

Contribution from Maurice Crow  
to C.I.P.A meeting to discuss  
"mass work in localities" 1965  
CROW-BOX23-25/13-0002

Note Maurice emphasises  
— "be in the mass movement"  
fight for the objectives of the mass movement.

22-9-1965

To All Branches and Sections.

Dear Comrades,

Further to the announcement of the one-day Conference to discuss MASS WORK IN LOCALITIES - Board Room, Unity Hall, 10 a.m, Sunday October 24.

The purpose of the Conference is to have an exchange of views and experiences on mass work in localities with the aim of improving such work and tackling this aspect of the problems which we face in building a mass party in Australia.

There will be five brief reports delivered by:-

Councillor Jim Mitchell - from Adelaide.  
Maurie Crow  
Jack O'Mara  
John Arrowsmith  
Dave Davies

The Conference will then be open for questions and discussion.

We pose the following questions which may be useful to consider prior to the Conference. However these are not intended to confine the topics and discussion.

- + Should any new methods, attitudes, policies and programs be considered in order to facilitate building a mass party?
- + Is there any importance in our members working in locality organisations such as Progress Associations, School Committees, Youth Clubs, Football Clubs, etc.?
- + Why isn't more local work undertaken by Party branches?
- + What problems do branches have in carrying out such work, discussing and leading it?
- + Have you any views on such questions as a Master Plan for Melbourne, the role of the Housing Commission, recreational and sporting facilities, the financing of municipal projects, voting methods and franchise in local government, powers of local government, etc.?
- + In what way should industrial branches, or union bodies concern themselves with local affairs?
- + Have you any experiences in local mass work which would be helpful to relate?

If comrades desire to read any material in preparation for the Conference, we suggest - 1. "Party Building and the Path to a Mass Party" by L. Aarons (revised) and - 2. Any Communist Review articles on mass work and municipal affairs over the recent months.

All Party members will be welcome at the Conference.

Yours fraternally,

State Executive.

To raise our influence on the local and electoral front to match our influence on the union front, we have to have two things - our OWN Party ~~policy~~ or program, not only in a generalised slogan form but a particularised policy for each locality, and for Melbourne as a whole, and we have to be in the mass movement to fight for the objectives of the mass movement, and to fight for the adoption of our policy by the mass movement.

skt A few words about the mass movement in the localities before turning to my main purpose today; a working class policy for a modern Melbourne.

There are many types of local organisations and they vary from suburb to suburb, but wherever the masses are to be found, or can most readily be organised, THERE is <sup>our</sup> place whether it is a kindergarten committee, a committee for a high school, an oil-tank farm protest committee, a library committee, a cricket or football club, a town planning society, a mother's club, a shop committee a Henry Lawson Memorial Association, a bush fire brigade, <sup>or</sup> a drive-in theatre protest committee.

There are some differences about Progress Associations or Ratepayers Associations. Some comrades believe that they are of value only for a brief period in outer suburbs where intense feeling develops over unmade roads or lack of sewers. I take a different view. In Melbourne anyway, these organisations are the most generalised of all local organisations - just about any local issue is "fair game" for them, and many of them ~~have~~ therefore live on under adverse circumstances ~~long~~ long after committees set up for a particular protest purpose have collapsed.

*of the Council of Progress Associations*  
Examine, for example, the minutes of the July meeting <sup>of the Council of Progress Associations</sup> which were circularised to all affiliated member ~~associations~~.

They pass on to all affiliates a questionnaire on the new valuations and rates compiled jointly by 6 Progress Associations in Heidelberg. They call on all affiliates to protest that the Board of Works rates should not exceed 10% over 1964, and go crook because not enough protests have come in, they remind affiliates to press for school overpasses, the cost to Councils being 1/3rd, they ask affiliates in Broadmeadows, Tullamarine, Keilor and Essendon for their views on the projected new package-deal suburb of Gladstone, they call in several ways for unity and propose certain more democratic methods of running their meeting. Not a bad lead, not all perfect, not exactly as we might plan it, but nevertheless not a bad cross-section of local activity called for - if only we had a few comrades in the local organisations to respond.

In the established organisation of the Council of Progress Associations is, at least in embryo, a people's parliament of local affairs. It is

far more accessible to democratic control and local pressure than the <sup>Victorian</sup> Municipal Association which represents 208 municipal councils, or say, the Board of Works, in both of which democracy is twice removed from the local citizen because delegates to these bodies are elected not direct by ratepayers but only indirectly by the local councils.

*The Progress Assoc.*

Its leadership has opposed red-baiting and rejected the very persuasive influence of Henry George-ites who tried to capture it.

However, despite my "plug" for progress associations, I don't want to appear unbalanced. All I am saying is - don't scrub them simply ~~because~~ because they don't always operate at a high fever of activity. There's many a union, and even a party branch here and there which dies away when the tide of struggle ebbs, but we don't scrub them.

Whatever local mass organisations there are, there our locality branch, or industrial branch should try to establish regular connections - but I don't mean the whole branch, that wouldn't be real. I mean one or two members whose MAIN job it could be, although occasionally as in all other spheres of activity there may be an emergency call for more assistance over hot issues. But, as in other spheres, ~~we~~ we can get nowhere useful without applying Marxism, without a policy.

So I want to turn now to our needs for a modern policy to fit a modern and rapidly changing Melbourne. I want to bring together several ideas that have been recently expressed:

1. First the idea already mentioned <sup>as "7-day wonder" which</sup> that progress associations spring up in the ~~newer suburbs over roads, sewers, and as soon as these amenities have been provided they fizzle out or become dead and alive and can't be resuscitated.~~ <sup>quickly dying then simple wit.</sup> Often implied in this idea, although not always expressed, is the idea that the suburban dweller in an established suburb simply has no real local needs to be campaigned around ~~ME~~. Is that true?

2. Second point. Sir Leo Curtis retiring Lord Mayor of Melbourne recently warned that State Governments were increasingly taking over the functions of local government, which is the OPPOSITE to what some of our comrades have been pointing out - that local government has imposed upon it many functions formerly the province of State or Federal Governments. These opposite tendencies apparently going on simultaneously have their tactical importance, e.g. whether the SEC should take over council-run electricity departments, whether kindergartens should be run by a State department or whether councils should take over house building in competition with the Housing Commission. Some of these tactical questions are very mixed and very complex and I would like to hear some views on them today.

But I believe that there is a more fundamental process at work, that either of these opposite tendencies namely, that private enterprise is stepping in and filching functions from both State Government and from local government, and this is of greater political importance.

Private enterprise is stepping in to take over not only some of the oldest traditional functions, but especially to supply the more modern needs in which councils have failed to take the initiative to keep up with the times.

For example of the older needs. Council road-making has become big private business and Comrade Harry Stanistreet proposes that groups of Councils should combine to form a road making combine that would ~~complete~~ compete with the oil, machinery and contracting monopolies. Or again the Templestowe nursery fire last year was a tragic reminder that there are dozens of privately run third-rate and expensive child-minding institutions. It is high time the standards of child expert, the late Dr. Vera Scantlebury Brown of 5 Government-subsidised pre-school centres to every 1 baby health centre were revived and campaigned for.

Of the newer needs take for example David Wang's Golden Bowl in Camberwell with trampolines, bowling alleys, gymnasium, sauna baths, heated swimming pool, coffee lounge, nursery and laundrette, "something for everyone" which <sup>is</sup> are a clever although rather expensive adaptation to modern needs. Think of Chadstone with its extensive facilities, including cultural attractions e.g. books, fairs and art shows, and now Ringwood & Preston are to have their own Chadstones.

3. Third point. If I can quote from Cde. Laurie Aarons report to the February meeting of the Central Committee. "The same approach that has consolidated the Party's influence in industry and the unions is necessary to extend this grass roots influence in the localities. Here we should avoid the sectarian approach, concentrating on proving the Communists the best mass workers for the local mass organisations and the mass movements that develop from time to time".

"Party branches must study local government questions, take an interest in the work of councils, accompanying the mass work of individual communists with consistent party leadership and policy on the issues confronting the people in the municipalities and shires"....

So there are 2 elements - one the mass work of individual communists and of necessity this must concern itself with the most elementary, the most immediate and often the most trivial of starting points. And secondly connected with these starting points yet carrying them further and integrating them, as it were is a policy which provides leadership, unfolding the real issues confronting the people which are not always apparent or fully appreciated in the starting points.

I'm aware here that

~~of course~~

~~We are~~ ~~that~~ one must beware of paper schemes, ~~of~~  
~~monitoring~~ or what ought to be. The Party produced, in earlier  
 years, some excellent municipal plans. The trouble with some  
 of these earlier plans, was not that they were on paper —  
 and there was nothing impractical with the schemes themselves —  
 the trouble was they remained on paper, at a propaganda  
 level, where the correct way forward was to select one or  
 two of the ~~some~~ <sup>two of the</sup> more popular and reliable starting points ~~and~~ <sup>from</sup>  
~~develop~~ the whole scheme, and develop ~~an~~ organization  
 around these.

Some of the older comrades, in particular, it seems  
 to me, in reaction against a somewhat idealised  
 approach to such plans, have become anti-paper, as if it  
 were ~~evil~~ <sup>sectarian or sectarian</sup> for Communists to have perspectives or  
 better ~~ways of~~ <sup>ways of</sup> ~~working~~ <sup>living</sup>. They have  
~~never~~ got around to the position of learning to grapple  
 altogether with big serious issues, reject any concept  
 of planning, thus tending to confine municipal  
 issues to the petty-fogging <sup>and</sup> thus talking behind the  
 march of events, leaving it to big business to become  
 the style-setter and pace-setter.

It seems to me inescapable. —

So starting points in a factory around local safety issues, on speed up or toilets, are necessary day to day work for communists in the job to qualify them to lead the workers into broader campaigns, say for a <sup>modernised:</sup> ~~£20~~ basic wage or nationalisation which confronts the employing class as a whole.

So in the localities, starting points around potholes or garbage collection, rates, flashing lights or school crossovers are indispensable immediate concerns. These starting points are - well precisely starting points, and anyone who wants to DO something about local affairs, as distinct from gas-bag about them, has to find them, go out of his way to find them, and then, to express it in today's language it is a question of "go go go", it's a question of perseverance and tempo to lift the grumble into an organised protest, to give the protest direction, to wrest victory if possible on the issue however small.

Our Hawthorn comrades, I feel, have something significant to report on some of their experiences, which I hope they will do later today, but I suggest, during the luncheon break that members study the three examples on the notice board - the simplicity and shortness of the publicity, The open yet non-sectarian presentation of the party, The seeking of views by questionnaires, etc

But I want to present some of the wider issues which we communists must advance on the municipal front, seeking the views of the working people, helping them to formulate and crystallise into more fundamental policies which sustain and give class conscious ~~XXXX~~ direction to many of the small immediate reforms.

*See 1/11/57*  
~~I'm aware here that one must be aware of paper schemes, of moralising on what ought to be. But some of the older comrades in particular I feel in reaction against some of the rather idealised municipal plans the Party produced in earlier years, have got around to the position of ceasing to grapple altogether with big serious issues, reject any concept of planning, thus tending to confine municipal issues to the petty-fogging and thus tailing behind the march of events.~~

*Re Party produced in earlier years some excellent municipal plans. The trouble will come in reaction against a somewhat approach to such existing plans on a*

It seems to me inescapable that we thrash out a creative Australian way forward, on the municipal as on other fronts, so that it becomes apparent that communists can appreciate and represent all that is the most advanced and attractive to the best elements of the working people.

Cde. Aarons puts it that "building of a mass party is essentially a question of developing working class consciousness of its leading role in the nation". Can we qualify for that on the municipal front, unless we ourselves help the workers to put flesh and blood on the skeleton of our anti-monopoly policy? Too many of us, including at times myself, have resorted to incanting "10% of the Federal revenue" as if it were a magic formula and enshrined all aspects of our

Now there are dozens of/bornings is over, ~~some of which have~~  
~~been circumscribed to~~ some localised, some Melbourne-wide  
~~ones which~~

Let me mention a few:

1) Parks, gardens, ~~tennis courts, playing fields~~ ~~avenues, boulevards~~  
wealthy of ~~the~~ <sup>a playing field</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> last century, who ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> wealthy dwell in Carlton, East  
Melb, ~~North~~ Royal Pde & St Hilda Rd etc liberally  
enclosed themselves with beautiful, spacious, tree-lined  
parks, avenues, boulevards & gardens: ~~places for~~ <sup>places for</sup> tennis courts  
~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> stark contrast to today's outer-suburban  
working class suburbs.

Should we compare for ~~such~~ such standards today —  
or have the motor car made all that obsolete?

2) Kindergartens — is it idiotic to expect a  
kindergarten within 1/4 mile of every home, is the  
demand that 1/2 of the pre-school children be catered for  
unreal?

~~3) Elderly citizens~~

3) Traffic Can an efficient and cheap public transport  
system be devised to prevent Melbourne being  
choked ~~with~~ and strangled by its motor-cars? If so, what  
is it? What about safety — school cross-overs & safety-lights?

4) Health What factories pollute the air, what can we have  
medicinal-aid for elderly citizens, what clinics for  
workers, like the Footscray clinic are needed, & what  
home-help service should be available? What is our  
attitude a Melbourne's ~~pure~~ <sup>untreated</sup> water supply?

5) Shopping Are ~~municipal~~ markets out-of-date? ~~Are~~ <sup>Compared to</sup>  
~~Convents incapable of~~ <sup>responsible</sup> ~~summing~~ <sup>summing</sup> up shopping like Chadstone?  
What municipal shopping facilities should ~~be~~ <sup>there be</sup> ~~demanded~~?

6) Education Has T.V. made modern municipal libraries  
obsolete? What size school playing fields should be  
regarded as standard? Is as good as Geelong Grammar  
or "only" as good as Melbourne High school?



Local Government Administration

Should we support the Committee of Enquiry recommendations on the following:

- (i) one vote for every adult resident as well as ~~no~~ ~~resident~~ ~~vote~~ ~~for~~ ~~non~~ ~~resident~~ ~~owners~~ as non-resident owners.
- (ii) ~~for~~ ~~the~~ election every 3 years instead of every year
- (iii) amalgamation of ~~the~~ groups of Councils instead of the severance trend evident since the Committee's report was published by O'Connell, Knox, & Doncaster-Templestowe

~~It~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ ~~development~~ of technology of roads such as a stage that many local government ~~of~~ functions should be transferred to central government with the exception of medical, child-care, electricity

- 7) ~~Master Plan of ~~the~~ ~~area~~ ~~is~~ ~~you~~ ~~satisfied~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~Master~~ ~~Plan~~ ~~satisfactory~~?~~  
 If not, how could it be varied? Should the new urban developments, such as Gladstone (near Broadmead) or the 700 hundred acres to be cleared in inner Melbourne suburbs, be developed by ~~the~~ ~~local~~ ~~authorities~~ ~~or~~ ~~private~~ ~~enterprise~~ ~~or~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~State~~ ~~Government~~ ~~or~~ ~~other~~ ~~authorities~~ ~~or~~ ~~planned~~?

In all of these various spheres, in what precise way <sup>of any</sup> has your local Council served the interests of various monopolies, and how can it be exposed and the people rallied to demand the Council serve their interests instead?

And there are many other issues. I'd like to deal briefly with two of these — housing & youth facilities

- 8) Youth facilities. Would you ~~patronise~~ ~~modern~~ ~~municipal~~ ~~sponsored~~ ~~and~~ ~~reasonably~~ ~~priced~~ sports- and-culture centres including in the one reasonable cover-charges: swimming-pool, gymnasium, bowling alley, volley-ball, squash, coffee-bar/lounge, ~~with~~ espresso bar and what-else?

9) Housing

people and which the 10% should be spent on. In doing so we put the cart before the horse. We say in effect:-"Well here's how you can get some money but I'm damned if I know what you should spend it on".

If I can now bring my 3 points together again I want to say first that comrades who say that there are no important genuine local issues are wrong, second that to see the shape of modern-type mass local needs, we have only to examine what new things private enterprise is beginning to do, replacing council amenities with commercialised ones, and thirdly that we the communists cannot stand idly by and watch this process going on; our job is to develop the working class to take leading role around these issues - which, of course, assumes an independent class policy.

<sup>5. A INSERT</sup>  
~~Now there are dozens of burning issues, some of which have been already circulated to you and I'd like to spend some time mainly on two of these issues:~~ housing and facilities for youth, both of which, I feel, are special areas of neglect both by our party and the labour movement as a whole. Although with the development of Youth Week can be seen the germs of important changes.

HOUSING. First then, housing - you might object: "This is not a political matter of a character that can arouse struggle. It is a matter for each individual's taste and finance". Of course some of the stormiest local mass struggles in history have taken place over housing - the anti-eviction struggles in the 1930's. Housing Commission rent struggles in the 1940's, but these were at a time when the working class were mainly tenants. But Victoria now boasts 75% home-ownership and a rate of almost 80% - an alleged world record.

So, rate struggles can be expected to replace rent struggles, and struggles for cheaper finance and cheaper land and houses replace anti-eviction struggles. Cde. Jack O'Mara will deal with some aspects of rate struggles.

But about the actual building projects. Can we say that this is a matter of indifference to local inhabitants? The Minister for Housing has announced that 700-800 acres is to be "reclaimed" by the Housing Commission in the inner suburbs. The people's homes there pulled down and the master builders are to build multi-storey flats and terraces. But what about the councils, most of them labour councils, where do they come in? There is a pilot plan for such development in Hotham Gardens, North Melbourne already in operation. Here 18 of Melbourne's master builders combined to form Master Builders (Associated) Redevelopments Ltd. of which A.V. Jennings is the Chairman to <sup>prove</sup> show just what a good show private enterprise could put on if they could only get the Housing Commission to present them with some more nice paddocks near the City to build on.

There were 5 of Melbourne's leading architects on the panel.

4 of these have since resigned when they found that the Company insisted on packing in every extra flat they could, so that the "Gardens" part of the project is fast vanishing. They put 148 flats on the same area as 108 flats had been built on in the original show piece. It is this Company which will no doubt have some of the 800 acres to play with. South Melbourne and Fitzroy <sup>are to</sup> come first but Collingwood, Prahran, Richmond and Carlton are to follow. Incidentally Jennings made a record profit this year to top off a record profit last year.

The Liberal Government is handing over to the building barons in a big way. But what are we to say when the Broadmeadows council ~~is~~, a Labour council, approves plans for <sup>Cogstan</sup> Developments P/L, the British building monopoly

~~The British building monopoly~~

to build a complete suburb of Gladstone, consisting of 700 acres, 3000 houses, shops churches, roads, recreation reserves and the lot?

Alongside this, to complete the picture, there is the well-known sabotage of the Holmesglen pre-fab concrete projects and neglect to use the Housing Commission as a builder.

In my opinion we ought to come out fighting on a program that the main provision of workers' homes ought to be carried out by the public sector of the economy (namely the Housing Commission) and not the private sector. We ought to demand that the Commission build so many reasonably priced flats and houses, both to let or for purchase that the waiting lists are reduced to zero. Only then can democracy as to what sort of house workers want begins to operate. It is my belief that many workers are driven to become home-owners, not because they want to, but because there are none they can rent at a reasonable rental or with reasonable security of tenure. In the same way I believe many are driven to buying or renting houses because there are no suitable flats they can buy or rent.

I think we ought to set our sights at a building program for the Housing Commission, battle to get it adopted by the Labour movement and by the people. In the 1950's the Building Trades Federation brought out a plan for the building industry backed by the ACTU. I can't see why that can't be repeated, but with more formulated demands.

Why should shareholders of British building monopolies or Australian building monopolies for that matter make handsome profits at the expense of home-hungry people? Let them build whatever mansions the rich fancy or the city skyscrapers but leave workers homes entirely to the Housing Commission, skyscrapers or otherwise.

Local councils have powers to build housing schemes under the Local Government Act, but I don't think it is good tactics to demand that they use them. In today's conditions big capital equipment is required to build economically.

7.

economically, and if local councils entered the field, they would only serve to help sabotage the Housing Commission.

I think it is better that local councils produce plans for re-development and call on the Government for the finance to enable the Housing Commission not only to acquire but to themselves tackle the building. One comrade has suggested that to provide cheap land for workers, the Housing Commission should acquire large tracts on Melbourne's outskirts, subdivide and resell the blocks at cost to cut out the subdividers profit.

This sounds attractive but there is the difficulty that the economic effect would tend to reduce the value of land everywhere else, so that when a workers came to ~~sell~~ resell his home, it would fetch less. Many might object to this but of course ALL land would be affected approximately proportionately, so that he could buy cheaper too.

Personally I believe the Party should advocate two alternate forms of workers' housing, and struggle to interest unions, ALP branches, Progress Associations and local councils.

1. "Package Deals" as it were, like Gladstone or in reclaimed inner suburbs where workers can either buy or rent cheap houses or flats only built and run by the Commission with land, house or flat, shops, school, community centre, park, all pre-planned, erected by large-scale modern building methods, although giving the worker perhaps a far wider choice of architectural design than now available.
2. For workers desiring more individuality at a higher price, or wanting to buy second hand houses, Government-provided long term (say 20 years) low interest (say 4½%) finance to 95% of the value of the house and secured by only one mortgage to supplement co-operative housing finance which should also be expanded.

Anti-socialist propaganda has long frightened workers with the prospect of dull, standardised, low grade housing under socialism. In my opinion it would be wrong for us to ape the housing habits of Europe or Asia simply because they are socialist, even if the propaganda is cock-eyed.

By advancing an all-round flexible Australian-style program on the housing front, we could be advancing reforms around which especially younger married couples could struggle ~~around~~ and simultaneously laying to rest the lie that we stand for compulsory uniform dullness.

On the municipal front we have to battle for properly town planned efficient suburbs with modern adequate shopping.

A few words now on my second illustration: youth facilities. If ever there was a grave issue around the local areas it is the growth of delinquency. Although Church youth clubs cater for some sections, the oldfashioned

war-time and early post-war notion of a youth centre or community centre never seemed to survive with vigor into the 1950's or 1960's. Why not? The recent controversial "Letter to teenagers" by an American Chief of Police quoted with approval by our own Chief Commissioner of Police, Arnold, said amongst other choice things: "Your parents do not owe you entertainment. Your city or town does not owe you recreational facilities. The world does not owe you a living. You owe the world something". Age 31-8-1965. Note that: "Your city ..... does not owe you recreational facilities".

Whether it OWES them or not, the city certainly doesn't provide very much. What capitalism DOES provide for our modern teenagers is TV and cars from which modern youth can hardly escape even if he wanted to. Having saturated the youth's surroundings with these blessings the older generations profess great surprise when the youth's world begins to revolve around cars, when they knock out their excitement, their adventures as it were, in the form of cars. They spend all their pocket money on cars, they spend their sparetime working on cars, steal cars, race cars, sieze girls or assault people with the use of cars. The "cult of the car" if I could call it so has features good and bad. Achievement in the personal skill and perseverance needed for repairing old bombs is a positive side to it. But there are also negative sides.

Australians are a sport loving people. But really cars are a poor sport. Despite shortcomings we have also fine cultural traditions. But a car dominated life tends to cultural barrenness.

Cde. Ron Neave has put me right on this whole subject. He explained how there was a flourishing youth club in Highett (?) with plenty of buildings and equipment and help from vigorous progressive people, but it has over recent years just fizzled out, except for the ~~garage~~ younger fry. Most of these teenagers have become car mad and are simply not interested. Does that mean that it is really useless for the city or town to provide recreational facilities for the youth? Does it mean that Policeman Arnold is right, but for other reasons? Surely not. It seems to me that if communists run away from this problem - push it aside as insoluble - regard the youth as an enigma whose real modern needs (aside from cars) can never be properly determined or satisfied, and we will be merely disqualifying ourselves from giving political leadership. And youth is the very generation whose contribution the working class movement in Australia most needs.

Take the municipal swimming pools of which there are many fine examples. Youth get there (~~or they used to~~), they swim a bit, sunbake a bit. But there is nothing much more they can do. Couldn't there be alongside modern coffee

and milk bars. ~~Couldn't there be a gymnasium attached~~ and say, volley ball courts? If squash or bowling alleys suddenly became popular, why can't such facilities be added ~~alongside as well?~~ Why should they be left to private enterprise to exploit, making such facilities far dearer than they should be? And couldn't culture come into, ~~that~~, real live "pop" singers and bands in the milk bars and say, folk singers in the coffee shop? Maybe talent quest ~~finalists~~ finalists occasionally. And ~~couldn't there be~~ popular young sports leaders paid to organise games and coach people? And couldn't there be a reasonably priced cover charge giving right of access to all these facilities? My guess is that if this were well organised by councils and subsidised by the Government, and if wowers were kept under strict control, the youth could be attracted and a taste for sport and live culture starting at their own level could be commenced. Moreover such a centre could be used to attract and organise participation in other sports and other cultural pursuits and the cult of the car would seem to me to have a real challenge. The car would begin to fall into its rightful place as useful transport but not a substitute for life.

I've advanced this concrete perspective at the risk of being labelled an old fuddy-duddy by the youth and an idealist by the adults because it seems to me that if not this, then some other type of inspired policy for sport and cultural activities that are connected with modern youth's habits and preferences have to be hammered out, in the process and activity amongst the youth themselves.

And then battled for: It would be very good if sponsorship for such projects could come from the trade union youth committees or the suburban and factory youth week committees. If such demands were presented to local councils what scope it would give active municipal workers. Petitions in which not only or mainly the parents are sought <sup>out</sup> ~~at~~, but the youth themselves, deputations to councillors or the council in which youth participated. Such a program could draw all streams of the labor and people's movement, the unions, EYL, YLA, Church youth clubs, Progress Assns., Labor Party branches, Labour councils and so on. As Makarenko puts it: The glorious tomorrow of youth must be organised and fought for by the youth themselves, And this is what youth must be helped to do, after they have finished ~~EX~~ raking up the leaves and washing the family car for Commissioner Arnold.

And our party should take the initiative at all levels, Of course, the adult generation OWES something to the youth. And if our party plays its part in paying its debt we can have a mass party - but I don't think too highly of our chances if we neglect this problem <sup>and</sup> the problems of the younger married couples. Mass parties are mainly built on these age groups.

I've dealt with some aspects of 2 issues - but there are dozens

Question: How to <sup>produce 10-2</sup> plans ~~for~~ around which citizens will fight? # 10.  
and dozens of others. If ~~they~~ <sup>plans</sup> are not lying on the surface, they are often not far below the surface because often public-minded citizens have already formulated some of the needs of the locality or metropolitan area and some excellent plans of the past which undoubtedly could have had some reality have been buried because of lack of finance.

On March 31st. of this year there was a coincidence. The leader of the ALP Parliamentary opposition in the Legislative Council Mr. Galbally, rose in Parliament with a 2 foot pile of official Govt. reports stacked on his desk. He charged the Bolte Govt. had set up 40 Royal Commissions and Boards of Enquiry in the past 10 years and had implemented less than 1% of their recommendations.

He made several interesting points about this. How the terms of reference are often drawn to preclude criticism of the Govt. e.g. on the Mt. Eliza Dam Enquiry ~~Shoe~~ parliamentary and public discussion was stifled while the enquiries sat. <sup>at first</sup> New issues are lively when they are first discussed but 2 years later when the findings come out the issues are dead - and the Govt. is aware of this. But above all is the point that a very small percentage (Galbally says 1% - possibly this is political license) were ever implemented.

The coincidence lies in the fact that on that same night, March 31 a party report was given to a meeting of municipal activists, in which a condensed considerable section dealt with what were called 'buried reports' and the point was made that the Liberals rather than give an image of themselves of black reaction knocking back every progressive move no sooner than it was made, have a habit of giving an appearance of liberalism by setting up a public enquiry with the utmost democracy and when everyone has "got it off their chests" and the report eventually emerges, they then bury it whole, or nibble at a few small minor recommendation and bury the bulk of it. This ignoring their own experts not forthrightly but on the grounds of lack of finance.

Examples were cited not only of Federal and State Govt. buried reports but also reports of Govt. Depts. and local councils buried because they were inconsistent with liberal policy or lack of finance.

This coincidence is worth mentioning because it is symptomatic of the fact that the Labor Party and our Party are searching for issues to arouse the people on the municipal and state Parliamentary front against the Govt. - incidentally the <sup>A.</sup>L.P. has set up a municipal policy committee charged with drafting a policy before the next State election

~~We will permit examples of buried reports but~~  
(To list a few examples from the various buried reports mentioned in either Galbally's report or our own party report to stimulate thoughts:  
From Galbally Juvenile delinquency report )

### Report on Housing Commission

The progress reports on decentralisation  
 Newmarket sales yards and inland killing  
 Library services (Jungwirth)  
 Queen Victoria Market  
 Debney Paddock

### Examples from Party report

"We must go on" Report of Barnett and Best of Housing Commission and its  
 early more progressive period.

Vera Scantlebury Brown on Kindergartens

Stretton report on bushfires

The original Melb. City Council report on Debney Paddock

and if you want a new inquiry to help keep your eye on right through:

Parlt. Foreshore Cttee. of Enquiry with Brian Dixon MLA

Lastly there is one which we have succeeded to some extent in resurrecting from  
 the dead, namely the Report of the Cttee of Enquiry into Local Govt. You will  
 already be familiar with the financial recommendations for Federal aid in a mild  
 form but the other recommendations that there should be 3 yearly instead of  
 yearly council elections, that all citizens should have at least one vote on the  
 roll, that named groups of councils should consider amalgamation you may not know.

Buried reports vary of course, but often <sup>contain</sup> certain progressive  
 ideas - that is precisely why they have been buried. - Moreover the enquiries  
 which produce these reports do not just drop out of the blue. They are usually  
 a result of agitational moves by progressive citizens, conscientious public  
 servants or enlightened experts trying to get something done. That was why the  
 enquiry came about, precisely to shunt-off the agitation into a quiet siding  
 and eventually bury it along with the report.

Because of all this, many useful plans or the germs of them are to  
 be found in buried reports which tend to have a measure of reality in 2 senses.  
 politically because they have already in the past attracted public support, and  
 practically because they experts have had a go at them in the course of <sup>some</sup> the enquiry.

Resurrected plans arising from yesterday's agitation and suitably  
 adapted and integrated with brand new plans based on today's agitations are  
 necessary for our local branches.

In Victoria, because Bolte has deliberately thrust upon local  
 councils increasing financial difficulties, and because councils have tended to  
 pass on these burdens to ratepayers, we communists have had some tendency to  
 confine local municipal activity to protesting against these impositions. This is  
 not <sup>in</sup> correct. But such negative protest movements are insufficient on their own



and must be complemented by a positive program of local demands. Of course, every branch can't produce a full blown municipal plan but the DIRECTION, THE PERSPECTIVES is what is necessary to grasp. We must be out in front with specific demands to rally people around, not way behind protesting only after the bosses have already galvanised the masses into protest by increasing taxes, rates and charges.

Let me turn to another aspect of this: the importance of local councils. Paris of course is famous for her red belt of suburban councils around the city. Well a new feature of post-war Melbourne has been the emergence of a belt of labour councils around Melbourne, a potential 14 or so out of 40, i.e. about 1/3rd. The impact of this, not only in the suburbs concerned but now at last, this year for the first labour challenge in the Board of Works over rates is a serious matter for the big employers. The political climate around these areas where there are Labour councils has changed considerably e.g. council support for Peace Congress activities, or for price protests as well as a greater potential source of struggle against local monopolies e.g. such as the oil tank farms around Williamstown.

And so the Liberals, with their faithful allies in the DLP, have started conducting dirty municipal under-cover campaigns using the whisper, to smear and the lie to bring down labour councils. Left-wing inclined councillors come in for special attention. The latest trick is to run not only liberal but even DLP as independents and exchange preferences underground as it were against labour. This has resulted in labour losses in Williamstown, Sunshine, Brunswick and this year in Coburg and Richmond.

In these, and indeed in all areas, comrades have a big political responsibility to work in unity with labour party left and centre and to isolate the extreme right wing in all possible directions remembering that there is a labour party council caucus wherever there are labour councillors, there is a quarterly labour party meeting of all councillors around Melbourne, there is a labour party Board of Works caucus, there are L.P. branches, Young Labour Ass. branches, Women's Organising cttee. members and not overlooking the fact that the L.P. has its own published policies, on education and cultural affairs and is going in for much more of this line and embodied in such policies there are many positive policies worth fighting around.

Lets face it: many labour party activists know a great deal more about local affairs than we do, and are far more active. Our unity with the most active honest workers who support the ALP is going to remain a lopsided affair as long as its main influence is confined to the union movement.

Only when this is supplemented with much better unity in struggle around local issues can we begin to recruit to our party, cement the unity isolate the DLP, arrest the reverses to Labour councils, and set our feet on the path of a red belt around Melbourne.

Only along such a path can we lay the basis of a far greater influence in the electorates generally on State and Federal politics, ~~of a mass party with mass influence capable of leading the path to socialism.~~

~~Whether we like it or not, the class struggle around the parish pump and the parish potholes has shifted from a struggle with the local estate agents, landlords and contractors, and has become a struggle with the big monopolies and their government.~~ And on this section of the political front field confront the big monopolies and their governments with a peoples movement capable of wresting the reins of government, local as national on the path to socialism.