

MQU [ Project Mimique ]  
LONDON PLAN WORKING GROUP  
SUBMISSIONS 2005–2006 + 2008 /  
PRECARIOUS EXISTENCE

The London Plan Working Group (LPWG) was set up under auspices of the London Social Forum in 2005. Three years later, it became incorporated into the third sector agency London Civic Forum, charged with co-opting the voluntary sector into city-regional governance. MQU (then working as Project Mimique) withdrew at this point, as we felt that the working group would lose its independence. LPWG activism continues under its new name, Just Space. The first two MQU submissions were written for MACE Housing Co-operative between the years 2005 and 2006, when the author was a tenant and part of the management committee. The second of these was authored with MACE chief executive, Rowland Ekperi, and led to his participation in the City Hall EIP debate that year. The third response – to policy 3B.12 on employment – was written by Project Mimique independently.

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With sincere thanks to **Steve Dowding** @dowdinsk and **Bhavesh Hindocha** @Loud\_Minority

At the beginning of 2008, MQU [Project Mimique] decided to withdraw from measures for public consultation in planning process. Our submission to the GLA on underemployment and forced labour in the capital in 2006 was ruled out of order on the grounds of 'total theory'. On the other hand, submissions made in 2005 with MACE Housing Co-operative, rigorously analytical but without mystification, received no feedback or recognition in subsequent documentation.

In the structural-functional model underpinning this strategic planning process, public participation is a displaced form of conflict, a technique to integrate subjects and groups predisposed to dissent. Political theorist Ralf Dahrendorf (1959: 207) comments that conflict can be conceived as a 'pattern' contributing to maintenance of the status quo, and quotes Lewis Coser (1956):

**Conflict may serve to remove dissociating elements in a relationship and re-establish unity. In so far as conflict is ... resolution of tension between antagonisms it has stabilising functions and becomes ... integrative component of the relationship ... [I]nterdependence of antagonistic groups and the crisscrossing within such societies of conflicts, which serve to 'sew the social system together' by cancelling each other out ... prevent disintegration.**

While integrating antagonism at the level of consultation, to the effect that nothing actually changes, discourse of the London plan itself transcends conflict, validating the 1961 dismissal by the Bureau of Unitary Urbanism: city planning must be understood as a publicity exercise – that is, a field of public relations – an invitation to participate in something that it is impossible, fundamentally, to influence. Respondents become trapped in a desperate need to be heard (without hope) in further rounds of consultation. Yet such power relations are mobile: what is perceived as a weaker party can turn tables on the strong. We regard the announcement of a debate by London Tenants Federation outside the London plan further alterations proceedings in 2008 as a step in the right direction.

Public participation in planning, it has to be stated, relies on a suspension of disbelief. It is an exercise in conformity. Those whose submissions are amenable to assimilation gain moderate ground, especially if their responses are in the affirmative. Those demanding a policy rethink are ignored. Elsewhere we have quoted Werner Bonefeld (1987: 118) on operations of the segmented-corporatist postfordist state: what we witness here is both a fragmentation and penetration of civil society, in a direct attempt to homogenise social interest.

But what of the subject drawn in to this futile engagement? Is the London plan a creation of its participants or vice versa? How implicated are those who engage in consultation, however antagonistic, in the construction of policies they oppose? Alex Callinicos (1976: 65–66), discussing the writings of anti-humanist philosopher Louis Althusser, points to a complicity of subject and object:

**The notion of a subject cannot be separated from that of its object, and from the relation held to subsist between them. In a sense, subject and object are made for each other ... Either the subject has imposed**

**... meaning on the world, that is, he has (in a sense) created his object, as for example, philosophers of the phenomenological school have argued. Alternatively, the subject is a creation of his object, in which case the object is thereby transformed into a subject.**

MQU notes the subjective status of the London plan as a determinant of both discourse and form in the majority of consultation responses.

Althusser turns the discussion into one of theology, a conversation between God ('I am that I am') and Moses: 'God is thus the Subject, and Moses and the innumerable subjects of God's people, the Subject's interlocutors-interpellates: his mirrors, his reflections. Were not men made in the image of God?' (1971: 53). Were not the majority of consultation responses made in the GLA's own image? Have we not in our discourses, if not in our politics (as in days of old), become specular mediations of the metropolitan state? Furthermore, the individual is 'interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, ... [that is] in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of subjection "all by himself"' (ibid: 56).

Nikolas Rose (1999: 41), after Michel Foucault, points to 'objectification of the human being in the discourses that would govern [them] ... and subjectification in diverse practices and techniques'. We would argue that planning consultation is one of these subjectifying practices and creates a subjectivity at war with, but amenable to, government. That is, a civil society held firmly at a distance. Power for Foucault (2000: 341) is 'a way of acting upon one or more acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action'. But the subject has no substance, it is produced "as an effect" through and within specific discursive formations, and has no existence, no transcendental continuity or identity, from one subject position to another' (Kellett).

MQU believes that we were not mistaken to participate. 'The analysis, elaboration and bringing into question of power relations and the "agonism" between power relations and the intransitivity of freedom is an increasingly political task – even, the political task ... inherent in all social existence' (Foucault 2000: 343).

Agonism is a process of 'mutual incitement and struggle, less of a face-to-face confrontation that paralyses both sides, than a permanent provocation' (ibid: 342). Yet, we were not mistaken to get out: a key problem for Foucault is 'to liberate us both from the state and the type of individualisation linked to the state', to explore new forms of subjectivity through a refusal of this 'individuality' (ibid: 336).

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## 1. SRDF 1A East London consortium, guidance

**We would welcome discussion of an east London-based consortium to tackle the long-term and immediate housing needs of single people of all ages.** The marginalised shortlife dweller of 2005 is the impoverished (and possibly homeless) pensioner of the future. MACE also notes the pressing need of many young people to leave the family home, and a prominent demand for immediate accommodation by those suffering from family and relationship break-up. We are able to provide this facility at the moment but in the longer term this could cease due to dwindling shortlife and other property supply.

MACE Housing Co-operative has the long-term aim of providing permanent housing for its members. The majority of our properties (housing a total of 218 people in over eight London boroughs in north and east London) are 'shortlife', that is, on finite lease from both private and social landowners. We are in danger of losing leases on much of our shortlife stock without replacement, an effect of the property boom and registered social landlord (RSL) demolition strategy. When we attempted newbuild permanent housing in March 2005 in Hackney (in partnership with Solon CHS, now Stadium), the local authority seized the space with demands for 100 percent nomination rights. **MACE requests special action from the Mayor of London to ensure that if a housing co-operative builds dwellings for its members' long-term benefit, that they retain the right to allocate new units to their existing tenants or from their own waiting lists, without intrusion from the local authority.**

In common with other shortlife managing agents with properties in the borough of Islington, we have had demands from the council for commercial rates on new shortlife leases, and market prices demanded for sale of older (existing lease) properties. **We would ask the Mayor of London to lobby councils for more favourable rates to housing co-operatives in both statutory lease negotiations and market sale.**

## 2. SRDF 5B Housing mix

There has been a pronounced demographic trend toward single living evident over the last 35 years. Single people are more likely to be isolated in crisis and least likely to be rehoused in temporary accommodation. Co-operatives such as MACE provide an interface for statutory support of vulnerable single individuals. MACE welcomes concern in the framework (SRDF 2005: 234) for those housed in relation to the London supporting people strategy, and for greater provision of student accommodation. However, many of London's poorer residents are not eligible for 'supporting people' status, being partially employed. The low waged account for 40 per cent of MACE tenants (as opposed to the 60 per cent on benefits in September 2005). It is not clear from the SRDF what percentage of social housing you propose for the single person, but we note that this will be much smaller than for the private sector as you express statistical preference for larger family homes in social housing quotas.

Single people are more likely to be in non-permanent housing (and therefore in danger of longer-term homelessness), and may also find themselves alone later in life, as the result of crisis or tragedy. Young people (under 20) are statistically most likely to become homeless, here often as a result of conflict with parents or domestic violence. In Hackney we note also that the property boom and institutional persecution of squatters is making this option ever more precarious. **MACE believes that there is a demonstrable and urgent demand in the capital for single person dwellings, both housing with open waiting lists and permanent accommodation.** Our own waiting list is

open (at time of writing) and we experience continuous vacancies, allowing flexibility. Several other co-operatives (including Brent Community Housing, Westminster Short Life, Georgiana Street and Phoenix Community Housing) were also open to those needing to be housed swiftly. **We urge the Mayor to accord higher priority in social housing ratios to London's single residents, and to provide for the diverse emergencies that bring people within the reach of housing institutions.** We draw your attention to some statistics below.

- The number of single person households has doubled in the last 30 years. Roof (September/October 2005), magazine of housing charity Shelter, stated that between 1971 and 2001 the number of single person households in the UK rose from three to six million. (The total number of households rose from 16 million to 20.5 million in the same period.) The magazine editorial put this increase down to a rising divorce rate and ageing population. We would also include a trend in the number of people choosing to live alone (an isolation enforced by benefit poverty).
- Single people are more likely to be isolated when coping with crisis. Research by charity Elizabeth Finn Care (Press Association 2005) stated that: 'An estimated 3.9 million single people of working age are living in poverty ... More than 300,000 such people, without dependent children, have fallen below the poverty line since 1996/97.' The figure is just under half (44.3 per cent) of a total 8.8 million adults calculated to be living below the poverty line by the charity. The paper quoted Jonathan Welfare, chief executive of Elizabeth Finn Care, who said that the growing number of single households in the UK meant the number of individuals at risk of falling into poverty is on the increase. 'They remain unseen because many come from backgrounds where we don't often expect poverty to exist and they don't come forward to ask for help', he said. The charity suggested that poverty was becoming more complex, with more single adults and single parents, more people living away from their families or losing contact with relatives. The charity concluded: 'The government's focus on child and pensioner poverty has made significant progress. We now need to give the same level of attention to the group that has not benefited, namely working-age adults without dependent children.'
- This rise has taken place in a climate of acute housing shortage and rising unemployment. Figures quoted in Roof (*ibid*) for the rise in homelessness are alarming: between 1979–1988 there was a rise from 55,000 across the UK to 113,000 (205 per cent). Roof says homelessness numbers rose again in the early 1990s, and again in 1997 due to shortages of rental accommodation.

Fitzpatrick et al (2000: 19, citing Andersen 1994) argue that: '[D]emand and supply within the [UK] housing market has restructured over the past couple of decades in ways that generally operate to ... disadvantage of single people on low incomes.' Structural pressures combine with individual crisis. The report highlights, in particular, council house sales, benefit restrictions by private landlords, expense of privately rented housing and an increase in housing association rent levels as capital subsidies have been reduced. They conclude that: 'In any case, housing associations have too few properties to compensate for ... loss of other rental stock' (*ibid*: 20).

We also note that allocation to housing association property seems to be via local authority waiting lists where the single person is at a distinct disadvantage. Those that experience unemployment or precarious working conditions are also likely to find these circumstances recurring throughout

their working lives. **A long-term housing solution for single people (such as transfer to RSL tenancies or co-operative newbuild developments) is vital to avoid emergencies at a later date.** MACE itself is contacted by around 60 'nonpriority' individuals every week.

- Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) (1998: 14) found that 23 per cent of all decisions concerning applications for housing assistance (under homelessness provisions, England only) were adjudicated to be 'homeless but not in priority need', that is, 56,700 cases during 1997–1998 across the country.

MACE did not experience any reduction in demand after the 1997 election. Fitzpatrick et al gave no indication of any statistical reduction in homelessness after this election, although New Labour initiatives may have increased supply of temporary accommodation and reduced (for a while) numbers of those sleeping rough (this from a conversation with one employee of the charity St. Mungo's in 2002).

### **Who are the nonpriority homeless?**

- The 1994–1995 Survey of English Housing (Fitzpatrick et al ibid: 12) found that homelessness was most prevalent among people aged between 16 and 19 (13.7 per cent said they had been homeless in the previous 10 years).
- Black people (of African or Caribbean descent) were found to have been disproportionately afflicted (13.4 per cent of those homeless in the previous 10 years, over three times the next figure down; when figures for those of Asian descent were added, this percentage rose to 19.6 per cent [Burrows 1997 cited ibid]). DETR found that minority ethnic groups were over-represented among bed-and-breakfast/hostel residents, especially women. However, single homeless people are statistically more likely to be male; the disparity disappears when single persons with children are counted in. Burrows found that Black 'heads' of household were three times more likely to have experienced homelessness than white.
- One study (Carlisle 1996) quoted by Fitzpatrick et al (ibid: 35) indicated that 40 per cent of prisoners expected to be homeless on release, with fewer than half of ex-offenders able to return to the address at which they lived before they entered custody. They also note high incidence of former armed forces personnel among the homeless (ibid: 28–29). In 1999, when the Fitzpatrick et al report was written, central government was considering measures to prevent homelessness among these latter categories, and prioritising financial and other support for care leavers as well as other young people forced to leave home (ibid: 29).
- Crisis at an individual level can include violence, relationship and family break-ups, debts and other financial crisis, mental health and drug use. Domestic violence is an important factor in making women homeless (Fitzpatrick et al ibid: 34); family conflict a leading factor in homelessness of young people. Care leavers, young people from step families, and those who have suffered violence (including sexual violence) are disproportionately represented.

MACE has been contacted by significant numbers of young people (particularly young women) from Asian families needing to leave home when parents attempted to impose traditional beliefs on more liberated offspring. **Family and relationship crises can occur at any point of life, and the report highlights vulnerabilities of the single elderly due to fractured relations with adult children; housing providers (including co-operatives) should be fully supported to help meet these diverse emergency needs.**

- MACE Housing Co-operative accepts tenants who have been through detoxification initiatives and offers support to tenants with a history of drug dependency. Flemen (1997) found that 35 per cent of street homeless young people in central London were heroin users, a level about 18 times higher than among the non-homeless (Fitzpatrick et al ibid: 32). Klee and Reid (1998 cited ibid) suggest that young homeless people use drugs, particularly opiates, as form of 'self-medication' to cope with stress of a roofless or marginal existence. Very serious mental-health problems, particularly depression, were identified among their sample in Manchester, and almost half had attempted suicide (ibid).

One co-operative (Westminster Short Life) takes people directly off the street. MACE tenants who have been street homeless are usually referred on from temporary accommodation. One Scottish Survey of Consumer Preference in Housing (1995, cited ibid: 12) found that 63 per cent of respondents who said they had been homeless in the last 10 years had been forced to find refuge with a friend or relative rather than statutory temporary accommodation. We have no figures for London.

As 'nonpriority' for local authorities, single people who have been street homeless are likely to be dumped in temporary

accommodation with little hope of statutory rehousing.

- Numbers of those in temporary accommodation nationally (quoted in Roof magazine, ibid) rose from 68,630 in 1991 (including private sector leasing and 'hidden homeless') to 118,350 in 2003 (a rise of 172.5 per cent in 12 years).
- Rough sleeping statistics are alarming. Fitzpatrick et al cite an estimate from 1996 of 106,900 single homeless people in London that year. There were around 17,000 bed spaces in London hostels before 2000, and occupancy rates were very high (a 93 per cent rate for London winter shelters, 1998–1999 [CRASH cited ibid: 17]). Fitzpatrick et al suggest that over 50 per cent of those accessing winter shelters in London each year were first-time occupants. They also point to a Homeless Network estimate of the prevalence of rough sleeping in central London: 2,381 persons during 1996–1997. Of these, around 1,800 people were newly homeless; this is equivalent to an average of five new rough sleepers every night.

### **Discrimination against those on low incomes**

At time of writing, 60 per cent of MACE tenants claimed statutory benefits. MACE prioritised housing the unwaged and those on low incomes, the single homeless, and occasionally families as well as 'key workers'. MACE, and other short life co-operatives in London, are a lifeline for those excluded from private renting by need to claim social security benefits, and from local authority allocation priorities and lack of suitable council stock.

Roof magazine (ibid) noted further landlord refusal of tenants claiming benefits with introduction of the flat-rate Local Housing Allowance (LHA). This was imposed on private tenants as pilot in nine local authority areas. Roof magazine quoted one 'pathfinder' area, Conwy, where the average proportion of properties affordable at LHA rates was below 10 per cent. With market rents in London keeping pace with a boom in property prices, and commercial-rate lease fees demanded for shortlife dwellings, MACE expects a greater longterm demand for diminishing, and more expensive, housing stock, effecting further marginalisation of the more vulnerable. We are deeply worried about the restrictive effects of the LHA on the longterm ability of our members to be able to afford their rent. **MACE urges the Mayor of London to lobby the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for complete cancellation of the Local Housing Allowance.**

Labour market trends indicate a greater proportion of temporary jobs, freelance and other flexible employment contracts often for hours less than full time. Flexible working (or precarious labour) afflicts particularly women, those in their 20s and 30s, and those working in such sectors as creative and media, business services and leisure, retail and entertainment, all slated for growth in the London economy. **MACE reminds the Mayor of the 'southafricanisation' (Hirsch) of London's socioeconomy, and growth of 'flexible welfare' of the New Deal programme, where the longterm unemployed are cast out into training for low-grade jobs and temporary office placement, effecting slippage in Housing Benefit as they are required to reapply. Many other workers will not be eligible for top-up payments.** MACE envisages greater demand for its space from people not considered vulnerable by government but nevertheless living in a near permanent state of emergency.

As unemployment was for monetarism, 'flexible working' is for New Labour: a brutal marginalisation (underemployment) instrumentalised to effect value discipline. Those forced through New Deal 'training', as well as the low waged and underemployed, need a flexible and cheap housing provider with tolerance of institutional delays in benefit process and freelance cash flow. The catchment for co-operative housing in London's polarising economy is vast. **Policy and action from London government to reduce lease fees from all landlords, for rights of selfdetermination in co-operative development, construction of social housing to meet diverse needs of the single person (including emergency accommodation), and cancellation of the Local Housing Allowance, are imperative.**

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This document was final submission by MACE Housing Co-operative to the Greater London Authority (GLA) discussion of housing targets in the London plan. Rowland Ekperi, MACE's chief executive, took part in the debate at City Hall, and contributed most of the constructive suggestions in the conclusion. Below we detail the considerable problems that shortlife providers face when negotiating with private landlords and RSLs, and prejudicial conditions under which co-operatives are forced to operate. At time of writing, GLA, Empty Homes Agency and central government were working to marketise the empty property sector, and we feared that our already escalating rents would rise still further.

Our engagement with the draft alterations to the London plan (housing provision targets) has been motivated by the need for housing co-operatives to build permanent housing for the single homeless and tenants of their shortlife properties; and also a determination to sustain access to shortlife stock in the face of competition from registered social landlords (RSLs) and private sector, and sale of formerly publicly owned properties at boom-inflated prices. In particular, we point to barriers thrown up by marketisation of social and intermediate housing subsectors, and prejudicial Housing Corporation classifications which deny many smaller co-operatives access to finance that is available to their competitors in empty property and social/intermediate housing markets.

MACE Housing Co-operative was founded in 1974 and became 'fully mutual' in 1986. It is registered as a Friendly Society under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965. At time of writing, MACE managed 102 properties and housed 218 people in eight London boroughs. The co-operative is run on principles of selfdetermination (that is, non-intrusion) and selfmanagement. It employs eight members of staff aided by a management committee and discussion forums drawn from its membership.

Co-operative housing needs more than affirmative policy statements in the London plan to maximise its potential. In policy and provision of social housing, the single homeless are routinely marginalised as low priority despite demographic trends, while single persons are categorised as 'high risk' by finance institutions. 'Affordable' housing association rents and options for shared ownership are too costly for those on low or precarious incomes. There is no 'trickle down'.

Around 60 single 'nonpriority' individuals contact MACE to access accommodation every week. The Empty Homes Agency states that there are 99,781 empty dwellings in the city, 43,000 of these in private hands (Mayor of London 2004b). It is clear that, outside of the restrictive terms of the London plan's housing targets, there is extensive capacity to meet needs of single homeless and other marginalised persons.

#### **Matter 1. Derivation of targets for additional homes**

**Is there sufficient clarity and robustness in respect of ... derivation of ... housing provision targets in [p]olicy 3A1 and [t]able 3A1? (A) How much reliance can be placed on figures deriving from ... [the] Housing Capacity Study? [In setting targets to 2017] the mayor has taken account of the relationship between London and [rest of the south east (ROSE)], and the Barker report on housing supply.**

On March 15, 2006, the Guardian published projections from Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) of a significant rise in single households by 2026 (Seager 2006).

While DCLG expected the total number of households to rise by almost a quarter over this timeframe (from 20.9 million nationally in 2006 to 25.7 million), a rise in single households was expected to be main driver in this expansion, accounting for 72 per cent of annual housing growth. Out of an anticipated expansion of 209,000 households per year, 150,000 will comprise single persons. DCLG (echoing Shelter) puts this acceleration down to a rise in divorce and older persons living alone after bereavement. The Guardian article notes that the vast majority (up to two thirds) of new single person households will be among the over-35s. Sixty percent of the expected rise is predicted to occur in London, the south east, south west and east of England.

These figures were not available when aggregates in the London plan, draft alterations or the associated documents (*London Housing Capacity Study* [2004] and *Housing, London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance* [2005]) were being calculated. MACE feels that there is a need for reconsideration of household ratios and priorities in the London plan and in any future documents on housing capacity and demand.

At a rough estimate, out of every 100 dwellings built, by DCLG figures, 36 should be affordable one bedroom units; by London Development Agency (LDA) ratios itemised in section 11.2 of *Supplementary Planning Guidance*, only 16.5 affordable dwellings out of 100 would have one bedroom, 45 per cent of that suggested by DCLG projections. Again, looking at those built for market sale, by DCLG figures, out of every 100, 36 should be one bedroom units, whereas LDA targets stipulate only 12.5 (just over one third [34.7 per cent] of that implied by central government). Total shortfall of one bedroom units within LDA housing requirements amounts to 43 per cent, a deficit of 6,046 units per annum of affordable housing, and of 7,306 units per annum of single person units for market sale.

There is something inherently dangerous in the derivation of targets from capacity rather than demand. In any other circumstances, this would produce a formality of performance-target achievement. A further problem is that assessment of local housing need is referred by local authority planning departments to their colleagues in housing who reflex to central government floor targets biased towards family and key worker provision. RSLs also marginalise co-operatives and the single person in their drive to meet targets for family and key worker housing.

As derivation of targets relies on suppression of demand, it is perhaps worth considering where tensions lie in single person provision. DCLG news release 2006/0044, March 14 2006, refers solely to home ownership when considering necessary expansion to meet the rise in single households. We draw your attention to our initial EIP submission that explores in some depth the structural pressures combining with individual crisis that indicate a vast need for (easily accessible) social and intermediate-rented tenures. Such turbulence impacts heavily on persons in the equality categories orienting the London plan and its supplementary documents.

In particular, labour market polarisation around contract (in)security (that is, aspects of deregulation) – described as a 'southafricanisation' of society by Joachim Hirsch (1981) – indicates a marked trend towards underemployment and casual or freelance working. Flexibilisation (or 'precarious labour') afflicts particularly women, those in their 20s and 30s, and those working in sectors such as creative and media, business services and leisure, retail and entertainment, all slated for growth in London. This volatility will intensify as 'flexisecurity' policies are unfurled across the European Union (Gray 2004).

Floor targets for the housing of key workers and larger families may also work to marginalise provision of single person

dwellings for the low-income tenant, as councils commandeer nomination rights to renovated and new build space to meet priority quotas. Co-operatives now also face the negotiation of commercial lease fees with all sections of the housing industry as private landlords and RSL business plans demand immediate and profitable incomes.

Off-loading of fiscal crisis onto the tenant manifests in high rents, bad housing, waiting list discrimination, exclusion from emergency provision along with street homelessness, prospects reaching right through to old age. Newbuild developments discriminate against the poorer applicant, for example when intermediate rather than social housing rents are offered, when only key workers may be housed, or with official promotion of part-mortgaged tenures. The market paradigm restructuring affordable housing provision operates as differential mechanism with pronounced centrifugal effect on the single and those on low incomes. We have to ask: where will the single elderly live in 2025 – those with a lifetime of precarious or underemployment, no secondary or private pension and without property capital?

**Draft Housing Alterations 3.12 These targets are for net additional homes, including additional dwellings provided through development and redevelopment, and conversions from residential and nonresidential properties, together with long term vacant properties brought back into use and household spaces in new non selfcontained accommodation [...]**

The Mayor of London's report *Empty Homes in London* (*ibid*) states that as of April 2003 there were 99,781 empty residential properties in London, with an estimated 43,000 in private hands. This represents a tremendous potential resource for shortlife co-operatives to sustain and expand their stock, particularly at a time when housing associations are recalling property for sale (this a response to the imperative of meeting decent homes standards in other properties by 2010). However, despite concerted efforts of the Empty Property Agency, significant grant aid for private sector renewal schemes by the London Housing Board, and central government intentions to amend the legislative framework, few of these empty dwellings are finding their way to shortlife co-operatives.

Alex Savine, group leader (policy and research) for Newham Council, reports that 'in the past, the [council] has sought to work with shortlife housing co-operatives. Recently, however, owners' anticipated rental income has undermined viability of shortlife housing arrangements' (personal communication, June 2 2006). Savine's comment provides an instance of a more general trend raising MACE rents across the board – a demand by landowners (including RSL and local authorities) to provide an immediate and profitable income from leased property through negotiation of commercial lease fees that capitalise on investment of funds by the co-operative. Private lease fees have risen by as much as 400 per cent since 1992 (compared to four to five per cent on local authority shortlife agreements). The authors feel that local authority support of landowner prerogative is based on misinterpretation of the UK Human Rights Act. We call for legislative controls to limit the amount a landlord can charge for empty property.

Supply chains implied by Jonathan Ellis, chief executive of the Empty Property Agency, escalate further this central block to the housing of those on low incomes. Yet he writes in support of RSLs managing empty homes schemes for local authorities and promotes private sector interest in refurbishing empty dwellings for rent. One might note also that subsidy and preferential loan arrangements are reserved for RSLs and the private sector, monies to which co-operatives generally have no access (see below).

The authors feel that mayoral actions effect the marginalisation of housing co-operatives from access to vacant stock. We request that London's co-operatives are invited to the annual Empty Homes event, and to any discussion on barriers to co-operative housing with the Empty Homes Agency. It would be a savage irony if shortlife housing co-operatives, long the primary users of empty space, are forced out of action by local authority and GLA empty property work which, notably, seeks to replicate their operations.

**(B) How sound are ... judgments that have led to targets higher or lower than ... capacity identified in the Housing Capacity Study?**

The authors feel that capacity for single person dwellings – especially with shortlife and private sector lease arrangements – is far greater than the London plan targets allow for, although we acknowledge that many empty dwellings, particularly those held by the private sector, will be more suitable for shared housing and family accommodation on account of the size and original layout of properties. The boundary between family accommodation and shared non-selfcontained dwellings has been left open, and we are concerned that the single person will be forgotten in the process of local authorities scrambling to meet targets for family and key worker housing.

Landlord prerogative (maximisation of commercial income) will inflict financial barriers for lower income households and deny them access to these (albeit temporary) dwellings. The authors suggest that the Empty Property Agency and Mayor of London need to bear this in mind when lobbying the DCLG and Housing Corporation. Without a counter to income maximisation, this significant 'addition' to residential stock will, as usual in housing policy, benefit the more wealthy.

A 'familist' discourse (the propagation of politically pro-family ideas and notional strengthening of families themselves [Barrett and McIntosh 1982: 26]) obscures the differing needs of diverse family households, including disparities of wealth, and extended relations of some minority ethnic households, as well as working to exclude the single person from housing policy consideration. Popular rhetoric around housing targets and urban form suffer from an acute 'familialisation' (*ibid*), that is, a recourse to ideologies modelled on values perceived to be those of the family.

MACE itself notes a bias in housing association thinking toward servicing needs of families housed within their stock, not realising that (for instance) crisis within the family often rests on lack of housing provision for adult children or elderly relatives, something particularly prominent in Asian and African households (but with wider import), and something that co-operatives are well placed to help sort out.

**Matter 3. Impact of proposed targets for housing provision on other policy areas.**

**In the identification of housing targets has sufficient attention been given to ... impact on other housing policies and on ... availability of land for other uses? (A) How should the draft alterations have regard to ... implications of revised housing targets for ... provision of affordable housing and for ... delivery of an appropriate mix of housing types and sizes?**

The London plan provides a highly sympathetic environment for housing co-operatives, but there is a radical disjuncture between statement of objectives in the plan and conditions that London's housing co-operatives face in accessing finance and stock, despite fulfilling sustainability criteria and several of the Mayoral objectives set out at the start of the document. Two other publications elide institutional barriers inhibiting nonprofit (but non-RSL) co-operative participation. One such document, *Community Land Trusts and Mutual Housing Models* (Mayor of London 2004a), laced with communitarian justifications and an emphasis on mutual ownership and equity stakes, makes no attempt to engage in dialogue with London's shortlife or even permanent co-operatives. The report *Empty Homes in London* (*ibid*) is addressed in some detail under Matter 1. However, this document too provides little hope for non-RSL providers.

The Mayor and staff at the London Development Agency (LDA) should pay due regard to funding of new build and empty property refurbishment. Many housing co-operatives, especially in east London, are not registered with the Housing Corporation and thus unable to access finance on the capital market without an RSL partner, and are neither eligible for RSL-earmarked grants, significant central government subsidy available to RSLs, nor preferential loan arrangements. This is a major factor preventing co-operatives from embarking on new build permanent accommodation or empty property renovation.

MACE feels that there is institutional discrimination against co-operatives within the Housing Corporation, and against the single person with no capital in the social and intermediate housing sectors. Social housing providers appear to regard the single homeless as morally reprehensible (perhaps a reflection of housing priority categories which cater for those using drugs or suffering problems related to alcohol). There appears also to be an assumption within the Housing Corporation that co-operatives are not well managed. Institutions right through to local authorities lack a knowledge of how co-operatives work and the calibre of individuals (especially housing management staff) that they can draw on. Tenant-only management committees are regarded as anomaly and, paradoxically, as lacking transparency.

With regard to single homeless persons, Leah Watkins' report *Sitting Up? A Survey of London Hostels about Move-on Accommodation and Support* (2003), indicates significant shortage of independent permanent accommodation (that is, with no or low support) to relocate those in hostels or other temporary housing. The 136 projects contacted during the survey (with a total of 6,382 bed spaces) reported a deficit of 1,930 move-on bed spaces. The report calculates that 30 per cent of people in temporary accommodation were simply waiting for a transfer to become available. Eighty-four per cent of the shortage was for permanent accommodation, 75.3 per cent were persons waiting for permanent accommodation with low or no support.

Boroughs have different resources to draw on and varying procedures of dealing with the single homeless. Testimony of at least one MACE tenant, however, has revealed that nonpriority persons in London Borough of Camden temporary accommodation may face the continual prospect of an imminent return

to street homelessness when in contact with local rota of night shelters and when staying in temporary hostels. In the latter, the homeless person faced a bailiff eviction after a one-month stay (deemed after this month to be 'ordinarily homeless' and therefore no longer council responsibility) if he was unable himself to access suitable move-on provision; and this after a lengthy period of rough sleeping and night shelter habitation. Experience in Hackney notes a refusal of emergency housing to non-UK nationals and the institutionalisation of rough sleeping into emergency housing procedures (at the time, an individual had to be sighted three times on the street to gain access to a shelter, this criteria was being applied even to young women). Other shelters across London charge the homeless exorbitant rates.

The Watkins report notes that refugees are deemed to be hardest to house from temporary accommodation; most move-on provision is earmarked for persons specifically with drug or alcohol-related needs.

Such a deficit is compounded by local authority lettings policies. These include ringfencing of one bedroom flats for couples (single persons reduced to studio accommodation, very restricted) and the exclusionary grading of priority, which works to marginalise single persons, including those with 'psychiatric' conditions (in Hackney, such applicants in the 'reserve' category are told that they will never be housed).

#### **(B) Has sufficient regard been paid to ... impact of ... housing targets on urban character?**

The principle of selfdetermination in co-operative housing, and space requirements of the single person, fit well into the high-density compact city model proposed in the London plan.

#### **(C) To what extent could delivery of ... housing targets impact on ... resolution of ... competing demands for land, including employment uses and waste facilities?**

MACE cautions against institutionalisation of supply chains via RSLs or private companies. In a climate of increasing competition and higher value accorded to empty space, housing co-operatives are already forced to operate at a disadvantage in competition for land and dwellings with RSLs and the private sector, or suffer escalating costs of supply chain management and commercial leasing. Supply chains would push rent levels up beyond local authority thresholds of Housing Benefit payment and push accommodation further out of reach of those on low incomes.

Allocation of land is via the market mechanism. What is needed are local land and property banks valued outside of the market paradigm for social and intermediate housing providers to draw on. However, quite the opposite appears to be happening on the ground. The GLA did commission a report on community land trusts and mutual housing models (*ibid*). However, the authors seem more interested in 'mutual home ownership', that is, part-mortgaged tenures in a co-operative management context, with gifted or discounted land held outside of private ownership. This report appears largely ideological. The authors have no interest in co-operatives that do not conform to the (more executive status) US model, and fail to engage in dialogue with London housing co-operatives on contemporary or projected circumstance, as one might expect in a strategic document.

The market determines who builds, but even here any playing field has been skewed against co-operative developments as both RSLs and the private sector were (at time of writing) eligible for London Housing Board grants to refurbish empty property, and RSLs received majority subsidy (85–95 per cent) from central government funds and preferential finance terms on the capital market. Both the London plan and economic development strategy provide a sympathetic regulatory context for co-operatives, but assert: 'Approaches which work with the grain of the market are most likely to be successful.' Put bluntly, this will force out many housing co-operatives as well as the single person.

Regarding the release of employment land for residential use, the authors feel that scale of vacant dwellings reported in *Empty Homes in London* proves that there is little need to encroach on marginal space set aside for small and micro firms, or for nonresidential space in shopping centres.

#### **(D) Do the draft alterations raise issues that need to be considered in the full review of the London [p]lan? [for example, transport, social infrastructure and affordable housing]**

Rather than iterate an assumed consensus, perhaps the London plan should address barriers that prohibit housing supply meeting the needs of those on precarious/low incomes and benefits, along with procedural closures of local authority rough-sleeping services. We call for political action to circumvent the market paradigm which raises prices beyond the

threshold that housing co-operatives can reasonably charge for rent (and low-income tenants pay), and the regulatory enclosures that marginalise housing co-operatives from development finance.

- We urge the Mayor to accord a higher priority in social housing ratios to London's single residents, and to provide for the diverse emergencies that bring people within the reach of social housing and crisis institutions.
- Possible measures to aid co-operatives utilise the vast stock of vacant dwellings include (i) ringfencing quotas of empty property for the nonprofit sector, (ii) legislative controls to curb lease-fee maximisation by owners of empty property (to take the profit motive out of negotiations), and (iii) equalisation of financial arrangements for renovation as well as loans to buy land and finance construction.
- We would ask the Mayor of London to lobby councils and housing associations for more favourable rates to housing co-operatives in both statutory lease negotiations and market sale, and for inclusion of co-operatives in housing association development plans and local authority empty property work. We would also request invitation of housing co-operatives to the GLA's empty property events.
- We request that the Mayor lobby the Housing Corporation to register housing co-operatives as social landlords, and to lobby local authorities to support such applications. RSL status will enable us to level the playing field in access to development finance and government subsidy for permanent housing for the single homeless.
- We would also request that the Mayor lobby the Treasury to guarantee any loan provided by financiers to housing co-operatives for development of permanent homes for the single person (a principle defined during the Thatcher administration to aid small businesses with no collateral). We would also welcome support in approaching pension funds and ethical fund managers for investment in social housing, and for Treasury mandate of a quota percentage of pension fund investment for co-operative social housing, including that for the single person. Properties would become collateral for pension funds, subleased to co-operatives who would manage them.
- We request investigation of the viability of local land and property banks (or a Londonwide variant) for nonprofit housing providers, outside of the market paradigm.
- Local authority deposit guarantee schemes should be available on a wider basis to aid anyone on the edge of crisis and to rescue those institutionalised as homeless (or 'receiving housing advice', an institutional euphemism for the new rough sleeper) by local authority procedures designed to discharge responsibility for the single homeless rather than house them.

#### **Postscript**

One obvious omission here: the importance of a Londonwide housing waiting list accessible to all who arrive or live in the city needing subsidised housing. Historically, the GLC (abolished in 1985) did maintain such a list, but restitution of metropolitan government has not seen similar foresight. A Londonwide list is vital for anyone unable to concentrate their rental existence in one local authority area for any length of time. For a single person, it can take around 15 years on one local authority list to be granted a social housing tenancy.

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Frustration with London Development Agency (LDA) refusal to consider needs of low-income Londoners produced this polemical response to the mainstream consensus in urban planning. Our submission hones in on labour markets servicing the knowledge and creative industries (regarded as key to London's postindustrial economy) and draws heavily on our work for coresearch group Games Monitor. We are indebted to economic development policy critics Aram Eisenschitz and Jamie Gough, and Italian philosophers of the *postoperaismo* (also known as compositionists). MQU charges the LDA with multiple neglect of forced labour in the capital as well as underemployment, vicious hierarchies and regulated access to training within the knowledge and creative industries. In their review of submissions to GLA proposals, planning inspectors dismissed the text below as 'total theory'. This, we feel, is unfair.

#### 1. Postindustrial labour markets and forced labour

In its conception of the London economy, Chapter 3B exhibits a bias towards immaterial production, that is, towards labour involving information, knowledge and co-operation (production of value subjectivities). Compositionist philosophers note a turn toward decision-making and creativity within the most mundane of tasks, but despite this, the concept of immaterial labour is highly stratified. Growth of employment demanding creative-symbolic manipulation implies a corresponding growth of low-value and low-skill jobs requiring routine keyboarding or skilled occupations devalued by educational hierarchy within the creative and knowledge industries themselves. This tendency towards inequality is masked in your eulogisation. Meanwhile, characteristics of a post-industrial economy (primacy, autonomy and production of the image as social relation as well as commodity [Debord], depersonalised time the real agent of valorisation [Berardi]),<sup>1</sup> are heightened within immaterial production – principles demonstrated without irony in your chapter which manages to be both spectacular as well as bland.

Restatement of economic development consensus (here, promotion of employer-led skills training) one might charge as ideological, and redolent of the biopolitical. Martin Jones and Kevin Ward (cited by Games Monitor 2015) suggest that training interventions can be regarded as response to a 'devolved rationality crisis', and within a discourse of competitive advantage under globalisation, displaced from the political sphere onto vulnerable groups such as the unemployed, who are then stigmatised for the state's own economic failings. Qualifications reproduce class privilege and the state regulative framework – from tax and accounting principles to institutionalisation of consent in a labour process context. In Hackney,

HTEN reports that software competency certificates issued by New Deal training contractors, as well as government-promoted NVQs, are regarded by employers as 'largely useless' (Hutton et al 2003). Definitions of 'skill', intrinsic to job classification, are nuanced by distributions of power in the labour market and sphere of social reproduction (most noticeably around questions of gender and race, but also international divisions of labour).

Could one counter that the plan exhibits an administrative dependency (Offe 1985) – the need for others to co-operate, for legitimacy – as more innovative recommendations remain marginal. MQU is thinking here of job rotation to enable both unemployed and workers gain employment experience (initiatives popular in Denmark and France), extended (and subsidised) study leave (Gray 2004), free access to knowledge (Capocci et al 2004) or the Guaranteed Minimum Income (demanded by redistributonists as well as revolutionaries). One has to admit that radical options are thin on the ground and a tad cliché. But in the production of co-operation, marketing is the only paradigm that seems to count.

'Working in the age of flexibility is no longer associated with contract stability and long term linearity of working life, but rather a motley set of temporary and discontinuous experiences. In this way, the paradigm of capitalist subordination is transformed into ... capability of capital to exert control over ... flows of mobility between jobs' (Capocci et al ibid). Training geared to employer demand is one aspect of this tendency, but so also are low wages, agency hiring, night working and under-employment, coercive aspects to the postmodern metropolitan labour market. Skills Intelligence Network (SKIN) found in a 2004 survey that almost 60 per cent of respondents attempting to work in key creative industry clusters made less than 25 per cent of their income from their specialism and 40 per cent made no income at all; also that less than 25 per cent of creative industry firms made over 75 per cent of income from their specialism (Bewley 2004: 23), an alarming revelation.

Conditions for forced labour, another issue ignored by the further alterations, are created by employer demand for ultra-flexible labour (Brendan Barber, General Secretary TUC). The Andersen and Rogaly report, *Forced Labour and Migration to the UK* (undated), identifies three 'urban' sectors in which forced labour of migrants is prominent (construction, contract cleaning and residential care), and the report threw up worrying examples from the NHS and sex industries.

Economic development strategy needs to address the trend toward discontinuity, or precarity (especially the situation of migrant and agency workers but also those working in the creative, media/publishing and knowledge industries), and work to address the plight of forced labourers in the capital. The London plan should reflect these concerns also.

1. Beradi's point is that the essential aspect of technical transformation introduced by digitalisation of the production cycle 'is not the becoming precarious of the labour relation (which after all, has always been precarious) but ... dissolution of the person as active productive agent, as labour power. We have to look at the cyberspace of global production', he says, 'as an immense expanse of depersonalised human time' (Beradi undated-a).

- At the very least, LDA should compile a sound evidence base on both these key issues, and prioritise them strategically, to enable local authority working and enhance trade union and other organisation.
  - Research should be undertaken on low-wage and insecure employment within the knowledge economy and support funding of initiatives set up to tackle underemployment, closed-shop hiring and sweatshop labour here as well as within the creative, media and publishing sector.
- With specific regard to the situation of migrant workers, our points below are adapted from the report by Andersen and Rogaly (*ibid*).
- The Mayor of London should campaign for ratification of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention 143 (1975) as well as United Nations Convention on Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families (1990). This will provide a viable framework to protect migrant workers, regardless of status.
  - The Mayor should also lobby the Home Office for withdrawal of regulations tying the work permit to one specific employer (enabling the worker to leave employment in a coercive context), and for separation of border control fixations from protection of rights and liberties. Right of residence should not be dependent on possession of a work permit. Full protection (including against deportation) should be accorded to all persons pursuing claims against abusive employers.
  - GLA should fund CABx and other advice organisations to enable migrant workers pursue both civil and criminal justice claims. At the time the TUC report was written, most agencies approached were unable to take cases further.
  - GLA should also fund provision for emergencies (housing and sustenance), interpretation services and a confidential helpline (ensuring that migrants have access to assistance and complaint mechanisms). It should also facilitate (if not already doing so) collaborative working of different agencies to combat forced labour and trafficking.
  - GLA should set up a taskforce to look into practices of employment agencies in the capital. It should work closely with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and minimum wage inspectors to identify forced labour practices.
  - GLA should mandate training of police officers in recognition of forced labour situations (including joint working with trade unions), navigation of subcontracting networks, and in prosecution of forced labour crimes.

## 2. London 2012 Olympics

Starkly, the Olympics are interpellation of postfascist regularity, the disciplinary subject imposed through state violence, corporate sponsorship and gender ‘enhancement’; and remediated (and expanded) by Blairite experiments in labour market and social regulation, acutely spatial phenomena. The critique below is taken from Games Monitor 2006/2015.

Economic development is predicated routinely on transience of opportunity, and marginal increments in economic benefit. Yet even this limited horizon is overshadowed by scale of job displacement, ‘flexisecurity’ and hazard of projected growth sectors of Olympic development and Legacy phases.

### *Development phase*

Divisions of labour within construction are highly pronounced, and disparities reflect the racism of corporate wage and status setting, a recomposing secondary market, and the institutionalisation of peripheral economic relations forged through Empire and regulatory arrangements of EU accession (and then remediated through national strategies of exposure, socialisation and containment). Trainees local to the Olympic boroughs and migrant workers face the prospect of being labelled ‘contingent’ in an already flexibilised sector (construction training to target the more marginalised unemployed, particularly migrant workers, women and youth). Contingent workers are prey to greater substitution pressures by employers and are more vulnerable to exploitation. It is not clear from planning literature whether recruitment for training schemes will be via the coercive New Deal programme or organised on an open principle.

The construction industry is pregnant with hazard, and offers a brutalised context for local, national and international construction labour. UCATT Building Worker (Spring edition 2005) reports over 300 onsite deaths since 2001; that 90,000 workers suffered musculoskeletal injuries during 2000–2001 (double the all-industry average); and that over 1,500 workers had been fired in the previous five years for raising safety concerns, a statistic exacerbated by subcontracting endemic to the sector. The HSE acknowledges that only five per cent of work-related injuries experienced by self-employed people are reported to them, due in part to the fact that the self-employed cannot claim compensation. Of the 166,181 firms registered by DTI in construction industries, just under 50 per cent had only one employee). Subcontracting is also responsible for levels of forced labour in construction reported by the TUC (Andersen and Rogaly *ibid*).

- MQU feels that access to training for migrant workers and other persons marginalised by construction labour markets is an important principle, and must be reaffirmed in the London plan with (identified) support mechanisms.
- LDA might also: facilitate housing of workers employed on Olympic developments; work with trade unions to advise them on safety, contract and rights issues; and provide a reporting point for employer and contract management infringements, and safety concerns.

### *Legacy phase*

Perhaps because of a flagship postfordist policy framework maximising informational technologies and small firm support, Legacy expectations point strongly towards low wages (national minimum rates for younger workers in key growth sector leisure, retail and entertainment) and highly casualised and insecure employment in the longer term. ‘Flexiployment’ (Gray 2004), where labour market flexibilisation is accompanied by a major increase of job insecurity and underemployment, and promoted actively by benefit and labour market regimes, appears to be defined implicitly as Legacy principle.

LDA strategy would seem to fall into what economic geographer Jamie Peck (1996) characterises as the ‘low road from Fordism’: based on a principle of ‘defensive flexibility’, that is, ‘deregulation, individualised employment relations, job insecurity and sharpened competition’. To which one might also add ‘enforced mobility’.

- LDA should abandon its support within the Olympic project for firms offering low-wage, precarious employment and alongside trade unions (including the IWW) seek to foster worker solidarity and articulation of demands within the low-wage London economy, putting funds and resources at disposal of militant organisers.
- LDA should work to enhance rights of precarious workers (including benefit regimes, national minimum wage levels and a temporal autonomy not predicated on ‘voluntary’ exhaustion) at the national level and within the European Union.
- The Mayor of London should insist that the Olympic Delivery Authority reinstate their commitment to decent wages and conditions for all Olympic and Legacy workers, regardless of status.

### *Peripheral*

The economic development strategy also offered a structural-functional package of ‘lifelong learning’, social- and micro-enterprise support, backed up by facilities for childcare. Mitigation of totalitarian proposals for 70,000 volunteers for Olympic Games staffing is promoted via training referral (after the event) and a partial choice in volunteer activity. Economic development strategy seeks here to offset crisis engendered by flexible contracting and volatility of technologised innovation (promoted by other aspects of the stated proposals). Far from catalysing an improvement in prospects, the Olympics appears co-opted into the New Deal paradigm: a marginalist experiment in social, labour market, and welfare state regulation.

Such strategies are central to an (increasingly coercive) mode of regulation underpinning postfordist social democracy. Labour market interventions, ‘foyer’ institutions (where young people receive mandatory training in return for accommodation away from the family home), capital subsidies to small firms, and promotion of selfemployment to the longterm unemployed, define a marginalist current reflexive to the production and reproduction of variable capital (that is, the disciplined worker [Molossi]) in the context of a wider regulatory compliance.

There is a sense of economic development activity as an elite project, of socialised conceptions of disparity and uneven development informing local acceptance of the Olympics themselves and promoted training, small-firm promotion and infrastructural proposals. One can see this in LDA assertions that sports facilities built for the Olympics will catalyse development and attract business location after the Games. This is in many ways similar to the Gramscian notion of passive revolution (Moore 2005), but in east London (outside of libertarian circles) there is no failure of the neoliberal hegemonic project, and no revolutionary counter to seduce workers from.

By an absence of geographical barriers to flows of money capital, contracting, labour and firm migration, neoliberalism imposes the discipline of value with full force. Class relations may be reproduced through varied combinations of coercion and incorporation: the state is infused by this tension. One sees clearly the state here as imitation, neither serving the needs of capital nor acting as guarantor of social reproduction, but rather acting out the social relations of capitalist property, accumulation and exploitation (Gough and Eisenschitz 1998). The LDA posits a consensus in the interests of locality – calling forced removal of existing firms ‘regeneration’, throwing a false legitimacy over capital via the Olympic proposals and local labour agreements, and opening a path via training, contract compliance and capital subsidy, for an intensification of the rule of value, a discipline on individuals and firms. As Gough (1996) notes: when labour is more geographically mobile it becomes increasingly abstract and replaceable.

MQU refuses the ‘urban bloc’ implied by your deployment of mainstream consensus policies. We call for strategic alignment of economic development professionals and planners at the GLA/LDA with the marginalised of the capital. However, we eschew a shallow ‘insurgency’, and iterate our pessimism in the current conjuncture.

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