

One of the greatest problems we face as a nation is that of urban decay - whether in the derelict wastelands of the inner city or on the bleak streets of outlying estates.

Q

WHOLESALE

This is a grim legacy of the ~~post-war fashion for town~~ <sup>conceived out with the best of intentions but failed</sup> planning - the equivalent, though we did not always realise ~~it~~, of the socialist economic planning which was destroying our economy before 1979. And just as surely it destroyed our own cities.

Too often

Mr. President, <sup>we</sup> cut the heart out of our cities ~~to make the~~ way for ~~concrete barbarism~~. We swept aside the familiar ~~unplanned~~ city centres that had grown up over centuries and replaced them with a <sup>wedge</sup> ~~plug~~ of tower blocks <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ linking expressways, <sup>T&R</sup> ~~indis~~persed with token patches of grass and a few <sup>widely</sup> ~~bleak~~ piazzas, ~~depressing islands of vacuity where muggers~~ <sup>shove</sup> ~~rush in and pedestrians fear to tread.~~

<sup>They didn't think - are a hedge the selling of people</sup>  
It did not matter if we smashed the moulds in which local folk <sup>lived - their friends their neighbours</sup> ~~ways had been set for generations.~~

*words*  
*They didn't think we*

It did not matter if we uprooted whole communities from the  
~~neighbourliness of their traditional environment.~~

*They didn't care can* *shit*

~~It did not matter if children could no longer play safely in the~~

local street under the watchful gaze of next-door neighbours,

*They didn't consider any of these things - nor did they*

~~None of these things mattered - just so long as the local~~

~~authority planning department could point to some pathetic~~

~~piece of grass amid the encircling concrete and say: "Behold~~

~~a lawn. We have given the poor a garden city."~~

What folly, what incredible folly.

*people who didn't fit in with us then*

And what did ~~we~~ do with the surplus inhabitants of this urban

*They*  
~~utopia? We decanted them, Mr. President, into the~~

~~non-neighbourhoods of outlying estates in which pubs and a~~

~~corner shops (were either non-existent or restricted in number~~

~~by the planner - the planner who himself lived many miles away~~

~~in a converted mill house in the pleasing clutter that had~~

~~simply growed.~~

*OF A VILLAGE*

*h*

~~It was a nightmare for the people but a paradise for Labour~~  
~~local authorities.~~ For it snuffed out of the sparks of ~~small~~  
~~scaled local~~ <sup>local</sup> enterprise <sup>and made</sup> and created a class of people entirely  
~~dependent upon~~ <sup>the</sup> the local authorities and ~~whatever~~ services  
 they chose to provide.

~~In this dependent class Labour saw a great opportunity -~~  
~~voting fodder, people who would vote Labour more or less~~  
~~eternally in return for low rents.~~ So it has been the  
 misfortune of <sup>Some</sup> ~~many~~ of our great Northern cities to meet the  
 challenge of economic change under the <sup>control</sup> leadership of <sup>new</sup> ~~blinkered~~  
 and extreme Labour councils.

Mr. President, cities have risen and declined throughout  
 history - risen when new industries were founded or mineral  
 reserves discovered, declined when a river has silted up, or  
 new trade routes have passed them by. But the great <sup>trading</sup> cities  
<sup>in Europe</sup> like Venice and Milan have not simply surrendered to the  
 threat of decline. They have adapted, learnt new trades,  
 embarked on new industries, above all capitalised on their

assets as cities - centres of <sup>skill of</sup> civilisation, of the arts and sciences. They have survived and prospered.

<sup>Dominated by</sup> Under Labour, however, many of our cities <sup>did</sup> ~~have~~ not adapted to change; <sup>but</sup> ~~they have~~ added to the threat of decline. When industries shrank they piled ever higher rates ~~and taxes~~ on those that remained - ~~until they too fled or collapsed.~~ When old markets vanished, they sought not new markets but new ~~government~~ subsidies. They capitalised not on their strengths but on their weaknesses. <sup>They accelerated decline.</sup>

And in the cities they ran, in city centre and outlying estate alike, businesses fled, employment opportunities vanished and skills decayed. Crime and vandalism alone flourished, driving out still more businesses, deterring local enterprise, and increasing the despair of council tenants.

New style municipal socialism deprived the people of hope, confidence and belief in themselves. That, not bricks and mortar, is the problem of urban decay.

Our answer is plain. We must restore hope to the people. We must give them the genuine opportunity to improve their own lives. We must bring back pride and prosperity to the once great cities and centres of industry now struggling to adapt to changing markets and technologies.

Mr. President we are doing all these things - and more.

We have increased spending on the Urban Programme by over two-thirds since 1979.

We have doubled the money available for the derelict land grant.

We established in 1985 Estate Action to help local authorities improve run-down council estates and we are spending £75 million on it this year.

We have allocated almost £500 million to the urban development corporations on London and Merseyside and we have recently established five more such corporations in Trafford, the Black Country, Teesside, Tyne and Wear and Cardiff Bay.

And we launched the urban regeneration grant this year to support development on larger inner city sites.

That is merely a random sample of the programmes and projects undertaken by this Government to remedy urban blight. All in all we have devoted over £2 billion to helping people in the cities. But have learnt there is no fixed solution, no magic Whitehall wand. It is not a question merely of how much we can afford to spend. Throwing money at the symptoms of urban decay is not the answer. On its own it does not work.

Indeed, by extinguishing local pride and initiative it may make the problem worse.

The spark to rebuild these cities must come from within if it is to last. And as I travel around the country, I see signs

of a new spirit of pride and determination and enterprise wherever I go.

In Gateshead, a local entrepreneur, John Hall, has built a 100 acre mall of shopping centres, gardens, restaurants and leisure parks on reclaimed land.

In Halifax?, Ernest Hall has transformed an old mill into a home for hundreds of new businesses, some of which will provide the great enterprises of tomorrow.

In cities like Manchester and Glasgow there has been a great resurgence of theatre, music and cultural life.

Above all there is everywhere a growing sense of hope and enthusiasm as the opportunities created by this Government's economic success spread throughout the land.

But more needs to be done and will be done.

In housing we will set the tenant free - free of automatic dependence on the local authority, free to choose a new landlord in order to improve the upkeep of his estate. ~~and~~ We will create Housing Action Trusts to repair chronically run down estates <sup>To</sup> ~~which would~~ make them attractive to new landlords. Only when the tenant is able to take his custom elsewhere will the local authority landlord have any need to pay attention to his plight.

In local finance we will reform the unfair and inequitable system of rates. No longer will hard Left councils be able to drive out small businesses with high rates. Every local inhabitant will have the right and the incentive to restrain local spending.

In local government, we will compel councils to put out more services to competitive tender. This will do more than simply save money for the ratepayer. It will encourage local business and bring about that revival of local leadership which is essential if cities and estates <sup>THEMSELVES</sup> are to enjoy lasting  
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revival.

In the city centres themselves, we must peel away 70 years of misguided "improvement" to restore to the splendid buildings there a setting worthy of their quality. We must bring back the people who work in the city to live in it as well, to enjoy the renaissance of its visual delights, to use more fully its existing investment and services and to participate directly in 101 housing developments according to their individual fancies.

As Conservatives we must redouble our efforts to win back political control in the inner cities. For if we do, we will reap a reward of new hope, new growth and a new national cultural asset which will astound the Jeremiahs who currently tell us that since their panaceas did not work, then nothing can be done.

To achieve these things, however, one achievement is essential. Law and order ....