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Zane L. Miller, Bruce Tucker. *Changing Plans for America's Inner Cities: Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine and Twentieth-Century Urbanism.* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998. xxi + 227 pp. $21.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8142-0763-5; $21.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8142-0762-8.

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The Politics of Urban Planning in Cincinnati's Over-The-Rhine

Zane L. Miller and Bruce Tucker have written an important book on the theories and politics of urban planning in twentieth-century American cities. The focal point of their study is the Over-The-Rhine neighborhood near downtown Cincinnati. During the nineteenth century, the neighborhood was an area that housed diverse people and featured mixed land use. By the early twentieth century, however, the more prosperous residents had abandoned the area and Over-The-Rhine became a classic American slum. In the 1920s and 1930s, civic leaders attacked the problem of slums such as Over-The-Rhine because they viewed such areas as spreading diseases that would consume healthy neighborhoods and entrap residents in a web of violence, crime, poverty, and political manipulation. The mode of attack was to create municipal planning commissions that would use zoning, rehabilitation, and slum clearance as a means of improving neighborhoods. The goal was the preservation of a cosmopolitan culture that rested upon historical tradition and the pluralistic totality of life. A significant result of this effort was the physical and social segregation of the community and its neighborhoods according to race and class. Intermixing of urban groups, notably ethnic minorities and slum dwellers, would be under controlled conditions.

The Great Depression, however, undermined these plans. The prospects of moving the poorer residents of Over-The-Rhine to outlying areas faltered. Although civic leaders began to focus on revamping inner city neighborhoods into stronger communities and screening out the "social junk," Over-The-Rhine remained largely untouched. By 1948, planners could not decide whether to use slum clearance or rehabilitation in Over-The-Rhine.

The Cincinnati Metropolitan Plan of 1948 stressed slum clearance and the conversion of the newly cleared land for industrial use, a process that would displace thousands of African-American residents. The heart of this scheme was West End, an area adjacent to Over-The-Rhine. Again, Over-The-Rhine remained untouched.

During this stage of urban planning, theories changed. A theoretical revolt against "determinism" gave way to a belief in cultural individualism. This approach led to citizen participation in the regeneration of neighborhoods and contributed to a belief that Over-The-Rhine was a viable community that merited revitalization. The focus moved from slum clearance to rehabilitation. This concept contributed to a contention that there were areas of historical significance within Over-The-Rhine which should be developed and perhaps used to entice upper-scale residents back into the neighborhood. There was also an effort to adapt Over-The-Rhine into an enclave of Appalachian immigrants who would be taught to live in an urban environment, a stab at integration. In 1964, a new plan for downtown Cincinnati advocated mixed land use, but this design had no provision for low-income residents of Over-The-Rhine who could not afford or did not desire to relocate. The Appalachian plan, moreover, never worked.

At the same time that the Appalachian scheme began, a conflict developed between those who would use historic preservation as a means to turn Over-The-Rhine into a chic neighborhood and those who wanted to empower the poor to live wherever they chose. Embedded in this conflict was the belief that citizen review, not bureaucratic determination, was essential to the choices that the neighborhood made. A plan to develop the Findlay Market as a center for revitalization failed because it was too complex and expensive. For nearly two decades a struggle went on between preservationists, initially under the leadership of the Miami Purchase Association, a local preservation group, and Buddy Gray, a resident of Over-The-Rhine who operated a shelter for the homeless and alcoholic. Gray, once a radical opponent of the Viet-

nam War, opposed the preservationists because he believed that their schemes would lead to gentrification, a process that would displace low-income residents. Gray and his followers sought to maintain the status quo of poverty, bars, cheap housing, and social welfare agencies. A battle over the listing of Over-The-Rhine on the National Register of Historic Places ended in stalemate.

In the 1980s, James Tarbell emerged as the primary advocate of historic preservation. Tarbell advanced a conservative understanding of the problems that faced Over-The-Rhine. He, for example, divided the residents of the neighborhood into the respectable poor and, what he called, "sloppy people." Tarbell's position allowed Gray again to champion the cause of the poor under the doctrine of community control and self determination. Tarbell, in turn, argued that Gray's stance deprived poor blacks of pursuing alternate life styles. The conflict resulted in further community separation and deterioration.

As the authors so ably note, no one apparently thought in terms of the city as a whole nor did anyone view racial and class-oriented integration as a possibility for an attack on poverty and the spreading ghetto. In the 1990s, Karla Irvine advanced a plan that called for wealthier whites to enter Over-The-Rhine and that would have also allowed poorer blacks to leave the neighborhood or to remain there as they so desired. The Cincinnati city council, however, rejected the proposal. At a critical point, too, Buddy Gray died at the hands of one of the homeless whom he had tried to help. The end result was a further deterioration of the neighborhood with little in the way of hope.

Miller and Tucker clearly depict the theoretical movement from urban cosmopolitanism, a product of the Chicago school of urban sociology to cultural individualism, as applied to Over-The-Rhine, to the philosophy of cultural individualism. They also show the impact of theoretical and political conflict upon the fate of the neighborhood. In essence, they have treated Over-The-Rhine as a microcosm of the theoretical, political and social problems that face urban planners and civic leaders in the twentieth century. Anyone who hopes to understand municipal planning, urban development, and neighborhood politics in modern America must read this excellent book.

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