

# CHAPTER 4

Jane vs LOMEX

JANE JACOBS LIKED TO MOVE AROUND  
THE CITY BY BICYCLE...





IN THE 50s AND 60s IT WASN'T THAT COMMON, EVEN IN THE VILLAGE...



SHE LIKED TO LIVE AMONG OTHER PEOPLE, ALL TYPES OF PEOPLE...



TO MOVE AROUND THE URBAN HAVEN OF WASHINGTON SQUARE...



TO FOLLOW THE STREETS WHERE THE BUILDINGS OF THE OLD INDUSTRIAL WORLD GAVE WAY TO THE NEW BOHEMIAN ELITE...



TO FREQUENT THE WHITE HORSE TAVERN WHERE ALMOST COMPLETE UNKNOWNNS, WHO WOULD NOT STAY UNKNOWN FOR LONG, LIKED TO CONGREGATE...



JACKSON POLLOCK, BOB DYLAN, WILLEM DE KOONING, SUSAN SONTAG AND A YOUNG, GUITAR-STRUMMING, ED KOCH, WOULD BE MAYOR AMONG MANY OTHERS WHO WOULD SHAPE THE WORLD AROUND THEM...

IN 1955, NORMAN MAILER AND OTHER REBELLIOUS SPIRITS  
FOUNDED "THE VILLAGE VOICE".



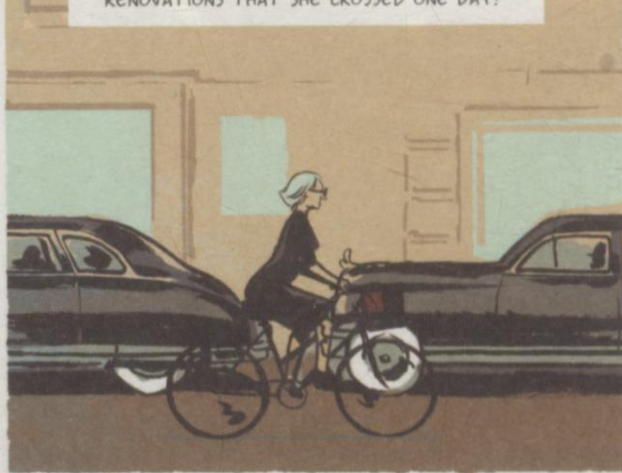
THE 60S ARE NO LONGER DEFINED BY REVERENCE FOR THE  
PROPRIETIES OF THE WASP BUT BY COLOURFUL AGITATION...



JANE JACOBS, WHO WORKS FOR A JOURNAL OF  
ARCHITECTURE, TRAVELS UP, DOWN AND ALL OVER  
MANHATTAN WRITING SHORT ARTICLES ON THE CITY...



COULD IT HAVE BEEN THE LIMOUSINES OF  
MOSES' ARMY, PLANNING YET MORE DRASTIC  
RENOVATIONS THAT SHE CROSSED ONE DAY?



COULD SHE HAVE BEEN STOPPED, WHILE MOSES STAGED ONE  
OF HIS MANY PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES?



THOSE ABOUT TO DO BATTLE SEEM UNEVENLY MATCHED. JACOBS  
IS POOR, UNKNOWN, WITH FEW QUALIFICATIONS... AND A WOMAN.





SHE IS ALSO THE ONLY WOMAN TO BE FOUND AT THE 1956 ARCHITECTURAL FORUM.

NO, NOT THE ONLY ONE.



BUT THE OTHERS ARE OBVIOUSLY WIVES.

WHEREAS YOU, YOU'RE READY TO GET UP AND SPEAK?



YES, BUT I'M NOT SURE IF THEY'LL LIKE WHAT I HAVE TO SAY

DOES IT MAKE YOU NERVOUS?



NOT AT ALL.

WELL THEN, LET'S GET UP ON STAGE.



MRS JACOBS YOU'VE RECENTLY PUBLISHED A STUDY ENTITLED "CITY CENTRES ARE FOR PEOPLE". COULD YOU ELABORATE FOR THOSE PRESENT?



CERTAINLY. I SEE THE CITY AS SOMETHING ALIVE, AS A COMPLEX ORGANISM THAT BREATHES AND PERPETUATES ITSELF.

DOES THIS MEAN THAT YOU ARE AGAINST URBAN PLANNING?

IF BY URBAN PLANNING YOU MEAN CARS GETTING PRIORITY OVER HUMAN BEINGS, THEN YES.

DOES THIS MEAN THAT YOU ARE AGAINST MODERN ARCHITECTURE?

NOT AT ALL, UNLESS IT MEANS BUILDING GREAT TOWERS LIKE THOSE LE CORBUSIER FAILED TO BUILD IN PARIS...



...UNLESS YOU MEAN BUILDING SO-CALLED GREEN SPACES WHERE NOW ONLY DOGS AND CRIMINALS CIRCULATE...

...UNLESS YOU MEAN DESTROYING SMALL FAMILY BUSINESSES IN ORDER TO CREATE URBAN DESERTS...

SOMETIMES I THINK THE AMERICAN CITY HAS BECOME AN INSANE ASYLUM RUN BY ITS SICKEST PATIENTS...

ARE YOU ALLUDING TO ANYONE IN PARTICULAR, MRS JACOBS?



I'LL LET YOU FIGURE THAT ONE OUT.

THAT WOMAN'S GOT SOME NERVE.

WHO IS SHE TALKING ABOUT?

WHY, THE GREAT ROBERT MOSES, MY DEAR.

THESE PROFESSIONAL QUARRELS ESCAPE ME, MY DEAR.





...ROBERT MOSES IS STILL BUILDING FURIOUSLY,  
AND AS THE YEARS GO BY THE PRESTIGIOUS  
PROJECTS MULTIPLY...



...THE LINCOLN CENTRE, ABOUT WHICH THE  
WORDS "RIGOR MORTIS" WERE USED TO  
DESCRIBE THE ARCHITECTURE...



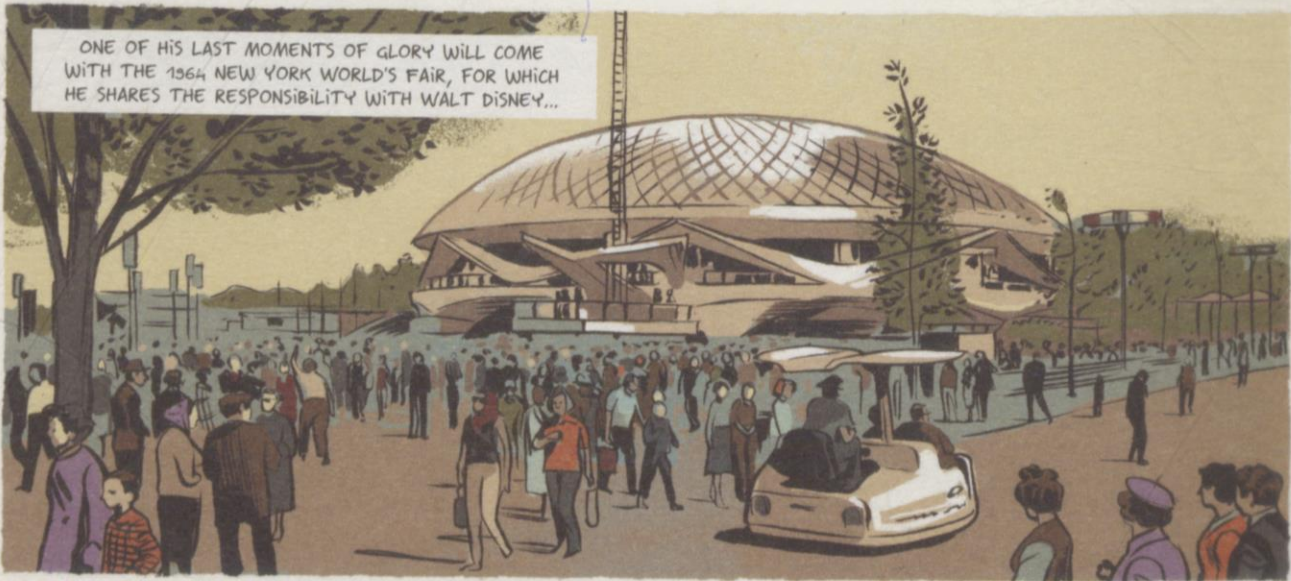
...THE UNITED NATIONS SKYSCRAPER, WHOSE  
REPUTATION AS A WORK OF ART ISN'T ANY BETTER...



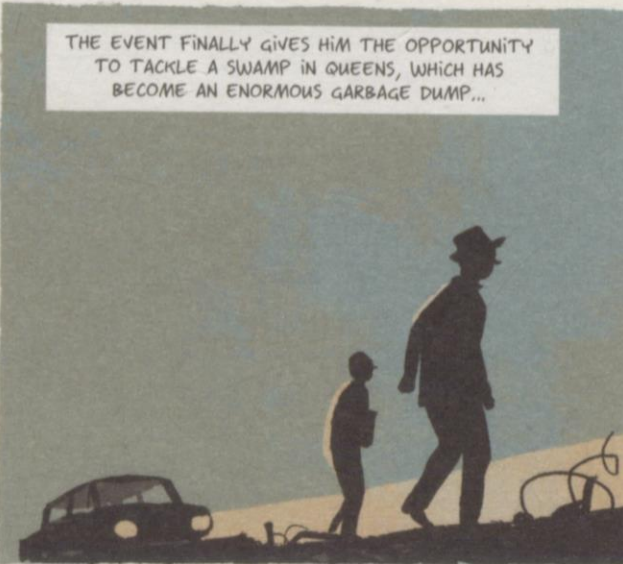
...THE VERRAZANO BRIDGE, BUILT IN 1954, IS OFTEN CONSIDERED HIS MASTERPIECE.



ONE OF HIS LAST MOMENTS OF GLORY WILL COME WITH THE 1964 NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, FOR WHICH HE SHARES THE RESPONSIBILITY WITH WALT DISNEY...



THE EVENT FINALLY GIVES HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO TACKLE A SWAMP IN QUEENS, WHICH HAS BECOME AN ENORMOUS GARBAGE DUMP...



HE CREATES FLUSHING MEADOWS PARK FROM SCRATCH BY WORKING HIS LABOURERS 24 HOURS A DAY UNDER FLOOD LIGHTS...





THE THEME OF THE FAIR IS "THE WORLD OF TOMORROW"  
AND MOSES, AS USUAL, TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE  
SITUATION TO GROOM HIS DEMIURGIC IMAGE.

IT REMAINS TODAY AS A HAGGARD MODERNIST SUBSIST,  
USED AS A BACKDROP FOR AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL  
SPACECRAFT LANDING IN THE FILM "MEN IN BLACK"...

BUT THE WHOLE THING IS A FINANCIAL FAILURE.



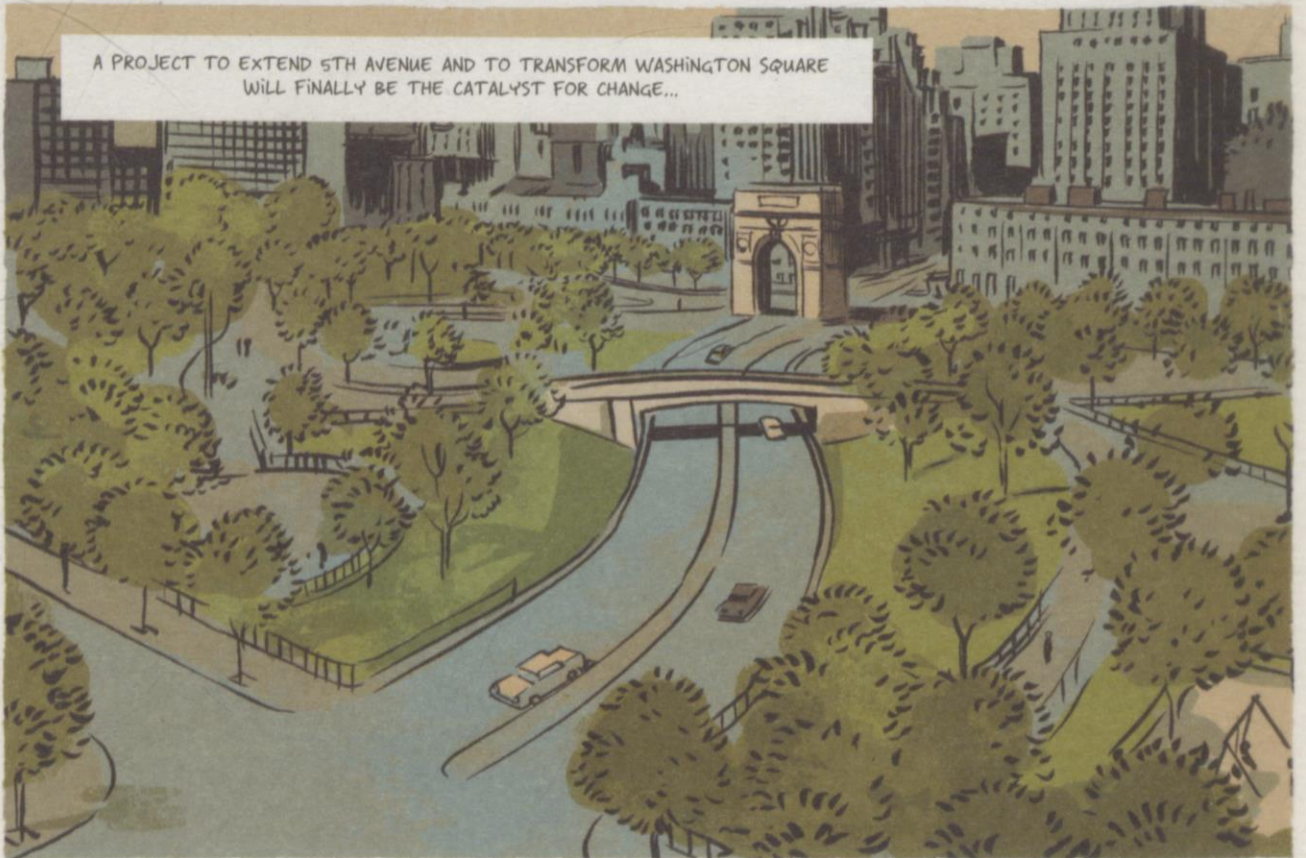
...AND MOSES' SPLENDID MODEL OF THE ENTIRE CITY  
OF NEW YORK GATHERS DUST IN A TINY DESERTED  
MUSEUM.



THINGS SLOWLY GET WORSE FOR THE MAN WHO FOR SO MANY YEARS WAS THE DARLING OF THE PRESS, OF POLITICIANS... AND RESIDENTS.



A PROJECT TO EXTEND 5TH AVENUE AND TO TRANSFORM WASHINGTON SQUARE WILL FINALLY BE THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE...

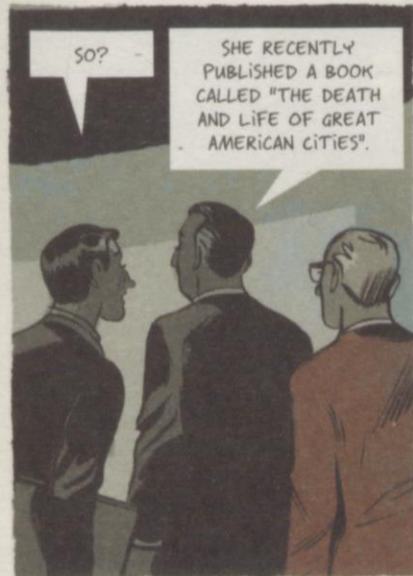


THIS INNER CITY OASIS CHERISHED FOR OVER A CENTURY BY WRITERS, PAINTERS, MUSICIANS AND EVERYDAY PEOPLE WILL FIND HISTORICAL DEFENDERS...

THE PROSPECT OF THIS SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS BEING DEVASTATED BY AN AUTOMOBILE INVASION OFFENDS A NEW SENSIBILITY TO THE OLD, PROVOKING RESISTANCE THAT IS AS STUBBORN AS IT IS SHREWD.



ON THE FRONT LINE, AMONG OTHER WOMEN, IS JANE JACOBS, WHO AS TIME GOES ON WILL DEVELOP STRANGE NEW TACTICS FOR HARASSING THE TECHNOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION...





YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO GET UP ON THIS STAGE!

WELL OF COURSE I DO, THIS IS A PUBLIC MEETING, IS IT NOT?



YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO TAKE THE MICROPHONE!

AND YET THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO. AND YOU, MISS, YOU TAKE DOWN WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY.



BE QUIET!

YOU, SHUT IT!



BE CAREFUL... MY MACHINE... IT'S BRAND NEW...



CALM DOWN.



COME WITH US.

WHAT AM I BEING CHARGED WITH EXACTLY?





IT'S TRUE THAT OVER THE YEARS ROBERT MOSES DEVELOPED SUCH ARROGANCE THAT HE STARTED TO THINK HIMSELF IRREPLACEABLE.

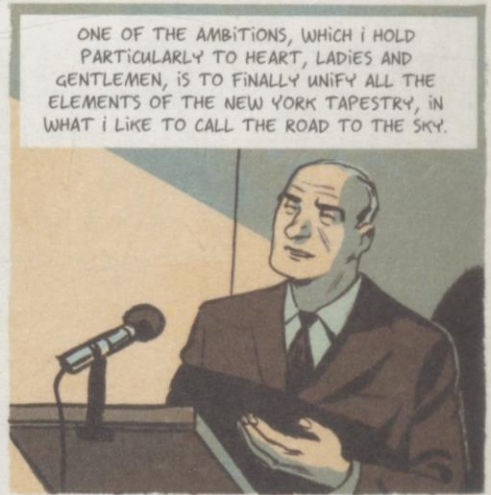
OTHERS, AT THE HIGHER ECHELONS, HOWEVER ARE STARTING TO THINK OTHERWISE...





IT'S ALSO SAFE TO SAY THAT ROBERT MOSES IS ALWAYS DRIVEN BY A GLOBAL VISION OF THE CITY, A VISION HE IS NOT ABOUT TO ABANDON...

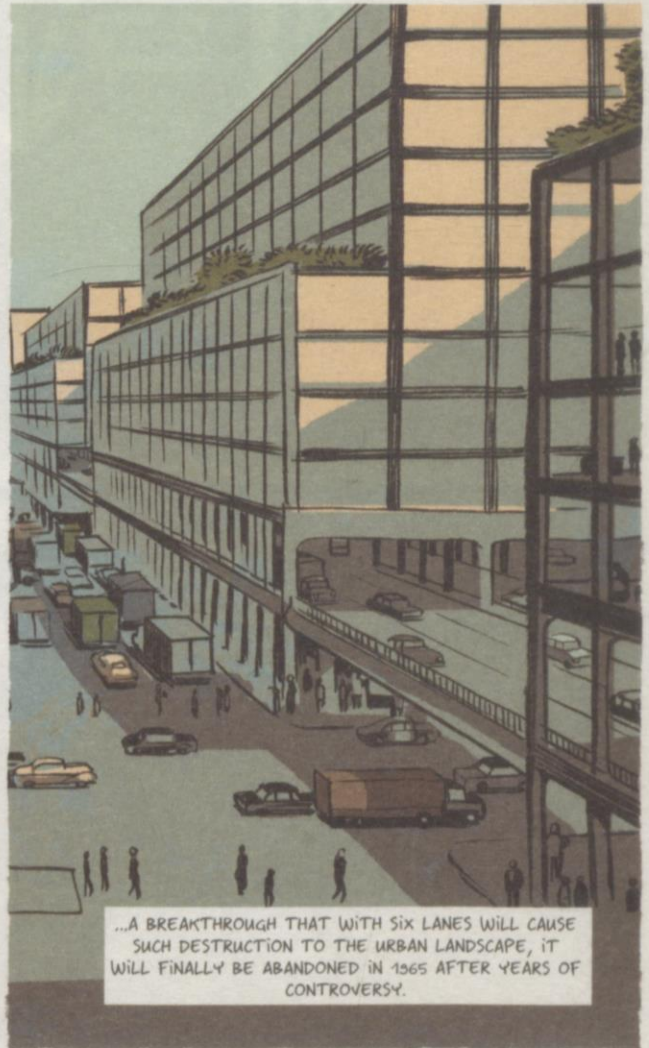
...AND MANY OTHERS ARE BEHIND HIM WHEN HE PRESENTS HIS IDEA OF THE FUTURE.



ONE OF THE AMBITIONS, WHICH I HOLD PARTICULARLY TO HEART, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IS TO FINALLY UNIFY ALL THE ELEMENTS OF THE NEW YORK TAPESTRY, IN WHAT I LIKE TO CALL THE ROAD TO THE SKY.

AMONG THESE COLOSSAL PROJECTS, IS THE MID-MANHATTAN EXPRESSWAY, AKA THE MME, INTENDED TO LINK THE LINCOLN AND QUEENS MIDTOWN TUNNELS...

...AN ELEVATED URBAN HIGHWAY LEVEL WITH THE 8TH FLOOR OF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING, MOVING STRAIGHT THROUGH THE INTERIOR OF CERTAIN BUILDINGS AND CUTTING THE ISLAND IN HALF...

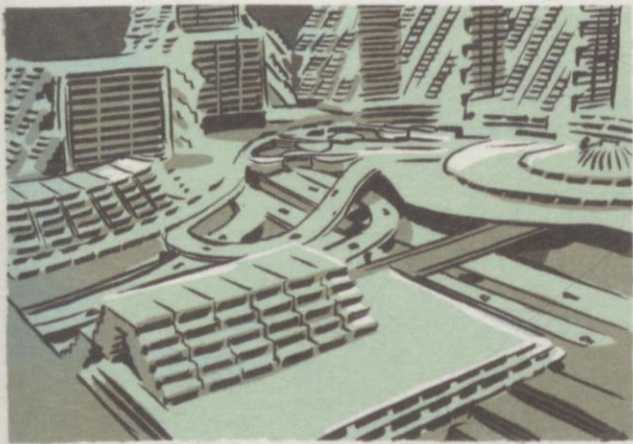


...A BREAKTHROUGH THAT WITH SIX LANES WILL CAUSE SUCH DESTRUCTION TO THE URBAN LANDSCAPE, IT WILL FINALLY BE ABANDONED IN 1965 AFTER YEARS OF CONTROVERSY.



BUT MOSES' FERTILE AND PERHAPS PERVERSE IMAGINATION HAS NO LIMITS AND A SECOND, EQUALLY GARGANTUAN PROJECT WILL BRING THE ANTAGONISM BETWEEN HIM AND JANE JACOBS TO A CLIMAX...

JANE HAS NO TROUBLE DENOUNCING THE MONSTROUS "SPAGHETTI BOWL" THAT WILL CONSTITUTE THE LOWER MANHATTAN EXPRESSWAY, SOON ALSO TO BE KNOWN AS THE LOMEX...



ALL THAT CONSTITUTES NEW YORK'S HERITAGE, BUT ALSO THE MEMORY OF THE TENEMENTS CRAMMED WITH NEW IMMIGRANTS...



THE AIR LADEN WITH THE SMELL OF MEAT FROM THE MEATPACKING DISTRICT...

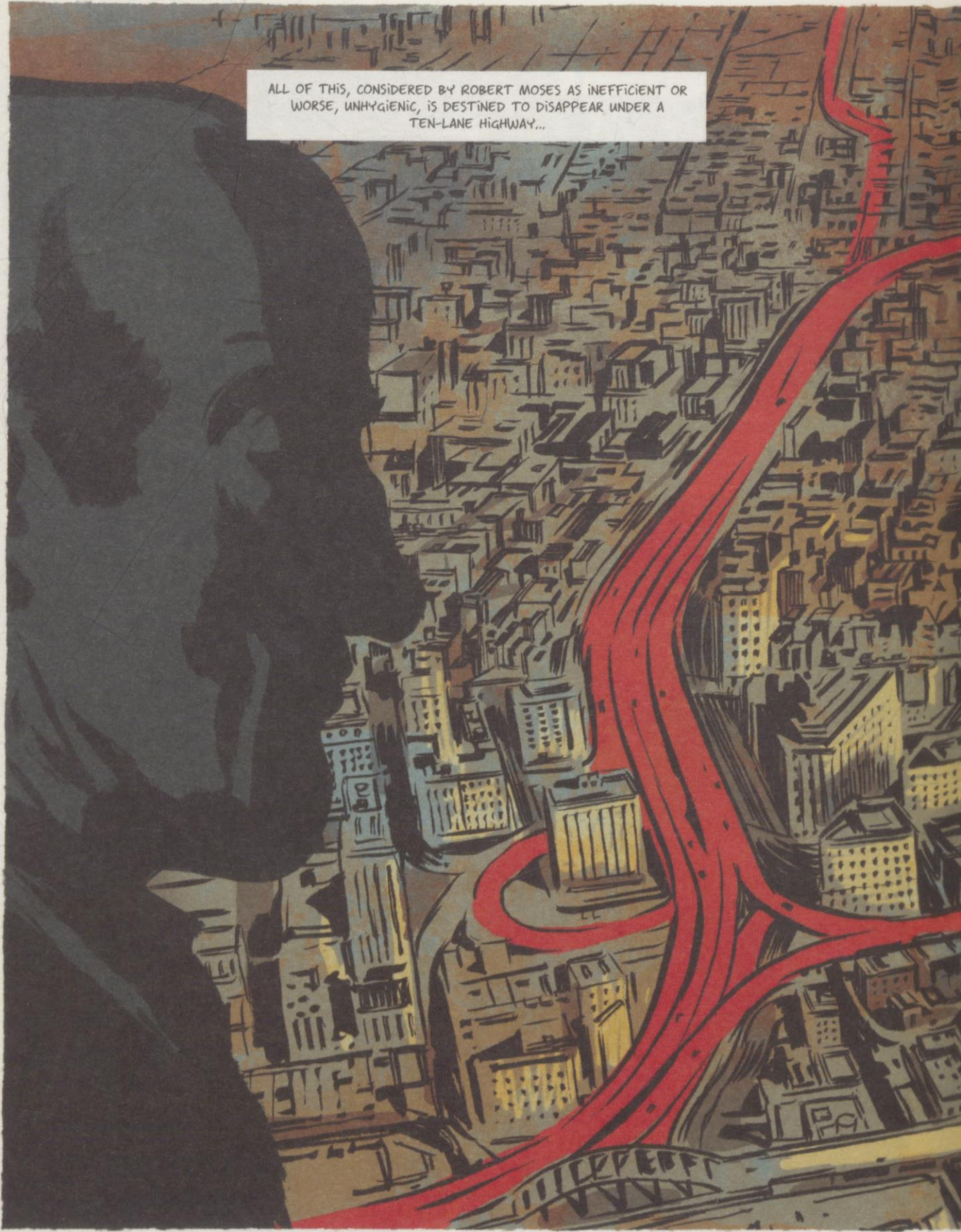


THE DISCARDED FISH OF FULTON STREET...



THE SEWING WORKSHOPS FULL OF EXPLOITED GIRLS...

ALL OF THIS, CONSIDERED BY ROBERT MOSES AS INEFFICIENT OR WORSE, UNHYGIENIC, IS DESTINED TO DISAPPEAR UNDER A TEN-LANE HIGHWAY...





JANE JACOBS WILL PERSONIFY THE REFUSAL OF THE SYSTEMATIC ERADICATION OF THE HUMAN, DONE IN THE NAME OF A HYPOTHETICALLY BETTER WORLD.



SHE WON'T HESITATE TO MOBILIZE THE WEAKEST TO CONFRONT THE LAWS OF THE STRONGEST...

LOOK AT OUR LITTLE ELVES!

YOU WOULDN'T HAVE THE NERVE TO SEND THESE CHILDREN OUT TO DEMONSTRATE?



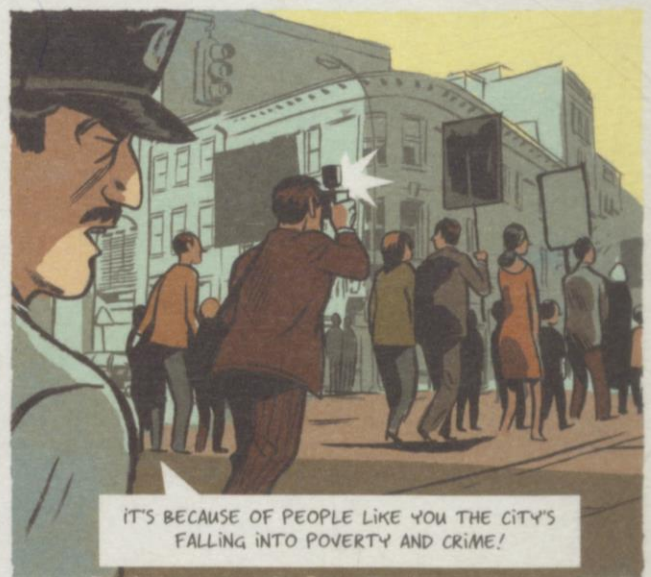
OF COURSE. YOU WOULDN'T HAVE THE NERVE TO ARREST THEM, WOULD YOU NOW?

!



AND THEIR PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS WILL BECOME VERY POPULAR WITH THE PRESS...

IT'S BECAUSE OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU THAT WE'RE LOSING IN VIETNAM!



IT'S BECAUSE OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU THE CITY'S FALLING INTO POVERTY AND CRIME!



HAVE YOU SEEN THE ARTICLE IN THE NEW YORK TIMES BY THE GREAT CRITIC LEWIS MUMFORD?

IT'S BECAUSE OF NEGATIVE THINKING LIKE HIS THAT PEOPLE ARE AGAINST OUR PROJECTS.



PERHAPS. BUT HE'S NOT WRONG WHEN HE SAYS THAT LOMEX WOULD BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS TURNING NEW YORK INTO LOS ANGELES...

I SAY, YOU'VE CHANGED YOUR TONE, JUST LIKE THE REST OF THEM!

LIKE ALL THESE OTHER MIDDLE-CLASS BOHEMIANS AND THEIR PRETENTIOUS OFFSPRING WHO ABANDON ALL NOTION OF THE PUBLIC GOOD TO DEFEND THEIR OWN PRECIOUS LITTLE PIECE OF TURF...



IN THE END IT'S YET ANOTHER BIG FISH IN THE NEW YORK POND THAT WILL DECIDE THE FUTURE OF THE UNSINKABLE DOCTOR MOSES:



NELSON ROCKEFELLER.

WHILE THE BRONX IS BURNING AND THE CITY IS SINKING IN BANKRUPTCY, SOME THINK THE WOUNDS INFLICTED ON THE CITY BY MOSES ARE TO BLAME FOR THE DISEASE.



OUR BOSS, MR MOSES, IS OF ANOTHER BREED. HE SEES FAR.

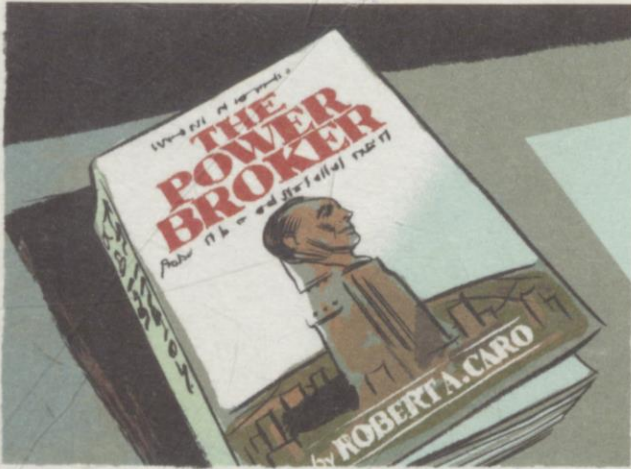
GOVERNOR FROM 1955 TO 1974, THIS DESCENDANT OF THE FAMOUS DYNASTY WILL BRING HIM DOWN TO THE RANK OF MERE CONSULTANT AND FINALLY BURY LOMEX IN 1971.



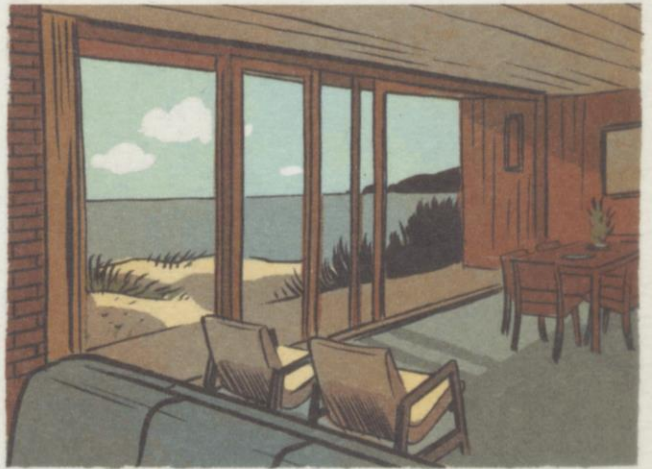
HE SLOWLY BEGINS TO LOSE HIS MANDATE... AS WELL AS HIS PRECIOUS TRIBOROUGH TOLLS IN 1968: IT'S THE END OF A WAR CHEST.



IN 1974, A DEVASTATING BIOGRAPHY BY ROBERT CARO PROPOSES "THE HISTORY OF NEW YORK AND THE STORY OF ROBERT MOSES ARE ONE AND THE SAME".



MOSES, WHO MARRIED HIS SECRETARY AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE, WILL END HIS DAYS IN HIS MODEST HOUSE ON GILGO BEACH WITH HIS LITTLE BOAT BOB...



FROM AFAR HE CAN CONTEMPLATE THE BRIDGE THAT, LIKE SO MANY OTHER SITES, WOULD ONE DAY TAKE HIS NAME: ROBERT MOSES CAUSEWAY.



WHEN HE DIES IN 1981 AT THE AGE OF 82, HE IS SEEN AS A KIND OF REPULSIVE OLD OGRE IN MATTERS OF URBAN PLANNING.



BUT EVEN IF HE LIVED LIKE A MOGUL IN BELMONT MANOR WHERE HE RECEIVED HIS ATTENDANTS ON LONG ISLAND...



...EVEN IF HE ORDERED HIS MEN, SLAMMING HIS FIST ON THE MOST REFINED OF TABLES, WITHOUT EVER CONCERNING HIMSELF WITH RULES THAT DIDN'T SUIT HIS DESIGNS...



...HE WAS NEVER A CAPITALIST LIKE THE OTHERS  
AND WHEN HE DIED HE HAD NO MORE THAN  
50,000 DOLLARS...

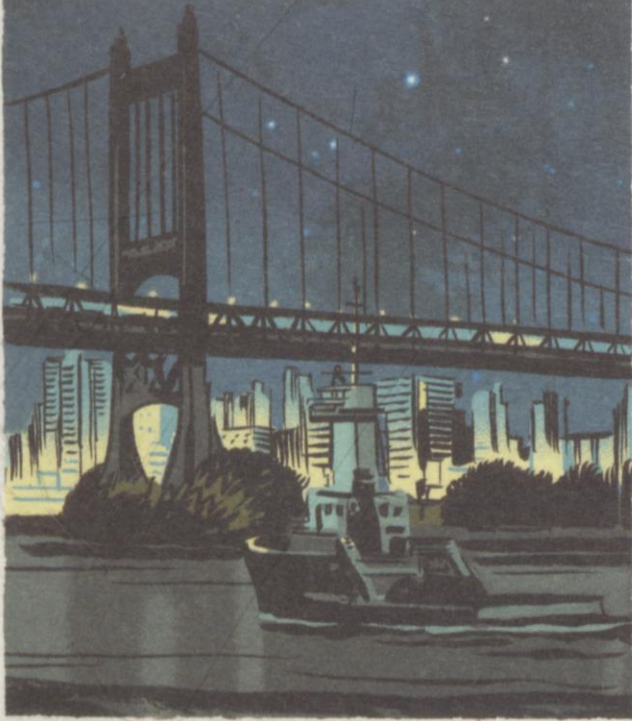
...JUST LIKE HAUSSMANN, HIS DISTANT PREDECESSOR,  
WHOM HE SO ADMIRED, DECRIED LIKE HIM, AND WHO WAS  
LEFT WITH NO MORE THAN A PREFECT'S RETIREMENT...



THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE TURNS AND NEW YORK RISES  
UP FROM ITS DERELICTION TO BECOME THE 21ST  
CENTURY'S UNSURPASSABLE INTERNATIONAL CITY...



AT A TIME WHEN TAX EVASION IMPEDES ANY REAL FORM OF PUBLIC INITIATIVE, PEOPLE ARE REDISCOVERING THE GREAT BUILDER, ROBERT MOSES, WHOSE LEGACY HAS ALLOWED THE CITY TO ENDURE...



BUT IT IS JANE JACOBS, VICTORIOUS OVER LOMEX, WHO HAS BECOME THE URBAN HERO, WHO EVERY 28TH OF JUNE HAS A DAY OF COMMEMORATION IN HER HONOUR...



CURIOSLY, THE REPUTATION SHE GAINED IN THE YEARS OF REBELLION CAN ALSO BE SEEN AS ONE OF THE PRECURSORS OF INNER-CITY GENTRIFICATION AND THE NIMBY SYNDROME ("NOT IN MY BACKYARD").





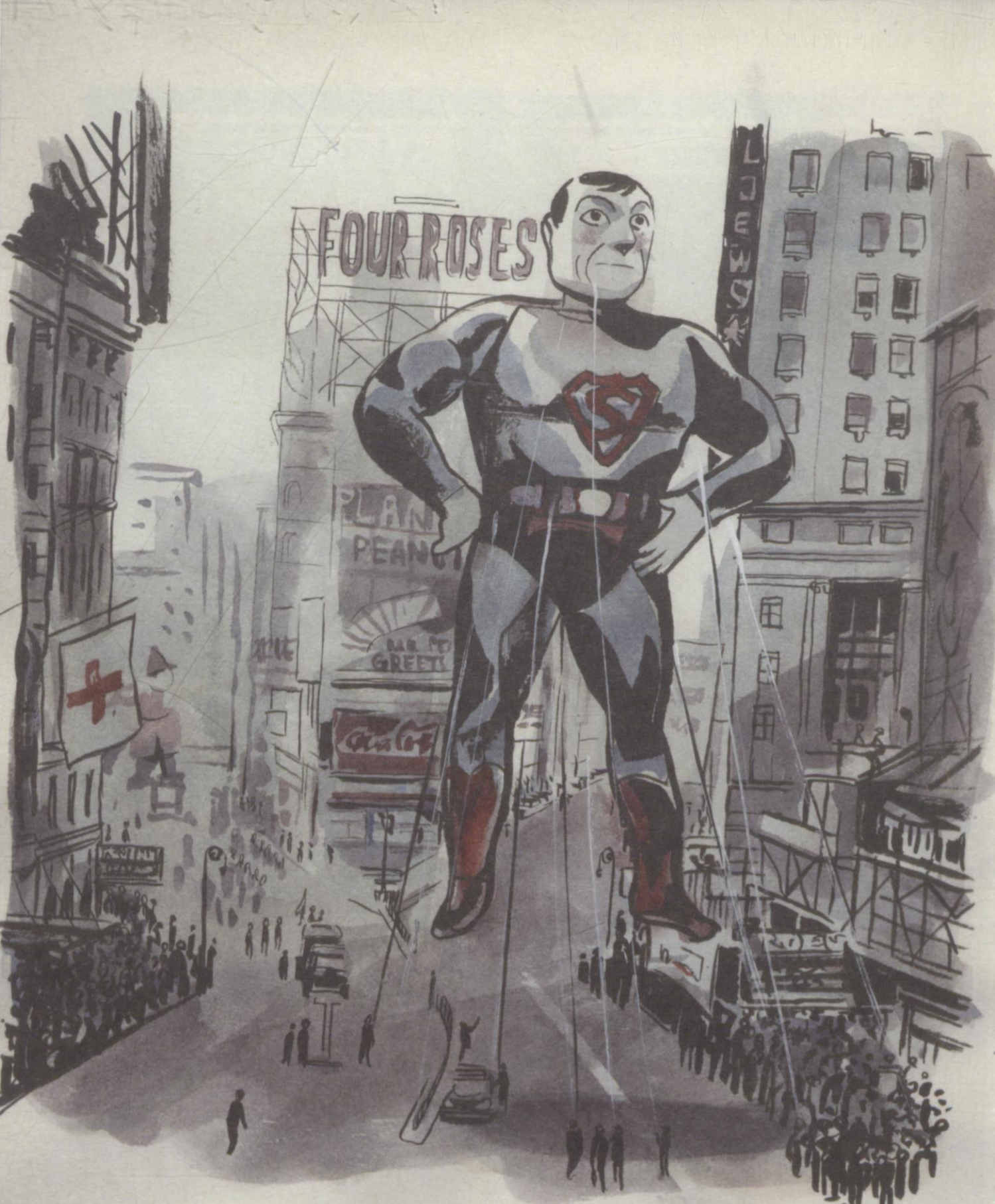
IN FACT, THANKS TO A STRANGE TWIST IN HISTORY, PART OF THE REPUBLICAN RIGHT, HOSTILE TO ANY KIND OF URBAN PLANNING (AND OF COURSE TO ANY KIND OF EXPROPRIATION), HAS ALWAYS BEEN ON JANE'S SIDE.



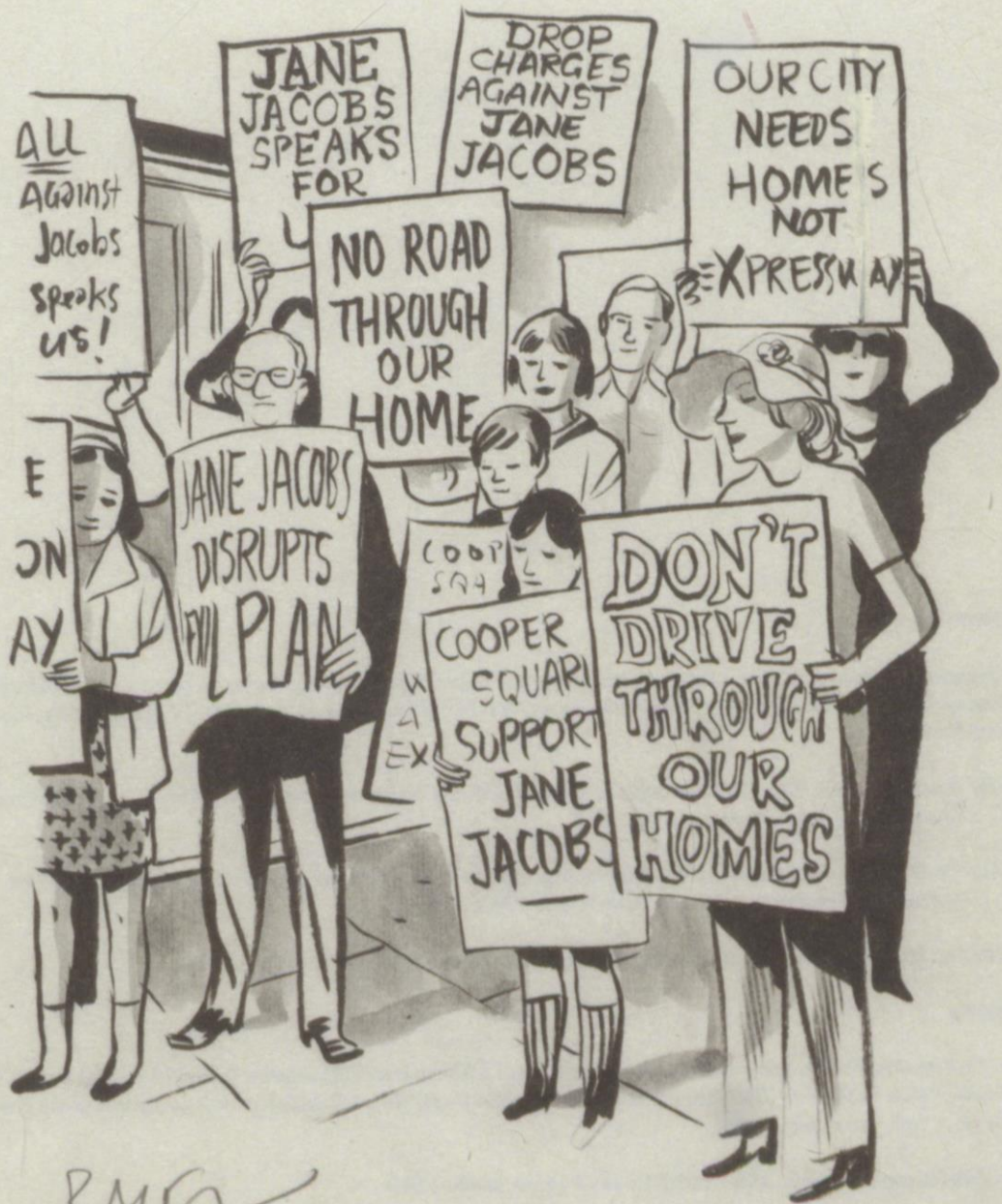
AND YET, THOUGH THE NAME REMAINS OBSCURE TO MANY OF ITS INHABITANTS, IT IS STILL THE SHADOW OF MOSES THAT DOMINATES NEW YORK'S SKYLINE THAT, FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE, HE SHAPED.



THE END



BAUER



BAUER