VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Ecoso exchange newsletter 2/3; Apr. 1989

This is the Published version of the following publication

ECOSO EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER

About This Issue

This issue of Ecoso Newsletter is mainly about <u>housing</u>, with special emphasis on the recent <u>Federal Housing Summit</u>. Included are three pages pages from "Make Melbourne Marvellous" about <u>a new type of home title</u>.

There are also articles about the process of developing <u>links between the trade unions and the community/environment movements</u>, with special emphasis on the <u>Restructuring the Work Force</u> and some reasons for <u>opposing work-based child care</u>.

✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱

For Ecoso Guidelines and information about DATE (<u>D</u>ocuments <u>A</u>vailable Through <u>E</u>coso phone 03.328.2345 or write to 2/5, 89 OShanassy Street, North Melbourne 3051. (Subscription to Ecoso $10 for eight issues).

By the way, the word "ECOSO" means linking the ecological and sociological movements.

✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱

Book Review of "A Culture of Power"

Last Ecoso Newsletter (Number 2/2, February 1989) warned about the danger of the New Right to the community/social movements.

In "A Culture of Power....Rethinking Labour Movement Goals for the 1990s" (published by the Australian Fabian Society), John Mathews warns about "the presence of the New Right which will continue to press its case for simplistic free market solutions to virtually every problem that comes up."

This phamplet is essential reading for all who are concerned with political movements. It provides some valuable insights into the process of linking the labour movement and the community/environment movements.

When studying this book it is possible to see where mistakes are being made and, simultaneously to see how to find new starting points in existing movements.

Medium Goals within Broad Democracy

John Mathews says "that the time has come for the labour movement to frame medium term goals with an explicit vision of the broadest democracy."

He deals in some detail with the trade union movement and the accord and he calls for "a democratic paradigm" which would encourage unions and social movements to overcome sectionalism.

Here is a quote :-
"The task of politics is conceived as the process of formulating the grounds for an alliance between different organised social movements including the labour movement, and then working through these movements and Labour Parties to cement alliances in practice. This implies that the social transformation which is desired will not occur mechanically, through maturation of some supposed logic of history, nor will it occur through the purported effects of citizens becoming embroiled in struggles and having the ideological veils which mask capitalism miraculously removed from their eyes. On the contrary transformation requires a mass base of support forged through alliances, and these need to be <u>constructed</u> at both the political and membership level."

Social Change and Historicity

John Mathews' analysis, however, <u>lacks an historical dynamic</u>. He tends to set his paradigm on the basis of change in society being determined by technology, mainly in changes at the work place. He does not seem to fully appreciate the forces for change wrought through the daily experiences of people and the effect of these experiences in changing and developing people's ideas and thus changing and developing society.

He writes that "the ideological veils which mask capitalism " are not removed through struggle. This is partly right, but they are being continually destroyed by forces which occur in real life situations, not only through people being consciously embroiled in struggle, not only through the popularisation of theories; but by a multitude of daily, subjective experiences, most of which are not identifiable. This human element is not recognised fully enough in the phamplet.

In "What is to Be Done ? " Lenin described how theory becomes a material force when it grips the people. R.W. Connell in "Gender and Power" (Allen and Unwin 1987) uses the word "historicity" to describe this human force. He writes :- "The concept of historicity is stronger than the concept of `social change' , which may be mechanical and external, something which happens to people, like a comet, a fire or a plague. The idea of historicity is about change produced by human practice, about people being inside the process.

"The Task of Politics"

"A culture of Power" identifies the task of politics as the politics of the here and now of how "to stave off the right wing" by building broad alliances which would enable the labour movement to retain control. This type of politics tends to remain the domain of people who are in the political movements.

This is, of course, an essential immediate task. In the process of carrying it out, it is crucial to think about how to change human practice, (human experience) in the way described by R. Connell ....ensuring that "people are inside the practice". This change in human practice is not fully enough recognised as a political force in "A Culture of Power".

John Mathews addresses those already in the political movements, and within this limit he has produced a very timely hand-book.

Restructuring the Work Force

In the past there have been numerous creative efforts to link the trade unions and the community/environment movements. For example, the national Living Standards Conventions in the late 1970s, Action for Adequate Child Care in the early 1970s, the Australia-wide Environmentalists for Full Employment in the 1970s, the national Radical Ecology Conference in the mid-1970s, and the historic green bans movement that heartened so many urban activitist around Australia in the 70s.

In last issue of Ecoso (Feb. no 2/2) the double page chart showed that there are areas where there is _basic agreement_ between the unions and the community movements but that there are also _basic contradictions_.

How can these basic contraditions be tackled ?

At a recent seminar in Melbourne on _Restructuring_ Julius Roe emphasised the need for the trade unions to involve people around campaigns on _social issues_ such as pensions, training, superanuation, child care, leave, and job satisfaction, all of which affect the lives of union members. More importantly he called on union members to become concerned about the _social usefulness_ of the goods they produce and the services they provide.

He emphasised that it is crucial to link the unions with the community organisations around campaigns which can give people more control over their own lives. This is only possible if the unions overcome _reformism_ and the community movements overcome _parochialism._

Chart on Linking Trade Unions and Community Organisations

In this issue, Ecoso Exchange reproduces a chart which was prepared by Ruth Crow some years ago for a talk to urban planning students at Melbourne University. It may help in understanding some of the problems which are arising from the restructuring process. (see Ecoso Supplement)

"Work Based Child Care" and Reformism

The restructuring process is already resulting in unions, particularly white collar unions, campaigning for child care. To date, this campaign is mainly for the reformist demand of _"work-based child care"._

As the slogan "work-based child care" is again being raised in local organisations, such as ALP Branches and Community Health Centres, as well as trade unions it is timely to set out the basic arguments against this slogan, so that the goodwill that could be generated around this issue does result in developing links between the unions and the community.

Sample of Reformist Motion and Alternatives

At a recent ALP local branch meeting there was a motion on work-based child care. On the following page you can read the original motion, the arguments against it and the alternative motions. The original motion was seconded formally, there was virtually no support for it.

****

DATE (Documents Available Through Ecoso) has some useful material on child care dating back to the early 1940s.
****

Sample of Reformist Motion and Alternatives
(See article on "Restructuring the Work Force")

A recent ALP Branch motion on work-based child care stated :-
"That this branch supports the creation of work-based child care facilities in the State and Federal Government departments and their instrumentalities. Further, we suggest that these facilities should be considered mandatory for departments and instrumentalities employing more than 400 people." (The motion was formally seconded but not supported)

Reasons for Opposing the Motion
1) What sort of child care is proposed ?
2) Is work-based-child-care opening the door to commercial chains of for-profit-child-care ?
3) What control will the parents have over the services provided ?
4) What happens to the child-care arrangement when the parent leaves government employment ?
5) What about the child's link with his/her own community ?
6) What about the effects on the child of being a commuter ?
7) What about after-school and vacation time child-care ?
8) How will other work places be affected by this proposal ?
9) Why only be concerned with child-care for employees of _large_ government departments and instrumentalities ?
10) _Why not recognise the importance of local government in the planning, provision and maintenance of children's services ?_
11) Why not give more support to the already successful ways of providing work-related-community-based-child-care provided by some municipalities ?

Alternative Motions
1) That this branch supports the extension of community-based child care, subsidised by the Federal, State and Local Government and _controlled by the community_.
2) That this branch recognises _the importance of local government_ in the planning, co-ordination and management of human services, particularly human services close to the family, such as child care.
3) That child care co-ordinators be employed in all large work places to assist employees with family concerns, in particular with arranging child care at locally-based child care centres and after-school and school vacation centres.
4) That Federal and State Governments and instrumentalities employing more than 400 people appoint child care co-rdinators to assist employees with family concerns, such as child care at locally-based child care centres and at after-school and school vacation centres.
5) That employees in centres of less than 400 be able to have their family concerns assisted by child-care co-ordinators employed centrally in each department or instrumentality.
6) That the main unions covering the employees in Federal and State departments and instrumentalities be informed of these motions.
7) That the City Council be informed of these resolutions.

(Comment :- Union campaigns around social, issues which neglect making community links, will end up with elitist work place ghettos "keeping out the cockroaches" referred to by Gore of Sanctuary Cove notoriety.)

"The Housing Question"

A Quote from Frederick Engels :-

"Capital is the command over the unpaid labour of others. The little house of the worker can therefore become capital only if he rents it to a third person and appropriates a part of the labour product of this third person in the form of rent. But the house is prevented from becoming capital precisely by the fact that the worker lives in it himself (excuse sexist language of last century), just as a coat ceases to be capital the moment I buy it from the tailor and put it on."

"Shelter Titles"

Strengthening the Use-Value of Homes Rather than Exchange Value :-

The constant letter-box-barrage of request, by estate agents, for homes for sale, encourages home owners to re-enter the market in the hope of reaping the benefits of 'capital gains', tempting ordinary home owners to speculate on their private dwelling.

In "Make Melbourne Marvellous" (published by the Socialist Alternative Collective of the of the Victorian Branch of the Communist Party in 1985) the idea of a new form of home tenure, a "Shelter Title", was advocated as one way of strengthening the use-value of dwellings and reducing the ever present pre-occupation of home owners in the exchange value of their home.

It is timely to reproduce several pages from "Make Melbourne Marvellous" which describe this idea. (See this issue of Ecoso pages 8, 9, 10)

Federal Housing Summit

Before the March Federal Housing Summit the Australian Council of Trade Unions and community groups, like the Council of Homeless Persons and the Australian Council of Social Service called on the summit to reduce the bias towards investment in housing and to introduce a capital gains tax on expensive homes.

According to Warwick Neilly, national research officer of the Building Workers Industrial Union, the summit did not effectively address these proposals. He also expressed concern because the need to increase the training of building tradepeople was not tackled. (Report in Tribune, March 8th).

However, according to Hon Barry Pullen, Victorian Minister for Housing and Construction, the summit agenda was widened beyond the initial reaction to the explosion of housing costs to the the new housing opportunities that may be developed through the release of land currently owned by the State and Federal Government.

Some of these large tracts of land, in the built-up areas of most Australian metropolises, could be redeveloped for innovative housing schemes. Widspread participation in planning these projects could link the unions and the community movements through campaigns that aimed at the provision of low cost housing and ensured that new-types of training are available for the tradespeople tackling such innovative projects. (See article on "Restructuring the Work Force" in this Ecoso Newsletter).

Home Ownership : A Powerful Vested interest

"It is worth noting that 70% of Australian households who own or are buying their own homes have a powerful vested interest in preventing basic changes to current housing policies. Those who stand to benefit most from our skewed system of housing provision are those households that own their own homes outright (38%) and those with mortages fixed to the 13.5% interest ceiling (13%). Together these two groups constitute a majority of Australian households. Any housing policy changes are likely to prove a hindrance rather than a help to them." (From an article entitled "No, Prime Minister" on how to deal with declining housing affordability in "Australian Society", March 1989 by Gib Wettnehall.)
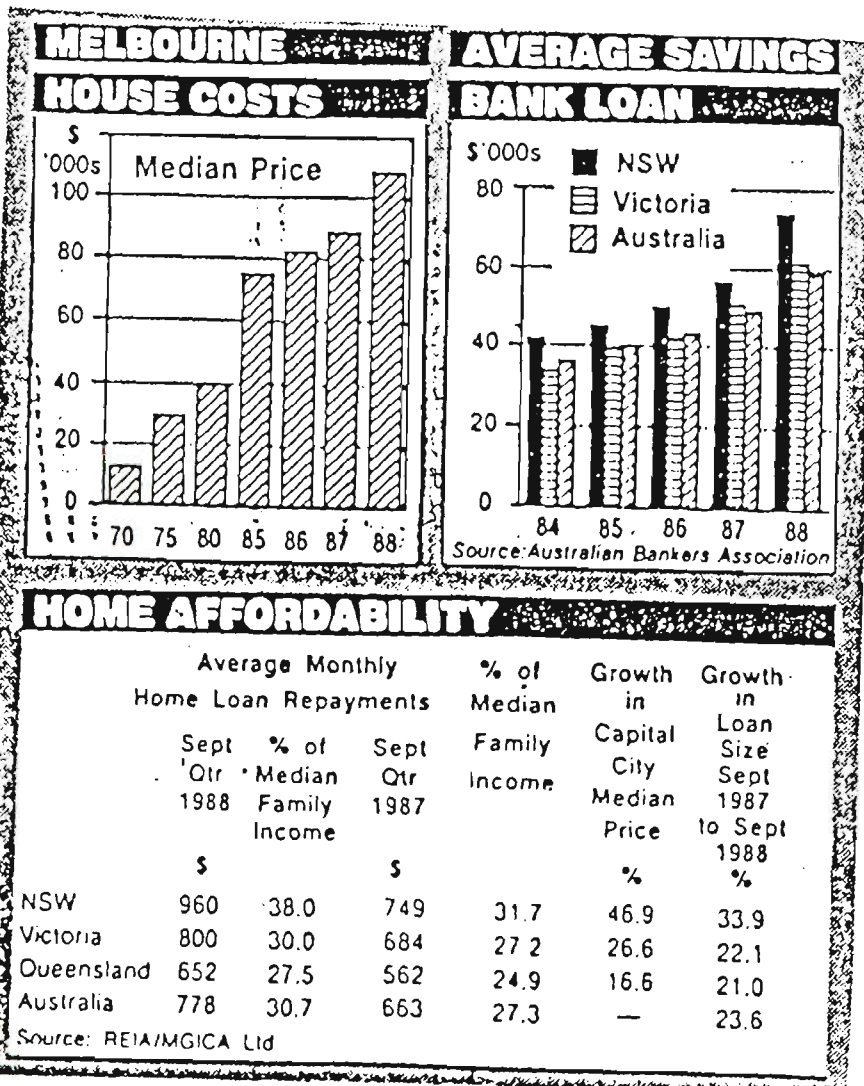
Social Home Ownership

"Community groups such as Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) believe there is still far too much emphasis on home ownership. In Europe, social ownership — for instance through co-operatives — play as important a role as owner occupation. The high cost associated with individual ownership will, unfortunately, always discriminate against those on low incomes. Until Australia tackles the long term need for a more balanced system of housing provision, low income earners will increasingly find they are forced to accept housing of a second rate standard as compared to the middle-class majority." (From article by Gib Wettenhall quoted above.)

Dreaming of a Home ?
The Choices

The Nightmare of Buying ?   The Nightmare of Renting ?

MELBOURNE HOUSE COSTS

Median Price (S '000s) — 70, 75, 80, 85, 86, 87, 88

AVERAGE SAVINGS BANK LOAN

S '000s — NSW, Victoria, Australia — 84, 85, 86, 87, 88
Source: Australian Bankers Association

HOME AFFORDABILITY

	Average Monthly Home Loan Repayments			% of Median Family Income	Growth in Capital City Median Price	Growth in Loan Size Sept 1987 to Sept 1988
	Sept 'Qtr 1988 $	% of Median Family Income	Sept Qtr 1987 $		%	%
NSW	960	38.0	749	31.7	46.9	33.9
Victoria	800	30.0	684	27.2	26.6	22.1
Queensland	652	27.5	562	24.9	16.6	21.0
Australia	778	30.7	663	27.3	—	23.6

Source: REIA/MGICA Ltd

Rents Escalating

Private housing rents in Melbourne rose by 12% in 1988, even though the number of vacancies in the rental market increased.

Today's median rent for single bed-room accommodation is $85 per week, for two bedrooms $135, and for three and four bedrooms $165 to $220.

This year, Hon Barry Pullen, Vic. Minister for Housing, said that an unemployed couple with three children would be paying 55% of their income for a three bedroom dwelling.

He said no family should have to pay more than a quarter of their weekly income on rent.

"PRIVATE ! KEEP OUT !"

"Sanctuary Cove" A Protection from "Cockroaches" !

"The streets these days are full of cockroaches, and most of them are human. Every man has a right to protect his family, himself and his possessions. To live in peace and safety. Sanctuary Cove is an island of civilisation in a violent world, and we have taken steps to ensure it remains so." A Michael Gore advertisement for the up-market Sanctuary Cove village in Queensland.

Landscape Buffers and Social Barriers at Sandridge City

"The Bayside Project (Sandridge City) is Melbourne's contribution to Queensland's latest develoment style of "Gore Planning". It is not so much the utilisation of mood setting land-water relationships that best characterizes the two projects, it is the more powerful themes of exclusivity, elitism, and `sanctuary' that are symbolic of their oneness.

"Close scrutiny of the plans of these `cockroach proof' sanctuaries reveals the latent (and medieval) tendencies of the planners to build walled-cities. Our latter day planners have just been careful to leave off drawing the walls. Instead what we have are landscape buffers and social barriers that conveniently disguise the desired, but too obvious, high wall. The extent of this `fortress' ideology (characteristic of the wealthy propertied class) becomes apparent when you examine more closely the design impulses of the planners of Sandridge City. (He, too must want to protect his possessions, himself and his family - the musculinist impulses should not be overlooked here)." (From "Cockroacches and Other Things" by Barbara Middoch-Mouy published in "Bayside Views" 1988.)

A New Sinister Urban Form ; "The Wild City" ?

"So unless the progressive forces of the U.S. are able to develop major movements, with enough social and political support to rectify the dominant trend in the forthcoming urban policies, what could emerge from the current urban crisis is a simplified and sharpened version of the exploitative metropolitan model with the addition of mass police repression and control in a largely deteriorating economic setting.

"The suburbs will remain fragmented and isolated, the single family homes close over themselves, the shopping centres a bit more expensive and a lot more surveyed, the highways more crowded and less maintained, the central business district still crowded during office hours and more deserted and curfewed after 5 pm, city services increasingly crumbling, public facilities less and less public, the surplus population more and more visible, the drug culture and individual violence expanding, gang and high society ruling the bottom and the top in order to keep `the top and bottom' social order, the urban movements depressed and discouraged and the urban planners eventually attending more international conferences in the outer safer world.

"What would emerge of a failure of urban movements to undetake their task, is a new and sinister form.... the WILD CITY." (From "The Urban Question - a Marxist Approach" by Manuel Castells, published, Edward Arnold 1976.)

Shelter Titles A New Form of Home Tenure ?

"Make Melbourne Marvellous" was prepared and published by the Socialist Alternative Melbourne Collective (S.A.M.) of the Victorian Branch of the Communist Party of Australia in 1985.

Here are some extracts on a proposed new form of home tenure which would <u>increase the use value</u> of home tenure and <u>decrease the exchange value</u>, that is decrease speculation on home properties..

Following the pattern of the general features for big Australian cities proposed in the last section, some special opportunities, constraints and features for Melbourne will be mentioned, some implications explained, but microplanning will be integrated where necessary, with the macroplanning elements. Also some strategies which may be appropriate to particular aspects in order to transform them from the current situation towards a fully socialist situation over a fifteen year period will be suggested.

Security of Residence

Many of those who reject the idea that they become owners of a conventional detached suburban family house set in a garden, think of their status as tenants because this is the main alternative to home ownership under capitalism, but the penalty for choosing this option is lack of security of tenure and the right to alter the premises to suit the particular needs of the occupier. However the proposed "shelter-title" — an entirely newly created tenure — would provide a one-only cover-all payment (for all rates, charges, fees etc) as simple as rent; yet give immunity from "notice to quit" or other forms of interference from the landlord.

It would, in other words, offer security of tenure without the present hassles of ownership. Further, the present own-your-own system of ownership in buildings that accommodate more than one household unit (under the "strata title" schemes) would already cover, or could be adapted to cover any style of living that is an alternative to the detached suburban house style.

So, the age-old distinction of owner and tenant would become obliterated and merged in a new category of shelter title holders.

Also, to prevent homes becoming commodities from which profit is made or anticipated, a valuation system that gave predominant weight to use value (number of rooms, their size, quality of structures, size of the land and so on) and less weight to location (accessibility to local or district centres, or to "congenial neighbours" or to outdoor amenities and other factors of changing fashion likely to affect the exchange values) would help to stabilise values. This could mean that house price fluctuations would no longer operate to force some people out of their chosen location, or to bring "windfall" profits to others.

However no-one would be forced to become a shelter-title holder. If anyone preferred to live in hotels, motels, hostels, apartment houses, boarding houses, caravans or any other form of rented accommodation, it would be free for them to do so. But this category of residents also deserves protection by having maximum rents (as distinct from cleaning, catering or laundering charges) determined by the valuation under the new valuation system.

In addition, it should be the objective of socialism to attain, as soon as possible, a situation in which the supply of housing of all types kept a little ahead of demand and social security provisions were sufficient to cover the basic shelter needs of all. Then unsavoury features of housing under capitalism could be consigned to history — homeless people, people living in sub-standard conditions in houses badly in need of repair, people living, against their will, in badly designed caravan parks or "squatters" forced to camp in vacant premises.

Shelter Titles

What would a "Shelter Title" show, who would be entitled to one, how could it be linked to other essential information about a particular dwelling to simplify household business, and what would be its implications ?

To start with one of the most important implications. It would not be a socialist goal to nationalise all urban land so that working people who own their own homes or are paying them off would be deprived of their titles and converted into tenants, with local Councils, Housing Commission or other public authorities acting as landlords.

The socialist goal would, in fact, go in the opposite way :— that is, those desiring to settle into a long-term home situation, whether they are paying off their homes or are renting them, would be elevated to the status of an owner, and given a shelter title to confirm their security of residence.

Four Classes of Shelter Title Holders

There could then be, it is suggested, four classes of residential ownership entitled to a Shelter Title :—

(1) Owners who have completed payment.

Those who have no further money on mortgage payments to make, and who therefore already hold their Certificate of Title. They would exchange their Certificate of Title for a Shelter Title which would confer on them exactly the same rights and duties as the Certificate of Title, but would also have extra information regarding property (as described below).

(2) Owners who are still paying

Those who have bought their home, but still owe money on it, either to a lender (for example a mortgagor), or to the seller (for example to the vendor under a terms contract of sale) would be issued with a shelter title, which would guarantee their right to live on the property as long as they wished, or to sell it, but the interests of lenders or unpaid sellers would be noted on the title, and remain as debt to be paid off by the owner. Such creditors, however, would retain the right to sue but would no longer have the right to sell off the home to recover moneys owing (i.e. to "foreclose").

(3) Instalment purchasers (tenants)

Those existing tenants who desired to purchase the dwelling they are renting would continue to make payments of the same amount as the rental had been; but they would be deemed to be purchasers of the property from the landlord, with the price determined by the public valuation system (see above). They would be issued with a Shelter Title, but their financial obligations would be noted on the title.

From the regular payments, the instalment purchasers (tenants) and not the landlords, would then become directly responsible for paying all taxes and charges on the property, as well as necessary maintenance costs. The balance of the regular payment would then be paid to the landlord, until full price of dwelling was paid off. An instalment purchaser, where desired, could sell the dwelling but balance of moneys owing would then have to be paid in full and in cash.

Private landlordism of dwellings as a means of investment to make capital gain or profit would be terminated with the introduction of Shelter Titles, so that the then-existing landlords would be converted into unpaid vendors of a special but dwindling class, as instalment purchasers (formerly tenants) gradually paid off their homes.

(4) Instalment purchaser (homemaker)

Those who were neither owners nor tenants before the Shelter Title scheme came into operation (for example, young people leaving the parental home, or those who previously sought only transient accommodation but now wish to "settle down") could, if they wished, become instalment purchasers and be issued with a Shelter Title.

The conditions would be similar to instalment purchasers (former tenants) except that payments would be fixed not according to what the rent had been, but as a percentage of the value of the home, and instalment payments, including interest at standard rates, would be made to the person or institution selling the dwelling.

Mortgages and Interest Rates

Future mortgages of dwellings, as a means of investment, would thus be terminated for this class of home-owner, and mortgagors cease to exist (except those being paid off under class 2 above – who would gradually disappear as home-makers paid off their dwelling).

The Melbourne co-operative cost-rental scheme (i) could be a transitional form of assistance to enable people to find a house or dwelling unit that suited them. with helpful support from others in the same position, not only for financial aid, but also for upkeep and renovations once the dwelling place has been occupied. Experience drawn from these co-operative efforts might prove sufficiently valuable to regard them as a permanent feature of socialist housing policy.

The current ridiculously inequitable range of interest rates for housing loans or terms contracts (from less than 5% to over 15%) would need to be altered to a standardised and reasonably low rate. Also, unequal valuations of homes of similar standards in different suburbs would need to be equalised. A Shelter Tribunal (similar to the Fair Rents Board of the 1930s depression years) would be needed to effect adjustments of interest, or valuation standards where disputes arose.

Shortage of accommodation – whether long-term or for various forms of transient or short-term arrangements – can give rise not only to the discomfort of those excluded from reasonable housing. but to unsavoury blackmarket situations, forcing up the real value of housing

or payments for housing. So, for socialism, the availability of ample housing, and a wide range of favoured varieties would need to be regarded as a high priority.

Shelter title records and consolidated payment

If those who are now tenants or purchasers under a terms contract of sale are to become eligible, under socialism, for a shelter title, then obligations for payment will be noted, preferably on the title. In the Melbourne Titles Office, this is already done in the case of mortgages, each of which receives a separate registration number which is then noted on the Certificate of Title for the land secured by mortgage. The full terms of the loan thus become a matter of public record.

Under the proposed shelter scheme, the terms of what had previously been leases or terms contracts would be registered, and their numbers also noted on the shelter title, so that this information would become available as a public record, giving certainty alike to purchasers, unpaid sellers or former landlords both as to the rates of payment and other agreed conditions.

The Melbourne Titles Office has been, and is, an extraordinarily comprehensive and reliable recording system. It keeps a separate piece of paper (a Certificate of Title) showing the owner of every block of land in Victoria and registers any transfers to a new owner. It contains a map of the block with highly accurate survey details. It also notes any mortgage over the land and the terms of that mortgage – quite an important function for the protection of capitalist lenders — and certain classes of other information affecting the block (ii).

Each mortgage is given a separate registration number to the number of the Title. The Title and the mortgage are simply cross-referenced which avoids the difficulty of the usually long and very tedious mortgage terms having to appear on the title.

The demand of the capitalist market for a system of own-your-own flats illustrates just how adaptable this simple device of cross referencing can be. In this case very complex and highly sophisticated information is shown on a plan (iii) that is registered, and the plan, like a mortgage, is simply cross-referenced to the Title.

But there is a tremendous amount of important information affecting the property or owner of the property that is not shown on the Title. Examples are: whether it is leased, and to whom and on what terms; how planning schemes of various authorities affect the land; or affect the buildings on the land; or any rates, taxes, charges, rent, instalment payments owing by the owner, and at any time, how much.

The constantly changing nature of this information and the sheer volume of paper-work involved would probably make the old-style method of recording unsuitable for linking the mass of extra information to the Certificate of Title system. But the limited scope of the information now contained in the present system all took place before the arrival of appropriate technology for the miniaturisation of information and its storage and retrieval which is now made possible by computer technology.

Containing, as it does, an excellent structure of basic information concerning identifiable pieces of land and its ownership, every Certificate of Title (or the shelter title substituted for it) could now be linked to the other aspects affecting land (mentioned above) through the same simple device of cross-referencing (as is done now for mortgages or strata title plans), except that registers of the additional information would not be stored on pieces of paper held in the Titles Office, but in a central computer.

References.

(i) Cost-rental housing schemes

As early as 1975, David Scott of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, wrote a booklet urging "Cost Rental Housing Associations" and campaigns by Shelter and the Brotherhood have recently resulted in implementation by the Ministry of Housing to a limited extent. Cost Rental Housing Associations currently help to choose, repair and generally manage existing houses purchased by the Ministry and rented to members of the Association.

(ii) Certificate of Title

From Certificate of Title, for example, it is possible to discover certain rights of the owner or their buildings over adjoining land, or the rights of adjoining owners or their buildings over the owners land (such as rights of way or party wall easements) or certain classes of restrictions on buildings (such as a covenant to build only one house, or a house of bricks). Apart from these physical constraints, the Certificate of Title records a limited range of rights that other people may have affecting ownership. For example, where the land is used as a security for a loan (that is registered mortgage or charge), where it has been bought but not paid off (that is a "caveat" or warning system to any intending purchaser that the land had already been sold to some other person) or where the owner dies (in which case an executor or administrator can be shown as the owner until the estate is sold or transferred)

(iii) Titles for Own-Your-Own Flats.

Originally the maps, on the titles showed only the boundaries on the ground, but never, apart from hints implied by party wall easement, any indication of the buildings on the block. The own-your-own flat or office schemes, however, needed to show the exact position and boundaries — vertically as well as horizontally — of "land" up in the air on the upper storeys to which each owner was entitled. The plan therefore showed the outline of the shell of the building and its relationship to the site boundaries, the height of each floor above sea level, the space of separate ownership of each floor, or part of it, the vertical easement needed by the building (for example for pipes) as well as common ownership of commonly-used land or parts of the building such as stairways, carparking and gardens.

Such a system would enable every owner of a shelter title to be given a coded key which on presentation to the computer, could give, if desired, a print-out of all moneys currently owing or due on the property. More than that, built into such a scheme could be a computer-controlled system for combining into one consolidated "shelter payment" the numerous and irregular separate accounts — council rates, water and sewerage rates, electricity, insurance, land tax, telephone rental and other such — the householder is now forced to bother about over a year; automatically crediting various institutions or other creditors each with its own portion of the money paid.

If desired, each shelter title owner could then arrange for his or her bank account to be automatically debited with the shelter payment when it regularly fell due. All the out-dated and time wasting hassle of home ownership, and the considerable cost of the mountains of paper-work now required, could thus be removed by the shelter title scheme, the only financial obligation being reduced to setting aside a fixed sum of money for the shelter title at the arranged regular intervals.

Amalgamation of some functions of the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the State Electricity Commission (in place of their present competitive position) are already being proposed, and proposed consolidation into one register of the multitude of planning schemes or by laws affecting land by an amended Town and Country Planning Act are timid moves that could be counted as amongst preliminary steps that could be further developed towards the shelter title one-stop information and one-payment-only scheme.

****

LINKING TRADE UNIONS MOVEMENTS AND URBAN ACTION MOVEMENTS

(This chart was prepared for a talk given by Ruth Crow in 1981. For a description of Anomie and Alienation see the attached extract from "Citizens in Conflict" by J. M. Simmie)

To date urban action movements have mainly attracted white collar workers and the trade unions have their main strength in the organisation of blue collar workers. This over-simplified chart may help to show how to forge stronger links between these two movements.

Blue Collar, Industrial Workers	White Collar, Professional and Technical Workers
Work at the point of production; Treated as things ("hands") Suffer *alienation*	Do not work at the point of production Treated as career staff Suffer *anomie* (never satisfied)
To feel human unite with others on the job; *solidarity antidote to alienation*	To feel human unite with others off the job; *creating community antidote to anomie*
To get immediate results action deteriorates *to reformist demands*	To get immediate results action deteriorates *to parochial demands*
Reformism results in *charismatic leaders* and destroys unity with other organisations	Parochialism results in *piece meal planning* and destroys coalitions
Antidote to reformism is *the campaigns around wider issues* (living standards, alternative plans for production)	Antidote to parochialism is *the campaigns around wider issues* (living standards, :andards, alternative plans for urban areas)
Campaigns for socially useful goods...... *Environmentalists for Full Employment*	Campaigns for socially useful services........... *Conservation of Urban Energy*

E F F E .... C U E
****

Linking the urban action movements and the trade unions on the main issues of our period

Action on ....ENERGY, EQUITY, EMPLOYMENT, ENVIRONMENT, ENJOYMENT.

****

Chemical Fires

Late last year a huge plume of black smoke could be seen in the outer suburbs of Melbourne when unidentifiable chemicals blazed at the United Transport Depot in West Melbourne.

This was not the first such fire, there have also been smoke palls when chemicals have been spilt and leaking road transports.

Several large public meetings have been held and there have been deputations to Government Ministers. The main demands are :-

1) Introduction of effective chemical storage regulations.
2) Increased inspectorial services with increased penalties.
3) The development of a health register and a Health Impact Study.
4) Redevelopment of the area where the main chemical stores are located.
5) The provision of a comprehensive report on the fire.

United Transport is reported as being a tax avoiding company. It is owned by an English company BET which has South African investments.

****

A Multi-Functional-Polis (MFP)

Is Australia a" Suitable Piece of Real Estate" for a Super Power ?

"The Multi-functional-polis (MFP) is a proposal by the latest super power finding Australia to be a suitable piece of real estate. The proposal, now subject to government and business feasibility studies, includes the construction of high tech cities, combining luxury living with research facilities, information industries and absurdly named "high touch" industries - leisure, tourism and cultural amusement.

"The multi-functional-polis would entail tens of thousands of Japanese people travelling here to take up short and long term residency. Once begun it is a proposal that would be more difficult to reverse than the momentous decisions made after World War 2 to invite the Americans to set up military bases on our soil.

"The possibility of developing reciprocal relations with the Japanese people and promoting cultural exchange should, I think, be encouraged.

"In practice however, if we continue along present lines with the dollar (yen) blocking our vision the result will be to turn ourselves into a dependent post-industrial service sector. We will become an island in the sun providing education facilities (Bond University) and honeymoon suites (the Sydney Regent) for our wealthier Asian neighbours."

****

Extracts from a speech by Paul James, Department of History and Philosophy of Science at Melbourne University.
More about the MFP on next page.

****

For useful background material on the MFP and "Globilisation of Planning" browse through Ecoso Newsletter Number 2/1 pages 3, 4 & 9.

****

What Reports to Government Say About MFP
A $ A 10 Billion/ 1,000 Billion Yen Investment ?

The Multi-functional-polis (MFP) concept is being explored by the Japanese Ministry of Inter-national Trade and Industry (MITI)as a joint venture between Japan and Australia.

Reports on the proposal have been prepared by Government Departments for the Federal Government and for several State Governments and a number of semi-official seminars have been held.

A report by a Victorian Government Department described the project as "exciting"; cautioned care "to ensure that the proposal is not misinterpreted within Australia" and considered that "the proposal may well be financially feasible".

The report included the following ideas about establishing the MFP :-

1) Based on Core Technologies, e.g in biotechnology, computer software, computer hardware and software to control intelligence, computers implanted in living organisms.
2) Institutional and Corporate Support. e.g. from Australian scientific research groups, technology companies (Australian Medical Research and Development Consortium, Computer Power etc)
3) Large Australian Corporations Support e.g. BHP. ICI. Elders.etc. It is interesting to note that Telecom and SECV were listed in this group.
4) International and American Investors e.g. IBM. Hewlett Packard. SRI (which is already holding discussions on establishing "a joint venture in Australia concentrsating on the development of artificial intelligence")
5) Transport and Infrastructure e.g. the highest standards of reliability using the latest technology, location of MFP within about 24 kilometers of international airport.
6) Financing. e.g. an investment figure in excess of $A10 billion or 1,000 billion yen; seeding funds from participating Governments and significant funds from philanthropic organisations.
7) Possible Location e.g about 60 kilometers north or north west of Melbourne.

****
The Very Fast Train (VFT)

The Gippsland Community Awareness Co-ordinating Committee have recently prepared a report calling for an inquiry on the proposal for the Very Fast Train. It is avaibale from Box 497 Morwell 3840 for $2. plus postage 70c.

****
The Rainbow Alliance

Alan Runciman from Rainbow Alliance and several other environmentalists polled very well in the recent Canberra municipal-state government elections. Congratulations ! Canberrans rejected both the Libs and ALP.

Mark the date in your diary now :- Rainbow Alliance Public Launch, Sunday, April 16th from 1.00pm to 5 pm at the Pharmacy College, 381 Royal Parade, Parkville. There will be about one hour of formal speeches and several hours of music, drama, children's activities, food, socialising use of visual arts, for example a photographic exhibition. (For inf. 387.9174)

****

D.A.T.E.
Documents Available Through Ecoso

Documents in the Crow collection are available through D.A.T.E. By phoning 03.328.2345 or writing to Ruth Crow, 2/5 89 O'Shanassy Street, North Melbourne 3051, arrangememnts can be made to browse through the files and to borrow (most but not all documents) ... in other words to make as much use as possible of the files.

****

This chart is republished in Ecoso to give readers some idea of the various campaigns which have contributed to the D.A.T.E. collection.

The chart was prepared for a talk given by Ruth Crow to students some years ago. The topic was "One Person's Perspective on Urban Action Movements", thus it does not indicate the campaigns with which Maurie Crow was involved. These were the anti-fascist anti-war student movement of the 1930s, the campaigns with which Maurie Crow was involved in the 1950s, the urban movements of the 1960 and early 1970s and the ecology movement (mainly on the conservation of urban energy) of the late 1970s and the 1980s.

The "locality of experience" refers to the suburb in which the Crow family lived.

URBAN ACTION MOVEMENTS . . . ONE PERSON'S PERSPECTIVE

October, 1981
Ruth Crow

PERIODS	1940 .. Mid 1950's	Late 1950 .. Mid 1960's	1970 ... 1980
Locality of Experience	Brunswick	Coburg	Nth. Melbourne
Period Features	Wartime, United Front Agst. Fascism. Increase of working women	Defeat of worst of "Cold War" Community movements on education. Beginning of Peace Action. More women with tertiary education. Rapid suburbanisation and car ownership	Movements on equity/environment. Urban renewal: increase of home ownership in inner suburbs. Women's liberation; Community Control
Immediate Gains	New types of centres for children. New ways of involving women in local organisations.	Recognition of deprived north and west. Increase Council support for services. Trade Unions and Living Standards.	Different quality in services. Alternative Plans by local people. Conserving energy as a local issue.
Reaction	"Cold War", social services first target. Deterioration in local politics ("red baiting"). Day nurseries closed.	Parochial interests encouraged. (e.g. preschool education for my own child)	Sacking of M.C.C. Action to divert to parochial planning.
Permanent Gains	Widening experience of people. Fight back on services through Combined Pensioners (started in Brunswick)	Widening experience of people.. beginning of union involvement. (Action for Adequate Child Care, etc.)	Widening experience. people. New ways of forming coalitions. (environment urban action, etc.

> "Philosophers have only talked about the world in various ways ; the point however is to change it."
> Karl Marx.