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MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

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ECOSO EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER

2/1, December 1988

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Enclosures

DATE, Documents Available Through Ecoso a project for making documents in Crow files available to the radical ecology movement.

Ecoso Exchange Guidelines, based on the Ecoso 1973 Guidelines plus the 1985 "Make Melbourne Marvellous" Socialist Values.

Subscription Form for Newsletter and information about newsletter.

The Ecoso Exchange Story So Far

Up to the mid-1960s Maurie Crow, who, since the early 1940s, had been mainly concentrating on white collar union organisations, turned his attention to campaigns around living standards beyond the work place.

He began to help to bring together some municipal councillors, planners, architects, trade unionist, social worker academics and others to discuss some of the newly emerging urban issues and how the local community movements could form links with the trade union movement.

The group was called the Town Planning Research Group. To keep in touch with each other the group produced a newsletter, aptly called "Irregular" (the name is interesting in that it was meant to imply that people could take part when and how they liked, that there was no obligatory hierarchical structure, this was before the word collective was popularised).

The meetings of the Town Planning Research Group (TRG) were, however, held very regularly and included a little conviviality. The TRG was merely a group to exchange ideas but through the discussions and the newsletter it was able to help initiate several new types of actions, for example the Living Standards Convention in the late 1960s in Melbourne which brought together Trade Unionists and community activists to discuss issues such as public transport, child care, social welfare.

Gradually the little newsheet "Irregular" built up quite a wide readership in Melbourne and in 1972 the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA Victorian Branch) presented Ruth and Maurie Crow one of the first Robin Boyd Awards for their "notable contribution to the literature of town planning" and in the presentation ceremony displayed copies of "Irregular" as an example of this.

The following year the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) also recognised the contribution Ruth and Maurie were making to the urban movement by choosing them for the prestigious Barrett Medal. The medal is not only presented to Victorians, others who have received it are Prof. Dennis Winston, Prof Hugh Stretton. Ruth is the only woman to have received this recognition.

The choice by the RAIA and the TCPA was not based only on "Irregular" as Maurie's contribution to the movements around freeway plans urban renewal and other such issues, and Ruth's pioneering work around community child care were also beginning to be recognised.

By this time the inspiring example of the Sydney Green Bans lifted sights of the whole urban issues movements throughout Australia. At the same time there was a growing consciousness about the finite nature of the world's natural resources. In addition the idea of "collectives" and "exchanges" were just beginning to provide new forms through which people could form creative relationships.

To incorporate these changes the TRG decided to become "Ecoso Exchange", and worked out its guidelines (see this Newsletter).

In February 1973 "Irregular No 50" became "Ecoso Exchange No 1". Gradually Ecoso Exchange began to acquire readers from all over Australia. Regular meetings were continuing in Melbourne and in 1974 proposals were made to hold a national Radical Ecology Conference (see DATE in this Newsletter). Ecoso Exchange continued to meet and to publish its newsletter until 1979 when for various reasons the group ceased to exist.

Ecoso Exchange Newsletter is Now Being Revived

It is not intended to revive the meetings of Ecoso Exchange as there is now quite a number of groups filling the role that the old TGR played. It is proposed that an ECOSO EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER, aimed at being avidly left on urban issues, seeks a readership throughout Australia for the following main reasons :-

- 1) To provide information... Australia-wide ...to the various groups and individuals in the ecology (sustainable society) movements.
- 2) To encourage the development of links between the trade union movement and the ecology movement.
- 3) To help unite the progressive political movements through the development of a New Party of the Left.
- 4) To find common ground on some issues between the left political parties and the newly emerging movements such as the Rainbow Alliance.
- 5) To make documents available to people in the radical ecology movement through the DATE Collection (see this Newsletter).

Globalisation of Trade and Planning Education

The Royal Australian Planning Institute's twenty first conference was held in Melbourne in August 1988. Its theme was "Planning and Developing Australia". The key-note speaker was Professor Gordon Clark from Pittsburgh, U.S.A. (Center for Labor Studies and Center for Economic Development School of Urban and Public Affairs, Carnegie Mellon University).

He described the rapid changes taking place in the 1980s and the localised character of economic restructuring and drew out from this discussion some implications for planning education.

The following quotes from his printed speech will indicate that his main message was how planning could serve the needs of the multinationals, which he called "multilaterals".

From the section on "Flexibility as a Strategy" :-

"In the United States, flexibility has been considered to be a private responsibility."

"Local history of labor-management relations are the terms of competition" (ie. between communities for jobs)

"....re-allocation of jobs between communities on the basis of community flexibility (worker loyalty)."

"....there are numerous instances of corporations restructuring their production systems according to relative loyalty to the company and to enhanced labor productivity.....these kinds of communities have become favored destinations for flexible techniques."

From the section on "Lessons for Planning Practice" :-

"In a political sense, to make places desirable to corporate strategists may require building a political constituency for local economic flexibility, and in the economic sense, local planners may have to design economic packages that will sell labor productivity and flexibility with respect to technology and innovation to retain capital and attract the successful elements of corporate restructuring."

"As part of planners' role in fostering the political and economic conditions for flexibility, planners may have to become skilled at brokering between local interests and corporate interests."

Corporations increasingly use consultants for political screening of communities (leadership, labor relations and community cohesion)."

From the section on "Lessons for Planning Education" :-

"The profession as a whole confronts the challenge of training its new colleagues for the global economy."

"Local economic restructuring is tied to corporate actions which have often an international context."

"We need to train planners to be economic analysts.... It is no accident that management consultants are becoming more important to local government - business schools train MBA students to make deals on the basis of good economic analysis. This is precisely the kind of education planners need; they ought to be skilled at accounting, finance and labor-management skills."

"Planners have to know how to build political coalitions."

"It should be obvious that planners need a better education in labor-management relations. Otherwise, they will remain oblivious of the vital variables that corporations now use to screen localities as possible location sites."

In the section on Conclusions :-

"Corporations are scouring the landscape for site of production that enhance global competitiveness."

"We might ask, how does the present government (and opposition parties) conceptualizes the style and role of Australian labor relations in relation to the imperatives of production flexibility."

"In western economies with long traditions of decentralised industrial decision making and ideologies that counter tendencies of centralised or strategic national planning, corporate decision making tends to by pass the national political arena in favor of local deals that have limited geographic impacts."

Notes Taken During Professor Clark's Speech

How to plan (whole cities, houses, transport, services and so on) for a multilateral economy so that the work force in Australia would not object to bosses from Japan or America or some other country... not only is technology multilateral but also the skilled workforce" An impression gained at this stage of his speech was that he was talking about planning whole new urban developments.

If planners don't "get with it" and study economics then thier jobs will be taken over by accountants or some other professional...the work force is very competitive.

Sir Ninian Stephens and Senator Richardson at Opening of conference.

To their credit, at the opening of the conference, Senator Richardson, referred to the work of the Commission for the Future and the concerns about global climate change, and the Governor, Sir Ninian Stephens raised a number of social planning issues.

Note :- Prof Clark made no reference to the finite nature of the world's natural resources, nor to any social issues.

(1988 Royal Australian Planning Institute conference papers are available for browsing through DATE...see elsewhere in this newsletter).

Ideas on Sustainable Societies

Ideas on sustainable societies have been discussed since the early 1970s, but each new round of discussion brings in new ideas and on some occasions new types of movements emerge from these discussions.

A new wave of interest has emerged with concern about the possible climate changes due to the greenhouse effect.

In this section of Ecoso Exchange we will present some information about some current discussions on sustainable societies.

Here are :-

- 1) An extract from the Rainbow Alliance Newsletter, and a brief report on a recent Rainbow Alliance Seminar.
- 2) An extract from the New Left Party National bulletin and a brief report on the CPA Tribute to Maurie Crow Seminar
- 3) An extract from a speech by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne to the Greenhouse 88 Conference in Melbourne, some ideas about the Greenhouse 88 Conference from a participant.

1) The Rainbow Alliance (Newsletter No 4 Vol 1) included an article by Drew Hutton (Queensland) entitled "Building Sustainable Cities Through Community Action". Here are some extracts from this very thoughtful statement :-

"Some of the problems of cities can be addressed within the current planning parameters. Many cannot and the solutions to these problems can be addressed only by conceding the need for a radical transformation in values and social structures. On present trends our cities are not sustainable."

.....
 "A new radical vision of the city is needed to give meaning to community action around urban issues. Our programme needs to be visionary, to have a clear commitment to social justice, participatory democracy and ecological balance, to emphasize the importance of maintaining and building on people's concern for viable communities, and it must have clear transitional steps."

.....
 "The main weaknesses in action groups set up to address urban issues are in the lack of organising or promotional skills among their members and a failure to see them as anything more than "single issues".

.....
 "Our proposed solution to an obnoxious freeway development, for example, should probably not be to put it somewhere else, but instead, to open up public transport, cycling, and land-use alternatives. Our long term solution to a seriously polluting industry might be to question the validity of such an industry in an ecologically sustainable society."

In the same issue of Rainbow Alliance Newsletter (Vol 1 No 4) Drew Hutton has another article entitled "Getting Started on An Urban Issue" in which he deals with the practical details of building a coalition around the issue of the storage of dangerous chemicals in Brisbane.

At the end of November 1988 the Rainbow Alliance in Melbourne held a very well attended seminar called "The Dreams of the Seventies and the Realities of the Eighties".

The theme speakers paid tribute to the work that was carried out in Victoria by such groups as the Conservation of Urban Energy Group (of the Conservation Council of Victoria) and the Environmentalists for Full Employment (of the Australian Conservation Foundation).

The discussion raised a variety of ideas. It tended to be centred on the need to give more attention to spiritual, personal relationships (for example the importance of shared parenting); the need to develop an economic analysis and the need to examine political institutions.

The Melbourne Rainbow Alliance will be holding several other seminars on Sustainable Societies during the early part of 1989 in a build up to the national launching of the Rainbow Alliance.

2) The New Left Party National Bulletin (Vol 3 No 3) has stated that one of its aims is "ecological balance - ending the devastation of the natural world and understanding our place as part of it."

In the section on "What We Stand For" there is a statement on "An Environmentally Sustainable Society". Here it is :-

"As the 'earth strikes back' after decades of environmental abuse, it is our collective responsibility to work to correct this dangerous imbalance between human society and the natural environment. This will mean conserving and enhancing natural environments and safeguarding endangered species and building a livable urban environment."

"It means commitment to preserving the planet's diverse ecology and species, which requires rethinking our relationship to other life forms and the place of human society in the natural order. And it requires a commitment to environmentally sustainable economic development and rejection of 'growth for growth's sake', and the rush for maximum profits and narrow economic efficiency at any cost."

In July this year the Communist Party of Australia (one of the organisations campaigning for a New Left Party) held a seminar on urban planning as a 'Tribute to Maurie Crow' (see elsewhere in this Newsletter about Maurie's contribution to the radical ecology movement).

The platform speakers based their contributions on the Socialist Values in "Make Melbourne Marvellous" (see "Value Judgements for Ecoso Exchange" in this Newsletter).

The four speakers dealt with four aspects of urban planning :- the trade unions and workplace, local government, women and energy conservation.

A tape of the Tribute is available from Ecoso Exchange (see DATE page of this Newsletter).

3) The Greenhouse 88 Seminar was launched, early in November, with a nationwide TV hook-up of the speeches and entertainment at the main conference which was held in Melbourne, simultaneously seminars were held in other cities throughout Australia. The Melbourne seminar was part of a national project convened by the CSIRO and the Australian Commission for the Future. It was attended by about 500 people.

A Statement by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne at Greenhouse 88 Health Forum (early November 1988) presented a scenario based on the "cluster and connect" ideas that have been popularised through the book "Seeds for Change" (see DATE page in this Newsletter).

Here are some extracts from an Age article about the Lord Mayor's statement :-

"Melbourne must restrain its sprawl or it will fail to cope with the warming of the planet.....the key areas of preparing a city to deal with climate change were in land-use and transport.

.....
 "Melbourne's urban sprawl and extra energy consumed in buildings and transport are disastrous and the main preoccupation of Council's planning efforts.....This urban sprawl consumed enormous amount of extra resources in energy and cash and was luxury Australia cannot afford."

.....
 "A healthy city would have well designed communities linked to each other and a business and retailing heart by efficient public transport."

The Lord Mayor is a member of the North Melbourne Association which has produced community reports such as "Less Energy and More Enjoyment in North and West Melbourne" (see DATE page of this Newsletter).

Matters of Concern at Greenhouse 88....I) The Nuclear Option

At the opening session Senator Richardson proposed that the nuclear option might have to be re-examined to counter the greenhouse effect.

A Draft Conference Statement and Proposed Actions were discussed at the final forum. One of the "proposed actions" stated :-

"Explore the nuclear option : There is some support for further effort to determine whether the persistent problems of operating safety, cost over-runs, nuclear weapons proliferation and radioactive waste could be solved to allow nuclear power to play a role in reducing the emission of greenhouse gases."

This option was hotly debated and finally slightly amended to :-
 "Safety, cost over-runs etc mean that nuclear power is not an option for reducing greenhouse" (this statement is from notes taken at the forum, not an official statement from Commission for the Future).

Matters of Concern2) Men as Main Platform Speakers

Although the participants consisted of about an equal number of men and women there was a very noticeable in-balance when it came to the speakers, especially the workshop speakers. For example :-

Workshop 1 (Healthy City) 4 women and 6 men.
 Workshop 2 (Energy and Manufacturing) 1 woman and 14 men
 Workshop 3 (Land, Water Habitat) 1 woman and 14 men
 Workshop 4 (Coastal Management) 1 woman and 14 men
 Workshop 5 (International Perspectives) 1 woman and 15 men
 Workshop 6 (Research) No women at all
 Workshop 7 (Education) difficult to estimate as this was organised around groups presenting material, for example students from Ivanhoe Girls Grammar, Brunswick East High School and Banyule High School. This workshop was jointly organised by a man and woman. Hat's off to this workshop !

At the forums there were about as many women speakers from the floor as there were men, but men dominated on the platforms.

Matters of Concern.....3) Trade Unions40 Third World

Two other matters of concern raised, strongly, in the final forum were the lack of any voice from Trade Unions (no speakers at forums or workshops were described as being from the union movement); and the need to give more consideration to our responsibilities in the Third World,

Metropolis '90

The third World Congress of the World Association of the Major Metropolises will be held in Melbourne from the 15th to the 19th of October 1990.

The Victorian Ministry of Planning and Environment has already sent out a call for papers.

Subjects to be discussed include :- the economy, transport, environment, population growth in developing countries, administrative organisation of the major metropolises, major hazards in metropolitan areas, housing, Australian metropolitan development.

It may be possible to plan ahead for this date and to arrange a number of "happenings" or alternative conferences; for example around cities for peace, cities for health, cities for women, cities for a sustainable society.

We already have nuclear free cities and there is already a tradition for holding alternative conferences, for example at the World Conference of Women and at the World Habitat Conference.

The United Nations World Health Organisation (WHO) already has a Healthy Cities Project "aimed at developing co-ordinated action across sectors at a city level to develop strategies for health promotion and illness prevention."

Canberra, Wollongong and Noarlunga are the Australian cities proposed for a pilot scheme. How is the project progressing? How can the new types of health organisation participate in such initiatives? Can other cities also aim to be "healthy cities"?

If you have any ideas on this please write to Ecoso Exchange so we can begin to spread the idea.

Nightmares or Dreams of the Future

A Multifunction Polis ! How ? When ? Where ? and WHY ?

The Japanese Government proposed last year that a Multifunction Polis should be built in Australia. It would be the world's first complex to link high high-technology industries and services and advanced educational and leisure facilities.

"Professor Yencken (Melbourne University Faculty of Architecture and Planning) has brought the University a research consultancy for a proposed new city to be jointly sponsored by the Japanese and Australian Governments which could act as a model for the 21st century settlements and attract people from all around the world for research recreational and learning experiences. The research project will take into account the lessons learnt from other new towns and cities, particularly those that have been built around new technologies."

(from Melbourne University Gazette, Winter 1988)

"Australia should make the proposal to build a futuristic international complex...the Multifunction Polis....part of a much broader debate on the country's future, the chief executive of the CSIRO, Dr Keith Broadman, said yesterday....."

"The CSIRO believed Australians should not turn their backs on the proposal. They should do all they could do to ensure that it was developed to their advantage."

(Melbourne Age 24/11/'88)

A Very Fast Train ! Melbourne-Canberra-Sydney in 3 hours !

"The VFT (very fast train) project, which is the subject of a \$19 million feasibility study may just be the answer. The sleek new service is designed to start operating in 1995. It is expected to make 30 trips a day and carry 400 passengers at a time."

(from Melbourne Age editorial 12/9/'88).

"Any doubts about the viability of the project should be swept aside by a look at the calibre of the hard-headed financially-successful joint venturers."...."There's BHP our biggest enterprise, Elders IXL, our second biggest company, TNT, which with Murdoch's News limited, owns Ansett and a major Japanese development and construction company. Japan is awash with investment capital for less interest than the Australian investor demands"

(from the Australian Municipal Journal, December, January 1988).

B-Double Super Trucks "Frayed Nerves of Freight Centres ?"

"B-double trucks (transports of one prime mover pulling two trailers) will cut transport costs.

(from Age 31/5/88)

The Federal Interstate Commission on Transport recommended in its 1987 inquiry into road vehicle limits the introduction of B-doubles in all states. (For an alternative see "Frayed Nerves etc" in DATE)

Links All Around Australia
Tributes To Maurie Crow (1915/1988)

Maurie Crow died on May 4th 1988. Tributes were paid to him by people from all around Australia. Here are four samples :-

.....

The first two tributes are from academics who mainly knew Maurie through the documents he prepared with various community groups.

"Maurie was the sort of man who had a vision....a deep and profound belief that there was a way of bringing people together and with reason and reasonableness, put points of view to them and come to a common purpose." Prof. Peter McIntyre (Melbourne University, Faculty of Architecture and Planning).

.. ..
"Making cities more human, it sound so simple but for most people it is quite meaningless. Maurie could see it as plain as day....There will be many people whose lives have been improved by Maurie though they will never know... but a few of us know." Prof. Peter Newman (Murdoch University, Planning Department Perth).

.....
Note :- one of the aims of reviving Ecoso Exchange is to continue what Maurie has started. As Peter McIntyre states "to bring people together with reason and reasonableness"; and as Peter Newman states "to improve people's lives though they will never know." Some people may like to think of this as a "spiritual aim"; but it is also a very practical aim, and practical steps are being taken to realise it.

.....
Here are two tributes from people who helped Maurie (and Ecoso Exchange) to develop links with people in many different parts of Australia.

.....
"My association with Maurie enriched my work in environmental, social and political fields....it was, and is, Maurie's consistent practical analysis coupled with his consistent ethical standpoint that in my view identified his work," David Ross (Newcastle Ecology Centre, N.S.W.)

.....
"The main thing is that Maurie brought human life style and environmental issue into the socialist movement," Brian Aarons (National Committee of the Communist Party of Australia, Sydney N.S.W.)

.....
Note :- An aim of reviving Ecoso Exchange is to attempt to continue to carry out what Brian Aarons recognised as Maurie's efforts "to bring human life style and environmental issues into the socialist movement". Another aim is to popularise documents which express "Maurie's consistent practical analysis..and..consistent ethical standpoint", and thus to attempt to continue to contribute to enriching the lives of people like David Ross.

See Ecoso Exchange Guidelines enclosed with this Newsletter.

D.A.T.E.
Documents Available Through Ecoso

The recent death of Maurie Crow means that unless some action is taken some material that could be valuable for some people in the ecology and labour movements may be lost for ever.

Since the mid-1930s Maurie and Ruth have been involved in various left movements. From the 1940s to the 1960s Maurie's main concerns were centred on white collar union unity, but since the mid-60s he was involved in urban action at both local and metropolitan level.

Ruth has been a local activist in campaigns around child care, children's cultural activities, education and health since the 1940s.

Maurie and Ruth have continually tried to link theory and practice often being joint authors of pamphlets newsletters reports. Much of their output has been as members of larger collectives producing various documents.

In recent years they have attempted to systematically file useful documents (both their own writings and community reports, government reports and so on). In addition they still have a few documents from the earlier years. This home-spun filing system is now being computerised as DATE (Documents Available Through Ecoso) so that others may use it.

DATE will be a central feature of Ecoso Exchange as each issue will list documents available on the Crow files.

To use DATE :- By phoning 03. 328. 2345 or writing (see address at end of page) arrangements can be made to :- come and browse through the files, to borrow (most but not all documents), to obtain an index of documents on certain issues, to photostat, on the spot, a limited number of pages ... in other words to make as much use as possible of the files.

DATE is only available to subscribers to Ecoso Exchange Newsletter, and discretion will also be used to ensure that DATE users are genuinely involved in the labour or ecology movements, ie the resources are being made available expressly to help unite the left and to form links between the labour movement and the community movement.

It will be necessary to have charges to cover cost of postage, stationary photocopying etc. (Note :- this is an entirely voluntary effort, no funding is being given to the project. If Ecosos Exchange and DATE can't pay for themselves then they will cease.

Subscription to Ecoso Exchange Newsletter. If you wish to receive Ecoso Exchange Newsletter please send \$10.00 to :-

Ruth Crow
2/5, 89 O'Shanassy Street,
North Melbourne 3051.

D A T E L I S T
Documents Available Through Ecoso Exchange

In this first DATE List the documents mentioned in the text are listed, plus a couple of other newsletters. Different ways of popularising the files may be used in other DATE Lists.

* = Collection of Documents for Browsing.

O-O-P = out of print but copy available for browsing and copying.

ALP Green Network (Working for Conservation) available from 3 Kelvin St., Ascot Vale 3032, (03) 568 0553.

CUE Documents* Various documents from Conservation of Urban Energy Group of the Conservation Council of Victoria (1978...1988).

Ecoso Exchange/ Irregular* File of Newsletters (see elsewhere in this Newsletter)

"Frayed Nerves or Freight Centres" O-O-P. A report prepared by the Victorian Urban Freight Group (community organisations, councils, trade unions)

25 pages with maps etc.

Greenhouse 88 Documents available from Commission for the Future, 98 Drummond Street, Carlton (Vic), 3053 or from CFF in other cities.

"Less Energy With More Enjoyment" O-O-P. A report prepared by the North Melb. Association 1981. 90 pages.

"Make Melbourne Marvellous" A report prepared by the Victorian Branch of the Communist Party of Australia. Available from Communist Party, 10 Smith Street, Collingwood 3066, 03.417 7388.

New Left Party Bulletin For information on groups and contacts write to Box C 525, Clarence Street, Sydney. 2000 Sub. to Bulletin \$5.00

Rainbow Alliance Newsletter For information on groups and contacts write to Box 122 Niddrie Vic.3042. Sub to Newsletter \$1.00 an issue.

Radical Ecology Conference* held in Melbourne 1975. Documents about planning for the conference, REC Networks, Magazines etc.

RAPI* (Royal Australian Planning Institute) 1988 Conference papers.

A Vision of Excess produced by Research & Action for Popular Planning (RAP-UP), Communist Party of Australia, Queensland. (07) 252.4866

SAM* Documents of the Socialist Alternative Melbourne collective which prepared "Make Melbourne Marvellous" (see above).

"Seeds for Change" a 500 + pages in book prepared by CUE Group (see above). Available from Conservation Council of Victoria for approx. \$10.00 plus postage. Available for reference through DATE

Tributes to Maurie Crow 1) Tape of gathering organised by the North Melbourne Association; speakers, Lloyd Edmonds, Dave Davies, Giovanni Sgro, Peter McIntyre, Winsome McCaughey, Anne Morrow and Peter Atkins. 2) A gathering organised by the Communist Party of Australia; speakers, Julius Roe, Gwen Goedeke, Barbara Weimar, Peter Atkins. 3) A family gathering with Lloyd Edmonds as speaker. Tapes available at \$5.00 each.

To arrange to use DATE phone Ruth Crow, 03.328.2345 or write to flat 2/5 89 O'Shanassy St. North Melbourne 3051 and send with your letter a stamped envelope addressed to yourself.

Eventually the documents that may have historical significance, may be lodged with the Melbourne university Archives which specialises in labour history.

ECOSO EXCHANGE (1989 VERSION)

Ecoso Exchange is a newsletter for people involved in the ecological/sociological movements. It is based on the value judgements on these two pages. It is re-using the title of a similar newsletter of the 1970s

VALUE JUDGEMENTS

from

"Make Melbourne Marvellous" (1985)

The sort of values suitable for a Socialist Australia should retain the well known socialist principles of abolishing exploitation and alienation but should be reformulated, it is suggested, to reflect also positive values that have emerged from new social movements, and more recent experiences of socialists.

Central to such reformulation should be an expansion of the age-old principle :- From Each According to Ability - To Each According to Needs.

This recognises that the development of new abilities to serve society, often associated with new technology and new social conditions, give rise to new needs; and changing needs, in turn, call forth and provide conditions for changing abilities; so that needs/abilities for socialism should include :-

* A reasonable level of food, clothing, shelter, privacy and shared child rearing and domestic upkeep, so that the physical constraints do not hinder people from exercising their abilities.

* Convenient opportunities for health, education and culture so that people's potential for developing greater and more diverse abilities are given scope.

* Access, locally, to a reasonably diverse vital community and supportive, recreational and social activities so that social conditions can assist people to gain confidence to use their abilities to the full.

* Complete eradication of all forms of male domination over females, on the job or in the home, to release women to a full range of areas in which their abilities can be exercised.

* Respect for the natural environment and other species, so that human needs are designed in such a way that the "needs" of other forms of life are also taken into account, substituting qualitative growth for wasteful and destructive "growth-for-growth's-sake" that damages the ecology and threatens the ability of future generations to sustain life on earth for themselves and other species.

In short, the long established socialist values of sufficiency and equity need now to be supplemented with values which are anti-patriarchal, ecology respecting and committed to self-reliance and grass-roots democracy based on collectives.

ECOSO EXCHANGE GUIDELINES
(Used by Ecoso Exchange from 1973)

Today we are living in a world increasingly manipulated by advertising and propaganda for a culture of consuming rather than using, of receiving or following rather than participating.

We who live in Western advanced countries have little chance other than to buy goods designed with built-in obsolescence. Thus a large proportion of hard work goes into fashioning materials which are mis-used or not fully used, so that the more there is produced the more there is wasted. These same superior industrial powers force this same pattern of consumerism on the people of the Third World.

Under these conditions the limited natural and human resources are not only inequitably distributed but are also recklessly squandered with outrageous pollutions and destructions of the natural environment. As for the social environment, life and thinking become dominated by material possessions and this creates a barrier making it increasingly difficult for neighbours, work mates and even members of the same family to relate to each other.

There is a more efficient way of living which does more for the dignity of human beings, uses less energy and preserves the world as a pleasant and habitable place.

Guidelines to Reverse Trends

- 1) A value judgement in favour of regeneration and promotion of community participation meaning that it is humanising and enriching for people to relate to each other through one form or another or voluntary participatory activity both on the job and off the job, exercising a measure of control in the course of such activity.
- 2) A consequent recognition of necessity for change in life-style and behaviour patterns that sees the quality of life as an alternative to consumerism understood as mass production and consumption and wasteful and unsatisfying consumer goods and services based on compulsion or manipulation.
- 3) Accordingly, a policy of restricting the use of energy and non-renewable resources per head and hence a planned design of community including population size, where people can better relate to each other and nature in order to reduce wasteful goods and services and at the same time guaranteeing an adequate minimum subsistence for all, and using modern technology to this end.
- 4) The recognition that such objectives cannot be achieved either on the basis of partial, linear, one-level ecological remedies or with authoritarian or manipulative control of production or affairs but requires a comprehensive, multi-directional, all-levels and participatory effort to achieve global ecological equilibrium.

Ecoso Exchange is one way of helping to reverse these trends.