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COMMUNITY CONSUMERISM & CLASS

AN EXAMINATION OF THE WORKS OF MARTIN MOWBRAY ON "LOCALISM"

by Ruth and Maurie Crow

FEB. 1984



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'COMMUNITY'
BY ANY OTHER
NAME, WOULDN'T
SMELL AS SWEET...



PREFACE

"....This is a time of crisis: there will surely be considerable restructuring of the health and welfare sector in the coming months and years, and yet the consumers, the unions and the left are having great trouble agreeing on any directions or tactics.

"Faced with such problems it seems necessary to go back to fundamental principles and social theory to see if any of the answers can be found there. In fact, going back to these theories, I have been struck by the fact that this is where some of the problems seem to begin.

"I think there are some basic problems with the theoretical equipment we've been using to analyse the welfare state.

"Its almost exclusive focus on the state's role in serving capital, and on the tyranny of economics, has led us to lose sight of some of the political ends and tactical options which might be available.

"I also suggest it's high time we came to terms with the contradiction between our criticisms of the state as a 'lackey of capitalism', and our simultaneous vehement defence of that same state's present activities.

"To understand the truly political nature of our struggle we must look more closely at our longer term goals, and what role the state might have in our achieving them.

"If we really do simply want a little bit more of the same, then we can be content with a simple 'fight the cuts' campaign...."

(Ric Mohr, a member of the NSW Community Health Association and of the Social Welfare Action Group - "Tribune" Aug. 17, 1983 p. 11)

Our contribution to some of these basic problems takes the form of an examination of the writings of Martin Mowbray which tend to have - to use Mohr's words - "an almost exclusive focus on the state's role in serving capital".

It is gratifying that, in the conclusion of an article soon to be published (received as we went to press), Mowbray departs from his customary exclusive focus to suggest a whole range of opportunities that local groups could grasp, taking advantage of the contradictions involved in the devolution of welfare responsibilities to local levels.

Prospects for the progressives in the human services and urban planning areas look good if only they can take Mohr's advice and clarify strategies and tactics within the framework of commonly agreed long term goals.

Ruth and Maurie Crow, Feb. 1984.

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INTRODUCTION

It is refreshing to find a sustained effort by academics who seem to identify with a Marxist position analysing Australian society in the area of human services.

One such person is Martin Mowbray. He has produced a series of papers (1) over the last three or four years which persistently develop a central core of theory. Unfortunately, controversy developing around some of his ideas is threatening to become divisive. Some progressives are pushing for human services delivery to be devolved to local government level with user involvement in the services and their management. Others - following Mowbray, - attack "localism" based on a "community", describing it as a way of cutting costs disguised as an unrealistic myth that legitimates continued central control.

Partly the issues are clouded by some key words being given different meanings in N.S.W from Victoria, and some significant experiences being different as between these two States at least. Where should socialists stand in this controversy? How can the potential divisiveness amongst progressives be overcome?

For the sake of clarity we will divide our treatment of the subject into three parts: Part 1 which sets out, quite briefly, a simple theoretical proposition which, on the face of it, would seem to meet with the approval of any socialist, and which ~~meets~~ meets with our approval, to the extent it applies and Part 2, much longer, which examines the proposition in some detail and suggests that life presents complexities that do not correspond to such a simple theoretical proposition. Part 3 deals with what can be done by progressives, despite some differences, to maximise unity.

PART 1

A SIMPLE THEORETICAL PROPOSITION

The kernel of Mowbray's position is :-

- (1) To define "localistic" in a special way to denote "those approaches which tend to distract attention from systemic, international, national or statewide action, or action organised on broad class, ethnic or gender lines" (19).
- (2) To state that words such as "community", "local control", "neighbourhood networks" etc. represent notions that accompany the above definition of "distracting" from the really important central political issues.

- (3) To identify various authorities and agencies that use such terminology and warn unwary would-be socialists that these terms are being used to legitimate continued capitalist domination over the working class. This is so because no "communities" or "local control" or "neighbourhood networks" in fact emerge. If there is any change at all, it is to increase exploitation, as by reducing funds for local services or relying on underpaid welfare workers or volunteers.

It should be noted carefully that "localistic" in the Mowbray meaning of the term does NOT necessarily apply to devolving powers and resources now operated centrally to a local level. If such devolution does not "distract attention from systemic, international... etc.etc." actions then, logically, Mowbray could have no objection to them and could even approve them.

However, his papers are silent on this point, and since he is alarmed at the current fashion of authorities "spraying on" words like "community" in the process of appearing to devolve powers (but carefully keeping control through "guidelines"), it would seem that he would be highly suspicious of any such devolutions in present circumstances. Speaking with disfavour of devolution by the previous "new right" governments, Mowbray expects this process to continue under the Hawke federal government. (20)

Also, to avoid another particular possible misunderstanding, (which Mowbray himself barely attempts in all his papers), he is NOT opposed to local activism. He does see the contradictory aspects of local activities - some of which (a) can be politically and economically beneficial to local people, but (b) can also simultaneously operate to complement central State social control over working people on behalf of the capitalists.

Thus Mowbray, although he supports some forms of local activity, circumscribes his own task to that of warning about the neglected area of the unrecognised or unacknowledged contradictory effects of localism that complement the interests of capital. (21)

Acceptable ?

The above definition of "localism" and accompanying assumptions are such that the Mowbray message seems entirely acceptable..? Surely no socialist could agree with wasting effort on apparently pettyfoggling actions that distract from serious central political struggles ?

Given that we are talking about local actions that distract, and given that authorities are deceitfully using mythical terms about local control to cover up a continuation of central control on behalf of capital, and given that no expansion of local power or benefit actually occurs, then we ourselves would accept the Mowbray propositions unequivocally. To the extent they apply, we do accept them.

PART 2CONTRADICTIONS ABOUND AND LIFE IS NOT SO SIMPLE.

The Mowbray propositions leave some questions to be answered, such as:-

- * Are there important central struggles that operate also at local levels so that local actions can also have central significance ?
- * Is the involvement of the population at local levels a precondition for becoming politicised and convinced of the importance of central politics ?
- * Where terms enshrining the people's demands are taken by the authorities and mis-used by them to deceive, what are the best tactics to prevent them sowing confusion that disorientates the workers' cause ?

In this part we will set out to answer these, but before proceeding we give a synopsis of Mowbray's views in more detail and the current political context - as we see it - within which the above issues will be joined.

1. A Synopsis of Mowbray's Views

"Localistic" Programs "Distracting"

Mowbray calls in question, as politically diversionary, the new ideology of government departments and non-government State agencies basing their programs, supposedly, on family networks, involvement of community groups, or administration by local government. He believes that such programs are either unrealisable in the sense that "community" (as he envisages it) never, in fact eventuates, or the effect (if any) is to increase the self-exploitation of unpaid or underpaid community workers or volunteers.

Although he nowhere explicitly states as much, the implicit position he seems to favour is that human services should continue to be supplied by central departments or agencies by paid professionals. Improvement of such services would then become a matter of central political action.

As he sees it : " the bourgeois virtues of independence, self-reliance and self-determination are tied to locality (localized) through notions of community development" (22)

In the words of Mowbray's synopsis of his own position:

"Broadly, localist policies and programs will be taken to include those perceptions and activities which involve some specific orientation towards discrete geographic areas, within which, it is held, explicitly or implicitly, that various conditions or problems can be adequately understood and to some degree ameliorated or resolved. Conversely, localistic will denote those approaches which tend to distract attention from systemic, international, national or statewide action, or action organized on broad class, ethnic or gender

lines." (our emphasis).

"Localist policies generally are accompanied by certain evaluative symbols such as the romantic concept of community and complementary idealized notions about natural support and cooperation in local social organization. The corollary of this is the promotion of adherence or sentimental commitment to locality, or territoriality, and confidence in localist solutions." (23)

And Mowbray, writing in 1982 of his aim, when "new right" Federal and most State governments were still in office explains:-

"Various aspects of government subsidized voluntary sector welfare programs, operated at local level, have a range of features that match the ideological, managerial and fiscal perspectives of the new right. Far from being the progressive flexible and independent enterprises they are commonly represented to be, these programs embody such significant controlling effects that they might better be conceived as extensions or buttresses for government policy. The popular image of community controlled or managed programs as being alternative, or even in opposition to government services, is misleading and warrants effective challenge" (23)

He claims that localistic programs are bolstered by notions of sentimental commitment to locality, local control, self-help and voluntarism. He argues that it is often claimed that volunteers are cost-saving, but this is superficial, because it does not count the cost of exploitation for those (especially women) who volunteer from a sense of obligation, nor does it count a possible lower quality of service provided. (24).

Historically, he regards localism as a device of central government, advanced when the capitalists feel threatened, and withdrawn when they feel secure. (25)

Peak Social Service Agencies Part of the State.

Mowbray considers that the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and other like peak non-government welfare Councils in other States, whilst periodically criticising governments, operate with governments, in the main, as "functional parts of the total State apparatus which serves to perpetuate class relations" (26).

They do this by adopting pluralist assumptions that poverty can be cured simply by a re-allocation of existing welfare resources, rather than being recognised as a necessary feature of capitalism, and by taming dissident affiliated organisations into the centralised "proper channels" of approach, akin to the effect of the Arbitration system in the sphere of wage-fixing.

Other tame-cutting methods include supporting self-help groups and other efficiency methods to help central government to cut-back welfare funding. He also accuses these peak agencies of recently giving more attention to computer-base

information services for "evaluating" funding and controlling welfare efforts than to welfare itself. And they lend support to localist actions including devolving functions with insufficient resources to carry them out.

Local Government Committed to Property-related Works.

Mowbray regards local government as a "logical part of a wider State system that has a fundamental bias towards the dominant classes" (27).

He selects local government rate systems to illustrate his point. He believes that owners of commercial properties can pass increased rates on in higher prices to working class consumers or landlords can pass increased rates on in higher rent to working class tenants. The burden of rates is thus borne quite widely, so the notion of a "ratepayers' burden" is a myth.

He regards the works programs and planning powers of local Councils as favouring mortgagees who require maintenance of property values. He cites numerous ways in which it is claimed that rates (or their indirect impact as in prices or rents, or as taxation concessions) have a retrogressive effect - the poor paying more of their income proportionately than the rich for a given service. Also, owners can make capital gains from real estate, and there are no betterment taxes.

Mowbray argues that it follows from all this that it is unrealistic to expect these features of local government to be "comprehensively transformed inside capitalism" since they play "an absolutely central role in certain processes of capital accumulation." (28) Local government is "structurally bound to devoting the vast proportion of its financial resources to physical, property-related, works" (29)

Therefore local Councils "...have not been, and are not now, neutral terrain for capture by socialistic groups or parties. They cannot be transformed by adding on assorted piecemeal albeit progressive programs as many believe." (30)

"Community" a Mythical Spray-on Solution.

In a paper written jointly with Lois Bryson, Mowbray observes that "'community' seems to prefix most government programs whether they be for health, education, social welfare or recreation." and (quoting from another author) they dub it the "aerosol word of the 1970's because of the hopeful way it is sprayed over deteriorating institutions."

Mowbray and Bryson set out to prove the "unrealizability of the romantic community" with its connotations of a "culturally and politically homogeneous participatory local social system" featuring "mutual support and understanding, collective responsibility and interdependence, co-operation and harmonious participation" and a "caring and egalitarian system" (31).

Romanticized versions of the ideal community of the past, we are reminded, carefully forget "gross inequalities, rigid status groups, blood feuds, persecution, intolerance, bondage and ignorance". In any case, it is argued, "patterns of interaction within traditional communities were dependent on stability of residence, and the fact that people worked and played in the same locations", whereas "the requirements of today's capitalist economy mean high rates of residential mobility and living patterns which daily take most people from their residential areas to work, shop, play and learn"

The conclusion advanced is that there are "basic processes within capitalist society which make it inevitable that communal aims cannot be achieved. To try to graft back on to today's social organization, a feature from pre-capitalist times, can be taken as a reflection of a remarkable capacity to allow nostalgia to override systematic analysis"

"It may be", the authors argue, "that some people are helped, that some services are provided or improved, that certain skills are enhanced, or even that more people interact and perhaps have more fun - but this still does not add up to the achievement of 'community' and (in so far as this is implied) it is misleading to use this term." (31)

The authors propose several remedies for these misguided illusions.

First, they point out that Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Gramsci and Lukacs and others have developed in detail theoretical foundations for organisation bequeathed by Marx. "The revolutionary objective of such organisation is premised on recognition of class antagonisms and realization of class consciousness through struggle. Working class action, directed at wresting economic and political hegemony from the bourgeois class is promoted by various socialist parties ...but it is characteristically ignored in community work".

Secondly, they propose "promulgating analyses" such as they themselves had done.

Thirdly, "In a direct practical way, understanding will be assisted by discouraging the rash use of the term community and promoting the use of substitutes with less extensive and problematic evaluative meanings such as locality, district, area, town, suburb, city, municipality, population, category, country."

Exploitation of Women in Caring Jobs.

The end-result of cost-saving "transfer of responsibilities to the local (community) level" it is pointed out "in practice, and just incidentally, usually means women" who are either unpaid or underpaid (33).

"No new programs that rely upon the undervalued or unvalued labour of women should be set up, and existing ones scrapped" and "caring needs to be treated...as an industrial issue" and not overlooked as a "blind spot, related to the fact,

convenient for some, that the work women do is rarely recognised as work at all." (34).

Mowbray considers that "Care of the disabled, young and aged ought to be recognised as a collective task, not one for individual families, especially women... localized services should complement or extend, not supplant, collective care arrangements." It should be observed, however, that in the above context, the words "collective care arrangements" appear to mean centrally-organised institutional care, not locally-organised reciprocal care arrangements on a walking distance neighbourhood scale to which he seems to be opposed. Mowbray seems to believe that large-group institutional care of children may be preferable to small-group family-size care. (35).

"Localism" Mis-used to Help Austerity.

Mowbray warned that a special danger of localism is that it enables "new right" governments like Fraser, to cut costs on the basis of voluntary or low-paid women's caring work.

He states: "It has not been my intention to suggest that localist programs are simply informed by new right politics or that they generally serve the new right in a straightforward and wholly predictable manner. Rather, that the contemporary emphasis on localism tends, in various ways, and to different degrees, to coincide with the political and economic thrust of right wing governments. Social policy cannot, of course, be understood outside of its current societal context - the same activities can have quite different effects as wider circumstances change." (36)

In the case of the earlier Whitlam government, he concedes, "...the localist bandwagon was...embodied in the Australian Assistance Plan (AAP)...part of a general expansion in government expenditure that encouraged more militant social action approaches." (37).

But, writing in 1983, after the advent of the Federal and State Labor governments, he says that there is a 3-way "transfer of costs from the central State to the local level, the private welfare sector and the family" (38). He sees "the established emphasis on fiscally-controlled, decentralised and privatized services well fits the strong corporatist commitment of the Hawke administration, into which the Labor State governments, such as NSW, are locked." (39)

2. A Comparison of N.S.W and Victoria.

Before examining Mowbray's views or presenting some of our own, we propose to try to remove some confusion arising not from differences of analysis or attitude, but from a few differences in the situation in NSW and Victoria. We will

confine our illustrations to child care services.

Some of these differences have their roots in different history of the two States, some are as simple as the same word meaning one thing in one State and something quite different in the other State. Examples are:-

- * Historically Victoria had more, and more developed child-care centres earlier than NSW. The recently established flexible hours, reciprocal-arrangements community-controlled "neighbourhood houses" came onto the scene in fierce competition with the established fixed-session, teacher-based, centrally-supervised kindergartens.
- * This is reflected in Federal finance. Of Federal child care money paid through local government, about 40% goes to Victoria as against only about 23% for NSW.
- * The differing positions is also reflected in the degree of local government involvement in child care. About 75% of Councils are involved in Melbourne. For NSW, there are only about 8 Councils out of some 200 that are so involved.
- * In Victoria, the word "Community" has been strongly identified with Community Child Care - a group of progressive women and men (but mainly women) strongly opposed to the ideology of the older-established pre-school institutions which regarded women's place as in the home (hence their reluctance to open kindergartens for hours that would suit working mothers).

In NSW, the phrase "community child care" can embrace, apparently, exactly the opposite connotation to its Victorian meaning. Mowbray writes: "Another advantage realized by the State lies in 'community's' expedience in obfuscating different interests that a program so labelled may really serve. Alexander and his colleagues illustrate this point in relation to 'community child care' provisions which in NSW have involved a disproportionate emphasis on sessional pre-schools (tailored for families with a parent at home) rather than long day care centres which would serve the needs of working parents." (40).

- * In Victoria, the word "neighbourhood" in child care circles has been identified with "neighbourhood house" and therefore with community control; and "neighbourhood centre" has been defined by some community planning groups as a walking-distance centre consisting of a "neighbourhood house" plus a "corner shop" facility.

The word "neighbourhood" in NSW has, apparently, a very much wider connotation, and does not have any overtones either of community control or of walking distance catchment area. For example, the "Neighbourhood Centre Funding Scheme" of the NSW "Community Liason Bureau" sets out in a Table about 30 different types of service coming under the scheme, most of which have nothing whatever to do with the above-mentioned Victorian usage. (41).

In brief, although more, and more careful, research would need to be done on this subject, it does seem to us that Victoria has had a longer and richer struggle around publicly-funded child care than has NSW and is more politically developed; and this has had an effect on the meanings of the various terms adopted.

Founding members of Community Child Care in Victoria were loosely associated with the Womens Liberation movement, and have played a more radical political role not only in local government but also in State and national womens affairs. The role of Community Child Care should be spelt out in some detail to substantiate such conclusions.

Community Child Care has been in the forefront of political demands for funding from local, State and Federal governments and in the forefront of defence and counter-attack against the cut-backs tried by the Fraser new right government. So far from being immersed in "localist" issues to the exclusion of all else, it has pioneered analysis of the policies and organisation of Victorian government departments and pioneered political demands on them to overcome their conservatism (42).

Community Child Care approves reciprocal arrangements for child care, shopping or any other supportive activity between those on the network of a neighbourhood house; but it distinguishes such mutually beneficial "reciprocity" from "volunteerism" of charity-type "good works" associated with an older type of class-based child-care benevolence which it displaces or wishes to displace from the more traditional type of organisation such as kindergartens.

It supports and campaigns for the proper award payments to such staff as the neighbourhood houses employ, but it does not demand or expect payment for users who voluntarily give time to be involved in collective supportive activities or management responsibilities.

Experience has shown that such collective efforts have a liberating and forward-going effect for people who have had poor opportunities for meeting regularly with other people, let alone working in a collective fashion with them. Whilst each house, in its origins, typically draws its initiating collective from mothers with young children, because they are most desperate in their isolation and can draw considerable relief from local acquaintances and friends, it aims to encourage people of all ages and both sexes to participate

Most of the neighbourhood houses are predominantly working class in composition of their membership (as we use the word "working class" - see below), and quite a few of them would be predominantly industrial working class. Whilst few of those involved would analyse their class position from a Marxist point of view, it would be confusing and divisive if not insulting to try to stigmatise them as middle class women merely out to organise a bit of "fun" for themselves - not that there should be anything politically suspect about women of whatever class organising their own recreation in any case.

From this brief description of the actions and attitude of Community Child Care it can be seen that an organisation such as this has not been hoodwinked by deceptive government moves to pass austerity downwards under the mask of romanticised and unrealisable "Community" mythology.

There is a report evaluating six of the "neighbourhood houses" or "community houses" which not only illustrates the value of the collective to the women concerned, but also shows how the establishment of these places had to be fought for quite persistently and politically, and were by no means bestowed by right wing governments.

It is just possible that another difference in emphasis as between Victoria and NSW is in the process of emerging. Time will tell. It is reported that the Cain government has under consideration a process of localisation of central powers, which is understood to provide for more adequate funding for Councils coupled with greater local decision-making powers.

It does not appear to be a case of deceptive manoeuvring to produce more of the centrally-controlled same by using all of the "in" buzz words. From an article by A. Pinches (44), it appears that what is under consideration are changes from specific grants for particular human services to centrally allocated block grants for a range of services, leaving it to Councils to decide which services are the most appropriate and the split up of funds. Further, as an earnest that the government is not trying to foist functions onto local Councils and then leave them stranded with inadequate funds it is understood the proposal is that the grants be indexed to average growth in State taxation revenue.

We are not aware whether similar flexibility of administration for local Councils exists or is being considered in NSW; but in Victoria, where Council support for childcare is more common than in NSW, this is obviously an important development.

Granted any Council could, as a condition of funding a neighbourhood house, still impose a form of culture or a set of guidelines which the people do not want; but this is less likely where some Councillors, especially women Councillors have themselves been involved in neighbourhood houses and know very well what people do want.

3. The Current Context.

As Mowbray has justly observed: "Social policy cannot, of course, be understood outside of its current societal context - the same activities can have quite different effects as wider circumstances change." (36).

This being so, it is fitting that we should outline "the changing wider circumstances" as we see them in order to measure Mowbray's perception of current policies.

Marx looked to a superabundance of goods as a pre-condition for communist society. It is not possible to give "to each according to his or her need" if there is insufficient to meet everyone's needs. Technologically, post-war Australia - we believe - has already attained such a level of super-abundance, so that it would seem a simple matter to grasp a better life by a re-allocation of resources, turning towards quality of services rather than quantity of products.

Why is it, then, that transition to a socialist society is not high on the political agenda of our country ?

By a process over the last three decades that has been so gradual and so superficially attractive that it has gone almost un-noticed, families of most Australian working people now find themselves in a situation that commits them to the purchase and operation of most expensive machinery. Without one, two or even more private cars, renewable every few years, many families cannot conveniently get to work, to the shops, to recreation or even to school.

In this process, some of the world's mightiest corporations - oil, automobile, steel and aluminium - have required, and obtained, a self-perpetuating system to ensure the uninterrupted expansion of their markets. The "car way of life", in effect, has become institutionalised, so that the post-war increase in productivity has not been used to allow people to develop more creative human relationships or even for meeting a sensible and equitable range of people's needs including shorter working hours. Instead, the increased productivity has been diverted into the strengthening of the global corporations, not only directly, but indirectly by providing a whole package of conditions that go along with a car-dominated style of life.

These include: low density urban sprawl, increasingly expensive road and parking systems, keep-on-the-move holidays, ready finances not only for cars, but all their associated gear, saturation advertising. In a word, universal privatisation and consumerism have evolved in place of socially organised and fulfilling involvement.

The recognition of the obvious advantages of cars for random trips and some forms of recreation needs to be tempered with the irritation of time frittered away on congested roads, of demands for unpaid chaffering of family members, of the isolation in their suburban lots of women, children, youth, unemployed, invalids and elderly, and of the decline in satisfactions formerly obtained in locally-based and relatively stable recreational activities.

The heavy drain of the world's resources to suit the global investments of the giant corporations have the consequences outlined above which are causing new types of social problems and exacerbating long-standing ones. The very emergence of family support systems and expansion of traditional welfare is one side of the coin - an increasing proportion of such services is being used in attempts to patch up the damaging and disruptive social and ecological effects of the car way of life.

The other side of the coin is the continued and largely unchallenged operation of the giant corporations which call the tune for the State in all its manifold forms.

This, anyway, is how we see the problem: how can the people organise themselves to counter the car-induced privatism imposed on them? We use the words "creating community" to designate this process.

In Melbourne there has been a group of community organisations that combined in 1983 to present to the Victorian government long-term alternative plans for metropolitan Melbourne, and practical short-term steps that Cabinet can take. In very broad terms, the Victorian ALP policy for the metropolis has many similar principles to the model contained in the book "Seeds for Change" and studies based on the book (45). The metropolitan alternative proposed is called the "cluster-and-connect" model. It sees the existing system of neighbourhood houses expanded into neighbourhood centres (= a "neighbourhood house" plus "corner shop" facilities). These neighbourhood centres would be in walking distance of homes and connected by feeder buses to bigger and more varied local centres located on the existing public transport network.

This is seen as the only practical way of basing the city more on public transport and less on cars.

The social solution of neighbourhood houses for supportive purposes and expansion of the range of community-involving activities at local mixed-use centres is regarded as equally important to the physical planning for connecting these urban nodes with public transport to overcome the expensive problem-creating dispersion caused by, and causing, the need for car access.

So the concept of "community" and "creating community" in Victoria has wider support than such organisations as Community Child Care, and whether the participants in this movement see it this way or not, the chief obstacle to the development of the cluster and connect model is the fact that the prevailing car way of life is propped up in countless ways by the hegemony of the global corporations.

4. Useful Insights by Mowbray

Localism and Parochialism help Pluralism.

If Australia's technological level is now sufficient for a superabundance of material goods for the benefit of all, it would seem to be a simple matter to advance rapidly to socialism. Mowbray deserves full credit for demonstrating the fundamental but often unperceived institutional and ideological barriers that lie in the way of this happening.

Welfare or recreational professionals who see themselves as making radical changes to society by the mere exercise of trying to involve local people in their own service delivery

or in their own entertainment have much to learn from Mowbray. So also have the users of those services, or people striving to establish them.

We emphasise that the all-pervading values of the car way of life of the global corporations based on consumerism and privatism not only dominate the market place and shape the basic policies of the three tiers of government, they penetrate social life at all levels. These dominant values constitute part of the "hegemony" of the ruling class 1980-style. The growth of the giant corporations has seen the growth of instant gratification with deferred retribution based on easy credit which overlays the earlier capitalist values of accumulation of private property by dint of hard work and thrift.

It is not possible to simply ignore the extent or strength of this hegemony over the working people and side-step it by "creating community" in walking distance of neighbourhood houses and feeder bus distance of lively local centres, utilising the lowest tier of government to plan such efforts.

An alternative set of values - a "counter hegemony" - based on the interests of working people is a pre-condition for any mass shift away from the hegemony of the corporations. Further, the battle to effect such a shift must be joined by pressure on all three tiers of government, not just local government, to cut adrift from the economic supremacy of the corporations by backing alternative values.

We therefore support Mowbray's warning against localistic notions as he has defined them namely, it will be recalled, "those approaches which tend to distract attention from systemic, international, national or statewide action, or action organised on broad class, ethnic or gender lines" (19)

By implication, it would seem, Mowbray should approve local action that strengthens those wider actions mentioned. With this we would agree wholeheartedly. For example, the sort of narrow parochialism concerned only with the amenity or services of the immediate area is a pitfall for local groups, if the notion is that the whole problem can be handled at the local level in a self-sufficient way.

Any movement ignores at its peril the real interconnections between the local and the central, the particular and the general, the social and the political aspects. To confine attention separately to the local, the particular and the social, plays into the hands of those using pluralism as an ideology to head off class politics. Pluralism diverts common action into a competition between numerous un-associated groups to try to get bigger slices of the resources cake at the expense of each other. In this way, pluralism provides an unfavourable climate for the coalition of such groups to strive not only for better distribution of the cake, but also for a cake with the recipe that suits the eaters.

So Mowbray is right to warn against the sterility of a strategy of parochialism or localism that seeks to confine attention to the neighbourhood or municipality, and to distract attention from wider movements.

We think his warnings are useful, too, about the tamecatting effects once State funding is obtained by the need for continual re-funding which tends to lead to deference to the funding authorities. Even feminist-inspired self-help groups tend to lose their original militant zeal under such conditions.(46). Of course, pressures like this are not peculiar to local organisations.

Aptly, Mowbray revives a quotation from Harold Wilson: "The State machine is neutral. It is like a car waiting to be driven. Whichever way it is steered the machine will go. What matters therefore is the driver. If the man behind the machine is a Labor man the vast machine will move towards Labor.. " (47) According to Mowbray, some left Labor people hold similar views in relation to local government expecting it to be more amenable to control than State or Federal machinery.

Mowbray rejects this view. As he puts it: "the systematic bias cannot be simply jettisoned when avowed socialists come to office. Nor can it be neutralised by 'alternative' leaderships tacking on various minor progressive administrative or decision making practices and programs as left labourites in local government seem to imagine."(48)

We agree with this formulation because any alternative significant enough to portend a real change must challenge what we have called the privatism and consumerism of the car way of life - a central component in the hegemony of the corporations that is as firmly embedded in local government as it is at State and Federal levels.

To the extent they can be clearly evidenced, we agree too with Mowbray's exposure of the retrogressive effect of rates and other inequities at present built in to the local government system.

We also believe that there is a lot to be said for Mowbray's contention that, historically, in periods when the capitalists feel their system threatened, they tend to advance localist policies, albeit spurious, and when they feel secure, they tend to withdraw them. In our opinion, though, the relationship between classes from one historical period to another is quite complex and cannot wholly or even mainly be measured by the rise or fall of localist programs. Mowbray, however, does not claim this.

Legitimation by Use of Myths and Humbug.

We agree with Mowbray and Bryson that romanticised myths about a homogenised community based on sweet harmony never have been, nor will be, a social reality. To the extent that governments or peak non-government welfare or other agencies use notions of local control, community development, public participation or neighbourhood networks to legitimate a

a reality of continued central control, or to the extent they manoeuvre devolution into "safe" local hands, such devices should be exposed as so much humbug. We realise that such co-option has been quite prevalent and that such moves can also be a cover-up for exploitation of women in a cynical cost-cutting exercise, as well as serving to protect the hegemony of the corporations.

To give Mowbray and Bryson their due, their paper on Community appears to be targetted against those would-be socialist community workers who kid themselves that they are carrying out important social changes, when what is really happening is that the mythical romanticised "communities" controlling their own services, for which they aim, simply do not materialise. By pretending that they do, they help to legitimate establishment myth-making sprayed on to centrally-controlled social organisations that remain basically unchanged as an arm of the State.

That is right enough. To the extent that the paper illustrates this particular form of delusion it is timely; for continuation of a pretence can indeed divert many well-intentioned people who can become disillusioned to the point of inactivity when the real facts of life ultimately let them down.

Mowbray has a brilliant and highly amusing passage on two versions of the "process involved in establishing a community managed service" (49). Progressive welfare workers will appreciate the gentle irony and see themselves, or others, in the agonising - often farcically agonising - process of applying and re-applying for funds.

In the orthodox version community initiative is supposed to start the process with public meetings, consultation with all interested groups with resulting investigations and a local consensus. Then follows a constitution, incorporation, elections, and application for funds, which, when spent, are accounted for by reports and public meetings.

In the alternative version, a central government wants to exercise constraint on expenditure, sets aside a relatively small portion of revenue for apparently benevolent "community" projects packaged in small but variable amounts calculated to boost the government's image. Control by regulations called "guidelines" is festooned with fanciful terms such as "community development", "natural networks", "local initiative", and "local control", "self-determination" and "self-help". Knowledgeable professional community workers or clergy get to know funds are available, prepare submissions applying the appropriate terminology, organise a few token volunteers and orchestrate the procedures set out in the orthodox version. If approved, the insufficient funds and uncertainty of future funding leads to a struggle for survival in an atmosphere of stifling anticipation.

In all this, Mowbray is not arguing against the public accountability provided by "guidelines" but against the self-delusion that there is any degree of genuine local self-determination.

Class Consciousness

The brief but principled statement by Mowbray in favour of forms of organisation that help class consciousness are a positive contribution that should not be overlooked, especially by those whose work is concerned with local affairs.

For example his support for "systemic, international, national or statewide action, or action based on broad class, ethnic or gender lines" (in his definition of localism); and still more in his favourable mention of class consciousness through struggle as advocated by Lenin and other followers of Marx as modes of organisation which he says are ignored in welfare circles.

We also approve the way Mowbray exposes non-Marxist theories. For example that it is poor performance by government, or poor advocacy in a pluralist society, and not capitalism that causes poverty (50); or that it is problems of modern urban or industrial systems generally rather than class society and the capitalist political order that gives rise to social problems (51)

5. Some Dubious Conclusions.

Without detracting from the value of the above-mentioned insights by Mowbray, and much useful and painstaking research, we believe that some of his conclusions are not helpful.

They seem to call in question the value of a struggle for people to control their own services, and the proposed strategy and tactics for dealing with deceptive notions that form part of the capitalist hegemony tend to be knee-jerk and inflexible.

Moreover, the analysis of the role of local government does not deal with the post-war impact of the global corporations and the Mowbray concept of "working class", although not defined, could likely be - from other indications - a narrow one.

Discouraging Use of the Word "Community"

We agree that "community" (as well as other terms such as "local control" or "self-help" etc.) can be used to blur class interests and serve to legitimate social control in the interests of the ruling class hegemony. What we also believe is that the same notion of community can and should be used in reverse by working people to assist themselves to organise a counter-hegemonic effort against the capitalists and especially against the global corporations.

For this reason we cannot accept the Mowbray and Bryson advice to "discourage the rash use of the term community and promote the use of substitutes with less extensive and problematic evaluative meanings such as locality, district, area, town, suburb, city, municipality, population, category, country" (52)

Of course, one should never do anything "rash", but from the context of the whole article, it is hard to detect any use of the word that the authors would regard as a non-rash legitimate use.

Mowbray and Bryson's objections seem to be of two kinds which it is important to distinguish:-

- (a) One objection to the word is that it evokes a notion of "romantic community" which they justifiably dismiss as unrealisable. But because people think that it is realisable, they are taken in by the word, and therefore actions by the authorities become acceptable because coloured by rosy expectations.
- (b) The other objection, associated with the attack on localistic notions is that "community", by its very nature is a non-class or cross-class idea, or, at least a non-political idea that distracts from a progressive political struggle against the capitalist hegemony.

We have three comments to make on use of the word "community".

Three Comments on "Community"

(1) Straw-man and common usage

Regarding the romanticised community objection, the Mowbray treatment of the subject has a strong "straw man" element in the argument. Who said that the word "community" conveys a romanticised concept of harmonious benevolence homogeneously suffused throughout a residential group? Once having arbitrarily attributed to the word such extreme emotive overtones, it is not hard to knock over your own "straw man" by proving that such mutually affectionate relationships do not eventuate, and to ascribe hypocrisy or naivety to those who use the term.

We use the word "community" with the opposite meaning of a "social mix": its very essence and value is not a grouping of likeminded people but a grouping of people irrespective of their differences. They may take common action over an issue that affects them, but this does not obliterate the different lifestyle or different standpoint of individuals any more than, for example, job action has such an effect.

Areas with strong neighbourhood focal centres can provide the conditions for people from all walks of life to subconsciously accept each other on a "nodding acquaintance" basis. Only some of these acquaintances are likely to blossom, through the sharing of experiences, into friendship.

But more local friendships will result than under circumstances in which no regular nodding takes place. Today's car-based suburbs make it easy for like-minded people to seek each other out, and totally ignore those who do not conform to their set of values. Because of the car, their friends often live in random directions and sometimes at long distances, and in visiting each other they by-pass many likeminded potential friends living quite close, but whom they simply do not know.

The essence of neighbourliness and job mateship is the acceptance of others at greeting level, even if you do not approve of their lifestyle, their religion, or their party politics, and even if you do not feel like developing a lasting close relationship with them. That is how we see the concept "community".

Rather than use this word at all, however, Mowbray invites us to use words with "less extensive and problematic evaluative meanings such as locality, district, area, town, suburb, city, municipality, population, category or country". Unfortunately, none of these substitutes contains any of the social or political meaning - or rather shades of meaning - conveyed by the word "community" as used in everyday life. For example, whatever romantic or unromantic flavour is ascribed to the word "community", the concept does distinguish such a grouping of people from State or Establishment bureaucracies, from private enterprise, from institutionalised welfare agencies, from party political organisation, and from local government administration. And the phrase "community of interest" seems to us as neutral and unromanticised as any general concept can be.

We think it unreal to try to discourage usage of the word. Marxists, at all events, would never dream of any "community" in such static unreal terms as the romantic community - even under socialism or communism. Given the entrenched unromantic shades of meaning of "community" it would be even more unreal to expect non-Marxist progressives to banish the word.

But we strongly support analysis such as that of Mowbray and Bryson which examines and exposes humbug calculated to mislead - wherever, in fact, this is happening.

(2) A Play on Words - And How to Counterplay.

Mowbray and Bryson's second ground of objection - the mis-use of the word by various authorities and agencies to legitimate and even strengthen capitalist hegemony - raises real difficulties for the progressive movement. These particular devices to hoodwink the working people on social welfare issues may be new, but the principles are not.

Right from the inception of their rise to rule as a class, the capitalists have used progressive-sounding ideas acceptable to the working people to camouflage their class domination over their workers. "Liberty, equality and fraternity" is a classical example. However, none of these basic concepts are ones which the working people have jettisoned or should jettison because they have been abused and misused by the capitalists. As Mowbray has demonstrated, this game of playing on words to consolidate central control is rife now - and will no doubt continue.

Lenin in "Left Wing Communism - An Infantile Disorder" gives some sensible tactical advice in cases where the bourgeoisie or their political parties, as in England, produce high-sounding ideals that command solid support among the workers. The workers should say, in effect: "we agree with that ! We support that! But we judge you by results!" Inability to

to produce results can then be used to strengthen the workers cause. (53).

The question is not whether words that have had values with which working people strongly identify can be taken by the Establishment and made into romanticised or "motherhood" words and misused to legitimate a continuation of capitalist control - of course they can ! The more important question is the best way to respond to such tricks so that the worker's cause does not suffer from confusion and demoralisation, which is what the Establishment and their agencies intend.

Those who support "community" are accused by Mowbray and Bryson of having a "remarkable capacity to allow nostalgia to override systematic analysis." because they are trying to "graft back on today's social organisation a feature from pre-capitalist times." (54).

This remark can only be applied "to whom the cap fits", that is, to those who fancy themselves as reviving a romanticised pre-capitalist situation. It certainly does not apply, for example, to those who support the cluster and connect model for Melbourne's future. This does not propose a revival of pre-capitalist conditions, or even pre-war conditions, but a swing forward to a new way of linking public transport and social activity. It is different from the suburban pattern of a few decades ago in that what is now required is a deliberate involvement of people in making these links.

To condemn talk of re-creating community as unrealisable nostalgia is about as sensible as it would be to condemn Marx on the grounds that he proposed the very much more formidable task of reviving pre-class-society social organisation, namely, communism. Marx did not nostalgically propose the re-establishment of what he called "primitive communism" in its earlier forms, but a non-class communism based on the best of civilised society.

Similarly, the cluster and connect case does not rest on pre-car nostalgia, but on re-arranging local conditions to make it possible for people to do together what they cannot achieve in isolation from each other.

If capitalism, with all its immense technological capacity, cannot marshal its resources to organise its major cities along the more human, more ecologically sound and more economically efficient cluster and connect lines, then there may well be a lot more people looking to socialism as a system that can achieve just such results.

The view of Mowbray and Bryson, however, is apparently that community cannot exist unless there are stable patterns of interaction between people, as there were in pre-capitalist conditions. The economic requirements of modern capitalism, they argue, demand high rates of residential mobility and high rates of personal mobility to work, shopping, education and recreation.

Granted. But there are two factors this argument overlooks.

There is now a very much shorter working week, so there is

potentially more leisure time available to breadwinners locally, both daily and in the weekends. Even more significant, the daily or weekly personal mobility is based on private transport which enables a car driver to go any distance, in any direction, at any time. It is excess of undirectionalised mobility, rather than general capitalist economic requirements that destabilises potentially stable associations at urban nodes within the low-density suburbs.

But this condition can be remedied by bringing access to many human needs not only nearer to where people live, but also made accessible by walking or public transport that can match the car in physical convenience for many purposes, and out-class the car by creating favourable conditions for some sort of meaningful human contact that is constant enough to be rewarding.

The Mowbray and Bryson argument does not take this turn, however. In saying that the degree of mobility required by capitalism prevents community forming at all, and therefore use of the word can only be a hoax, they are, in effect, taking the hegemony of the car way of life for granted.

It seems to us that to launch an attack on a word is a clumsy, confusing and even counter-productive device. Unity of progressive community forces against conservative and manipulative central strategic planning is hard enough; to disorientate the expanding but frail unity by fruitless semantic divisions over a word or a phrase is the last thing the movement wants.

In similar vein, Mowbray prescribes "dropping altogether" use of the word "radical" (55), simply because, in addition to meaning "radical left" the word has been debased to cover "radical liberal" and "radical right". If pro-working class theoreticians are to drop every word formerly found useful by progressives because it has been borrowed by pro-capitalist theoreticians, they will be left with very little political vocabulary at all!

The English working class, for example, right from the inception of their organised efforts as a class (leaving aside the very early riots) learnt how to "play with words" to hide their real intentions and activities beneath ideology borrowed from and made respectable by, the capitalists. The Webbs, in their history of trade unions, describe how, in the period when Combination Laws made unions illegal, groups of workers would meet in a back room of a local pub under cover of a religious brotherhood or a social club. Hence, incidentally, the word "steward", directly descended from the practice of this important official whose original job was collecting money from union members present, buying the beer in the tap room and serving it to the clandestine gathering!

Coming to more recent times, there are plenty of illustrations showing how practical political tactics have been found to counter the use of words calculated to mislead, divert and disorientate the union or community movements (and this applies particularly to that category Mowbray is addressing - community workers who can be easily demoralised, whether paid or not).

Take the case of whitecollar workers in Australia. Banks, insurance offices, oil companies, trustee offices, shipping offices and airways offices were formerly prime non-union workplaces. The general idea put about by employers was that if employees performed well they had a career in front of them. Each employee's promotion was then at the bosses' discretion - but this, so they were led to believe, was an entirely different system to wages awards, so they did not need unions; these were appropriate only for industrial workers.

When the whitecollar unions started to unionise these workers, they did not try to exercise the word "career" which was mesmerising and tranquillising the employees of these big corporations. They formulated "career awards" - almost a contradiction in terms - a guaranteed system of progression which removed the discretion from the employer and the uncertainty and frustration from the employee.

For another example, Hitler called his fascist party "national socialists", but the real socialists of the world did not drop the word "socialist", nor did the communists, who were singled out for special attack, drop the word "communist" as a way of fighting this crude attempt at legitimation and scapegoating. Instead they set out to expose the ultra-conservative brutal meaning of Nazism, disclosing its connections with segments of international finance capital.

So, playing on words - and counterplaying on them - has been indulged in both on behalf of the capitalists and on behalf of the workers, and is as old as the class struggle itself. Finesse at all times is required of the players, but withdrawing a word altogether from play has never been one of the rules of the game.

(3) Historical Differences.

Another example of word-play, so close that it could be easily overlooked is this: the progressive movement appears to have been "out in front" in using the word "community" for its own purposes. In Victoria at least, Community Child Care back in the early 1970's, of its own volition, choose the word "community" to represent what they meant to describe the human relationships in "neighbourhood houses" or "community houses", and, as we have mentioned, the concept of "creating community" has spread from this founding organisation to various organisations supporting the cluster and connect model for Melbourne.

It would be unthinkable to expect Community Child Care to deny the very ideological basis of its own existence. It would be equally unthinkable for socialists to attack such an organisation for concentrating within local horizons in such a way as to "distract attention" from higher and broader political movements because the facts show that, so far from doing this it has, on the contrary, pioneered a struggle against conservatism in State and Federal bureaucracies. In NSW and other States circumstances may be somewhat different.

In striving to "create community", although such strivings begin, admittedly, in a small local area or neighbourhood, and the participants begin with a desperate desire for social contact, experience of those involved (typically mothers with young children at the outset) helps politicise them. If, in the process of striving to obtain and manage a neighbourhood house in which to "create community" active members become politicised, what does it matter that, more recently, government departments and agencies have borrowed the words and invested them with goodness knows what other meanings?

If the "evaluative ideological assumptions of the user" (to use Mowbray's words) when using the word "community" are understood by these users as a non-commercial, non-establishment form of organisation; and if, in practice, that sort of organisation begins to lay the basis for ways of life that are alternative to the market-dictated ways, why not?

In a word, let us keep the word "community" and invest it with a meaning that suits us, and expose attempts to have it misread against us! But above all, extend the efforts to have alternative policies adopted at local, regional, State, and Federal levels. There is no other way that masses of people becoming involved in a community effort can learn the basic politics of their situation.

How can people encapsulate the values they want to establish for the future, other than by using emotive words like Community to which they attach their own values?

"Unity" is another word frequently twisted by contestants of right and left in the industrial or political sphere. When the right talk about unity it often refers to a unity based on agreement with the capitalists accompanied by an absence of action; when the left talk about unity it invariably means unity based on action of some sort, without which the word is meaningless.

But it would be unthinkable to banish the word as a "dirty word" because it has been misused for partisan purposes, or because perfect unity is unattainable. Irrespective of the origin or history of the word "community" or "unity" or any other word, the test should be whether the concept conveyed by the word can be adapted to help people to organise against the hegemony.

Seeing Mowbray has invoked Lenin, we let Lenin have the last say: "The surest way of discrediting a new political (and not so political) idea, and to damage it, is to reduce it to an absurdity whilst ostensibly defending it. For every truth, if carried to "excess" (as Dietzgen Senior said) if it is exaggerated, if it is carried beyond the limits within which it can be actually applied, can be reduced to absurdity..." (55)

If the case is, that by "spraying on" the word "community" where it cannot be applied the capitalists have reduced the word to an absurdity, let them play their game! The working class should not throw out the fact of community Organisation by throwing out the word - to do so would be to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Instead they can rescue the word, invest it with their own meaning, and turn the joke on the capitalists!

The High Politics of Microplanning

By definition, it will be remembered, "localistic" means action at municipal or lower levels that distracts from actions that are aimed higher and wider and are presumably judged to be, in consequence, more politically significant. In advancing this strategy for those seeking to change the capitalist system, Mowbray makes it clear that he is in favour of local action that does not have any such distracting effect.

He does not write about the character of such legitimate local actions, but his support for them appears from two saving clauses:-

"This is not to say that there are not various contradictory effects, or that there is no productive place for socialists in relation to local government. It is just that local government cannot be fully understood without an analysis of its capitalist state service functions" (55)

"This is not meant to lead to a conclusion that local government is not a proper and fruitful area for action based on socialist principles. This vital area remains to receive much serious attention in Australia" (56)

Yet it would appear from the general context of Mowbray's articles that he could hardly be in favour of devolution of any existing central functions to local level in the current flurry of using such devolution to distract the attention of local people from wider concerns. For the same reason he could hardly favour attempts at public control of such devolved functions, as they are likely to be simply part of the mythology of localism.

We believe that the circumstances are more complex than presented, and that there are, indeed, as Mowbray says, "various contradictory effects" which are extremely important, and there are other questions than those dealt with that have to be answered:

When the talk is of people being distracted from widespread and apparently more serious political movements, which sort of people are meant? Are the people class-conscious active socialists trying to apply Marxism? Or are they a cross-section of suburban citizens most of whom are not class-conscious and are certainly not trying to change the capitalist system?

If it is those who are already socialist, then when they take part in local issues, they should be able - especially with Mowbray's help - to connect up the local politics with the central political issues, thus giving more depth to the central issues, as distinct from distracting themselves from their pro-socialist course.

If it is those who are non-socialist or even non-political, then the process first of politicising, and then of radicalising is more likely to begin for them if there is a local issue right under their nose, rather than one at State or Federal level over which they feel they can have little

or no effect.

We would go a long way further than this and assert that the impact of the hegemony of the global corporations is such that effective counter-measures have to be firmly tackled with the microplanning of alternatives at very local levels

Before expanding on this proposition which rests on a different emphasis to Mowbray on the "capitalist State service functions" of local government, we have some comment to make on his analysis. It will be remembered that he chose municipal rating systems to illustrate the proposition that local government operates to give a dominant bias to the capitalists, and has done right from its inception around 1850.

Now it is true that within capitalism, the main contending forces, capitalists and workers, can be identified from the beginning to the end of the system, with domination of the capitalists over the workers through all this period. But as the means of production are constantly being revolutionised by technological change, the nature of each of the main contending classes change and the relationship between them changes, as do the various ideologies and institutions by which the capitalists and their allies retain the "upper hand" over the workers and their allies.

In 1850, for example, farmers and capitalists were very much smaller enterprises, although relatively more numerous than the multi-nationals of the 1980's, the control centres of which have become concentrated either in the capital cities or overseas. Over the same period there was a severe decline of agricultural workers, compared to urban workers; and the urban working class no longer consisted predominantly of industrial workers, but, because of structural change in industry, commerce, finance and science, had expanded to include as many white-collar service workers as industrial workers, as well as a small but growing number of employed professional workers.

Such changes could not fail to have some impact on the balance of class forces in a capital city like Melbourne, for example, where nearly 75% of Victoria's population lives; and, in turn, this would have an impact on both form and function of the apparatus of State, including local government the lowest tier of government.

In one of his papers on localism (57) Mowbray chooses the incidence of local rates to illustrate his undoubtedly correct basic proposition that local government is a "logical part of a wider State system that has a fundamental bias towards the dominant classes." But although he explores local rates in the 1850's when many of them originated, through to the 1980's, and although his chosen concern is with class relationships, there is no inkling of any class changes in all that time and their effect on those relationships, nor changes in local government services and financing, nor changes in the functional part played by local government in the State apparatus.

Mowbray's analysis, as a consequence, is so static that he

capitalism has imposed on the workers. So he is left thrashing old-fashioned inequities, which, although they may be still real enough, are also becoming less important than more recent oppressions, which deserve to receive more attention from socialists desiring to intervene in marshalling forces against the multinationals.

Mowbray fails to mention that by the 1980's most of the working class families are owner-occupiers of their homes; that most have to rely on one or two cars for shopping, work or recreation; that local government is increasingly becoming an instrument for delivery of "human services"; that the class of local people aspiring to become Councillors started with "City Fathers" who were largely local land-owners; as urbanisation proceeded shifted to local manufacturers, businessmen, professionals and estate agents; then shifted to aspiring politicians looking for careers in their party or parliament; and, more recently, in some areas, has shifted again to home owners wanting to improve amenities and services but with no particular political axe to grind.

It may well be, therefore, as Mowbray puts it that "rates paid on property became, from the outset, the predominant source of local government revenue. They remain by far the most substantial source of taxation available to Councils" (58), although he does not mention growth of State and Federal grant monies.

Mowbray then makes a case that rates paid by owners of commercial properties can be transferred through prices or rents to working class consumers or tenants. No doubt. But rates and rents paid by workers are also reflected in wage structures and increases in rates and rents are transferred by way of wage increases to workers. Mowbray says that "rates can be set off against capital gains" from any increase in exchange value of the property. No doubt. But working class owner-occupiers are amongst those who so benefit. (59)..

According to Mowbray, domination of capital over labor, in relation to property is supplied by local government to the extent that mortgagees (and presumably, also unpaid vendors) require maintenance of property values. "A precondition for deriving income or wealth through the agency of property is obviously that there be a certain surety that the latter's value will be protected or increased. Necessary practical ingredients in this are the provision of basic physical works and a relatively orderly system of land-use - over which capital can exert appropriate, overt or covert influence, and gain other advantages." (60) Yes. The need for surety of values based on basic amenities are for the mortgagees and unpaid vendors (many of whom, incidentally, nowadays, are working class) obvious. They are equally obvious needs for working class owner-occupiers from a financial point of view, and to all residents, whether tenants or owners, from a social point of view.

Indeed, to the extent that the home-owning segments of the working class have derived a positive benefit from the increased value of their homes, due to local government providing surety and amenity, it could be argued that local government favours them more than mortgagees who invariably set a margin of safety by not leaving first mortgages more

than, say, two-thirds of the value, so that any movement of property values other than under the wildest crisis conditions do not affect their security.

Evidence adduced by Mowbray that lower-income tenants and home-owners pay proportionately more rates than those on higher incomes seems rather inconclusive; and some of it could really be read as arguing for a redistribution of the rate burden from some sections of the working class to other sections of the same class, rather than to capitalists deriving income from property.

What we say Mowbray misses is the impact of some of the world's mightiest corporations - the oil, car and metals industries - associated with the manufacture, operation and maintenance of cars and trucks, and the infrastructure needed for all this. Does not public sector provision of facilities to enable these machines to operate and proliferate constitute a considerable part of the accumulation of these giants? Some invaluable research into this area was done by Geoff Lacey in a paper "The Dominant Car" as early as 1975 (61).

Maintenance of the local road networks are a sizeable part of the finances of most local governments, typically about one-third of the budget. Rates spent in this way should surely be seen as pumping money into the accumulation of wealth for these industries?

Similar effects are surely discernable to the extent that local government planning obligingly aids and abets regional planning by providing for continued outward sprawl at low density which creates conditions of dispersion and randomness of destinations favourable to the car?

The resultant immoral energy waste and social deterioration is the heavy price working class ratepayers and tenants pay.

The cluster and connect model for Melbourne, based on public transport, growth of local centres as places worth stopping at (by re-directing growth that would otherwise go into sprawl), establishment of a universal system of walking-distance neighbourhood centres connected by feeder-buses to the local centres, apart from saving the average household in the order of \$40 a week in transport costs (62), could create better close-at-hand supportive and recreational places for working people.

Certainly, a socialist solution would be to tackle this critical urban problem at its source by removing the insatiable pressures for expansion of private transport created by these corporations helped by State and Federal government policies. But it would also require alternative local government plans on the lines mentioned above.

Therefore, we ask, looked at from the viewpoint of class significance, does not local government finance and planning help accumulation of capital of some of the world's biggest capitalist investments, far outstripping the older, more traditional investments in mortgages, or even the more recent residential estate developments, both of which, in any case, conform with the basic interests of the same corporations?

Local government will remain subservient to the basic interests of these corporations until the battle is joined on the basis of a peoples' alternative, basing macro-planning of the metropolis on the seldom-applied micro-planning of peoples' needs at street, neighbourhood and local levels. There is no Chinese Wall between such local struggles and the struggles on regional, State or Federal levels.

Such a people's alternative city plan, because it involves re-directing market forces instead of allowing the big corporations to dominate the market, relies, of necessity, on deliberate integration of planning, bringing into one workable system alternative social, transport, land-use, ecological, energy and employment policies. If socialists are earnest about alternative cities (which we believe they should be, since Australia is amongst the most urbanised countries in the world) alternative comprehensive planning cannot be avoided.

This challenges the progressive movement with a sophistication of planning not until recently attempted. It also simultaneously opens up more avenues by which the authorities can hoodwink the progressives and legitimate continuation of the status quo.

Thus, where a few elements only of a comprehensive alternative plan (which strung together would have little or no effect on undesirable market trends) are picked up by governments, and attempts are made to carry out this or that isolated feature (in the name of acceding to the people's alternative), but in such a way that the whole is unworkable, then the demand must be made by the progressive movement that the government extend its decisions to cover the whole alternative package.

So, to add to Mowbray's storehouse of myths such as romantic community, neutral local government machinery etc., we suggest another: the myth of piece-meal "ad hocery". This operates to co-opt expectations by carrying out bits and pieces of the alternative strategy, whilst pretending sympathy with it, but in such a way that it cannot work properly. The reason that the alternative cannot show success with only some elements implemented is that, of its very nature, it must involve a consciously-designed, systematic intervention, in the capitalist market; and this, in turn, requires integration of the functions - historically fragmented - through all departments and agencies, and at all levels.

But where can the pressure come from capable of achieving such results? The ACTU is just beginning to grapple with the "social wage" concept which needs to be unfolded beyond issues of fiscal inequity to encompass the full range of urban social needs, many of which are being formulated by community organisations. If such a process were to be consummated, it could forge a wide coalition based on a radical needs policy which, coupled with some degree of control by producers and providers as well as consumers and users, is the only political force capable of challenging multinational domination.

The political force of such a coalition, however, does not derive from top leadership only. Union strength, for example does not comprise union officials or union councils acting

alone. Their real strength is manifested by the strength of shop committees or office committees and measured by the resolve, independence and creativity of the workers in the workplace.

So too for community organisations - whatever geographic area or area of interest they cover - their strength is not manifested by centralised officers or committees alone, but the extent to which these are backed up by neighbourhood groups or interest groups; and the strength of such rank-and-file groups are determined, for their part, by the resolve, independence and creativity of the members of that group.

In both cases organisation on a small-area localised basis give maximum effectiveness; in a big factory "shop" by "shop", in a big office section by section, and in a suburb, neighbourhood by neighbourhood.

Solidarity around one aspect or another of a peoples' alternative to the anti-social and un-ecological products and services of the big corporations, must rest ultimately, in fact, on collectives of people. Job collectives, collectives of people with special interests and local collectives all have their part to play, and, as they widen their coalescence with like groups, give strength to their central organisations.

Whilst in his "saving" clauses Mowbray seems to support local action (as distinct from localistic action), he certainly does not advance local, neighbourhood or community actions as the particular level at which any meaningful alternative to the car way of life must begin. More than that, he does not support a shift of central powers and resources to local and sub-local levels in order to shift local politics from its original property-serving rate-base onto a basis where there can be local activities that integrate local transport, local social and recreational activities in local urban nodes - and supportive and convenience services in walking-distance nodes.

Without such powers and activities, the metropolis will become even more dependent than it is now on the car, and people even more estranged from each other. This is because nothing can be done to make any shift from a car-dependent to a people-dependent suburban existence unless the critical question is confronted of how to get people from their front gate to their neighbourhood centre on foot, and, (typically) by bus or mini-bus from there to their local centre, served by the city's main public transport network.

And this cannot be solved by physical measures only - the walking distance neighbourhood centre, and local centre served by feeder bus must include lively and varied social activities strong enough to attract people, or they will continue to take off in their cars, or continue isolated in their homes. As the strongest way people can be attracted is to activities in which they are personally involved, increase in local community involvement in all types of activities must spearhead the movement for a people's alternative city.

In summary, we agree with Mowbray that it is unlikely that local rates and planning systems can be "comprehensively transformed inside capitalism", since they play an "absolutely central role in certain processes of capital accumulation." (63). However, we do not agree that capital accumulation is now all or mainly to do with real estate, but very much with the car, oil, steel and other global corporations - also locally. And we do not agree that there cannot be, or should not be, a decisive shift to local government of funds from central government tax resources, and a struggle by local people to be consulted and help manage the alternative plans.

Maybe, too, further insights are needed into the myths generated on behalf of the global corporations to legitimate their dominance, such as the myth that people, by choosing to "trade space for time", choose the urban sprawl; the myth that nearly everyone is a cardriver; the myth that people would narrow their circle of friends if they did not have cars; the myth that cars are cheaper than other ways of getting what people need; the myth that consumerism and privatisms are positive values; the myth that cars have killed off community, which can never be revived!

The State and Class Domination.

We know that the crucial touchstone of Mowbray's critique is how the capitalists as a class use certain ideas to legitimate their domination over the working class with the help of mystifications by the State that promise local self-controlled communities which are either so romantic that they can never materialise at all, or only emerge on the basis of unpaid or underpaid labor of volunteers or exploited women to replace properly paid professionals.

What we do not know is what Mowbray means by "working class" - the class whose interests he claims to advance. And we do not know how he assesses the political possibilities presented by the modern State.

(a) Changing features of the State.

We have already observed that, in dealing with the inbuilt class bias of the rate base of local government, Mowbray fails to mention any significant change either within the working class or within the ruling class, over a period of 130 years. Nor is there anywhere mention of the development of significant contradictions within the State over this period, so that the way the State operates to represent different fractions of capital, and whether, at times, parts of the State can, paradoxically, operate to represent even some interests of the working class itself are not discussed.

These omissions of Mowbray leave the unfortunate impression that he approaches the whole subject of legitimatising devices by the State, of which he complains, in a rather fundamentalist fashion. That is, starting with a given postulation that the State operates always in a pre-determined

pro-capitalist role on behalf of the capitalists against the working class - and any apparent exception in which the State seems to favour the workers is only a trick to buy-off demands for better standards by the workers in order to further entrench capitalist-dominated control. Then all the evidence is crammed into the mould of this postulated truism, so that emerging new reality can be conveniently overlooked.

There is at least a case to be considered that there has emerged over recent decades a much more complicated situation in Australia that gives the potential for the working class to take advantage within the State of the cleavage of interests between the multinationals and the older "competitive" capitalists, as well as the more fundamental cleavage between these forces and the working class. (64)

The answers as to whether there are such possibilities depend in no small measure on the concept of "working class". If big segments of the ever-growing army of whitecollar and professional workers employed by departments, authorities, media and various agencies are counted as part of the working class, then it would be surprising if some of them had not found ways of expressing the basic interests of their own class through their jobs - more especially in the area of resources for welfare and recreational services, as well as urban planning, transport and the media.

We believe that this has begun to happen, but at this early stage only to an insignificant extent, and in a very uneven fashion; and, of course, no Marxist would expect that, within capitalism, a major portion of the State's resources are likely to be converted from serving the capitalists to serve the workers.

Even if the State continues to function, in the main, on behalf of capital, however, it could make all the difference as to which set of capitalists the State favours in allocation of its resources. Switching support from the dominant global corporations to new alternatives that emphasised goods and services that are more socially useful and ecologically sensible, and industries and cities so organised as to facilitate such results could make significant differences even to the working class. Such changes directed towards an alternative could affect every level of government and the daily lives of the people.

Now if the whitecollar and professional workers employed by the State are conceived as nearly all "middle class" (which is the current fashion amongst academics and journalists) then the above perspectives that depend on some of the bureaucracies acting in ways described above, would hardly be credible. But if these categories of workers are seen as part of the working class, then such developments, constituting an extension of class struggles into the State itself, are not only credible but almost predictable. Boris Frankel has written carefully about such developments (64).

(b) What is "the working class" ?

It is of considerable importance, therefore, from a strategic

point of view to clarify what constitutes "the working class", in Australia in the 1980's, and what bearing the working class, as conceived, has on the State and vice versa.

Mowbray, it will be recalled, considers that the "revolutionary objective of such organisation" (i.e. working class organisation bequeathed by Marx) "is premised on recognition of class antagonisms and realization of class consciousness through struggle. Working class action, directed at wresting economic and political hegemony from the bourgeois class, is promoted by various socialist parties...yet is characteristically ignored in community work." (65)

We, who together with a small minority of Australian people, share similar views with Mowbray on this, would be astounded if such views came to be publicly espoused by those employed as community workers, or even by those, outside welfare, trying to rally people, locally or otherwise, to a socialist cause. Crudely preaching class antagonism, especially with the prevailing confusion as to who is "working class", under current Australian conditions, could drive the socialist movement into further and undeserved isolation.

In a general atmosphere where no-one expects unions - even militant unions - to inscribe "socialism" on their banners, it is hardly to be expected that the time is tactically ripe for social welfare and similar groupings to hold aloft such slogans.

The vital thing at this stage, in Australia, is not whether socialists working in mass organisations or movements that have no socialist objective, proclaim socialism within those organisations. Rather it is how effectively they can assist the members to develop a counter-hegemony.

But counter-hegemonic positions are not necessarily expressed around conventional political issues, or in party-political terminology. In the case of the energy industry, for example, energy issues have not yet become everyday politics, because the socialists have not found ways (except in the coal industry) of taking on the domination by the global corporations of this most vital of all industries. So the politics of energy tends to go disregarded even when it appears.

Mowbray, in a review of the book "Seeds for Change" (45) falls into the error of missing the very fundamental counter-hegemonic significance to be found in the book, when he says it is devoid of politics. (67). The book only pioneered the field for Victoria in charting the energy alternatives to the global corporations' recipe for high-technology centrally-controlled and corporation-owned energy monopolies; and also only charted proposed social alternatives. In this, as in other critiques, Mowbray tends to fail to see the substance behind the form.

A surer way of ensuring the rise of class consciousness in a mass way is for people to learn from their own experience in the course of struggling for alternatives, and this, in fact, is a pre-condition for building the sort of organisation that Mowbray is talking about.

So what are the specifically Australian socialist alternatives worthy of being struggled for? Industry that produces socially useful and ecologically rational products, certainly; but for the subject on hand, human services, what? Surely here the socialist goal, in this most citified of all countries, must be transformed urban life that is richer and more human, more equitable and more universally enjoyable than anything the big corporations can offer?

Surely, though, the working class do not go on suffering from alienation and anomie until the Great Day when socialism magically arrives, but start struggling for the perceived needs now, within capitalism? If it were otherwise, the working people would never be equal to attaining hegemony. How is this to be formulated? Take the following words:-

"The emphasis is very clearly on people getting together to help each other and taking joint action on common problems... A centre should equally be accessible to all people including 'special needs groups'... In a time of increasing categories and divisions, the neighbourhood centre's general community focus is one way of breaking down these artificial barriers between people."

We do not believe that any socialist would be ashamed of a concept like this to describe an aspect of life in a socialist society - an aspect, moreover for which the struggle can commence right away. Yet the point is that these words are from a policy statement by the NSW Youth and Community Services Department, through its Community Liaison Bureau, quoted by Mowbray (66) to illustrate the "community" mythology which presents the sin of legitimation of capitalist control.

Maybe the Mowbray rejoinder would be that any such centre - even assuming it did become a reality - would include and be dominated by people from the capitalist class, and would serve therefore to "break down barriers" between workers and capitalists, rather than sharpen class consciousness.

But is this true? It would be true in most suburbs if "working class" is confined to "industrial workers". But once the working class is defined as those who are employed by capital to create surplus value - and their like numbers in the public services - we get a definition of the Australian working class as follows:-

- "1 (a) Industrial workers mainly in factories, mines and transport.
- (b) Non-manual workers in trade, shops and offices (but in factories and transport too)
- (c) Part of the intellectually and technically trained workers in industries and services.
- (d) Rural workers.
- (e) Women doing unpaid work at home who move in and out of the workforce.
- (f) The unemployed.
- (g) Pensioners, retired workers.

and the definition goes on to add other "forces whose interests would best be served by ending capitalist class rule" as follows:-

- " 2. Women as an oppressed sex.
3. Students (who will mostly become workers or members of the new intermediate strata).
4. The Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islanders...etc.
5. Social movements of sections of the people, or movements around particular issues."

It is interesting to note that the term "working class" as so defined above would cover both Barry Jones' proposed category of "information workers" (his quaternary sector), which would fall within 1(a) and 1(c) above, and his "quinary sector" which includes home-based work, both paid and unpaid, covered largely by 1(e). Even if Jones (68) and Andre Gorz (69) prove right in predicting that capitalism in its technological restructuring of industry is passing into a phase when a very large proportion of the population will prove permanently jobless or partially unemployed, then the categories above of 1(f) "unemployed" or 1(g) "pensioners" would include these segments in the "working class". Gorz has entitled a recent book "Farewell to the Working Class". By this term Gorz must mean "industrial working class" as defined above.

The above definition is taken from the Program of the Communist Party of Australia" (70), which goes on to warn that "not all the people comprising these forces will be conscious that it is in their interests to end capitalism", and that the "basic force for change is the working class". The document points to the various differences between all these class components, even down to differences on the one job; and goes on to say: "Recognition of such differences is important in the welding of unity, because common interests only express themselves when people recognise and act on them."

This revolutionary party, therefore, certainly does not expect any romanticised "community" that is homogeneous and harmonious even within the working class, let alone the broader groupings which include its allies. From this standpoint, the differences to be observed in the population are of two kinds, which should be treated in different ways:-

- (1) differences within the working class and its allies, which socialists should try to overcome, with the purpose of revealing the basic common interests in an alternative to defeat the oppression of the capitalist class.
- (2) differences between all these forces and the capitalists, especially the giant corporations, the harmful impacts of which should be exposed at every opportunity.

With this analysis of the current Australian situation, it is clear that, in the big cities, except for a very few suburbs where the very wealthy are concentrated, the working class will be in a good majority, and the working class and its allies in an overwhelming majority. So, if they are brought together in a "community" effort, what have they to fear from the few capitalists who may be caught up in the same effort?

Of course, they will have to learn to assert working class ideas over bourgeois ideas. But this remains a challenge only partially met to this day even in many shop committees

or office committees. What is certain is that where workers are organised in job committees, or where the same workers are organised in walking-distance neighbourhood houses they are at least in touch with each other in some relatively stable way, and, to that degree, they are objectively closer to conditions that help unfoldment of political awareness than if they continued in the isolation of job division of labour, or with the extreme privatism imposed on them by the consumerist marketplace.

With such an analysis, whilst a few wealthy suburbs might provide an exception, not only is the majority of the population counted as working class, but big segments of whitecollar and professional workers in public service departments, the media and various agencies are working class too. Movements "from below" (i.e. from suburban working class groups) demanding better services and some control over them are likely, despite the continuing hegemony of the corporations, to find response from efforts "from above" (i.e. from working class professional and administrative workers in the State). The initiative could even come the other way around, with efforts "from above" to offer to suburban groups better services and some control.

If these are the maturing circumstances - and we believe that they are - then while it would be prudent to examine with suspicion any moves coming from the State which seem to promise more than they can deliver, under the disguise of a legitimising myth, it would not be strategically sensible to throw cold water over efforts by whitecollar and professional workers to help their own class, using the very excuse of "community" to give it justification.

Ruling class hegemony is not something masterminded by a multinational "think tank" and cunningly inserted by deliberate State intervention. Rather it grows naturally out of the changing relationships of production and exchange. Support for the car way of life, as a general ethos, appears to originate from workers who, with no other option open, seem to initiate the demand for low-density outer-suburban sprawl, and for more and better roads, as well as the demand for professional support services to overcome the isolation to which this process subjects them. Authorities do not need to take directions from global corporations to respond to the above perceived needs of this car-based society.

To build the public service and infrastructures to sustain the changed way of life, tens of thousands of employees - part of the working class - have had to be employed; and this provides one opportunity for the growth of a potential counter-hegemony on behalf of the working class generally.

Justifiable as it may be to subject every idea that emanates "from above" with suspicion, and to subject to close scrutiny every action in response "from below" to ensure the participants are not being duped, there is such a thing as overdoing it to the point where professionals or users with socialist leanings would feel so nervous that they would fail to take combined action in their own best class interests.

Caution is all the more likely to be overdone if the concept of "working class" is a narrow one meaning "industrial workers". This could impair a practical working unity between service workers and the community. It could also impair practical unity between different components of the working class organised in suburban groups.

Discerning And Exploiting Contradictions.

Our contention is that, whilst being aware of the disadvantages of localist policies where they are used on behalf of the capitalists to foist burdens on the working people, any fight-back tactics that go beyond a mere negative defence, and are aimed to advance a working class counter-hegemony, must seek out and exploit the advantages to the working class presented by these same localist policies.

In other words, the contradiction in the situation should be exploited. We use the word "contradiction" in the Marxist usage envisaging evolution within a given system as a self-movement proceeding by way of development of a "unity of opposites" and their reciprocal co-relation; and the maturing accumulation of contradictions within the system until resolved in a revolutionary transformation to a new system, with a new set of contradictions. An example of a contradiction was given in the last part of the last section, above, of the growth of the working class within the State as a contradictory by-product of the growth of the State to accommodate the corporations.

Mowbray himself perceives the basic contradiction of the capitalist system between the social production and private appropriation of the system, or, at least, the expression of this contradiction as a class struggle between the working class and the capitalist class as the determinant of social change.

But there are myriads of minor contradictions, including (as we have mentioned above) within the working class and its allies and within the capitalist class and its allies. Strangely and disappointingly Mowbray seldom seeks out and discusses the way in which the working class can take advantage of the very contradiction inevitably presented by a localist program. (An exception is his listing of ten tips entitled "living with localism" (71) and his paper on Distributive Bargaining for Community Organisations (3) demonstrates his deep commitment to strengthening the hand of community organisations in bids to negotiate for more adequate resources).

We should remark, at the outset, that Mowbray, in lumping together as "localist" all caring services devolved to the level of local government, or of "community" or "neighbourhood" right down to the level of the home, overlooks a most significant difference. A deliberate distinction needs to be made between:

- (1) caring in the home transferred to individual housewives who bear the extra burden of caring for non-members of the family, isolated from the company of other adults - as in most family day care arrangements, and
- (2) reciprocal child caring in a neutral venue such as a neighbourhood house, which brings women out of their home to associate with others, thus also allowing them some respite from the otherwise never-ending constancy of their caring efforts for their own children.

We agree with Mowbray that (1) tends to place an intolerable extra burden on women; but we believe that (2) is an important step forward. In what follows in this section, it is (2) or similar collective efforts with other purposes which we have in mind, and not (1). We agree entirely with Mowbray's general attitude (72) which is critical of shifting institutional child care to individual housewives.

Historically, socialists in Australia have mounted strong campaigns in the sphere of international and national politics (anti-conscription, anti-fascism, anti-nuclear and anti-Vietnam, for example), and strong national industrial campaigns (around wages, shorter working week, job protection and education, for example); but they have been woefully weak on local campaigns and not much better on State issues.

It is our belief that this relative neglect of off-the-job and local conditions has been one factor in the steady decline of socialist influence. The post-war conditions of day to day living have undergone very big changes due to the imposition of consumerism and privatism and an enforced excess of mobility by car by the powerful corporations; but the socialists have been very slow to counter this with alternatives. How ever can people be expected to support a change in system when the socialists cannot tell them how socialism can improve their day to day life?

Local activities not only around politics, but around sport, entertainment, culture, education, recreation, health and welfare can help to give confidence to workers - and especially to women - that they can get together to run their own affairs, if only, at the beginning, around small neighbourhood and local efforts.

Our first point, therefore, is that Mowbray seems to miss the possibility of this positive advantage altogether. When he says that "the bourgeois virtues on independence, self-reliance and self-determination are tied to locality (localized) through notions of community development" (22) we agree, except that we do not concede that these personal characteristics are bourgeois virtues. Socialism cannot come into existence unless independence, self-reliance and self-determination are restored to working people. It is penetration of the market into the community and the home as never before that has robbed people of these very characteristics.

We think that Mowbray, in dealing with "voluntarism",

overlooks the positive value of working people learning independencs and self-reliance in doing together those activities that cannot or should not be supplied either by the market or the State. Lucas Aerospace (UK) workers are acting in a counter-hegemonic way when they voluntarily draw up plans for alternative products for "their" industry. Local people who similarly involve themselves voluntarily in alternative plans for services or their delivery should be assessed in the same way, and if their actions are potentially counter-hegemonic should be supported.

All such freely given counter-hegemonic activities should be coupled up with demands by those giving unpaid time, or those benefiting from it, that there should be an expansion of funding for adequately paid professional workers in adequate numbers to make that involvement possible, as a continuing workable arrangement. Proposals for adequate funding of professionals and/or adequate re-adjustment of working time of professionals (so they have time to assist non-professional people) have already been demanded and gained in Victoria (73).

The raw statistical facts quoted by Mowbray show the high proportion of women doing voluntary work, and he points to the exploitative character of much of this work based on an extension of house-work skills. This is important to understand, but Mowbray neglects the fact that for a large proportion of these women - and some men - the only alternative would be the stifling isolation of the four walls of the home.

It is not a real alternative to suggest that such people would prefer to be exploited as wage workers. Surely there are many different ways people can contribute to services without playing a role that simply comforts the capitalists and without being in the workforce?

The prevalence of the consumerist ethos, with all needs, real or fancied, purchased on the market means that many services tend to be provided in such a way as to deny people control over their own lives. Thus part of the struggle against capitalist hegemony is the "community creating" movement.

The first example of a contradiction that Mowbray fails to exploit therefore is the contradiction that localist policies imposed from above, pretending to be based on community development, could be taken at their word, and workers demand that the promised opportunities for control over their lives be converted into a reality.

In the early post-war days, the incipient movement for rather crudely-conceived community recreation centres and other local improvements came to a standstill. This was not only due to the capitalists abandoning localism because they felt secure due to the operation of Keynesian economics (mentioned by Mowbray - and undoubtedly one element). There were other elements equally if not more important. Too many Australian-born working people were too busy buying or repairing their first-ever car, and building houses in the outer suburbs - and working overtime to pay for all this - to have time for local activities.

Also because the migrant workers moving into their houses in the older suburbs were insufficiently acclimatised to be integrated quickly into local activities. Also because cold-war retaliation of the late 1940's and early 1950's began with a selective frontal attack on the left, before any attack on the unions, in the sphere of school committees and child care, at least in Victoria where these activities had developed vigorously during the war, with strong participation by communists.(74)

In other words, abandonment of localism in the 1950's and 1960's came from workers because of their new conditions of life, and from anti-communism, and not so much because the capitalist State first pushed forward localism, and then withdrew that push, which is Mowbray's contention.

In the Whitlam government's era, as Mowbray mentions, "... the localist bandwagon was embodied... in the Australian Assistance Plan"(AAP)... "... part of a general expansion in government expenditure that encouraged more militant social action approaches... with the advent of austerity and the new right in various offices of power, localist policies have taken a different direction as well..."(75) (our emphasis). This was written in 1982. Had it been written in 1983, Mowbray could have added: "Now that both Federal and most State governments are labor, the possibility again arises for the same localist measures to encourage militant social approaches."!

But, except for this hint of "militant social action" under AAP - which, incidentally, hardly seems consistent with his general theme, since he describes AAP also as part of the "localist bandwagon" - he does not anywhere suggest that localism can be used by the working class to their own advantage.

Nor does Mowbray anywhere suggest the relative inability of socialists to take advantage of the proffered AAP resources to build and consolidate strong local activities, and sustain militant approaches for their extension during those years. Socialists should now strive to overcome their relative weakness in local political arenas and participate with various community groups to demand more resources for local government from the new Federal government.

Another connected point that Mowbray does not mention is that many of the new localist services are brand-new services previously unsupported by the State in any shape or form, so that all benefits won for administration on a local or community level are not necessarily a cheaper solution acceptable to the State as an austerity measure.

A second contradiction that Mowbray fails to mention is the advantage for the worker's cause of grass-root collectives as a method of organising. As indicated above, this is widely recognised in trade union circles where the training grounds of the job committee and job general meetings so obviously provide, not only the strength of the central organisation, but also the source for recruitment of union top leadership. Why there should be a different set of principles for human service organisation defies explanation.

There is only one passage in all the Mowbray articles we have listed with any mention of collectives, as far as we can recall. It is this: "Care of the disabled, young and aged, ought to be recognised as a collective task, not only for individual families, especially women... localized services should complement or extend, not supplant, collective care arrangements" (76).

Whilst we agree, in general, with this very general principle, it is not clear whether Mowbray envisages "the collective task" and the "collective care arrangements" as being centrally-based or regionally-based collectives, or whether he sees them as local. From the general context of his articles it seems he is unlikely to be referring to local collectives because he is opposed to devolution of service delivery at local government level or lower under prevailing conditions.

So we have the contradiction in relation to the training potentially provided by local collectives: Yes, looked at one way, it may to some extent divert the attention of the few politically active workers and users of local services. But no: that is not all. Looked at another way, this could result in a manyfold increase in those otherwise inactive people who become first socially and then politically active. The result of paying attention to the other side of the contradiction could be an increase of political pressure on State and Federal governments than from a population left relatively inactive and quiescent about local affairs.

A special word on the potential of women arising from this. Some militant socialist feminists hold any women's caring work in contempt and expect liberation to be achieved by women joining, in mass, the autonomous socialist women's movement. Our belief is that a small minority of more enlightened women may take this political leap; just as a small minority of both sexes manage to become active in a communist party. We also believe, however, that political awakening for big masses of people come from the political lessons they learn in the process of struggling to achieve their perceived felt needs.

Mowbray's attitude that women should not be saddled with caring work especially on an unpaid or underpaid basis is absolutely right as a policy goal. But he carries it to the point of denying an expansion of localised caring work on the ground that more women than now would be drawn into undervalued and unvalued work, and in greater numbers than men (77).

Where these remarks apply to Family Day Care schemes or the like, we would fully agree with him because these particular solutions leave the caring woman isolated still at the kitchen sink but burdened with more children. But for the same woman to step out of the home and, together with other women (both housewives and women who do paid work) become involved in the collective solution of a nearby neighbourhood house, with childcaring on a reciprocal basis is an entirely different matter, as indicated above.

It can mean a step towards practical liberation from their children for some part of the day, and possibly a step towards enlightenment about sexual liberation as they have discussions with other women who are further down the track of liberation. We believe that socialists and women's liberationists alike should be supporting these practical half-way steps of women's collectives around "neighbourhood houses" using the opportunities they have had for more advanced attitudes and actions to help their sisters who have not previously had these opportunities, but can now learn from their collective involvement.

Further, it should be observed that in the localities, it is not just in welfare caring that women predominate. They are very strongly represented, and often predominate, in many types of local urban action groups around anti-freeway struggles, squatting by the homeless, unwanted redevelopments, environment issues, unemployed campaigns, as well as in longer-established activities such as community-organised sports, cultural, arts & crafts, social efforts and school parent-involving events.

Such efforts, especially where they are based on collective decision making should not be condemned as unpaid self-oppression, or incorrectly categorised and satirised as merely middle class women having "fun", but encouraged as providing the groundwork on which can begin the process of political education.

The third aspect of contradiction that could have been explored by Mowbray is this: experience in European socialist countries is that serious difficulties have arisen because control over production and other facets of life has been far too rigid and too centralised. If socialism is to offer a better life, then both industrial and non-industrial activities need to be sufficiently localised for people to feel they can control them, and develop their self-worth in the process of developing their self-management.

We do not want in Australia, a sort of socialism that takes over national and multinational corporations with continued remote but very real control by new managers in different shoes dominating the economy and life of the people, except as a necessary brief transitional phenomenon.

In Australia, the socialists have far less historical excuse for making the mistake of over-centralisation - an institutional legacy already largely achieved by the corporations. To earn enough support even to attain socialism, socialists in Australia need to encourage local activities covering an expanding range of functions run by organisations of local working class people and their allies. Until masses of people feel sufficiently confident to run local enterprises of different sorts (including their human service needs) they will not feel confident enough to take over and run the metropolis and all its industries and services.

By presenting only the weaknesses that localisation policies might bring to the working class - and especially to women -

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- (14) Mowbray.M Contesting Local Government: Some British Strategies - School of Social Work, Univ. of NSW Feb. 1983.
- (15) Mowbray.M Militant Socialism and Poplarism in British Local Government. - School of Social Work, Univ. of NSW Feb. 1983.
- (16) Mowbray.M Volunteering for Nothing? The Costs of Volunteer Labour - "The Lamp" Vol. 40 no. 9, 1983.
- (17) Mowbray.M Restructuring Child Welfare: Deinstitutionalization and Austerity in the Department of Youth and Community Services - School of Social Work, Univ. of NSW March 1983.
- (18) Mowbray.M Fostering Integration: The Medicinal Properties of Localism - An Historical Perspective - to appear as part of a book soon to be published: "Community Work in a Multicultural Society" by R. Thorpe and J. Petruchinia.
(Note: We understand from the author that this work will contain numerous illustrations showing how localism and so-called participatory practices serve the needs of capital)

- (19) See (10)p.1
 (20) " (12)p.239
 (21) " (11)p.1 & (6) pp.7 & 29
 (22) " (10)p.11
 (23) " (10)p.1
 (24) " (16)
 (25) " (10)pp.2-5
 (26) " (4)p.53
 (27) " (6) or (7)
 (28) " (6)p.29
 (29) " (6)p.20
 (30) " (6)p.29
 (31) " (9)pp.255-260
 (32) " (9)pp.263,265
 (33) " (9)p.263
 (34) " (13)pp.16,12
 (35) " (17)p.11
 (36) " (10)p.41
 (37) " (10)p.4
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 (39) " (12)p.239
 (40) " (10)p.6
 (41) " (10)p.32

- (42) "Ripple"- Journal of Community Child Care.Examples of analysis:-
 Oct.'77 - Social Welfare Dept.
 Dec.'77 - Health Dept.
 July'78 - Local Government
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- (43) Inwald.S & McCaughey.W "Doing It Together" - Community Child Care 1981
- (44) Pinches.A A Growing Role for Councils - The Australian Municipal Journal Vol.63 No.963 Aug.1983
- (45) White.D et al Seeds for Change - Creatively Confronting the Energy Crisis - Conservation Council of Victoria Chaps 7 & 8 - 1978.Authors known as "the CUE group") = Conservation of Urban Energy. CUE group members associated with series of studies which used Seeds for Change as a basis,such as:
Nunawading Municipality as a Case Study 1979
Nunawading Energy Study 1982
Less Energy with More Enjoyment - in North and West Melbourne - North Melb.Assoc. Feb.1981
Energy Conservation Guidelines for Local Government - The Municipal Assoc. of Victoria & Graduate School of Environmental Science, Monash Univ. espec. pp 51-55,68-72 Jan.1983
Steps Towards a Better Melbourne: A Community View - Briefing notes for Ministers by joint Committee of representatives from CUE group, Train Travellers Assoc.,Community Child Care, & Energy Committee of Municipal Assoc. of Vic. and Town & Country Planning Assoc. - Sept 1983
- (46) See (11)pp.30,5
- (47) " (6)p.5
- (48) " (6)p.8
- (49) " (10)pp.21-25
- (50) " (4)p.54
- (51) " (9)p.256
- (52) " (9)p.265
- (53) Lenin.V.I - Left Wing Communism - An Infantile Disorder Chap.7 Martin Lawrence 1920
- (54) See (9)p,260
- (55) " (6)p.7
- (56) " (6)p.29
- (57) " (6)
- (58) " (6)p.14
- (59) " (6)pp.20-27
- (60) " (6)p.19
- (61) Lacey.G - The Dominant Car - Institute of Engineers - Aust.Conference on Metropolitan Transport 1975 (reproduced as Appendix 11 in Seeds for Change - See (45))
- (62) Brown.T, Crow.M & Sams.D Nunawading Energy Study - An Assessment of the Energy Implications of Applying the Seeds for Change Model - CUE group of the CCV (See (45) above) March 1982
- (63) See (6)p.29
- (64) Frankel.B Marxian Theories of the State - A Critique of Orthodoxy - Arena Publications Monograph no.3 1982.

which will likely be short-term. Mowbray overlooks the other side of the question that it can also bring long-term, long-needed benefits to the working class, and especially to women.

Our fourth and last illustration, already mentioned above, is that Mowbray nowhere mentions the new phenomenon of a contradictory nature: that there has been a growth in the internal contradictions within the State apparatus, the theoretical consequences of which have been explored at length by Boris Frankel (64). Perhaps Mowbray is so close to the growth of State sector radicalism (which was unthinkable until quite recently) that he has allowed these new conditions to be implied rather than explicitly stating them. His concern that community workers are being hoodwinked by the spray-on emotive words to create the impression that the State has become a reliable benefactor desiring the control of things that matter to be transferred to the people shows he must be addressing himself to the radical workers.

If so, such workers should not be discouraged by a one-sided message. Their radicalism can best be confirmed and turned in a socialist direction if they are helped not only to understand their ambivalent position (clarified thanks to Mowbray) but to combine with the users of the services to take the masking slogans at their face value and go as far as possible in converting them into a stern reality.

Before we finish Part 2, we answer the questions we raised at the beginning of this Part in this brief way (which will require no elaboration due to what has been discussed above):-

- * The struggle against the hegemony of the global corporations not only takes place simultaneously at local and central levels, but the local level is the special arena of microplanning alternatives without which the campaign at the central levels cannot succeed.
- * The involvement of the population at local levels in local politics is, in any case, a pre-condition for them to become politicised and convinced of the importance of central politics.
- * Where terms enshrining people's demands are taken by authorities and mis-used, the best tactic is to counter-attack in some way, using the term with a meaning that suits the working class.

PART 3.WHAT TO DO ? BUILD ON STRENGTHS

The aim of this article is to achieve the maximum unity of action of progressives, whether theoreticians or in the field.

It is helpful to see unity at three levels:-

- (a) Unity of long-term aims (goals)
- (b) Unity of methods and directions towards those goals (strategy)
- (c) Unity of short-term action to implement the strategy (tactics)

We believe that consideration of these different levels - all of them necessary for any sustained progressive movement - can help remove some misunderstandings that would otherwise impair unity. Where differences appear, it is better to look for the acceptable positive contributions made by the contestants, and to build on the strength of each, rather than leaving a critique stand as something potentially divisive.

Goals.

Some - like ourselves, and, it would seem, Mowbray - believe that socially useful and ecologically tolerable commodities and services can only emerge as a predominant mode of production affecting the lives of most of the population under a socialist system.

We believe this because we think that capitalism in its present monopoly form (78), despite all its massed accumulation of capital necessarily relies on privatism of lifestyles and disregard for the rate of resource depletion in order to sustain its markets.

Other progressives believe that the long-term goals can be achieved as reforms under capitalism.

To enable socialists and non-socialists to work together, we suggest, the first key thing is consensus around broad long-term goals. Let us leave aside for history to decide whether capitalism can or cannot be sufficiently reformed to achieve the consensus goals. In the meantime, let us all - including the socialists - make demands on the present system that it adopt such goals.

The basis for such a consensus really rests on a critique of the effects of the dominant sectors of present-day capital. There must be a determination to reject the excessive mobility, the fashion-changing and other resource-wasteful styles imposed on people by the all-pervading aggressive marketing of the giant corporations. This current system leaves the State to provide the unprofitable human services in a form that is,

typically, fragmented, standardised and niggardly.

As an alternative, we suggest, tentatively, a formulation of which some of the main features might run like this:-

The welfare, sporting, recreational and social needs of a person to be met by expanding his or her opportunities to be collectively involved in these activities and in their management. To ensure the maximum degree of conviviality and conservation of energy, such involvement and management to be as local, as integrated and as universally-available as is practical, and adequately resourced from public funds. (These underlined words we will call the "tentative consensus").

By the words "as local ... as is practical", we mean that where viable supportive activities can be organised on a walking-distance "neighbourhood" catchment basis, then that should be done rather than with wider catchments that would invite car access. More specialised activities might require a much wider catchment of a suburban shopping centre, or even wider; but all such activities requiring a wider-than-walking catchment should be clustered and served by public transport from where people live. (45).

(Note: a more detailed statement of these goals was adopted by a Melbourne seminar on energy conservation in 1980, and is contained in Appendix 1).

In putting the emphasis on local control, it is not to be taken that democratic control or political effort is not also desirable at higher levels, but that democracy at these levels can be more effective and more responsive to the extent that it is underpinned by the widest self-management networks that can arouse social, and then political, interest for those people who are otherwise politically quiescent.

Now it might be objected that the proposed tentative consensus appears to be flatly inconsistent with Mowbray's opposition to localistic effort.

Not so, we suggest. Mowbray's main concern appears to be not with local effort as such so much as with misplaced local effort arising from localistic notions. That is, notions painting a rosy and misleadingly romantic and unrealisable picture of the potential of local control, especially when these notions are linked with concepts of community development and the like.

But this concern of Mowbray - however right or however wrong - is to do with the current practices of governments and agencies in "spraying on" words like "community" to legitimate continued central control over deteriorating institutions and practices at a cheaper cost. That is, it is really to do with tactics the way we have defined it - in this case the tactics of the establishment in manoeuvring to uphold the status quo.

If we shift the whole set of relationships from the current tactics of the establishment to the future goals of the

progressive movement, we would hope that Mowbray might agree with the tentative consensus or some fairly similar formulation. Like Mowbray, we oppose tactical misuse of concepts borrowed from the tentative consensus (or like formulation) to legitimate the status quo. But such a rejection of humbug should not be allowed to inhibit the progressive movement from making an adequate formulation of goals based on a set of better and alternative values.

If the phrase "creating community" has come to be identified with the values contained in the tentative consensus by a significant section of the progressive movement, such as Community Child Care in Victoria, and if it is seen as a long-term aim and not a legitimatising device for papering over bad old practices, we hope that that should not become a point of divisiveness amongst progressives.

Others may express the same broad concepts with other words and phrases, but it is important we do not attack each other, and sow confusion as to practical tasks simply on the basis of different connotations given to particular words. Unity cannot go far without some agreement on long-term goals and such goals must be expressed in words. We should not abandon our own ways of describing our goals because the establishment twists their meaning.

Strategy

The second key thing to enable a unified effort to achieve a long-term consensus goal is for unity on broad strategy. We mean by that, agreement as to the general direction to be taken, the forces to be mobilised and the deployment of those forces.

We want to mention three aspects: (1) integration of policies, (2) intervention in practical politics and (3) the classes of people the progressives should be aiming to unite. Mainly we want to deal with the third subject.

(1) integration of policies.

Implied in the word "integrated" in the tentative consensus is the need for comprehensive forward planning integrating social and physical planning. This includes the integration of social, economic, transport, housing, land-use, environmental, and energy planning, interwoven into a workable alternative scheme. This integration of planning, suitably phased, must begin now, for in no other way can the predominance of the giant corporation's market be challenged and the stage set to start on an alternative. (79).

(2) intervention in practical politics.

It must be part of the strategy of progressives to find some way (it will be different for different individuals or organisations) to intervene in practical politics to try to have the course set towards the consensus goals.

Those who expect too much to happen too soon (i.e. who expect

to find, in capitalism, a system that quickly complies with peoples' aspirations for a human and rewarding life) are likely to become so quickly disillusioned that they abandon hope and effort. In this respect, we approve that aspect of Mowbray's intent to warn progressives about the illusions that promise but cannot deliver.

At the other extreme are ultra-left people who only offer trenchant criticism of the establishment, but offer no way to practically intervene in the situation (i.e. who hope for socialism to somehow arrive without the mass support of those who, from their own experiences, have learnt what they are up against and how to tackle it).

Rather than blow hot, blow cold attitudes or stand-off attitudes, we argue for a here-and-now continuing effort by all concerned to engage in the battle to have the goals implemented, phase by phase, and in an integrated way.

(3) classes to be united.

What big groups in the population are potentially likely to intervene from their own experiences? More pointedly: is it true that those who are called "middle class" (and who are typically, women) have an unfortunate effect in community action groups because they tend to take over from "working class" elements (if any)? Our estimate is that most of the people called "middle class" (they may be middle income) are actually working class - whitecollar, technical or professional - and have a very important positive role to play. Ability to analyse and articulate on behalf of their collectives is a very precious offering; just as is the common sense and solidarity found as characteristics of the industrial workers involved.

Source of much of the confusion is different theories of society between Marxists and many sociologists, journalists etc. As Lois Bryson - co-author with Martin Mowbray of the "spray-on" article (9) pointed out years ago that sociologists rely on ratings of occupational prestige to give a "hierarchical order" which is generally called a "status" approach, as distinct from a Marxist class approach. (80).

We would add that the "status" approach tends to be based on subjective factors, as to how particular groups perceive their own place in society, it tends to be coupled with pluralist theories which conceive society as determined by the sum total push-and-pull of various status groups to obtain a proportion of power for themselves. As against this, the Marxist approach, concerned with changing society, looks for broader stratification based on relationship to the means of production. This is an Objective criteria, although the extent to which various classes become conscious of their own class is, of course, an all-important subjective element for significant political action.

Without pursuing these theoretical aspects further here, we would recall the analysis of the Australian working class

set out above, showing 7 segments (of which industrial workers are only one), and 4 other groups "whose interests would be served by ending capitalist rule", which we will call "allies" of the working class. We would also recall that this same analysis acknowledges that there are numerous differences even within each component of the working class, even within each job.

We suggest, therefore, that the way forward for a united approach is to use the "status" categories, wherever possible, as sub-stratifications within the various 7 class divisions and/or within the 4 divisions of allies. If there are differences as to just where the line separating "working class" from its "allies" should be drawn, or the "status" categories overspill the 11 categories, let us not spend too much time arguing about that. We propose, in a word, that all those who fall within the 11 categories of people labelled either "working class" or "allies", or any set of "status" that lie within this very broad ambit, should be regarded, potentially, as the mass basis for the progressive movement around human services and related urban matters.

If this proposal is adopted, the word "middle class" should be used very cautiously when applied to any in the 4 categories of allies; and not at all when applied to the 7 categories of "working class". By all means use the word "middle income" (if that is what is meant - as it usually is) remembering that such a term embraces big sections of skilled workers in industry, as well as experienced whitecollar workers and tertiary-trained professional workers.

Let us not, however, import artificial divisions by calling people middle class who own no means of production, simply because they have had a tertiary education, or even because, like many sectors of the industrial working class, they have absorbed and retain many of the notions from the prevailing capitalist values that surround them. All sectors of the working class, and their allies, have, potentially, mutually reciprocal parts to play. It should be our job to help unite them; not divide them.

Tactics.

From year to year, month to month, and day to day, tactics change. It is not our intention to discuss such changing scenes except to make one suggestion.

The Australian union movement is trying to break out of its former narrow wages, hours and job-condition framework to which employers have always tried to constrain it. It is talking of a "social wage" which is to include a full range of conditions affecting the workforce. Because of the traditions of the union movement, this tends to focus on standards measurable in monetary terms like wages and hours or such as prices, taxation, superannuation, pensions, compensation.

The progressive movement for human services needs to try to have the unions expand this idea to include housing, transport, leisure facilities, health and human services, many of which

spheres are qualitative in character, and not easily to be measured.

What is required is not for the unions to set up their own health clinics, childcare, housing, recreation projects or transport, but, in association with community endeavours in these and allied fields, to formulate community demands for the authorities to do so.

If it is true that there is a contradiction, recognised by Mowbray, in the effects of localism, some aspects of which can simultaneously advantage and disadvantage the working class, it is equally true that localism also has contradictory effects within the capitalist class. The benefit of continued social control by seeming to supply local services that keep the working people satisfied is continually and simultaneously threatening to give rise to unwanted side effects of costing too much and/or accustoming workers to dangerous ideas of self-management.

Those who have learnt well from Mowbray how to detect spurious but soothing myths coming from the State, need to study, equally, how to exploit the contradictions of the situations against the global corporations.

Union shop committees or office committees, although completely working class in composition are often hampered by bourgeois ideas. Neighbourhood houses and urban action groups, although most of them are mainly composed of working class people, are also often hampered by bourgeois ideas.

But both sets of grass-roots organisation, however frail, should be cherished by socialists. Provided they begin to take action, their experience will lead them to shed many of their bourgeois ideas and confront the all-pervading hegemony of the global corporations with a projected urban life that is far superior and is already economically attainable. All conditions are ripe for such a transformation - all bar the counter-hegemonic programs, and the political struggle !

- (65) See (6)p.263
 (66) " (6)p.258
 (67) " (2)p.323
 (68) Jones.B Sleepers,Wake! - Technology and the Future of Work pp 51 and 202-209 Oxford Univ.Press 1982
 (69) Gorz.A Farewell to the Working Class : An Essay in Post-Industrial Socialism - Pluto Press 1982
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 (70) Towards Socialism in Australia - Program of the Communist Party of Australia. Adopted 1979 pp.27-28
 (71) See (13)pp.15-17
 (72) " (17)
 (73) The Role of Voluntary Helpers - Appendix 4 of a Report on Childrens Services in the Melbourne Municipality - published by the Central Childrens Policy Committee for the Melbourne City Council Community Consultation on Children's Services Oct.1980
 (74) Crow.R Child Care and the People's Front Against Fascism - article in "Join Hands"- Communist Party of Australia Winter/Spring 1983 iwsue
 (75) See (10)p.4
 (76) " (13)p.16
 (77) " (13)p.16
 (78) Crough.G & Wheelwright.T Australia: A Client State - Penguin Books 1982.
 (79) Steps Towards a Better Melbourne - See ref (45) above.
 (80) Bryson.L & Thompson.F An Australian Newtown - Appendix 1 "The Concept of Social Class" pp.313-317 - Penguin 1972.

COMMUNITY ENERGY NETWORK - LOCAL PLANS GROUP

PRINCIPLES AGREED AT THE "BETTER LIVING WITH LESS ENERGY" SEMINAR 22/3/80

The measures outlined below are goals set within the general objective of an environment that can be sustained and for a non-nuclear world. This depends on reducing the high rate of consumption of non-renewable resources. In turn, this requires industry to be adapted to make only goods and services that are socially useful, and which require less energy in their manufacture and use. This course has the added advantage of providing more jobs. What is also required is a change in community structure according to the principles set out below, emphasising social interaction and ready access to needed services and alternative lower-energy technologies. This can lessen dependence on car transport and other high-technologies, as well as encouraging a much more attractive life style.

TO IMPROVE SOCIAL LIFE AT THE SAME TIME AS CONSERVING ENERGY . . .

Physical design to be on the "Cluster-and-Connect" Principle

Meaning that people-intensive activities should be *clustered* together in a hierarchy of centres — the range of functions of which would vary depending on the catchment necessary to sustain them — such centres to be *connected* by public transport to provide ready access as locally as possible.

Applying these principles to Melbourne conditions:

1. Melbourne's car-dependant outward sprawl to be discontinued.
2. Future urban growth to be designed to favour walking, cycling and electric public transport.
3. Outward growth and redevelopment growth to be re-directed into local growth centres around selected railway stations.
4. A few of these local growth centres to be somewhat larger (call them "district centres") and district centres on different rail lines to be connected by express bus.
5. The local or district centres to be connected by local shuttle bus (or trams, where appropriate, in inner and middle suburbs) to neighbourhood centres.
6. Neighbourhood centres at bus stops or tram stops to be in walking distance of the homes they serve.
7. Pleasant indoor/outdoor spaces and places to be provided at all such local centres designed to establish "neutral ground" (not too public nor too private) that can give opportunities for social mixing in non-commercial surroundings.

Social/employment emphasis to be on "Creating-Local-Community" Principles

Meaning to establish or strengthen interdependence among individuals and groups around local activities — encouraging personal involvement and community control so that people identify strongly with local groupings and feel they "belong" locally.

Applying these principles to Melbourne conditions:

1. Existing services (childcare, health, welfare, education) to be linked, extended and changed away from single-purpose, institutionalised services bestowed by professionals on passive consumers towards an emphasis on active personal involvement by individuals and groups, helped by professionals, and with services available in a more integrated way.
2. Opportunities to be created for individuals and groups to be personally involved in local low-energy crafts, games, sports, culture and recreation largely now the preserve of the more affluent or the more educated.
3. Supportive networks to be encouraged amongst neighbours through the neighbourhood houses, which might also serve as a base for other low-energy efforts such as co-operative gardening, food purchases and adapting homes to conserve energy.
4. A wide range of more specialist activities (health, welfare, education, sport games, crafts, culture and recreation) to be available at all local and district centres, as well as an expanded range of industrial, commercial, retail and entertainment business.
5. A dramatic increase in job opportunities to be created in connection with neighbourhood, local and district centres for people with skills to assist others to "create community" by being brought together around either supportive or specialist activities, as well as more local jobs due to an expansion of local businesses.
6. Control of all community services and activities, including participation in redesigning facilities, to be vested in those who use them and in those who are employed to make them possible.

REFERENCES(1) Writings by Martin Mowbray

Martin Mowbray B.S.W (NSW) M.Soc.Stud.(Syd), lecturer, School of Social Work, University of New South Wales, Kensington 2083 has written the following 16 items (numbered (2) to (17) below) which were examined for this paper. For the convenience of readers seeking sources, wherever there are two or more versions of papers containing similar or overlapping material, we have bracketed them together and supplied an explanatory note. Otherwise the items appear in approximate chronological order. Note that ref. no (9) is an article written jointly by Lois Bryson and Martin Mowbray. Items 3,5,14,15 are on subjects lying somewhat outside the area of our paper, and together with item 18 (not yet published) are not commented on in our text.

(2) Mowbray.M Book review of "Seeds for Change: Creatively confronting the energy crisis" - Australian Journal of Social Issues Nov.1979

(3) Mowbray.M Distributive Bargaining for Community Organisations: Lessons from Industrial Relations - Australian Social Work Vol.33 No.3 Sept.1980.

(4) Mowbray.M Non-government Welfare: State Roles of the Councils of Social Service - The Aust. & NZ Journal of Sociology Vol.16 No.3 Nov.1980

(5) Mowbray.M The Role of the Media - The Communications Game: A Team Approach - Proceedings of 7th. Annual Conference, Local Government Planners Association of NSW Nov.1981.

{ (6) Mowbray.M Capitalism, Socialism and Local Government Rates and Fiscal Welfare - School of Social Work, Univ. of NSW June 1981

{ (7) Mowbray.M Rates, Roads, Rubbish & Redistribution: The Politics of Local Taxation - The Journal of Australian Political Economy 11 Jan 1982.
(Note: Item (6) has an introduction that does not appear in item (7). Apart from this, item (7) is more polished but substantially the same version as item (6)).

(8) Mowbray.M A New Orthodoxy: All-Purpose Radicalism - Guest commentator for editorial - Australian Social Work Vol.34 No.2 June 1981.

(9) Mowbray.M & Bryson.L "Community": The Spray-on Solution - Aust. Journal of Social Issues Vol.16 No.4, 1981.

{ (10) Mowbray.M Localism and Austerity - Sociological Assoc. of Aust & NZ Conference Aug.1982

{ (11) Mowbray.M Localism and Austerity: Community Welfare and State Policy - NSW Social Welfare Workers Union Dec.1982

{ (12) Mowbray.M Localism and Austerity: The Political Economy of Community Welfare Services - Community Development Journal Vol.18 No.3 1983.

{ (13) Mowbray.M Localist Policy - Problems and Directions - Seminar on Localism, Victorian Council of Social Service and the Children's Welfare Association - May 1983

(Notes: Items (10) and (11) are practically identical - item (11) being slightly more polished and with a few passages not contained in item (10). Item (12) written after the defeat of the Fraser government is a shortened version of (11) but with a section "Australian Welfare Politics" comparing Fraser and Hawke governments. Item (13) has substantial passages repeating item (11) but with much new material on recent political party attitudes and "living with localism" tips.)

- (14) Mowbray.M Contesting Local Government: Some British Strategies - School of Social Work, Univ. of NSW Feb. 1983.
- (15) Mowbray.M Militant Socialism and Poplarism in British Local Government. - School of Social Work, Univ. of NSW Feb. 1983.
- (16) Mowbray.M Volunteering for Nothing? The Costs of Volunteer Labour - "The Lamp" Vol. 40 no. 9, 1983.
- (17) Mowbray.M Restructuring Child Welfare: Deinstitutionalization and Austerity in the Department of Youth and Community Services - School of Social Work, Univ. of NSW March 1983.
- (18) Mowbray.M Fostering Integration: The Medicinal Properties of Localism - An Historical Perspective - to appear as part of a book soon to be published: "Community Work in a Multicultural Society" by R. Thorpe and J. Petruchinia.
(Note: We understand from the author that this work will contain numerous illustrations showing how localism and so-called participatory practices serve the needs of capital)

- (19) See (10)p. 1
 (20) " (12)p. 239
 (21) " (11)p. 1 & (6) pp. 7 & 29
 (22) " (10)p. 11
 (23) " (10)p. 1
 (24) " (16)
 (25) " (10)pp. 2-5
 (26) " (4)p. 53
 (27) " (6) or (7)
 (28) " (6)p. 29
 (29) " (6)p. 20
 (30) " (6)p. 29
 (31) " (9)pp. 255-260
 (32) " (9)pp. 263, 265
 (33) " (9)p. 263
 (34) " (13)pp. 16, 12
 (35) " (17)p. 11
 (36) " (10)p. 41
 (37) " (10)p. 4
 (38) " (13)p. 2
 (39) " (12)p. 239
 (40) " (10)p. 6
 (41) " (10)p. 32

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