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"Don't blame off of this pollution on us....It's those stinking fish!"

from A&M BREE (August 1977)
a publication of the
Assoc. of Metis & Non Status
Indians of Sask.
92 1086 Saskatchewan St, Regina
EDITORIAL

This issue of the Newsletter is the first produced by the Toronto local of the U.S.G. It contains a report of the proceedings of the recent Central Canada-U.S. Regional Meeting held in Toronto, November 11-13. Summaries of workshops and discussions are included, as are proposals for ongoing working groups and for future conference organization. Much of the material in this issue is focused on the general area of the political economy of urbanization. Included are papers by Damaris Rose, Steve New, and Shoukry Rowel, and part of a bibliography by John Holmes on the subject of urban political economy. The remainder of this bibliography will be published in the next issue of the Newsletter. In addition there is an article by Shoukry Rowel on 'Critical Notes on Marx's Theory of Value', and a short review of some recent work by Rowel and Allen Scott. Reader's attention is directed to announcement of the New Orleans U.S.G. Annual Meeting, 1978.

All contributors to this issue and participants in the Toronto Regional Meeting would welcome response to their discussions. Write directly to the individuals concerned, or care of:

The Editors,
c/o Suzanne Mackenzie,
Department of Geography
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario.
M5S 1A1

The following members contributed to the production of this issue: Garry Crowfoot, Gord Garland, Suzanne Geddes, Suzanne Mackenzie, Sue Ruddick, Damaris Rose, Alan Wallace, Katherine Willson. We would like to thank all contributors to this Newsletter and all participants in the November meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of December 1, 1978, the U.S.G. International Account at the Burnaby Credit Union had approximately $50.00. Of this approximately $375 is committed for the U.S.G. Newsletter. Our finances have improved because 1) we have received over 35 new memberships and renewals since September 1, 1977; 2) we have centralized all U.S.G. International funds; and 3) we have received several donations from fully employed members.

It is important to note that we began this year with $220. Thus we have really raised approximately $430 since the last annual meeting in Regina. This is about the amount required to publish four newsletters. - Nathan Edelson
L’Union des Géographes Socialistes

L’Union des Géographes Socialistes (Union of Socialist Geographers) fut formée à Toronto en mai 1974. Un groupe de personnes regroupées à Toronto établirent un consensus concernant la formation d’une organisation (USG/UGS) afin d’améliorer les contacts entre géographes les uns avec les principes des buts de l’organisation. Ces derniers consistent à travailler pour une restructuration radicale de la société en accord avec les principes de justice sociale. En tant que géographes et individus, nous contribuerions à ce processus en deux manières complémentaires:

a) organiser et travailler pour un changement radical à l’intérieur de nos communautés et
b) développer une théorie géographique contribuant à une lutte révolutionnaire.

Donc, nous appliquons le principe: de chacun selon ses capacités, à d’autres selon les besoins. Nous déclarons que le développement d’une société humaine, non-aliénée exige à son niveau le plus fondamental, une socialisation des moyens de production.

Présentement, le USG/UGS possède des membres en Afrique, en Europe et Amérique Latine aussi bien qu’en Amérique du Nord. Plusieurs groupes actifs existent au Canada ainsi qu’en Etats-Unis, incluant des géographes académiques et non académiques ainsi que des non-geographes.

Le USG/UGS publie plusieurs fois par an un périodique (Newsletter) et tient une réunion annuelle en avril ou mai chaque année. Lors de dernière réunion à Regina en juin 1977, il fut décidé de publier dans le périodique Newsletter des articles ainsi que des informations en français et en espagnol.

Le USG/UGS encourage donc la demande de renseignements ainsi que les nouveaux membres. Pour plus d’information ainsi que le nom des personnes à contacter dans votre région, écrivez à:

Susan Barry
Département de Géographie
Université McGill
805 ouest, rue Sherbrooke
Montréal, Qué.
Canada H3A 2K6

Pour devenir membres, envoyer votre nom, adresse ainsi que $5.00 a:

Nathan Edelson
Département de Géographie
Université Simon Fraser
Burnaby, B.C.
Canada V5A 1S6

Les membres reçoivent automatiquement le périodique Newsletter. Une subscription individuelle au périodique s’élève à $5.00 annuellement; $10.00 en ce qui concerne les institutions.

U.S.G. Fifth A.G.M.
New Orleans, April ’78.

The Union of Socialist Geographers will hold its fifth annual meeting in New Orleans at the time of the Association of American Geographers 1978 Annual Meeting. All members and friends of the U.S.G. are invited to attend. A series of sessions will be held at which radical geographers are encouraged to read papers, report on activities and organize workshops and panel discussions. The U.S.G.'s Annual General Meeting will take place on Sunday, April 9. Substantive sessions will be held on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Place and times will be announced in a program to be distributed to Newsletter subscribers in March. Those who would like to present papers or otherwise participate should write to:

Jim Blaut,
Department of Geography,
University of Illinois at Chicago Circle
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A. 60680

GEOGRAPHY OF WOMEN

Several U.S.G. members are interested in collecting material on the geography of women for a future newsletter. In response to a request several months ago, Bonnie Loyd has submitted a bibliography and a short article, and other people have promised contributions. Anyone interested in submitting short articles, reviews, bibliographic notes or general questions on the subject should contact:

Suzanne Mackenzie,
Department of Geography,
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario. M5S 1A1

TRANSITION

Transition, the quarterly Journal of the Socially and Ecologically Responsible Geographers can be obtained for a $3.00 subscription from Laurence G. Wolf, 610 Poulske St., Cincinnati, Ohio, 45220. The subscription includes participation in the SERGB Network, which makes research reports and other information available to members.

Recent issues of Transition include articles on Women and Geography, Scientists and Nuclear Power and a new approach to Field Study. (Vol. 6, No. 4, Winter, 1976-77) ‘Towards a More Humane World’, ‘Physical Geography Today’, and ‘International Tourism and Life on the Kenya Coast’ are some of the titles in the most recent issue. (Vol. 7, No. 7)
Minnesota, Regional Meeting and Newsletter.

A group of people at the University of Minnesota are interested in holding a regional meeting of the USSR towards the end of 1977. The aim will be to gather together in Minneapolis those from the Midwest and North Central U.S. and from central Canada who are interested in socialist geography. There seems to be a lot of separate individual communication in this region, and it is important to develop some communication between them. No particular structure or topics have been chosen for the meeting, as we feel that these should be decided upon by the participants. Thus we ask that anyone interested in such a meeting contact us with the following:

Bryan Higgins
Mickey Laura
Bill Pizarro
Eric Shepard

at:
Department of Geography
University of Minnesota
414 Social Science Building
Minneapolis MN 55455 USA

An edition of the USSR Newsletter is currently being prepared by a group at the University of Minnesota, for publication towards the end of the year. Any contributions, reviews, short papers etc. would be gratefully received. Please contact Bryan Higgins, Department of Geography, University of Minnesota, 414 Social Science Building, Minneapolis, MN 55455 USA.

Newsletter

A woman without a man, is like a fish without a bicycle.

from Kinesis (published by the Vancouver Status of Women: 2029 West 4th, Vancouver, B.C.)

Antipode Seized!

On the 11th of November, 1977, the Canadian Customs at Peace Bridge, Fort Erie, Ontario, impounded copies of the geographic educational journal Antipode. Two distinguished professors visiting Canada from the U.S.A. were refused permission to bring these journal copies into Canada on the grounds that the Customs officers did not consider the material to be 'geographically'. This is not only a professional slight to the visiting academics, but seems to be an extremely arbitrary decision.

The second reason offered for the entry refusal was that the journal was not marked 'Printed in the U.S.A.'. In future the publishers will undertake to print place of publication on the journal.

We wish to express our dismay at the action taken by the Customs officers and to strongly request that Antipode be registered as an educational journal that can be brought freely into Canada.

Dr. Richard Peet & Dr. Philip O'Keefe
Department of Geography, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, U.S.A. 01602

The above letter has been sent to journals, newspapers and Geography Departments throughout Canada. A covering letter was attached to those copies sent to Geography Departments and we reprint this below.

On the 11th of November, 1977, the Canadian Customs at Peace Bridge, Fort Erie, Ontario, impounded copies of the geographic educational journal Antipode. The attached letter outlines this incident.

If you, your colleagues or the Geography Department with which you are associated, would like to take a stand on this issue, please write:

Honourable Joseph F. Guay,
Revenue Canada, Customs and Excise,
Connaught Building,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Please include in your letter a strong request that Antipode be registered as an educational journal that can be brought freely into Canada.

Gord Garland.

Members are urged to write to the Minister and to pass this information along to their colleagues. When a letter to the Minister is sent, please forward a copy to:

Gord Garland,
Department of Geography,
University of Toronto,
Toronto, Ontario.

Gord will ensure that all incoming letters are compiled and sent on to Drs. Peet and O'Keefe.
It is, perhaps, premature to attempt an assessment of the conference until after the event. Nonetheless, we wish to preface the abstracts of papers and minutes of the business meeting with some general comments.

The conference was held in conjunction with the Political Economy of Urbanisation Working Group which was formed subsequent to the Regina conference of the U.S.G. The membership of this group includes a large number of U.S.G. members. A group of six people from Kingston attended as a part of the P.E.U.W.G. and led a discussion on the analysis of urban social movements. This reflected their activities in Kingston Socialists, a pre-party group engaged in such activities as strike support and educational actions in Kingston.

A Montreal section of the P.E.U.W.G. presented a view of theories of urbanisation and the State which led to wide-ranging discussion. Although two members of the Montreal group were unable to attend subsequent to car problems, six U.S.G. members were present from that city. Other U.S.G. members arrived from Clark University and Minnesota.

In addition to a member from Chicago, the week-end attracted a number of students and faculty at the University of Toronto who had not attended U.S.G. meetings prior to the conference.

Papers and discussion focused primarily on the theory of urbanisation with sessions too on regional development and community action within the city. The latter session was addressed by Tom Scanlon who is engaged in developing community oriented curriculum programmes for use in High Schools; Judy Stamp who is actively involved in developing community education in Toronto and Francine Beaudin who worked for an educational newspaper in rural Quebec. All three wish to maintain ongoing dialogue with other Socialist Geographers. Informal meetings and discussions throughout the weekend frequently returned to the questions of class and to the labour theory of value and surplus value.

Towards the conclusion of the business meeting on Sunday, some criticisms of the conference were made. Most notable of these was the recognition that a few members tended to dominate discussion and that frequently such discussion, although interesting and often enlightening, was without clear direction. It was suggested that discussion would be most useful if papers were presented in the form of working notes. Some presentations at the conference were excessively detailed and provoked general commentaries rather than constructive criticism and specific suggestions.

The most valuable aspect of the conference was the establishment of communication among a surprisingly large group of Socialist Geographers in Ontario, Quebec and adjacent parts of the U.S. A number of people formed working agreements and planned subsequent meetings as subgroups within the U.S.G. Moreover, it became apparent that Montreal, Toronto and Kingston had emerged as centres of activity in Socialist Geography. This will facilitate the movement of tasks such as the printing and mailing of Newsletters from the back of a poorly pressed but ever-competent local at Simon Fraser to whom, with the draft of this Newsletter, we send our comradely regards.

---Toronto Local, U.S.G.

Friday Morning


CLASS STRUGGLE AND URBANISATION UNDER CAPITALISM

The focus of this session was on "urban social movements", with the object of providing a rationale for, and a way of, analysing the significance of these social practices. For the Kingston group, the discussion and argument presented here was seen in contrast to the traditional orientation of socialist groups toward the organisation of labour in the workplace.

The presentation, and subsequent discussion, centred on three questions. Firstly, what are (how do we define) urban social movements? Secondly, why are they important? Thirdly, how can we analyse them in terms of the class structure of modern capitalist societies? In discussion a general consensus emerged on a fourth and critical question: what is the practical significance of urban social movements?

Firstly, and in terms of a definition, it was argued that urban social movements may be defined:

a. by their content with reproduction issues
b. in general, by a territorial base. Exceptions to (b) were, however, noted. One important area, for example, is organisations which develop to make demands on welfare services (cf. Cloward and Piven).

Secondly, it was argued that the significance of urban social movements must be seen within the context of the development of urbanisation under capitalism. The question as to whether urbanisation should be discussed in terms of the "urban" (Castells, 1977), or in terms of the general reproduction of the relations of production under capitalism, was shelved for later discussion. Three general tendencies however, were noted:

1. The increasing importance of the stability of:
   11. urban governmental finances
   2. increasing management problems associated with the extended reproduction of the labour force as a result of:
   1. land price inflation
   2. accessibility problems in relation to the separation of home and work.

2. the attraction of private capital to the locus of devalorised capital-the city.

3. Increasing politicisation of management decisions as the role of
the state, and urban planning, increases. This produces a greater transparency of social process, and therefore enhances the potential for conflict.

As a result of these tendencies, urban social movements have organised around issues increasingly critical to the smooth functioning of capitalism as a whole: e.g., housing, urban planning and renewal, property taxes.

Thirdly, it was suggested that, in general terms, we may follow Capital's analysis of urban social movements in terms of:

a. The 'stakes' involved (material interests)

b. The social base involved

c. The social organisations involved in conflict

d. The modes of action adopted.

e. The effects of action.

It was further suggested that the first two steps, the identification of stakes and of social base, were critical to any analysis of the importance of social involvements. This comes down to the development of a class analysis in general (of capitalism) and in particular (of a particular local context).

The following classes were identified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>capital and its fractions</th>
<th>endowers</th>
<th>land developers</th>
<th>industrial finance</th>
<th>state-devalorised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tenants</td>
<td>homeowners</td>
<td>productive</td>
<td>unproductive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was argued by the Kingston group that discovery of the revolutionary potential of community groups should be based on a class analysis of the stakes involved in each situation. In the general discussion, an analysis appeared to emerge that community organizations may contribute to the heightening of class consciousness, and play a part in the promotion of demands for revolutionary reforms (e.g., a land municipalisation). For these general reasons, however, it was also suggested that the revolutionary potential of such groups is strictly limited.

(i) because territorially based groups frequently enter into conflict with each other in terms which cut across class boundaries.

(ii) because community groups often confront the State (e.g., planners) rather than capital as such. The lines of conflict may therefore be obscured.

(iii) because, at best, community groups appear to confront fractions of capital (e.g., landowners) rather than capital in general.

In response to (i), it was argued that conflict against the state may serve to demystify the "managerial" role of the state, thus contributing to a heightening of class consciousness.

Richard Harris
Fran Klobodski

Friday afternoon
Toronto Local U.S.G.
POLITICAL ECONOMY OF URBANISATION: TWO APPROACHES

In recent years a fruitful but sometimes bewildering array of Marxist literature on urbanism has appeared, some examining specific urban social movements and some attempting to provide a theoretical framework for understanding urban form and process. While the morning session has dealt with some of the former work, this session examined two complementary approaches to the general study of urbanism. Hopefully this juxtaposition will generate an ongoing discussion of the necessary links between the two bodies of work. The first paper examined was J. Lojkine's "Contribution to a Marxist Theory of Capitalist Urbanism" (C.G. Pickvance, ed. Urban Sociology: Critical Essays, Tavistock, 1976.)

Lojkine's analysis attempts to provide concepts and outlines processes which provide a basis for the Marxist study of urbanism. His work emerges not so much as a holistic theory but as a suggestion and a theoretical basis for a wide variety of empirical studies. Lojkine sees the necessity for capital to increase productivity leading to the increasing socialization of the general conditions of production: the process of production in the industrial unit on the one hand, and the process of social and material circulation and the 'collective means of consumption' (material supports of commodity circulation and need for reproduction of labor power) on the other. The uniqueness of capitalist urban life is created by the scale of the collective means of consumption and by the particular mode of concentration of the general conditions of production.

While this socialization of the means of production and circulation and the collective means of consumption is necessary to accumulation and corresponds to the current level of development, the productive forces, it is also contradictory. The capitalist relations of production which impose the technical necessity for socialization and agglomeration also limit, through the inherent need for competition their rational social development.

Lojkine discusses these limits in terms of: 1) the inability of the "private capitalists to finance the collective means of consumption which are both non-productive and non-profitable. This particular sector of expenses is burdensome by socializing the property of profit to fall, thus contributes to checking its own development. 2) the limit arising from competition among users and developers of urban space which leads to uneven development on a regional and national scale. 3) the limit arising from the fragmentation of the use-value of urban land through private ownership and ground rent appropriation. This leads to increasing segregation and forms a structural obstacle to social planning in the city.

The State intervenes to resolve the short term conflicts created by the above limits and does so in response to class struggle. But State intervention fails to change the fundamental contradiction, and through politizingshing increasing areas of daily life, extends the arena for class struggle. Integral to this extension is the fact
that the collective means of consumption, by their very collective nature, stand opposed to the market standardization of use-value, and thus threaten the ideology of possessive individualism.

Some of the more apoplastic criticisms of Lojkine's argument include:

1) His failure to disaggregate the concept of social expenditures. Some state expenditures may in fact be indirectly productive of value. (cf. O'Connor 1973)
2) His failure to disaggregate both the bourgeois and working class interests, and to recognize the differences in the forces that those classes might exert.
3) His failure to identify the working class as a source of state funds; through income tax, pension funds etc.
4) His suggestion that the collective consumption tends to break down the fetishism of commodities is highly speculative; and again ignores class divisions.
5) He omits completely the sphere of private reproduction, the family and its relationship to collectivised consumption.

Finally, his theory is based on very general trends in post-war advanced capitalist societies. Study of individual formations may well uncover processes that call his theory into question.

**Commentary on the Land Question and Capitalist Urbanization**

This session included a summary and critique of two papers by Allen J. Scott and Shoukry Rowais, entitled "The Urban Land Question" and "Urban Planning in Theory and Practice: A Reappraisal".

In "The Urban Land Question" the authors argue that the production of urban land takes place in two distinct phases: firstly, the State provides public infrastructure and facilities; secondly, this serviced land is exchanged through private market transactions which determine the pattern and intensity of land use (i.e. the spatial configuration of differential locational advantages). This process is an on-going one. On the one hand there is a market allocation process that is not an object of collective decision, and on the other there is a political allocation process that unceasingly attempts to rectify the problems and inefficiencies that result. For the above reasons the authors argue that urban land can never be rationally planned without significant changes in existing social and property relations.

Through concentrating on the inefficiency of urban land allocation the authors neglect to focus on 1) urban land rent, and 2) the deep structure of social and property relations which underpin market exchanges in capitalist society. Furthermore, their dismissal of the "objective antagonism between the claimants of profits, wages and land rent" is based on a Ricardian analysis, which by and large precludes consideration of wage-labourers.

The second section focused on the theory of the State in relation to capitalist urbanization as expressed in the paper "Urban Planning in Theory and Practice: A Reappraisal". The State acts out of the imperative of maintaining the cohesion of capitalist society, mediating class conflict and guaranteeing and legitimating social and property relations. The fundamental contradiction between the necessity of private decision-making and the need for collective action to maintain the preconditions of commodity production finds an important manifestation in the process of urban land allocation. This contradiction is fundamental to an understanding of urban planning in theory and practice. The Rowais and Scott paper is weak in its extension of its analysis of State intervention in urban problems to the immediate present. The concept of "redistribution" is introduced, but its interpretation in light of class conflict is left undefined. Problems such as high housing prices and land use conflict which directly affect wage labour are ignored. A richer interpretation of land problems might have been presented if the role of land in the reproduction of labour had been explicitly considered.

Gord Garland & Katherine Willison
Discussion:

Shoukry Howels was present and after the presentation he indicated that his analysis has since gone beyond the specific content of these papers, particularly in the area of the representation of labour. He also indicated that "the social question" had not been re-examined. He went on to condemn simplistic class analyses of housing issues, and stressed the disappearance of landowners as a distinct class. The group discussion which followed mainly focused on the class implications of the diffusion of land ownership.

November 12, 1977; morning

McGill Local Workshop,
Regional Underdevelopment

The morning workshop focused on a general discussion of the nature and implications of regional underdevelopment, particularly how underdevelopment as an ongoing process in "developed" or "core" countries. In the course of the discussion three principal themes emerged. These were:

1. the implications of regional underdevelopment for the labour force in the region;
2. the role of the State in countering regional underdevelopment;
3. the dynamics of international capital and its implications for regional underdevelopment.

The implications for labour: Discussion focused on a relatively new phenomenon occurring in underdeveloped regions where the movement of productive capital out of peripheral regions has been accompanied by a decline in the physical capital and by a shift in the organization of productive activity. The problem is to maintain the viability of the industry. The pros and cons of each action were discussed.

Some examples were given for both Quebec and Vermont:
- Industrial capital often gains from such transactions by "cutting its losses" or on "non-viable" enterprises. Often, if labour and state effort reestablish the viability of the industry they are approached again by capital which attempts to reprivatize the enterprise.
- the advantages accruing to "labour" - even if the enterprise is made profitable - are questionable on the following grounds:
  (1) "worker" control is often pre-empted by the presence of state funds and state direction as a dominant factor in the organization of productive relations; and management of industry; (2) even if "workers" control the industry, social relations of production are maintained; some of the workers involved in the organization of productive activity, place of previous managers. It was emphasized that structural determinism and social relations determine consciousness - simple ownership of the production process by workers will effect a change in personal but not in social relations.
Saturday Afternoon: McGill Political Economy of Urbanisation Working Group. THEORIES OF STATE EXPENDITURE AND URBAN STRUCTURE.

The purpose of this session was to attempt a synthesis of theories of the economic function of urban form - (based primarily on the works of Topolov, Pretesecille and Lamarche) - and theories of state expenditure developed by Yaffe Gough, O'Connor, and Fine and Harris.

1. Theories of State Expenditure:

(a) The Nature of Crisis in Capitalist cities.

--functionalist view: The crisis originates in the sphere of production resulting from the increasing organic composition of capital which displaces labour and reveals the myth of state commitment to full employment.

--Fine and Harris argue that the crisis is used by the state to restructure productive capital.

--Gough argues that the crisis arises from the class struggle which necessitates increased state expenditure.

--O'Connor argues that the growth of state involvement in the stimulation and development of demand to offset increased monopoly production leads to a fiscal crisis of state expenditure.

(b) Categorisation of State Expenditures.

--Gough and O'Connor approach this in similar ways:

--state investment in economic agents, social consumption and capital, social consumption expenditures and social expenses,(O'Connor) and, infrastructural service, social needs and social expenses, (Gough).

This categorisation has been criticised by Mozkowitch on two grounds: (a) The limited view of state action in terms of state expenditures alone; and (b), the use of an essentially departmental model of state expenditure which Mozkowitch counters with a model based on the circuits of capital.

2. Capital and Urban Structure:

The group examined studies by Lamarche, Topolov and Pretesecille which focus on the implications of capital for urban form. Common to all three writers is the concept of State Monopoly Capital, which is itself with current phase of capitalism in which the state assumes itself to be monopoly capital to counteract tendencies towards a falling rate of profit and towards overaccumulation.

In the urban context, state intervention takes four forms: (a) the agglomeration of rotation of capital, (b) the management of collective capitals and between classes, (c) the promotion of collective consumption and (d), the transformation of private property rights in accordance with the changing needs of monopoly capital. A brief summary of some particular aspects of the writers' work follows.

1. Lamarche. Lamarche views the urban community as a spatial organisation which facilitates various forms of circulation. Lamarche focuses on the sectors of commercial and financial capital which control the circulation of commodities and money respectively.

Property capital (e.g. large development corporations), is viewed as a medium through which commercial and finance capital are integrated. Particular to Lamarche's work is an analysis of the mediacy by which property capital realises profit. Three sources of profit are indicated: those derived from the building industry, from industry in general and from differential, absolute and monopoly rent.

2. Topolov. Topolov focuses on housing and relates his study to (a) the structural determinants implied in the circuit of capital, (b), the role of the state and (c) the reproduction of labour power as related to the reproduction of capital. Topolov notes that peculiar characteristics of housing (durability, fixed location) tend to prolong the period during which its value is replaced by money. This augments the part of social capital engaged in circulation which, as a consequence, tends to create pressures toward a falling rate of profit in the industrial sector. The state intervenes to counteract the tendency in the provision of devalued capital and subsidy of home ownership. Topolov then relates the concept of home ownership to reproduction of labour power. Home ownership performs two principal functions: provision of accommodation and assurance of consumption.

3. Pretesecille. Pretesecille examines the structural determinants of urban space in relation to three factors. (a) The type of finance capital involved, (b), the extent of devalued capital implicit in the project and (c), the nature of the building industry. Pretesecille notes that the type of investment (and particularly the presence or absence of devalued capital) has a specific effect on the architectural form.

**DISCUSSION.**

The ensuing discussion was rather diffuse, however, some central concerns emerged. (a) Devalorised capital: Defined as capital which accumulates below the average rate of profit, examples for a variety of reasons may be allowed to depreciate. The capitalist accepts a progressively lower rate of profit from the production process. It was pointed out, however, that the dynamics of capital in motion are difficult to conceive of by means of some statistical average. Regional and national characteristics of the social relations and the size (organic composition, productivity) of the capitals involved are varying contexts within which devalorisation must be understood. The question of state expenditures as devalorised capital was also raised. It was pointed out that the analysis of such expenditures through the concepts of the circuits of capital seemed more useful than the static categories employed by some (e.g. Topolov).

The state does not intervene 'merely' in an economic manner but its policies reflect and often directly employ, the monopoly
of police power held by the state. Furthermore, state intervention in the housing market does not imply the automatic development of monopolies. Changes in the structure of the market depend on the manner and level at which the state intervenes, infrastructural, financial, etc.

The questions and problems raised in the discussion reflected the immature status of research and analysis on the state and urbanism. The importance of the questions lies in the need to understand the nature and effects of political strategies currently and in the future.

WEST COAST REGIONAL MEETING
UNION OF SOCIALIST GEOGRAPHERS

When: Weekend of February 16 thru February 18, 1978
Where: Vancouver, British Columbia

Proposed Schedule (subject to your response):

Friday: February 16
6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.: Informal Dinner
7:30 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.: Informal discussion of weekend agenda and current ongoing research
9:30 P.M. - 7 A.M.: Introduction to the Geography of the Waldorf Hotel Pub

Saturday: February 17
11:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.: Lunch
1:00 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.: Regional Business Meeting to discuss issues for U.S.G. Newsletter
- evaluation of U.S.G. Newsletter
- issues for U.S.G. Annual Meeting
- inventory of current research and conferences in region
2:00 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.: Special Sessions
- Urban Housing Policy
- Geography and Social Class
- Urban Social History
- Marxist Economic Theory

Sunday: February 18
8:30 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.: Breakfast
11:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.: Lunch (and tour of Vancouver)

A Summary of the Minutes from the Toronto Regional General Meeting; held November 13th, 1977

The meeting session opened with an outline of current and proposed activities from members of various localities within the region.

Dick Peet and Phil O'Keefe from Clark report they are putting together a meeting on "Marxist Geography and topics for Marxist Geography".

McGill people report that besides their current study group on "urbanism, they have put together a reading group on the Political Economy of Canada". A proposal was made to translate articles from the French journals. Susan Ruddick, one of our bilingual geographers, will be the co-ordinator for undertaking a synopsis of La Pensee and L'Espace et Societe.

From the University of Minnesota, we hear via Eric Sheppard that a regional meeting will be held sometime in January or February. The next U.S.G. newsletter, which is to be done by Minnesota, is presently scheduled for January publication. A study group on community alternatives is currently in the works.

Jim Blaut reports a successful contribution by radical geographers to a discussion on Underdevelopment held at the West Lakes division meetings of the A.A.G.

Communication

Further to the Regina meeting, the problem of resolving the place of facilities (i.e. computer, printing, mailout) and the concentration of U.S.G. labour power was discussed. In the last year, there has been a diffusion (technical) of the membership from S.F.U., Vancouver, where the permanent records have traditionally been kept, and the newsletter processed. The circulation is continuing, necessitating a search for alternative facilities at probable higher costs.

These higher costs and the need to maintain financial stability stress the need for paid-up memberships. If everyone pays their dues, the money-pot and our vital communication links can maintain reasonable health! Lapsed members will receive 2 personally sent and worded reminders by the regional contact person.

To further stabilize the financial situation, it was suggested that donations could be made from grants and scholarships. Also, donations could be made by increasing the number of U.S.G. member "guest lectures", from which the fee in part or (?) could be donated. The latter move would reap both social and material rewards!
At the Regina (June 1977) meeting, it was suggested that members of the core committee and members-at-large display a balanced regional distribution. Since then, "2 of the members-at-large have disappeared sucked away by the vampire..." Hopefully Eric Sheppard at University of Minnesota and Christine Rodrigue at Clark will be immune a bit longer in the positions of "regional" conscriptors.

A Collective Project

It was proposed that a "collective work project" be undertaken by local and individuals. The decision was made to put together a "critical study guide" to Nogge's widely used text, Geography: A Modern Synthesis. This will entail a detailed critique and exploration of alternatives. Interested persons should either get together as a local discussion group where possible or work individually.

The objective is to put these pieces together as a complete alternative study guide by April 1978. Contact the co-ordinator: Dr. Phil O'Keefe, Department of Geography, Clark University, Worcester Mass. U.S.A. 01602.

The U.G.S. Annual General Meeting: in conjunction with the A.A.G. April 1978 in New Orleans

1. U.S.G. meeting space and accommodation will be either at the AAG location or in close proximity. It is being organized by Jim Blaut.

2. An application for special interest session has been made by Jim Blaut. He mistakenly called it the A.G.M. of the U.S.G. Will be corrected by simply using the time for some other discussions. The A.G.M. should not be open to non-members.

3. Dick Peet has a U.S.G.-Antipode session organized.

4. Individual papers are being sent in by members; we must compile a list of all of these so that people can attend.

5. U.S.G. Meetings

The AAG runs from Sunday through to Wednesday. The real U.S.G. A.G.M. will be on Sunday.

Other sessions: information will be sent out and available at our desk and posted in the hotel. These meetings will be interspersed with A.A.G. meetings.

6. Sessions within the U.S.G. should be informal. Papers may be presented under general headings. People interested in presenting papers should write to Jim. The announcement will be in the Minnesota or McGill newsletter. Final programmes is to be sent out one month before conference.

7. McGill has organized a special session.

Canadian Association of Geographers (C.A.G.) Annual Conference

The U.S.G. is on the map! We have been noted by the C.A.G. and included in their invitation for Special Sessions for the London, Ontario June 1978 gathering. Any suggestions????? Send them to: Gordon Garland, Department of Geography, Sidney Smith Hall, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario.

Further Notes:


2. see letter to Customs re: "Antipode seized at Border!"

Sunday Afternoon

Judy Stamp, Tom Scanlon and Francine Beaudin

Community Geography

This session was oriented toward discussion of work by non-academic U.S.G. members. One of the aims of this meeting was the establishment of ongoing discussion between community and academic members. Outlines of July's and Tom's work appear two pages hence.
Francine Beaudin described her work with a group researching social and economic changes in the agricultural region of Bellchase, Quebec. This group has produced a film and document and are currently disseminating this information to area residents. Francine is also working on a local newspaper, La Voix, in her community of Ste. Camille.

The group discussed problems of writing 'non academic' text, of focusing on issues of importance to rural people, and of using newspapers as means of raising consciousness. Finally, Francine discussed problems of incorporating geography into a history course she will be teaching in the spring, and discussion centered around teaching alternative material within a structured school curriculum framework.

Several proposals for ongoing groups emerged from the general discussion:

1. a proposal by members of the Toronto local to meet regularly to discuss their work, both academic and non-academic. These meetings will also involve interested people from outside the discipline. Anyone interested in attending contact: Suzanne Mackenzie, Department of Geography, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario 656-0912

2. a proposal to hold quarterly (or so) meetings of people concerned with issues of geography and women, especially with the question of production and reproduction of labour in the city. It was suggested that such meetings be held in Kingston (look out Fran) as someone pointed out that this was half way between Montreal and Toronto! Anyone interested please contact: Fran Kiockowski, Geography Department, Queens University, Kingston Ontario or Bettina Bradbury, 3514 Oxford Avenue, Montreal, Quebec or Suzanne Mackenzie (above)

Much of the data generated by the Toronto Geographical Expedition was collected by high school geography students. The results suggest that students at this level are capable of producing research that is useful to local residents, while learning important geographical skills and concepts. A year of experimentation at seven Toronto high schools indicates that many of the field studies fundamental to the Expedition can be adapted to the high school geography curriculum.

A recently published Manual entitled: Neighbourhood Geography, outlines in detail, how teachers can involve their students in neighbourhood exploration. The Manual contains five field studies:

1. Land Use - Students evaluate private space in the area to reveal the 'sense of community' that exists, and assess public space for its' accessibility and usefulness to the local residents. Students map features such as automobile space, porch use and child space.

2. Local/Non-local Land Use - Students determine through interviews, which land uses in the neighbourhood exist primarily for the local residents and which serve a wider population. The effect of the number and distribution of non-local establishments is then evaluated.

3. Traffic - students conduct a traffic count on all streets in the neighbourhood and measure the speed of the vehicles at strategic points.

4. Range of a Child - Children are interviewed to reveal how far from their home they roam and to what specific nodes they are attracted.

5. Where Children Play - Students map where children are found playing in the community and record the surfaces they play on and the activities they engage in.

In the back of the Manual, there are pull-out sheets that are given to the students. These sheets explain how to collect the data; assemble the information and analyze the results.

They are encouraged to use the data to depict problems in the area and to develop specific practical solutions. The results can then be presented to the local residents.

While the research does not always bring about desired changes in the community, it does allow students to use their geographic skills in a useful practical way and exposes them to the difficulties groups encounter when they try to obtain even minor changes in their neighbourhood.

The Manual can be obtained from: The Is Five Foundation 477 Dupont Street Toronto, Ontario, M6G 1Y6 Cost, including student sheets is $7.50
Critical Notes on Marx's Theory of Value

1. How do we assess a theory of value? As Marxists, or, what amounts to the same thing, as humans interested in affecting a transition to socialism, we assess a theory of value, including Marx's, by asking: (i) what extent does it illuminate, scientifically and demonstrably, the nature of class relationships, particularly relations of exploitation; (ii) to what extent does it illuminate the prospects of exploitation; (iii) to what extent does it make the world self-conscious, by awakening it from its dream about itself and by explaining its own actions to it.)

2. Following these criteria, I want to initiate a Marxian assessment of Marx's theory of value. I propose to consider six interrelated aspects of his theory of value:

i. the source of surplus under full-blown commodity production;
ii. the reduction of concrete to abstract (or simple) labour;
iii. the historical and moral dimension that enters in the determination of the value of labour power;
iv. the determinants of the overall rate of exploitation;
v. the production and appropriation of relative surplus value;
vi. the meaning and political significance of improved productivity of labour.

No suggestion is here made that these are the only points in Marx's theory of value that warrant critical consideration.

(i) It is not accidental that Marx insists on the historical and moral dimension. Quite unlike the classical economists, he had already developed his historical materialist philosophy, which, in opposition to Hegel, insists on the historical and logical priority of the objective, but, in opposition to Feuerbach, sees no human history without human subjectivity. Hence, two points acquire central importance in Marx: first, the class struggle as the main determinant of the rate of exploitation, and second, the rate of exploitation as the main determinant of the value of labour-power. In addition, Marx acknowledges the importance of labour productivity as a partial determinant of both the rate of exploitation and the value of labour-power. (More on this later).

(ii) Having accepted the methodological/philosophical intentions behind Marx's insistence on the centrality of the class struggle, the theory of value he actualized must nonetheless be criticized for not having solved the problems presented by these very intentions.

(iii) In search of an 'objective measure of value,' Marx chose to construct his theory of value in terms of hours of simple labour. The measure appears objective in that it is independent of subjective evaluations of the use-values of commodities on the one hand, and of subjective or political evaluations of labour-power (i.e., wages) on the other. Yet the measure (hours of simple labour) is not in fact objective. For it involves, logically as well as historically, a very central 'historical
and moral dimension; namely that of the reduction of concrete labour to simple labour. Far from being merely computational, this reduction is first and foremost a real social convenience, for it allows a simpler, more efficient computation of labour.

It is the process by which differential rewards to producers are translated into the wage. The wage is the product of two main components: the time spent on the production of the commodity and the subjective (more specifically, political) dimension of reducing concrete to simple labour.

Marx neglects this problem completely and thus neglects also the very real dynamics which fragment the working class and divide it over the very central social/political question of the relative evaluation of concrete labour skills.

Accordingly, his "theory of consciousness" suffers greatly, and from a gratuitous optimism that the development of factories and bigger factories, will facilitate the spread of consciousness. (On the assumption that consciousness is the only source of surplus value and that a difference in consciousness can be made only by changing the modes of production.)

(vi) The Marxist conclusion that the production of relative surplus value is self-cancelling rests on two premises: first, that capitalists are not unique in their capacity to accumulate surplus value, that social human beings evaluate commodities, (at least consumption goods), according to their 'objective' value and an adult political process for the political significance or implications of this point.

In the second place, the ability of human labour-power to create more value than its own is not unique and significant, or unique and characteristic. For what is truly unique to human labour-power is that it combines mental and manual labour skills and therefore lends itself readily, progressively, and with no visible irritation, to cooperation. Political economy, for one has already recognized this. He developed this theme at length both in Vol.2 of CAPITAL and in previous works (POVERTY OF PHILOSOPHY, GERMAN IDEOLOGY, GRUNDRISSE), but he never adequately pursued the political significance of this point.

Norr, for that matter, did he exploit it in her political economy. On the contrary, he unwittingly undermined its significance by arguing that the production of relative surplus value is a self-cancelling process.

Marx's neglect of this problem completely and thus neglects also the very real dynamics which fragment the working class and divide it over the very central social/political question of the relative evaluation of concrete labour skills.
6. It is not possible to develop such a theory in this document. It is only possible to indicate, briefly, some of the promising points of departure. If we so resolve, we must do much more work on this issue.

7. For now, consider these preliminary propositions:
   (i) The uniqueness of labour-power (under a regime of
       full-blown commodity production; or what amounts to
       the same thing, a regime of fully developed wage
       labour) is that it combines mental and manual labour
       skills and hence that it lends itself readily, progressively,
       and with no visible limits, to "voluntary" cooperation. ("Voluntary"
       here, denotes the absence of direct coercion, no more.)
   (ii) The most important source of surplus under full com-
        modity production is the combinability (mental and manual) of
        labour, or, relative surplus value.
   (iii) Dispossessing the direct producers from the means of
        production is the principal historical task of the emerging
        bourgeoisie in the phase of petty commodity production. This
        allows the institutionalization of wage labour and hence the
        appropriation of absolute surplus value. Dispossessing the
        direct producers from their control over the logic, development,
        trajectory and social division of labour is the principal
        historical task of the established bourgeoisie under full-blown
        commodity production;
   (iv) The inner logic of full-blown commodity production,
        far from leading to a gradual unification of the working class,
        has important structural forces which tend to divide and
        fragment the working class;
   (v) Since the material surplus (quantitatively) gradually
        ceases to be the nexus of exploitation, revolutionary con-
        sciousness ceases to develop "spontaneously" or as a "logical"
        response to the "relative immiseration" of the class;
   (vi) Under full-blown commodity production the nature of
        exploitation shifts from exploitation in the quantitative
        sense to exploitation in the qualitative sense of an increasing
        reproduction of the means of production and of
        precariousness in the labour market; and finally;
   (vii) Politically, the task is no longer only to control the
        means of production as such but to control the labour process
        itself, (i.e., the combinability of labour), the social division
        of labour, and hence, and as a by-product, the social wealth
        which is the product of labour, and labour alone.

Shoukry T. Rowels.

Approaches to Housing Research:
A Bibliography.

- John Holmes, Queen's University, Kingston

This bibliography is an amended version of one which was appended
to a paper presented at the June 1977 meetings of the CAG in
Regina, Saskatchewan. The paper, entitled "Housing and Housing
Policy: The Need for a Political Economic Approach" contained
a critique of orthodox housing research and then reviewed studies
of housing conducted within either an institutional (managerial)
or a political economic framework. The material reviewed and
critiqued in the paper was drawn largely from U.K., France and
U.S. material. Canadian material was intentionally excluded since
it was the focus of a complementary paper presented in the same
session by Charlie Simper - "Urban Housing Markets and Policy
Directions: A Canadian Perspective".

In the interim since the paper was presented I have added a few
items to the Bibliography (with thanks to Damaris Rose for drawing
some to my attention) and also provided a few footnotes with re-
spect to the location of some items. The bibliography is in no
comprehensive - it was put together to provide a few
examples of work in these two areas (institutional and political
economic) areas of recent housing research.

I. Critiques of Orthodox Work and General Arguments for Either
An Institutional or a Political Economic Approach

Anderson, J. (1976) The Political Economy of Urbanism: An Intro-
duction and Bibliography. Obtainable from the author, Architec-

Duncan, S.S. (1976) "Research Directions in Social Geography:
Housing Opportunities and Constraints" in Transactions, Institute
of British Geographers New Series, 1(1), pp. 16-19

Gray, F. (1975) Non-explanation in Urban Geography" in Areas,
7(4), pp. 228-235

Change and Conflict, Conference Papers 14, Centre for Environ-

Contains not only the conference papers but also summaries of the
 ensuing discussions. The latter are particularly interesting
since they reveal the sharp contrasts between the theoretical
and Marxist tradition on the one hand and the empirical British
managerial approach on the other. A second conference of a similar
nature was held by C.E.S. in January 1977. Collected proceedings
are not yet available. However, individual papers are included in
later sections of this bibliography. Note: some C.E.S. publica-
tions are available at reduced rates to students.


II. The Managerial/Institutional Approach

What is generally referred to as the Managerial School developed as a trend in British Sociology and Urban Geography in the late nineteen Sixties. It dates, perhaps, from Ness and Moncrief's influential Race, Community and Conflict, a work dealing with race and housing race, and conflict, a work dealing with race and housing in Birmingham, England. In this work, the authors introduce the concept of housing classes and the idea of struggle between such classes to gain access to housing opportunities. The development of this line of research is reflected in the articles by Pahl, cited in this context, below. The main point of Pahl's original 1969 Environment and Planning article, is that 'social constraints on access to scarce urban facilities, such as housing, reflect the social distribution of power in society'. It presupposes that the distribution of power in the society constrains access, and the population distribution in different social classes. This approach has been used in various ways by different authors to study the housing field. The managers include mortgage lenders, property investors, builders and developers of land, estate agents, real estate lawyers, interest groups and lobby organizations participating in policy making and local government officials involved in the administration of public housing.

The analysis proposes a range of occupational groups and professions, reflecting their roles and procedures, (reflecting their ideologies), constitute a range of constraints on access to services. These constraints are experienced in various ways by people in diverse locations. In the specific case of housing, the aim is to understand how groups in different positions in relation to housing context. This approach has been used in various ways by different authors to study the housing field. The managers include mortgage lenders, property investors, builders and developers of land, estate agents, real estate lawyers, interest groups and lobby organizations participating in policy making and local government officials involved in the administration of public housing. This is a very broad category and indeed the managerial approach itself includes a wide range of perspectives.

On one extreme it tends toward what Roweis and Scott have referred to as the 'manipulated city' approach, exemplified in Canada by many of the contributions to City Magazine, and at the other extreme, toward studies such as those by Boddy and Paris which can be viewed as being firmly placed in the category of political economy.


Public Policy and Private Profit

Steve New.

There has been a lot of attention focused around the issue of urban land development and the emerging monopoly ownership of developable land by a relatively few corporations. This trend towards the increasing concentration of capital within the land development industry has been accompanied by a dramatic increase in the cost of housing lots in Canadian cities. This simple correlation forces many people to conclude that the power of ownership of these corporations must be substantially reduced if housing is to remain affordable to a majority of Canadians. A popular solution offered by many is to increase the role of the state in providing low cost housing lots through public land assembly projects.

This policy was a major topic pursued by Peter Spurr of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation in a report entitled, Land and Urban Development, a preliminary study. The study provides a comprehensive overview of the housing and development industry in Canada over the past 25 years, and promotes public land banking and assembly as long term goals of the federal government. The report's conclusions are based upon an impressive collection of empirical evidence, and have been praised by planners and urban researchers who are critical of the existing private land development process. The arguments in favour of public land assembly appear to be growing as a result of this report and other similar discussions such as those in Vancouver at Habitat in 1976.

There is a serious problem as a result of this popularity, that of over-hyping the potential of public land assembly without properly evaluating the concept in its socio-economic context. It is therefore the intent of this brief presentation to provide a critique of the Spurr report, focusing upon the role of the State in providing urban land under the two pricing policies identified by Spurr, for the disposal of public lands within a market economy. There will be particular emphasis upon the case of a Canadian city which presently markets public land for the purpose of providing residential housing lots.

Spurr identifies four goals or objectives which a "government body might pursue by undertaking a land assembly project. These objectives are:

1. To reduce land costs for the ultimate consumer (i.e., prices);
2. to control urban spatial expansion in support of planning goals, by leading or blocking the shape of a city's growth with the public land;
3. to provide land for various social needs not met by private enterprise. One such need is low cost housing for subsidized housing projects for the elderly;
4. to generate new revenue (profit) for governments.¹

Spurr explains that the second and third objectives may be achieved through proper planning and administrative controls and therefore, are not dependent upon the public ownership of the land. They are minor objectives. The major objectives are land price reduction and revenue generation.

Land price reduction refers to the sale of public land at cost, below market value, and provides a form of subsidy for the first buyer. It is also expected to lower the general market value of houses in an area when the public land development captures a significant proportion of the market. The policy of revenue generation eliminates the subsidy to the first buyer, and the opportunity to speculate on the lower-than-market-value of the lot and the house. The profits from this method of sale are then re-invested into the community by the government. Spurr concludes that the land assembly objectives may vary according to the type of local market.

He argues that a land price reduction policy is better suited for a smaller urban centre where most of the households already own a house, and where land and housing costs increase more slowly, relative to larger cities. In this manner, the effective subsidy on a building lot priced at cost will not be speculated upon by prospective buyers and sold at the prevailing market value, to the same extent as in larger cities, because of the less volatile market in these smaller centers. Conversely, because of the high demand for housing in the larger cities, and a correspondingly greater chance for speculation on cost-priced lots, the advocates look to a market value with the profit going to the public body. As the author says, "the issue is not whether the profits are big, small, good or bad, but who should receive them."

Upon evaluating the goals proposed by Spurr, there appears to be an absence of a critical analysis of the role of the State in the land development process. The omission is an obvious one due to the objective relationship to capital in which CMBIC, but nevertheless must be noted when analysing the development process in a capitalist society. Each of the four goals defines the government in a mediative role between private function house buyers and the large development corporations. In other words, they appear to place the public good ahead of the interests of the private land developers, with the net result of trying to limit the powers of private industry. This observation clearly contradicts any critical evaluation of the role of the State in Capitalist society, which examines the parallel rise to power of capitalism and the State. Such an evaluation overlooks the role of the State as an arm of capital in facilitating the maintenance and growth of capitalism and the capitalist ideology.

Given this definition of the State, and the following research and analysis around this definition, I propose two additional goals for public land assembly to supplement Spurr's two main objectives. These two additional goals are:

1. provision of a supply of housing lots for private industry when it is not capable of fulfilling such a task;

2. preserve and maintain the capitalist ideology.

Both these goals will be discussed, but there will be a greater emphasis on the former one, which is more evident in the case study chosen.

In review again, Spurr states that the particular pricing policy is dependent upon the local market conditions. He says that a cost-price policy is appropriate for an area where demand is relatively stable. If this market is further analyzed, it is generally characterized by a low level of speculative activity and consequently, a low level, or absence of large land development companies who may obtain higher profits on land transactions elsewhere. Therefore Spurr's cost-price policy is geared toward a local economy which is characterized by small construction and land development companies which do not have sufficient capital to develop large tracts of urban land.

This brief market overview adequately describes the situation of the case study Canadian City (although it is changing with increased interest from the larger national corporations in the recent past). The City experiences a relatively stable housing market with approximately 100 housing contractors building an average of 800 single family and duplex dwelling units each year.

The City has carried on a public land development policy for the last 25 years. This practice has been helped considerably by the extent and location of Crown land adjacent to the core area of the city. The City obtains title to the land from the Province, services it and sells it at a public auction with the initial price representing the cost of development. An individual or company may only buy four lots at each auction and must have substantially completed a dwelling on the lot in one year's time.

The City has historically provided about 40% of the residential lots supplied. This has been the actual objective of the public land development policy, supplemented by the following facts:

- City lots are purchased almost exclusively by private contractors;
- Although there is a limit of four lots per individual or company, many more are purchased by one group through affiliated companies, employees and members of their
families;

Spurr proposes that the market value of houses is
determined by the old housing stock which out sells
new housing in quantity by 3 to 1. The local market
condition of this city is comparable at a ratio of
2.5 to 1;

The local contractors therefore receive an additional
profit on the hidden subsidy from the difference
between the cost of the lot, and its market value with
the house on it;

The cries of a lot shortage do not correspond to
any shortage of serviced lots ready for development
or unoccupied new houses. A recent market survey
reported a three year supply of available lots for
housing if current growth rates prevailed.

Two observations emerge from these facts. One is that housing
is considered as any other commodity and is intended to provide exchange
value for the construction industry and prospective buyers, rather
than use value. Although there may be an adequate number of dwelling
units to satisfy the demand for housing at this time, the demands
of industry and capital require that the contractors keep building
houses to keep working and producing profit. This may obviously
lead to future bankruptcies of some of the smallest companies if
they do not sell their houses, as they are dependent upon a rapid
turnover of capital on investments to keep in operation.

The second, and more relevant observation on the present discussion
relates to the role of the local government in providing lots for
private industry, who could not otherwise perform such a task because
of their small scale. The State assumes the costly process of serv-
ing and developing the land and, then places these lots for sale
for private profit. This act embraces one of the fundamental con-
tradictions of the capitalist system, and that is the socialization
of the productive forces, or of development in this case, and
the private appropriation of the resulting commodity. The State assumes
the development function which private capital cannot undertake
profitably or isn’t prepared to get involved in directly. This
socialized function always results in further benefits to private
capital.

The second market condition which Spurr describes is the high demand
area of the large cities in which there is a high degree of speculation
on land prices. The author suggests that the revenue generating
policy of public land disposal works best in these areas in
order to eliminate any speculative activity on cost-priced lots.
The profits from land sales at market value are then redistributed
to the community.

It appears contradictory to the perviously defined role of the State
to enter into direct competition with private industry in this
manner. An explanation lies with a further clarification of the
market characteristics of this situation, and a further refinement
of the State’s role in supporting private capital.

These high demand areas are characterized by the large development
companies, 120-140 of which account for 75% of metropolitan lot
development in Canada. The Spurr Report refers to a survey which
found 211 farms holding 119,600 acres of land, while public land
assembles account for approximately 50,000 acres in about 100 differ-
ent projects. Coupled with this concentration of ownership by
private development corporations, are the constant reports of
the speculative and development profits made by these companies.

These profit figures affect many individuals and groups directly
in their need for housing and it appears to be in the interest
of the State to intervene in the development process in order
to vent the resentment growing against this sector of capitalism.
The State defines itself in an ideological role of trying to pre-
serve the notion of free enterprise by competing with the large
development companies and providing an opportunity for the small
house builder to compete in a free market. In any case, private
developers own a vast amount of developable land in Canadian
metropolitan areas, and it does not appear that the threat of
competition from the Canadian Government will seriously jeopar-
dize their continued existence and profits in Canada.

Footnotes:

1. Peter Spurr, Land and Urban Development, a preliminary study, James Lorimer and Co., Toronto. 1976. pg. 245
2. Ibid; pg. 254
Scene: Ottawa, in a not-too-distant future. A Federal NDP government has just been voted in, much to most people's surprise. Hasty-called policy meetings are being held at the various Ministries. The new Minister for Urban Affairs has been consulting with some "urban experts" (so far mainly socialist geographers) in the hope of guiding urban development in a socially-rational manner by means of a coherent programme of land reform.

The dialogue takes place in the Minister's office:

Minister of Urban Affairs: Well, last week we had some preliminary discussions about NDP policy and the urban land issue, so now I think it's time we got down to something more specific.

1st Executive Assistant: Yes, and we should all be aware by now of the constraints we operate under. It's all very well having these enthusiastic young radicals coming here and telling us we have to virtually restructure the whole economy if we want to do anything about the inefficiencies and the inequities in the urban land market. They don't have to deal with the electorate.

2nd Executive Assistant: Or the demands of the Urban Development Institute, or HUDAC, or the big banks.

Minister: Now, now Cyril, you must remember that this is an NDP administration.

1st E.A.: Anyway, they said something about the British Community Land Act, didn't they? That was passed by a Labour Government and the real estate industry does seem to have accepted it, albeit reluctantly. Perhaps we should try a toned-down version of it over here.

Minister: (pauses pensive) Yes, a Development Land Tax could be imposed immediately while a land acquisition programme would be phased over a longer term; this would give the municipal councils and provincial governments a breathing space before they'd have to fork out for the purchase and servicing of all this extra land... and of course we'll have to work out how much land is needed too... Both measures together would serve as short and longer-term ways of rationalising the urban land development process. Wilbur, see if you can find someone to give us a rundown on the British legislation, and then we can see if any of it could be applied to Canada by our government.

1st E.A.: Certainly, Minister - in fact I think there's another urban expert in town, a visitor from Britain.


Minister: Come on, let's not make prejudgments. We'll try to see this person on Tuesday.

**************

Scene:

Tuesday, at the Minister's office - after the niceties.

Minister: (to Expert) As I think you know, we're shopping around for some ways to make urban development more socially rational. We can't go on allowing publicly-financed improvements to urban land to be appropriated by private interests; we must gain more control over the land market and plough increments in the value of urban land back to the community. Perhaps you could start by telling us the aims of the Labour Government's Community Land Act.

Expert: Well...er...it rather depends which Manifesto, Green or White Paper you read. Labour's been talking about land nationalisation since 1918, though nothing was done about it really until the Land Commission was set up in the mid-1960s -

1st E.A.: Land nationalisation?!!! Isn't that rather drastic, if you don't mind my saying so, madam?

Minister: (in soothing tone) It's all right, Wilbur - I was at the Habitat conference in Vancouver last June, and Mr. Silklin, the minister responsible for the Community Land Act, made it quite clear that Labour's policy falls well short of wholesale nationalisation. (To Expert) Do carry on.

Expert: Well, in February 1974, when the administration first came to power, their manifesto stated that land required for development would be taken into public ownership, so that it would be "freely and cheaply available for new houses, schools, hospitals and other purposes." The manifesto for the October 1974 election said that this land "will be paid for at existing use value, and the expensive disgrace of land speculation will be ended."

2nd E.A.: Still sounds too radical for us to handle...

Expert: (hoping to be subtly persuasive) Maybe... But you know the idea of public appropriation of publicly-created increments in land values is nothing new - it's been around since John Stuart Mill, and his writing wasn't exactly very radical. Of course, the sanctity of private property has been even more hegemonic here than in Britain, but now the climate of public opinion is changing; people know that some degree of direct state intervention is essential to make the land market efficient and keep cities healthy places to live. Even the development industry is slowly coming around to the idea -

1st E.A.: Yes, they don't complain about "creeping socialism" quite as much these days, it's true...

Expert: Anyway, the official aims of the 1975 Community Land Act were two-fold: Firstly, to "shirk off" development values of land for the public benefit. Secondly, to bring about positive planning, as opposed to the negative development control policies which have historically dominated British planning.

Minister: Those sound like reasonable enough objectives... But what about that stuff about cheap housing? Still, I guess Silkin realised that was overambitious - we should keep that in mind for our own policy document.

Now, I understand that under this Act local authorities have
the power to acquire land for development net of Development Land Tax, initially set at 6%. This is levied on the sale of interests in land exceeding $10,000 in one year, with the exception of land for owner-occupied homes. Gains of over $50,000 per year are taxed at 8%. The tax enables the local authority to purchase substantial parcels of land which they can either develop themselves or lease to private interests for "positively" controlled development. The "profits" from the Act will be split between local authorities and central government. Eventually, all development land will be dealt with in this way; the tax will be raised to 100% so that purchases can be made at a market price. Is that correct?

**Expert:** Well, yes, you've got the gist of it. Of course, it's very complex... and originally the tax was to have been 80% across the board until the "second appointed day" when all land is to be bought at existing use value. However, the reduction in DLT was one of many concessions made as the Bill went through Parliament.

**1st E.A.:** I'm not surprised - an 80% tax would scare all the developers away pretty quickly. I think, Minister, that in Canada we should have to have a much lower rate of tax.

**Expert:** (trying hard not to show her exasperation) But a lower rate of tax will achieve nothing except raise a few thousand dollars and maybe wipe out the "fringe" speculators who may get the worst publicity but whose activities are peripheral to the development process. Meanwhile the large corporations will continue to thrive, and they may actually be encouraged to hold land vacant for a longer period and then build on the land themselves, thus avoiding the tax. The Ontario Economic Council reported such effects from the Land Speculation Tax in this province: (fluffing through a pile of paper) "It is ironic that the question of economic and market power now permeates the debate over high land costs, while such government activities as the long regulatory process, the requirement that developers finance municipial services and the land speculation tax tend to increase concentration."  

**2nd E.A.:** But surely the new Government will want to get rid of land speculators. And besides, the Canadian people are tired of planning and service provision being tied up in red tape. We can't bear the intervention without higher prices that we ease the flow of land for private development.

**Minister:** Hmm... There's something in that... But we must remember that we are pledged to take a more active role in the urban development process. We must certainly go beyond existing legislation, especially the kind of thing the PCs did in Ontario. Besides which, people often say that up till now land-banking in Canada has been so piecemeal that it's led only to more scarcity and in some cases even higher prices for house-lots - and there's probably an element of truth in that.

**Expert:** Well, there are some very important differences between existing land-banking schemes in Canada and the British legislation. The main one is that the Community Land Act, in theory, gives local authorities the power to ensure socially-needed renewal in inner-cities, whereas up till now Canadian schemes have been almost entirely concerned with expansion at the periphery of urban areas.

**1st E.A.:** Yes, but in Canada we must be primarily concerned with the tremendous growth around our major cities; our land assessment systems must mainly cater for new development. Moreover, we have to rationalise urban growth, we can't afford indiscriminate suburbanisation and the inefficient use of infrastructure which that process generates.

**Expert:** Exactly. That's why I take issue with those proposals of Spurr's. We suggests a greatly-expanded land assembly-acquisition programme of unserviced land far enough away from the current urban fringe to be available at agricultural value. Even though that can be done and it's impossible without the utmost secrecy it won't help matters much, because if growth continues to slow down governments will be left paying the interest charges on unwanted land. Besides which, they'd be hard pressed to find the revenues needed.

**Minister:** Ummm... Good point. Yes, peripheral expansion must in future be carefully planned, with no more sprawl, and we must try to make use of vacant and under-used land in the inner-city, especially private redevelopment of inner-city areas that didn't materialise - we could get socially-necessary uses like low-to-middle-income housing on those sites if only we could buy them at existing use value... But just a minute, you said the Community Land Act could achieve all these fine things in theory - isn't it working out then?

**Expert:** Well, not exactly. You see, with the economic crisis, it's very hard for local authorities to do much with these inner-city sites, of which there are many. The financial funders of development schemes are of course the financial institutions, and they'll only get involved when they know there'll be steady and secure returns to compensate for the risks inherent in complex redevelopment schemes. They also require long leases - up to 125 years - giving them an effective share in the equity of the projects. And in some cases it seems that the sites would not be sold to the institutions rather than leased, although this goes against the grain of the Act. They've argued to the Government that in depressed areas such as this, the economic prospects it wouldn't be worth going ahead with a scheme at all on a leasehold basis because the rental income would be inadequate. Which, frankly, puts the local authorities in a rather embarrassing position when looking for services - for low-cost housing - so they're keeping clear of inner-city sites as far as the Community Land Act is concerned.

**Minister:** I see (thoughtfully). Well, we'll obviously have to have more contact with the development industry from the outset, especially the institutions; we know we can't do without them, but they can do without Canada if we're not very
by private individuals; in the medium-to-long term the goal of rational urban development would be completely neglected.

What the Community Land Act, in its compromised, debased form, amounts to is a subsidisation of the development industry, because the costs of land assembly are shifted onto the state, while the profits they make from the buildings they put up may well be in excess of the ground rents payable to local authorities.

1st F.A.: If I understand you correctly, and if you'll excuse the expression, what you seem to be implying is that we're damned if we do and we're damned if we don't. What is it you're actually proposing?

Minister: Yes, I tend to agree. We could spend months here analysing and criticising and being self-righteous, but we must do something about the urban land market; pay some attention to our election promises.

Expert: I know that... It's just that we really must understand the implications of what we're doing, realise that these reforms are inevitably not without contradictions. I would suggest modified legislation based on the Community Land Act. Simplify the Development Land Tax, and make it 100% from the start.

This would go hand in hand with the land acquisition programme and then the authorities could afford...
ions inherent in limited intervention in the land market, although of course they didn’t recommend any radical changes. If you’ll excuse my bluntness, what this means is that, in the absence of a firm and demonstrable commitment to increasing socialisation in all sectors of the economy you’ll probably be defeated in the next Federal elections. That’s not to say that a centrally-directed economy is the only solution, or indeed desirable except as a transitional stage, but that would be the logical extension of your policies... but perhaps I’m digressing.

Minister: Hmm... yes, well, this is indeed a serious point that you’ve raised, and I do think we must be very careful to consider the political implications of our... possible increased role in the urban land market before we rush into anything.

2nd E.A.: If I might remind you also, Minister, your Government has a majority of only three seats.

Minister (sighs): Yes, I know, we have to remember that too. (To Expert) Well, we’ve covered quite a lot of ground this morning and I’m sure we’ve all learned something. Of course, in the coming months we must investigate all the alternative courses of action to see which, if any, is most appropriate at this very difficult time. Maybe we should invite you back for a discussion session with officials from the Finance Ministry and a few urbanists from the research institutes. Meanwhile, thank you so much for coming along - they’ll pay your expenses in the downstairs office - good morning!

Expert: (rising hastily to her feet) Good morning - I do hope I’ve been of some use to you.

***************

(Later that day - the Minister is alone in her office, surrounded by memoranda and overfull ashtrays)

Minister: (muttering over a cup of cold machine coffee) Those negotiations are getting very distressing. Damn this business of reform politics! I’d never have been faced with these kinds of dilemmas if I’d followed my dad’s advice and joined the Tories!

***************

-DAMARIS ROSE
GOVERNMENT DEPT.
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Notes


Inspirations
Format: Susanne Mackenzie; Shoukry Roweis
Content: Richard Crossman (1976), Diaries of a Cabinet Minister.

What is Urban in Urban Analysis?

Shoukry Roweis

1) To most of us who come to identify ourselves as socialist or Marxist geographers or urban analysts, this identification is not a fad or an idle label, but a definite response to various dissatisfactions. There is firstly dissatisfaction with the dominant orthodoxies: the “descriptive” geography, neoclassical urban economics, Heberian urban sociology, behaviourist analyses of “urban power structures”, and so on. There is also a dissatisfaction with contemporary urban life itself; its disarray and the disarray it causes in our lives. On top of this, there is usually dissatisfaction with pluralist electoral politics; with its obvious inability (contrary to the claims of its apologists) to lead to meaningful reforms, let alone significant social transformation.

2) It is unfortunate, though, that in our zeal to respond to these and other dissatisfactions, we often forget to ask the crucial question as to what is urban in urban analysis. Clearly, the question is not entirely semantical nor trivial. It is a question of substance and of method. Without some answer, our efforts are likely to flounder and remain fragmented and eclectic; and we are likely to remain divided and politically weak.

In what follows, I would like to develop the outlines of an answer to this question. I hope this will generate discussion and stimulate autonomous thinking rather than adding another piece of doctrine. Firstly, though, the question needs to be formulated more carefully. There are two sets of issues here: one of substance and one of method. I will take them up in that order.

3) With respect to substance, the question is one of the object of “urban” analysis. What is the phenomenon (or set of phenomena) that constitutes the object of inquiry of “urban” analysis? Is it sufficiently different from the objects of inquiry of, say, geography, political economy, sociology, etc.? And if we are to uphold the need for (and the prospective viability of) a “science of urbanization”, must not we be able to show that such an “urban” phenomenon eludes analysis through the existing theoretical frameworks of political economy, geography, and so on?

4) With respect to method, by which I mean “rules of theorizing”, how do we expect a prospective “science of urbanization” to be similar to (or different from) established sciences such as geography, sociology, political economy, and so on? Is there anything about the “urban phenomenon” (if we decide, that is, that such exists) that warrants or calls for a special method? If so, what are some of the main features that such a method must have?
5) What we call the "urban" phenomenon is in fact nothing but the observed outcomes or manifestations of the process(es) of land occupancy (and development). In this sense, the term "urban" is perhaps distorting and confusing, for there seems to be little difference in kind between the inner logic and dynamics of the processes of land occupancy as they operate in a small hamlet and in a big metropolis. Of course, scale makes a difference, but perhaps only with respect to the patterns of appearances (so-called spatial patterns) typically generated at different thresholds of settlement size and complexity. A subset of these appearances is, of course, what we call "urban problems", for these are no more than the negative outcomes of the internal contradictions of the processes of land occupancy. One can readily show that the inner logic, dynamics, and hence internal contradictions of these processes remain qualitatively invariant even when their manifest outcomes vary across thresholds of settlement size and complexity.

If so, it follows that no rigorous definition can be given of the term "urban", and it may be that we do not need the term itself. In fact, we can now argue, and I think persuasively, that the designation of "large" settlements as "urban" is no more than an ideological mystification. This mystification seeks to justify the introduction, by state agencies, of especially intricate and obscure political, legal, administrative and fiscal practices to intermediate the internal contradictions of the land occupancy process. As the negative manifestations of the land occupancy process mount beyond tolerable thresholds, the imperative of state mediations is invoked.

6) The need for a coherent, non-eclectic and non-vacuous "science of urbanization", the search for a tangible and concrete object of inquiry, and the demystification of the term "urban", lead us to the conclusion that what we can, and I think must, develop is not a "science of urbanization", but a science of land occupancy. Of course, by this we mean a science that seeks to understand and explain the processes of land occupancy in their concrete and specific historical contexts (e.g., under advanced capitalism, early capitalism, late feudalism, etc.).

7) At this point, the following question may justifiably be asked: but cannot land occupancy be studied through the theoretical frameworks of some of the existing sciences, such as geography or political economy? If so, then, why do we need a science of land occupancy? I believe that the processes of land occupancy cannot be plausibly analyzed through the existing sciences. There are several reasons for this, of which I will mention two.

First, the existing fragmentation and compartmentalization of the social sciences lead to a situation where each separate science can only inquire into partial aspects, dimensions or facets of land occupancy. The land economists, for example, may illuminate some of the "economic" aspects of land occupancy, while urban sociologists may contribute some understanding of the "social" or "community" aspects. However, the uniqueness of the land occupancy process is precisely that the combined and simultaneous effects of these various partial forces (the "economic", the "social", the "political", etc.) on the formation and evolution of the inner logic and outcomes of these processes is qualitatively different from their "added" partial effects. The eclectic pasting together of partial "understandings" of land occupancy can, in other words, lead to nothing other than distortion, mystification, and confusion. Nor can we get around this by invoking the vacuous aspirations of inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary studies. A unified science that seeks to inquire into the totality of the forces shaping and reshaping the logic and outcomes of land occupancy is imperative.

8) Such a prospective science must also be, to some extent, methodologically unique. In the first place, the science of land occupancy calls for a method that is capable of capturing and systematically revealing the ramifications of the multiple interconnections among the political, social, cultural, and technical imperatives and pressures that shape and reshape the logic and outcomes of land occupancy. What is needed here is a method that is capable of comprehending not only complementary interconnections, but contradictory ones as well. In the second place, the fact that the day-to-day operations of the process of land occupancy are heavily influenced by local, short-run, and conjunctural forces, calls for a method that is particularly sensitive to, and able to detect the very crucial distinction between organic/structural forces and tendencies on the one hand, and conjunctural, localized pressures and peculiarities on the other. It would not be difficult to demonstrate that this method can be nothing other than a dialectical materialist one.
9) In short, I am arguing that the very interests which prompt us to identify ourselves as socialist or Marxist urban geographers or urban analysts set us the task of developing, not a "science of urbanization", but one of land occupancy: a science whose object of inquiry and method of analysis impart on to all the key characteristics of a true, unified, and unifying, Marxian science.

A GUIDE FOR RED BIRD WATCHERS

Red bird watchers have long felt the need for a guide to the red birds of North America. To meet this need in part, we supply the following list of red birds which are commonly seen in North America. Species marked with a single asterisk (*) display a pleasing combination of red and black in their plumage. Those marked with a double asterisk (**) are merely pink. It should be noted that many species with 'red' in their name (e.g. "Red" Bellied Woodpecker) are not at all red.

Scarlet Ibis
Roseate Spoonbill
Ruddy Duck
Ruddy Turnstone
Red Phalarope
Rough-legged
Red Headed Woodpecker
Rufous Hummingbird
Vermilion Flycatcher
Redstart
Redwing Blackbird
Scarlet Tanager
Summer Tanager
Hepatic Tanager
Cardinal
RoseBreasted Grosbeak
Painted Bunting
Purple Finch
House Finch
Cassin's Finch
Pine Grosbeak
Redpoll
Hoary Redpoll
Red Crossbill
White Winged Crossbill

Review: Urban Planning in Theory and Practice: A Re-Appraisal

Allen J. Scott and Shoukry T. Rowis
University of Toronto, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Papers on Planning and Design, No. 14, August 1977, 31 pp., $2.50

This paper is part of an ongoing effort by the authors to develop a fresh and useful Marxist approach to teaching and practice centred around urban problems. It contains two groups of material: one presenting a compact and incisive critique of developments in mainstream urban planning theory, and one a justification and grounding of that critique in a Marxist interpretation of capitalist urbanization.

The critique of planning theory is initiated in a discussion of the criteria for scientific social theory. Two fundamental objections are raised to current planning theory: the vacuity of presenting planning as a structure without regard for its material context, and the futility implicit in the idealist/utopian roots of planning theory. The ideological functions of planning theory are also discussed briefly. This material is well argued and certainly belongs in any course that deals with planning theory.

The paper also includes a good deal of introductory material on capitalist urbanization, as background to and support for the critique. This discussion is probably too sketchy to interest greatly those already working in this area, but there are some points which reflect the authors' analysis that are well worth attention. A major emphasis is placed on the contradiction between the imperatives of private and collective action inherent in capitalism. The role of the State is presented largely in these terms. This contradiction has a major urban manifestation in the "land nexus" and the urban problems centred around it. This emphasis on urban land use conflicts has been previously expressed by the authors; (one should look at "The Land Question", a previous paper in this series), and needs to be discussed alongside other interpretations of the major conflicts of capitalist urbanization. Towards the end of the paper there is a frustrating undeveloped reference to the potential and problems of the repoliticization of urban interactions through extensive state intervention in the urban structure.
While the paper is too comprehensive for its brevity to really offer a satisfying discussion of capitalist urbanization, its critique of planning theory is stimulating and well-argued. As a basic document for teaching and discussion it should prove very useful.

Contents: Urban Planning in Theory and Practice: A Re-Assessment by Allen Scott and Shoukrar Rowies

I. Introduction
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IV. The Nature and Dynamics of Urban Planning Under Capitalism
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   2. Some Illustrative Cases
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V. The Nature and Meaning of Current Planning Theory
   1. Mainstream Urban Planning Theory as Functional-Structural Theory
   2. The Imperfect Negation
   3. The Idealist-Utopian Origins of Conventional Planning Theory
   4. The Impasse of Conventional Planning Theory
VI. Beyond Innocence and Despair

Other papers in this series are listed on the next page.

- Katherine Willson

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11. B. Rogers, Towards a Political Economy of Planning. February, 1977. ($2.00)


Papers 1, 2, 4, and 6 are out of print.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: U.S.G. HONOROGRAPH SERIES

During the 1977 Annual General Meeting, it was decided that the U.S.G. Executive should attempt to initiate the publication of a series, known as the Honorograph Series. (See Volume III, Number 2 of U.S.G. Newsletter, p. 27). The purpose of the series is to publish manuscripts of high academic quality on topics of general interest to socialist geographers. Manuscripts should be of a length too long for journal articles and too short for book publication. This is estimated to be between 60 and 100 typed pages.

At the present time we have adequate funds to initiate the series, and the Executive Committee is in the process of formulating procedures and guidelines with a view toward establishing an Editorial Board for the Honorograph Series. We are currently soliciting:

1) Manuscripts of the appropriate length and quality for publication as part of the Honorograph Series;
2) Suggestions with respect to procedures and guidelines that should be followed by the Editorial Board in selecting manuscripts; and
3) Recommendations of people who should serve on the Manuscript Series Editorial Board.

Please submit these to the U.S.G., Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C.

The Executive Committee will draft a set of proposals concerning editorial policy and compile a list of nominees for the Honorograph Series Editorial Board. These recommendations will be submitted to the 1978 Annual General Meeting in New Orleans for approval. At that time any manuscripts received will be submitted to the Editorial Board for its consideration.

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