THE end of the National Register controversy shifted the focus in Over-the-Rhine to the planning process but failed to accelerate it. The continued drag on progress toward a plan stemmed in part from the emergence of James Tarbell, an entrepreneurial celebrity in the local entertainment business, as the most adamant and voluble opponent of Buddy Gray's racially and socioeconomically separatist attempt to commit the city to maintaining Over-the-Rhine as a predominantly black and overwhelmingly poor enclave. But Tarbell also framed the case for historic preservation in a new way and a manner characteristic of the most vocal advocates of the cause at this stage of the game.

Tarbell's emergence proved important for several reasons. He appeared at the most critical point in the long debate about the future of Over-the-Rhine, the moment for final decisions about a comprehensive plan for its future. In addition, he now dominated the anti-Gray side of the debate; other historic preservationists faded into the background as if convinced that city council would defer once more to Gray, as it had so often in the past. But Tarbell framed his arguments in a way that facilitated a victory for Gray and the racial and socioeconomic separatists.
Tarbell displayed an open disdain for the "sloppy" poor, the homeless, alcoholic, and other underemployed or unemployable people who made up such a large and visible part of the Over-the-Rhine population. Yet Tarbell, like Gray, refused to make the question of poverty itself a prime civic and political issue and especially a part of the problem in Over-the-Rhine. Tarbell's positions gave the preservationist cause in the 1980s a conservative cast and also reinforced the resolve of those who saw Gray as a charitable humanitarian friend of the homeless rather than as a builder of the second ghetto, a champion of poverty and social and civic fecklessness as life-style choices.

Tarbell proved adept at securing publicity, in part because he, like Gray, struck print and electronic journalists as a quintessential cultural individualist, a person who had "done his own thing" by devising a life style quite different from the middle-class Catholic family into which he had been born. Tarbell, like Gray, wore his hair long and sported a beard. Tarbell, like Gray, moved to Over-the-Rhine in the late 1970s to help the poor and homeless. And Tarbell, like Gray, came out early against the listing of Over-the-Rhine on the National Register of Historic Places because of the fear of gentrification. Tarbell, however, changed his mind, and in so doing emerged as the most striking leader on the integrationist and historic district side after 1983.

Tarbell's family moved from a small Ohio town to Cincinnati in 1946 and settled in the generally affluent neighborhood of Hyde Park. Tarbell grew up there and attended St. Xavier High School in downtown Cincinnati, a few blocks south of Over-the-Rhine. After graduating he secured a job with Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati, then went to Boston, where he worked first in a hospital and then as a commercial fisherman. He returned to Hyde Park in 1967 to run a community youth center (a non-governmental operation to keep teenagers off the streets), then opened a drug-free nightclub for young rock music fans in a renovated automobile garage in Clifton, a neighborhood close to the University of Cincinnati.

The club soon folded, leaving Tarbell disappointed, broke, and looking for inexpensive housing in a conveniently located and interesting neighborhood. In 1971 he chose Over-the-Rhine, which he remembered from his high school days and which he had revisited in the 1960s
to see his sister, one of the many youngsters from Cincinnati's outer-city neighborhoods and suburbs who served as volunteers in the Main Street Bible Center run by the Roman Catholic archdiocese. Tarbell himself tackled social problems in Over-the-Rhine by renovating low-income housing for low-income residents (and his family), and he earned a living by turning a nineteenth-century saloon a few blocks south of Over-the-Rhine into a combination bar-restaurant-nightclub that attracted a young white crowd, people in their late teens to their early forties served by employees who lived in Over-the-Rhine.2

Tarbell at first, as he put it, carried "a lot of anger for the landlords, businessmen and politicians who were ripping off the poor." After several years in the low-income housing field, however, he divided the poor into two classes: people who cared, and "sloppy people" who "threw garbage out of windows, played loud music night and day, got drunk in the street, and let small children roam the streets unattended." Now he wanted to save the neighborhood, in part by getting other middle-class people to help him assist the responsible poor who were "doing their part" by paying rent on time, picking up litter in front of their apartments, working instead of relying on welfare, and disciplining their children.3

Tarbell also now expressed disdain for those social activists he described as naively sympathetic to the "sloppy people." These kinds of activists, thought Tarbell, made wrong-headed "assumptions about who are the oppressed, and the oppressor," acted as if "they've cornered the market on devotion and self-sacrifice," and so distrusted "the establishment" that they presented "a terrible barrier to getting things done for poor people. What they don't see is that it doesn't make it any better to pat them [the careless poor] on the back and say, 'It's okay, we know you've been exploited.'"4

Tarbell's framing of the issues dominated the debate about the proposed comprehensive plan for Over-the-Rhine, and economic and demographic conditions at the time seemed to tip the odds in his favor. Cincinnati, like other American cities, still suffered from a stagnant national economy, high energy prices, capital shortages, and diminishing federal support for low-income housing. These factors not only exacerbated an already serious shortage of safe and sanitary dwelling units for poor and moderate-income people but also inhibited the production of
new and rehabilitated market-rate housing. At the same time, the population of the city continued to drop—by almost 15 percent between 1970 and 1980—and the city government continued to compete with the suburbs and other metropolitan areas for residents and businesses to shore up its shriveling tax base.

These conditions, as in the 1950s and 1960s, threatened to swamp in a sea of deterioration and despair all of the city's neighborhoods and their metropolitan serving institutions (including hospitals, universities, and cultural and other recreational facilities) and helped attract key city administrators in support of historic preservation. These administrators saw National Register districts as one source of funds to subsidize the creation of low- and moderate-income housing. And they backed local historic districts as a means both to control the demolition of low- and moderate-income housing units and to assist in stemming and/or reversing the suburban exodus by preserving features of metropolitan life that made Cincinnati attractive to many prosperous blacks and whites. But the outcome of the Gray/Tarbell struggle over the comprehensive plan for Over-the-Rhine depended on city council, an uncertain element in the planning and historic preservation calculus because its consideration of the neighborhood's nomination to the National Register in the early 1980s had concluded with a decision split evenly on both sides.

Yet council could not act on the question until and unless planning director Hubert Guest put a plan on its agenda, something now high on his list of priorities. In the spring of 1983 Guest launched an effort to wrap up the plan by the end of the year and to include within it an integrationist historic preservation component and a set of development policies he wrote one night during a bout of insomnia while on business in Columbus. Now Guest cleared this scheme with city manager Sylvester Murray and the heads of relevant departments in city hall and informed Murray that he might reject the plan prepared by the Over-the-Rhine Planning Task Force even if the Planning Commission approved it. With that, Guest turned over to the Task Force's consultant his development policies and told the consultant to finish the job within six months.

The consultant followed Guest's orders but also produced a draft of the plan that bore the clear imprint of the residents on the Task Force. It called, for example, for the creation and maintenance of 5,520 low-income housing units and contained another effort to replace the low-
income housing retention ordinance, which required periodic review and renewal when applied to a particular neighborhood, with a law that would protect low-income housing on a permanent basis. The proposal, called the Redevelopment Management Strategy, suggested the adoption of an enabling ordinance authorizing the creation of overlay zoning “development districts.” Each of these would be provided with strict regulations for new or rehabilitated non-subsidized housing to prevent such projects from having a “negative” effect, such as the involuntary displacement of residents, and the proposal laid out thirty-three “policies” for use by city staff in grading projects, including one that called for the reservation in each project of at least one-half of the dwelling units for persons of low or moderate income.7

The Task Force, led by Bonnie Neumeier, tore the plan apart. Neumeier complained that the plan failed to prescribe specific solutions to problems it outlined and pointed out that the consultant deleted an “education overview” prepared by the Task Force. She added that the Task Force had not voted on criteria for defining proposed architectural resource clusters or on the plan’s development policies, which, among other deficiencies, devoted too much space and detail to historic districts and too little to low-income housing. She also observed discrepancies between the text and the maps in the zoning recommendations.8 Neumeier then wrote recommendations for consideration by the Task Force9 (twenty-two typed pages of text, ten pages of revised land use and zoning maps, and two short attachments) that advanced from an assumption of the normality, legitimacy, and vitality of predominantly low-income neighborhoods, including Over-the-Rhine, and proposed that the physical environment of the whole area should remain cheap and plain as long as the residents liked it that way.

This view appeared at the beginning of the critique in its review of the draft plan’s history of Over-the-Rhine, which presented poverty as something to be eliminated. Neumeier said the story would have to be rewritten by the residents as a history that made “more of a positive statement of who we are” and that gave a more upbeat account of housing rehabilitation for the poor since the late 1970s, when Buddy Gray and his allies became important players in the Over-the-Rhine drama. Similarly, Neumeier disliked the plan’s use of the term “vagrants,” which she called a “slander on our homeless people,” and proposed to amend a section on
current planning efforts to give residents (rather than former planning commissioner Herb Stevens) the credit for initiating the Planning Task Force.\textsuperscript{10}

Neumeier also disliked the “value judgments” in the next section of the draft. She proposed to change a reference to “poorly educated women” into an observation that low levels of education among women typified low-income neighborhoods. She also proposed to explain the difficulties confronting such women, including the absence of equal opportunities for education and jobs and the fact that they often had sole responsibility for raising their children. She defended the desire of Task Force members to place high-density residential land uses near and around warehouses and industries as a practice befitting the mixed land uses of Over-the-Rhine, even though conventional planning wisdom and the draft plan condemned such “spot zoning.”\textsuperscript{11}

Neumeier then came down hard on the draft plan’s “Visual Analysis,” lambasting it even as she proposed its deletion. This chapter, said Neumeier, represented only the consultants’ point of view, gave a “bleak, depressing view of the community,” neglected “people oriented conceptions,” and too often cited the “attractiveness” of views of the city as seen from Over-the-Rhine rather than views inside the area. Residents of Over-the-Rhine should decide “what looks good, feels good and is valued and positive and attractive, . . . particularly as it relates to the planning of our community,” Neumeier said.\textsuperscript{12}

The next part of the draft plan, “Architectural Resource Clusters,” received even rougher treatment. Neumeier said the consultant and the city’s Historic Conservation Office and Planning Commission staff drew up the section without the participation or approval of members of the Task Force, who objected to its goals and objectives and the local historic districts recommended in it. Neumeier wanted this chapter deleted too, but nonetheless wrote a denunciation of both national and local historic districts, said the residents would never even consider local historic districts until all low-income residents in the area had secured housing, and climaxed the assault with a page and a half criticism of specific aspects of the chapter, including its failure to point out “neighborhood efforts” to prevent the demolition of old buildings, such as the passage of the interim development control districts and the neighborhood housing retention ordinances.\textsuperscript{13}
Finally, Neumeier proposed to amend extensively part of the last chapter of the draft plan. This section included land use and zoning recommendations as well as neighborhood improvement policies, to which she offered eight pages of proposed changes, including the deletion of all references to “historic” characteristics or districts. She also dismissed the neighborhood improvement strategies as unacceptable because the Task Force had played no part in devising them and because they failed to relate specifically to the plan’s emphasis on low-income housing. In addition, the neighborhood improvement strategies offended Neumeier because they seemed likely to attract more prosperous “outsiders” into the area by promising new “infill” housing and “pie-in-the-sky” design ideas, such as “dreams about cobblestone pavements,” a “village commons look, and bicycle/pedestrian paths.”

The Task Force revised slightly Neumeier’s revision of the plan, adopted it in February 1984, and then offered to work out with Murray a compromise version of the draft. This uncharacteristically civil move came not as a gesture of conciliation, but in response to a rumor that Guest would reject the Task Force’s handiwork. Murray fielded this request by arranging for talks between Guest and Gray in which Guest managed to wring some concessions from Gray by threatening to walk out of the negotiations. Gray, for example, approved the inclusion of Guest’s development policies but at the price of altering the historic preservation proposal to state that such action might be considered in the future. Gray also wanted to eliminate—but finally agreed to relegate to an appendix—a proposal to preserve the architectural “clusters” that could not pass muster as historic districts. But the two reached no agreement on how to zone the area around the Drop-Inn Shelter, which Gray preferred to designate for high-density residential (R-7) and Guest for office use.

After these negotiations the Planning Commission amended the city’s housing allocation policy to permit additional low-income units in Over-the-Rhine, and Birdsall and Gray revised the draft plan according to the compromise worked out between the Task Force and city administration representatives. The Task Force took under consideration and approved this version of the plan in September 1984 at its thirty-sixth and, as it turned out, final meeting, one year after Guest’s target date for completing the plan. This took time, however, because Task Force
members made thirty-four corrections covering errors of fact and omission, typographical mistakes, and out-of-date information in the last revision of the draft plan.\textsuperscript{18}

At this point the pace of planning for the future of Over-the-Rhine picked up, but only slightly. Jim Bower, chairman of the Planning Task Force, formally delivered the comprehensive plan—an inch-thick document composed of 190 pages—to the Planning Commission and city manager Murray,\textsuperscript{19} who met on February 6, 1985, with a contingent from the Task Force and pledged his support for the Task Force's comprehensive plan. Gray thanked Murray for that, but also registered with him a complaint about Guest's idea of office district zoning around the Drop-Inn Shelter. Gray contended that such zoning would jeopardize the future of the facility in what he depicted as an ideal location "near our people, on the edge of downtown, on the edge of Over-the-Rhine, a couple of blocks away from the nearest bars, and in a section with a small residential population."\textsuperscript{20}

By this time, however, Guest had adopted a strategy for dealing with the next step in the planning process that put him in opposition to both the city manager and the Task Force. Guest did not think the Task Force's comprehensive plan would be approved by either the Planning Commission or city council because it, like the Forusz plan of 1975, was too long, too complicated, and loaded with non-essential details, such as the history of the community. As planning director, however, he felt responsible for securing the approval of some kind of plan. So he proposed to give Buddy Gray "everything he wanted," but in a more succinct package.\textsuperscript{21}

Guest did not formally reject the comprehensive plan. Instead, he recommended that the Planning Commission accept it, which meant "recognizing that it exists without approving or disapproving it," and then adopt a two-part package prepared by Guest. The first part selected from the comprehensive plan twenty-five goals, six categories of development policies, and twenty-two land use maps for approval as parts of the Coordinated City Plan. The second advocated the preparation of a short urban renewal plan for adoption by the Planning Commission and city council, a document necessary to authorize the city to expend funds to acquire property through eminent domain (if necessary) and to carry out federally subsidized projects in the area.\textsuperscript{22}

Guest's report came before the Planning Commission for its initial
public hearing in May 1985. It was a long session that opened with a blis­tering attack on Guest's recommendations by Task Force chairperson Jim Bower, who insisted on the adoption of the Task Force's comprehensive plan in its entirety. So, too, did several other speakers, including former planning director Stevens and Buddy Gray. But James Tarbell, as a repre­sentative of the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce, denounced both the comprehensive plan and the Guest proposal. Tarbell claimed that both lacked balance, discouraged housing renovators and business developers, and contradicted city council's policy of distributing low-income subsidized housing throughout the city. The proposal for giving top priority to low-income housing, he charged, rested on a "ghetto mentality" and amounted to "saying high-income housing should be the top priority of Hyde Park" (one of the city's wealthiest neighborhoods).

The Planning Commission's second hearing on Guest's proposals on May 17 lasted five hours and proved even livelier. Bower again backed the comprehensive plan, a position supported by the testimony of twenty-two others, not counting five people who talked only about "saving" the Drop-Inn Shelter from the threat of office zoning and one person who used the occasion to denounce historic preservation as leading invariably to the involuntary displacement of the poor. The commission­ers then listened to the eighteen speakers who opposed the adoption of the comprehensive plan, the last of whom, Tarbell, not only pilloried both the comprehensive plan and the Guest alternative but also called for the appointment of a new Task Force to write a plan capable of command­ing a consensus of support.

At this point Murray, who had not attended the first public hearing, spoke out to encourage the Planning Commission and city council to approve the comprehensive plan. He chastised those who called it "the Buddy Gray Plan," which struck Murray as an affront to the many "citizen volunteers" who put so much time and work into the effort. But he also addressed several particular criticisms of the plan, especially the charge that the supporters of 5,520 low-income housing units wanted to create a perpetual slum by excluding upper-income residents. He contended instead that "we want rich and poor people" in Over-the-Rhine, which he described as capable of containing 11,000 housing units, all of which, above 5,520, could be reserved for upper-income people, if neces­sary by amending the plan.
Murray also attacked those who thought that approval of the plan would prevent the city from spending money on anything except low-income housing. He described the plan as a guideline, “not a Bible,” the goals and objectives of which did not subordinate commercial and industrial development to housing, all of which could “receive money at the same time.” The plan merely intended to say, insisted Murray, that “where housing is concerned, public moneys will be allocated to meeting the 5,520 low income housing goal as a priority before . . . upper income housing.” He closed by warning low-income housing proponents that such housing required federal government aid that was “drying up” to such an extent that “our goals may not be met. Nonetheless,” he added, “we should try as genuinely as possible.”

Murray in these remarks offered the Planning Commission an easy way out of the argument: mollify the Gray faction by adopting the comprehensive plan and placate the Tarbell faction by persuading it that the plan’s top priority could not be fulfilled. The commissioners, however, got into a wrangle. Marion Spencer, city council’s representative on the Planning Commission (and the city’s first female African American council member), moved the approval of the comprehensive plan, which fell to a tie vote. Commissioner Donald J. Mooney responded by proposing to pursue Guest’s urban renewal/Coordinated City Plan approach and to review and perhaps revise his specific recommendations for each. This passed, but the Planning Commission put off working out the details because of “considerable confusion” over what would be considered for transfer into the Coordinated City Plan and what should be considered for insertion into the urban renewal plan.

While Guest and his staff clarified these details Murray conferred privately with the commissioners about the Over-the-Rhine situation. He hoped to patch up the rift between Mooney, Spencer, and himself, which seemed likely after Mooney showed Spencer and Murray the latest version of his scheme. But Murray also lobbied successfully for the insertion of language to make clear the city’s dedication to commercial and industrial development in Over-the-Rhine because of his previous commitment of support to the Verdin Bell Company’s efforts to rehabilitate a nineteenth-century Catholic church and school complex (St. Paul’s) in the Pendleton neighborhood for use as a market for religious goods.

Meanwhile, Mooney made additional efforts to build a consensus for
his scheme both on the Planning Commission and among the followers of Gray and Tarbell. First, Mooney, fellow commissioner Estelle Berman, and urban conservator Genevieve Ray went over the goals, objectives, and development policies for transfer from the comprehensive plan to the Coordinated City Plan and drafted amendments and alternative language for consideration by the Planning Commission (they changed the proposed zoning around the Drop-Inn Shelter from office to public or quasi-public). Mooney opened the public hearing on these items by announcing that the Planning Commission had spent eight hours discussing the plan—"a lot of discussion," interjected city manager Murray—after which it agreed to hear no more testimony on the issue.²⁹ Mooney and Berman then unveiled their revisions—a dozen minor changes, almost all of which aimed at mollifying Tarbell and his allies but none of which removed low-income housing as the top priority for the future of Over-the-Rhine or eliminated or reduced the target of 5,520 low-income units. The proposals received mixed reviews.³⁰ Buddy Gray complained that the Planning Commission had watered down the previous version of the plan because of "pressure from the urban gentry that has moved into the neighborhood" but admitted to "a good feeling" because the compromise represented a step forward that put "the city on record for low-income housing." Tarbell, however, denounced the Planning Commission for not going far enough in encouraging commercial projects and residential developments for people of all income levels. He also scoffed at Murray's expression of hope for commercial and industrial development as "a self-serving statement to appease critics" and claimed that the low-income housing priority set the neighborhood on a "tragic" course, which he described as a "serious mistake" both "symbolically" and "practically."³¹ After these remarks the Planning Commission approved Guest's revised package and sent the urban renewal plan³² to city council's Urban Development Committee. The chair of this committee, former mayor David Mann, made clear very early his support for the document by describing it as a collection of goals and objectives to guide decisions rather than as a legally binding blueprint, and by emphasizing that the plan could be changed if it failed to produce desirable results. Advocates of the plan dominated the subsequent floor discussion, and a dozen of them
testified before Buddy Gray took the floor to make a closing plea. He characterized the plan as an assemblage of compromises, some of which he disliked. But he praised the low-income housing features while contending that they would not prevent the moving in of higher-income people. Gray also pointed out that the plan represented merely guidelines rather than commandments, but promised to watch implementation decisions closely and on a case-by-case basis because “we want low income housing protected.”

The Urban Development Committee approved the plan and took it in August to city council. Mann there described it as a plan that offered commercial and residential balance, respect for “historic resources,” and a chance for persons of all income levels to live in Over-the-Rhine while protecting the right of current poor residents to remain, a point he especially emphasized. He also repeated his depiction of the plan as a statement of “desire and hope” providing guidelines for the actions of city government without restricting private development activities. After hearing statements for and against by Gray and Tarbell, council approved and adopted the Over-the-Rhine urban renewal plan by an eight to one count.

Buddy Gray had called the urban renewal plan a compromise, although he might more accurately have called it a victory for racial and socioeconomic separatism. The chances of its yielding a significant level of mixed-income residential and commercial development looked slim because of the low-income housing priority, because of the existence of the Over-the-Rhine low-income neighborhood housing retention ordinance, and because Gray and his allies expected to (and did) control the implementation of the plan. Gray and his allies, that is, held to and realized a vision of an Over-the-Rhine dominated by an ideologically homogeneous people—theirselfs and the mostly black, low-income people they had chosen to represent and reside among—who wielded sufficient influence to control economic and residential development and redevelopment, social service and religious agencies, and acceptable life styles in Over-the-Rhine. The Gray faction sought from outsiders not toleration—a term that connoted the patronizing of an inferior—but recognition as equals and as the sole representatives of the poor from a territorial base under its control.
This stance, ironically, put the Gray faction in league on a variety of scores with the experts who wrote the Cincinnati metropolitan plans of 1925 and 1948. The Gray faction, like the metropolitan planners, loved homogeneous neighborhoods. And like the metropolitan planners, Gray and his allies objected to the idea of maximum feasible participation of all those concerned with the area, a form of planning that engaged not only local residents but also city government, its consultants, and non-residents with a stake of some sort in the future of the sub-community as part of the larger social, cultural, and civic entity. Instead, the Gray faction preferred community control, a form of minimal feasible participation that eliminated outsiders as players by reducing them to meeting organizers, clerks, research assistants, and copy editors, and by casting city council members as rubber-stampers.

Yet the Gray faction had not returned entirely to the past. The metropolitan planners had deplored the mixing of commercial, industrial, and residential land uses, a practice warmly endorsed by Gray and his allies. And the metropolitan planners had identified the public interest with the welfare of the metropolis, an interest they put before and above the particular interests of the various groups and parts that comprised the metropolis. The Gray faction (like others after the mid-1950s) did not talk about the metropolis and said little about the welfare of the city, which it implicitly viewed as a collection of liberated local communities free to pursue goals, objectives, and life styles chosen by their residents. To the Gray faction the city did not resemble an organically related system of groups and parts but an agglomeration of self-determining entities, a balkanized collection of mutually suspicious and competitive local enclaves. This conception of the city ruled out compromises that might jeopardize the control of a community by the leaders of its majority (which by definition identified the chosen life style for the neighborhood) and made community control the key element in a politics of separation and isolation for each enclave.

Because of these views, the Gray faction, unlike the metropolitan planners, did not worry about nurturing cooperative and coordinative intergroup relations based on mutual understanding, empathy, and cordial coexistence. Instead, its members—and especially Gray—earned reputations as not only tenacious but also extraordinarily tough partisans who treated opponents with an incivility bordering on intimidation.
and who impugned the motives and disputed the veracity of anyone professing to care about the poor of Over-the-Rhine while seeking to integrate them with other kinds of individuals. The Gray faction, that is, assumed that the poor residents of Over-the-Rhine had chosen that place and poverty as their life style and for that reason deserved differentiation and segregation from others, poor or otherwise, who might prefer integration and who therefore deserved the right to pursue their life styles in some other neighborhood. By this reasoning people who sought to integrate Over-the-Rhine seemed either hypocrites ("they say they believe in choice but seek to integrate this neighborhood to change the life style of its residents and our ideology of separatism for the poor") or liars ("they do not really believe in choice for poor persons and seek to drive them out and take over the neighborhood"). In either case, the integrationists struck the Gray faction as subversives who sought to undermine the integrity of a neighborhood that poor residents and their representatives had selected as their own and started to shape into a no-frills social and physical environment appropriate for their aspirations. And the poor, like the wealthiest of racially and socioeconomically separatist suburbanites, claimed the Gray faction, should continue to enjoy that right of self-definition and self-determination.

Tarbell and his allies did not characterize the plan as a compromise but as a capitulation to racial and socioeconomic separatism. Yet they shared many of the views of Gray and his allies. The Tarbell faction also condoned the mixing of land uses and accepted the assumption that individuals should exercise a choice of life styles and of appropriately arranged and designed neighborhoods in which to pursue them. Tarbell objected to the Over-the-Rhine plan, however, because he thought it inhibited prosperous individuals from exercising their right to choose a neighborhood (and to help arrange and design it) and because it isolated the poor residents of Over-the-Rhine, a step that denied them ready access to alternative life styles and ideologies that they might mimic, adapt, or reject.

Tarbell also assumed that poverty itself denied the poor an effective choice of life style and no choice of residence except in predominantly low-income neighborhoods. Indeed, Tarbell thought of Over-the-Rhine as a ghetto for the underclass, a locality virtually abandoned by the working poor and now populated by the poorest of the poor, most of them
demoralized and functionally if not literally illiterate people under the control and manipulation of a well-intentioned but misguided group of soft-hearted, hard-headed, white middle-class drop-outs. Such a ghetto by definition restricted its residents, especially younger people, in their choice of life styles to those varieties pursued by their underclass neighbors or to those represented by Gray and the other white advocates for the homeless who resided in Over-the-Rhine, people who had, argued Tarbell, decided to live in the neighborhood, and a faction that insisted on ideological and life-style homogeneity.

Tarbell, that is, objected not so much to the presence of the Gray faction in Over-the-Rhine (at least in principle) as to its efforts to deprive poor people of day-to-day exposure to examples of alternative ways of thinking and living. He objected especially to the Gray faction's willingness to welcome large numbers of demoralized and irredeemable residents (such as “sloppy people” and “drunks,” as Tarbell described them) whose behavior would not be tolerated in other neighborhoods, including those of the working poor. Yet neither Tarbell nor the other integrationists talked much about the destiny of the presumably irredeemable poor, including deinstitutionalized mental patients. He and the others eschewed gentrification, a position suggesting that they thought the irredeemables would get along as well if not better after the integration of the neighborhood and would not require additional improvement efforts by government or philanthropists, which would have been futile gestures on behalf of people who could not be changed or change themselves.

The Tarbell faction also differed from Gray and his allies on the question of the planning process. Tarbell favored maximum feasible participation of all parties concerned with the area and thought the plan's defects derived from a defective process. The Tarbell faction contended that the Gray faction abandoned this ideal by dominating the Planning Task Force and by frustrating many business representatives into resigning. As for the city planners, Murray, and city council, Tarbell thought they simply but hypocritically went along with Gray out of deference to “community control.”

Yet the city administration and Planning Commission, like Gray, regarded the Over-the-Rhine urban renewal plan as a compromise. Mooney secured at least some rhetorical movement in adding balance to the
plan on the issues of residential and commercial development. Murray sent a message to commercial and industrial interests that he retained his commitment to the promotion of such developments and regarded the land use provisions of the urban renewal plan as satisfactory tools with which to get things done in small, targeted areas, the mode of operation he preferred from the beginning. But their sense of the urban renewal plan as a compromise also stemmed from their sharing of assumptions with other participants about individual choice and from their commitment to Tarbell's views about the ideal planning process.

Murray, Guest, and the planning commissioners, that is, felt also that individuals should make choices about their life styles and neighborhoods of residence, the basis on which rested the idea of participatory planning that involved representatives of residents of the area. And they supported a form of participatory planning involving the maximum feasible participation of all parties concerned, the rationale for their view of the active role of representatives of city government in making the final version of the plan. When this process seemed tilted too far in the direction of the residents, Murray and Guest intervened more forcefully in the process. The Planning Commission did the same thing by voting merely to accept rather than to adopt the comprehensive plan and by then amending the work of the planning staff on the entries to the Coordinated City Plan and the provisions of the urban renewal plan.

City council seemed also to regard the plan as a compromise, a stance registered by its approval of the Planning Commission recommendation. This vote in addition endorsed implicitly the validity of the planning process as an exercise involving the maximum feasible participation of all parties concerned. And council in discussing the plan as a guide to balance in the mixture of land uses and people sought to disarm critics by emphasizing that it constituted not a blueprint but a collection of goals, objectives, and recommended policies that might be interpreted loosely during implementation and even, as Mann pointed out, changed if necessary to assure the realization of the promise of balance.

City council in this way seemed to embrace both the idea of the plan as a compromise and the idea of balance (integration) as the ideal policy in the age of individual choice in life styles and neighborhoods. Yet the record in Over-the-Rhine since 1950—including the plan of 1985, which touted balance while making low-income housing, not balance, its top
priority—left unclear the meaning of the city’s commitment to this and
other neighborhoods. Did council intend to designate balance as the ap­
propriate policy for all the neighborhoods of the city? Or did it intend to
leave the issue of balance versus homogeneity to the choice of residents
of each neighborhood, a policy that might yield the status quo, a city di­
vided into white and black turfs overlain with several havens for the sepa­
ratist poor, many havens (mostly white ones) for the separatist non-poor,
and just a few havens for integrationists—a formula that gave more
choice in neighborhood design and arrangement to the separatist non-
poor than to the other two groups.

This ambiguity, moreover, stemmed largely from the fact that no one
in the Over-the-Rhine planning debate discussed the relationship of var­
ious proposals to the public interest defined as the welfare of the city as a
whole, a characteristic void in public discourse in the age of autonomous
neighborhoods. Such an assessment would surely have condemned the
Over-the-Rhine plan of 1985, which seemed likely to sustain the status
quo, despite the talk about balance during its adoption by city council.
The policy of standing pat, especially under conditions of no white popu­
lation growth by natural increase or in-migration, seemed more likely to
yield a continuation of conditions that in the 1950s prompted the long
search for new treatments for the inner city: an expanding black ghetto,
a growing black underclass, and racially fixated and fleeing white
middle- and upper-income classes. That search soon stalled, and almost
no one after the early 1970s focused the Over-the-Rhine debate on pov­
erty as a problem and on socioeconomic and racial residential integra­
tion as a way to both mitigate that problem and reduce the corrosive
effect of the persisting ghetto on African American morale and inter­
racial relations.