US Further Isolates Itself at Habitat II:
Slouching Towards Istanbul

by Peter Marcuse

Habitat II, announced with fanfare as “The City Summit,” was a new low in the substitution of words for action. The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, was held in June in Istanbul.

Housing and urban issues are not high on the agenda of any of the industrial nations today. In the headlong retreat from the welfare state, the Clinton administration is not alone in seeing a forlorn and positive urban policy as a political loser.

But in Istanbul the United States distinguished itself by being on the conservative side of almost every controversial issue that came up. The specter of Jesse Helms seemed to weigh as heavily on the State Department and the jointly-run United States delegation as the specter of OMB and Congressional hostility weighed on the Department of Housing and Urban Development at the other end.

The single most controversial issue was probably the somewhat esoteric one of the “right to housing.” Various UN documents which the United States has signed on to include references to housing as a human right recognized by all governments. An explicit reaffirmation of the right to housing in Istanbul might have helped significantly in some developing countries where states have ridden rough-shod, often with bulldozers and armed force, to displace squatters, evict tenants, and clear land. In the United States, explicit recognition in Istanbul of a right to housing would have had primarily a symbolic effect and support efforts to halt the backward slide of the Federal government on housing subsidies and policy.

The split was largely along North-South lines in Istanbul. Many from the South pressed for a provision in the Global Plan of Action, a document to be agreed upon at Habitat II, against forced eviction. In the end, only forced evictions “contrary to law” were spoken against, so no government in control of its own legislative process need worry. The stronger language that representatives from the European Union had proposed was considered by the US to be “simply unacceptable” because it might, somehow in the future, expand residents’ rights in the US. Reflecting the ambivalence about policy at HUD, the personal feelings of members of the US delegation, 30 in all, were not always reflected in the US official position. Members of the delegation were asked to commit themselves to supporting the US line when formally adopted, regardless of personal opinion, as a condition of joining the delegation. Some, such as Maria Foscarinis of the National Center Against Homelessness, refused to do so because of that.

The United States was not always on the wrong side; on women’s issues, for instance, where in legal terms the US is already on the progressive end of the spectrum, the delega-
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ion pushed not just for "equity" but for "equality" of rights. Issues that could have made a larger real difference never even surfaced to the level of word play. One is economic redistribution, basically from the North to the South. At earlier UN summits, that had been at least acknowledged as appropriate subject matter. The idea, let alone real commitments, did not officially come up at Habitat II. Even the World Bank and many individual donor countries recognize the moral obligation; but so internationally, the lack of fund, no commitment, no coordinated UN efforts were on the table for discussion.

The US made much of the issue of implementation. Having made certain that no goals were formulated (such as a right to housing) which might expand UN programs or even targets, and boasting that what was agreed to was entirely consistent with existing US law, the US pressed for "specifics." These specifics had the same ring as every second sentence, and "public-private partnership" in the others. The Republican freshmen in Congress would have been proud. The fact that the market has produced the shortages, the unsavory and life-threatening conditions, the overcrowding and insecurity, which a large part of the world's population is subject to, does not appear.

Interchange, networking, and sharing of information was plentiful at the Non-Government Organization (NGO) forum. A large number of Turkish groups had booths and presented documentation. They included squatters, displacers, Kurdish nationals, and groups in solidarity with refugees and asylum-seekers in the Balkans. Some ran into trouble with the Turkish police. At a rally to welcome a group of bicyclists from France who had ridden through Europe and took the right to housing, as a small, Kurdish group joined the (legally authorized) march toward the conference area. The police, in full riot gear, stopped the march and arrested some of its participants. Plans for the network in Istanbul were under a silent protest against the arrest and/or disappearance of their sons and daughters, a regular event for two hours on Sunday afternoon. The weekend of the conference, police broke it up violently, arresting over 400 people.

Protest against the police behavior spilled over from the NGO forum to a few of the official plenaries. But one this this at the problems raised by the world of the official delegations (who met separately from the NGOs throughout) and that of the NGO's remained separate and distinct.

The Global Plan of Action and other documents approved at Istanbul are not bad documents, although for less than they could have been. Much more important, however, was networking among grassroots groups, efforts at solidifying relations among them, and formalizing NGO influence on national and international policy.

But a bit of word-play on "NGO" has to be examined more closely. The term "Non-Governmental Organization" includes tenants' unions, community members in solidarity with displaced communities, groups that build housing for low-income people, women's groups, health groups, groups of youth and of elderly, and human rights groups. But it also refers to private commercial interests, the National Association of Realtors, the Chamber of Commerce, and Right to Life groups (who, incidentally, had a formal booth at the NGO forum and were accused of being a direct pipeline to Jesse Helms). Lumping them all together as NGO's is part of that discourse that conceals reality and inhibits action. Certainly, community-based organizations ought to be at the center of any procedural action, and groups in sympathy with them—like the Planners Network—should also be involved. But groups not in sympathy with them, having different interests and goals, should not, no matter what their legal form of organization. Those attempting to network, coordinate, and get the need to face that problem. If they do, and if the Habitat II conference gave them some information and contacts to expand their efforts and look globally as well as locally, it will have (unofficially) accomplished at least something.

PN'er Updates

- PN'er Clement Dimnower recently wrote an article for the Urban Land Institute concerning state initiatives relating to voluntary cleanups and brownfields, available from ULI, 1025 Thomas Jefferson St., NW, Ste. 500 West, Washington, DC 20007. He is interested in hearing from PNs and others who know of other brownfields resources. Clement Dimnower, 3732 Vevey St., NW, Washington, DC 20006-2229; 202-244-6648.

- PN'er Tim Stroshane writes: A year ago, I staffed the Mayor's HIV/AIDS Housing Task Force, which produced a report whose recommendations on AIDS housing in Berkeley were unanimously adopted by the City Council. The recommendations include rehab funds for an AIDS house with supportive services; an eviction prevention program providing shallow rent assistance to people disabled with HIV/AIDS (to be operated by Catholic Charities of the East Bay); and recommendations for the City's housing authority, housing trust fund, and Shelter Plus Care program. For a copy of the Mayor's HIV/AIDS Housing Task Force Report, contact me at 510-644-6002 or email: tjs@cci.berkeley.ca.us

- PN'er Maury Gittelman writes: I am in Washington, DC, seeking to work as a volunteer on such issues as community economic development, housing, jobs, etc. My background is as an economist, doing research on poverty and income distribution issues, but I am willing to work in any capacity. If anyone has an opening or knows of a good lead, please contact Maury Gittelman at 202-332-5808.

- PN'er Randy Wilson writes: I'm in the Boston area, where I've worked as a planner for ten years in the cities of Boston and Cambridge. A lot of my focus has been on addressing the disparity between the high tech, high skills economy and the people and neighborhoods who are left behind. I've also worked with unions, community groups and other progressive interests on alternative economic programs. Current project is getting a PhD in Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts - Boston; probable focus is community development and the role that social services and community development organizations play in the process. A group of us here are about to mount a yearlong evaluation of Boston's "Empowerment Zone" project, so I'd love to hear from others with experience/knowledge of similar efforts. Randy Wilson, 1 Pemberth St., Cambridge, MA 02140

- PN'er Roger Colin writes: I work with a consulting firm: Fisher, Sheehan and Colvin, Public Finance and General Economics. We do public sector work, ranging from working for a variety of community-based groups on issues relating to electric industry restructuring, to doing an increasing amount of fair housing research and litigation support, to working for Legal Services offices on a variety of litigation efforts (challenges to various Food Stamp and AFDC regulations). Some of our most intense work is in the area of bringing energy efficiency to bear an affordable housing development and first time home buyer programs to help improve the long-term affordability of low-income housing. I've been with Planners Network going back 15 - 20 years now, back when I was a planner at the University of Iowa where I was challenging electric rate increases. I'm in Belmont, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. Contact Roger at 34 Warwick Rd., Belmont, MA 02178; 617-484-0597; RColvin@oao.com

- PN'er Alan Mahin writes: Among the hats I wear is teaching in a planning school in Johannesburg, running a research programme called Proplains which focuses on institutional issues around planning, advising politicians and officials in national, provincial and local post-apartheid government on urban planning questions; and chairing the board of an NGO which works mainly in inner city housing situations. I'm hoping the network will put me in touch with new contacts in these fields. And, especially, I'm hoping the network will generate discussions which will relate contemporary planning issues, problems and processes to newer literatures on posituality, identity, difference, and their connections to justice, equity and polarization. Contact Alan at University of Witwatersrand, Private Bag 2, WITS 2050, South Africa; mahin@wu.ac.za

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- PN'er Michael Heiman, associate professor of environmental studies and geography, and chair of environmental studies at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, writes: I was funded by a US EPA Environmental Justice grant to visit and prepare training materials to access the Community Right-to-Know Toxic Release Inventory Data base for residents in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, I have now sev eral products available from that effort. These include a feature-length training video and script for accessing the data base in DCOM for Windows 95. In addition, I was guest editor for a recent issue of Antipode on Race, Waste, and Class. Contact Michael at Environmental Studies/James Center, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA 17013; 717-245-1338; heiman@dickinson.edu.
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Hold your nose and vote

by Norman Krumholz

Perhaps more than in any recent election, progressive planners will hold their noses this year as they vote for president. To most progressives (and many Democrats), Bill Clinton has given away what the Democratic party stands for in his zeal to show that he can balance the budget, shrink the role of government, and be tough on social issues. As a method of governing and as a re-election campaign strategy, Clinton has chosen to imitate Republican policies to minimize the ability of the Dole/Gingrich crowd to turn his right flank.

For progressive planners interested in cities, their neighborhoods, affordable housing and the environment, this year’s presidential choices present a particularly dismaying dilemma. Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have seen the necessity to mount an attack on the economic trends that have created the inner-city ghetto and are keeping millions in poverty and hopelessness. Instead, both parties supported “welfare reform” which translates into more hunger, homelessness and less economic opportunity, and a crime bill which will mean more death penalties, more jails and more incarcerations.

Neither party has been interested in addressing the increasing economic disparities between distressed central cities and their suburbs. Both parties have supported deep cuts in affordable housing and the continued radical shrinkage of HUD. Both parties have effectively abandoned racial integration as a national policy, and have not pushed for further racial gains or for the enforcement of what was accomplished in the past.

On the environmental front, the news is bad as well. Like the Republican, Clinton’s environmental policy is mostly rhetoric and accommodation, and many environmental groups are outraged that Clinton has done little more to protect the environment than the Reagan and Bush Administrations.

Still, if Clinton is bad, the Republicans are much worse. Their party, to quote Ralph Nadar, has been taken over by “the cruellest rogues who ever crawled upon Capitol Hill.” In this present incarnation of the Republican Party, even centrist and liberal Republicans will control the White House, Senate, House and will influence the Supreme Court for 20 years. Progressives and their concerns will be cast into outer darkness.

All that said, a choice is clear. I will vote for Bill Clinton in 1996 and urge other PN members to do so. I will not sit out the election. Some of us tried that in 1968 and it didn’t get us a more liberal nation. It got us Nixon and the strong conservative movement that continues to define the political agenda today. Beyond my reluctantly vote for Bill Clinton in 1996, I will continue to work for a much more progressive Democratic Party or a third party devoted less to corporate contributors and the status quo and more to the improvement of cities and the reduction of poverty and racial discrimination. Part of the reason Clinton has disappointed progressives is because there is no powerful, nationally organized progressive presence in America to point him in the right direction. We must all join in the essential task of building one.

Norman Krumholz is a Professor at Cleveland State University.

Start creating alternatives

by Dana Driskell

My take on this issue begins with serious questions about the future viability of the Democratic party as the party of the working people (cynically called the “middle class” by both the media’s media strategists). From NAFTA to welfare reform, from HUD reorganization to affirmative action, from the “anti-war” bill to the Federal Reserve to Filegate, slick Willie and his party machinery are more and more difficult to rationalize as the lesser evil.

Today’s political landscape reminds me of the car commercial, “...this is not your father’s Democratic party.” What we have is a party led by Reagan Democrats whose core beliefs consist of Dick Morris’ latest focus group summaries. And, assuming the easy victory in November, get ready for AI and Tipper Gore! Enough. We need to begin the long, slow, unplanned process of developing new coalitions that can, over the long term, advocate the needs of the working people. Nader is too one issue oriented (although his take on corporatism is important). Perot is delusional and a multimillionaire. Even wannabe fascist Buchanan has shown how the right wing can and will respond to issues affecting their economic interests.

All of these developments show a public that is looking for alternatives to two-party business as usual. Let no one underestimate the hard work necessary to change ingrained habits. But now is definitely the time to begin placing the lesser evil for the greater good. For sure, that path lies outside the Democratic Party.

Dana Driskell works at the NYC Dept. of City Planning.

The fix is in.

“There’s nothing wrong with this country which a good election can’t fix.” — Richard Nixon

of Progressive Planners

by John Cabral

How do we hurt ourselves and limit the prospects for meaningful social change by voting for the Democratic Party in the national elections in 1996? Let me count the ways. No, let me avoid doing this in this forum, since just about everybody agrees that by supporting the Democrats against the Republicans we are merely choosing between the lesser of two evils. The question we all have is whether, in good conscience, we have any choice.

There are some choices. The choice over half of the population makes is not to participate. As elections approach, it’s remarkable to observe how the whole population is bombarded with messages about the importance of voting. Different social sectors in different parts of the country get targeted for voter registration drives, and then voter turn-out

A low voter turnout is an indictment of fewer people going to the polls.

— Vice President Dan Quayle

Voting, then organize

by Ron Shiffman

This year’s Presidential and Congressional elections have put many of us in a difficult position. On one hand, we don’t want to support a political party which supports a swing to the right, a perception that we all feed but one that was endorsed by less than 50% of the electorate in 1996, and more importantly, by less than 15% of those eligible to vote that same year. A vote for Dole, Perot or even Nader might help foster that perception. Most progressives will refuse to vote for Dole because of what he and the Republican Party stand for in this election. While Dole and Clinton draw closer and closer in their campaign promises and programs, it is still important to distinguish between the two.

When we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that Clinton is the better of the two candidates. However, having said that I am not sure that I can vote for Clinton based on his actions over the years and particularly this past summer. Clinton has the ability to determine right from wrong but he often chooses not to use that skill. Instead, he sets aside that ability and abdicates his role as a leader to that of an interchangeable supporter of the latest poll. Leadership is taking a position, and educating and informing people of the reason for the decision. Clinton is clearly not a consistent leader. Once he does take leadership, such as in the battle over the budget earlier this year, he stands tall and generates enthusiasm and respect. However, his recent acquiescence on immigration, welfare reform, gun control and the recall of his wife’s former lover indicate how he has guided this administration than his stand on the budget. To vote for Clinton would signal that it is fine to abandon children, new immigrants, and principle in order to curry favor with the “uncompromising and uncaring” and with those corporations that seek a greater share of the corporate welfare “dole.”

I know I can’t work for Clinton and Gore this year. However, I do know how important it is for every Democrat running for a seat in the House or the Senate to win. I do know it is important to develop new progressive leadership on a local level. I do know how important it is for progressives, planners and people of good will to organize and mobilize the base of our communities and to create new and sustain old connections to the trade union movement. “Power concedes nothing without a demand,” said Frederick Douglass. “It never did, and it never will. If there is no struggle, there is no progress.” Struggle is the key point. We never had, nor do I believe that we will ever have, the leadership of a presi-
Election ‘96: The Role

Hold your nose and vote

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of Progressive Plans

To vote, or not to vote (socialist)?

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didn't vote, don't complain.
The other option is to vote for a third party. The Green Party
USA, the New Party, and Labor Party Advocates are three new
efforts to break the Republican-Democratic stranglehold on U.S.
politics and give voting people a chance to vote for progressive
social reforms.

The Greens have succeeded in getting veteran anti-corporate activist Ralph Nader on the ballot in many states as a candidate for President but does not trust the U.S. political system and refuses to actively run a campaign. The New Party, based mostly on community-based organizations who work with the urban poor and minorities in the big cities, is running only candidates for local office and endorsing progressive Democratic

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dent, governor, mayor, or for that matter any legislative governing
body that will be responsive or accountable to the needs of
the people, unless the people hold them accountable. The basis of
the Rev. Jessie Jackson's speech, so eloquently delivered at the
Democratic convention, was that without struggle Roosevelt,
Kennedy and Johnson would not have taken the actions that they
did take.

If we as planners, progressives and journalists had done our jobs
properly, Clinton would not have dared to sign the welfare legis-
lation this August. He would not have dared allow the Defense of
Marriage Act to become law. Perhaps people like Peter Edelman, Mary Jo Bane, and Wendell Primus who resigned from the administration, and others like Cranston, Reich and Shaheen, would have had the political courage to force the President to listen
to their counsel.

I know that I have the luxury to oppose Clinton's re-election because there are enough others to assure his re-election. That
level of comfort and the concept itself is dangerous. First, it is
that kind of argument that can unwittingly cost Clinton the presi-
dency. Second, it can make it harder to get people to the polling
booth and harder to throw out the Gingrich-Dole Congress.
Third, it allows the myth of a move to the right by the American
people to be perpetuated and reinforced. And finally, it allows me
to escape from my own personal and professional responsibili-
ty. I don't mean my responsibility to vote, but my responsibility
in selecting leaders. I feel all progressives, particularly progressive
planners and their colleagues, to educate, agitate and mobilize.

In the end, we always seem to have a choice between people
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distrust. Given these realities we need to select the candidate that
will be the most responsive to our needs. Experience has taught
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govern democratically. Only then will our choices be broadened
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Ron Shiftman is the Director of the Pratt Institute Center for
Community and Environmental Development (PICCED)

September 1996 PLANNERS NETWORK

Resources

• Faculty/Los Angeles. The Urban Planning Department in
UCLA's School of Public Policy and Social Research seeks
applications for a permanent ladder faculty position in the
area of Planning Theory and History. The ideal candidate
would be able to contribute directly to one of the school's
four areas of study: The Built Environment, Environmental
Analysis and Policy, Regional and International Development, and Social Policy and Analysis.
A full posting contact Mayra Brown, Dept. of Urban Planning; School of Public Policy and Social Research; University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1566; 310-206-7150. Deadline for submission is November 15.

• Faculty/Berkeley. Applications for a position in the area of
Community Development and Planning are being accepted, at either the assistant or associate professor level, depending
upon qualifications. Applicants should have PhD in related
field, experience with social and political issues in urban
minority communities, and interest in participating actively
in the community. Full postings are available from Search Committee, Dept. of City and Regional Planning, University of California, 228 Wurster Hall #1830, Berkeley, CA 94720, mgnyder@eod.berkeley.edu

• Professor/Los Angeles. Occidental College invites applica-
tions for the Henry Luce Professorship in Urban Environmental Studies. The Luce Professor will be responsi-
ble for establishing and coordinating a new Environmental Studies Project, focused on the development of environ-
mental issues, and using metropolitan Southern California as a
laboratory. For more information contact Professor Jim Sidd, Chair, Environmental Science and Studies Program, jsidd@oc.edu; 213-259-2518, or PN’er Peter Drier, Director of Public Policy Program at drier@oc.edu; 213-259-2513.

Calls for Papers / Assistance

• I am looking for papers, articles, or studies that examine
HUD's approach to portfolio reengineering (originally called
market to mark). Also helpful would be contacts of anyone
who assisted in any writing on this topic. Housing and
Community Vets, Aspen Systems, housing@aspen.com

• Call for Papers. Association of Collegiate Schools of
Planning (ACSP) is accepting abstracts for papers to be con-
sidered for their 1997 conference, to be held November 6-9 in
Port Lauderdale, FL. All abstracts are due Friday, January 3.
For more information, contact Sandi Rosenblom, Chair,
ACSP Conference Committee, Drachman Institute, University
of Arizona, ACSP 1997 Conference, 819 East First Street, Tucson Arizona 85721-0483; 520.623.1223; ACSP97@asu.edu.

• Housing Funding. PN’er John Furman writes: Our agency is
attempting to identify non-traditional sources of financing for
our affordable housing projects, particularly those financing
mechanisms which can be combined with low-income hous-
ing tax credits. We have exhausted local HOME funds and
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income from previous rental rehabilitation programs operated by our local municipality. (3) Program Related Investments (low-interest loans made by corporations and foundations). I am also interested in ascertaining how to use HOME funds most effectively in leveraging the maximum amount of tax credits. Please contact me at the following address/phone:
numerical address: John Furman, Program Planner, Utica
Community Action Inc., 214 Rutger Street, Utica, NY 13501;
315-797-7634; Fax: 315-792-1983; jfurman35@aol.com.

AWARDS / COMPETITIONS

• Housing Awards. The Housing Assistance Council requests
nominations for the Skip Jason and Clay Cochran Awards in
recognition of individuals who work "to break the chains" and
often go unrecognized outside their communities. Eligible
applicants for the Skip Jason Award are those whose efforts
have improved the housing conditions of the rural poor in their communities, and those for the Clay Cochran Award for
Distinguished Service in Housing for the Rural Poor are individuals who have provided outstanding service, with national impact, for the betterment of housing conditions for the rural poor. Nominations may be submitted to the

• Low-Income Housing Awards. The Fannie Mae Foundation
is accepting applications for the Awards for the Market Excellence Program for the Production of Low-Income
Housing, meant to identify and recognize organizations develop-
ing and maintaining housing for low-income residents. Applications and information are available from FannieMae.com, 4000 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20016-2800;
202-274-8000.

• Development Awards. The Rudy Bruner Award has opened
its 1997 competition. The $30,000 award recognizes urban
place-making that successfully reconciles social, economic and
aesthetic values throughout the development process. Four addi-

We didn't do too well with the animal vote, did we? Isn't it the animals who live in these projects? They're not our people.

- Senator Alfonse D'Amato, R-NY, on a Brooklyn low-income housing project he did not support.

Shiffman / continued from page 5
dent, governor, mayor, or for that matter any legislative governing body that will be responsible or accountable to the needs of the people, unless the people hold them accountable. The basis of the Rev. Jesse Jackson's speech, so eloquently delivered at the Democratic convention, was that without struggle Roosevelt, Kennedy and Johnson would not have taken the actions that they did take.

If we as planners, progressives and journalists had done our jobs properly, Clinton would not have dared to sign the welfare legis-
lation this August. He would not have dared allow the Defense of Marriage Act to become law. Perhaps people like Peter Edelman, Mary Jo Bane, and Wendell Primus who resigned from the administration, and others like Clivenston, Reich and Shelby, would have had the will to force the President to listen to their counsel.

I know that I have the luxury to oppose Clinton's re-election because there are enough others to assure his re-election. That level of comfort and the concept itself is dangerous. First, it is that kind of argument that can unwittingly cost Clinton the presi-
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Ron Shiffman is the Director of the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED).

In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the next place oblige it to control itself.

- James Madison

RESOURCES

Jobs

- Faculty/Los Angeles. The Urban Planning Department in UCLA's School of Public Policy and Social Research seeks applicants for a permanent ladder faculty position in the area of Planning Theory and History. The ideal candidate would be able to contribute directly to one of the school's four areas of focus: The Built Environment, Environmental Analysis and Policy, Regional and International Development, and Social Policy and Analysis. For a full posting contact Marsha Brown, Dept. of Urban Planning, School of Public Policy and Social Research, University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1566; 310-206-7150. Deadline for submissions is November 15.

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Awards / Competitions

- Housing Awards. The Housing Assistance Council requests nominations for the Skip Jason and Clay Cochran Awards in recognition of individuals who "walk the talk" of the "trenches" and often go unrecognized outside their communities. Eligible applicants for the Skip Jason Award are those whose efforts have improved the housing conditions of the rural poor in their communities. Eligible applicants for the Clay Cochran Award for Distinguished Service in Housing for the Rural Poor are individuals who have provided outstanding service, with national impact, for the betterment of housing conditions for the rural poor. Nomination forms are available from the Housing Assistance Council, 21025 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 606, Washington, DC 20005, 202-842-8600.

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ing and maintaining housing for low-income residents. Application and information are available from FannieMae.com, 4000 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington DC 20016-2800; 202-274-8800.

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tional finalists receive a $1,000 honorarium. Deadline: 12/13/96. Application or info: Bruner/Cott and Associates, 130 Prospect St., Cummington, MA 01239, 617-492-8400, (fax) 617-876-4002.

• Essay Contest. The Planning Commissioners Journal is sponsoring its biannual “Building the Future essay competition for high school students. Essays should consist of thoughtful and creative thinking about the problems our communities face and how we can plan for better places to live in. For more information and contact Planning Commissioners Journal, PO Box 4295, Burlington, VT 05406; 802-864-9083; pcj@together.net; http://www.plannernetsweb.com/essay96.html

RESOURCEs

• Community Economic Development. The Community Information Exchange has released its database on community economic development on CD-ROM. The discs include case studies, information about funding sources, and “how-to” materials. It's available in subscription form (12 months) for $500 for local organizations, $600 for state-wide organizations, and $750 for national organizations. Contact: Community Information Exchange, 1029 Vermont Ave., NW, Ste. 710, Washington, DC 20005; 202-628-2981; http://www.noglocalities.dca.uchicago.edu/cie/index.htm

• Housing. HUD USER, a division of HUD’s office of Policy Development and Research, now offers Fieldbooks, a bi-monthly newsletter reporting on promising efforts in housing and community development throughout the country. A one year subscription is $15. Order by calling 800-245-6291.

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• Organizer Training. Community-based practitioners, community organizers, and labor representatives are invited to apply for participation in the pilot of a new and unique community-based development and organizing program to be held in California, January 24-31. The intensive five day training and strategy session will focus on emerging issues impacting communities and ways to deal with the changing social, political and economic environment. The program is being developed by the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, with the support of the Ford Foundation. In partnership with community development experts from across the country. Other participating organizations include the Midwest Center for Labor Research and Applied Research Center. For further information, contact Ron Shiffman at 718-636-3449 or Dawn Armstrong at 718-636-3486, x436.

• Employment. National Jobs for All Coalition, October 13-19, will focus on awareness of the true extent of un- and underemployment, economic interests’ support of high levels of unemployment, and awareness of the links between development, theployment, hunger, poverty, and racial and gender inequality. For information about events near you, or to get involved, contact The National Jobs for All Coalition, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 554, New York, NY 10115; 212-870-3449. A "Call To Action" concert, celebrating the end of National Jobs for all Week, will be held Saturday, October 19th, at the West End Gate, 2911 Broadway (between 113 and 114th sts), at 7:30 p.m. Performers include Ray Barretto, Sergio Mendes, Ryo Kawasaki, Riot Act, Sharon Perez-Abreu, Faith Schwartz, Jenny H USART, and guests.

• Housing. The State of the Nation's Housing: 1996 (36 pp.) is available from the Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University, 79 JFK St., Cambridge, MA 02138; 617-495-7908.

• Nonprofits. Mission Possible: 200 Ways to Strengthen the Nonprofit Sector's Infrastructure, by Kate Chicco, Deborah Koch, and Kristin Scutchner (270 pp., $96), is available ($25) from the Union Institute, 1710 Rhode Island Ave., NW, $1100, Washington, DC 20036; 202-496-1630.

• Federal Policy. Federal Policy in Transition: A National Briefing Book on Housing, Economic, and Community Development is available ($75) from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1012 14th St., NW, $1200, Washington, DC 20005; 202-662-1530 x254.

- Tri-State Transportation Coalition/The Economist


By the middle of the 20th Century there were 2.6 billion people on earth; between them they had 50 million cars. Less than 50 years later, the totals have risen to 5.5 billion people and 50 million cars. The population has doubled in a couple of generations, but the number of cars has risen tenfold.

In New York City:
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Which would you invest in? — SRO Providers Group

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• Universal Employment. The National Jobs for All Coalition has issued a call to Jobs For All Week, October 13-19. Communities nationwide are being asked to hold events focused on the problems of joblessness and the available solutions. Contact Benjamin K. Hunnicutt, Jr., c/o National Jobs For All Coalition, National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 554, New York, NY 10115; 212-870-3449.

• Co-housing. CoHousing Communities - Keys to Success, will be held October 17 - 19 at Nyland Coloming Community. This three day seminar is designed especially for development professionals who are committed to being on the leading edge of sustainable residential development. The conference will be held in Lafayette, CO (30 miles NW of Denver) and will include an in-depth guided tour of three additional projects in the Denver metro area. For more information contact Lisa McGall at 970-927-3807; lisamic@nfred.net; http://www.rmi.org.

• Physical Environment. "Communities and their Physical Environment," the 12th Conference on the Small City and Regional Community, will be held October 24-26 in Louisville, Kentucky. The conference will focus on the physical environment of small cities and their regions, and on the local pursuit of sustainable development. For more information contact Peter B. Meyer, CUER Building, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292; pmeyer02@palgum.louisville.edu

• City Limits. Founded in 1976 as a newsletter for grassroots housing activists, City Limits has long been an influential voice and singular source of news for those of us working to rebuild New York's low-income communities. To celebrate their 20th anniversary, join activists, policymakers, journalists, and community development professionals on November 14 at a gala at the Sky Club, stop at The Met Life Building in Manhattan. Tickets start at $75. Contact Kim Nauze, Senior Editor, City Limits Magazine, 40 Prince St., New York, NY 10012; 212-925-5920.

• Cooperatives. The UC Center for Cooperatives' 1996 Annual Conference will take place November 15-16 in Northern California's Wine Country. "Cooperatives and Communities: Growing Strong Together" will examine the relationship between cooperative ownership and strong local economies, and highlight economic development strategies based on cooperative development. For more information, contact Deb Gray, Center for Cooperatives, UC Davis, CA 95616, 916-752-4967, dgray@ucdavis.edu.

• Technology and Communities. The Southern California Conference on Technology, Employment and Community will focus on the impact of this rapidly growing revolution on our social, economic, and cultural experience. The conference will be held November 21-23 in Los Angeles, and additional information is available from Impact of Technology on Society Project, c/o Dept. of Economics and Statistics, California State University, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA 90032; 213-343-2941; jmarti@calstatela.edu.

• Environment. Benton MacKaye and the Appalachian Trail: A 75th Anniversary Celebration of Vision, Planning and Grass-Roots Mobilization, a one-day interdisciplinary conference, will be held November 22 in Albany, NY, discussing both the origins of the Trail, and contemporary trail and greenway initiatives in the Northeast. For more information contact F'nr Ray Brownly, Dept. of Geography and Planning, SUNY-Albany, Earth Science 218, Albany, NY 12222; 518-442- 4766; nr438@cmnsvx.albany.edu

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Which would you invest in? - SRO Providers Group
PN '97 in California
Planning is underway for the PN '97 Conference, to be hosted by Cal Poly, Pomona, June 26-29. Groups collaborating in conference planning include the Industrial Areas Foundation (East Valleys Organization), the Watts Community Labor Action Committee, and possibly others.
PN '97 will feature tours in the LA region and workshops. Affordable lodging will be available at Cal Poly. New features include:
• focus on blight and hard core problems in suburbs,
• a location west of the Mississippi,
• activities for children, and
• an explicit engagement with community organizers.
The conference structure will promote the exchange of ideas and experiences between planners and organizers. If you would like to help with the conference, contact Chuck Hatchikian (909/869-2687; cmhatchikian@coppomona.edu) or Gwen Urey (909/869-2725; gurey@acupomona.edu) at Cal Poly.

PN at ACSP
Planners Network organized a reception at the combined Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) and Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) conference in Toronto in July. The PN Reception, co-sponsored with the York University Faculty of Environmental Studies, was well attended, with over 150 people passing through. Several European visitors commented that they were particularly interested to find out that the US has a progressive planning subculture. Thanks to PN steering committee member Barbara Rahder for doing much of the work.

Act locally: Local PN Chapter Activity
CENTRAL ILLINOIS PN CHAPTER LAUNCHED
Activists from the University Y, the Student Planners Organization of the U of T’s Department of Urban and Regional Planning, and UIUC’s East St. Louis Action Research Project in Champaign, Illinois have joined together to sponsor a local chapter of Planners Network. Building upon the success of the NY Chapter of Planners Network, local organizers plan to meet on the third Thursday of each month to discuss critical issues facing progressives. The monthly meetings of the Central Illinois Chapter will alternate between invited guest speakers and class planning films, such as those featured at the 1996 Planners Network National Conference held at Pratt Institute. The first meeting of the new chapter is scheduled to take place on Thursday, October 18th at 7 pm at Temple Buell Hall at the U of I. Interested individuals should contact Angela Morgan or Ken Reardon at the U of I: 217-333-3890 (F), 217-244-1717 (F) or KM4R@uiuc.edu.

NEW YORK CHAPTER HOLDS MONTHLY FORUMS
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• Friday, October 21: Jobs for All Week
• Friday, November 22: Business Improvement Districts (BID’s)
• Friday, December 13: Globalization and Deindustrialization
Contact Winton at 718-636-3461; winton@ix.netcom.com for more information.

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Also in formation is a local PN chapter in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Dr. Alejandro Rofman plans to organize the group’s first meeting in April or May of 1997. Contact Dr. Rofman at 54-1-854-0462.

Double Exposure
Poverty & Race in America
Chester Hartman, Editor

The best articles and symposia from Poverty & Race, the bimonthly publication of the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, on the country’s two most important, and seemingly intractable, social problems — and the added impact when they intersect.
Includes contributions by Benjamin DeMott, Nathan Glazer, Roger Wilkins, Senator Bill Bradley, Brent Staples, Representative Maxine Waters, Manning Marable, Max Frankel, Herbert Gans, Henry Hampton, Julian Bond, Raul Yzaguirre, Juanita Tamayo Lott, Jose Padilla, Paul Ong, Douglas Massey, S. M. Miller, David Rusk, Eric Mann, and Melvin Oliver ... sixty contributors in all.

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Act locally: Local PN Chapter Activity

CENTRAL ILLINOIS PN CHAPTER LAUNCHED
Activists from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) have joined together to sponsor a local chapter of Planners Network. Building upon the success of the local chapter of planners network, local organizers plan to meet on the third Thursday of each month to discuss current issues facing progressives. The monthly meetings of the Central Illinois Chapter will alternate between invited guest speakers and student planning projects, such as those featured at the 1996 Planners Network National Conference held at Pratt Institute in New York City.

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If you're interested in finding out about other PN'ers near you, or in starting a local chapter, contact Winton at 718-636-3461; wintonp@ix.netcom.com

PO '97 in California
Planning is underway for the PO '97 Conference, to be held by Cal Poly, Pomona, June 26-29. Groups collaborating in conference planning include the Industrial Areas Foundation (East Valley Organization), the Watts Community Action Committee, and possibly others.

PO '97 will feature tours in the LA region and workshops. Affordable lodging will be available at Cal Poly. New features include:
- focus on blight and hard core problems in suburbs,
- location west of the Mississippi,
- activities for children, and
- an explicit engagement with community organizers.

The conference structure will promote the exchange of ideas and experiences between planners and organizers. If you would like to help with the conference, contact Chuck Hotchkiss (909/869-2687; cmhotchkiss@calpoly.edu) or Gwen Urey (909/869-2725; guere@calpoly.edu) at Cal Poly.
Double Exposure: Poverty & Race in America
Chester Hartman, Editor

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September 1996
PLANNERS NETWORK

The work of Mel King

by Louise Dunlap

Each of us touches a thousand people, says the law explaining why two strangers often know someone in common. But there are people on the planet who contact with more times than this number -- in ways that are powerful, warm, and deeply felt. One of these great connectors is Melvin H. King -- educator, mentor, practical politician, consensus-builder, environmentalist, poet, visionary, and interfaith leader.

I've stopped being surprised when people know Mel King -- from the checker at the supermarket to the US Ambassador in South Africa. It's not just that they know about Mel -- they know him. Working with Mel has been central to their lives. For many, the contact has stirred deeper commitment, a clearer sense of their work for social justice, more active and skilled leadership, and the "higher level of human consciousness" Mel has said he believes all people could fit.

Some have known Mel since the '30s and '40s when he was growing up in Boston's South End; where he still lives. His neighborhood school was a "Little League of Nations," a 56-identifiable ethnic group. Mel's family -- who had come from Barbados and Guyana -- lived on Secon Street, since lost to urban renewal. Their neighbors were Irish, Portuguese, Albanians, Greeks, Lithuanians, Armenians, Jews, Filipinos, Chinese, and Swedes. Mel's mother, an informal detective, knew every person, was active in church and women's groups; his father -- a dockworker and activist -- held union meetings in their home. (Mel once told a reporter that his political work started "When I was born.")

After going south to college, Mel married Joyce King, with whom he began a family of six children (and, now, six grandchildren). He went to work in the home community -- first as a teacher in the Boston public schools, then as a street worker and community organizer with the South End Settlement House. Here he set up youth programs linking African-American, Puerto Rican, Asian, and Latin agricultural workers and students alike to challenge a system of schooling that was deeply racist. In the early '60s he ran three times for Boston School Committee -- during an era so hostile that only one black candidate had ever been elected to city office.

Those whose lives touched Mel's in the '60s and early '70s were part of the civic "organizing" and "institution-building" moves he records in his inspiring book, Chain of Change. During these peak years of the civil rights movement nationally, Mel was unlimmiting local campaigns around housing, jobs, and schooling -- holding Boston accountable for conditions that often rivaled those in the South. With this work evolved the ideas that change comes only when the effort to seek a higher level of individual and community consciousness.

"It's about power and energy," he told a crowd at a Seabrook demonstration in 1986. "But it's your power and your energy.

As Executive Director of the New Urban League of Greater Boston, Mel with other leaders sought more democratic forms of self-organization, among other things to gain "economic control." This meant, among other things, greater control of the funding coming from paternalistic service organizations like the United Way. One high point was Urban League attendance at a full house City Council meeting. Entering the Storrow Drive ballroom after an elegantly luncheon, Black leaders moved quietly toward the front of the room gathering scraps and crumbs from the tables. As silence mounted, they reached the podium, spoke briefly, and tipped over the bag of garbage they had collected, declaring: "We are not taking any more of your scraps." The funding picture began to change.

It was during the early '70s that Mel joined the faculty of MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning and began the Community Fellows Program from which he retired this past spring. This program has enabled hundreds of community leaders of color from throughout the US to spend a year of reflection at MIT and to learn one another's stories and deepen their ability to build community.

In 1973, Mel was elected Representative to the State Legislature. In five terms on Beacon Hill, he continued to build institutions for community development -- in housing, youth education and employment, the Community Development Finance Corporation, assistance to small minority- and women-owned businesses, and anti-poverty legislation. As the one legislator committed to a progressive agenda, everyone brought him their issues, often to his early morning open breakfasts for policy makers. Mel won passage for a strong South Africa divestment bill which successfully passed in 1982 over Governor Ed King's veto.

While his legislation to prevent companies from charging for solar energy did not pass, Mel converted his own home to solar and, in the '70s, helped launch a long-lived coalition of Boston Urban Gardeners; BUG is still active with community gardens and farmers markets. How many know that Mel keynote the first US Green Party convention in 1987? In earlier years when few on the Left took environmental issues seriously and few environmentalists thought about social justice, Mel quite natural- ly became an advocate of what today we call environmental justice.

Many know Mel from his more recent campaigns -- for Boston mayor in 1979 and 1983 and for US Congress in 1986. It was during the second mayoral race that Mel and the circles of people around him came up with the idea of the "rainbow coali-
Please Write!

The surest sign of an effective network is as much participation as possible. As we strive to fill Planners Network each month with information and resources, we can only do so much without your help.

Send us your:
- Resource listings
- Job Postings
- Article ideas (or articles, even)
- Suggestions, comments, critiques of the newsletter.

The Planners Network

The Planners Network is an association of professionals, activists, academics, and students involved in physical, social, economic, and environmental planning in urban and rural areas, who promote fundamental change in our political and economic systems.

We believe that planning should be a tool for allocating resources and developing the environment to eliminate the great inequalities of wealth and power in our society, rather than to maintain and justify the status quo. We believe that planning should be used to assure adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, jobs, safe working conditions, and a healthy environment. We advocate public responsibility for meeting these needs, because the private market has proven incapable of doing so.

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Lessons always showed him — whether or not they shared his values and concerns. I will remember his effective work in his powerful faculty groups and a recent conference he sponsored encouraging activists of color to use electronic media for their own empowerment. I will remember his courses in community development, his seminar on Peace and Justice Studies, and the hundreds of students from every conceivable kind of community whom he challenged to believe in themselves.

"It's about power and energy," he told a crowd at a Steakhouse demonstration in 1986. "But it's your power and your energy." He gave the same message in gay and lesbian bars during the Rainbow races and outside student shanties during anti-apartheid day, to Community Fellows, and to the youth and their parents who stood up against the racism of Boston public schools. Mel continues to help all of us touch the power of love and find the energy for change.

PN'er Louise Dunlap taught with Mel King in the Urban Studies Department at MIT for 15 years and was Environmental Coordinator in his congressional campaign.

This article originally appeared, in a somewhat longer form, in the May issue of Peaceworks, 2161 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140; 617-661-6130.

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The by-lines were left off of the articles in the July issue. The authors were:

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Page 8 - Habitat II - Tony Schuman
Page 9 - Planning Education - Nancy E. Lee
Page 10 - Local Organizing - Peg Seip

Doris Rosenblum

Longtime PN member Doris Rosenblum, one of New York City's most tenacious and influential organizers, died of cancer at the end of August at age 71. A fixture of the Upper West Side political scene for more than 35 years, working issues ranging from affordable housing preservation to education reform, Rosenblum remained deeply involved right up until her death. Told just three weeks ago that she had irreversible lymphoma, she still considered attending a retreat of the New York State Tenants and Neighbors Coalition, where she had been a board member for the last five years.

"She was just never able to back away from something she believed in," says NYSTCN's Michael McKee. That may explain her legendary resume. As a mom on the Upper West Side in the late 1960s, Rosenblum set out to improve conditions in her kids' schools. In 1971, she helped found one of the city's first alternative schools, the West Side High School. Rosenblum went on to defend rent stabilization laws and tenant rights in Mitchell-Lama buildings. She also helped found the Strycker's Bay Neighborhood Council and, as a member and then district manager of Community Board 7, played a central role coordinating opposition to several huge West Side developments, most notably Riverside South.

Shortly before her death, she chided while telling friends that she was running 13 different coalitions out of her apartment. That didn't include the work she did with children, preparing oral histories of various neighborhoods as the official Manhattan borough historian.

Says Community Board 7's current manager, Penny Ryan: "We will only know what she was doing completely when we come to find out what's not been doing."

(Reprinted from City Limits Weekly, September 2, 1996.)
Mel King / continued from page 14

tion,” which would become the name and the model for the national Rainbow. This deeply visionary concept comes naturally out of Mel’s organizing history and is still evolving. In the 1983 race, it took form in a coalition that linked supporters by ethnic neighborhood as well as less place-oriented constellations like gays and lesbians. Although the electorate ended up choosing Ray Flynn, Mel’s Rainbow had succeeded in shifting discussion to more progressive ground and setting up alliances that would continue.

I can speak first hand about Mel’s presence at MIT, which he has often said is “the real world,” with all the oppressions we encountered outside and all the opportunities for learning to oppose them. It was wonderful to have a colleague who would unflinchingly do so – with 30-40 year’s worth of intelligent strategy and finance. I will always remember Mel standing among the huge columns at the Mass. Ave. entrance to the Institute speaking or reading poetry at rallies, and how he would get his camera to record people coming together to raise their voices against injustice. I will remember the profound respect his colleagues and I have always shown for the man who always showed him – whether or not they shared his values and concerns. I will remember his effective work in high-powered faculty groups and a recent conference he sponsored encouraging activists of color to use electronic media for their own empowerment. I will remember his courses in community development, his seminar on Peace and Justice Studies, and the hundreds of students from every conceivable kind of community whom he challenged to believe in themselves.

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Inside this issue:

- Election '96 and the role of Progressive Planners
- PN'er updates
- News from local PN chapters
- Job Postings
- Love and Leadership: The Life and Work of Mel King

NEXT ISSUE

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All materials should be sent to:

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As always, our thanks to those who can type their notes. It reduces our chances of misreading what you write. Feature articles of 500-1,500 words are always welcome; a diskette is greatly appreciated.