

A.) The Community Child Care Movement of the early 70s.

The Community Child Care Movement of the early 1970s arose partly out of the ferment around women's liberation and partly from a recognition that community services for families with young children had not kept pace with rapidly changing social patterns.

When it was first formed Community Child Care was one of the most out-spoken groups to point out....

- \* that there is an unrealistic reliance on a social unit (the family) whose function and potency had undergone dramatic changes
- \* that there was an inadequate provision of community services for families with young children and that some of the existing services were inappropriate;
- \* that there were changes in the nature of the family and an increasing participation of married women in the work force.
- \* that traditionally there had been an emphasis on economic necessity being the main reason for the provision of day care services.
- \* that the lot of the woman at home with young children was increasingly becoming inhuman and intolerable.

In its earliest days the title of the organisation that campaigned around these needs was called Community Controlled Child Care. This emphasised the importance of control of services being in the hands of the users of the services. Thus right from its inception, Community Child Care raised the possibility of people being able to provide for each other's needs.

At this stage the four main tasks were identified as...

1. A more equitable distribution of resources already allocated for children's services and a greater allocation of finance for this area as a whole.
2. A greater recognition of the need for many different kinds of services so that appropriate facilities could be provided for children whose parents are in the work force, or studying or at home
3. Special consideration of the needs of children of migrant families.
4. Special consideration of the needs of children in new types of housing, for example families living in high rise flats.

Through establishing the Resource Centre at 67 Brunswick Street Fitzroy Community Child Care has helped to begin to initiate new types of services to meet these new types of needs.

(See Community Child Care Policy Statement)

B). Three Emerging Challenges of the late 70s .

- I. Finite nature of resources, 2. Structural Unemployment
3. Escalation of anomic.

I. • The finite nature of the world's natural resources. Fears on this were expressed at both the World Conference of Women and at the World Habitat Conference

Canadian delegate at the U.N. Women's Conference said...

"We cannot separate out our struggle for our own liberation, whatever that may mean ... the right to realise our full potential... we cannot separate that from the wanton waste of our resources ; we cannot separate that from the kinds of things that humanists and environmentalists around the world are doing." (Rosemary Brown 1975 )  
The Secretary General of the U.N. Habitat Conference warned..

"The present style of life of western countries is not going to last long... amongst other things there are not going to be enough resources in our planet to sustain this style of life..." (Enrique Penolosa 1976)

As early as 1972 , the Premier of Victoria predicted...

"The quality of living , and the endeavour to preserve the very ability of man to live, must become the increasing concern of all people and all governments." (R.J. Hamer 1972)

Some conservation groups have already pointed out the need to restructure our urban <sup>area</sup> so that mobility is reduced and conviviality encouraged. In The "Seeds <sup>for</sup> Change " supplement of the Learning Exchange September 1977 "a model" is presented which is based on the idea of a "Neighbourhood House " as a small local focus In the "Chain Reaction, " Vol 3, No 1. there is an article which presents a radical strategy to change land use patterns so as to simultaneously reduce drastically the need for transportation, especially motor cars, and recreate the lost sense of community in urban areas. Surely, there is common ground between conservation organisations such as the Conservation Council of Victoria, and the Friends of the Earth who have already embraced ideas of recreating community.

2. • Changes in Technology and the Trend Towards Structural Unemployment

To date, Community Child Care has been active during a period when there has been fairly full employment with the possibility of both parents being in the employed work force or of parents being able to continue to study . Today there is increasing unemployment, this needs to be examined in the light of technological changes which could result in an comparative increase of women in the work force.

The past two most intense economic depressions in Australia (in 1890s and in 1930s) were both marked by the ~~inc~~ relative increase in women in the employed work force. Some of our largest food and clothing factories were established in the 1890s and in the 1930s there was another wave of light industry being established, especially in the textile trade. Today the increase of employment opportunities for women is in the ~~industry~~ industries requiring keyboard operators. At the same time there is a decrease in public expenditure on services, thus a reduction of job opportunities for child care workers, social workers, nurses and so on. (see Employment pages of Age March 13) Numerous campaigns will no doubt develop around unemployment issues. Some of these may have more significance for C.C.C. than others.

One organisation which could have particular significance to E.C.C. is the recently formed Environmentalists for Full Employment (E.F.F.E) which was recently launched by the Australian Conservation Foundation and several trade unions. To date, the emphasis in this group has been to advocate the production of goods which are "environmentally acceptable". Organisations such as Community Child Care can make a unique contribution to such campaigns by emphasising that employment of people on jobs which help people to relate to each other (e.g. the jobs of <sup>child care</sup> catalyst, community education officers, child care workers etc) do not consume any of our scarce natural resources (or such infinitesimal amounts that they are not worth accounting for) and at the same time the provision of such relating opportunities are an anti-dote to consumerism. The A.C.F is calling a conference later in the year "Work for All? Its purpose, its nature and its possibility". Chain Reaction Vol 3 No 2 and A.C.F Newsletters have some information on E.F.F.E. Surely there is common ground between the C.C.C and organisations concerned about structural unemployment, especially around such issues as more job opportunities through a wider provision of services for children.

3. The escalation of the phenomena of anomie and its relationship with consumerism and with family's dependence on professional services over which it has little control.

Recent reports indicate that the problems in an increasing number of families is much deeper than loneliness, isolation, lack of stimulation and insufficient support services for health and child care. Wife bashing, child bashing, rape, and drug abuse and other violence are symptoms of a widespread breakdown in human relationships.

The Knox Report identified the symptoms of consumerism...  
 "women described the beginnings (of feeling of being trapped) as  
 the unrealistic expectations they were taught to hold concerning the  
 kind of life style they would lead 'married, housed and pregnant'.  
 The media was blamed for much of this picture that life would be a  
 contemporary home filled with the most glamorous up to date gadgets...  
 and the latest model car and a doting ~~husband~~ handsome husband who is  
 supposed to treat her like a queen... the children will be angels and  
 models of good conduct. The reality, where her husband is 'just an  
 ordinary chap'... the children scream, fight and get dirty, and  
 her house isolates her from her neighbours, she has never had the chance  
 to befriend during her married working years prior to pregnancy, maybe the  
 beginning of a downward spiral" <sup>(tend to)</sup>

~~in addition~~ Such conditions generate feelings of anomie... of having  
 insatiable ambitions which can never, ever be fulfilled. These anomic  
 relationships are further aggravated by the family's dependence on  
 professional services over which it has little control. The article by  
 Christopher Lasch "Siege of the Family" gives a brilliant analysis of  
 of how many of the agencies ostensibly administering to the family  
 have undermined the family instead.

Community Child Care has consistently emphasised that many of the  
 skills, energies and resources required to develop and run much needed  
 children's services and "where changes are needed most the most  
 positive force for change usually stems from those who need it the  
 most... in this case ~~it~~ it is the parents."

The antidote to anomie is participation in helping to recreate  
 community and being able to ~~reestablish~~ reestablish control of personal relationships  
 within the family.

Surely, there is common ground between C.C.C and the various  
organisations that are involved in alternatives to the huge institutional  
~~institutional~~ services which in the past have dominated relationships  
within the family.

Thus the policy of the Community Child Care needs to be examined  
~~within the context of~~ in relationship to the three emerging  
 social issues.... 1) the finite nature of the worlds resources,  
 2) changes in technology and the trend towards structural unemployment.  
 3) the escalation of the phenomenon of anomie and its relationship with  
 consumerism and with the family's dependence on professional  
 services over which it has little control