

THE AUSTRALIAN

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Causes of the youth explosion

THE HUGE increase in teenage crime in the United States, reported this week, reflects the ferocity of the current youth explosion throughout most of the Western world and Russia.

Its impact is already being felt in Australia where general lawlessness and acts of violence and assault by young people are mounting.

What has triggered this—and what is sustaining it—cannot be easily explained.

It is not just simply, as some people suggest, a matter of the influence of television or films; nor entirely one of domestic environment. These are contributory. But there is a deeper, underlying reason.

Youth today is the victim of a society which worships technology at the expense of sociology, and, unfortunately, the technological developments are racing ahead of the sociological.

It is—we must hope—a transitional period after which the gap between the two will be closed and civilised life given back its proper balance.

No great issues

Meanwhile, youth must endure and live in a world that becomes steadily more dehumanised; and it is in unconscious reaction to this that the young burst into crime and disorder; not in every instance, but in many.

Before the age of affluence reached down to the lowest levels of Western society, the family was the basic unit, the anchor piece, around which life placidly revolved.

To some extent this remains so today. For the most part, however, vast social changes have withered parental ties and uprooted family patterns and destroyed the controls they once exerted.

The tragedy, for youth, is that they have not been replaced.

Society has become terribly amorphous, fluid and unstable. It has no clear directions, no precise aims—except to be ever more acquisitive—and no great issues.

The Bomb, civil rights, hunger and poverty are immense problems. But for many people they are too diffused and incomprehensible to be a worry, or, as in the case of poverty particularly, they have become hidden in the real sense. In all, they touch very few young people.

A healthy sign

The absence of causes has merely left them more time to play with the toys of modern society—leisure, cars, money, sexual freedom, and so on. And given too much too soon, with no guidance and little supervision, they have tended to abuse them.

While it is impossible to condone the violence

Robin Boyd, on a visit to Tokyo, takes a ride on the cleanly designed monorail and draws some contrasts between the Japanese and Australian urban scenes.

MODERN JAPAN ON A CONCRETE BEAM

JUST OUTSIDE Tokyo's splendid international airport the monorail starts, almost level with the ground. By the time it reaches its other terminal near the centre of the city, eight miles and 15 minutes away, it is at a height of about six stores.

In many ways this monorail system represents modern Japan at its best. The design is as clean and polite as the attendants. Every appointment from the terminal escalator to the white and grey interior of the cars is impeccably made in the international functionalist idiom.

On massive concrete beam held aloft by T-shaped pylons it flies above the shallows of Tokyo Bay, above canals lined with barges, and little wooden houses with vine-covered verandas, above steel yards and junk heaps and multi-lane free-ways and low block-like buildings of many shapes but only one color.

The color is grey. The buildings' walls are grey. The roofs are darker grey. The tangle of telephone and power wires makes a grey net above the damp channel roads. At this time of the year the very air is a muggy, smoggy grey.

Preoccupied

The extraordinary mess that makes up most of Tokyo is thus very different from the Austins and Aginses. It is a pre-occupied, monochromatic, aimless untidiness rather than a varicolored, competitive, ambitious prettiness.

Some appalling plastic trinkets in the stores of Japan give evidence of a soft core of visual vulgarity somewhere in the community, but generally this is hidden at home behind the aboits. In the public street there is virtually no bad taste. Buildings simply happen, exhibiting no taste at all—or are they consciously and usually successfully, works of art. As is the monorail in its own way.

Monorail is not a good name. The three-piece train sits astride a single beam which bears its weight, but it has a subsidiary stabilising rail lowered down the beam on each side. Six rubber-tyred wheels, set

horizontally in each of the long side skirts of the carriages, bear on these side rails and hold the train steady even on the sharp, banked curves.

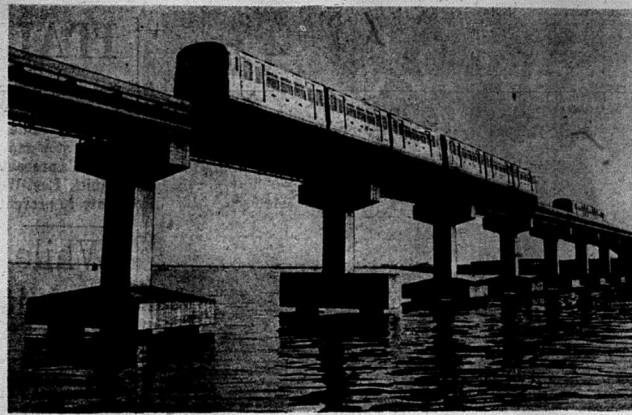
It is a good idea for public transport. The ride is as smooth as a concrete beam, the route is comparatively independent of traffic, or other obstructions on the ground, and the rail structure can be infinitely more attractive than the overhead wires of trams or trolley buses, as Tokyo's engineers have demonstrated.

Nevertheless, the brave experiment of the Japanese company which erected this "world's longest commercial monorail"—in time for the Olympic Games last October has not produced encouraging evidence for this newest and once promising answer to some of the world's urban transport problems. After the games, and after six months or so of curiously rides by tourists and local citizens, the system is now running at low capacity and its economy looks much shakier than its carriages, beautiful in most cases, yet these roads are criticised by some traffic engineers as being too narrow. Speed is limited to 45 miles an hour because the

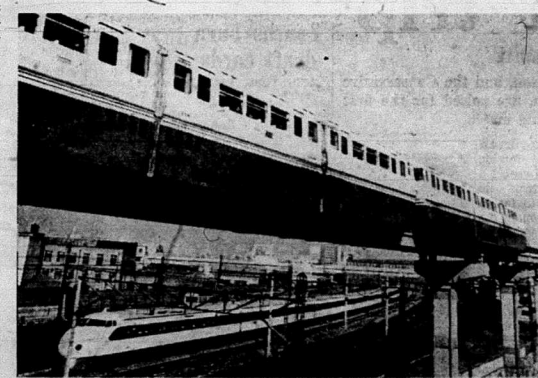
lanes are not wide while the curves are quite baroque. However, new road construction is now dropping far behind the demand, and building activity is faster than at any time since World War II. The new graduates from Tokyo's 10 schools of architecture find deflating work in the employ of building companies.

Not that there is any air of depression. It is just the Tokyo's building has dropped from a spring to a walk. Japan's three- or four star architects with international reputations at the highest level are keeping busy one way or another.

Maekawa is doing municipal work away from the capital—Yoshiura is building a house for John D. Rockefeller at Tarrytown, New York—although he has crooked at home because of bureaucratic interference he has felt obliged to resign as architect for the new Imperial Palace and the building stands half finished and languishing while his colleagues try to coax him back to the job. Meanwhile Kenzo Tange, who last year was awarded the Royal Institute of British Architects' gold medal by the Queen, has followed up his brilliant successes on the Olympic



OVER WATER: Tokyo's monorail flies above the shallows of Tokyo Bay.



OVER LAND: The monorail soars over ground-bound traffic.

stadiums with a great modern Roman Catholic cathedral. Without question Japan has come to the top level of creative modern architecture. But how can one country produce private buildings as magnificent as this cathedral, or the culture centre and public appointments as handsome as the airport and the monorail, and yet at the same time present such mess and confusion in the public streets?

It is all too easy. We do it ourselves, in our own different way, nearly as blatantly as Japan does.

Strange as it may seem, Australia and Japan have much in common at this time. Not only that marked contrast between private beauty and public squalor. The two countries also are the most highly developed industrial nations in Asia, and for all the enormous differences in background are the two most advanced in the ways of Western culture. Each also is of the generation of the international canned culture of today and is in some danger of losing identity.

Yoshiura, though an advanced modern architect, is frankly a sad man as he watches Japanese children growing up with their backs turned to every Japanese tradition and their eyes fixed on a Hollywood West.

Kenzo Tange, who is second to none in his use of advanced building technologies, nevertheless manages to build in genuine Japanese tradition to his buildings. But he too is sad when he contemplates modern architecture, for instance the commercial exploitation of local color. "Japanica," as in the new tourist hotels; and he deplores the mess of his city.

Driving away from his cathedral through narrow streets crowded with non-maintained buildings, broken fences, piled and soiled rubbish bins, posters, wires and signs, Kenzo Tange bent forward and exchanged a few sentences with his chauffeur.

Then he leant back and laughed. He was confused in English. "I asked him did he have to drive through such ugly streets—couldn't he find a better route?" He said it's very difficult, as the streets here are just as bad. Tokyo is a very ugly city."

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Taming Soviet Siberia

From STUART LOORY

The vast natural resources of what was once the Siberian wilderness today are being tapped with pioneering enthusiasm by Soviet engineers. Below, in the third article of a series on a trans-Siberia trip, Stuart Loory describes the huge dam and world's largest hydroelectric power plant at Bratsk.

THE MAN-MADE lake stretches behind the dam at Bratsk for almost 350 miles, filling in the valleys of the hilly forest country and creating innumerable small coves.

Approaching the dam site by air, the first thing passengers notice is the logs in the cove. Thousands of logs—all cut of uniform size and bundled into rafts. Soon the boats will come to take the rafts in tow to the huge new sawmills built here.

Then the forests come into focus—acres and acres of forests from which trees have been cut in neat squares.

Finally, there is the dam site. In December, 1954, Soviet engineers arrived at this spot and picked out a site where the Angara River narrows to just a half mile and flows through a 200-foot high gorge. They decided their power station would be built.

Today the Bratsk dam produces water to run the world's largest working hydroelectric station. Ten years ago, a handful of men braved weather and insects to start the dam in the summer the mosquitoes swarmed so thickly that on some days work had to be stopped. In the winter, the temperature dropped to minus 58 degrees some days, and that, too, stopped the work.

More than 137,000 people now live in a half-dozen new cities in the Bratsk region. From the dam itself does not appear out of the ordinary. A more breathtaking sight is the gleaming new pylons straddling away as far as the eye can see from the dam and supporting a tension-wire bridge, over which rivers of electricity flow to quench the thirst for electric power in the Soviet Far East.

From the bottom of the Angara River's gorge, the perspective changes. A visitor gets the feeling he has wandered into the set of a Hollywood spectacular. The dam makes insects of men, and the water flows over most the full half mile across its face, Lenin's words, "Comrades, this is Soviet Power!" The Electrification of the Whole Country," are insaid in letters a mile high.

Foreigners in Moscow are wont to joke about the progress of communism. "Evaluating put men into space," they say, "how will the system last if the moon is a Communist planet that decay into atoms almost as quickly as they are finished?" And in Bratsk, like Bratsk, though, that the visitor gets the feeling of the Soviet Union's dynamism.

New cities

Cities carved out of the forest wilderness, huge factories under construction, the electric generators whirring deep under the dam, the electricity flowing along those steel rivers under the dam across the country, the visitor sees all this.

So when Konstantin Knyazev, the director of the Bratsk station, says that within five years the world's largest aluminum plant will be built at Bratsk, he is not speaking of power, which is now excessive, he is to be believed. Even though the mill apparently had to be built in a remote

THIS WORLD of ours, which we enter by no de-

going to talk like a missionary among the heathen and use the old-fashioned and worn-out

Tennyson, looking down from the snows of age on the doings and sufferings of mankind, was

What are we up to here?