

## THE CRISIS OF THE CITIES\*

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When I suggested this title to Professor Āgāh he said that sounds very American, and I said, yes, it is American. "The Crisis of the Cities" is an American phrase and rightly it is American because they have a crisis at heart as badly as anybody else. In fact, the crisis of the cities is an universal problem. It is to bring the great crisis of the world in-line with economic and social change. I have long been interested in local government finance, but I must admit I had not thought much about city problems until I was asked to a conference in Toronto in 1967 where there were gathered together for two weeks delegations from great cities in 40 Countries and 12 experts lecturing on different aspects. The delegates were divided into seminar groups and together we discussed the problems. My job was to contribute the finance paper.

The countries that were represented were really all over the world, except for Red China, and I am sorry to say Irān had not been asked although Turkey was. But there was the U.S.A., U.K., France, Germany, India, Turkey, Russia, Japan, Italy, Yugoslavia, several from Australia, Nigeria, the U.A.R., Greece and so on. What struck me most at the conference was that the problems of the great modern city are extraordinarily similar, not withstanding vast differences of population, organisation and national constitutions. We found for instance, that the problems of Moscow were extremely similar to the problems of other countries. Hence, it seemed to me that it would be interesting to make comparisons in different countries, and that one country should be able to learn a good deal from the experience of others. This "crisis", this modern problem of the modern cities, is one in which the ordinary citizen has a duty, a commitment to interest himself. The city is after all his, he should be, and I am sure

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he will be, interested no less than the expert who advises and the administration which has to manage the reforming.

The causes of the crisis of the city are broadly three, and these are found normally in every large city; but naturally their relative importance differs from one country to another. First of all, rapid population growth can be cited, both through natural increase and through immigration. There is of course emigration from the cities (as I shall discuss later) but immigration is very normally far more powerful than emigration. In most cities the greater weight of population increase occurs through immigration; natural increase may even be less than the national average, because on the whole; urban families tend to be smaller than rural families. Since Irān has a high rate of natural increase, it is only natural that Tehrān should have a really phenomenal rate of increase, counting both natural and immigration. The second cause of crisis is concerned with the effects of the motoring age. This works in a number of ways. In the first place it enormously increases the mobility of the population; this is especially noticeable in the U.S.A. where people commute for very many miles to their work in the city, whereas they live and have summer houses all over the place, so that they really lose the feeling of the city as a community. That is one aspect of the motoring age; the opposite is traffic congestion in the city, and problems of parking. One cause of this mobility, and particularly in the U.S.A., is that the rich people become dissatisfied with living in the city, as they used to do, and they move out, outside the city boundaries into what the Americans call "tax havens" where they do not pay the city taxes. The third cause of the crisis is changes in technology affecting the way of family life. I refer to all the modern conveniences, of which the housewife can avail herself in the western countries, but I imagine less here. This is accompanied, or in fact caused by, the disappearance of domestic servants; so that quite a different type of house is wanted in quite a different location, and this has influenced city development very much indeed.

So much for the causes; now what about the problem of rehabilitation? Here we have to consider two quite different aspects. First there is the problem of remodelling the old city centre, or as people have now come to call it, the core city. This is mainly a problem of decongestion and of urban renewal, that is remodelling old developed parts. This can take several forms, you may remodel a single house or demolish and remodel a

whole area. The remodelling of the core city is one side of the problem. The other is orderly development of new and expanding areas, so that they will grow up well planned and with provision for all modern amenities, such as water supply, water borne sewage, and of course electricity and oil for heating and so on. This aspect is much less difficult than the rehabilitation of the core city. These large cities are what the Americans call "metropolitan areas" or "metros" for short; their problems are especially acute because of their large size. Because of their size they exercise forces of attraction for the country around. People want to come into the city because they think they get better wages, better jobs, because they think their children will get better education or be better looked after in respect of health and because they have seen the amenities provided in the cities, and they want to share them. So this means that these rapidly growing metros give rise to problems of the relations of the very large cities with the rest of the country, and with the smaller cities.

It is wise to adopt a target for the maximum growth that will be permitted to the largest cities in order that they do not become unmanageable. It is interesting that several of the largest cities in the world have adopted targets of about eight million. Moscow is to be limited at eight million and this will be achieved by licences for people to move in, and by compulsion. London, the area of Greater London Council, is fixed at about eight million and anybody else has to settle outside. Tokyo has eleven million, but is trying to get rid of at least three million as fast as it can. Paris is also trying to get rid of population, and will not grow beyond eight million. In Tehran I understand there is a sort of accepted target of about four million; already I understand you are over three million; four million I am sure is quite big enough. But as I understand it is more or less dictated to you by the water situation.

These are the acute problems of the metro cities; the problems of other cities which are growing fast are similar although they are not quite so acute. For instance in the U.K. we have the Greater London Council, we also plan to have similar organisations for other heavily built up areas, where a local authorities are quite contiguous. For instance round Manchester, round Birmingham, round Glasgow, on Tyneside, Merseyside and so on. A Royal Commission on local government reform has just recommended the establishment of three new metros. I imagine that you have, or are

on the brink of having, similar problems in respect say of Tabriz and Isfahān, for these smaller cities there is a little more room to manoeuvre in, but the problems are coming to them just the same.

I want to discuss these problems under five headings: (1) those arising from population movements; (2) those concerning physical planning, and land use; (3) questions of institutional organisation; (4) finances, how is all this to be paid for? and, (5) how we should start.

First of all the question of population movement. As I said this is generally a movement into the city, the movement out can be tiresome to the city government if it means that the rich are all going out (as probably will be the case). But the problems of immigration and the population that is left in the core city are particularly difficult. The Americans with their usual felicity, have coined a phrase "ghettoes" because what is happening in the U.S.A. is that the coloured population is moving into the core cities while the rich, white population, moves out into tax havens, leaving a very difficult problem of decongestion of the middle of the city and re-housing of the immigrants. Another difficulty is that the coloured people who are streaming up from the south have rather different social habits, and very much lower incomes, than the people who are in the city.

In the U.K. we have something of this problem because we have a great, (considering the size of the country) influx of Asians from India and Pakistan as well as negroes mainly from the Caribbean. The situation is not quite so bad because there are not so many of them but what happens is always the same: some of these coloured people go into an area and immediately the white people, the original inhabitants, say they think they will go somewhere else. And so you have a problem that renews itself all over the country. Now Paris is in a very bad way with this sort of thing, because they have had an enormous immigration from the surrounding country. France as you probably know as it is rather similar to Iran in organisation, it is extremely centralised and so the magnet effect of Paris is very strong, but in addition they have a large influx from North Africa, so they are having great trouble in Paris, but they are doing some very excellent planning.

In Australia the immigrants are almost all white, and they are mainly from Europe so although they may preserve their own Greek or Yugoslav, (or what ever it is) community, they eventually become very good, well

absorbed, industrial citizens.

Now I do not know the particulars of your immigrants in Tehrān; I understand from Professor Pākdamān that the first wave came from the neighbourhood and then at the second stage people began to go into the provincial cities such as Tabriz and Isfahān in great numbers, but Tehrān is now also getting immigrants from much further away; from the South for instance. However, they are all your own nationals, they are all similar in religion (or practically all) and so this part of the problem should be less serious for you than for some countries, but it is all a matter of degree.

The awkward problem arises first because of the different standards of living of the immigrants; they are usually poorer and have been living in rather primitive ways without any modern amenities. The people who come in are mainly young people who quickly marry each other and raise families, and so there arises a great problem of education. The city population will have an abnormal number of young people who have to be educated, and this puts up education costs. The same is true of health services; so long as people live in a scattered way in rural areas they do not need nearly all the health services that they will need in towns.

All these changes have financial implications. There are some ways in which you can deal with them; for instance, say no one else is to come and live in Tehrān. One way, which is increasingly used, is to move factories out of the city (as it seems you are doing on the eastern side of Tehrān) and built housing suburbs for the workers. In this way you get a balanced income group in the new areas, and you are at the same time able to decongest the centre of the city.

Next a word or two on physical planning and land use. This is quite a different sort of problem, apart from maintaining the buildings and the assets it is almost wholly a matter of infrastructure on capital account. We can distinguish three aspects of the problem, as I briefly mentioned earlier. First control of suburban sprawl, control of people building houses anywhere they like, say up the mountains, without any previous planning of the street network, of sewerage, or previous determination of zoning in the sense of what type of houses or factories will be allowed in particular areas. Such planning naturally should be done in advance of development, so as to provide for the various types and standard of housing, the location of factories, of schools, of open spaces, and recreation

as well as dealing with the problems of traffic. But there is no use planning the road network in detail unless you know what the way that it is going to be infilled with houses; and there is no use planning the houses unless you have some idea of the income and the age distribution of the population for which you are planning and so on.

The other aspect of planning is the urban renewal problem which always implies decongestion of the old parts, demolition of really bad property, rehabilitation and modernisation of old but sound and still useable property, and finally the elimination of what in English we call "shanty town settlements" on the outskirts, (such as you can see down the road to Rey). Demolition of really bad property is often very necessary thing, but you just can not demolish houses (as at one time people thought you could) and trust that some one will build new houses in their place. This policy does not really work, you displace a whole community, they have to find accommodation somewhere else, probably they do not do this very successfully, and really make another slum in place of the one that has just been demolished. Alternative accommodation has to be found. In Oxford, at present, we are having a very large exercise of demolition and re-planning, and I think it has been very successful; it has a very useful effect on traffic flow as well.

This is also possible even in quite underdeveloped countries. In Lagos; the capital of Nigeria, they did a pretty good job of slum clearance in the middle of the city. The housing authority started a new suburb on the outskirts. The exercise was put under a housing authority, to get away from party politics. It was a difficult exercise because in crowded conditions in underdeveloped countries nobody really knows who a particular plot of land belongs to. People are very largely illiterate and they just live there because nobody has told them not to and so more and more come in. In Lagos they had an awful time sorting out claims. In the end they did it by calling in the tribal chiefs who just laid down this bit belongs to this family, this bit belongs to the next family and so on. It is often very tricky to declare whether it is better to repair and modernise houses or to demolish them. With modern techniques I understand that it is cheap to demolish even quite solid houses, so may be this is the better policy; if this is to be done it is wise to clear a substantial area which can be redeveloped as a unit.

Now for the question of traffic flow of all types of vehicles. This

implies in the first place replanning of central streets, so as to increase through-ways. London is considering a great exercise of this sort, constructing what they call the "London Box". This will be a sort of inner ring road and will require a very great deal of demolition. I doubt whether this is really necessary in London, and I would not think it is necessary in a great many cities; but it is essential with modern traffic flow to have sufficient good through roads, or inner circular roads, so that the traffic flow can be spread over a number of roads. The road exercise is tied up with the planning of public utilities, particularly water sewerage and electricity distribution.

The next question to ask is what bodies are to be responsible in respect of these various rehabilitations, or extensions? Here, there are a number of problems: first of all someone has got to do the planning, and this requires an expert, a foreign expert if you like to start with, but this should be basically the joint work of the national government and the city government. Planning should embrace the whole area as a unity. Whether it is organisationally a unity or not, it needs planning as a unity. This does not imply that every aspect of city life must be planned centrally, but the more the plan is a unity the better. For instance the city of Melbourne, one of the biggest cities in Australia, has only one planning authority (I think this is rather disgraceful) but they have a sewerage plan if they do not have anything else. Once you have planned your sewerage it means that you must bring your roads along the sewerage lines and build your houses along them also. So in a sense sewerage planning is fundamental.

Now let us assume that we have decided who is going to do our plan. The next question is who is going to see that the plan is carried out, who is going to be responsible for the execution of the plan? Here, I think, it is pretty evident that the city authorities have the main responsibility; they will do doubt need financial assistance but they are the people who have to see whether contractors, who say for instance that they will fill up all the holes in the streets, and put a nice asphalt carpet over the lot, are really doing their job or not. It must be made clear who is responsible for the execution, it does not matter so much who it is as long as the responsibility, the commitment, is quite clear.

Thirdly, who is going to evaluate the results? There are two aspects to this question: first, checking of the monetary outlay, such and such

a requirement will have been entered in the budget for this, that and the other. Was it spent on that or did it go somewhere else? Was it over spent? And if so why?

The other aspect is checking the physical achievement. We learn from the accounts that, say, 100 men were engaged on a particular project. You are told how many of them were working on different days and what wages they got. But what you want to know is what did they do? What did they achieve? Unless you have the physical check as well, and this is satisfactory and the standard of work is satisfactory, then you are getting almost nowhere. Now the answer to the question, who is going to be responsible for these three separate aspects of rehabilitation, depends on the national constitution, the regionalisation and the general tradition of the country, so that there is no unique solution.

Broadly there are in the world two main types of municipal organisation, one which you have here, the city manager type. The other is the one which we have in the U.K. and which is widely spread over the British Commonwealth where the responsibility belongs to a council divided into a series of committees or commissions each of which is responsible for a particular service or project, or a set of projects. These are co-ordinated by a central finance or a general purposes committee which acts as a sort of cabinet. There are various stages in between. For instance in India they have an officer appointed by the national government called the civic commissioner. They have an elected council with different committees on the British plan, but the civic commissioner is half way between a town clerk, as we call him, and a city manager. How much he is one or the other depends very much on the activity and the progressiveness of the elected council.

In respect of a capital city, the national government inevitably has a greater commitment than it has for other cities in the country, since the image of the capital city is a matter of national importance. This, to my mind, should imply that the government is prepared to see that the capital city has particularly good services, planning and so on. This in fact, I think, is usually the case, and the other cities tend to get a bit jealous; but after all the national capital is the head of the nation. However, the rehabilitation and the checking is organised, it is essential to have as comprehensive a plan as possible with clear demarcation of responsibilities between the different bodies who may be concerned



with planning, execution and evaluation.

One can see the working of different forms of organisation and planning. Looking about the world, there are all sorts of examples. I will just say a word about three of them: Toronto, London and Paris. Toronto which is the largest city in Canada, with over two million inhabitants, did nothing for a very long time about its suburban sprawl. But about thirteen years ago the various local government units in Toronto were got to agree that they would appoint Toronto Metro—that is to say a super-council which would rehabilitate Toronto. At first at any rate this was extremely successful, everyone knew that the streets and the traffic were in an awful mess, everyone knew that the electricity and the water and the sewerage were in an awful mess, and everyone in all parts of the city was prepared to contribute to the improvement of Toronto. Since then, although this was achieved very successfully, agreement has not been so good because it then comes to be a matter of some equalisation between the poor areas and the rich ones, and the rich ones are a little diffident at paying for low income housing for the poor areas and so on. However, by and large the Toronto Metro has undoubtedly worked.

Now in London we had since before the turn of the century, the London County Council, which was an extremely centralised body that did practically everything in London. There were metropolitan boroughs but they really did not do anything. But the trouble was that London spread so much outside the area of L.C.C., that finally the Greater London Council had to be established. As I said, this is established for an area which will take eight million only. Everybody else who wants to come and live in this area, must be persuaded to move to a satellite town, a new town, and we have built quite a number of these springing up at distances of thirty say to fifty miles from London. In an over-crowded country like ours this is the only solution. It seems that the Greater London Council will be less centralised than the L.C.C., and the new London boroughs, some of whom had to be pushed and cajoled into the new area, will have more independence and be given a large spread of things to do. The whole of London has (or is about to have) a very effective system of revenue reallocation, (equalisation between the poor and the rich areas).

Paris is going on a different plan in the sense that it has designated a very large area as the "Paris zone". It is sixty to eighty miles across going into areas that are still absolutely rural, and including

hundreds of local authorities. Planning is taking place in the physical sense all over this area, and this is the business of the Greater Paris Council. It is not concerned, as the Greater London Council is, with services such as health and education. Its concern is for the road network and housing zone.

As regards institutional organisation, planning can take all sorts of varieties; experience will show which one works best. But finally one comes up against the problem; who is to pay for all this? There are two aspects to consider here: current and capital finance will be wanted widely because so many of the things that have to be done are infrastructure and physical assets, and it would be impossible to finance these in any reasonable time from current revenue. Presumably the capital funds will be supplied more or less by the central government either by loan or by grant on capital account, or else by loans from some other authority. For instance in Holland, (the Netherlands) they have what they call the Municipal Fund, into which all the municipalities pay something and the government pays very large amounts out of assigned revenue. Then the municipalities in a committee between themselves discuss how this is to be allocated. Each city will make applications for a slice of the municipal fund. I mentioned the capital account because I think that it is so important. I think that as far as I can judge it is the one which is difficult in Tehrān.

The current municipal budget, all municipalities must have, but I am sure that they do. Many of them just collect revenue and spend it on what they like and when they come to the end of the revenue, they can not spend any more. So if they have got half a school built they can not finish it until some more revenue is collected. But the best conducted towns have budgets which should and do cover all their operating expenses except for public enterprises or trading services owned by the city; these should be keeping commercial type accounts and only be included in the budget as to the net results of their operations. All of these budgets require careful auditing in order to see that things have gone as planned and to show up where things have gone wrong.

As far as possible the local independent taxes of the city should cover ordinary current expenditure. (I understand that in Tehrān they have to do more than this because they are by law required to put so much into the capital account). But at least they should cover ordinary current

needs as far as possible, allowing however for some help from the national government. This means good local tax or taxes. In the U.K. we only have one independent local tax; but it is quite independent. It is a tax on the occupation of land and buildings. This is not the best sort of tax on land and buildings. I think one on the selling price is really much better, but everywhere it is pretty clear that the basic local tax has to be one on land and buildings, or possibly just land if you are very anxious to encourage buildings. But then naturally, there must be a higher rate of tax to get the same revenue. The tax on land and buildings (a property tax) needs to be sufficiently high not only to get good revenue for the city but to curb land speculation. A very low tax on property, speculative builders will not bother about, they will go on building suburban sprawl, unless they are prevented by legislation but, if there is a really high tax, they will think twice about speculating in advance of any sort of planning.

The simplest, and I think the most satisfactory base for this local property tax, is on a careful valuation of selling prices of buildings and land. For this it is essential to have records and maps which show all the buildings, also records of all the sales that take place, in order that you may judge the effect of a change in the selling price of a particular property in a particular area, as it effects other properties which have not recently been sold in the area. If it happens that one property has sold for twice the value that it would have had say five years ago, then it is clear that the value of the other houses or buildings in that area has gone up too, and you can charge them more tax accordingly. This, I have seen done very successfully in Nairobi, in Kenya, and I understand that it is just as good in Lusaka in Zambia.

But, it is easy when you have a new and expanding town. It would be equally easy in new and expanding suburbs. It is very difficult in the centres of towns where everything is already built up. Also, the valuation exercise is expensive and it needs to be kept up to date if it is going to be at all effective because property prices rise very fast; the valuation and the tax liability need to rise at least as fast. Consequently, it is useful for the national government to undertake this exercise and to do it on a quite objective professional way, something that is very hard for the city to do itself.

There are other useful taxes, (I gather you have quite a variety

here) the best one would be a local income tax, as they have in Scandinavia. The general sales tax works very well in India, very well indeed, on a state basis. But take a state like Maharashtra where Bombay is situated, all the wealth and most of the population of the state is in Bombay so it is practically a Bombay sales tax. In the U.S. and Canada, some of the big cities have sales taxes of their own.

The difficulty about any sort of tax on consumer sales is that its incidence is very regressive, that is to say the lower income receivers pay a much larger proportion of their income in this tax than the richer ones, and presumably this is something that people would not like on grounds of social policy. I understand that here you receive assignments of income tax, and some sales tax. This tax devolution is a simple way of doing things, but it is not as independent for local government as raising your own taxes. Another method is to have a system of surcharges on the national taxes. This does give some liberty and flexibility to local government.

Now let us assume that we have got a reasonable revenue, and a good plan. Which part of the plan are we going to start on first? Any project for reform which is to be considered should be first be selected on quite broad lines, which are agreed on, and then analysed strictly on cost/benefit lines. That is to say, you take all the expected costs planned very carefully and all the expected benefits taking clear note of when they accrue (because the cost you have to meet three years hence is not so serious as one you have to meet this year). On the other hand, a benefit that you will only receive in three years time is not so attractive as one in which you can hope to have in six months. So a stream of costs and benefits through time is estimated and then discounted to the present. There are then two figures, one of costs and one of benefits. Wherever the benefits exceed the costs, this is an eligible project and all you want to find is which project has the greater excess of benefits over costs. (This is very over simplified, you will find it described any where in the literature).

A few years ago cost/benefit analysis was a brand new idea; now everyone does it. But there are often difficulties, one is that you must not think only in strictly economic terms. It is most necessary to think in social terms as well. And it is necessary to consider also whether if we implement this project, what effect will it have on other projects which

are in the neighbourhood. These things probably cannot be submitted to the ordinary working of the market, so that we do not have price evidence to quantify them. In that case we must just think out the best substitute, what the Russians call "shadow prices", and use that. Even a shadow price is very much better than just a hunch. Besides, just a hunch, is very difficult to sell to a city council, or perhaps to a minister, and some ministers are much more important than others. An objective answer really has to be given.

Once the broad priorities for the projects have been evolved, before starting it is essential to have a careful feasibility study. By feasibility I mean going into details as to what physical snags there may be that had not been noticed. If any have been overlooked, then the costs would be very much higher than anticipated. Just to take an example from a long way away, there was an interesting case of this, in one of the little West Indian islands, which very much wanted to have a deep water harbour. They had an enormous harbour leading up to the capital town, but it was only about two feet deep, and the problem was how to get a deep water harbour, so that big ships could use it. It looked like a very expensive job of deepening. However, experts who understood tides, winds, and so on were engaged and they discovered that there was very little movement in the land under the sea. So, it was possible just to make a canal which would be as deep as was desirable but would be quite cheap; they just marked this out with towers, and then they had their deep water harbour for very little cost indeed.

There are many cases where feasibility studies were not done, and where all sorts of horrible snags occurred, for instance, in the initial location of something. There was a good example of that in the U.K. (some time ago, I will say), where a new airport was to be made in Scotland and a site was chosen that was guaranteed to be as free from fog as could be in the neighbourhood, and so they started to build and prepare for the airport, and then they found there was 15 feet of soft soil, peat, on top of the place where they wanted to build the airport. So they proceeded to take 15 feet of peat away, and replace with 15 feet of gravel. Now, if they had done a proper feasibility study, they would have found that, not more than two or three miles away, was an equally eligible site that had a hard base (I gather that something like this went wrong with your petro-chemical factory). Having made your feasibility study and having

started on the project, the next thing is to watch the progress of its implementation, keeping a careful financial check, and a careful performance check on its progress.

Now, I will, very boldly make a few suggestions of what seem to me to be your basic problems in Tehrān. My guide book tells me that the accelerated unwieldy growth of Tehrān is a strictly contemporary phenomena. I am sure that the enormous accelerated growth has taken people by surprise and now it is necessary to sit back and think what can be done about it. I realise that considerable progress has been made in the last two or three years (or is about to be made) on many of the special problems (and you do have special problems). For instance water, partly due to all the underground *qanāts* and so on which are so useful.

It should be possible to stem the rate of population influx by directing people to the outskirts or further away to Tabriz or Isfahān. This in the U.K. we have done to a large extent and I gather you are also using the same method of industrial licences for setting up factoriea where you want them to go, and not letting them go just anywhere.

There are two problems that seem to me particularly severe, one is the problem of sewage. You really cannot have a city of three to four million people without a proper waterborne sewerage system. Now this will be very important, very expensive, and very difficult with the underground *qanāts* but I would think that it is however, absolutely essential. I would think that the only way is to go about it gradually. At any rate, the first thing you could do is to cover up the water courses, especially in the poorer areas. The water courses in the richer areas are quite nice and pretty in a way, and people do not throw things into them. But in the poorer areas they just throw anything from dead cats, household rubbish, orange skins, and so on. Therefore, the water courses should not be available for rubbish disposal. No doubt a better, stronger, cleansing department, which will go around and collect rubbish at more frequent intervals is also needed. But, apart from waste disposal, the big problem obviously is transport and traffic. Now, what I would think would be the priorities in this, would be first of all better road maintenance. We all know there has been a very bad winter, just like everywhere else in the Northern hemisphere. But a bad winter had no business to make such bad holes in the streets. They may have been badly made. And so, when they are remade I would strongly suggest they are remade by someone on whom you

can keep a watch and have performance achievement reports at frequent intervals. I would think that much the best way to proceed would be establishing or improving the Public Works Department, which would do these things itself, and could be kept under close supervision by the municipal authorities. This might be preferable to letting it out to contractors who will naturally try to keep the costs down as far as ever they can, and on the quality of whose work you have very little control. Street improvement should be a top priority; if you have good streets you can drive along and you will eliminate this familiar phenomena that a car in front suddenly swerves and when you get there you know why because there was an enormous hole it wanted to go around.

The next priority would be traffic regulation. There is not all that much traffic in Tehrān, there is a much bigger flow of traffic in London, or Paris, or New York, but in those towns there is a traffic flow. In Tehrān there is mainly what the Americans call a traffic snarl: car and buses trying to go different ways, all in the middle of every crossing. What is to be done about this? Several things I think: first of all there is a need for more traffic lights. With your very wide streets, I am not sure that you could not have more roundabouts than you have introduced. This is a much better way of keeping up a flow than traffic lights. In connection with this, I am shocked at the way in which cars are allowed to come out of a side street, or against the lights almost into the middle of the street. One knows very well they are just watching until there is a small space between two cars, then they will dash across. The way to get over this is to stop them well back down the side roads, well back from the main road (having very carefully decided and marked which are the major streets, and which are the minor ones) so that they cannot come out until there is a proper opportunity. It is necessary to have what we call "give way" signs on all the minor roads. With this, one would say the only way to get a good flow is by having traffic lanes, and making drivers stick to the lanes. If there were no holes, they might do it better.

I see you have about two rather large blocks which have traffic lanes, and I have tried to look very carefully to see if people drive better there. They do not keep to the lanes completely, but I do think even that much has made a difference to the standard of driving. Now, what I would suggest is that you put up notices to say that traffic lanes must

be strictly observed. Get people driving properly there, and then extend the system to other places. Further, pedestrian crossings should be clearly defined, probably you need some more of them. And, they should be observed. In many countries, the pedestrian crossings all have lights, and if the pedestrian attempts to cross when the light says halt, then the police are after him. Pedestrians can only cross when a little green man appears on the light, and then they know they can cross. A good deal of additional delay is caused in the streets in Tehrān by pedestrians just coming out cheerfully, and almost unconsciously, and weaving their way among the cars. I am sure you need a highway code, as we call it: instructions which drivers and pedestrians must obey. All this, no doubt, requires a large increase in traffic police. And this I think might be difficult because I understand they are provided by the central government. They need to be many more of them, and they need to be much more accurate, more active. I watched one this morning, in the street outside our hotel room where there was a fantastic traffic snarl. He just stood and looked at it, he did not seem to do anything about it. Of course, he was in a difficulty because there was nothing to keep the other cars from coming on. But the lights went green, and the lights went red, and the lights went green, and the lights went red, he did not seem to pay any attention to that, anymore than the cars did.

A better system of traffic police might be difficult, I do not whether it would be possible to have municipal traffic wardens, of which you could have as many as you liked. They need to know how to direct the traffic. This can be learned in any western country - not in Japan; Japan's traffic is very much like Tehrān's traffic. Now all of this would not be expensive, but I think it would make a tremendous difference to the traffic flow. It could easily, as far as I can see, be financed by higher fees for car licences. I understand you only pay a licence for your car when you first acquire it. We pay a licence for our cars every year of £25 per car. Your revenue from car licences here is very small indeed. If this were raised to say the equivalent of £15 or 20, this might persuade some people not to bother about cars and to go in buses. Also you would have the revenue to do these quite simple traffic improvements.

My guide book tells that your Reza Shāh, who was a very great town planner and builder, carried out demolition with a superb disregard for existing buildings. He did a very good job in Tehrān, but that was some



time ago. Tehrān now needs a little more of this superb disregard for buildings, because I do not think you will get really good traffic flow until there are some more through streets. There are splendid avenues going north-south and east-west but they usually in a tiny street and so cannot be successfully used for through traffic. Only a few buildings need to be knocked down to make a big difference to the traffic flow. People would know that the centre streets are crowded and that they could arrive at their destination more quickly if they went a little north or a little south.

To my mind those two, sewerage, and transport and traffic are the most important priorities that an outsider can see at short notice. There are lots of other things that need to be done such as covering the water courses in poor areas, and perhaps in not so poor ones. Also to step up the rate of building low income housing which will be essential if the core city (that is to say the south of Tehrān) is really to be rehabilitated.

The city has a large number of taxes, but I much doubt if any of them are really being implemented to a full capacity. Some of them, perhaps, ought not to be there at all. I wonder, has anyone done a cost/benefit study on the brick tax? It seems to me that to keep fourteen receiving centres perpetually open for thousands of bricks which pay a very low tax, (I think its 30 rials per 1,000) is just a waste of time and money. But, especially, I would say the priority is to raise the property tax and see that people pay it. I understand that you are starting to do this by threatening to cut off water and electricity. Well, cut it off. Let a few people know what it feels like not to pay their property tax and I am sure they would soon reform (we do this in the U.K.). But the property tax needs two things: it needs to be efficiently assessed and collected and it needs to be levied at a much higher rate so as to curb speculation.

Finally, there is the question of where capital finance is to come from, and I do not know the answer to this. But presumably your city authorities do, because as I understand it, the cities have been in great difficulties in raising finance for periods of more than about six or seven years. And this is just not long enough to plan important capital works, such as sewerage and low income housing. If better ways of raising capital finance could be found I am sure this would be a very important priority.