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and political discourse 2/40; Aug. 1996*

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Ecoso Exchange Newsletter

Crow Collection Association

Ecological, Social and Political Discourse

No 2/40, August 1996

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This Ecoso is smaller than usual to allow for the enclosure of a couple of leaflets about the IDEAS EXCHANGE DAY ON AUGUST 24TH.

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News from the Crow Collection.

The leaflets with this Ecoso will show the progress that is being made in organising the Ideas Exchange Day. A special thanks to Audrey Davies for making it possible to visit some of the Western Region Secondary Colleges. Also thanks to Bev Wendleken for designing the "Participatory Certificate" and to all those who have come to meetings of the *Steering Committee*".

Its been good to hear from some of our country supporters, Geoff Kerry (Orbost) sent us a booklet of his poems... "*People Power .. Perverse Verse*", Kylie O'Brien sent us two short essays for the Exchange Day (one from herself and another from a teenage friend). Kylie lives in northern New South Wales. Margaret Muir sent in a contribution about her ideal school. Margaret lives in Kangaroo Island. Its very pleasing that people living so far away like to feel part of the project.

Also welcome to Sally Carmody who is living in Korumburra, She wrote to say that she had recently come across a copy of Ecoso and was most interested in the information it provided.

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Fred Shepherd who lived in Horsham. All his life Fred worked for a better world. He was well known in the Wimmera for his courageous support for unions and world peace in a region where there tends to be blind prejudice against such movements.

After his retirement Fred was a surrogate grandfather to young children who needed such support. Our sympathy to Margaret, his sons and daughters and his many friends.

The numbers and letters on the address slip will let you know when your sub to Ecoso is due. ND, OD or any number lower than 2/40 is now due or overdue.

Ecoso 2/40, August '96, page 2.

What Sort of Schools Do We Want ?

A HEARTFELT PLEA FOR SMALL SCHOOLS

"What Sort of Society do We Want ?" This question is not treated idly by Margaret Muir, a mother of four young children. As she lives many hundreds of miles from Melbourne she cannot attend the Ideas Exchange Day so she has sent in her ideas about schools:-

"My eldest daughter attend a rural school of about 35 students.

"Parents were always welcome. Living closeby I often walked down to listen to the children's reading, and stayed for lunch. sitting outside with the teachers in a very casual atmosphere. There was always plenty of comings and goings of local people.

"This school served as a centre point for our community. We had a swimming pool at the school which we all used. All meetings were held at the school, so were concerts and special events and sometimes, in the weekend, birthday parties.

"I think schools like this are important for two reasons.

Firstly the children are in a perfect environment for developing self esteem... the classes are small, the teachers relaxed. Our school, had only two classes and thus a wide range of ages in each class. All in all it amounted to a very safe, secure and family like atmosphere, a very growing and welcoming place. Children who were at all shy or unsure were much more likely to feel safe, to be themselves and have an input into the situation.

"Secondly, because small schools give strength and identity to the community they serve. Being central and close to all the families there is a good community feeling. There is plenty of input and involvement from the community and wonderful support between the families.

"Recently, in Victoria, most small rural schools were closed leading to a few large schools with children having to travel greater distances each day.

"My experience with larger schools has been that children can't walk to school and are quite often driven, causing dangerous situations at arrival and departure times. Larger schools are more institutional and there is much less sense of community. (I feel much less threatened entering a small school than a large one).

I think it could only improve our society to re-open all the schools that were closed. And considering the advantages of small schools to us and our children, ultimately the whole society would benefit if more small schools were built."

What are your ideas about the sort of Education we want in Australia. ? You will have an opportunity to discuss this at the Ideas Exchange Day on August 24th at the Victoria University of Technology. information about the Ideas Exchange Day from 03. 329. 8685

Retrieving a "Gem" from the Murray

A Year Seven Student Project on Environmental Planning

(Based on a report by Angela Munro)

A recent report on Eco-tourism includes a "gem" worth giving to others. This "gem" will be discussed at the Ideas Exchange Day.

In her report on the Central Murray Eco-tourism Project Angela Munro describes how *secondary students at Yarrawonga were involved in a participatory urban design exercise*. The methods used could be replicated in other schools, for example on projects about the use of open space around the Bay and along the creeks and rivers, about the re-use of derelict factory buildings and so on.

Before describing the project it is necessary to give some background information.

HOW DID THE IDEA START ?

The main people responsible were Angela Munro, a planner who for some years chaired the Albury Wodonga Development Corporation, the graphic arts teacher at Yarrwonga Secondary College and an architect. The local newspaper also played a crucial role.

The towns along the Murray are concerned about their loss of income now that "pokey" trips are no longer so popular. The Shires of Berrigan, Corowa and Moira appealed for funds from the Commonwealth Department of Tourism to investigate Eco-tourism and last year Angela was appointed as the project planner.

WHAT IS ECO-TOURISM ?

Angela describes Eco-tourism in the following words.:-

Eco-tourism was first advocated in the 1980s by environmentalists aware of the growing interest world wide in wilderness. Studies were done which demonstrated the dollar value of conservation, and the economic argument supplemented the ecological case for bio-diversity.

The Eco-tourism Association of Australia fostered such thinking and explored opportunities for its application in practice, as have bodies such as the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the Australian and New Zealand Scientific Exploration Society. Increased levels of education and affluence, both in Australia and elsewhere generated a discriminating, independent minded traveller. This was associated with an increased mobility of students, young graduates, couples (double income - no kids) and early retirees with substantial disposable income. *The packaged, shallow and passive forms of tourism, often obliterating the very qualities which first attracted visitors, was anathema to this rapidly growing market.*

The world at their feet, they sought out those areas which offered unique or rare experiences and attributes, whether

anthropological, natural or cultural.....The challenge for any region is not simply the identification and marketing of such experiences, it is the planning and management of visitation such that the destination, the environment is not "loved to death".

At Yarrawonga year seven secondary students were involved in making a plan for the area around a derelict railway station.

THE SEVEN STEPS

Step 1. The first discussions with the students resulted in them interviewing their grandparents and other older residents about what Yarrawonga was like when they were young.

Step 2. These interviews resulted in the students making a collection of old photographs and other memorabilia.

Step 3. The students then went on a photo-tour of the town and its surrounding area and made a display of their snapshots.

Step 4. The discussion about the exhibits resulted in explanations about quite complex concepts such as sustainability.

Step 5. This was followed by a walk to the railway area, on the way discussing the architectural styles of the buildings and attempts at estimating the date they were built.

Step 6. The walk included such historic areas as the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden, the Mulwala Lake and the weir.

Step 7. On return to the classroom, using available material - timber, polystyrene, paints and pot scourers, a model for the railway area was constructed

Finally the model was ready to display to the school and the community. Angela used these words to describe this :-

The result highlighted the significant and historic railway station, looking down on an avenue of shade trees, linked through the town centre. The derelict land has been revegetated with indigeneous plantings; a small lake has been stocked as a trout cod reserve, a walking and cycle path now led through the native garden, continuing between the canal and the railway line and on around Lake Mulwala

This was the vision of a group of adolescents, who initially clearly saw it was "not cool" to appear to be interested. Nor did they imagine that they had any right to influence the layout and development of their town.

If you would like to see some of the project material from Yarrawonga, then come to the Ideas Exchange Day at the Victoria University, on Saturday, March 24th. Angela has offered to be an "enabler" at one of the discussion groups. The discussion groups are time-tabled to begin at 1,30 pm.

*Information about this project from Angela Munro 03.9347. 6560
Information about the Ideas Exchange Day 03. 329. 8685.*

A Fair Day's Pay for a Fair Day's Work

or

Each for Themselves and the Devil Take the Hindmost.

IDEAS ABOUT WORK AND UNIONISM

(Contributed by Una Voce)

For more than 150 years the union movement has ensured that there is some fairness in society. Just think of some of the slogan :-
Solidarity for Ever !

Unity is Strength !

United We Stand, Divided We Fall !

A Fair Day's Pay for a Fair Day's Work !

There are many, MANY, MANY more such evocative sayings. All of them seeking social solutions to exploitation. Each of them inspires a picture of people actively defending their living standards, not just their own, but everyone's.. of people finding an answer to their alienation.

But, how relevant is unionism today ? How can the union movement meet the challenges arising from changes in technology and the distribution of paid work ? These are some the question which will be discussed at the Ideas Exchange Day on August 24th,

CHANGES IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF PAID WORK

How we earn our bread and butter, and, whether there will be jam tomorrow depends on a number of interlocking factors such as :

- * Globalisation of the economy,
- * New technologies affecting both business and production,
- * The influx of women into the labour market,
- * Changing family patterns,
- * The escalation of out-work,
- * The growth of part-time employment.

The Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union's report on out-workers, *"The Hidden Price of Fashion"* reported research which found that there are at least 300,000 outworkers in Australia today. Most of them know nothing about unions. They are very much at the mercy of those who supply the materials and collect the finished products.

As regards those already covered by the unions, the present policy of the Federal Government is hell bent on destroying the limited protection provided by current industrial relations legislation.

In a recent article in *"Options"* Tony Evans (South Australian Trades and Labour Council Officer) wrote :-

No industrial relations system can "guarantee" fair wages and conditions, a point which is painfully obvious on a daily basis to many Australians. What the present system does provide is an "opportunity" to collectively win improvements in their living standards and "quality of work

life" including the minimisation of risks to health and safety while at work.

Tony Evans pointed out that Howard, Kennett and Court want to :-

- * Wipe out collective action from the experience of workers,
- * Reduce unions' ability to challenge and campaign against the "economic rationalist" agenda,
- * Use the penal provisions of the Trade Practices Act in industrial disputes.

UNIONS AND MOVEMENTS FOR CHANGE

The union movement is facing a huge challenge... A SURVIVAL CHALLENGE ! Writing about the Federal Government's proposed industrial legislation Tony Evans warns that :-

This is a threat to all movements because unions (for all their faults) remain a great source of organisation, innovation and inspiration. The collective experience of unionism builds activists (though not enough of them !) and helps support other movements, financially, organisationally and intellectually. That is why it is so important for the Liberals to break unionism.

Some community movements and community leaders are beginning to recognise the truth of Tony Evans's words :- that threats to unionism are threats to the community movement. For example the recent report by Sue Jackson of the Brotherhood of St Laurence "*The Way Forward, the Future of Work*" which recommended :-

- * Support for the Australian Industrial Commission,
- * Greater flexibility in welfare payments to account for the greater diversity in paid employment,
- * The spread of new jobs across communities and regions.

The study found increasing overwork. As real income declines and low paid employment and job insecurity increases, the working week for many is longer than 30 years ago.

In her 1995 Boyer Lectures Eva Cox made the following plea

Let's bring back the eight-hour day. Make this a maximum and penalise those who work longer. Can anyone really claim to be productive after an eight hour stint, paid or unpaid.

We need time to take part in social and communal activities. The human condition requires we have the time for public life as well as family and paid jobs

*What are your ideas ? . You will have a chance to exchange you ideas with others at the Ideas Exchange Day, August 24th, Peter Gibbons (Assist. Secretary of the Manufacturing Workers' Union and Chair of the Crow Collection Association) will be a speaker at the 11 am Forum. At 1.30 pm there will be a Discussion Group on "A Fair Days Work for a Fair Days Pay" ,
Information about the Ideas Exchange Day from 03.9329.8685*

Retrieval

A Fair Days Work for a Fair Days Pay

A page from "We, the People", published 1940

CHAPTER TWENTY: "YOU GUYS GOTTA ORGANIZE"



"You Guys Got - ta Or - gan - ize"

"WHAT's all this that's in the paper about the open shop?" asked Mr. Hennessey.

"Why, don't ye know," said Mr. Dooley. "Really, I'm surprised at yer ignorance, Hinnissey. What is th' open shop? Sure, 'tis where they kape the doors open to accommodate th' constant stream av min comin' in t' take jobs cheaper than th' min what has the jobs. 'Tis like this, Hinnissey: Suppose wan av these freeborn citizens is workin' in an open shop f'r th' princely wage av wan large iron dollar a day av tin hours. Along come another son-av-a-gun and he sez t' th' boss, 'Oi think oi could handle th' job nicely f'r ninety cints.'

"'Sure,' sez th' boss, and th' wan-dollar man gets out into th' crool worould t' exercise his inalienable roights as a free-born American citizen an' scab on some other poor devil. An' so it goes on, Hinnissey. An' who gits th' benefit? Thru, it saves th' boss money, but he don't care no more f'r money thin he does f'r his right eye:

"It's all principle wid him. He hates t' see men robbed av their indipindence. They must have their indipindence, regardless av anything else."

"But," said Mr. Hennessey, "those open-shop min ye menshun say they are f'r unions if properly conducted."

"Shure," said Mr. Dooley, "if properly conducted. An' there we are; an' how would they have thim conducted? No strikes, no rules, no contracts, no scales, hardly iny wages an' dam few members."

This is how Finley Peter Dunne, speaking through his famous character, Mr. Dooley, described the competition among unorganized workers which forced down their wages. In capitalist society workers and their employers are not equal in bargaining power. Because the employers own the means of production, they have the advantage; to lessen that advantage, workers organized into unions.

This is a page from a book called "We, the People" which was written by Leo Huberman and published by the Left Book Club (Victor Gollanz) in 1940.

Please excuse the sexist language, but the message for today is clear.

In the late 1930s and 1940s Victor Gollanz published dozens of books on social and political issues. Most of them are in the Crow Collection Room but have not been catalogued.

From about 1936 to 1946 the Left Book Club study circles were a very popular adult education for many young people throughout the English speaking world,.

The Crow Collection Room and the Australian Collection Room will be open from noon on the Ideas Exchange Day on August 24, thus there will be an opportunity for a short browse.

The Registration of Out-Workers.

Registration, in 1895, was the result of years of campaigning.

It did give some protection to clothing workers

This quote complements the article on OUTWORK in Ecoso 2/39. It is from "Outwork : An Alternative Mode of mployment". A CURA* study of the conditions and perceptions of outworkers in the Clothing Industry, 1976.

More than 100 years ago the Chief Inspector of Factories in Victoria referred to the situation developing in Victoria in the Clothing Industry at that time which was having both a deleterious effect on the Industry as a whole and leading to large scale exploitation of women This paragraph has an uncanny resemblance to the situation in the clothing industry today..(ie the mid 1970s when study was made).

*CURA was the Centre for Urban Research and Action in Fitzroy in 1970s/80s

And, Three Other Important Matters

PAINTING THE FUTURE REAL .. A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE WEST.?

Painting the Future Real is a community based multi-media project to explore what a socially and ecologically sustainable future might look like on the basalt plain between Melbourne's Docklands and Geelong, within the lifetime of a child born today.

It is a joint project between the Victoria University and the Australian Conservation Foundation. The team consists of writer Merrill Findlay, multi-media artists Csaba Szomosy, graphic designer Rebecca Kaye and architect Richard Lee. They will be working with people in the region and elsewhere to develop written and visual images that reflect community aspirations.

Some of work in progress from this project will be on display in the Library on the *Ideas Exchange Day* on August 24th.

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AUSTRALIANS HAVE A SENSE OF FAIR PLAY - HOPE FOR RECONCILIATION

Aboriginal activist Garey Foley told students at St Albans Campus of the Victoria University that the successful campaign to save Northlands College reaffirmed his belief that deep in the hearts of most Australians is a sense of fair play. There is a enormous amount of goodwill out there...What we saw at Northlands was genuine reconciliation.

Reconciliation, multiculturalism and social justice will be some of the issues to be discussed at the *Ideas Exchange Day*, on August 24th,, The theme for a discussion group on these issues has been set by a quote from Oodgeroo (Kath Walker). Speaking at the University of New South Wales, in 1991, she said. :-

*I had a dream of uniting all the best of all the races
in this beautiful country.*

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LITTLE FUTURE FOR PUBLIC HOUSING

No pretence - Its not Public Housing is the title of an article by Annette Wase in recent issue of *Western Region Housing Action* She warns that current policies will incite hatred, increase stigma and divide communities :-

1. Public housing will be more and more a residual safety net (people too incompent to access other forms of housing.
2. The private sector is eager about getting hands on the inner urban prime land now used for public housing
3. The all powerful role of the Department of Social Services in providing both income and housing will develop fertile grounds for witch hunts.

Ecoso guidelines and subscription rates are on the cover page.
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Exchanging Ideas Through Poetry

The Shadow I Cast.

by Nita Green

*I no longer wilt
In someone else's shadow*

*The shadow I cast
is thin and straight
and strong.*

*And as the sun sets,
it longer grows
as stronger now
my song*

*My shadow now
for all to see
is true and straight
and wholly ME*

*shadow cast
till sunset fades
and I depart
for other glades*

Home *by Jenny Lane*

*Warm earth
human faces
talk my language
write stories
from red rock heart*

*I've heard
it's a new country
no culture, no story
This is an old country
an old, old country
a timeless story*

*The land touches you.
Scratch the surface
three, four, five generations -
this land's not yours
You belong to the land*

*Warm earth
human faces
from ancient cultures
one, two generations
direct connection
with ancient earth*

*Warm earth
human faces
millennia steeped
in red rock heart
the elder people
constantly renew
weaving all together*

*Blood rivers
in our veins
Fire suns
deep within
Wind breathes
life
Red rock heart
Ground of our being*

*Eye, look in -
one, three, five
ten thousand generations
renew the spirit
touch the source
warm earth
human faces
red rock heart*

THE ECOSO EXCHANGE VALUE JUDGEMENTS.

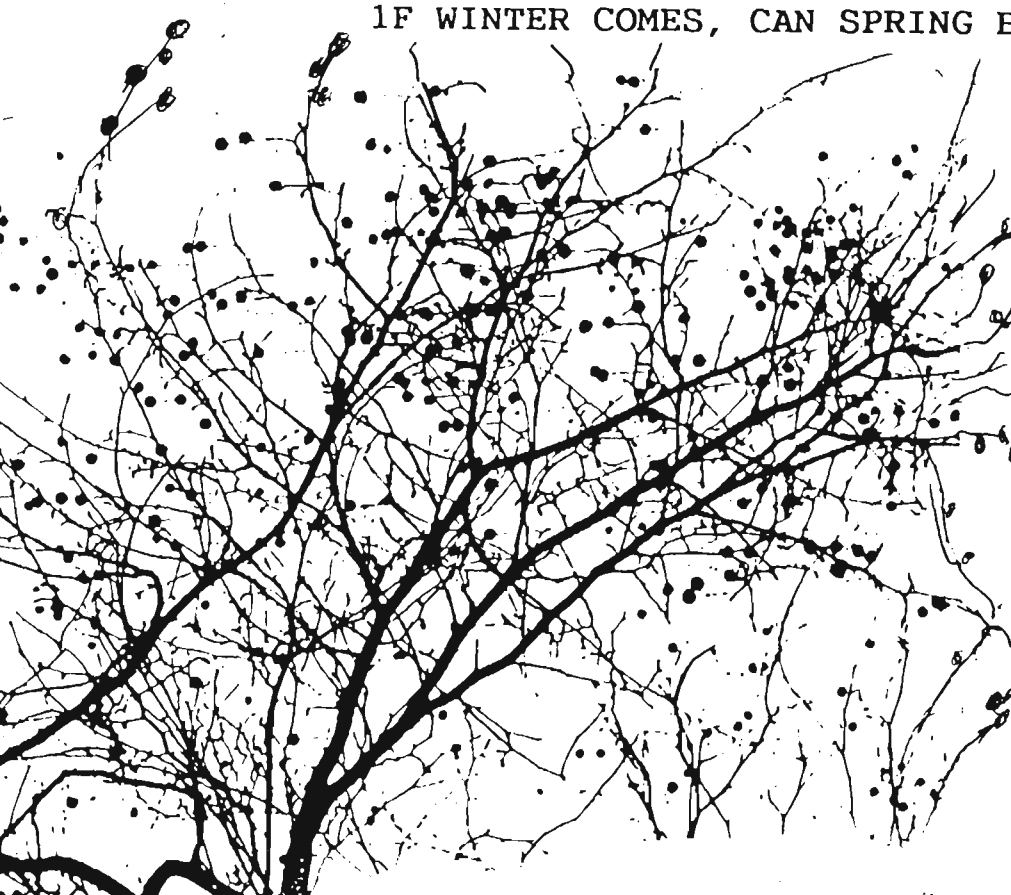
The forerunner of Ecoso was called Irregular. It was first published in 1967. In 1973 it changed its name, adopting 4 guidelines. Here is a summary :-

1. A regeneration and promotion of community participation
2. The need for change in life styles to combat consumerism.
3. A policy of restricting use of non renewable resources.
4. A recognition that such objectives require participatory effort.

The Crow Collection Association was formed in 1990, and since then Ecoso has been its newsletter..

For more information about Ecoso and the Crow Collection please write to Sheila, Byard, Dept of Urban and Social Policy, Footscray Campus of the Victorias University of Technology. Box 14428 MCMC Melbourne 8001. Phones (03)9688.4754, (03)9329.8685 and Fax (03)9688.4324.

IF WINTER COMES, CAN SPRING BE FAR BEHIND ?



We know its mid Winter but this is the Spring issue of Ecoso. It is sent to you early to make sure you have as much information as possible about the *Ideas Exchange Day* on August 24th, from 9am to 5pm, at Victoria University, Footscray

The Ideas Exchange Day is for people of all ages.

Please invite your neighbours, friends and relations to come to exchange ideas on *What Sort of Society You Want Australia to be ?*



CROW COLLECTION

Address for return mail :-

Crow Collection, Footscray Campus,
DUSP, VUT, Box 14428 MCMC, 8001.