

Ecoso Exchange Newsletter

Crow Collection Association Incorp.
Ecological, Social and Political Discourse

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News from the Crow Collection

SPRING PICNIC AT THE LIVING MUSEUM OF THE WEST

On a warm, windless day the Crow Collection Association held its Spring Picnic beside the Maribrynong. Thanks to the Living Museum of the West for providing facilities for tea and coffee and space for our "Show and Tell" Session.

Highlight of the "Show and Tell" was a film presented by Martin Powell which he made on his recent trip with the Energymobile which toured Australia, encouraging people to have a "hands-on" experience with energy efficient equipment and models. (More information about the Energymobile from 650.7883).

Others who "Showed and Told" were Julie Statkus (Community Theatre), Sue Jennison (Video on the Keilor history), Helen Van Den Berg (Green House Issues), Jenny Lane (Green Innovations).

"OPENING THE DOOR TO DANCE"

Thanks to Margaret Walker for sending the Collection the book and audio cassette, "Opening the Door to Dance" and the list of archival material about the Unity Dance Group and the Australian Association of Dance Education. Margaret wrote the following inscription on the fly-leaf of the book :- "To dear Ruth who provided so much of the inspiration". This personal message is included here to draw Crow Collection supporters' attention to

the fact that in the 1940s and 1950s Margaret and Ruth worked closely together around providing cultural activities for children. There are not many documents in the Crow Collection about this association and thus Margaret's archival material is a valuable complement to the Crow Collection. (More information about "Opening the Door to Dance" from Margaret Walker, 062.51. 2537)

THE NOEL BUTLIN ARCHIVES CENTRE

The Crow Collection Association has received a "List of Holdings" from the Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University and in return Susan Jennison (VUT Information Librarian) has sent the Centre a print-out of the Collection's catalogue and the listing of unpublished documents.

The Noel Butlin Archives Centre describes its holding as "Archives of Business and Labour... Records of organisations, Records of Companies and Personal Papers". The Centre also holds the "The National Aids Archive Collections"

Some examples of material held in the Butlin Archives are national records of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union (some dating back to 1852), documents from the national committee of the Union of Australian Women) and amongst the list of personal papers are those of Ken Miller (the 1950s Communist Party's municipal campaigns), Ian Turner (political pamphlets of the 1940s), Lloyd Ross (trade unions), Brian Fitzpatrick (civil liberties) and many many others.

The Noel Butlin Archives Centre publishes a newsletter. The newsletter and the Butlin "List of Holdings" is available for reference in the Crow Collection Room. (For further information (06) 249.2219 or Fax (06) 249.0140)

GLOAMING IN THE GARDENS

The 1995 "Gloaming in the Gardens" will be held on Tuesday, January 17th from 5.30 pm. Invite your friends, neighbours and relations to come. B.Y.O picnic. We meet near the kiosk in the Botanic Gardens and stay until about 8.30 pm.

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A Tribute to Lloyd Edmonds

by Ruth Crow

The Melbourne Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History held a memorial gathering to celebrate the life of Lloyd Edmonds on October 16th.

Lloyd fought in the International Brigade against Franco during the 1930s Spanish War and it is natural that at the memorial gathering and in the publicity about his death that this early part of his life received most attention. This Ecoso article aims at describing some of Lloyds's other political, social and personal involvements.

FRIENDS AND COMRADES FOR YEARS AND YEARS

Lloyd Edmonds, Maurie Crow and Frank Meyer were friends and comrades for more than 45 years from the early 1940s. Maurie died in 1988 and Frank the following year.

The children in the Crow, Meyer and Edmonds families were much the same age, so the three families shared many outings and holidays together. The families also supported each other during the bitter days of the Cold War when both parents in the three families were affected by the unscrupulous attacks on members of the the Communist Party.

WHITE COLLAR UNIONS IN THE 1940S AND 1950S

The three friends were members of the Clerks Union and one of their main contributions to progressive politics in the 1940s was to change the character of this union from a paternalistic, bureaucratic organisation, to one in which the membership had more control.

During the 1950s Maurie, Lloyd and Frank were three of the main people to help establish ACSPA (the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations) which gave greater power to people employed in non-unionised or poorly unionised, white collar work places, such as banks, schools, universities, hospitals, local government and welfare organisations

LIFE BEYOND THE WORK-PLACE

Maurie, Frank and Lloyd had an abiding interest in finding ways of linking trade unions and other progressive movements. From the early 1950s they campaigned through the unions for Federal Aid for local government, helping some unions to work out policies on urban issues such as housing, health and other community issues, and helping community organisations work out campaigns which could be taken up by the unions. The pensioners' campaign for half the basic wage is a classical example of phrasing a community campaign so that it easily fits into union policy.

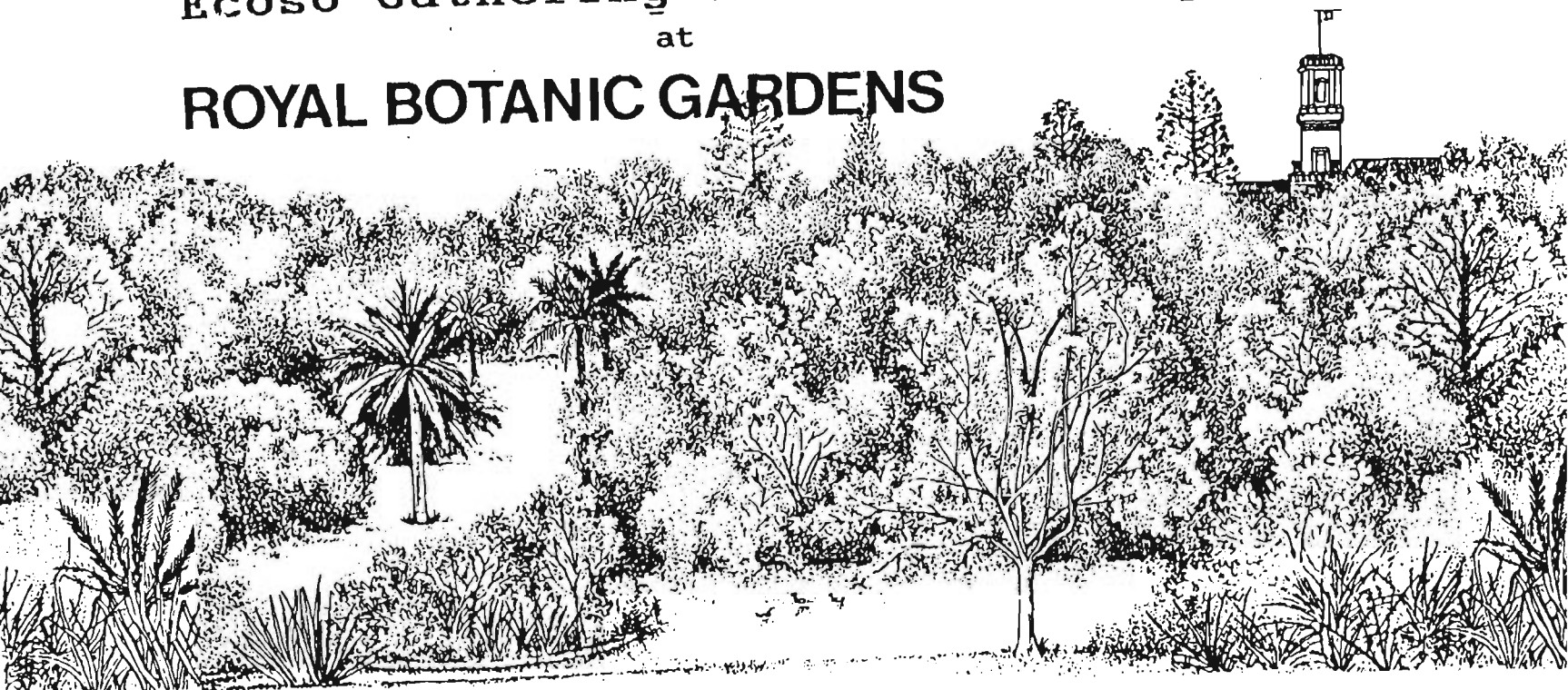
By 1967 these links were strengthened by the holding of the Living Standards Convention which brought together blue and white collar unionist and community organisations. Lloyd, Frank and Maurie were amongst the main organisers of this gathering.

A monthly forum of trade unionists, planners, councillors and others involved in urban planning was one of the main results of the Convention. Lloyd, Maurie and Frank were the nucleus of this group which was called the Town Planning Research Group (TRG). It circulated a newsletter first called "Irregular" but from the mid 1970s "Ecoso Exchange Newsletter". The Crow Collection Association inherited this publication in 1990.

SPIN-OFF EFFECT OF TRG AND ECOSO

The TRG and its newsletter had a spin-off effect, alerting its members to major controversies, raising understanding and thus helping to indicate the scope of possible action through analysis

Ecoso Gathering in the Gloaming
at
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS



Tuesday, January 17th 1995 from 5.30 pm to 8.30 pm
Bring your picnic tea, your friends and relations.
Mark Tuesday, January 17th, 1995 in your new 1995 diary NOW !!

PARKLANDS CODE

This PARKLANDS CODE has been written by representatives of CAFE (Coalition Against Freeway Extensions), CRAMP (Coalition of Residents Against Ministerial Planning), Environment Victoria, Friends of the Merri Creek and Save Albert Park. The code was published in the Age in beginning of December with the names of the supporters. (More information, 344.4695, 654.4833).

The public parks, gardens, bushland, open spaces of Melbourne are central to the cultural, recreational and sporting life and traditions of our city. They belong to the community.

These parklands are vital assets and adequate resources must be devoted to them. They provide the essential balance against the environmental impact of continuing urban growth.

There must be legal safeguards against commercial interests and state and local government projects which threaten to degrade them. Parklands must not be encroached upon or altered unless full and open community consultation and objective assessment demonstrates positive environmental and social outcomes.

Melbourne has inherited a world class system of open spaces of which it has long been proud.

Our public parks, gardens, bushland and open spaces must be preserved.

and suggestion for better alternatives. Lloyd, Frank and Maurie and other TRG members, in their own fields and in their own style, entered the joustings in many contests on such issues as urban renewal, transportation, suburban sprawl, regional plans, social justice, participation in planning, women and suburban isolation, children's services, community health and a whole range of such urban issues which affect the quality of life beyond the workplace.

THE 1975 RADICAL ECOLOGY CONFERENCE

During the early 1970s the TRG newsletter gradually increased its readership and although most subscribers lived in Melbourne a number of subscribers came from other states. By 1975 the TRG was confident enough to seek support from other groups for the holding of some type of gathering on ecological/sociological problems. A National Radical Ecology was proposed.

Again, Lloyd, Frank and Maurie were key people in supplying the support organisation for this gathering which attracted a wide variety of participants from all over Australia, including representatives of the Australian Conservation Foundation, people from Nimbin as well as trade unionists. One of the many results of the REC was establishing the Movement Against Uranium Mining, another was the research group which resulted in the publication of "Seeds for Change - Creatively Confronting the Energy Crisis".

INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL AND ALSO NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY

The above information sketches how Lloyd was right at the start of a number of significant, international and national movements ... organising against fascism, involving white collar workers in unionism, participating in campaigns on sociological/ecological issues. Lloyd's involvement in these sphere would be pretty well known to people on the Left in Melbourne...he was a "public figure", standing up and being counted (risking condemnation, and possible loss of job) for these activities. But in the neighbourhood where he lived many people may have had a different image of him.... an image of a neighbour who was involved in the day to day local issues.... a superb networker.

During the fifty or so years he lived in Essendon, he built up a number of interlocking networks around the Essendon Peace Group the campaign for the District Hospital and for the Essendon Library, encouraging groups to write local histories and planting trees at such reserves as the Organ Pipes,... the list is endless.

THANKS AMIRAH

Fortunately, in 1985 Amirah Inglis encouraged Lloyd to publish the letters he wrote to his family when he was in Spain. These were published by Allen and Unwin in "Letters from Spain" (ISBN 0 867861 593 5 and ISBN 0 86861 601 X). The book is no longer in print but the Crow Collection has one. The Collection also has some 1930s pamphlets about the Spanish War and other documents about the rise of fascism and campaigns against fascism.

Historian Carolyn Rasmussen sent the following message to the memorial meeting for Lloyd which was held 16.10.94.

I am sorry I can't be present at the memorial for Lloyd today, but my heart will be there for a very special man. It was a privilege to associate even for a short while with such a gentle, good humoured man who nevertheless exuded an aura of strength and commitment.

The Spanish War was blessed with some of the finest poets of the twentieth century but nothing spoke so eloquently to me as a young historian of the near past than the realisation that men like Lloyd had felt so compelled to answer its call.

I'll remember him too, as a man for whom age was neither decline or retreat. There were always things to learn and tasks to be done. He never lost the faith. The struggle was never over and in it was life and vitality.

Joan Kirner sent the following message to Ruth Crow to pass on to supporters of the Crow Collection :-

*"I was sad to hear of Lloyd Edmonds' death. Please pass on my tribute to a fellow Essendonian, socialist and environment-
alist and friend of my late father."*

The Liberal Party

Why Menzies is Called Pig Iron Bob.

The ABC TV program on *"The Liberals : Fifty Years of the Federal Party"* has revived interest in the role Menzies played prior to the formation of the Liberal Party. Some of the political pamphlets in the Crow Collection provide some of the facts. Here are two quotes from a booklet which was published by the Communist Party in the mid 1940s.

MENZIES SAID "DON'T CRITICISE HITLER"

In 1938 at a meeting of the Sydney Constitutional Club (a few weeks after Munich) Menzies expressed his admiration for Hitler saying :-

"Democracies cannot maintain their place in the world unless they are provided with leadership as inspiring as that of the dictator countries. Why was Hitler able to tear up the Treaty of Versailles, absorb Austria and Sudetenland without firing a shot ? The dominating reason why he was able to do it all is that he gives the German people a leadership to which they render unquestioning obedience. If you and I were Germans sitting beside our own fires in Berlin we would not be critical of the leadership that has produced such results" ("Sydney Morning Herald" October 28, 1938)

Many people are aware that Menzies was nick-named "Pig Iron Bob"

The Australian Labor Party

What Lenin Wrote in 1913

Another pamphlet in the Crow Collection is "Lenin on the Labor Government in Australia" which is a reprint of an article in Lenin's Collected Works (Vol.XVI). It is dated 1913, that is over 80 years ago, about a dozen years after Australia was federated.

The article is quite short. Here is most of its text (where omissions have been made there is a dotted line) :-

"What a peculiar capitalist country this is in which Labor predominates in the Upper House and recently predominated in the Lower House and yet the Capitalist system does not suffer any danger.

"An English correspondent of a German newspaper recently explained this circumstance, which is very often misrepresented by bourgeois writers.

"The Australian Labor Party does not even claim to be a Socialist Party. As a matter of fact it is a liberal-bourgeois party, and the so-called Liberals in Australia are really Conservatives.

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"Capitalism in Australia is still quite young. The country is only just beginning to take shape as an independent State. The workers for the most part, are emigrants from England. They left England at a time when Liberal-Labor politics held almost unchallenged sway there and when the majority of English workers were Liberal. Even up to now the majority of skilled factory workers in England are Liberals. This is the result of exceptionally favourable, monopolist position England occupied in the second half of the nineteenth century. Only now are the masses of the workers beginning to turn towards socialism.

"And while in England the so-called "Labor Party" represents an alliance between socialist and trade unions and the extreme opportunist Independent Labor Party, in Australia, the Labor Party represents the purely non-socialist trade unionist workers.

"The leaders of the Australian Labor Party are trade union officials, an element which everywhere represents a most moderate and "capital serving" element, and in Australia it is altogether peaceful, and purely liberal.

"The ties between the separate States of Australia are very weak. The Labor Party has to concern itself with developing and strengthening the country and creating a central government. In Australia the Labor Party has done what in other countries was done by the Liberals,

.....
"Naturally, when Australia is finally developed and consolidated as an independent capitalist State the conditions of workers will change, as also will the

Liberal Labor Party which will make way for a Socialist Labor Party. Australia serves to illustrate the conditions under which exceptions to the rule are possible, The rule is :- A socialist Labor Party in a capitalist country. The exception is :- A Liberal Labor Party which only arises for a short time as a result of the conditions which are abnormal for capitalism.

"Those liberals in Europe and in Russia who try to "preach" to the people that class war is unnecessary by pointing to Australia only deceive themselves and others. It is ridiculous to think of applying Australian conditions (an undeveloped young country, populated by Liberal English workers) to countries in which a state developed capitalism has been long established.

Lenin's article is in the Crow Collection pamphlet boxes, it is also in a volume of Lenin's "Collected Works" on the shelves.

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Hat's Off to Labor Women

"Hats Off to Labor Women" was the title of a recent lecture given by Jenny Beacham, Secretary of the Victorian Labor Party. Jenny explored some of the differences in style between men and women politicians while paying her personal tribute to women who were Victorian Labor parliamentarians in the 1980s. She described Joan Kirner in the following words :-

"Then there is Joan Kirner - one of the great politician anywhere in Australia - always focussed, and always able to carry the debate forward in an open or direct way. I've been asked many times what I see as her strength and I always say that at the end of a meeting she is always the one to say what is to be done and make a plan to advance" .

Lenin would be interested in what Jenny has to say when she compares the backgrounds of Federal Liberal and Labor politicians (see article above "What Lenin Wrote in 1913"). Here is a quote from Jenny's speech :-

"Recently I made a comparision between (Victorian) Liberal and Labor Federal M.P.s. The similarity between the two sides of the House are very strong. 38 out of 47 attended Melbourne, Monash, Sydney or ANU universities. Only 3 out of 47 did not attend univeristy. At least 16 studied law, that is, 1 in 4.

For political parties to define these characteristics of particular merit is perfectly reasonable but it reduces the pool of candidates considerably, for example the percentage of the male population who have attended those prestigious institutions is very, very small. Our definition of merit severely restricts the pool of talent, which in other organistions may well be defined as "merit". "Merit" is not an objective yardstick for measuring the worth of possible parliamentary candidates, but a particular set of criteria defined by those in power in the

particular organisation as deserving reward. I believe our criteria in the ALP are too narrow and in the interests of democracy must be broadened. The undemocratic outcome of our selection process means it excludes large segments of the community. We cannot claim to be a dynamic, responsive, political party if our definition of democracy is more closely related to Plato's definition of **democracy of the master class** (editor of Ecoso emphasises) than an Australian definition - from the Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary - 'Government by the people, the principle that all citizens have equal political rights'. (The Crow Collection has a copy of Jenny's speech and a copy of her chart classifying the place of education and previous occupation of Labor and Liberal politicians).

And a final quote from Jenny's speech :-

"Of all the arguments put against more women in public life the most offensive is MERIT. 'What we want are candidates of merit' they say. But how is merit defined and who defines it? Merit seems to me to be very much in the eye of the beholder."

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Tom Uren's View of Labor History

"I'm still in there punching. I have always been in a partisan minority. Defeat can make you a better person."

These were the words used by Tom Uren (former Federal Minister) when a reporter asked him had he won more than he had lost.

Tom's book "Straight Left" has recently been published by Random House. Although it costs \$39.95 it is well worth the price. It is a book full of facts, but it is also full of homely philosophy, such as :-

"My aim of politics was to bring out the best in people"..

Here is his summary of Whitlam's contribution to Australia :-

"His vision and greatness engendered the development of a new nationalism in Australia, a new awareness of the importance of our art, theatre, science, health programs, cities, local government, a new approach to our indigenous people, Australian heritage and and environment".

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Electoral Reform Issues for Victoria

Some community organisations are concerned about the degree of power which the Victorian Government intends local government to have. This has increased since the Government released it latest reports on the future of central Melbourne - the September 1994 "Development Framework for Victoria", and the November 1994 document "Creating Prosperity -Victoria's Capital City Policy".

These reports state that the Minister for Planning will be the responsible authority for the casino zone, the Port and Docklands and a range of specific development proposals 'of State interest'. On the future role of the Melbourne City Council as a representative body "Creating Prosperity" simply states "Council arrangements which give any elected council the ability to rise above parochialism and focus on strategic issues facing the Capital City will be pursued." (page 58). Will these demagogic words set the scene for precisely those conflicts of interest which have beset the Melbourne City Council whether under Civic Group or under Labor and Independents ?

A further matter of concern is the suggestion that the consultants to the City of Melbourne may wish to have electoral arrangements reverting to some form of property franchise or dual system of "democratically elected and democratically chosen" persons to rule the central city. It is timely to note that for more than a decade in Victorian local government elections the system of has been "one person, one vote, one value" - an appropriate arrangement when it is recognised that so much of municipal expenditure is non-rate in source and that broad democracy, with compulsory voting, is what is expected.

(Ecoso would appreciate articles about local government for its next issue..deadline for Ecoso 2/34, Jan 31, send to address on cover page)

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Holiday Reading

These three, very different, recently published, cheaply priced books may be of interest to you. Each costs about \$20.

"Metropolis Now - Planning and the Urban in Contemporary Australia" edited by Katharine Gibson and Sophie Watson, published by Pluto Press. This collection of essays "challenges many of the ways in which contemporary urban discourse places the suburbs (distinctive parts of Australian cities), women, non English speaking residents and Aboriginal histories in a position of subordination, positions of 'otherness'."

"As I Recall - Reminiscences of Early Canberra" by Charles Daley. published by Mulini Press in association with Canberra and District Historical Society. Charles Daley, a public servant from 1905 who was the Civic Administrator of Canberra from 1930, was closely involved in the selection of the National Capital, its building and the social and cultural life in Canberra. This book is a collection of articles he wrote after he retired. It is written in a very personal style, bringing to life many people who are only known as names to most people who are alive today.

"Political Dreaming - Men, Politics and the Personal" by John Andrews, published by Pluto Press. This is a book about "the long inner struggle to find inner meaning and peace of mind and form good relationships with others", John includes ideas discussed between him and several other men including Don Chipp Gabriel Lafitte, Michael Challen, a trade union organiser, a Labour MP, a priest, a Yoga teacher and several others.

Ecoso 2/33. December 1994.

Co-op Kobe -Mutuality Japanese Style

By Sheila Byard, (Based on a visit to Kobe in 1993)

The immense "Co-op Kobe", a consumer co-operative, has one million member households and more than 6,000 employees ! Not many Australian co-operators would know that its founder, the late Dr Toyohiko Kagawa, had strong links of friendship with Australia. He trained as a Presbyterian minister, founded the famous All Japan Anti-war League, and was interned during the Second World War. It was because of his work for peace that he came to Melbourne in 1935 to speak at an international peace conference.

In 1991 for its 71st anniversary, Kobe Co-op opened a co-operative training centre in the hills beyond Kobe, about 40 minutes from the centre of the city in the outer suburb called Miki-shi. The Kyodo gakuen (or Co-op College) has accommodation for 165 people with meeting rooms, dining rooms, library, and sporting facilities in a garden setting, next to a small national park. As well there is a fascinating replica of the Rockdale (U.K.) Toad Lane Co-op premises which houses a museum of the co-operative movement in Japan and beyond.

Courses are held at Kyodo gakuen for employees and members of the Kobe Co-op, for employees of other Japanese consumer co-op societies and for people from overseas co-op societies.

The Kobe Consumer Co-operative these days has a department store (Seer, opened 1989), 58 mini marts, 84 self service supermarkets and 19 group purchase depots as well as other types of retailing systems. Co-operative retailing has a strong emphasis on certification of ecologically sound produce. Some 400 food items are produced at the Co-op's modern plant including bread, tofu and noodles. Co-operative learning has been an important part of the life of the association since a women's movement was formed in 1924, in the period preceding women's suffrage in Japan. Today the Co-op's Living Culture Centre in the Higashinada-Ku area of Kobe continues this work.

Two aspects of the work of the Kobe Co-op seemed to me to be particularly interesting were the work of the Co-op Rainbow Kids program in building co-operative attitudes among the young, and the use of volunteer activities to build links between older and younger members. Japan has an ageing society. In the absence of an adequate welfare net, "Help-each-other" and "Enjoy-lunch-together" programs are particularly important.

Knowing of child-care co-ops, housing co-ops and co-operative banking in Australia, makes me wonder how well the common bond can work in an organisation the size of the Kobe Co-op.

Since Kobe is hardly more than half a day away there should be more scope for Australian links and exchanges, especially for young co-operators with an interest in food production and consumption issues, The address is :- CONSUMERS CO-OPERATIVE KOBE
1-3-19 Sumiyoshi- Honmachi, Higashinada-ku Kobe, 658 Japan
FAX (078) 856-1993,

Ecoso Exchange Guidelines

Adopted 1973

1. Ecoso has a value judgement in favour of regeneration and promotion of community participation meaning that it is humanising and enriching for people to relate to each other through one form or another of voluntary participatory activity both on the job and off the job, exercising a measure of control over such activities.

2. A consequent recognition of the necessity for change in life-style and behaviour patterns to one that sees the quality of life as an alternative to consumerism, understood as mass production and consumption of wasteful and unsatisfactory goods and services based on compulsion and manipulation.

3. Accordingly a policy of restricting the use of energy and non-renewable resources per head and hence a planned design of community including size of population, where people can relate to each other and to nature in order to reduce wasteful goods and services and at the same time guaranteeing an adequate minimum subsistence for all, using modern technology to this end.

4. The recognition that such objectives cannot be achieved either on the basis of practical, linear, one-level ecological remedies or with authoritarian and manipulative control of affairs and requires participatory effort to achieve global equilibrium.

(Subscription to Ecoso Newsletter \$10 for 6 issues. Ecoso was first published from 1967 to 1980. It was revived in 1988. The Crow Collection Association was formed in 1990. It has adopted Ecoso as its newsletter. More information about the Crow Collection and Ecoso from the address below.)



Crow Collection Association (Incorp.)
A Living Library to Plan for the 21st Century

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