Council that it would not sell off any municipal property. When even a partial list of sales and very long leases is catalogued, the magnitude of this lie can be observed.

Using the S.D.A., now Scottish Enterprise, as a clearinghouse, Glasgow District Council has become one of the most prominent speculators and certain councillors have become very adept at spotting opportunities. Although it was British Rail who sold the St. Enoch Square Complex to the S.D.A. who, in turn sold it on to the unlikely partnership of Sears Properties Ltd. and the Church of England Commissioners, how the District Council let them alter Glasgow's groundscape in such a fundamental manner, is a question which probably will never be answered.

Aitkenhead house, bequeathed to Glasgow by Lord Aitkenhead of Kings Park, was sold for £1000 to be made into private houses. Rouken Glen Park was sold to Eastwood District Council who then sold off Deaconsbank municipal golf-course. Even the Glasgow City Hall could be put up for grabs. The S.D.A. was sold most of the car-park sites in the City Centre and have either already sold or are in the process of selling them off to the likes of Kings Car-parking. The tale of woe-begotten deals goes on and on but there are a number of very crucial developments that are being processed today and which should come under close public scrutiny. 'The Crown Street Regeneration Project', on the doomed Hutchie 'E' site keeps the controversy of the Gorbals Saga going. The District Council tried a Pontious Pilate scheme by selling this thirty-four acre site to the S.D.A. who, being project leaders, held a design competition asking for plans to rebuild the site along German Urban Renewal lines. An English company won it by designing an integrated housing plan of one thousand houses over a period of eight years. 75% will be owner occupier and the other 25% will be made up of sheltered, and special-needs with most being stepped-ownership, i.e. half owned. The successful company, Campbell, Zogolovitch, Wilkinson and Gough centred their design on the Berlin Exhibition of careful and sensitive urban renewal. With the council house sale policy, it is certain that this whole site will become totally private in a very short space of time. With the rumblings about demolishing the Queen Elizabeth Square flats it would not be outrageous to expect a drive to take over the whole of the Gorbals. This would fit in with plans to privatise and upgrade the banks of the Clyde on both sides of the river. Already the site of the Garden Festival is being privately developed despite the option that the District Council could have bought it from the Clyde Port Authority. We are told that £5.2m had to be raised to help build the new Glasgow Concert Hall by selling off property in the Merchant City and the Broomielaw, and striking a deal with Grosvenor Square Property plc and Bredero Properties plc and John Lewis, allowing for the massive Buchanan Street shopping mall, twice the size of the St. Enoch Square Centre, to be built. It is interesting to note that with the completion of this centre, there will have been £430m spent on shopping amenities since 1985, in a City Centre which already boasted one of the most concentrated shopping areas in Britain.

Why did the Council need this money when the Cost of building the Concert Hall was around £30m and the insurance money, and its interest, in the bank, from the St Andrew's Hall, had grown to £24m with a further £8.5m from Bruce Millan, in his role as European Commissioner?

Why is the Concert Hall registered as 'Cultural Enterprises Ltd', a private company whose directors are strangely not listed but who are reputed to be leading councillors? Jean McFadden, Pat Lally, Council Leaders, and Martin Caldwell of 'The Anti-Privatisation Committee' were all members of the Concert Hall Working Party through which it was privately registered. Also, why has the Clyde Port Authority just recently become a limited company?

It is not hard to see a picture emerging in 1990 which points at the determination to privatise the whole of the City Centre and all along the riverbanks.

Of the more recent developments, the proposals to lease one third of the Glasgow Green to a private speculator for a period of 125 years has caused a great public outcry. Once again, the same council leaders are the main supporters of it despite public misgivings about proposed conversion into an upmarket leisure complex which only those who can pay will be able to use. These include a disco, an hotel and a Blackpool-type of water- world. One old Calton woman was heard to say, 'it's not the parks they want to get rid of, it's the perks and anyway the only water facility we want on the 'Green' is 'Wet Wet Wet'. At least they didn't cost us anything'.

Although three companies are submitting separate proposals, it has already become known that two of them are associated companies, 'Citygrove' is in with the 'Rank Organisation', while the third company, 'Sport and Leisure PLC', is to become operationally linked with 'Rank'. All very complicated, as often happens in long-lease deals. A good example of this is in Auchinlea Park near Easterhouse, where a large section was sold to Velware Ltd., a company which promised to build factories and provide jobs for local people. After a short while, the Company went into liquidation, was bought over by another company, and all the conditions of the original sale were negated in the take-over. Now they are turning it into a leisure-complex with a few part-time, badly paid jobs most of which will be to do with collecting the entry money. The fact remains that this land is lost to the public forever. A '125 year lease' is known in business circles as a buyers-lease because of the impossibility of the actual deed-holders ever getting it back again. Think of this: 125 years from now is into the 22nd century. Can you imagine the Council or the public ever getting the Glasgow Green back? But those on the Glasgow Green are not the only current dealings to give Glasgow's parks away to private speculators, there are plans to develop parts of Springburn Park and they have just allowed the band stand in Kelvingrove Park to be turned into a privately owned public house.

The first house to be let in Castlemilk was in 1955 and as the dream turned into the nightmare, which a good part of it is today, there was always the consolation of sitting up there on Cathkin Braes and dreaming of better things to come. A person could have looked down on Glasgow as the clouds of demolition dust settled to reveal the new Glasgow. No more industrial chimneys and, with the exception of one or two that were left, the only cranes to be seen on the Clydeside were those building high-rise flats. Big fat hotels began to obscure the view with their toyland designs, as did big wide urban motorways leading into sprawling car-parks into which crept the big long cars of the double-breasted international developers.

From up in Castlemilk the City Centre seemed to get further and further away from the people as it vanished once again, this time behind the veil of cultural-

entrepreneurialism. The Year of Culture: 'let's bury the mistakes of the past in the sponge of 1990, no one will notice'.

Inward-investment became the password as the cultural-speculators and tourism-touts joined hands with the District Council to form a circle into which speculators, investors and developers would throw in their stakes. Like all games of chance those with most to lose, lose most... especially if they are using other people's money. Completely out of their depth, it's not long before the riverside-gamblers and urban-cowboys have the local small timers tied up in a game that has no end. That is why 'Glasgow's Glasgow' was forced to go on regardless, that is why Council property all over Glasgow is being sold off and that is the real reason why there is such a desperation to allow the proposed private developments on the Glasgow Green to go ahead.

1990 was the big poker game and Pat Lally, Glasgow's gambler solitaire, with the municipal purse in front of him, thought he had a winning hand. With a fool-house he bet against five-aces and will be paying the debt for many years to come.

Unfortunately for Glaswegians, it is they who are having to service the debt by having their heritage cashed in and having to suffer a shameful level of economic neglect. They are now being asked to pay for the use of common amenities and underwrite the tripe and trallywags of the vainglorious cultural industry.

How long will it be before they actually become tourists in their own City?

'I belong to Glasgow No More'.

Who would want to live there anymore anyway? Most Glaswegians have refused to be taken in by it all, what with the new City Centre houses next to dark and unpopulated no-go areas around the huge shopping-malls and car-parks, where it is getting more and more dangerous to be after dark. A perusal of the police records of incidents in the area would reveal a frightening pattern of people being attacked in the dark shadows of these modern monstrosities.

The Merchant City? No community there, just transient young couples and single folk on their way to leafy suburbia, or worse, the town houses of the very firms which are trying to exploit the City. Most of the people that live in the new City Centre are never seen, there's never any weans in prams or people having a chat with their neighbours on their way to the corner-shop. Yet these houses are way above the market price for their size and location. Developers up until now have been in a double-bubble situation by pretending that quality exists just because the price is high, but now they are being found out. The Carrick Quay housing development at the Clydeside is a typical example where there are very small two and three bedroom flats which were advertised at between £80,000 and £190,000. Only a few have been sold and not just have they had to reduce the price but building has been suspended until they can get in more money. This illustrates the 'fly-by-night' character of much of the development.

The real heart of Glasgow now beats at the edge of the City among those who have been disenfranchised and brutalised by a deplorable level of Local Authority and central government neglect. The City Centre is now a semi-populated ghost town.

The streets of Glasgow were once teeming with folk, day and night, as they went about their everyday business but now you won't see many people at night. During the day you will, but these have either driven in to operate or consume the newly confectionalised City Centre, or have been bussed in from the likes of Castlemilk, to run it.

Even Castlemilk is not safe from the claws of privateers, More and more 'impossible-to-let' houses are being done up for sale and, at this very moment, plans are being drawn up to sell large tracts of Cathkin Braes. It seems that the Braes of Cathkin are no more sacred than the blaes of the Glasgow Green, yet both are bequeathed to the people of Glasgow.

There has been too much common property sold off already with hardly a condition... the only clause being the Santa Clause of Glasgow District Council under pressure from the cynical Tory administration, which, with the business community, has gone a long way to destroying a great City.

But although the heart has been torn out of Glasgow its spirit has survived and will continue to fight for the imperatives of an ever-changing future. By then perhaps all the questions that are not being answered today will have had an honest reply and the finger will be pointed at all those who thought they could outwit the Glasgow people and rob them of their common rights.