

U.S.G.

NEWSLETTER

GUNTER GAD
2A WILBERTON ROAD
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Union of Socialist Geographers

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from: NEW BREED (august 1977)
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#2 1846 Scarth 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 Roweis, 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 Roweis on 'Critical Notes on Marx's Theory of Value', and a short review of some recent work by Roweis 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 Gaddes, 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 \$650.00. 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 lesquels sont d'accord 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 les 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 de Nord. Plusieurs groupes actifs existent en Canada ainsi qu'aux Etats-Unis, incluant des géographes académiques et non académiques ainsi que des non-géographes.

Le USG/UGS publie plusieurs fois par an un périodique (Newsletter) et tient une réunion annuelle en avril ou mai chaque année. Lors de cette 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 souscription 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 Foulke St., Cincinnati, Ohio, 45220. The subscription includes participation in the SERGE 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) 'Toward 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 USG 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 seem to be a lot of separate individuals 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 on by the participants. Thus we ask that anyone interested in such a meeting now or in the future contact one of the individuals named below. Please tell us how you would like the meeting run, what subject areas should be discussed in workshops etc., and whether you have any ideas you want to present. Also indicate the dates on which the meeting should be held. Please help us generate some enthusiasm! All replies received by Nov. 1st will be collated into some sort of coherent meeting, and final arrangements and dates will be communicated to all. Please contact one of the following:

Bryan Higgins
Mickey Lauria
Bill Pisarra
Eric Sheppard

at:

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

Newsletter

An edition of the USG 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

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

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

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 'really geography'. 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 P. Guay,
Revenue Canada, Customs and Excise,
Connaught Building,
Ottawa, Ontario.
K1A 0L5

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.

U.S.G. Regional Conference, Toronto.

November '77.

It is, perhaps, premature to attempt an assessment of the conference so soon 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 organisations in Toronto and Francine Beaudin who works 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 work in progress, identifying specific problems and questions. 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 sub-groups 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 backs of a sorely 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

Kingston Political Economy of Urbanization Working Group.
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 concern 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 :
 - i. urban property markets
 - ii. urban governmental finances
 for the stability of the capitalist system as a whole.
2. Increasing management problems associated with the extended reproduction of the labour force as a result of:
 - i. land price inflation
 - ii. accessibility problems in relation to the separation of home and work.
 - iii. 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 three tendencies, urban social movements have organised around issues increasingly critical to the smooth functioning of capitalism as a whole: eg. housing, urban planning and renewal, property taxes.

Thirdly, it was suggested that, in general terms, we may follow Castells' 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:

capital and its fractions -	landowners	} "in general"
	land developers	
	industrial	
	finance	
	state-devalorised	
Labour and its strata -	tenants / homeowners	
	productive / unproductive	

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, a consensus 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 (eg. land municipalisation). For three 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 (eg 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 (eg landowners) rather than capital in general.

In response to (ii) 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 Klodawski

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 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 commonly felt and met needs in reproducing labour 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 circulation and collective means of consumption is necessary to accumulation and corresponds to the current level of development of 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 capital by strengthening the tendency of the rate 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 politicizing 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 apposite 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 and to recognise the differences in the forces that these 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 collectivised 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.



C.D. Readership Service
Canadian Dimension
P.O. Box 1413,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2Z1

Anyone currently doing work, theoretical or empirical, on urban social movements in Canada is urged to write to Richard Harris, Department of Geography, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. Richard is interested in gathering together papers for a session at the meetings of the Canadian or American Assoc. of Geogs.

COMMENTARY ON THE LAND QUESTION AND
CAPITALIST URBANIZATION

This session included a summary and critique of two papers by Allen J. Scott and Shoukry Roweis, 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 uses (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 Roweis and Scott paper is weak in its extension of its analysis of State intervention in urban problems to the immediate present. The concept of "repoliticization" 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 Willson

Discussion:

Shoukry Roweis 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 reproduction of labour. He also indicated that "The Urban Land Question" had since been revised. 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 centred around a general discussion of the nature and implication of regional underdevelopment, particularly regional 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 counteracting regional underdevelopment
- (3) the dynamics of international capital and its implications for regional underdevelopment.

(1) the implications for labour: Discussion focused on a relatively new phenomenon occurring in underdeveloped regions: the movement of industrial capital out of peripheral regions has been accompanied by the sale of physical capital to labour employed in that region - who then (often with State assistance) attempt to maintain the viability of the industry. The pros and cons of such action are summarized as follows: (examples were cited for both Quebec and Vermont)

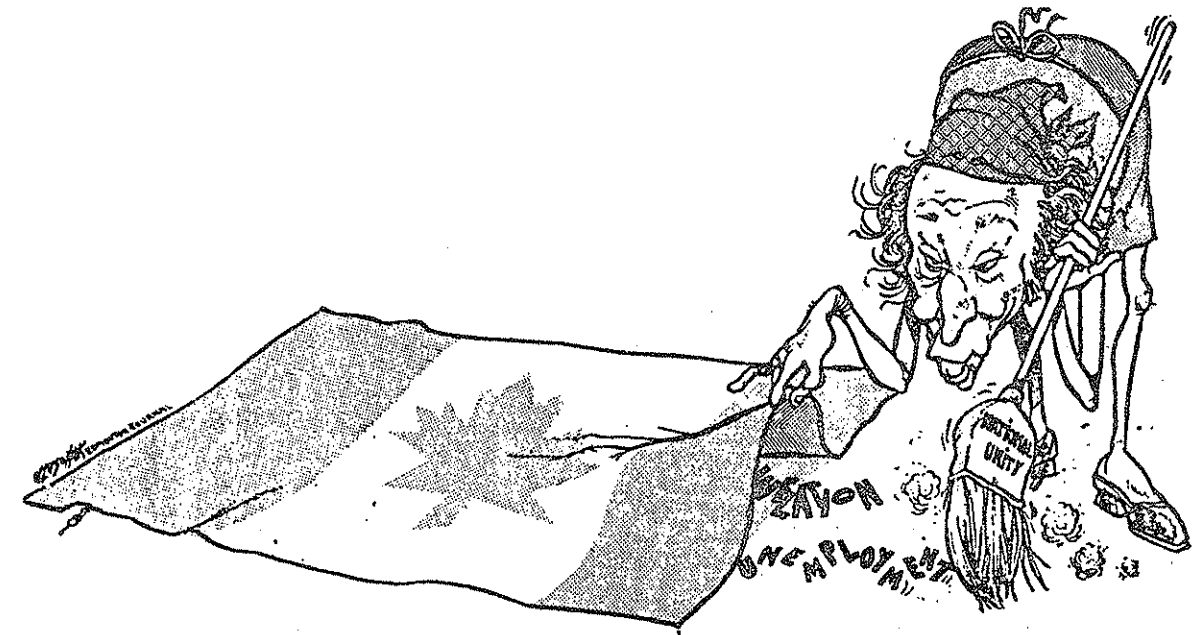
-industrial capital often gains from such a transaction by "cutting its losses" on "non-viable" enterprises. Often if labour and state effort reestablish the viability of the industry they are approached again by capital which attempts to reprivatize the enterprise.

-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 and management of industry;
- (2) even if "workers" control the industry, social relations of production are maintained; some of the workers originally in the rank and file simply assume the place of previous managers. It was emphasized at this point that structural designation and social place determine consciousness - simple ownership of the production process by workers will effect a change in personnel but not in social relations.

(2) the role of the State: The role of the State in attracting industry to regional underdeveloped areas takes place primarily through the provision of infrastructure and education of the labour force. However, the creation of an ideologically sophisticated labour pool appears to be the major factor in attracting capital. However, State intervention is inadequate for a number of reasons: (1) the allocation of expenditures to retrain a labour force in underdeveloped regions aggravate underdevelopment by stimulating the out-migration of higher skilled workers; (2) state subsidies which maintain firms "at the margin" actually benefit monopoly capital and ultimately assist the process of concentration and centralization of capital. Monopoly firms can produce commodities more cheaply than marginal firms, yet market commodities at the same price, thus exacting superprofits which maintain or increase their relative advantage over marginal firms; (3) government subsidies are established in four to eight year contracts. Firms often locate their operations where subsidies are highest, then relocate when subsidies are discontinued or when more lucrative offers are made elsewhere; (4) the State and international capital are not coterminous; thus the structural exigency of international capital overrides the limited territorial control of nation-states.

(3) the internal dynamic of international capital: The territorial nature of state control suggests that a more fruitful understanding of the process of development and underdevelopment would arise through an understanding of the internal dynamic of international capital. The discussion that ensued centred around a debate over the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Some members of the workshop felt both state intervention and the global movement of international capital represented efforts to counteract this tendency. Other members challenged the theory of the falling rate of profit. The argument against such a tendency is developed in one of the following papers.



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 urban form - (based primarily on the works of Topalov, Preteceille and Lamarche) - and theories of state expenditure developed by Yaffee Gough, O'Connor, and Fine and Harris.

1. Theories of State Expenditure:

The group identified two basic approaches within the theories of state expenditure and examined these approaches in relation to the following concepts. (a) The nature of crisis in capitalist cities, and (b) the categorisation of state expenditures. A summary of the views expressed on these matters by the writers in question follows.

(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 the growth of state involvement in the stimulation and development of demand to offset increased monopoly production leads to a fiscal crisis

(b) Categorisation of State Expenditures.

--Gough and O'Connor approach this in similar ways: social investment capital, social consumption expenditures and social expenses, (O'Connor); and, infrastructural service, social needs and social expenses, (Gough).

This categorisation has been criticised by Moskowitch 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 Moskowitch counters with a model based on the circuits of capital.

2. Capital and Urban Structure:

The group examined studies by Lamarche, Topalov and Preteceille which focus on the implications of capital for urban form. Common to all three writers is the concept of State Monopoly Capital, the current phase of capitalism in which the state allies itself with 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 stimulation of rotation of capital, (b) the management of contradictions inherent in capitalist production, both between 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' works 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 means 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. Topalov. Topalov focuses on housing and relates his study to (a) the structural determinants implied in the circuits of capital, (b), the role of the state and (c) the reproduction of labour power as related to the reproduction of capital. Topalov notes that peculiar characteristics of housing (durability, fixed location) tend to prolong the period during which its value as a commodity 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 devalorised capital and subsidy of home ownership. Topalov 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. Preteceille. Preteceille examines the structural determinants of urban space in relation to three factors. (a) The type of finance capital involved, (b), the extent of devalorised capital implicit in the project and (c), the nature of the building industry. Preteceille notes that the type of investment (and particularly the presence or absence of devalorised 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 included investment in (frequently underdeveloped) regions which, for a variety of reasons may be allowed to depreciate. The capitalist accepts a progressively lower rate of profit rather than abruptly withdrawing 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 formation 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 writers.

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. - ? A.M.: Introduction to the Geography of the Waldorf Hotel Pub
1489 East Hastings, Vancouver

Saturday: February 17

- 9:30 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.: Urban Geographic Practice: Theoretical Perspectives on Employment in the State Bureaucracy
- 11:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.: Lunch
- 1:00 P.M. - 2:30 P.M.: Regional Business Meeting to discuss
 - evaluation of U.S.G. Newsletter
 - issues for U.S.G. Annual Meeting
 - inventory of current research and conferences in region
- 3:00 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.: Special Sessions
 - Urban Housing Policy
 - Geography and Social Class
 - Urban Social History
 - Marxian Economic Theory
- 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.: Dinner
- 7:30 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.: Guest Speaker
 - on B.C. Native History
 - on Class Analysis of Canada

Sunday: February 18

- 8:30 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.: Breakfast
- 9:30 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.: General Papers
 - Poverty in Britain
- 11:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.: Lunch (and tour of Vancouver?)

This is a very tentative proposal of events. It will be modified according to the responses we receive from members in the region. Please let us know if you 1) Plan to attend; 2) Wish to present a paper or organize a session; 3) Have any suggestions for sessions or speakers, etc. Write to the Union of Socialist Geographers, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C.. Please let us hear from you by January 15, 1978. On that date we will mail out a more definite schedule to all members in the Western Region. Anyone, who needs transportation (or riders to share expenses) should let us know.

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 Societé.

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 (ie. 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. This dispersion will be 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 locals and individuals. The decision was made to put together a "critical study guide" to Hagget'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 on sections of the text they feel competent or interested in analyzing. 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 regarding the area you would be willing to work on and have completed by April. (2nd edition)

Included here is a summary of a discussion of HOW to present material for U.S.G. meetings in order to promote collective learning sessions.

First proposal: Material should be presented in outline; then give an outline of questions which arise out of the topic and which seem to be crucial, pivotal, or relating to similar problems in other fields or to more general problems. In the discussion, people can then concentrate on problem-questions.

More important than anything else is the process of people putting their heads together on work in progress presented by one or several people. The object is not exclusively to present finished material.

There is the problem of domination of the discussion by a few people, partly due to different levels of awareness of the material.

Second proposal: A "rule" - when two people start to say something, the one who has talked defers to the one who has not.

Third proposal: The structure of discussion should be focused. Peripheral issues should be collectively designated as they arise, for later discussion.

Fourth proposal: Material should be sent out long before the meeting and people should send back questions they would like to see discussed.

There was general agreement among those present that the above might provide useful guideline for future meetings.

The U.S.G. 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 programme 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 :

1. January 4-6, 1978; in Hull, England: Institute of British Geographers (I.B.G.)
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 Judy'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 focussing 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 centred 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:

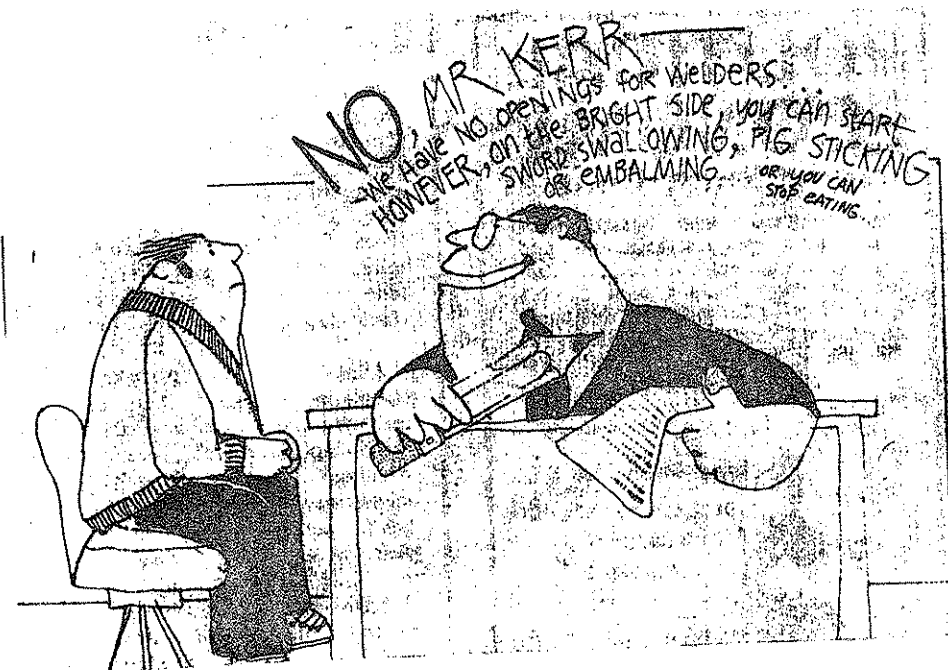
Suzanne Mackenzie
Department of Geography
University of Toronto,
Toronto, Ontario 656-0912

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 Klodawsky,
Geography Department,
Queens University,
Kingston Ontario

or Bettina Bradbury,
3514 Oxford Avenue,
Montreal, Quebec

or Suzanne Mackenzie (above)



Tom Scanlan

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

Toward Supportive Neighborhoods:
Women's Role in Changing the Segregated City.

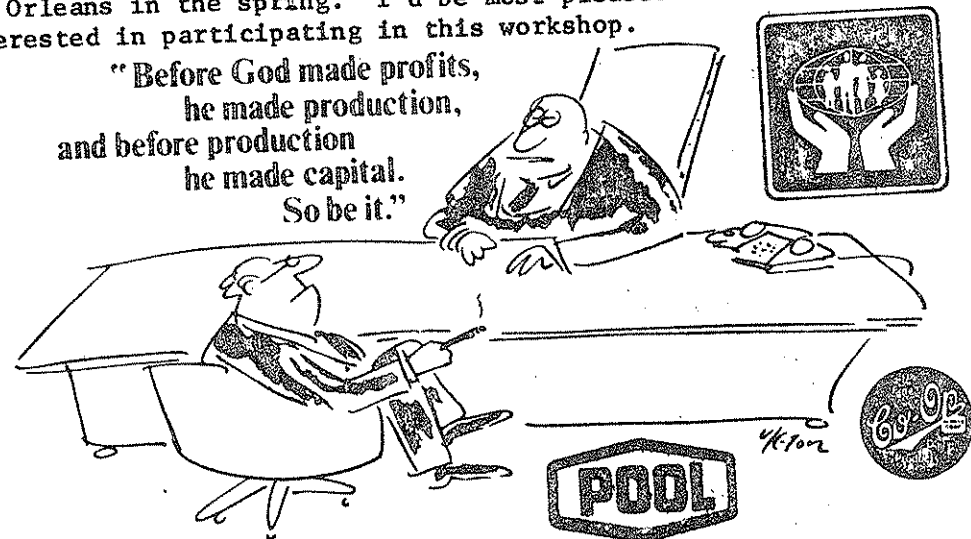
Judy Stamp
Geographer/Parent
283 Brunswick Avenue
Toronto, Ontario

When we consider the nature of women's relationship to the environment of the city, the important question, I think, is whether or not women are going to lend energies to changing the neighborhood from a divisive, isolating place into a vital, supportive setting which meets needs of belonging for those who live there. There are hopeful signs that we will, but there are also serious obstacles in our path.

My interest in this topic stems from my own needs and interests as single parent and geographer. My work is first an exploration of the nature of neighborhood and the different lifestyle regions of women in the segregated city. Data and maps are updated and expanded from my earlier work in Segregation and Integration: A Geography of People in Metropolitan Detroit (1972). This analysis provides a framework against which to evaluate the ways in which women are changing neighborhoods to meet the needs of changing lifestyles, and the problems we face in doing so. Data on changing neighborhoods is being gathered from experience in my own new neighborhood in Toronto, and from my work in establishing support groups for women with pre-school children, as part of a collective of "parent-liaison workers."

The first formulation of this work is to be published this year in Women and Environments, David Morely, Rebecca Peterson, eds. I plan to hold a workshop on the topics at the U.S.C. sessions in New Orleans in the spring. I'd be most pleased to hear from anyone interested in participating in this workshop.

"Before God made profits,
he made production,
and before production
he made capital.
So be it."



from NEXT YEAR COUNTRY
Box 3446, Regina, Sask.
(NYC editorial policy is established
by the left wing Waffle of the
New Democratic Party)

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) to 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 these relations of exploitation; their prospects, more specifically, in terms of a socialist transformation; and, (iii) to what extent does it help in reforming consciousness and hence in political education and mobilization. (Marx himself recognized the importance of this. "The reform of consciousness" he wrote, "is accomplished by making 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.

3.(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 actualised must nonetheless be criticised 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 convenience, this reduction is first and foremost a real social process. It is the process by which differential rewards to labour are established and changed. Consider the following example: a chair takes a master carpenter one hour to carve and an apprentice 5 hours to assemble and finish. Suppose that society evaluates a labour-hour of the apprentice at 2 simple labour-hours (s.l.h.), and the master carpenter's at 6, in this case, the value of the chair is equal to $1 \times 6 + 5 \times 2 = 16$ s.l.h.s. Now, suppose that society had a different evaluation of the labour of these people. That is, suppose society applies a different reduction of concrete to simple labour, such that the apprentice's hour is equal to 1 s.l.h. and the master's to 8 s.l.h.s, the same chair will have a value of $1 \times 8 + 5 \times 1 = 13$ s.l.h.s. Now, the labour time spent on the production of the chair has not changed, nor did the specific work accomplished in this time, yet the presumed objective value of the chair has changed. What appeared to be an objective measure of value, then, turns out to depend on 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 from a gratuitous optimism that the development of factories and bigger factories, will facilitate the spread of revolutionary consciousness. (On the assumption, of course, that physical proximity makes a difference and that no divisive forces exist that are capable of creating dissonant consciousness). (iv) Having satisfied himself that he has found the source of surplus (as in ii above) and having established the logic of exploitation; (neglecting the deeply rooted dynamics which tend to divide and fragment the working class), Marx proceeds to treat the working class as a totality that is assumed to have no contradictory forces within it. Hence,...."the epoch of the bourgeoisie ... has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other - bourgeoisie and proletariat." In line with this simple optimism, Marx found no need to treat, in any depth, these two interconnected questions: first; how is the value of labour-power determined? and second; how is the rate of exploitation determined?

This neglect is understandable. If the working class is a monolithic, unified class, and if the bourgeoisie is too, then both questions can convincingly be answered by reference to the political struggle between these "two great camps." This answer, we must recall, fulfills all the methodological intentions of a historical materialism that is neither mechanistic nor unduly voluntaristic. But it is substantively defective, and in a very central way, since it neglects one of the basic tendencies of capitalism; namely, the fragmentation and division of the working class.

(v) These arguments have the effect of bringing to question one of Marx's central assertions (developed in Vol.1 of CAPITAL); that labour-power is a unique commodity in that it can produce more

value than is required for its reproduction. True, labour-power has this characteristic, and equally true is that this is a key source of surplus-value; absolute surplus value. But this is not all. In the first place, this characteristic is not unique to labour-power, if by this we mean human labour-power. Domesticated animals expend labour-power that has identical characteristics. In addition, all such psycho-chemical processes which use not-yet-appropriated gifts of nature in the production of commodities achieve the same result as the application of labour-power; i.e., they help produce absolute surplus. This last proposition will be considered a heresy if the above objections (3.i,-3.iv.) are considered ill-founded.

In the second place, the ability of human labour-power to create more value than its own is not its most significant or unique characteristic. For what is truly unique to human labour-power is that it combines mental and manual labour skills and hence, that it lends itself readily, progressively, and with no visible limits, to cooperation.

Marx has indeed recognised 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 or implications of this point. Nor, for that matter, did he exploit it in his political economy. On the contrary, he unwittingly undermined its significance by arguing that the production of relative surplus value is a self-cancelling process.

(vi) The Marxian conclusion that the production of relative surplus is self-cancelling rests on two premises: first, that capitalist production is always competitive production; and second, that social human beings evaluate commodities, (at least consumption goods), according to their 'objective' value and not according to their historically contingent characteristics as items of social wealth. (More on this distinction later.) Both premises can be shown to be defective. The invalidity of the second premise has been substantiated above. The invalidity of the first is not only empirically evident, given the realities of current capitalism, but can also, and more importantly, be demonstrated logically. This of course, relates directly to the claim made in 4v above that the uniqueness of human labour-power is its combinability through a social division of labour. For if this claim is true, competition among units of capital must in due course give way to monopoly as each unit of capital seeks to exploit this unique characteristic in order to generate and appropriate surplus.

In fact, Marx was correct in foreseeing the trend towards monopoly because he ignored, in pursuing this particular issue, his own conclusions concerning the ephemeral nature of relative surplus.

5. It is the central claim of this document that, for all the reasons given above, we must seek to develop, at least in a preliminary and crude way, a theory of value and exploitation on the basis of the insight that the uniqueness of human labour-power, and hence the historically relevant source of surplus, is its combinability through a social division of labour.

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 commodity production is the combinability (mental and manual) of labour, or, relative surplus value.

(iii). Dispossessing the direct producers form the means of production is the principle 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, and trajectory of the social division of labour is the principle 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 consciousness 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 imposition of burdens on the reproduction of labour and of precarious life opportunities and prospects for members of the working class; 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. Roweis.

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Approaches to Housing Research : a Bibliography.

- John Holmes, Queens 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 Chris Sharpe - "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 notations with respect to the location of some items. The bibliography is in no sense 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 Introduction and Bibliography Obtainable from the author, Architectural Association, 36 Bedford Square, London, WCI, England.

Duncan, S.S. (1976) "Research Directions in Social Geography: Housing Opportunities and Constraints" in Transactions, Institute of British Geographers New Series, 1(1), pg. 10-19

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

Harloe, M. (1975) ed. Proceedings of the Conference on Urban Change and Conflict, Conference Papers 14, Centre for Environmental Studies, 62 Chandos Place, London WC2N4HH, England.

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 French 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. publications are available at reduced rates to students.

Harloe, M. (1977) ed. Captive Cities: Studies in the Political Economy of Cities and Regions Toronto, Wiley. Collection of papers largely presented at meetings of the Research Committee on the Sociology of Urban and Regional Development of the I.S.A. with an introductory essay by the editor.

Massey, D. et al. (1976) "A Strategy for Urban and Regional Research", in Regional Studies, 10(4), pg. 381-387.

Murie, A. (1976) Process and Change in Housing: Research Priorities Working paper 43, Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, Eng.

Pickvance, C.G. (1976) ed. Urban Sociology: Critical Essays, London: Tavistock. Collection of translated articles which originally appeared in French. Includes an introductory essay by the editor.

Sayer, R.A. (1976) "A Critique of Urban Modelling: From Regional Science to Urban and Regional Political Economy", in Progress in Planning, 6(3), pg. 187-254.

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 Rex and Moores's influential Race, Community 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 below. The main point of Pahl's original thesis, set out in his 1969 Environment and Planning article, is that 'social constraints on access to scarce urban facilities, such as housing, reflect the distribution of power in society'. It presupposes that these social constraints do not simply reflect the distribution of power in the sphere of production; since populations differ in their access to facilities even when their economic position is held constant.

The analysis proposes a range of occupational groups and professions, public and private, whose rules 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 capital and/or property operate in the housing context. This approach has spawned a significant number of case studies of management in the housing field. The managers include mortgage lenders, property investors, builders and developers of land, estate agents, real estate lawyers, interest groups and lobbies 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.

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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 Planners and urban researchers will accept these conclusions in favour 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, focussing 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 goes further to conclude 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, he advocates lot sales at market value with the profits 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."²

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 author's connection with CMHC, but nevertheless must be noted when analysing the land development process in a capitalist society. Each of the four goals defines the government in a mediative role between prospective 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 views the State in an objective relationship to capital in which it is considered 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 the housing 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 lot supply. The lots have sold at, or near the initial price until quite recently when residential development reached a geographic boundary of the core area of the city and there will be a years delay in providing serviced lots in an area beyond an adjacent river.

The popular objective of the land development policy is to provide low cost housing lots to new families. This objective has become smothered under the cries of the private contractors demanding a supply of lots from the City to keep in business because of the delay in continuing development beyond the aforementioned river. These cries drive home 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 outsells 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 servicing and developing the land and then places these lots for sale for private profit. This act embraces one of the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist system, and that is the socialization of 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 47 firms holding 119,000 acres of land, while public land assemblies account for approximately 50,000 acres in about 100 different 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 preserve 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 jeopardize 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

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Social Democracy and Urban Land Reform

Scene:

Ottawa, in a not-too-distant future. A Federal NDP government has just been voted in, much to most people's surprise. Hastily-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 pensively) 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 municipalities and regional 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.

2nd E.A.: Not another head-in-the-clouds socialist, I hope.

Minister: Come now, 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 on 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. Silkin, 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 he 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 "skim 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 66%. 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 over \$150,000 per year are taxed at 80%. 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 existing use value. 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 property 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 it themselves, thus avoiding the tax. The Ontario Economic Council reported such effects from the Land Speculation Tax in that province: (shuffling through a pile of papers) "It is ironic that the question of collusion 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 municipal 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 have more intervention without also making sure that we ease the flow of land for private development.

Minister: Hmmm... 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 assembly programmes must mainly cater for new development.

Minister: I have to disagree with you there, Wilbur. We must realise that we are entering a period of lower growth. Immigration is slowing down; our largest cities are no longer quite the magnet they were in the '50s, '60s and early '70s. 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. He 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 when 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 schemes 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 main 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 have to 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 with doubtful 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 local needs are 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 cooperation 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

careful indeed. (To Expert) You were saying-

Expert: So, despite the good intentions of this Act, central government has been urging the local authorities to concentrate on buying peripheral sites for sale to private builders for owner-occupied housing and a small amount of industrial use. They're being told to make a quick profit on the sites and to steer away from "large-scale land assembly programmes and complex redevelopment programmes."

2nd E.A.: What's wrong with making a profit? Surely the initial goal is to get the Land Account firmly into the black in the short-term, so that money is available for the next round of acquisitions at use value and for the authorities to carry out development themselves?

Expert: Unfortunately it doesn't work that way. The authorities are so much in debt to private capital already that they must use the profits from land deals to pay interest on current loans and reduce their future borrowing requirement. So much for giving priority to positive planning and using the increment in land value for social gains for the community...

Minister: But this is too pessimistic - it wouldn't be likely to happen here in Canada. After all, our economic situation isn't nearly as bad as that in Britain.

1st E.A.: Excuse me, Minister, aren't you being over-optimistic? Surely you've read the briefs for tomorrow's urgent meeting on regional and municipal finances? I'm afraid the lower levels of government will have to realise that the federal government can't even pretend to be a bottomless pit.

Minister: Er... yes... well... Perhaps I overlooked something there. I'll check it over tonight (leaning over to expert and whispering) - so much paperwork here you know... But I think we're right to discuss the problems with this British legislation. We should give it serious consideration for our urban programme - but we don't want to fall into the same traps.

Expert: Another thing - it's not only because of past debts that quick profits are wanted on land bought under the Community Land Act. The initial capital for land purchases must be borrowed, mainly on the private market, and so if there's much delay between acquisition and disposition interest rates keep going up, and they eat up any profit made from the Development Land Tax. Under the authorities which go for substantial profits the whole exercise becomes self-defeating.

2nd E.A.: Well then, it's quite obvious that there must be a fair compromise. Why not encourage the authorities to go for profit-making sites initially but ensure that most of the profits are retained by regional and municipal governments for planned development and future land acquisition? And that would also be a visible gesture toward more local autonomy...

Expert: But if the land is disposed of mainly to private builders for profit, then social and community planning goals can't be met - it's a contradiction in terms! Further, in the next round of land transactions another increment in land value would be captured, not by the state for the people, but

by private individuals; in the medium-to-long term the goal of rational urban development would be completely negated. 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 far in excess of the ground rents payable to local authorities.

1st E.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 -

Minister: (interrupting) 100%??!!! I really can't follow your logic. First you tell us that the British Government had to make concessions, such as lowering the tax rate and exempting many categories of development in order to obtain the cooperation of the development industry. And then you say that the NDP should pass even more radical measures in order to effect any lasting reforms on the irrationalities of urban development - you seem to be asking us to do the impossible!

1st E.A.: Yes, the financial institutions will back out of development altogether if we don't allow them a decent profit. They might switch to industry, or, more likely, to property development in the States and Europe. And without their backing builders will be driven out of business, which would be disastrous, because of the linkages of the construction industry to other sectors of the economy.

Minister: And the construction workers - remember how much of our party strength depends on the unions; we can't allow mass unemployment in the construction industry! (To Expert) I don't mean to dismiss your ideas - they're very interesting - but we have to be ... er... a responsible government...

Expert: Well, it seems to me that you're asking me the impossible - you want advice on short and mid-term urban land reforms but you're not prepared to put these proposals in the context of a long-term plan. Of course short-term policies are essential, but you must realise that limited state intervention in the land market, without full nationalisation and control of investment capital, will sooner or later create more irrationalities in urban development, as I did try to point out to you with reference to the consequences of the British legislation and subsequent policy guidelines. As I said earlier, even the OEC recognised some of the contradict-

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: Hmmm... 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, er... 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 urbanologists 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) These conversations 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
GEOGRAPHY DEPT
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Notes

1. Ontario Economic Council, Housing 76: Issues and Alternatives, Toronto, p. 37.
2. Spurr, Peter (1976), Land and Urban Development, Toronto: Lorimer, pp. 362 - 402.

Inspirations

- Format: Suzanne 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 urban 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: "descriptive" geography, neo-classical urban economics, Weberian 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 to 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.

There is a second reason why this is so, however, that has to do with the type of relationship that exists between the land occupancy process on the one hand, and the larger social order on the other. While it would be an error to assume that the land occupancy process is independent from the larger social order, particularly from its historically specific pattern of social and property relations, it would also be an error to neglect the all-important impacts of land occupancy on the nature and trajectory of this larger social order. Unlike the existing, compartmentalized social sciences, a prospective Marxian science of land occupancy must seek to elucidate the nature and significance of the mutual interactions between land occupancy and the larger social order of which it is a part. It can only do this as a unified science.

8) Such a prospective science must also be, to some extent, methodologically unique. In the first place, the very nature of land occupancy calls for a method that is capable of capturing and systematically revealing the ramifications of the multiple interconnections among the political, economic, 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 (eg. 'Red' Bellied Woodpecker) are not at all red.

- Scarlet Ibis
- Roseate Spoonbill**
- Ruddy Duck
- Ruddy Turnstone*
- Red Phalarope
- Ross' Gull**
- 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*



'And do you realize that if this treaty is approved, they're gonna take our Panama Canal and move it down to Latin America?'

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

Allen J. Scott and Shoukry T. Roweis
University of Toronto, Department of Urban and Regional Planning,
Papers on Planning and Design, No. 14, August 1977, 51 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-Appraisal
by Allen Scott and Shoukry Roweis

- I. Introduction
- II. The Tasks of a Viable Theory of Planning
- III. Conceptual Foundations of a Viable Theory of Urban Planning: Social Formation, Urbanization and Planning
 1. The Essential Rootedness of Urban Planning
 2. Modes of Production in General and the Capitalist Mode of Production in Particular
 3. The Capitalist State
 4. Urbanization in Capitalist Society
- IV. The Nature and Dynamics of Urban Planning Under Capitalism
 1. The Urban Land Nexus and the Genesis of Urban Planning
 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
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- Katherine Willson

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ANNOUNCEMENT: U.S.G. MONOGRAPH SERIES

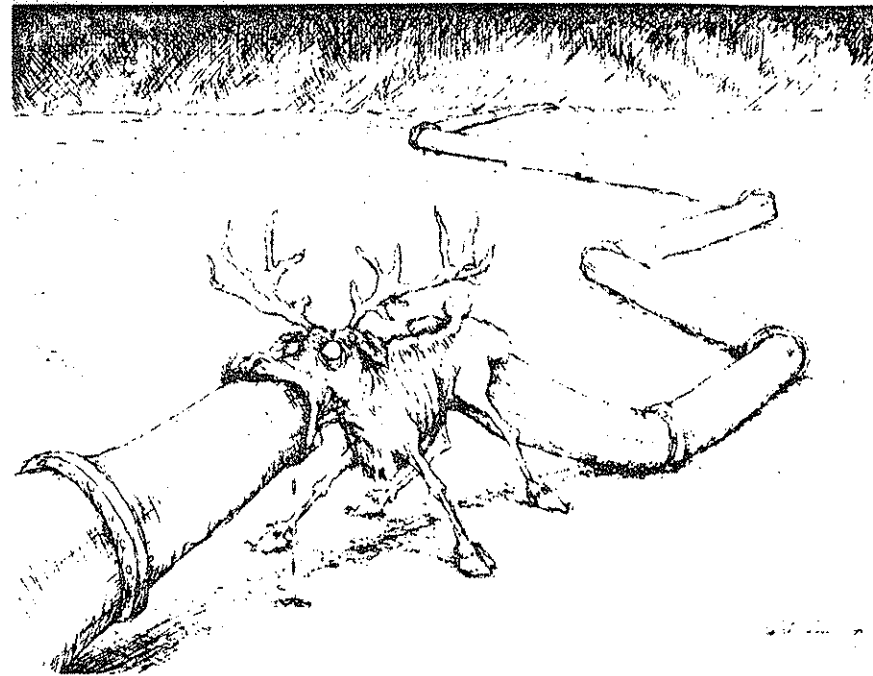
During the 1977 Annual General Meeting, it was decided that the U.S.G. Executive should attempt to initiate the publication of a Monograph Series. (see Volume III Number 2 of U.S.G. Newsletter, p. 27) The purpose of the series is to publish manuscripts of high academic quality on topics of general interest 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. Therefore, the Executive Committee is in the process of formulating procedures and guidelines with a view toward establishing an Editorial Board for the Monograph Series. We are currently soliciting:

- 1) manuscripts of the appropriate length and quality for publication as part of the Monograph 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 Monograph 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 passed on to the Editorial Board for its consideration.



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