

workshops for working people on organizing, crime, tenant education and training, the school crisis, labor movement history and organizing, plus workshops on such things as research techniques, fund-raising, preparing propaganda and educational materials, etc. Their catalog is available from 107 South St., Boston 02111. Another similar school is the S.F. Liberation School, whose catalog is available from 2811 Mission St. SF, Ca. 94110. Non-elitist community schools of this type are very important for radical education and organizing, and the two mentioned here are good models to look into if you are thinking of starting one in your own area (as you should).

CONFERENCES: Paul Davidoff and David Gurin have put forth a proposal (enclosed) for network participation in the Vancouver U.N. HABITAT conference (May 25-June 11). Please read it carefully and respond to them directly. There's also a joint AIP- ASPO conference in Washington in mid-March. I don't know whether I'll be going, but I imagine lots of people in the Network will be there. It would be good if one or a group of you would take the initiative for organizing a get-together or meeting/session of some type among Network people, and some means of recruiting/informing potential new members. Anyone interested should get in touch with me as soon as possible, so I can include a notice in the next mailing. (Perhaps if some exciting meeting plans congeal, other Network members who weren't planning to go to AIP/ASPO may decide to attend.) For inspiration, I append the following, from Rick Cohen:

"Speaking of AIP/ASPO, I'm a refugee from the San Antonio bash, which I'm sure other Networkistas have told you was grossly disappointing, or maybe just gross. I can't remember walking out of so many panels before in my life. Aside from a couple of denunciations of H.C.D.A. (outnumbered by the endorsements calling it an 'opportunity'), even the crop of token curmudgeons was pretty poor. The grossest moments were the gatherings of the whole group (except those students and non-professionals who couldn't afford the luncheon cost, enabling them to chew on the meaty words of Bill Ruckelshaus)—amazing how the nation's top planners can get on a dais and utter platitude after platitude and not even blush from embarrassment. The occasion of the joint AIP/ASPO conference in D.C. in March should be cause for radicals to begin discussing the formation of a radical caucus within the organizations. Having helped out with the Caucus for a New Political Science some time ago, I've seen how poorly some of these efforts fare. But CNPS helped to raise some issues on the nature of the profession and ASPA, and might have gone further with some different tactics. In this instance, allowing AIP/ASPO to show a united unchallenged front of apolitical Horizons and Imperatives representing the planning profession is a terrible disservice to the American public. I'd like to see discussion by Networkistas on the possibility of an insurgent presence at the joint AIP/ASPO gathering."

ANOTHER ATTACHMENT is Carla Cohen's Letter from Washington. She's been in close contact recently with the People's Bicentennial Commission (1346 Conn. Ave. NW, Wash. 20036) and recommends to Network people both the results of the Hart Poll they commissioned on economic democracy in America (summarized in vol. 3, no. 3 of their newspaper, Common Sense—not to be confused with the S.F. socialist paper of the same title I mentioned in the last newsletter) and Common Sense II, by Jeremy Rifkin, PBC Exec. Dir. She also suggests that Network members look into the publications and research of the Exploratory Project for Economic Alternatives (directed by Gar Alperovitz), 1519 Conn. Ave. NW, Wash. 20036, which for several years has been looking into issues of economic democracy, priorities, investment decisions, full employment, etc. She also adds:

"I have been looking at proposals for citizen participation in planning, particularly at the national and state level. I would be interested in any projects which your correspondents feel have proved effective. I am most concerned with the problem of translating citizen planning into governmental actions in a continuous way. I am also troubled by loading too much on citizens who still have to work every day and want some time for their private lives."

FOR ALL EX-PEO-ers (assuming this mailing arrives in time): A Gala Farewell Party/WAKE for PEO and its friends is being held on Saturday, Feb. 7 at Charles Kaswan's (141 E. 3rd, Apt. 3D, NYC, OR4-5919). There will be a dinner plus a world round-up by recent visitors to Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, S. America and Portugal by Jewel Bachrach, Jill Hamburg, Fran Piven, Stanley Winters, Morris Zeitlin and others. You're supposed to RSVP (by Feb. 3) to 732-8881.

ALICE CUNNINGHAM of ABAG (Assoc. of Bay Area Govts.) wants to contact people interested in job sharing (and other forms of work restructuring), particularly in the public sector. She's connected with a group called New Ways to Work (457 Kingley, Palo Alto, Ca. 94301, 415-321-9675). Those interested can contact her at ABAG (Claremont Hotel, Berkeley, Ca. 94705). Alice also has sent in notice of a Conference on Income Support, Unemployment Insurance and Guaranteed Jobs to be held Feb. 26-27 at the Royal Coach-Inn in San Mateo (Cal.) It's sponsored by the Manpower Studies Program of S.F. State Univ., and information is available through Curtis Aller, the program's director (1600 Holloway Ave., SF 94132).

EMILY ACHTENBERG sends the following:

"A plea: approximately 40 tenant organizers in local FHA developments, along with the Tenants First Coalition (a federation of FHA tenant unions), Urban Planning Aid (an established advocacy organization) and several TFC and UPA staff members, are currently defendants in a civil conspiracy suit brought by a major Boston area FHA developer (Max Kargman). Kargman claims that the defendants have conspired to deprive him of his private property with the general purpose of 'abolishing private landlord ownership of Federal Housing Authority (sic) housing, as a means toward a broad program of greater distribution of the wealth.' The gist of the charges is that UPA and associated individuals published a handbook, "Tenants First! A Research and Organizing Guide to FHA Housing" which lays out 'a model course of action and a set of tactics for unions to employ in the implementation of their avowedly radical goals,' and that the 7 tenant unions subsequently utilized the tactics—including rent withholding, late rent payments, picketing, demonstrations, eviction blocking, and general obstruction of justice. The plaintiffs claim to be threatened with 'serious and irreparable harm,' including mortgage foreclosure on several projects. They are seeking injunctive relief and damages against the individuals and organizations named. The suit is regarded here as a substantial threat to the future of tenant organizing and related housing advocacy work. Donations for the legal defense fund are urgently requested; send to Tenants First Coalition, 595 Mass. Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. 02139 (with a note that it's for legal defense)."

TFC is also looking to have people submit "amicus curiae" briefs in their defense. Further information about this, and copies of the TFC defense brief are available from the same address. This attempt to extend conspiracy laws into the area of tenant organizing has important implications for radical planners and organizers all over, and we should provide whatever assistance we can to their defense.

BOB GOODMAN has just returned from a trip to Paris, where he was in touch with Bernard Huet, the editor of "L'architecture D'aujourd'hui," the largest French magazine addressed to an architectural audience. "Huet has a

Requiem for an Order

If some of the recent declarations of the Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs concerning a reform of the profession of architect only indicate intentions—the real definitive formulation of which we must await in order to judge the real impact—a number of certainties which relate to the organization and modes of behavior in the profession are, nevertheless, discernible.

1) In the future, any idea of reserving the field of architecture as a monopoly for architects alone—as is the case in Belgium, for example—is permanently eliminated.

2) On the contrary, it is a matter of making the law correspond to reality, by expanding the privilege of exercising the profession to categories of persons or organisms who have it already in fact if not in law.

3) Always with a concern for "realism" which seems to be a presidential trait (divorce, abortion), one is deliberately abandoning the exclusively liberal character of the profession. By a significant reversal, the rule, of exercising in an independent manner, becomes the exception. What is already a fact no one disputes.

4) Following a reasonable logic, one comes to foresee the abolition of the code of professional ethics and the disappearance of the Order of Architects, which was created in order that this be respected.

Thus, the Order of French Architects will have lived for 35 years.

Those who have demanded the abolition since one day in 1968, of this corporative creation of the fascist Vichy regime, will rejoice; but, they will find it a bitter deception with respect to present circumstances and significance of this disappearance—so far from the militant dreams of the beautiful month of May. Even those who pay it lip-service cannot hide the defects of an institution that is as little revered as it is respected.

By way of a funeral elegy, one could simply recall that, since its creation and in a continuous manner, the Order had a task of preserving and controlling, at the heel of all the powers which succeeded one another since 1940, its anti-democratic electoral system was conceived in order to insure the maintenance of a reactionary feudalism, finally to become an anachronism.

Its role consisted essentially in having to swear a derisory oath, to protect a word that some called a "title", and to collect contributions so well weighted as to penalize salaried persons and to favor the employers. In the way of benefits, there were none; it's enough to compare the services offered by the R.I.B.A. to British architects and the intense activity which it supports in the field of publication, education, research, and the promoting of young architects, in order to be enlightened.

We have seen that one of the official reasons pronounced for abolishing the Order of Architects is the progressive disappearance of the profession exercised in its exclusive form. This conception of the practice, set forth at the beginning of the 20th century by some great minds, assigns to the architect a priestly role vis a vis the client, as with doctors and lawyers. The artist, in order to preserve his integrity as demiurge, should not be the vassal of any economic power, and his art should be protected from any suspicious odor of profit.

It is curious to find this idealist argument in the prose of the UNSFA, which desires a practical framework "corresponding to economic and social realities", whereas no one can ignore the links that some large architectural offices have with banking and real estate groups, and the collusion of interests with construction enterprises, whereas one sees others take part directly in real estate speculation, and the practice of bribes, under the table in an envelope, or in rebates, have become commonplace.

Why keep it quiet any longer? Architecture is frequently a good business, and the time for bad conscience has passed.

Thus, a page in the history of French architects has been turned. A whole aspect of false respectability, of myths and ideologies falls away, revealing the brutal reality: a profession of which, if it does not submit to the laws of profit, is doomed to be proletarianized and whose efficiency appears more and more doubtful in a market-economy system. The architects, High Priests of Art, will be reduced from now on to a role of layman and placed under a common law, that of the simple citizen. But for those who still believe that Architecture can serve some other, social function, a new chapter must begin. The moment has arrived to identify one another and unite in new organizations which escape corporatism, real unions where employers and employees do not sit side by side, and to continue the obscure battle for the survival of architecture, for the protection of the real interests of users, and, in order to change society.

Bernard Huet ■

radical perspective and is trying to transform the magazine into something more useful than the professional promotion service it served in the past. In the process he's been shaking up some people in high places through editorials and articles. One of his recent editorials (Sept./Oct. '75) wound up getting him sued for libel by the Order of French Architects. From what I can gather it's in some ways similar to the AIA here, i.e. setting 'standards' for the profession.' The (somewhat awkward) English translation of that editorial is enclosed. (I can send anyone who's interested the original, far more eloquent French version.) "Huet's case is still pending—I'm sure he'd be interested in hearing from network people. I think he'd also be interested in possible articles about the architecture or planning scene in the US and Canada (the magazine has an English summary and an international audience.)" Direct any communications for Huet to Bob (11 Donnell St., Cambridge 02138), and he'll forward them.

Bob also adds the following: 'I'm now working on a series of pieces that will deal with the future control of alternative energy systems—with special emphasis on solar. Big companies are tooling up, along with government, to create what may parallel the relationship between the other government agencies and big business—serving to strengthen utility monopolies and companies that make solar components. Legislation has passed, making for possible exclusive patent rights for companies on inventions financed by taxpayers money.

"Some projects in the works portend something very different than the backyard collectors or decentralized control and distribution, e.g. a project by private companies to build earth orbiting satellites (financed by fed. gov't) to collect solar energy, transmit it via microwaves to earth, then distribute it. There are other projects even more 'central tending'.

"I'd be interested in hearing from people about both positive and negative experiences with the political control of alternative energy systems—what's being proposed or has been done in their areas by either groups of people, gov't or private companies. Suggestions of knowledgeable people or groups for me to get in touch with (including any scientist types who might be informed about the environmental problems that may be associated with certain ways

of using the new technologies, e.g. radiation hazards from microwave transmission.")

CARL ANTHONY has produced an interesting paper, entitled "The Big House and the Slave Quarter: Prelude to New World Architecture." Anyone interested in a copy should contact Carl at the Dept. of Architecture, U.C. Berkeley.

JOHN FRIEDMANN asks any members who have materials or thoughts on "urban farming" or "community gardens" to get in touch with Barclay Hudson, Urban Planning Program, SAUP, UCLA, LA 90024.

HERB GANS hopes that people in the network will respond to the Cleveland Policy Planning Report, "a good and seemingly unique kind of officials planning report that was discussed by some of us in a recent JAIP. I personally would be interested in hearing from Clevelanders as to how well it's working. (Herb is at the Center for Policy Research, 475 Riverside Dr., NYC 10027.)

BARRY CHECKOWAY recommends to everyone a monograph by Roger Kasperson and Myrna Breitbart, "Participation, Decentralization and Advocacy Planning" (Washington: Assn. of Amer. Geographers, 1974), "the outstanding synthesis I know that reviews the federal experience, municipal decentralization, and advocacy planning (and much else) from a radical perspective. The work calls for approaches that go beyond advocacy and participation to those which would enable ordinary people to plan and advocate for themselves. Excellent!"

Barry has also volunteered to undertake a really useful function among and for the academics in the network:

"It seems to me that the network newsletter should provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas among those teaching courses from the perspective of those identified with the network. My own courses at Berkeley (and before at Penn and Rutgers) always have been concerned with the politics of planning and with involving students in cases where their research and learning could also be useful to participants engaged in actual struggles. I would be glad to circulate my own course materials and ideas among others and to receive the same from those in parallel situations elsewhere. Perhaps we could ask all those

teaching relevant courses to send their materials to a central point (I volunteer) where they could be collected, briefly summarized for a future newsletter, and circulated to those interested in a fuller description."

That strikes me as a truly useful project, and I urge you to respond to Barry at the Dept. of City & Regional Planning, Wurster Hall, Univ. Cal., Berkeley, Cal. 94720.

BRUCE GOULD, Housing and Urban Development Staff Associate for the Community Service Society (105 E. 22nd, NYC 10010) has sent in some materials people in the network might find interesting: a report on a year-long study of the NYC housing court by CSS, and a statement presented to the State Assembly on "The Dispersal of Federal Monies Available to NY State and NYC Pursuant to Sec. 8 of the HCD Act of 1974." People interested in these materials should write Bruce directly.

HOWARD WAITZIN recommends an article in the 8/7/75 WIN by Claire Douglas and Jim Scott entitled "Toward an Alternative Health Care System," putting forth a specific model of good health care delivery. If you have trouble locating that issue, let me know, and I'll send you a copy of the article.

FRED COOPER of the Delta Ministry has asked me to include a job opening notice from Bolton, Miss., a mostly Black rural town of 1000, 20 miles from Jackson. Bolton is starting a housing counselling program and is looking for a housing counsellor with some knowledge of housing development and Farmers Home Adm. programs. Anyone interested should contact Mayor Bennie G. Thompson, PO Box 7, Bolton, Miss. 39041, (601) 866-2221.

On the subject of jobs, Woody Widrow, who works with the Shelterforce Collective, is trying to locate a part- or full-time job in the NY-NJ area which would involve him with community people and the needs of low- and moderate-income residents. If you have information or would like a resume, contact him at 62 Chestnut St., E. Orange, NJ 07018.

DICK SHOECH wants to bring everyone's attention to a NET Masterpiece Theater program called "The Suffragettes," which he describes as "a wonderful training film series on how to organize people."

SARA WERMEL has sent in a notice of an exhibit called "Bronx Art Deco Architecture," which showed at the Larcada Gallery in NYC through Jan. 24. It's an exhibition of architectural drawings, photos, promotion brochures and contemporary slides of apartment buildings in the West Bronx in the Art Deco style. The purpose of the exhibit, organized by Prof. Donald Sullivan of Hunter, is to call attention to the quality of the apartment blocks in that community, which is undergoing substantial decline. The show will be moving up to the Bronx, and anyone interested in further information can contact Sara or Don Sullivan at the Hunter Planning Dept. As someone who spent the first 17 years of his life at 196th and the Grand Concourse, I'm sorely tempted to fly into NY just to see the old neighborhood in all its glory.

SEAN MACDONALD has sent in copies of two papers he recently prepared: "An Analysis of the Social Control Function of City Planning" and "The Model Cities Program: City Planning as Social Control." Anyone wishing copies of these should write him at 98-10 64th Ave., Rego Park, NY 11374.

MARY TASKER, who works with the Shelterforce Collective, is interested in making contact with any community activists/radicals like herself (raising two young children alone while maintaining an intense level of community activism). "Both kids have been dragged around to picket lines, demonstrations, sit-ins, and of course endless meetings. . . . In the midst of all this fantastic and wonderful chaos I'm trying to continue to inject some semblance of order and sanity into their lives, to do combat

4

with the forces of racism, chauvinism, and capitalism and all the other isms that plague us . . . and to let them know that they are wonderful . . . and very respected and loved as people. I feel there must be other women who consider themselves radical activists and struggle with the same issues—but where are they? Most of the radicals I know are either single or in two-parent family situations. I guess my plea is—are there any more women like me out there?" (She's reachable at 41 S. Munn Ave., Apt 402, E. Orange, NJ 07018.)

WARREN JONES has passed on a review of Richard Meier's book *Planning for an Urban World: The Design of Resource-Conserving Cities* (MIT Press, 1974), by Stephan E. Roulac (who impressed me as a somewhat reactionary developer at a recent conference where we both spoke), published in the *Ecology Law Q.* Warren feels the review fails to address many questions that Third World and radical/left people would, and wants to know if anyone else in the network is inclined to review it.

THE HOUSING WORKSHOP OF THE CONFERENCE OF SOCIALIST ECONOMISTS (the British counterpart of URPE) has published a good set of papers entitled "Political Economy and the Housing Question." Included are critiques of specific British housing institutions as well as more general papers on the Marxist theory of rent and the political economy of housing form. Price is \$3.00, and it's available from *Political Economy of Housing Workshop*, 93 Woodside, London SW19. Those of you who are institutionalized should get your libraries to order it; the institutional price is \$7.50.

STEVE MERRETT, who is the convenor of the Housing Workshop, has sent me a list of their members (who are all over England) and suggests that if any of you are travelling to England and would like to contact people there, you should get in touch with me, letting me know the specific cities you will be visiting, and I'll forward you the appropriate names.

BRUCE DALE, just back in the US of A from several years in Italy, made available to me his mailing list from The Architects Resistance, a late 1960's group of left architects and planners. We recently mailed a postcard to all 246 of them, which has drawn a mild response to date; a large proportion were returned, however, as the list was from 1970. Anyway, welcome to the TAR-ers who have just joined.

With all these references to people and things, it would be good if any of you to whom inquiries and requests are to be directed could let me know every now and then what kind of response, if any, you are getting from these various notices. I think we'd all like to have some measure of how effectively the Network system is working.

At the bottom of this sheet is my initial attempt at ferreting out the truly interested from the voyeurs. I've had some form of expression of interest—letter, donation, materials submitted for circulation—from perhaps half the people on the list. The others—mainly those taken off PEO, Marx & Metropolis, etc. lists—are people from whom I've heard nothing (and who never asked to become part of the Network). Although there were a few dissenting voices regarding the penultimate paragraph of my Nov. 6 letter—that some form of contribution should be mandatory for continuing membership in the Network—the majority of comments I received supported that position, which is one I feel strongly about. Thus, the "coupon" below. If there is a red check mark next to it, it means you're one of those I've never heard from (or, in a few cases, it means I've made a mistake—advance apologies to those who have sent in long reports and large financial contributions but who nonetheless are "marked"). I'd like those people to at least send back the coupon indicating their positive interest in remaining in the Network. My plan is to give all those who still remain silent one last opportunity—in the next mailing—to

indicate their desire to remain in the Network, and if such is not forthcoming, to drop them. If anyone feels strongly that this is an unreasonable or unwise procedure, let me know.

Well, that's it. Once again, I'm sorry it's taken so long between communications, but . . . One thing I haven't been very good at is responding individually to specific moderately urgent requests that come in between mailings (my technique is wherever possible to include answers in notes attached to the mailing); from now on I'll do my best to respond promptly to individual communications that require an immediate answer.

Take care,

Chosen

A PROPOSAL FOR HABITAT

HABITAT, a United States Conference on Human Settlements, will convene in Vancouver, Canada, May 31 to June 11, 1976. Habitat grows out of the UN Conference on the Human Environment, which met in Stockholm in 1972. The Stockholm Conference encompassed all environmental problems of land, air, and water. Habitat focuses on the "built" or man-made environment. The term "human settlements" enables the conference to consider villages or even solitary shacks in the wilderness, but it will also pay a lot of attention to cities, large and small.

While the nature of UN membership dictates that cities in the developing countries receive a large share of attention, the conference will also consider, on a world scale, the problems of developed cities which we American and Canadian planners work with daily. Network planners and urbanists may want to learn all they can from this conference and its preparatory documents. Equally, or maybe more importantly, we may want to have some impact on the conference, some way of adding our own ideas and promoting them to the assembled delegates and world press.

The UN, of course, is an organization of governments, but it encourages a measure of non-governmental participation in its conferences by means of NGO (non-governmental organization) forums. At Stockholm the ideas and activities of the Environment Forum of the NGOs often attracted more attention and international press coverage than the rather staid official conference of governments. At Stockholm the Forum went on simultaneously with the government conference; in Vancouver the Habitat Forum will meet from May 25 to 29, before the governments' conference begins.

Habitat Forum will consist of plenary sessions and what they are calling "Working Group Sessions" divided along the following lines:

1. Natural Resources and Genetics: (Resource allocation by human natural systems; interdependencies between urban and non-urban systems; harmonizing ecology and economics in developing sustainable growth patterns; conservation of diversity.)
1. Population factors in human settlements projections for the future.
3. Land use planning (laws and legal problems).
4. Community planning, housing and technology.
5. Food production and distribution.
6. Energy production, use and conservation.
7. Water management and resources.
8. Waste management (and waste as a resource).
9. Public, occupational and environmental health.
10. Public participation (information, education, training).

Yes. I do indeed want to remain in the Network.

Name _____

Address _____

(Feel free to back up that bland statement of commitment with some kind of intellectual or material contribution to the Network.)

The NGO idea is that the recommendations of these working groups and the Forum will be transmitted to the UN Conference of governments, and they are to take them into consideration in their deliberations.

Network members, as individuals, or as a group, may wish to make heard a strong voice in favor of policies that are redistributive, favorable to minorities, democratic, and environmentally sound. Our recommendations can be founded in our practical experience as planners, urbanists, and community organizers.

While a world conference such as Habitat is limited in what it can directly achieve on a practical level, it will be a good place to meet people working in different ways on similar problems. Habitat promises to be particularly rich in social and technical ideas and analysis, especially on relations between the developed and less-developed countries and their cities. In addition, 230 films from 110 countries will be shown, and numerous visual exhibits will be mounted.

We offer Network readers these suggestions for participation in Habitat (and request your ideas):

1. Individuals or representatives of local groups are welcome to Habitat Forum according to UN-NGO announcements. Attend the Forum and participate in Working Groups. Let us know that you are planning to attend so that we can meet together as a "Network" group. We could convene some sessions of our own, or form a caucus to present our views if we feel inadequate attention is being paid to problems and solutions we consider insignificant. At the Stockholm conference Forum meetings were lively, even raucous, when environmental issues were politicized.

In order to participate in the NGO Working Groups at Habitat Forum, write to **Marion Parks, Environment Forum, 3021 Cambridge Place NW, Washington DC 20007.**

At the same time, let us know you are planning to come to Vancouver. Write to **David Gurin, Department of Urban Studies, Queens College, Flushing NY 11367.**

2. If enough people are interested we can make our meetings in Vancouver into a casual conference of Network planners. Some funds may be available for the publication and distribution of our observations about the conference and particularly about the US and other governments' follow-up on policies recommended at the Forum and at the conference itself. Paul Davidoff, who is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Habitat (of the North American Committee of NGOs Concerned with the Environment) will integrate our activities with those of other groups with the same concerns.

3. In preparation, people may be interested in appraising UN and NGO advance papers for Habitat. Also very important to examine are official U.S. (and Canadian) submissions to Habitat. A list of UN preparatory papers can be obtained from **Habitat Secretariat, United Nations, New York City 10022.**

Basic NGO information should be available from **NGO Committee for Habitat, POB 48360, Bentall Center, Vancouver BC.**

The US submission and related documents can be gotten from **Habitat National Center, 1111 Eighteenth St. NW, Wash., D.C. 20036.**

Three basic policy papers will be debated in Vancouver: (1) Declaration of Principles, (2) Recommendations for national action, (3) Recommendations for international cooperation.

4. At the Stockholm Conference some of the most impressive activities were outside both the UN and the official NGO forums. These activities were organized by concerned residents of Stockholm itself. A group called "Alternative City" directed "Alternative Tours" of the city and suburbs, and sold Alternative Post Cards of some of the less successful aspects of city planning in Stockholm and environs. They ran Alternative Exhibits and demonstrated Alternative Transport by crowding the streets with bicycles (causing some Environment Conference delegates to be immobilized in their official limousines). We are making contact with groups in Vancouver who may also wish to use the convention city itself as a lesson in urban problems. Network people may wish to work with them.

"Human settlements" is one way of describing the subject of basic concern for all those reading this newsletter. Habitat will put a world spotlight on our concern, for at least a few days. Some form of participation by people such as those in this network may be useful.

David Gurin
Paul Davidoff
January, 1976

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

The local situation is grim. Washington has its first elected government in 100 years, but the Mayor continues to act the same way he did when he was appointed. He selects cronies or people who can be controlled by his cronies for his top cabinet posts. The City Council, which is comprised almost exclusively of former activists in the civil rights and poverty movements (Julius Hobson and Marion Barry among them) is finding it very difficult to promote change without cooperation from the Executive. Most of the council members are inundated with the minutiae of daily business.

The Acting Director of a new Department of Housing and Community Development (more than one year since the renewal agency, housing authority, and code enforcement have been combined) polished up the handle of the big front door and has now got the permanent appointment, under the protest of 12 out of the 13 council members.

The contrast between Baltimore and Washington in renewal and housing efforts is stark. Baltimore has received less money and accomplished much, much more, even during the Nixon-Ford years. Baltimore has had 10,000 housing units rehabilitated in the last 15 years, including much for low and moderate income families. There are at least 20 neighborhoods which are undergoing some kind of rehabilitation. The downtown renewal, both commercial and residential, is beginning to take final form. It is ambitious and handsome. Baltimore is lucky in having more than a decade of Mayors who support housing and renewal and in having the leadership of Bob Embry, a former city councilman who has headed the housing-renewal program for most of these years.

Washington is about to experience the Bicentennial year with a shortage of accommodations for sleeping, eating, and car parking. There is an urgent need for a ban on the private automobile in the downtown area, which in the normal tourist season is jammed to the point of hopelessness. The National Park Service is carrying out many projects, some of long range benefit like the Visitors Center in Union Station, others pointless like the new park between the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial. But none of the Park Service projects, as far as one can see, are coordinated with the city. One longs for a hardheaded meglomaniac like Mayor Drapeau, who at least gives actions to argue with. The city controls literally hundreds of acres of vacant land, most of it quite near the downtown. If it is not to be used for housing and community services, why can it not be used for national projects, at least for one year?

On the housing scene, the Council passed a rent control ordinance a little over a year ago. The city was not prepared to allocate funds to administer the program fairly and no programs were devised to accompany the ordinance (receivership for owners who want to abandon the building). As could be expected, the rent control has had a negative effect on the quality of housing. Maintenance is being cut back as profits go down. In an effort to generate activity for an utterly moribund housing industry (due more to inflation, money shortages, and the suburban no-growth movements than to rent control) there has been an enormous spurt in conversion of older rental housing to condominiums. The Tenant Organizations have obtained 18 months of moratorium against conversion. A rigid test of conversion cannot be seriously entertained, however, until the city establishes the capability to accept ownership and management of aging apartment developments in order to preserve moderate income housing.

There is almost no rental housing being built in the metropolitan area, and little sales housing. No new housing is available for under 45,000 dollars (town houses). Washington had a vacancy rate under 3% during the '60's. It must be under 1% now.

Although Washington is scheduled to receive 42 million dollars in community development block grants this year, it has spent only a few million. There is little dialogue, no intelligent leadership, no intelligent criticism. Tenant organizations can block things, stop things, but they can't make things go forward.

Carla Cohen
January, 1976