

So, Chris Ryan, like Alan Roberts, proposes that, since the solution of the ecological challenge lies in the direction of low-energy low-impact technology, the very social character of the productive process itself must change. This, surely is correct ! The character of the productive process itself must change to one amenable to self-management and community-control as distinct from globally-organised, multi-nationally-owned, bureaucratically-controlled production. That is really only another way of putting what I started with: restoring to workers their capacity to creatively project a future and work to transform their circumstances towards it---but not any old sort of future: now it must be an ecologically tolerable future.

Let me express the same basic content in the terms of some differences that emerged during the Radical Ecology Conference. To "work at" changing technology is tantamount to saying we have to work at changing lifestyle values,, because, of course, changing the character of the productive process to one of an impact low enough to sustain ecological stability and one amenable to workers control ~~means~~ changing what we consider important in life. To say this, however, is not to ignore that for the masses of people, their values are and will be determined for them by the present system : so the system itself has to be changed. But it does mean that the advanced minority of radicals who reject the capitalist ~~extremist~~ consumerist values should be allies in the task of changing society; that is: communists should look to lifestylers as potential allies, and lifestylers should look to communists as potential allies.

I lay emphasis on Chris' words that we have to "work at" changing technology into a more creative self-manageable process. No-one can win before they start. You have to project the future : a more workable, more humane ~~more~~ ecological future, and then battle towards it. Maybe the goals will change as you battle towards them: but without goals there is no battle, only unending class ~~struggle~~ ^{scrimmage?} within the system.

Now it is typical that any mass movement has to have starting points that ~~can~~ cannot embrace the whole future goal, but begin with small or partial and ^{system} certainly incomplete objectives. But radicals are out to change the whole / so for us starting points are not enough. Simultaneously we have to "work at" the projection of tomorrow's circumstances for a whole alternative society---and for Australia especially, with 85% city dwellers ~~in~~ --- that includes a whole urban alternative society. Struggling for that bright alternative urban future projected vividly as a feasible human and ecological future that capitalism can't offer is the only way to attract the overwhelming masses to the side of a radical alternative social system. We in the advanced capitalist countries cannot expect to get a social revolution first, and only then start to become human, self-managing and ecological.

Moreover, unless the indescribable ^{and partial} small/efforts of self-management which can have achievable results within the present capitalist framework are ~~in~~ given direction, perspective and inspiration by more comprehensive projected goals for the whole of society, the small efforts, even small successes, tend to fizzle out, succumb to obstacles, or even ^{become} commercialised and safely incorporated in the established ~~order~~ order ~~is~~ serving thus to stave off radicalisation of the masses

SO: we need a goal for our own city of 2½ million:we need an alternative Melbourne, and we need to be able to demonstrate its superiority over the present capitalist Melbourne.

If ~~this~~ this is agreed, there are four extensions or implications of the argument I want to draw out - and defend - before describing the alternative vision as I think it could be seen.

1. We need to project a feasible communist Melbourne - not a socialist Melbourne.

Communists for some decades have tended } in my view incorrectly - to project socialism as the big bright be-all and end-all. Yet socialism in the terms of any communist, is a transitional stage between two entirely new social systems: it is only the first necessarily imperfect stage of communism. Its as if we were trying to enthuse people with some new constructions in course of erection someplace, and we showed them old buildings half pulled down and shapeless new buildings in various stages of erection with scaffolding all around them, and we have been saying: "Behold! this is what we offer you!" And at that the images have been from other countries that wouldn't fit Australian conditions anyway.

We, in Australia, had neglected so long to project the human non-alienating self-managing communist values which we have only in recent years been resurrecting, that communists, in fact, are not typically identified with such values in the minds of workers at large at all. Instead, Communists tend to be seen either as good militants who can be trusted to stir things up; or as people interested only in a struggle for power---as if their only objective was to oust the capitalists, stand in their shoes, and subjugate them to authoritarian dictatorship for the sole purpose of redistributing the wealth, simply interchanging the role of the classes. But either image is a ~~stupid~~ caricature of communism - not communism. ^{is "stark & bleak"} Either image /confuses a phase or aspect of the struggle with the goal being struggled for.

I have to say this to avoid the rejection without consideration of the model which I will soon project on the grounds of Utopianism, futureology, volunteerism or some other deadly idealistic sin. Long habit inclines some, I think, to dismiss anything that seems to look too far ahead on the grounds that it ignores the harsh reality of the multinationals and their compliant State machinery that between them have no other choice but to drive forward the whole capitalist growth ethos, foisting consumerism on us and making environmental destruction inevitable.

Yet, I suggest, the quickest way to assist masses of people (as distinct from radical minorities) to understand what impossible obstacles the big corporations really are is to project a positive constructive Melbourne as-it-ought-to-be, a Melbourne that people can identify with, and which can be seen to overcome their problems.. People surely cannot be enthused to struggle towards the goal of controlling a Melbourne misshapen by present trends with values dictated right now by the very forces we oppose. We can'y win by preferring a communism based on freeways / ^{and overtime}

To fight for a change in power without a change in values simply plays into the hands of trendplanners who extrapolate the future from the present and present it in the sacred name of "reality" often camouflaged with great academic and scientific erudition, as the fate before which we are all expected to obediently submit. We, all of us, will indeed be subject to just such a capitalist fate and prove the spurious trendplanners right, unless we fearlessly advance an inspiration of an ecologically tolerable and non-alienating social system for the future: and - you can call such a system what you will - I call such a system communism.

2. We need an understandable working model of our future goals - not general phrases of better values.

Despite what I said about communists losing sight of their goals, it is true that, in the 70s anyway, those in the CPA at least have been progressively advancing the goals of self-management, workers control, community control and, more recently still, ecological goals; and such new perspectives have begun to inspire the beginnings of industrial and political struggles in these directions; workers who say: why can't we run the factory instead of taking the sack, or who refuse to build what is bad for the community.

All of this is tremendously welcome; but my proposition is that a further dimension is needed: something is needed between the necessarily generalised phrasemongering of the long-term goals and the necessarily piecemeal character of the partial industrial struggles or experiments in alternative technology.

What is needed is a model of coherent practical principles demonstrating how a communist Melbourne could be superior to a capitalist Melbourne - an operative model which attempts to translate the spirit of the generalised human and ecological goals into a system of urban living shown to be more workable, and with a higher standard of ecological performance than our present urban existence. We need, in a word, some intermediate-stage alternative society that can be visualised by the ordinary citizen, and sufficiently real that some aspects of it can be fought for and realised right now. Armed with such an overall orientation even the loss of a small ~~struggle~~ struggle over an immediate issue need not sap confidence because it can be seen as a small skirmish in a big war.

Such an attempt is not Utopianism: it does not try to evade the industrial infrastructure of multi-nationals as if they don't exist. On the contrary it says: "look, the capitalist superstructure of political institutions, science, culture, hidden curricula and consumerist and sexist mass media imagery that shape lifestyles--and all the rest--no longer meet human needs. A different superstructure is needed capable of shaping the productive forces that is, the infrastructure to our needs---and here it is! Here is the sort of alternative superstructure that we have to fight towards, struggling for ~~our~~ power to control the infrastructure in the process in just such and such a way.

Until we reach the stage of foreshadowing our own alternative future we will tend to chain ourselves and the whole of the working people to the

present system, and keep wondering why the Australian workers don't manage to transcend reformist attitudes.

3. We need a model of qualitatively different human relationships (both productive and social) as well as redistribution of commodities and services to the deprived.

Egalitarianism is not communism. Productivity in Australia at its present level is quite sufficient to sustain the whole population with adequate food clothing shelter health education and other basic services; and, of course those really deprived can and should be undeprived.

The Australian Government's attempts to go some distance in this direction should be strongly supported. But if DURD, AAP, RED Medibank, childcare and the rest really accomplished this, the capitalist system would still be with us, still dominated by the big polluting industries, still investing their superprofits in the only way they can -- into still more industry and more pollution. Of course, under socialism, severe inequality of access to goods and services as now exists would have to be rapidly abolished. And, indeed it is important for ecologists to support such aims for equitable distribution right now to avoid a wedge being driven into the peoples movement by the establishment between those who need more goods and those who support no growth economies.

But this is not enough and this is not communism. A re-slicing of the same cake does not fit communist Melbourne 1970's style. In the left-wing of the labor movement there are sentiments that have their origin in an awakening class-consciousness of the early socialists such as "nothing is too good for the workers" or "what's good enough for the boss is good enough for the workers". Translated literally into a socialist model this could mean simply redistributing the physical wealth and existing class of services from the wealthy to the deprived. This could mean doing what the capitalists are doing -- only more efficiently. It could mean expansion of production faster in bigger productive units using more energy. It could strive to attain 3 cars for every workers family plus an annual jet-set around the world trip plus 80ft frontages instead of 40 ft.

The point is, however, that the boss's personal lifestyle, anymore than what I might call the boss's "productive style" is not something to be worshipped and aped so soon as the workers have the power to do so. Egalitarian distribution of something historically outworn may be equality of a sort, but it is an irrelevant and misdirected effort if our object is a society free of alienation and ecologically stabilised.

So -- the model of Melbourne we need must provide for access by all, including the deprived who have gained their fair share, to a creative, satisfying life, and that means in the field of production as well as outside that field.

4. We need an all-out effort to implement the 3 needs just mentioned -- ~~not sparetime attention by a few radical eco-freaks~~ not sparetime attention by a few radical eco-freaks.

The 3 needs to recapitulate are:

- (a) the goals or value-judgments of a communist Melbourne
- (b) a workable understandable model
- (c) incorporation of equity to the deprived in the ^{current} struggle for superior productive and social relationships.

These three needs should not be seen as a separate political struggle but, ~~but~~ constituting, as they do, goals for an alternative society they should become the predominate preoccupation of most radical ecologists and most communists, the best of the militant unionists and leftwing laborites, of womens liberation, student groups and so on.

We can never reach such a goal by expending all our political attention to the Russian Chinese Cuban or Vietnamese people's struggles. We cannot do it by confining our perspectives only to immediate pollution or immediate wages/prices struggles. Nor can we reach such goals by relying solely on global ecological demands such as banning of atom bombs, banning of uranium exports and sharing of energy with the Third World. All of these campaigns were and are and will be quite important. ^{And they} ~~we~~ should continue to have support. Also, the global capital connections alike with the global ecological problems are so inextricably bound up with local ones that in constructing an alternative model for Melbourne, the implications, whether obvious or lying below the surface, impact the international scene at every point. This last statement might seem directly to contradict the point I was trying to make about expending all our political effort around the struggles of other people---but it does not.

What I am saying is that we should not use either current industrial or conservation issues, or international issues, as a standing excuse for permanently deferring or evading the quite elementary task of charting a course for our own city---which is a good part of our own country. The whole of the resources of the left movement and of the alternative lifestyle movement should be brought to bear on "doing our own thing"--- or rather, in this context, "doing our own alternative urban system of things". The further this task can be advanced, incidentally, focussing all issues around making our own fundamental social changes, the more use it will be both to industrial whitecollar and professional workers at home and our friends and allies abroad.

Now I turn ~~briefly~~ to list briefly, a set of general assumptions used in the construction of the principles for future Melbourne :-

1. Less energy use

It is assumed that it must be in the right general direction ecologically to restrict to the utmost the use of the non-renewable energy resources i.e. the fossil fuels in an advanced capitalist country such as Australia, so that Melbourne, for example should restructure the use of energy in industry, transport and domestically to cut down on the scarcer oil and gas, and switch as much as possible to brown coal, as well as reducing overall levels of energy consumed.

2. Responsibility for energy reduction is on industry and government.

Consumers are not responsible for the goods and services foisted on them by the capitalist market, and more than the same people, in their capacity as workers -- industrial, white-collar or professional workers -- for the goods made or the production techniques adopted by their bosses. An enlightened minority of alternative lifestyles may succeed in partially by-passing the big corporations, and I say: Good luck to them! Out of all the experimental anti-consumerist producing and living may well come certain ways of existence capable of being popularised and universalised to form part (but only part) of the basis in a technical sense, for an ecologically stable communist society. But it is assumed that, whatever such a minority might evolve, even by way of urban living, the great mass of consumers and nearly all producers cannot do so even if they wanted to. It is therefore assumed that the main direction for energy saving must be by a political effort to change the established order in two main spheres:-

- (a) production and all that goes with it---distribution, marketing, advertising research and general government administration.
- (b) functioning of cities---including all the planning, infrastructure services, community services and administration that goes with it.

(At this point I want to make it clear that the conclusions I am leading up to will relate to some aspects of planning cities only---although of course an ecological communist Melbourne would be inconceivable without equal attention to production distribution and so on.)

3. A higher standard with less effort and less energy

Defining consumerism as mass production of wasteful and unsatisfying private ~~consumption~~ consumer goods and services based on compulsion and manipulation that arise from the capitalist mode of production, it is assumed that a major effect of restricting energy use could be -- with people's control -- to actually improve the standard of living. This could be so because, above the level of self sufficiency in food clothing and shelter at reasonable standards further improvement of real standards lies in the direction of enriched unalienated relationships, both on the job and off the job, and not in the ~~the~~ direction of continued long hours of alienating work in capital-intensive enterprises making goods or supplying services that further alienate people from each other both as producers and consumers.

--and that brings me to the 4th assumption- a key one- and if you don't like it --- yes, the model which follows!

4. Collectives on the job and on the concourse

The new enriched human relationships that I have kept talking about that will replace alienating conditions with less energy are assumed to lie in the direction of "collectives"--on the job and off. By "collective" is meant a team, for which, since there is a common purpose, there begins to develop a spirit of each contributing as best they can, some with higher skills, others with humble offerings, but all with a quickening appreciation of each other, all teaching and learning from each other, all developing a more elevated concept of their aims and with it, incidentally, an increasingly more effective impact on the "tone" or ethos of the factory or community generally.

Armed with these four assumptions (1) we must cut down on urban energy use (2) to do so we must control industry and government, and hence turn to the politics ^{for} a new social system (3) but we can actually have a higher standard of life with less energy and (4) to do so we are going to need collectives both in the development of self-management on the job and in community control elsewhere, I now turn to some problems of city planning specifically and choices confronting Melbourne.

Melbourne blossomed as a trading post for a goldrush and later as an industrial/commercial city, and grew to half its present size before the predominance of the car as a mode of transport. Hence the older and inner suburbs are well served--in fact extraordinarily well-served compared to other cities--with a ~~new~~ network of tram and rail tracks for the denser housing in these parts. As late as 1954, 60% of Melbourne's jobs were in the old central sector of 6 inner suburbs (Melb; Port Melb; South Melb; Richmond Collingwood and Fitzroy), and most of the rest in the heavy industries on the badlands to the west, and lighter industries to the north. With the advent of the car the land between the residential developments that hugged the ~~existing~~ radial rail lines filled up with houses on 50 ft. frontages, and distances from the rail stations and the jobs in the central sector became greater and greater. The Board of Works in its 1954 ~~report~~ plan tried to overcome the longer and longer worktrips by an evening up process: it zoned enough industrial land in the east and south calculated to create, in time, as many jobs as there would be job-seeking residents in the area. The effect of this, unfortunately, was to compel cross-suburban car commuting. The low-density housing made any suggestion of a circumferential public transport service, or a series of them, out of the question. So, unless a worker with a suburban job just happened to live and work on the ~~same~~ same rail line, the only reasonably convenient way to get to work was by car. The enforced spread of car ownership led to a decline in public transport, so that many who could use the radial public transport e.g. those whose jobs were still in the central sector, began to use the car instead.

Now consider another aspect of Melbourne. Being a capitalist city from its inception, the whole mode of capitalist production has rested on an unthinking but strong divide-and-conquer principle common to all owning classes towards the working population.

This has resulted in segregation to the point sometimes of institutionalisation. So factories are for factory workers, offices for whitecollar workers, labs for scientists and none of them for non-employees. Kindergartens, schools, housewives-at-home and elderly citizens homes stratify into age layers, all of which, of course are debarred from factory office, or laboratory. And in Melbourne there are plenty of special segregations—Housing Commission ghettos, heavy industries to West, pubs and football clubs—think up your own example.

So, in place of an unalienated what I might call a "Whole" community, where male and female, young and old, worker housewife and student, migrant or not all feel strongly identified with the community—all feel strongly that they have some part to play, can have their "say", and can do their own community "thing" and are wanted—in place of this: Melbourne gives us segregation and institutionalisation.

Superimposed on this, the post-war car boom has aggravated all these trends to insufferable proportions, because it has added the dimension of dispersal. Result is that factories, shops, pubs, kinders—and facility you can think of—tend to be scattered at random, with a good chance you need a car to get to any of them. "Car access" is the new sacred cow of town-building, but instead of building us urban places for people, the resulting formless sprawl has deprived our outer suburbs of the remotest character of urban life. The result is that children, housewives sick and elderly are cut off even more effectively than before. Even the "lucky" housewife with the second car is relatively worse off than her pre-war sister. She cannot get off to go to any local centre of activities or become a regional one where she is stranger for it has been scattered. So the nuclear family thrown on its own devices turns in on itself, gets bored with itself, then turns outwards, by car again to go a hundred miles or so of a weekend to get away from it all.

For the future, the plans of the MREW Melbourne regional planning authority for 7 radial corridors and/or satellites for urban growth, with so-called green wedges between would predetermine Melbourne even more decisively as a car-based metropolis. This is so, because the longer the radial arms grow outward, the further the distances between them become, and the more impossible it would be to service cross-suburban trips from one arm to another with public transport. These trips would also be more and more across open country making them quite unnecessarily long.

In a sense, the multi-radial arm design is the "sprawliest" design you could think up, and therefore becomes the most car-dependent. Simultaneously all the socially alienating disadvantages of the outer suburbs will be continued and intensified. That's the official option.

The other option for Melbourne is as follows:-

1.

An Option for Melbourne

- An Alternative to the Official 7-Radial Arm/Satellite Plan

1. Urban design to save transport energy and maximise collectives

Deliberately design all new growth areas, and restructure all built-up areas with two objectives in mind:-

(a) Take every measure possible to reduce the need for transport, and also to defeat the car and truck as the predominate mode of transport, ~~with~~ and in doing so make an immense saving in fossil fuel energy, reducing the road slaughter and minimising pollution at the same time.

(b) To constitute human-scale mixed communities with strong urban centres of sufficient variety and so organised to attract a wide range of local collectives with strong and efficient public transport connections with other such centres and the City to still further increase access to collectives. Note the two-pronged attack : to save energy directly via transport; and to ~~ex~~ save energy indirectly by creating arenas where it is at least practical for collectives to form and develop alternative urban lifestyles to those based on consumerism. In one word "access to collectives via public transport" displaces "car access" as the highest expression of urban life.

2. A design for Neighbourhood with concourses for off-street people-parking

A physical design suitable to carry out these objectives for the urbanised centre and the surrounding residential neighbourhood that it serves would ideally have these features:-

- (a) the urban centre would be located at the geographic centre of the neighbourhood so that the trip from home to centre becomes as short as possible for as many as possible.
- (b) residential density would be lowest on the outskirts of such neighbourhood, with increasing densities as you approached the centre to enable the maximum number of people to walk or cycle to the centre
- (c) encouragement of cluster-house designs both for low and medium density areas to enable more flexible domestic arrangements, superior outdoor amenity ^{whilst} ~~yet~~ retaining some outdoor privacy; yet yet enabling somewhat higher densities, and making public transport and deliveries more efficient.
- (d) all people-intensive activities to be located in the centre, that is, shops, offices, labor-intensive light industry, schools, pubs welfare services libraries entertainment, indoor sporting with mixed use principles, not only within the centre but even within the same building if compatible.
- (e) "people-parking" spaces indoor and compulsory, for the use of collectives; and mixed amongst the commercial/industrial/educational etc functions. The word "concourse" is used to imply just such an all-inclusive set-up including off-job collectives in people -parking spaces.
- (f) frequent shuttle service local public transport in the form of mini-bus, dial-a-bus or taxis; and cycle or pedestrian paths all to be funnelled into the concourse to make it more convenient to go to - or through - that concourse than in any other direction; and

commuter and shopping carparking to be progressively restricted as alternative superior local transport modes take over.

- (g) the mixed-use hub of the concourse to be constructed in compact building complexes built over and around selected suburban train stations. In areas of new urban growth this would present no difficulty. In built up areas of present suburbs there could be a gradual redevelopment around selected stations with a slow transference into the concourse in the new building complexes of what-ever people-intensive functions were scattered throughout the neighbourhood and at the same time developing other industrial/commercial/educational etc facilities previously lacking in the local suburban area. This could provide a reasonably diversified range of employment, shopping and activities of all kinds to make it easier for more people to work or do-their-own-thing, getting to know others in the process, and without travelling further.

3. Transport between Local District and City concourses

- (a) Melbourne has a magnificent network of railway reservations- they are like a freeway system equipped with steel rails - and these, plus tram tracks where suitable, should on no account be sacrificed in favour of any gee-whis technology, but used to form the material framework for connecting concourses with each other and with the city. These long-haul operations in order to outdo car transport alternatives, should be as fast as possible (in contrast to local public transport to the local concourse, where frequency and closeness to homes is more important). And, as already described, all local transport modes, should be created or updated and reorganised to funnel into the local railstation which would then lie at the very heart of all local people-intensive activity, thus creating the optimum conditions that railed transport could possibly have to re-establish its ascendancy over private transport.
- (b) Every 4 to 6 local concourses could be served by a somewhat bigger district concourse with a wider range of choices of all sorts than would be possible for the local concourses. Such district concourses would thus be train-based, not car-based regional centres
- (c) All concourses on the same railline would be connected strongly by public transport not only with each other but with the City which should have the concourse aspect that is the aspect of All-Melbourne collectives emphasised to the utmost degree, for this is the place with the greatest access by the maximum number of citizens, lying at the centre, as it does, of the whole railed transport network.

4. Removing the multi-directional advantages of car transport

Lastly for a final principle to combat the dominance of the car and the truck. This dominance rests partly on their superlative capacity as machines that can convey people and goods in any direction on our superlative road system. So:

- (a) Linear corridor development for all new urban growth is proposed to rob both car and truck of this singular advantage. A rapid transit rail system, twice as fast as cars, would provide real competition.

Linear design also has the advantage of being an entirely new and workable form of decentralisation. Its like a whole series of small ~~human-size~~ human-size country towns, humanised still further because of the concourses at their heart, and all strung together, and, thanks to rapid transit, no further from the city in time than any other part of present Melbourne. This provides maximum economy in resource use for transport energy, maximum convenience for communication one with the other, and maximum emphasis on sustaining urban-type life

- (b) Translating the same principle into built-up Melbourne, each radial railline could be regarded as lying in the centre of community corridors confined, not in this case by countryside lying on each side of the corridor, but by what could be called "transport ~~watersheds~~ watersheds". That is, with all local public transport directed into the local concourse. Local transport would thus be deliberately deployed to provide a material basis to make conditions favourable, or at least possible to create a local community with local collectives. In this case, cross-suburban public transport could be provided, not, as it is now, indiscriminately ~~by~~ bus in many directions, but only by joining district concourses, possibly by express bus routes.