

**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY**  
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

*Ecoso exchange newsletter 2/18; Feb. 1992*

This is the Published version of the following publication

UNSPECIFIED (1992) Ecoso exchange newsletter 2/18; Feb. 1992. Ecoso exchange newsletter, 2 (18). pp. 1-10.

The publisher's official version can be found at

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# ECOSO EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER

Number 2/18

February 1992

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## News from the Crow Collection

The Crow Collection Association Incorporated was formed a year ago with the objective of developing the Collection as a LIVING LIBRARY by :-

- \* enhancing its accessibility and comprehensiveness.
- \* promoting projects on planning for the 21st century.
- \* through such projects helping individuals and organisations to build neighbourhood networks.
- \* providing archival material for student projects.

In September 1991 Christine Carolan was appointed project officer for the first living library project. This is on Children's Services.

The main efforts during the last weeks of the year were to strengthen the practical links between the Collection and the community by providing opportunities for groups to use the documents. Here are three examples :-

1. A seminar with staff from the Children Services Department of the City of Sunshine.

2. A seminar for year eleven students from Williamstown High School.

3. A viewing day for teachers at secondary schools in the Western Region. The documents were arranged in five groups showing how the Collection can be used for Creative Writing, Media Studies, English (current issues), Australian Studies and Human Development.

One of the outcomes of this project is the video "Scattering the Seeds" in which Marnie Statkus and Ruth Crow discuss some of the Crow Collection documents and how they can be used by students.

The Project (including the video) has been funded by the Lance Reichstein Charitable Foundation. See pages 7 and 8 of this newsletter.

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### Our Royal Bush Park

The recognition that city people need public open space for passive recreation as well as sports facilities is the reason for the great earth works and tree planting that are taking place at Royal Park.

In 1972 the Association's "CAN Report" (Citizens' Action Plan for North and West Melbourne) (1) had these plans for that barren windswept area :-

The CAN concept will be to develop a large coherent environment for the whole of Royal Park of a truly Australian nature with abundant native flora and perhaps native fauna. This will have a general "wilderness park" treatment as distinct from widely spaced specimen trees set in English lawns.

The will be to simultaneously encourage a national awareness which, emerging five or six generations after the pioneers, appreciates the native landscape; and to display an Australian bush atmosphere very close to the city for overseas visitors who may lack the opportunity to travel far to the country side.

In line with this concept it is proposed that landscaping will be sufficiently thick and continuous to encircle playing fields so that a "village green" or rather "bush clearing" effect is achieved.

There will also need to be intimate, well sheltered, thickly planted spaces created that produce an atmosphere of "mystery" to invite exploration and provide a measure of privacy and informal relaxation.

The Melbourne City Council is currently implementing the Royal Park Master This is based on some of the CAN ideas and discussions at public forums over the past fifteen years. Participation is continuing (phone Adam on 386.7491, or Bruce Cartwright 658.9800 for more information).

In 1852 (140 years ago,) Albert Mattingley, head teacher at what is now called Errol Street School, described the area which is now called Royal Park in the following words :-

From the junction of Flemington and Sydney Roads to the Sarah Sands Hotel in Brunswick, then down the centre of Brunswick Road to Moonee Ponds Creek, then along its course as far as Flemington Bridge to the starting point was named Parkside. In the early years of this town the Aborigines used to camp and occasionally hold corroborees in these park-like lands.

Hundreds of parrots and parakeets of beautiful plumage, the scarlet lory being quite common among them, the white sulphured cockatoo, with its harsh screaming note, and occasionally the black cockatoo with its weird cry; kookaburras, magpies and several varieties of honey eaters were to be seen and heard as well as the entrancing notes of the harmonious thrush, whilst overhead wedge-tail eagles, hawks and kestrels soared aloft. At night the nocturne of the mopoke resounded when possums and native cats emerged from hollows in the trees or from holes in the ground.

On the waters of the swamp were black swans. pelicans, magpie geese, black, brown and grey ducks cormorants and gulls whilst curlews, plover crane, snipe and sandpipers were seen in the shallows; quail and stone plovers on the higher banks....Royal park was clothed with umbrageous red-gum trees.... Clusters of she-oaks and wattle also adorned the park and add grace thereto.

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- 1. CAN Report and some reports on Royal Park, are in the Crow Collection. (See inside wrapper about a twilight ramble through Royal Park)

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Books for Studying/Browsing :-

- "Intimacy and Solitude" by Stephanie Dowrick
- The Conscience of the Eye" by Richard Sennett
- "Economic Strategy for Social Change" by the CUE Group
- "Economic Rationalism in Canberra" by Michael Pusey
- "The Third Wave" by Abe David and Ted Wheelwright

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Intimacy and Solitude

This book by Stephanie Dowrick was recently published by Heinemann. As the title suggests, this is a book about the contradictions in every day life for every one living in our modern world where the "eye has no conscience" (see article on book by Richard Sennett in this Ecoso).

Stephanie Dowrick lets people tell their own open ended stories allowing the reader to participate in shared experience. At the same time she brings a range of views together and this helps to define and reject authoritarianism

She makes the reader aware of the need to distinguish between solitude and loneliness, and between intimacy and dependency. The book revives some of the ideas of Krishnamurti which were popular in the 1930s. For example "To transform the world, we must begin with ourselves".

It is a book to have handy so that when the paradoxes of the world are too pressing, it is there for a browse. It does not give direct answers to the contradictions and conflicts but it does give a feeling of sharing.

The paper back costs \$19.95.

Retreating from the Agora

Richard Sennett's "Conscience of the Eye" (published by Faber) will be welcomed by those who have read his "Uses of Disorder" (1970) and his "Fall of Public Man" (1970). All three deal with how city dwellers are no longer taking advantage of the public gathering places, preferring to retreat to the sanctuary of the home.

The title of his book comes from the idea that our civil responsibilities are "the conscience of the eye". We see things about us that distress us but we do not have any sympathy in righting what is going wrong.

The spaces that are meaningful to our lives are the private spaces of our homes and the spaces of the clubs, churches and other organisations to which we belong and which we tend to privatise, thus reducing their public appeal.

Similarly to his other books, parts of the "Conscience of the Eye" are very easy to read. For example, he describes the people and buildings he passes on a regular three mile walk from his Greenwich Village home down to the city centre. "Everywhere the eyes are averted, no one crosses into another sphere."

He takes the reader on other strolls describing areas where "The past crumbled into the present in little fragments of making do". Here life is bearable because otherness can be encountered. Then he takes the reader past the "planned" areas where playgrounds where no children play and the neighbourhood is as "lifeless as a film set".

Publications for Sale

The Crow Collection Association has a price list of publications for sale. These are publications which have been written by Ruth and/or Maurie or collectives to which they belonged. For example :-

"Economic Strategy for Social Change", by the Conservation of Urban Energy Group (Melbourne). The main members of this group were :- John Andrews, Maurie Crow, Ruth Crow, Trevor Blake, Don Seimon, John Wiseman, Ed Kaptain and Peter Atkins.

This 1987 publication is available for \$5.00. It could be a useful supplement the books reviewed in this issue of Ecoso. It presents ideas in the same spheres and also some ideas on policies which are being pursued and others which could be popularised.

"Economic Strategy for Social Change" was written by in an attempt to bridge the gap between the environment movement and the labour movement.

More information :-

The Crow Collection Association, Urban Studies, Victoria University of Technology Box 64, Footscray 3011; phone (03) 688.4754 or Fax (03) 688.4805 or after hours (03) 380.1876.

Who are the Economic Rationalists ?

Economic rationalism asks for nothing less than a clear cut reduction of the public sphere to the private sphere and a parallel reduction of public policy to business policy. (Michael Pusey).

"Economic Rationalism in Canberra - a Nation Building State Changes its Mind" by Michael Pusey was published last year by Cambridge University Press. The back cover summary states :

In Australia during the 1980s, the traditional balance between the economy, the state and society changed as the new dominance of the economy eroded the primacy of the political and social orders.

"Economic Rationalism" discusses two essential questions :

who are the bureaucrats responsible for the formulation and implementation of the reforms ?

what is the social significance of economic rationalism,, public sector reform and structural adjustment ?

The first question is dealt with in a detailed study of Canberra bureaucrats, based on interviews with more than 200 members of the elite Senior Executive Service in the key departments of the Canberra state apparatus.

The second part of the book undertakes a theoretical analysis of this evidence and reaches for a new understanding of modernisation, national identity, public morality and citizenship in the new global order.

Michael Pusey is currently an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of New South Wales. The sales of his book showed that the public is thirsting for such information. The first edition sold out in a very short time.

Those who have inhibitions in tackling any study which seems to indicate that a knowledge of economic was a necessary pre-requisite for the reader, can take heart. This book is absorbedly interesting to all. The introduction, the figures and diagrams, the notes, references and the logical way information is presented to break down subjective barriers.

The appendices provide some valuable reference material. For example, Appendix B is a table listing the "Major Economic Trends from 1975 to 1990" and the "Major Events from 1975 - 1990" are listed in Appendix C.

The book costs about \$25 but it is well worth the investment. If you cannot afford this be sure to borrow it from a library. It is "a must" for all concerned with ecological and sociological issues as well as economics.

After you have finished studying "Economic Rationalism" how about reading, or re-reading "The Third Wave - Australia and Asian Capitalism" by Abe David and Ted Wheelwright, published by the Left Book Club, 1989. Reviewed in Ecoso No 8, January 1990. The two books complement each other.

Privatisation in Britian

A recent paper by John Ernst on the consequences of privatisation of essential services in Britian provides good ammunition for opponents of privatisation.

The scale of privatisation in Britian has been enormous - some 69 billion pounds (often underpriced) public assets have been sold to the private sector.

John Ernst looked at privatisation of water, gas and electricity. British gas was privatised in 1986, regional water authorities in 1989 and electricity industry in 1990/91.

The public flotation of the industries on the Stock Exchange were at substantial discounted rates. This was illustrated by huge increases in the value of shares at the end of the first day of trading - water company shares : 46 %, electricity 51%, ("So almost a shift by sleight of hand, these industries were worth around 50% more than they were hours earlier."). This "fire sale" approach reached its peak with the sale of the water authorities, where the government effectively donated in excess of 1.5 million pounds to transfer them to the private sector. The Guardian called it "massive re-distribution" of wealth from one owner (the Government on behalf of the people) to a much narrower segment of the population.

With the exception of British Gas (which has benefited from a world wide fall in gas purchase costs) prices in these utilities have risen faster than the rate of inflation since privatisation.

In the water industry, the average household bill for water and sewerage has risen by around 30% (70% above the inflation rate). The water industry's own estimates show a likely increase in excess of 300% in water charges by the year 2000 (The Guardian 15/3/91). Domestic electricity charges have risen well above the rate on inflation.

There has been a substantial increase in the incidence of "fuel poverty". Significantly, the increase in the fuel and water bills of domestic consumers contrasts sharply with a general decline in prices for commercial and industrial consumers.

Initially the privatised utilities adopted a more stringent approach to the handling of consumer debt and disconnection. For example, domestic gas disconnections rose by over 70% in the first two years of the industry's privatisation. More recently, as a result of intervention by the public regulators and the increased use of pre-payment meters, the number of disconnections has declined. There is mounting concern, however, that recourse to pre-payment meters as a debt management device will lead to an increase in the level of self-disconnection by low income consumers who are unable to meet substantially higher energy and water bills.

(Information from a paper at the 1991 Victorian Council of Social Service Seminar. The full paper is available from the Crow Collection)

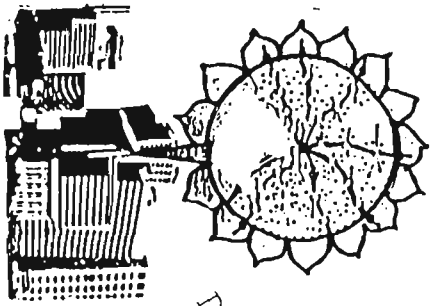
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Subscriptions are now due for 1992. A subscription form is enclosed. If at all possible, please add a donation to your subscription.

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Scattering the Seeds  
Reproduction of the cover of the first Crow Collection video, "Scattering the Seeds". It has been dedicated to Marjorie Coppel (see next page).

For information on how you can buy, borrow or copy the cassette phone the Crow Collection Association (03) 688.4754 or Ruth Crow (03) 380.1876 or write to Sheila Byard, lecturer, Urban Studies Unit, Victoria University of Technology (Footscray), Box 64, Footscray 3011 or Fax (03) 688.4805.



Draft of front cover.

# SCATTERING SEEDS FOR CHANGE

- Child Care during World War 2
- Changes in Local Government
- Conservation of Urban Energy

The Crow Collection

Funded by Lance Reichstein  
Charitable Foundation

Illustrations for "Seeds for Change - Creatively Confronting the Energy Crisis", published by the Conservation Council of Victoria, 1978.



SCATTERING SEEDS FOR CHANGE

The Crow Collection

Draft of spine.



## SCATTERING SEEDS FOR CHANGE

### Crow Collection

Ruth Crow and her late husband, Maurie, were involved in movements on urban issues from the mid 1930s. Over the years they built up an extensive collection of documents, books, pamphlets, posters, photographs and working papers.

In 1990 the Victoria University of Technology (Footscray Campus) invited Ruth to donate the collection to the VUT Library.

The Crow Collection includes documents written and/or used by groups and individuals committed to social change. This store of information from the past is generating ideas about the future.

### The Video

#### CHILD CARE DURING WORLD WAR 2

*Changes in the workforce* — married women in paid employment. Brunswick Children's Centre • Funding • Community Involvement • Services

#### CHANGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

*Municipal Council responsibilities in 1940s as compared with 1970/80s* — Women • Human Services • Nuclear Free Zones • Participation in planning.

#### CONSERVATION OF URBAN ENERGY

*Alternatives to urban sprawl from late 1960s* — The Radical Ecology Conference • Movement Against Uranium Mining • "Seeds for Change".

Running Time: 27 minutes

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Reproduction rights readily available to community groups. Contact:

Hon. secretary,  
Crow Collection Association,  
Urban Studies Unit,  
Victoria University of Technology,  
Box 64 Footscray 3011,  
Phone (03) 688.4754, Fax (03) 688.4805.

Draft of back cover.

Made by the Victoria University of Technology  
(Footscray Campus)  
January 1992.

This video is dedicated to the memory of Marjorie Coppel.



Marjorie Coppel

A Dedication by Ruth Crow

Marjorie Coppel was born at the turn of the century. She was about forty when I met her in 1939 when I was in my early twenties. We met because she was writing a pamphlet on food, health and income and I had collected together some material on mal-nutrition and poverty. (1)

A few years later we met again when she was involved in an organisation called "The Council for Women in War Work". (2) We discussed the need for child care so that mothers could work to win. (3) Within a few months Marjorie was a key person in establishing a number of new-type day nurseries (4) and in helping to initiate the Committee for Co-ordinating Child Care in War-time. (5)

In 1943 the Federal Government subsidised some child care centres but after the war this funding was stopped. In 1946 the Day Nursery Development Association was formed to re-establish the war-time services and to extend them. Marjorie was the president of DNDA and, for a while I was its honorary secretary. We did succeed in the first few years and some of the war-time day nurseries acquired their own buildings (6).

In 1948 the "Cold War" dismantled this organisation (7) and the centres which were providing full day care changed to sessional kindergartens.

Marjorie was a quiet, thoughtful, sincere woman. She inspired others to work together and to achieve what it would have been impossible to do as individuals. I have asked that this cassette be dedicated to her in recognition of the profound effect she had on my life.

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1. The pamphlet "Food and Health" is in the Crow Collection.
2. See pamphlet "Women at War" in Crow Collection.
3. "Child Care so Mother Can Work to Win" was a war time slogan.
4. There were about 15 orphanage-like creches and about 40 half day kindergartens. The 5 new centres (at first subsidised by the Women of the University Patriotic Fund) provided all day care and a cultural program.
5. This organisation succeeded in convincing the Federal Government that subsidies should be provided for child care. The new type-centres were subsidised by the Federal Government and some kindergartens became full day care centres. (The Crow Collection has reports, a scrap book and a photo album about some of these centres).
6. The war-time centres were established in rented accommodation.
7. See Ecoso Newsletters No 9 and No 16

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Documents in Crow Collection - Planning History

The following information about the Crow Collection was distributed at the history of planning seminar organised by the VUT (Footscray), Urban Studies Unit to celebrate World Planning Week in November last year :-

Although there are some printed publications in the Crow Collection perhaps the most useful documents for planning historians are the working papers (unpublished material) based on community action such as :-

- \* alternative plans to the MMBW 1972 Metropolitan Plan
- \* material on the campaigns against freeways and urban renewal of the 1970s
- \* the inner urban action movement from 1965 to 1990
- \* community planning and the preparation and implementation of the Melbourne City Council Strategy Plan from 1973 to 1987
- \* the initiation of such projects such as community newspapers, community health and neighbourhood houses
- \* the preparation of publications such as "Seeds for Change", the "Nunawading Energy Study", "Frayed Nerves or Freight Centres"
- \* social issues such as community child care, community health centres
- \* community submissions to various government inquiries and reviews
- \* the file of Ecoso Exchange Newsletter, published from 1967.

Documents from AIUS, TCPB and TCPA

- \* The Crow Collection has a fairly full set of documents published by the Australian Institute of Urban Studies (thanks to Patricia Whately)
- \* The VUT library has bound copies of reports from the Town and Country Planning Board (thanks to Richard Arnot).
- \* The Town and Country Planning Association' files, from about 1950 to 1990, are in the Crow Collection Room (thanks to Alan Parker).

Some bound copies of the journal of the Royal British Institute of Planning have recently been donated to the VUT (thanks to Gordon Rushman).

Useful Indexes and a Useful Bibliography

The TCPA documents include the minute books and an alphabetical index of the main issues in the TCPA minutes from 1953 to 1963. The index was compiled by R. H. (Dick) Arnot.

The Crow documents include an indexed file of Ecoso Exchange Newsletters from 1967 to 1980 and from 1988 to 1991.

The AIUS documents have both bibliographies and indexes.

Taken together, these TCPA, Ecoso and AIUS indexes provide a ready reckoner for an overview of some planning issues from 1953 to the 1990s.

Documents in the Crow Collection - Political History

The early years of the left political movement of the period, during which the Crow documents have been collected, was dominated by a concentration on national and international politics and trade unions. The 1930/40 documents reflect this fact. However the Crow documents from the last thirty years are a source of information on local and state (Victorian) politics, community movements and issues relating to suburbanisation.

Strengths of the Crow Collection

1. A fairly comprehensive collection of the left pamphlets of the 1930s and 1940s (previously, about 60% had not been recorded on IBNS).
2. Documents on radical campaigns on children's service (ie. campaigns for services which met the needs of children and their parents) in 1940s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (not 1950s which may be significant in itself).
3. Documents on the cultural movement of the 1950s, for example the revival of Australian folk culture and the campaign for international understanding through art exchanges etc. The Collection can be supplemented with material from Margaret Walker's Collection in Canberra (Margaret's catalogue is in the Crow Collection).
4. Linking the trade unions and the community movements, the Living Standards Convention in the mid 1960s, the Radical Ecology Conference of the mid 1970s, Environmentalists for Full Employment in the 1980s.
5. Theories on white collar unions, and a very few documents on the Clerk's union, but these can be supplemented by deposits in the Baillieu Library (a catalogue of some of these is in the Crow Collection).
6. Community involvement and local government in inner suburbs of Melbourne and some documents about other parts of the metropolis, mainly in the 1970s and 1980s but also some of the pamphlets of the 1930s and 40s and some of the early child care documents fall into this group.
7. Talk notes, drafts of articles and published articles some of which reflect the personal lives of two people active in the left movement at various stages in the history of the past 50 years.

What the Collection does not Contain (Documents that have been culled) :-

1. Communist Party publications such as collection of works by Lenin, Stalin Mao Tse Tung etc; files of serial publications such as Communist Review and overseas left magazines and newspapers from the 1930s to 1950s. Some of these may be in university libraries such as Baillieu.
2. Left Book Club publication of the 1930s and early 1940s. However, a fairly full set of these were in the VUT Humanities Resource Centre and are now on the shelves in the Crow Collection Room.
4. Serial Publications on issues such as education, child care, peace, town planning, transport, women, recreation, the environment etc. These are probably available from the organisations responsible for them.