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Vol. 4 No. 9 November 1994

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Volume 4 Number 9
November 1994

A magazine of public affairs, the arts and theology

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SPECIFIC LEVITY

Award

H.A. Willis has been selected as the state finalist for Western Australia in the MBF Health and Well Being awards for 1994. His winning article, On the Rack, was published in Eureka Street in March this year.

Cover Photograph: Clockwise from top left, Damien Parer, Captain Frank Hurley, George Silk (still photographer) and Maslyn Williams.

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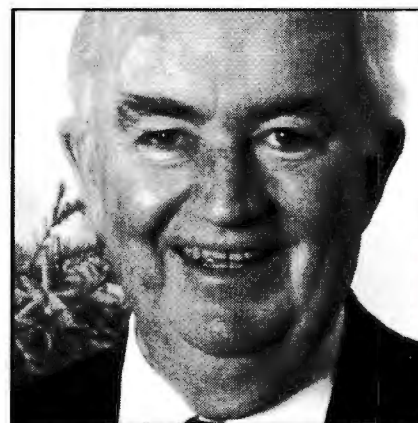
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IN MEMORIAM



William Joseph Daniel SJ
1930-1994

EUREKA STREET NOTES WITH SADNESS the death on 23 October of Fr William Daniel SJ after a long battle with cancer. Bill was a moral theologian and, amongst numerous commitments, an occasional contributor to *Eureka Street*. He had a gift for presenting demanding moral argument with both compassion and commonsense.

Writing, for example, in *Eureka Street* in May 1992 about the difficult area of euthanasia, Bill said 'suicide should not be countenanced by the law because it is a negation of the basic values on which our society and culture rest. It is the most direct repudiation of the value of life and of human community. It says to the rest of the world, "I mean nothing to you and you mean nothing to me"'. But typically Bill went on to temper such words with a suggestion that reaches to the heart of what causes despair: 'We need a kind of Neighbourhood Watch, on the lookout not for burglars but for the sick and lonely.'

Bill's final contribution to *Eureka Street*, last November, was a response to the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* in which he tried to hold together the teaching authority of the Church and the dignity of the individual conscience. 'Conscience does not create moral truth but seeks to find it.' Bill believed that through enlightened use of the traditional principles of moral discernment, you could find a way to remain both faithful to the tradition and responsive to the needs of people and the challenges presented by new technologies, especially in the areas of medical and sexual ethics. His advice was sought by many, especially by Catholic hospitals, and he was consulted by government agencies on the moral aspects of uranium mining and the land rights of Aboriginal people. In a recent publication, *Reconciling our Differences*, he wrote: 'Modern humankind needs the wisdom of the indigenous peoples of the world the way the ecology needs the rainforests. To give these peoples the self-determination they need in order to foster their culture and preserve their relationship with the earth is to preserve a little flame from which a future generation may kindle for itself a more serene and more enduring light.'

Bill's death is a poignant loss. We have never been more in need of his lucid and humane moral thinking. ■

—Michael McGirr SJ

Shaky foundations

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE MESS of papers that camouflaged academics' desks were likely to be research or teaching documents. Now it's a fair bet that the top layer, at least, consists of grant applications, funding initiatives or demands to measure output by performance indicators.

John Dawkins, as Minister for Education, changed the course of Australian university history when he abolished the divide between universities and colleges in the late eighties, and initiated across-the-board amalgamations of teaching and research institutions. He also put fire into the process of competition between tertiary institutions, and made scrutiny of academic performance as regular as a primary-school nit inspection, if somewhat less effective.

What we have now, eight years and three ministers on (Dawkins, Beazley and Crean) is a greatly ex-



panded university sector and student numbers undreamt of when Robert Menzies began his own reforms and expansions of university education in the fifties. There is no going back, and some—not all—of the reforms, were salutary.

Australia has long enjoyed a reputation for outstanding research quite disproportionate to our size, and unlikely given our geographical isolation. But there are signs that we are no longer making the crucial commitment to long-term, pure research that we once did. Future planning needs to be more long-sighted than present practice—with its mix of vogue opportunism and consumerist courting of the student-'client'.

This month's *Eureka Street* focuses on higher education (see pages 29 to 59). It is the foundation on which Australia will thrive. It must be supported. ■

—Morag Fraser

Turn a page and the world turns upside down

IN AUSTRALIA, WHEN SOMEONE mentions 'politics' and 'the arts' in the same breath it's odds-on that what follows will be an earnest speech on cultural pursuits deemed worthy of public subsidy. Hence the media attention lavished on the Prime Minister's release last month of what was drily, even drearily, described as a national cultural policy. Amid this flurry of fiscal projections, however, a news item about the political realignment of two prominent artists in the United States seems to have gone largely unread on this side of the Pacific.

Yet this change of heart, given the iconic significance of those involved, deserved to be proclaimed with all the solemnity, and heard with all the awe, that previous generations accorded to events such as the storming of the Winter Palace or the fall of the Bastille. As one read it, one knew again that vertiginous feeling which Marx declared characteristic of modernity, the sense that all that is solid melts into air. And what was this announcement, which seemed to be no less than an intimation of, dare one say it, a new world order? Clint Eastwood and Arnold Schwarzenegger are going to vote Democrat in the forthcoming US Congressional elections.

In this remote corner of Hollywood's empire, where the *Pax Americana* is maintained with little more than goodwill visits from passing nuclear submarines, the full import of such an aboutface by these

longstanding conservative Republicans is difficult to grasp. But, in truth, it is as shocking to the sensibility as if it had been John Wayne, and not Jane Fonda, who denounced the Vietnam War over Hanoi radio; as if J. Edgar Hoover had fought to save the Rosenbergs from the electric chair; as if, at the height of the Cold War, the leading crypto-Communist plotter in Washington had turned out to be none other than Senator Joe McCarthy himself.

What reasons have Dirty Harry and the Terminator offered to explain their newfound allegiance? Eastwood, that paragon of *machismo*, is campaigning to prevent a millionaire advocate for New Age spiritual enthusiasms from displacing an avowedly down-to-earth feminist, Dianne Feinstein, as US Senator for California. And Schwarzenegger says that he has been enlisted by his wife, Maria Shriver, in the cause of her uncle, the elder statesman of the American left, Senator Edward Kennedy. One wonders whether this can be the same Arnie who once settled an onscreen domestic dispute with a bullet and the immortal line: 'Consider dat a deevorce'. Who now can say that the International Year of the Family has achieved nothing?

All is changed, changed utterly. Or, as Dirty Harry might have put it, we're not gonna believe what happens next, even while it's happening. ■

—Ray Cassin

Talk of the town

From John W. Doyle

Fr Ngyuen Viet Huy ('Report', *Eureka Street*, October '94) has drawn attention to a grave social handicap we have largely overlooked—that of immigrants who have small competence in either English or their family language. As he says, 'Any attempt to communicate seriously with them ... ends painfully.' Indeed, the fruitless attempt to find words often leads to despair, anger, hostility and violence.

Perhaps we are in no small measure responsible for this unhappy outcome in that we have not put proper emphasis on young people mastering their family language before studying English formally. They should certainly not have been left to 'pick up' either language in the home or on the streets.

Competence in English beyond 'bazaar language' is clearly necessary if even native speakers are to 'communicate seriously' and (especially the most intelligent of them) not be forced through ignorance of our common tongue to take to the barricades. How much more necessary is this mastery if 'every Australian child' is to become fluent in another tongue!

John W. Doyle
Kew, VIC

Take a note

From John Barich

I found Ray Cassin's Comment on *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (*Eureka Street*, September '94) a little ingenuous. While it is true that the apostolic letter *per se* contains 'comparatively little theological argument of any kind', one cannot ignore the footnotes, which cover many authoritative statements, including *Inter Insigniores*—the 1976 declaration on the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood—and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Both of these are replete with 'theological arguments'. The declaration, in fact, is in two parts: the declaration itself, with 22 theological references, and a 32-page commentary with 54 references.

One could well ask 'How many times does the Pope have to repeat his "theological arguments" to convince those in doubt?'

John Barich
Ardross, WA

Eureka Street welcomes letters from its readers. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters may be edited. Letters must be signed, and should include a contact phone number and the writer's name and address.



Ray Cassin replies: *A footnote, even a footnote citing previous papal or curial documents, does not a theological argument make (though it might be the start of one). The fact remains that Ordinatio Sacerdotalis ignores questions such as the difference between 'the apostles' and 'the Twelve', which are now the common coin of theological inquiry into the understanding(s) of ministry and authority in the New Testament and the early church. If the Pope does not deign to address these questions in a statement on women's ordination, it should come as no surprise that his statement fails to close the debate.*

My point exactly

From Raimond Gaita, Professor of Philosophy at the Australian Catholic University's Institute of Advanced Studies.

Peter Singer accuses me of inconsistency which he says is all too typical of my thinking (Letters, October 1994). His strategy is to discredit me so that it appears plausible that if he and Rae Langton did misunderstand almost every major point I made, then the fault was mine rather than theirs.

Am I inconsistent in claiming that in general academic philosophers doubt little of consequence while I am also dismayed and frightened that philosophers encourage their students to speculate about whether it is permissible to kill young babies for much the same reasons as it is permissible to have an abortion? I concede that I expressed myself carelessly when I said that, in general, academic philosophers doubt little of consequence.

Clearly, the doubts that Singer cites are about important matters. However, I meant—and anyone who reads my letter will see the context bears me out—that the professed enthusiasm of academic philosophers to follow reason to wherever it takes them does not incline many of them to swim against the intellectual currents of the times. So the question is whether the arguments that philosophers have given for relaxing the conditions under which we may kill people are arguments against the spirit of the times or arguments expressive of them. I believe that the latter is true, despite the fact that many philosophers now seriously entertain beliefs that are radically in conflict with central elements in a tradition of Western moral and religious thought. Indeed, I believe that the arguments advanced by philosophers on these matters have had as little to do with people's disposition to accept or seriously to entertain the conclusions as did the arguments of philosophers in the decline of religious belief. So I am saved from inconsistency and Singer is denied even his meagre excuse for avoiding what is really at issue between us.

It is not inconsistency or obscurity on my part that explains why Langton and Singer misunderstand me so persistently. It is their lack of attention to what I have said combined with their unresponsiveness to possibilities not canvassed within a relatively narrow range of philosophical orthodoxies. Here are three examples.

First, Singer assumes that when I say that all human beings are precious, I must mean human beings considered as a species. I did not mean that. Leaving my work and also a philosophical tradition going back to Aristotle aside, there is a considerable literature, inspired by Wittgenstein, which explores the importance to philosophy (not just to ethics) of a notion of human being that is quite different from the one Singer takes to be the obvious one. It is not *Homo sapiens*, nor *Homo sapiens* plus person, nor *Homo sapiens* plus moral emphasis: it is not that of *Homo sapiens* plus anything. Singer ought to know this, and therefore there is no [good] reason for his assuming the view of the matter that is most congenial to his conclusion that my opinions are 'nonsense' and 'absurd'.

Secondly, I made quite a lot of the distinction between two different kinds of critical concepts and of its

relevance to moral philosophy and applied ethics. Yet both Langton and Singer think that it counts against what I make of that distinction that some philosophers believe that moral judgments are not true or false in ways that matter. It strikes me as, at the very least, uncharitable to assume of any philosopher that he or she could be so foolish as to make much of a point that was vulnerable to that reminder.

Thirdly, neither of them gives serious attention to my claim that it is misleading to speak in a general way of the nature and responsibilities of philosophy without acknowledging certain peculiarities of academic philosophy, some of which are general and some of which are a consequence of the expanded university system and the pressures that are now on it. As far as I recall, I made no undifferentiated claims about philosophy—about

I think I wore my flotation belt too long.



philosophy as such—and I was at pains to point to the need for a wider and more rigorous intellectual culture to which philosophers would contribute, but mostly without wearing their professional hats. Thus, when Langton suggests in her letter that 'the world at large can be important to philosophers', then I want to reply (as to almost everything she says), yes and no, and to remind her of how complex are the connotations of 'world' and, connectedly, of 'worldliness'. I want also to suggest to her, yet again, that it is a serious (if professionally dangerous) question whether it is consistent with the respect for the world that her remark implies, that we should wish thousands of narrowly educated ap-

plied 'ethicists' upon it—applied ethicists trained in universities where there is increasing pressure on all academics to cut their subjects down to a size that makes them more tractable to their need for speedy publications, and to their need to flatter students who for one reason or another are not up to it, but who are necessary if departments are to survive.

I am encouraged by reviewers of *Good and Evil* to believe that it is not so undermined by contradiction and obscurity as to explain the extent and degree of Langton's and Singer's incomprehension of the chapters Tudor gave them before their interviews. (A review by Christopher Cordner which gives a clear account and a just placing of the issue raised in the book appears in the June issue of *The Australasian Journal of Philosophy*.) Even so, let me state clearly and for the record: of course I do not believe that Langton finds the Nazi in Chaim Kaplan's story defensible, nor do I believe that she enters a plea for the philosopher king (that thought appears to have been prompted by her wooden reading of my claim that her tone and Singer's reminded me of the one taken by politicians who had been in office for too long and who had come to suspect that they were born to rule); of course moral philosophy can 'have implications for a world beyond the ivory tower' (although that Langton can still describe universities as ivory towers is a fact that makes perspicuous some of what divides us); of course a philosopher can 'without arrogance do applied philosophy'; of course since 'human beings are fallible, then our judgments about what is evil are likely to be fallible as well'; of course 'blind faith in judgments about what is evil can be a tool of prejudice'.

Clearly she assumes that the reiteration of such platitudes is relevant to our disagreement. That is bad enough. But it gets worse when she takes on the tone of someone who has the right to speak on behalf of philos-

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ophy and reason and asks rhetorically, 'how could it be irrelevant to a moral philosopher, or to anyone, that the voice of reason and of conscience ... agree?' Does the hard work of detailing why things are not so simple really count for so little?

In their interviews and in their letters, Langton and Singer unwittingly provide examples of the tendencies within academic philosophy that sustain my scepticism of the claims made on behalf of applied philosophy and of the rejuvenated moral philosophy that some believe will deepen it. I take only moderate pleasure in their 'own goal', for it was I who suggested Rae Langton's name to Steven Tudor, in the hope that she would add something to a discussion in which I suspected that Singer and I would pass each other by. And hopeful that it would help her towards a better response, I sent her a copy of my previous letter to *Eureka Street* together with some of the points I have made in this letter, but which space did not permit me to include in the last. I was naive.

Raimond Gaita
Ascot Vale VIC

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Thank you

From L. Howell

If I may say so, your September issue is as stimulating and exciting as usual. Theology and Christianity can be confusing as well as informative and useful.

Congratulations are due to Mr David Ardagh, pp9-10, for his extensive vocabulary. 'Dichotomy' is a winner. As an additional source of information and inspiration, Moses' Ten Commandments, studied and analysed theologically, can be helpful. They are simple in their admonition.

The falling off in church attendances and growing disinterest in God and Christ are proof that we all need a better understanding of Christianity.

L. Howell
Narrabeen, NSW

Message missed

From Dr R.J. Burke

Recently a joint statement by the Catholic Women's League, the Society of St Vincent de Paul and the Knights of the Southern Cross was made available to churches in NSW to express alarm publicly at all forms of family abuse—predominantly against women. This important document received good support from a small number of parish priests. A follow-up survey of parishes resulted in only one reply, a negative one. This was reported by one of the authors at last month's (Oct) NSW conference of the CWL.

It is ironic that the same weekend a study published by the *Medical Journal of Australia*, reported on prime time television and subsequently in *The Sydney Morning Herald* (17/10/94), found that nearly a third of 1000 women interviewed at Royal Women's Hospital, Brisbane, had been victims of domestic violence and that this increased during pregnancy. A social worker at the Royal Hospital for Women, Sydney, was not surprised by these findings.

What can the Catholic laity do? Our first attempts seem to have failed, even though other groups outside the church structure are quite supportive of the message. When will the eyes and ears of our pastors and their masters, as well as those in the community, be opened?

R.J. Burke
Roseville, NSW

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Brian Haill, Australian AIDS Fund

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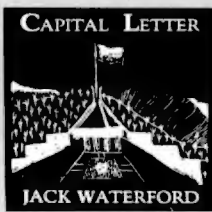
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Time to court a new chief

THE HIGH COURT'S AT IT AGAIN. Now it wants a right of free speech on political matters and public affairs. A right, moreover, that can override existing laws of defamation, contempt and sedition, and which may well put paid to plans for racial vilification laws. It's almost as if the Chief Justice, Sir Anthony Mason, wants to leave yet another stamp on a court he has dominated for two decades. Mason has presided over his last case. He has a few more judgments to deliver before he steps down in March, but already the wheels are in motion to search for a replacement. And the replacement will be an ordinary judge—whether the appointment is made on the grounds of merit and seniority or political expedience will change nothing.

It is the mettle of the most junior judge that will make a difference, but that mettle will not be demonstrated in arguments about, say, whether the Sexual Privacy Bill is a valid exercise of the Constitution's external affairs power. Even without Mason, five justices are solid on that issue. The flavour of the judge will be shown in the way he or she approaches basic common-law issues, particularly age-old disputes between the citizen and the government.

The court's activism has rarely been displayed on the old battleground of High Court politics, the respective powers of the Commonwealth and the states. It has been concerned chiefly with relations between the big guy and the little guy (who, cynics might note, has sometimes been well-heeled and well-represented). This activism has touched both the Constitution (finding an implied right of free speech on matters of government and public affairs) and the common law (*Mabo* was a re-statement of the old laws of property ownership). In the past decade, the court has shown a willingness to extend common-law protections in a way that goes well beyond incremental change in the law to adapt it to new circumstances, or to draw together different court decisions.

Clearly, the biggest influence on the court's activism has been a perception, shared by most of the judges, that executive government is increasing its power at the expense of citizens, and that there is a need to redress the balance. The mood has not been partisan: it is big and bossy government that is under attack, not Labor or Liberal forms of it.

But, though the executive has been the prime focus of the court's suspicion, it is determined to keep the legislature in check, too, and sometimes has been prepared to jump from one interpretative device to another in order to do so. At one moment the judges will be absurdly literal in their reading of a statute, and in the next they take the widest approach imaginable. For example, the court threw out legislation permitting the bugging of a suspect's home because the law did not explicitly authorise (though it plainly envisaged) the burglary of the suspect's home to plant the bug. But shortly after, the court invented an entire Commonwealth jurisdic-

tion to supervise the sterilisation of the mentally disabled from some vague words in the Family Law Act about 'the best interests of the child'.

Often, the true radicals on the court are not necessarily those judges thought of as being on the left of the political spectrum. In recent times, suspicion of the overreaching state has come from conservative quarters as well. Three high-Tory states' righters—Keith Aickin, Harry Gibbs and Darryl Dawson—were at the forefront of the court's concern about due process and natural justice in administrative law, whereas some otherwise liberal judges, such as Lionel Murphy, were strong 'big government' men who always started from the presumption that legislation was valid.

As for disputes between the Commonwealth and the states, on most issues the court has had strong centralist majorities for 25 years. This owes as much to Malcolm Fraser as it does to Labor: states' rights rhetoric aside, both parties have a clear interest in appointing a bench that takes the Canberra view.

But neither party has paid much attention to the wider anti-government activism of the court. Is such a court better or worse for Labor? Should it be looking for a Chief Justice who is a centralist with liberal views? Or for someone who 'understands the needs of modern government' and regards parliament, not the courts, as the democratic means of balancing individual rights and executive interest?

Twenty years ago, it would certainly have been arguable that Labor had more to fear from an individualist and creative court than did the coalition. This was not so much because the judiciary was intrinsically conservative—like, for example, the US Supreme Court with which Roosevelt had to contend in the 1930s—but because Labor was far more likely to be interventionist and collectivist in its approach to government; it wanted to expand the powers of the state.

These days that is increasingly less so, even though the Government has shown impatience and even anger at court decisions on matters such as election funding and due process for asylum seekers. But Labor has had few problems with the court on constitutional matters, and many in the government are comfortable with its human-rights emphasis—not least because (as with *Mabo*) a High Court judgment can give a cause the gloss of respectability among sections of the community who might otherwise be difficult to persuade.

Two things are certain: The High Court has never been more visibly powerful, or more conscious of its role in government. And the judges are in office much longer than the average government, so the jurisprudence of a High Court judge is one of the enduring legacies of any Prime Minister—a fact that ought to overwhelm temptations to appoint a token or an old mate. ■

Jack Waterford is deputy editor of *The Canberra Times*.

My friend Parer

*This year marks the 50th anniversary of the death of Damien Parer, the first Australian cinematographer to win an Academy Award. Parer's friend and colleague **Maslyn Williams** remembers the man and his work, and reflects on the image of Parer presented by recent biographers.*

PELELIU ISLAND, IN THAT EMPTINESS between the western fringe of the Carolines and the northern part of the Philippines, is a measly island about five miles long and 250 feet at its peak. Fifty years ago Peleliu was a Japanese outpost, and on 15 September 1944 it was invaded by US Marines. Within three days they had taken the island at a cost of 5274 wounded and 1251 dead, and among the latter was my friend, the cameraman Damien Parer. The fact that many high-ranking Americans considered the operation unnecessary is now irrelevant. Years have passed, and events that then seemed momentous have become attenuated memories. Yet there is still an emptiness.

This year the memories have suddenly become more real, even vivid, because I have been reading two new biographies of Parer. *War Cameraman: the Story of Damien Parer*, by a lecturer in communications at Charles Sturt University, Neil McDonald, has Parer's war work as its primary focus. *Damien Parer: Cameraman*, by the Catholic writer Niall Brennan, portrays him as a unique kind of Christian crusader who used his camera as a tool if not a weapon. An inset quote on the cover makes this plain: '... part-child, part-poet, part-genius, part-saint ...'

These are good books, both for the general reader and for the film historian. The authors have evidently spent much time and effort on research, some of it with doubtful informants. Their different approaches combine to produce a wholeness that has been missing from previous efforts in print or via radio and television, though it is necessary to read both books if the reader wishes to get a three-dimensional impression of a man who was an artist-craftsman with an interesting personal history and a unique spiritual motivation.

The latter facet of Parer's character is underlined by an opinion Brennan obtained from the senior Catholic chaplain to the AIF in the Middle East: 'He was the most completely spiritual layman I have ever known.' Coming from a man who, without the military trimmings, could fairly be described as a level-headed rural parish priest this is an acceptable

assessment. Coming from Brennan, who seems to me to row the 'Holy, Holy' boat with too much vigour, there is a danger of making Parer seem too much of a prig, even as a schoolboy; Brennan writes of him running away from boarding school because of the 'conversation and behaviour of evil schoolmates'—a phrase which, I suspect, originated with Parer's wonderfully loving and deeply religious mother.

A few pages later comes the story of Parer attempting to induce an expression of heartfelt reverence on the face of a young model by speaking to her earnestly about the Passion; and a further on comes a suspect story in which he warns a famous imported film star of the danger into which he was placing his immortal soul by his shameless, predatory behaviour. I do not suggest that these are apocryphal concoctions, but I doubt if they are true enough to be useful.

McDonald is more reticent about the religious aspects of Parer's character, and this is sensible of him because when he does venture into Catholic territory he tends to fall into error. He refers, for instance, to one of his most unreliable informants as a 'former priest' when the person concerned had been briefly a seminarian before becoming a semi-official photographer of ceremonies and activities connected with the church.

And he tells of a 'pilgrimage' that Parer made, walking about 20 miles to attend Midnight Mass at a monastery and reciting the rosary as he went. It seems that I was invited to take part in this exercise and declined because of other commitments, but was 'deeply moved' by the invitation, which was a 'decisive moment' in cementing our friendship.

It is a moving little anecdote but pure gobbledygook. The reason for the pilgrimage was Parer's wish to visit his brother, who was a Franciscan friar studying for ordination. Another friend, also invited, considered Parer to be 'some sort of nut' and probably still does. Brennan also goes astray on the subject of this Franciscan, whom he has celebrating the Mass at his brother's wedding; the actual celebrant was a Jesuit, Richard Murphy.



Back from the desert: Williams (left) and Parer outside Misr film studio in Cairo, 1941. Photo courtesy of Maslyn Williams.

It could be said that minor errors of this kind are not important and may reasonably be ignored, but it seems to me that Parer has a place in the panorama of Australian history, and anything written about him in future will in part be abstracted from these two books: therefore they should be accurate.

So it is careless then of McDonald to have Parer's father discussing his son's future with the film-maker Charles Chauvel when travelling in the *Spirit of Progress* in 1934, three years before the *Spirit* made its first trip; and the anecdote that has R.G. Menzies informing me of Parer's death is just thoroughly muddled.

EVEN MORE BEMUSING is McDonald's thumbnail account of my own early years of 'deprived childhood' and being forced to subsist 'on various forms of charity for most of (my) life', a sadness that has left emotional scars. I have been ignorant of such scars all these years, though I wish I had known about them earlier. It would have allowed me to give a Dickensian twist to the autobiographical book that I have been working on recently, replacing those cherished dreams of joyful schooldays, magic holidays with relatives in Devonshire, the Golden Valley of Cashel in Ireland and the mountains of North Wales, to say nothing of visits to an aunt who had an old farmhouse in the south of France.

But for McDonald, I would not have known that when arriving in Australia as a youth I 'was placed with a wealthy doctor in Bowral'. I have always believed that within days of arriving in Sydney I boarded a train that took me to New England, where I learned to be a jackeroo and, in fact, wrote a book about it that gained me a handsome award.

But it is a well known cliché that memory plays tricks, and in any case it is probably improper to introduce personal interpolations into what is, I suppose, meant to be no more than a commentary on two books. But as I have already said, I am making use of this opportunity to evoke memories and thoughts that have lain dormant for 50 years and more; memories of my friendship with a man who for a decade was closer to me than a brother.

For this reason I want to make it plain that although McDonald and Brennan have done an honest and excellent job I have doubts about the memories of some of their informants. So when Brennan tells of an occasion when Parer and the often surly and curmudgeonly Frank Hurley shared a tent in the desert, and that Parer by example shamed Hurley into getting out of bed and kneeling to say his prayers, I find that, however hard I try, my imagination is not sufficiently elastic to accept anything quite so unlikely.

Putting these quibbles aside, however, it is obviously more important to consider the treatment that

the authors give to the middle years of Parer's development both professionally and in a religious or spiritual sense, because in the end these two aspects of his character became fused into the unity that Thomist theology describes as piety or religious motivation (put it as you will), becoming an integral part of day-by-day behaviour.

Parer's lifespan was 32 years. After leaving school at 17, he spent the next few years training as a still photographer and picking up odd bits of film studio work whenever he could, for that was where his heart was. We met in 1935, working as juniors in a new film studio in Sydney, myself in the script-and-editorial and Parer in the camera department. These were the middle years of his transition from being a professional photographer to becoming a film cameraman.

It was a learning period for both of us; a period when things were coming together in the personal search for a sense of direction and purpose and, for Parer especially, the achievement of technical perfection. Together with a group of other youthful film enthusiasts we began to discover what was going on among the most advanced European filmmakers and theorists, yet McDonald and, more especially, Brennan both seem content with references to the influence that the Russian cameraman Vladimir Nilsen and the British documentary pioneer, John Grierson, had on Parer's thinking.

It is true that he studied Nilsen's *Cinema as a Graphic Art* thoroughly, with much underlining and note-taking, and for a while was fascinated by aphorisms such as 'Fluent simplicity is the secret of visual literacy' (neat but simplistic, and ultimately meaningless). He was also much taken by Grierson's theory of 'mobile and fluent composition' until discovering that the phrase was borrowed from *The Poetry of Film*, an essay written 20 years earlier by the Hungarian, Gyorgy Lukacs. This essay included another phrase which ultimately became Parer's driving maxim—'to catch the absolute reality of the moment'. That was what he was trying to do on Peleliu Island, when a Japanese machine-gunner cut him down.

This is not to say that Nilsen and Grierson were not important in shifting Parer's thinking away from the merely poetical and pictorial and towards the day-to-day realities of human behaviour in a continuously changing world. Both were men of cultured integrity, but both were ardent propagandists—Nilsen as part of the machinery of the socialist revolution, and Grierson as the prime mover in Britain's documentary movement, which sought to use film to meet modern sociological, political and

educational requirements, a statement underlined in Parer's copy of Paul Rotha's book *Documentary Film*.

THE IDEA THAT FILM could and should be used for such purposes was not new. In 1896 Maxim Gorky had been worried that the exaggerations and fantasies of the popular cinema would make people less willing to accept the realities of ordinary life. In 1915 a Benedictine monk, Cecil Bognar, had written 'film itself is merely an instrument, a raw material like paint or type, that may be used for all forms of communication and even perception'. The last word was the key: film would become a means of making people perceive reality from a number of different angles or viewpoints chosen by others.

It would be tedious as well as unproductive to list the books and specialist magazines that Parer read in his quest to equip himself as a first-class cameraman. Books not read because they had not then been translated from the languages in which they were written (mostly Russian, German or Hungarian) were discussed with others who had read them, but books and their theorising, however enlightening, did not give him a particular goal apart from being able, one day, to be involved in the making of good films with first-class camera work and a gentle moralistic quality.

As one of the group who shared these hopes and enthusiasms, I consider that this period of four or five years was by far the most important for the would-be filmmakers of that age. The books and the on-and-off employment in studios were a splendid apprenticeship, but they lit no fires in the mind. For this reason I find it strange that neither McDonald nor Brennan give more than a few haphazard paragraphs to this period. McDonald apparently sees it simply as a link between Parer's early years and the war period, which is his main interest and which he covers better than anyone else has yet done.

As for Brennan, he does his subject no service whatever by beating the Nilsen-Grierson drum so lustily that one is not able to hear the rest of the orchestra. It is quite wrong to suggest that Parer's eventual method of operating was 'the pay-off for the years of quiet and intensive study of Nilsen's diagrams and Grierson's theories'. Both had their place in his professional development, but in terms of actual filmmaking neither would have claimed to match the genius of Dziga Vertov to whom both were indebted, or of Alexander Dovzhenko, whom the film historian Basil Wright refers to as 'probably the greatest poet of cinema the world had ever seen'. Nor did any of the theorists have the inspirational effect of the sometimes lush and sometimes stark imagery of Robert Flaherty's *Moana*, shot on a Pacific Island, *Nanook*, about Eskimo life, and *Man of Aran*, about the people of a bleak island off the Atlantic coast of Ireland.

One could go on with a catalogue of such films, citing those of Cavalcanti, the Dutchman Joris Ivens

Parer and I walked home in silence that night ... I had the feeling that in his mind, along with Gypo and Mrs McPhillips, were these deeper things, sin and forgiveness; forgiveness even of that most heinous sin, the betrayal of a mate. Things that like great literature, should be about.

and Pare Lorentz in America, among others. It was a time of ferment in the 'realist' film world, and in spite of Brennan's religious fulminating about the 'shabby products of Hollywood, wasteful scoriae filling the coffers of uninterested millionaires' there were many great films turned out by Hollywood studios which kept the enthusiasts going back, three and even four times, to squeeze that last nuance of structure, lighting, directing or camera work from a beautifully conceived sequence or episode.

Again, one could reel off the titles of films and the names of those who made them year after year, not only in Hollywood but in England, France, Germany, Hungary and Russia. Films that were great entertainment but which could sensibly be classed as examples of a genuine art form. From France came Julien Duvivier's *Carnet de Bal* and *Pepe le Moko*, René Clair's *The Paris that Sleeps* and *The Italian Straw Hat*, and Marcel Pagnol's *The Baker's Wife*—a story about the village priest and the Communist mayor joining forces to avoid a community calamity. Parer's guffaws at the shot of the mayor carrying the priest across a river made people in the audience turn in their seats. From Germany came *The Love of Jeanne Ney*, directed by G.W. Pabst and brilliantly edited. And from America? Frank Capra's *Lost Horizon*, with Ronald Colman; Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*. Lists as long as your arm.

To be sure, there were also cartloads of tinsel and tawdry stuff that Brennan would call prurient; that has always been the case, in every field of visual and literary yield. But in filmmaking, from the earliest days there were great films and splendidly creative filmmakers who provided the inspiration and incentive for people like Parer. We saw Garbo, directed by Rouben Mamoulian in *Queen Christina*, and sat as if magnetised at the almost unbearably desolate shot of Garbo standing at the bow of the ship that was taking her away. And again, in *Ninotchka*, directed by Ernst Lubitsch, she sits alone in her hotel room looking at a photograph of Lenin who almost imperceptibly seems to smile at her. But the film shots and sequences that still stick in my mind, as they did in Parer's were in John Ford's *The Informer*, made in 1935.

First, the full close-up of Gypo Nolan being interrogated by the British: the tortured face, whisky-sodden, torn between self-preservation and shame as he teeters on the brink of betraying his mate. (Years later I used the shot myself, when making a film in Germany about the interrogation of refugees.) Then Gypo staggering through dark streets towards the church to ask forgiveness for what he has done. The off-scene voice of a woman in a pub singing *Mother Machree* (sob stuff, for sure, but wonderfully done). In the church he stumbles down the aisle towards a crucifix hanging above the altar. The only other person in the dimly lit church is Mrs McPhillip, praying for the repose of the soul of her son, the victim of Gypo's betrayal. He swallows the blood and mucus



dribbling around his lips and whispers drunkenly, 'Twas me was the informer Mrs McPhillips, can you forgive me?' She is weeping, empty of everything, even the capacity to hate her son's murderer: 'I forgive you, Gypo, you didn't know what you were doing'. Parer and I walked home in silence that night, knowing that if we were to be filmmakers we had a long way to go; and I had the feeling that in his mind, along with Gypo and Mrs McPhillips, were these deeper things, sin and forgiveness; forgiveness even of that most heinous sin, the betrayal of a mate. Things that great films, like great literature, should be about. The mystery of human nature.

I WISH BRENNAN HAD SEEN THIS. If he had he might not have filled this period of Parer's development with pages and pages of his activities with the Campion Society, bushwalking or making little films about religious occasions and the doings of the Grail ladies, even though these, too, were relevant to his development. Thinking about it now, I believe that Brennan should have called his book *Damien Parer: Crusader*, or something of that sort. It would have given the thematic cohesion that it needs while at the same time making plain that Parer became the legendary wartime cameraman because of the inescapable nature of his vocation.

The story of Parer's war years begins several months before war was declared, by which time I had become director, editor and scriptwriter of the Commonwealth Government Film Unit in Melbourne, producing films about eggs, butter, sultanas, wool and other such exportable commodities; an occupation to which I brought as much of the tech-

Bitterly cold, but feverish with anticipation: still cameraman George Silk (left), Williams and Parer, near Greece's border with Yugoslavia before the expected German invasion.

Photo courtesy of Maslyn Williams.

In spite of Brennan's religious fulminating about the 'shabby products of Hollywood' there were many great films turned out by Hollywood studios which kept the enthusiasts going back, three and even four times, to squeeze that last nuance ... from a beautifully conceived sequence or episode.

nique of Eisenstein, and as many of the theories of Grierson, as the subjects and the authorities could assimilate. Meanwhile Parer, with two workmates from the studio days, had set out to make two short films under the general heading *This Place Australia*, based on the Henry Lawson poems *The Waratah and the Wattle* and *The Storm to Come*. They were shot mainly in the Blue Mountains and when released were highly praised, with one critic saying 'The star of the production is cameraman Damien Parer, whose work is as breathtakingly lovely as anything that ever came out of Hollywood.'

Though living in different cities we had kept in close touch, and as one of my own two cameraman was retiring I asked Parer to send me clippings from these films. On the strength of their quality and his background of studio work he was hired to take the retiring man's place. I dreamed then, for a little while, that working together at last we would show them the way films should and could be made in Australia, but within weeks he had been conscripted into the government's War Film Unit and in January 1940 was on his way to the Middle East.

I followed him a few months later, as 'scriptwriter, producer and assistant cameraman' under the veteran Frank Hurley. We worked together in North Africa, Greece, Crete and Syria. We grew up, made discoveries of all sorts, and became so much closer to each other that a British major with whom we had frequent dealings used to say, 'Here come Damon and Pythias'. When Australia's interests switched to the Pacific and a completely different kind of fighting we became separated, Parer moving to New Guinea and onwards with the frontline fighters, while I became a minor pawn on the propaganda chess board moving back and forth between Canberra and MacArthur's headquarters in Melbourne.

McDonald and Brennan are on firmer ground when dealing with this period, with access to genuine records and firsthand stories provided by trustworthy informants who saw Parer in action, and shared the same daily experiences. McDonald's professional bent becomes evident here and his coverage is more methodical and complete in detail, so that it adds up to the best available assessment of Parer's war work yet published.

Brennan deals with the various campaigns less extensively—though treating them with respect and at times in a most moving manner—while pursuing his interest in the effect of Parer's deeply held beliefs on both on his war work and personal relationships. This insistence on underlining Parer's evident, though at times almost eccentric, spirituality makes Brennan's

book important for a complete understanding of this many-faceted man. At times Parer's behaviour and Brennan's language may seem extravagant, yet there is no gainsaying that, to many who knew and worked with him, this was an essential part of his captivating good nature and of his willingness to take frightening risks to get the shots he wanted.

For example, after the battle of Guam the respected correspondent Denis Warner wrote: '... the marines think of him as a sort of legendary figure the bullets cannot touch because four of their corps of cameramen have been killed in the fighting here and none of them took the same risks as he did ...'

An American correspondent who knew what it was to have close calls adopted the motto, 'My paper pays for live news, not dead correspondents.' When I mentioned this to Parer, during one of his brief leaves he just grinned as if he knew something that I didn't.

Coming closer to the centre of this question, Brennan quotes the chaplain, Father McCarthy, on Parer's attitude towards the Mass, to which he went daily whenever possible: 'He knelt straight up, without kneeling on anything, his hands clasped together, as if enraptured. He remained like this for the whole of the Mass and for some time after.'

It was this 'otherness' that made him, at times, seem strangely and even comically separate. I can remember that when in Cairo on leave we often went to Groppi's for dinner and he would ask a girl to dance, then trundle her back forth across the floor like a farmer ploughing a furrow, his eyes fixed on some invisible object above her head and a look of ecstatic reverence on his face. He would bring her to our table for a drink and say 'Thank you, that was lovely.' On one such evening he asked the dance band leader to play Gounod's *Ave Maria*. The girls wondered what was wrong with this handsome odd-bod.

This could all be seen as some peculiar kind of affectation, but there is evidence in plenty to put against such an interpretation. More than 20 years after Parer's death, Bernard Hosie, a Marist, wrote a pamphlet for the Australian Catholic Truth Society with the heading *A Unique Australian*. It follows the well-worn track that others have carved in trying to identify what made Parer different; the difference that made him an enigma to many. But then Hosie quotes a conversation which Parer had with his oldest brother, Stan, before going back to the war-front once more: '... this can't last, Stan. On the law of averages I've got to stop a bullet. I don't mind much; it's in the Father's hands.'

Reading that brought back several memories. We were in Queensland, at Maleny, visiting his mother and others of the Parer clan when I said, 'There'll be so much to be done when this is all finished. So much and so many to mended. So many big subjects to be covered where the right kind of film will be useful.' He was squatting under a bank on the edge of a paddock, because he always had troubles with constipa-



Tracking down a killer

IN SEPTEMBER, as the Australian Society for Microbiology was meeting in Melbourne, a microbiological drama was unfolding in Brisbane. On the eve of the spring racing season, 14 thoroughbreds died of a mysterious illness and soon after their trainer, Vic Rail, also fell ill and died.

Early in the month two horses had been moved to Rail's stables, near Eagle Farm racecourse, from a paddock at Cannon Hill, in Brisbane's eastern suburbs. They became ill and died. By 22 September, when their deaths were reported to the Queensland Department of Primary Industries, several other horses in the stables had developed the same symptoms as the Cannon Hill horses: loss of appetite, high fever, and reddened mucous membranes. A build up of fluid in the lungs made breathing difficult, and most of the afflicted horses were destroyed before they asphyxiated.

To complicate matters, the only person who had a complete knowledge of the horses' movements and contacts, Vic Rail, became critically ill, showing remarkably similar symptoms. From the pattern of the disease, a virus was the obvious suspect: the fear was that Equine Flu or African Horse Sickness, both renowned killers, might be involved.

Although carrying out its own detective work, the Primary Industries Department did not hesitate to call in outside experts. Tissue samples from the dead horses were analysed at the Australian Animal Health Laboratory in Geelong, and samples were also sent to the Centre for Disease Control in Atlanta, USA, because one early suspect was Hantavirus, which can be spread by rats and is notoriously difficult to diagnose. The Queenslanders also set up videoconferences with the assembled researchers at the Melbourne conference. The episode was the talk of the meeting, and a Korean scientist, Dr H.W. Lee, a world authority on Hantavirus, flew back to Seoul with samples from the infected horses. Two days later he faxed back to the meeting that he had eliminated Hantavirus and several other alternatives.

Within a week, researchers from the department and the Animal Health Laboratory had independently isolated and identified a virus from the Paramyxidae family. It comes from the same group as the virus that causes measles, but no member had ever been known to be fatal in horses before. To be sure this virus was the real villain, researchers in Geelong deliberately infected a couple of horses. They came down with the disease in three days.

The authorities established a telephone hotline to make information available to journalists and the racing industry, and held regular press conferences. But such openness proved a little difficult to control. When Rail died, health authorities told the media that his heart had given out. What they failed to say was that it was because his lungs were full of fluid, just like the horses' lungs. Part of the reason for this late admission is the difference between the public and scientific perspective. Scientists are naturally cautious, and try not to make claims without overwhelming evidence. It is also true that few infectious diseases are shared between species. But what if this deadly virus had been highly contagious? Two other stable workers seem to have been exposed to the virus, but did not succumb to the disease.

Fortunately, the mystery disease could only be passed on by very close contact. The Primary Industries Department's swift work in limiting contact seems to have stopped the disease in its tracks. ■

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tion. And standing there, looking at the scenery, I was thinking of films about refugees, rehabilitation problems and the two of us working together.

Then he said, 'That would be bloody wonderful', but I knew that he wasn't altogether sure; I waited for him to pull up his pants and speak again. 'God allots the jobs. He gives us the skills we have and he can take them away when he wishes. Let's go and have a drink.'

NOW, SITTING AT AN OLD TYPEWRITER working at this piece, I remember driving with him across a desert and Parer reciting Chesterton's *Lepanto* with a kind of breathless urgency heightened by some kind of excitement, tripping over its exhilarating rhythms.

Gun upon gun, ha! ha!

Gun upon gun, hurrah!

Don John of Austria

Has loosed the cannonade ...

Then he said, 'Did you know that the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary was proclaimed to celebrate that battle?'

The memories run together. There is a hawk of some sort high in the sky, hovering with rippling wing-tips. Parer's expression changes into an enraptured ecstasy and we have Gerard Manley Hopkins:

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon in his riding

... the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Silence for a while and we turn to St Winifred's well and the *Golden Echo*.

When the thing we freely forfeit is kept with fonder a care,

... do but tell us where kept, where.—

... We follow, now we follow.—

Yonder, yes yonder, yonder,

Yonder.

His voice had sunk to a whisper. He already knew where he was going. There were people who spoke of his death wish, which was silly because nobody enjoyed being alive more than he did, forever conscious that God was close by. He loved his wife and was excited by the idea of fathering a child. He no more wanted to die than his namesake, Father Damien, had wished to die of leprosy on Molokai. But he had once quoted to me a line or two from something by Jacques Maritain, to the effect that death to 'self' leaves one free to die for ideals and beliefs.

I am grateful to McDonald and Brennan for bringing back these memories. ■

War Cameraman: The Story of Damien Parer

Neil McDonald, Lothian, 1994

Damien Parer: Cameraman

Niall Brennan, MUP, 1994

A sort of healing

SOME SORT OF HEALING was at work—along with a little more wounding—in Sydney last month, when the 40th anniversary of the great Labor Split of 1954-55 brought old enemies together at the State Library of NSW.

'Fellow relics of the fifties', historian Ed Campion called the participants in a conference organised by the Australian Society for the Study of Labor History and the Library Society: Communists, Groupers, Santamaria-ites, ALPers and DLPers, all laying claim to have been the true representatives of Australian working people in those days.

At the heart of everything said lay two questions: 'Who were the true believers and remained so?' and 'Was the Split merely about differences on opposition to communism, or was it a response to a perceived attempt by B.A. Santamaria's Movement to take over the Labor Party?'

If there was consensus after five hours of self-explanation, it lay in the feeling that the motives of most of those who took part in those passionate struggles were honorable.

Elfreda Morcom, an 84-year-old former member of the Clerks Union, which was wrested from Communist control by the Groupers, said she had joined the Communist Party 'because of its ethics', and she was believed.

Jim McClelland—former senator, Whitlam government minister, and a champion of the Groupers but anti-DLP—drew the sword on one speaker, Jack McPhillips, a former assistant secretary of the Ironworkers Federation. McClelland said he had been told by a now-deceased printer that in the 1949 Ironworkers ballot, the printer had given 2000 ballot papers to McPhillips, not to the returning officer. 'He's a liar and so are you,' retorted McPhillips, injecting retaliatory anger into an otherwise polite occasion.

Bob Gould, Sydney bookseller and leftist, came to McPhillips' defence with a recollection that a few months before the printer died he had denied to Gould that he had printed the ballot papers. But Gould still accepted the court evidence that the ballot had been rigged.

Ex-Groupers and DLP supporters used the occasion to reassert their Labor

legitimacy. Jim Macken, a former Clerks' Union activist and later an Industrial Commission judge asserted, to considerable applause, that Industrial Group policies of the '50s were more 'Labor' and more socialist than ALP policies in the '90s.

Forty years after the split, it was not hard to accept Frank Rooney's declaration that he had always been with the rank and file—he was a former coal miner, ALP organiser, Movement man, Grouper and DLP'er. He now lives on the pension, although in the heat of the Split the NSW Premier, Joe Cahill, had offered him a job as a conciliation commissioner. Rooney declined: 'To do that, I would have had to dump my mates. I went down with them and I'm proud of it.'

The ghost of Herbert Vere Evatt hovered over the conference—haloed and unhaloed. 'I don't know whether he was mad or not,' said Rooney, 'I am not a psychiatrist. But he did some mad things—the Split would never have occurred without him.'

Arthur Gietzelt agreed, at least on the latter point. Gietzelt, a passionate believer that the Movement had to be exposed, declared that the Labor Party owed Evatt a debt. 'Make no mistake,' he said, 'Santamaria was about changing the whole nature of the Labor movement and of Australian society.'

For Gietzelt, it was the 'courage, tenacity and strength of Dr Evatt' that defined this turning point in Australian history. He recalled that at the ALP federal conference in Hobart in 1955, where party powerbrokers rejected the credentials of six Grouper delegates from Victoria, the mainstream party had only defeated the Grouper/Movement forces by one vote.

KEVIN DAVIS, a former Jesuit scholastic who was state director of the Movement in NSW from 1951-54 and became a founding member of the DLP, said his motivation in those days had been opposition to totalitarianism, whether of the left or the right.

But his assertion that the Movement had never feared a Communists takeover in Australia was news to some of his listeners. Neither, he insisted, had

the Movement itself wanted political control of the country—these assertions were 'nonsense'.

Hadn't he read all those hair-raising stories in the Movement journals *Freedom* and *News Weekly* about the imminent seizure of power by the Communists? Or heard the five minutes of midnight propaganda fed to nuns and priests and other captive audiences by Movement speakers?

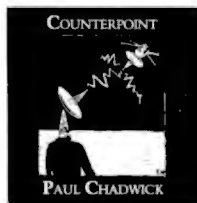
And hadn't he read of Santamaria's communication to Archbishop Mannix in 1952 (reproduced in part in Gerard Henderson's book *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops* (1982), in which Santamaria set out his vision that, within a few years of the defeat of Communists in the unions, the Movement would be able to 'completely transform the leadership of the Labor movement, and to introduce into federal and state spheres large numbers of members who possess a clear realisation of what Australia expects of them and the will to carry it out', thus delivering to the church 'great accessions of strength'.

Henderson says that Santamaria has never challenged the veracity of that document. In 1955, many Labor people feared that it was exactly what Santamaria planned, though they couldn't prove it. The prospect of the Movement gaining such influence was feared by those Catholics who embraced the plural society, and bitterly resented by non-Catholics such as Arthur Gietzelt.

Maybe Santamaria never told Kevin Davis about his plans. After all, he was not notably dedicated to consensus. Why should he be? In strategic terms, Santamaria was the Movement.

But at the State Library in Sydney in 1994, no one needed convincing that Evatt, whatever his emotional state or his motives in 1955, had split the Labor Party, setting it on a long and painful new course. The result was an ALP that more closely reflected the growth of a liberal, secular Australia, and which scuppered Santamaria's naïve and presumptuous dream of a nation evolving in his own religious likeness. ■

Paul Ormonde is a Melbourne writer. He is the author of *The Movement* (Thomas Nelson, 1972).



Uphold the (copy)right

COPYRIGHT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A TOOL to control information, but it seems that information is getting out of control. Digital technology transforms numbers, words, pictures and sounds into the language of computers, arrangements of ones and zeros. Each one or zero is called a 'bit' and bits can flow through phone lines to other computers which reproduce them as, say, text, video or music. Bits can also be remixed—my words, her sound, his picture—to make your new 'multimedia product', which you then circulate among potentially millions of other computer users who are dipping into the stream of bits.

This activity consists of countless tiny, fleeting electrical charges. Thousands of hours of creative effort, selection and use make nothing physical. A 'wired society' with a 'celestial jukebox' and 'world-wide web' can function without the things in which formerly we stored ideas: books, video and audio cassettes, portable computer disks.

John Perry Barlow, in an influential article published in *Wired* last year, asked: 'If our property can be infinitely reproduced and instantaneously distributed all over the planet without cost, without our knowledge, without its ever leaving our possession, how can we protect it? How are we going to get paid for the work we do with our minds? And, if we can't get paid, what will assure the continued creation and distribution of such work?'

Copyright law attempts to balance reward for effort with widespread distribution of knowledge by protecting only the form in which ideas are expressed, not the ideas themselves. As Barlow puts it, copyright protects the bottles but not the wine. Technology has ended the need for bottles and forced a fundamental rethink of copyright.

'When the primary articles of commerce in a society look so much like speech as to be indistinguishable from it and when the traditional methods of protecting their ownership have become ineffectual, attempting to fix the problem with broader and more vigorous enforcement will inevitably threaten free speech,' Barlow warned. 'The greatest constraint on your future liberties may come not from government but from corporate legal departments labouring to protect by force what can no longer be protected by practical efficiency or general social consent.'

So far, Australia's approach to this great issue—on what terms can society have information in the information age?—has been limited. The Attorney-General's Copyright Law Review Committee has gingerly poked the problem in its inquiry into whether publishers and employed journalists should continue to share copyright in the database era. (The majority said the publishers should prevail).

The Communications Minister's Broadband Services Expert Group, chaired by Brian Johns, is showing a welcome breadth. Its July interim report on the future communications infrastructure laid down key principles which, along with economic and investment considerations, included emphasis on social wellbeing, cultural identity, open access, 'our tradition of inclusiveness' and avoidance of inequalities.

On copyright, the group deferred for now to the Justice Minister's Copyright Convergence Group, comprised of communications consultant Victoria Rubensohn, ABC chairman Mark Armstrong, leading copyright solicitor Peter Banki, and News Limited's general manager for corporate development, Malcolm Colless. In their August report, they seem to advise the Federal Government to adopt a course that ignores Barlow's warning.

In fairness, the Copyright Convergence Group had a difficult task because the Copyright Act, shaped in 1968, needs updating.

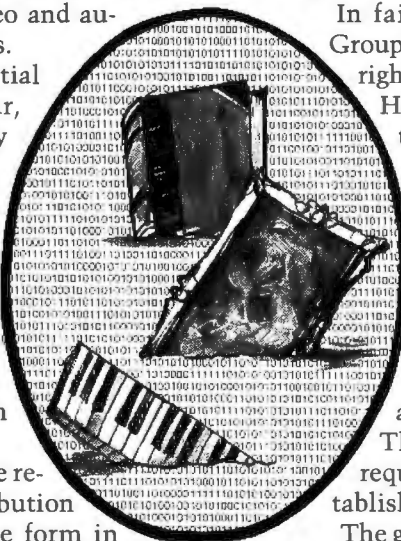
However, the group states that it chose to make recommendations within the existing copyright framework and 'has not, for example, examined the continuing relevance of distinguishing between various traditional categories of works. The group acknowledges that in the coming era of digitisation, it may not be possible to distinguish between literary, artistic and musical works in the digital form. These developments may eventually require a fundamental re-working of established copyright concepts.'

The group recommended patches for the old concepts because 'in the interim, it is essential for both commerce and creative development' that copyright law can cope.

My concern is that attempts to make the unworkable work inevitably will condition the environment in which the predicted fundamental rethink occurs. By delaying the rethink, and by encouraging litigiousness, we will assist the most powerful organised exploiters of copyright to strengthen their position. Already concern has been expressed at the extent to which a handful of organisations control not just the structure of communications (press, broadcasting, book publishing), but also its contents (film libraries, newspaper databases, sound archives).

How much harder will it be to shape an information society that respects access, inclusiveness and social wellbeing when copyright control of much of the raw material for that society has been accumulated by a few powerful organisations who fix its price and guard it with lawyers? ■

Paul Chadwick is Victorian co-ordinator of the Communications Law Centre.



Turning the heart to stone



'Anzac Day takes us to the deeper places of the human heart where we are naturally and properly silent': Statue of Simpson, his donkey and a wounded digger outside the Australian War Memorial.

Photo: Emmanuel Santos

SECTARIANISM HAS PLAYED a major role in shaping Australia, particularly in the 19th century. Ranging from suspicion to fear to outright loathing and violence, sectarian responses provided much of the motivation for the formation of political parties, tribal loyalties and attempts at national definition. In that sense sectarianism was a positive force in Australian development. But it was also deeply divisive. And it was on national occasions, therefore, that sectarianism was seen at its worst.

If we had a myth of nationhood as powerful and compelling as, for example, the Americans, then the first day of each new year, Federation Day, would be celebrated as our national day. Instead its significance is forgotten. At the time Australians accepted federation as an imposed necessity and consented to forging a nation without much joy or general excitement. Indeed, for many the event was hopelessly marred by an outburst of sectarian squabbling of remarkable pettiness.

Although the rights and wrongs of the dispute are of no consequence now—it was a problem with the order of precedence between the various churches—the dispute meant

that Sydney's Catholic archbishop, Cardinal Moran, withdrew his involvement in the official celebrations. Instead Moran installed himself, in full clericals, on a high point in his cathedral grounds and watched the federation procession pass by, flanked by 3500 Catholic school children. Thus was religion seen as a source of division and national disunity at the moment of the birth of the nation.

Some of those schoolchildren piously demonstrating with the Cardinal were, in all probability, among the 330,000 Australians who served with the Australian Imperial Force during the First World War. At war they learnt, not so many years later, that such petty quarrels and divisions should have no place when vital national issues arose. Homefront divisiveness broke down in the face of the pressing need for unity, loyalty and mateship.

True, Australians went into action at Gallipoli as Victorians, Tasmanians and Queenslanders; but they were evacuated as Australians. They had forged a national unity and had begun a national story of enduring power and force, in sharp contrast to the failure of nation building

in 1901. The diggers believed in themselves as soldiers, and they were contemptuous of anyone who would attempt to assert or revive traditional divisions. Later, in France, when a chaplain arrived to take up his post with a particular battalion, he asked what was the religion of the other chaplain assigned to the unit. His batman was quick to put him straight: 'There ain't no religion out here, sir, we're all brothers.'

The men of the AIF sincerely hoped that this new spirit would pervade Australia on their return home, and that the war experience would shape a new Australia where hatred and division would have no part. Instead, under pressure of war and conscription, Australia experienced extraordinary growth in sectarian tensions, nowhere more so than in the commemoration of Australian war dead.

PREACHING IN St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, at a Mass of thanksgiving for the Armistice, Bishop Patrick Phelan assured his listeners that Catholic war dead had a certain hope of salvation, a consolation denied those who mourned Protestant

war dead. Phelan's sermon on this day of national rejoicing was mean-spirited and mocked the contention that Australia's common sacrifice had drawn Australians together. It reinforced the picture of a bitter society divided by religious intolerance and bigotry. Phelan spoke of the heroic deeds of the Australian troops while 'giving one in the eye' to those who campaigned for conscription: 'their gift of sacrifice and life was a free gift; no cruel law dragged them from their parents and friends'. The war had also shown, the bishop asserted, 'what little use [was] the Bible-reading [Protestant] clergyman who had no power to forgive sins'.

As the formal celebration of Anzac Day developed throughout the 1920s, religious differences increasingly drove apart those ex-servicemen who had returned to Australia with a hope for new ways of doing things. The stumbling point was invariably the Catholic Church's refusal to allow its adherents to participate in the services of other churches, or in 'united' services. The Catholics argued, therefore, that national commemorative services must rigorously exclude all religious elements in order to allow for Catholic participation. And yet commemoration seemed to demand some form of religious expression; things seemed incomplete and unsatisfying without some of the general hymns and prayers typically heard at the overwhelming majority of Australian funeral services.

Organisations of returned servicemen and women battled with these problems and usually arrived at some compromise that involved the exclusion of Catholics from some part of the ceremonies, emphasising disunity and disharmony and the failure to build on the spirit developed on the battlefield. Although it was rare for the state to become involved in these trying disputes, the opening of the Australian War Memorial on 11 November 1941 produced an extreme example of the Commonwealth's vexing religious difficulties.

It was probably unwise for the Memorial's board of management to attempt to arrange 'a form of service

that all denominations could take part in'. There was no pressing need for religion, as the ceremony marked the opening of a building rather than the commemoration of Australian war dead. But religion gave solemnity and the clergy spoke words that other Australians found such difficulty in using: words about love and loss, about selfless sacrifice and enduring hope.

The board of management asked the Memorial's director, Tasman Heyes, to consult with the heads of the various churches in Canberra to find agreement about the religious element. The board might just as well have asked him to douse the warring passions then engulfing Europe.

H EYES DRAFTED A SERVICE similar to that used at the opening of the Australian National Memorial in France in 1938 and sent it around Canberra for comment. The senior Catholic priest in Canberra, Monsignor Patrick Haydon, who had been accustomed to attending Anzac Day ceremonies at Parliament House at which prayers were read and hymns sung, said that he had no difficulty with what Heyes had proposed but that he would refer it to his bishop, Terence Maguire, just to make sure. Rebuking Haydon for his earlier ecumenical adventures, the bishop adopted a hard line, vetoing Catholic participation in a ceremony that contained religious forms.

The Memorial dispute was sent to War Cabinet for resolution (remarkable in itself, given the gravity of the situation facing Australia in late 1941.) Cabinet asked Sir Harry Chauvel, one of Australia's most distinguished First World War generals, to hold talks with Sydney's Archbishop Gilroy, himself a survivor of the Gallipoli campaign, to see if they could negotiate a compromise.

Expert in the art, Gilroy suggested that there be two ceremonies, a religious function before the two-minute's silence at 11am, which Catholics would not attend, and a national ceremony immediately thereafter which they could attend. There would be a small gap in the program to allow Catholic dignitar-

ies to slip into position at the end of the religious activities, and schoolchildren and priests would be marshalled close to the dais during the religious service, ready to take their places once free to do so. It was a neat solution which worked so well that observers did not appear to notice the divisions. Nevertheless, the ceremony had highlighted the failure of unity.

During the 50 years since that time the observance of Anzac Day has changed significantly. Men and women of all religious faiths, and none, are happy to sing and pray together in common commemoration of sacrifice and loss. Christians, we now know, do not endanger their faith by reciting shared prayers in unison. But religious usages on Anzac Day are generally subdued, not to say invisible.

It is as if Australians have found a form of spiritual expression that does not depend on the words and liturgical devices of the churches. Clergymen may be used, but more often the president of the RSL will be called on to 'say the ode' and to call for reflection and prayer.

Anzac Day observances are not explicitly religious; and yet, as Catholic theologian and Jesuit priest Andrew Hamilton has persuasively argued (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26th April 1994), Anzac Day is the great Australian feast day.

Hamilton contrasted the way we commemorate our war dead with what he had recently seen in El Salvador where ceremonial, emerging from a solidly Catholic culture, depended on explicitly Christian symbols. By contrast, Australians may find religious forms and prayers a barrier to spirituality—alien and formulaic; we are a spiritual, if not a religious people. As Hamilton wrote, 'Anzac Day takes us to the deeper places of the human heart where we are naturally and properly silent. It

In France, when a chaplain arrived to take up his post with a particular battalion, he asked what was the religion of the other chaplain assigned to the unit. His batman was quick to put him straight: 'There ain't no religion out here, sir, we're all brothers.'



is a time for keeping faith.'

It was an awareness of this mood that motivated those with responsibility for constructing the funeral service of the Unknown Australian Soldier at the Australian War Memorial last year. Few are called on to design a major national service of this nature, particularly in a country like Australia which cannot turn automatically and easily to state-supported religion for the solution. The first principles on which all decisions were based by those constructing the ceremony was that we would remain as faithful as possible to the mood and form of Anzac Day, as the one homegrown and successful ceremony on which we could draw. And yet the funeral service would be different in context and content from Anzac Day traditions.

It seemed to us that most Australians would want some form of religious recognition for a funeral service because, despite the popularity of marriage celebrants and secular weddings, there seem to be relatively few secular funerals as yet in contemporary Australia. But again, as War Cabinet discovered in 1941, it was actually quite difficult to locate official religious advisors to the Commonwealth government who might speak with authority.

The Memorial approached the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS), a body which oversees the operations of the chaplaincies to the Australian Defence Force, as a possi-

ble avenue of religious advice, and Memorial staff laid before that committee the emerging development of the ceremony.

There were two major issues for consideration. The first concerned the question of the selection of the religious celebrants; the second involved the nature of the religious component of the ceremony. At a meeting held in the Russell offices of the Department of Defence, I advised RACS members that the Memorial would seek the participation of the Principal Chaplains of the three services, as representing those services, not as representatives of the denominations to which they belonged. It was fortuitous that the Principal Chaplains happened to be drawn from the three major Christian denominations, Catholic, Anglican and Uniting. I also advised RACS members that special prayers would be written for the occasion that would be based on a hope for an after life and the existence of a God, but that they would be prayers in which any person of religious faith might join without concern. They would be written in a language that would engage and involve, and would not rely on liturgical formulas that would distance and distract.

The task of drafting prayers for the occasion fell to a small group consisting of the Rev Bruce Horton, Principal Chaplain (Army) and secretary of RACS, The Rev Campbell Egan of the Braddon Uniting Church, Canberra, Dr Richard Reid, project manager of the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier and myself. Neither Richard Reid nor I had any formal religious affiliation or credentials but we were able to explain to the clergymen the spirit and mood that the Memorial's Council intended the ceremony to display. In a thorough account of the ceremony in *Eureka Street* (February 1994), Ken Inglis commented that the prayers incorporated 'confident affirmations of Australian nationality'. Inglis found it 'arresting' to hear such words spoken in a liturgical setting and manner.

NATURALLY WE HAD HOPED to engage and involve those who would attend the ceremony in Canberra

and those who would follow it on television or radio. The prayers offered by the clergymen would carry all the explanation and meaning of the ceremony, apart from the Prime Minister's eulogy and brief words of acceptance by the Chairman of the War Memorial Council, Dame Beryl Beaurepaire. They would need to be brief, given the requirement that the ceremony remain simple and they would need to be readily understandable. There would be a place for all to pray for the soldier in traditional forms of silent prayer, but for the rest we were hoping that the spoken prayers would arouse the mood of spirituality that we were striving to achieve.

It was the silence that I most noted on that extraordinary day. Standing in the Memorial's Courtyard after the ceremony had ended, I was struck by the demeanour and behaviour of the people as they filed past in their thousands to pay personal tribute to the Unknown Soldier. Never before have I been part of such a silent and reverential assembly of Australians. The ceremony seemed to have stirred something elemental and sacred. That experience in the Memorial's Courtyard deepened my conviction that Australians are a spiritual people, even if the forms of their spirituality are not traditional, or specifically Christian.

Nevertheless, the ceremony provoked critical responses. Bishop Geoffrey Mayne, head of the Catholic chaplaincy to the Australian Defence Force, registered, both before the ceremony and subsequently, his dissatisfaction with the lack of Christian forms. Indeed he encouraged those on the Religious Advisory Committee, of which he is a member, to register their dissatisfaction with the ceremony, after it had been held.

Bishop Mayne also used the opportunity of the sermon during the 1994 National Anzac Day Mass in Canberra to complain that the funeral service ignored Christian tradition and therefore was offensive to the Unknown Soldier and to the clear majority of Australian society. The bishop called up the spirit of an old digger who had given his life in war, claiming that the digger was pro-

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foundly and properly disturbed by the lack of specifically Christian prayers and forms in the funeral service.

Of course this is a dangerous device and an impossible argument to settle: we simply cannot know what any now long-dead Australian soldier might have thought. It should be said that although we wished to respect the sentiments of the past, our job was to design a ceremony that today's Australians would understand. In any case, the evidence, at least from those Australian soldiers who served during the First World War, might not be as Bishop Mayne believes.

Chaplains found that the diggers had little formal knowledge of religious and very little involvement with the churches before they had enlisted. Indeed initially many chaplains struggled to understand how a man might do good and selfless things while admitting no adherence to a formal religious position and displaying no knowledge of Christian teachings.

WITHOUT DOUBT AUSTRALIAN DIGGERS abhorred a competitive spirit among chaplains and distanced themselves from anything that smacked of denominational opportunism, for example, the sight of an Anglican and a Catholic chaplain squabbling over a dead body in an attempt to claim the dead soldier as one of their own.

The men esteemed, instead, a practical spirit that accepted service of others as its central tenet, and they gave their loyalty to those chaplains who worked with all and for all. Those few chaplains who really came to know the men developed a profound admiration for them and genuinely believed that the diggers had discovered a spirit that would enrich and elevate Australian life after the war.

In the soldiers' care for suffering and dying mates, in their determination to share what they had and to stick together, and in their cheerful acceptance of their fate in the face of the horror of war, these men showed a spirit that could provide the inspiration for the development of national character. The 'Anzac reli-

gion' did not demand adherence to Christ but it did not proscribe it either.

Many chaplains found exposure to the evil of war profoundly disturbing and many left the formal ministry on their return to Australia. Others succumbed to war trauma just like the soldiers and found a kind of healing in alcohol. Others again found consolation in an even greater devotion to Christian teaching and a more vigorous spiritual life. Very few came home as they had gone away.

Ken Inglis suggested that C.E.W. Bean would have been 'profoundly pleased' with the funeral of the Unknown Australian Soldier at the Australian War Memorial last year. But Bean was not a religious man and had written in his diary on Christmas Day 1916 'I don't know that I bear any allegiance to the Christian faith'. He did, however, develop a profound faith in the goodness and integrity of Australian soldiers and devoted his life, through his history and through the creation of the Memorial, to their memory. Bishop Mayne confessed to his congregation that he had 'tagged along' with the official party immediately after the entombment to give a Christian blessing to the Unknown Soldier. Others, we may assume, visited the tomb with their own prayers to say and their own humble purposes to achieve.

No government ordered this approach to remembrance, although Geoffrey Blainey writing in *The Age* purported to find in it the work of Prime Minister Keating. The simple ceremony was an honest attempt to inspire all to remember, but in ways that Australians themselves have developed in the 75 years since the guns fell silent in the 'war to end all wars'. If the ceremony took us to those 'deeper places of the human heart where we are naturally and properly silent' it also gave space for formal religion to those who are formally religious. And it gave room to the nation as a whole in its own particular way 'for keeping faith'. ■

Michael McKernan is deputy director of the Australian War Memorial.

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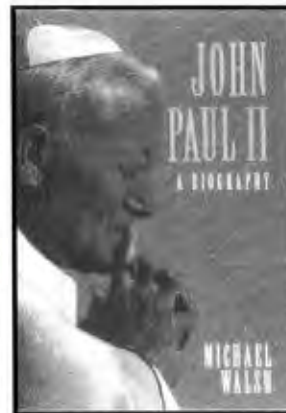


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A The quality of diversity is getting strained

A PROPOSED MERGER by the nation's two leading radio networks, Austereo and Triple M, is now just a shareholder's vote away from becoming a fact. Radio stations around the country are rapidly being bought up by media entrepreneurs with networking in mind, and this latest deal consolidates a trend away from local radio with its traditional strength as an outlet for parish pump issues.

On average, Australians spend a day a week listening to the radio. Austereo and Triple M dominate capital-city audiences, attracting the greater number of listeners under 40 years old, who are one of the most attractive groups for advertisers. It is also a group which knows that the difference in sound between the two networks is difficult to discern.

Triple M is part of the national entertainment group Village Roadshow Ltd, and Austereo Ltd is controlled by the Melbourne based-Kirby family, with Kerry Packer having an eight per cent interest. Other media entrepreneurs such as John B. Fairfax (the Rural Press Group), Mike Willesec and, until recently, Mark Day, have been busily buying and networking radio stations around the country. The lower cost of linking a number

of stations to one program source is attractive to proprietors, and large aggregated audiences represent rich pickings for national advertisers.

Listeners, on the other hand, have consistently demonstrated a preference for radio with a local sound, and this has produced problems for networkers in the past. During the 1980s for example, Alan Bond's short-lived media empire included a radio network that sank without trace in less than a year, when listeners deserted his stations for more local fare. But new technology now allows networked stations to 'sound local', by the regular insertion of centrally triggered advertisements, station identification jingles and such critical information as weather. The 018 and 1800 reverse-charge phone calls also allow talkback listeners to hear callers from their town or suburb, despite the fact that the broadcast might be emanating from the other side of the continent.

Such are the perceived benefits of networking that last year Village Roadshow paid \$150,000 to acquire an 'MMM' call sign from a community radio station in Adelaide, so that it could complete its mainland capital-city network. Austereo's call signs are more diverse: SA FM

in Adelaide, B105 FM in Brisbane, Fox FM in Melbourne and 2DAY FM in Sydney. The merger of the two networks began as a hostile takeover bid by Village, and the subsequent deal, to be voted on by Austereo shareholders later this month, would produce a \$200 million conglomerate with Village in command. With the possibility of new stations appearing after the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) completes a planning exercise some time in 1996, this realignment of radio interests represents a pre-emptive strike against newcomers to the industry.

The legislation which allows this buying-and-networking spree is the Broadcasting Services Act, the same act that established the ABA as a 'new look', minimally intrusive industry regulator. The Act targets radio for the most radical experiment in media deregulation yet, with few restrictions on ownership and program standards.

It has been in place for two years now and, if you believe the Federal Government's view, it is designed to position the Australia media to take best advantage of new electronic technology and market forces. This should mean increased diversity of ownership and content in both radio and television. For radio, the results so far have not matched the government's economic rationalist hype. There are now fewer commercial owners, the same ho-hum music dominates the airwaves and advertisers face higher charges because they have fewer operators from which to choose.

Despite this, the Trade Practices Commission is taking a hands-off approach. Commissioner Alan Fels has decided not to oppose the Triple M-Austereo merger because of the number of radio stations in each major city and because he believes that advertisers can choose other media. The quality and diversity of programming content does not seem to be an issue.

Meanwhile, the broadcasting sectors that provide most program diversity to radio listeners continue to be hamstrung: the ABC, by financial restraint; and community radio, by the long-winded ABA planning review, which has put on hold a much-demanded expansion of local non-profit broadcasting. ■

Dave Lane is a producer for ABC radio.

O And all that glisters ...

ONE RESULT OF A TRIPLE M-AUSTEREO MERGER will be the 'for sale' signs going up outside Gold 104FM in Melbourne. Gold 104FM had been bought by Austereo under rules that allow an operator to own two stations in a capital-city radio market. But since Austereo also owns Fox FM, these same rules ensure that once the merger is complete, Gold will be on the market again. This will leave the station, which began life as part of the labour movement, in limbo. (Its connection with its Trades Hall founders was extinguished earlier this year.) Gold was once 3KZ, one of the most successful AM broadcasters in the city. It was also one of the first stations to adopt the now depressingly widespread 'gold' music format, based on hits from the '60s and 70s, to cash in on the preferences of the ageing and increasingly affluent baby-boom generation.

An older generation of Melburnians, however, will remember 3KZ somewhat differently. Before the introduction of television, it provided listeners with a staple of serials, soaps and variety shows. After 1956 it pioneered rock 'n' roll, with Stan 'The Man' Rolfe introducing young Melburnians to the devil's music each Saturday night on *Six O'Clock Rock*. Of course, all this was just gloss for the truly dedicated, who tuned in to *The Labor Hour*: 60 minutes of official pronouncements from Trades Hall and the ALP. *The Labor Hour* was the last attempt by the Victorian labour movement to use its radio asset to promote the Labor cause.

In the '90s the 3KZ story turned sour. The station moved to the FM band after paying the Federal Government an extraordinary \$31.5 million for the privilege. This stands as a record and represents the misplaced optimism generated by the speculative boom of the 1980s. 3KZ's call sign was changed to Gold 104FM, but this didn't stop the slide into the red. By March this year, it was in receivership and was subsequently sold to Austereo for \$9 million. —Dave Lane ■



The short life and hard times of Colleen

Sam Watson is a solid, pony-tailed, middle-aged Aboriginal man. He is the director of the Brisbane Aboriginal Legal Service which, he says wryly, makes him an expert on Aboriginal deaths in custody. They act for the family of Colleen Richman—a 41-year-old, five-feet-one inch tall, eight-stone Aboriginal woman—who, on 23 September 1994, became the 22nd person to be shot dead by Victorian police since 1988; of the eight in 1994 she was the fifth 'disturbed' one.

According to witnesses, Colleen was chopping at a bench with a tomahawk and swearing loudly. Someone called the police. They came, armed. They told her to drop the tomahawk. She didn't. She dropped, and died with one bullet in her chest and three in her back while a young police officer was kneeling in front of her—reloading.

On her last day a witness said she 'seemed to be feeling all the hurt in her life'. Colleen Richman was one of the stolen generation. She had been taken from her mother at birth and raised by a white family who, she claimed, abused her. She found out she was Aboriginal only when she was 16. Her life was chaotic, poor, and sad. Sometimes she got depressed, drank too much and mutilated herself. She never hurt anyone else.

By the time Colleen died police firearms training had been independently reviewed four times, and critically commented upon by the Victorian coroner in his inquiries into police shootings. Each recommended sweeping changes. The coroner had been critical of police culture of 'heroism' saying it contributed to deaths. Twice his findings had been vigorously dismissed by senior police, including the chief commissioner.

Police have set up another 'internal investigation'—Sam wasn't impressed—and admitted that defective training and skills had 'contributed' to the series of police shootings. Assistant Commissioner Ray Shuey will oversee firearms retraining of all operational police within six months. Questions remain, however, about broader aspects of police training: communication and negotiation skills training had recently been dramatically reduced in the Police Academy in favour of even more extensive firearms training, and community contributions to police training, by groups such as the Fitzroy Legal Service, dropped. It is not

clear whether Assistant Commissioner Bill Robertson, responsible for police training before the Richman shooting, remains in charge. It is not clear how overall training will be improved.

Sam thinks that the courts should decide, publicly, where blame should lie. So the Legal Service wrote to the Coroner on behalf of the family asking when the inquest would be and for copies of all the reports and statements. They wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Police, asking what he intended to do about what appeared to them to be a possible unlawful homicide—'manifestly excessive force' or failure to follow standard procedures including new guidelines. They asked for the officers to be suspended. They found out later that after three days and an internal investigation the unnamed two were back on duty, still armed.

They rang, asking to be given the names of the two police officers, which was denied. When I spoke to Sam they were about to write formally to the chief commissioner, the Attorney General and the Premier, asking for the names so that they could initiate private prosecutions. If this request is denied the family would consider laying charges of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice against them. And the family is going to sue for damages. They say that they had just started to arrange reunions and Colleen's killing had 'ripped the heart out' of the family.

Meanwhile, the Victorian Police Association blame the government for 'releasing dangerous mental patients' into the community without 'proper supports'. (No one called for the psychiatric emergency team, three minutes away; Colleen was self-destructive, not psychotic, and she had supports). They threatened to sue on behalf of the officers traumatised by the eight fatal shootings this year—saying an open letter from the Deputy Premier and the acting chief commissioner might be an admission of negligence in failing to train police properly. Sam Watson smiles cynically when he learns that cameras were present when, a few days after Colleen died, police 'talked down' a disturbed man armed with a knife, and it all ended with a hug. Where were they for all the others? he asks.

The week after her funeral, figures of

police arrest patterns released by the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service showed that Aboriginal Victorians are nearly seven times more likely to be arrested and charged with offences than non-Aboriginals, with distinct and inexplicable different charging patterns depending on where the arrests take place (49 per cent of Aboriginal arrests in Mildura are for drunkenness, compared with only 4 per cent in Yarra, for instance). As *The Age* editorialised, five days after Colleen's death, 'health, housing, education and employment systems, as well as the police, need to be especially sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal people. They need to find ways to make the opportunities and services that the rest of the community takes for granted accessible to Aborigines.'

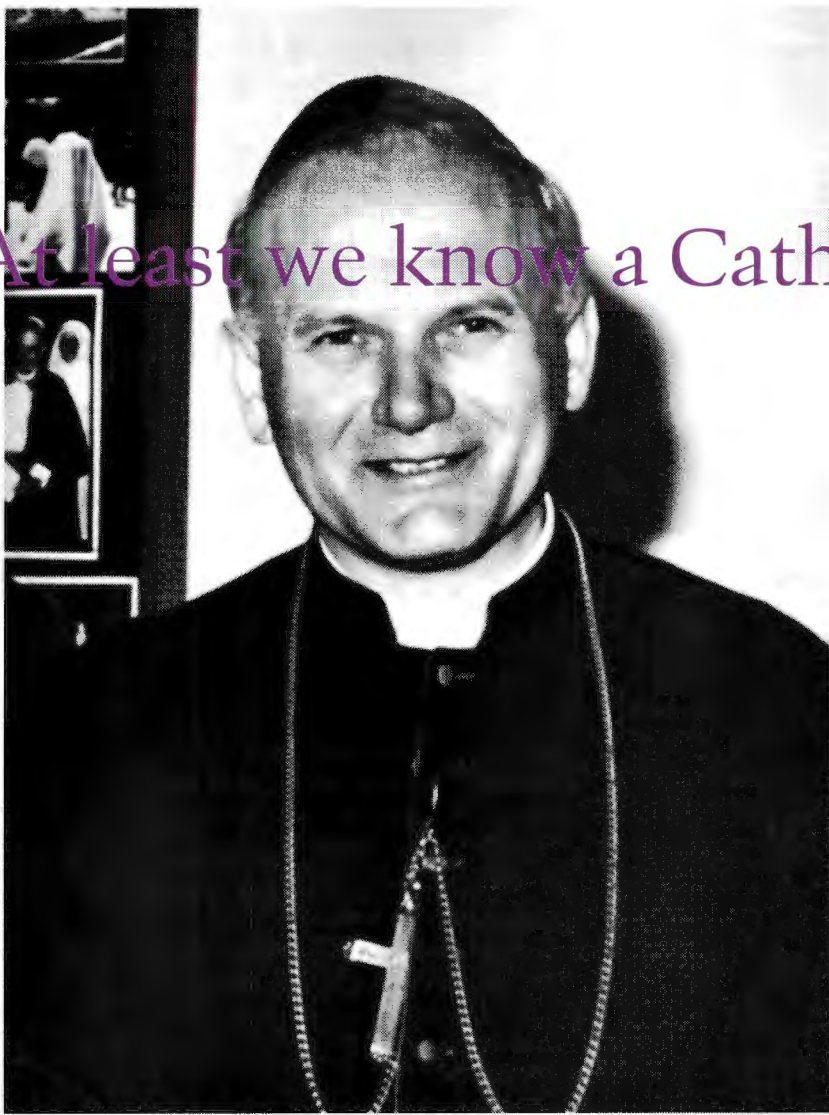
Ironically, that week two Koori children, victims of indirect race discrimination—one of them Gary Foley's son—were still fighting to get their school, Northland College, reopened. All but three of the Koori students who had gone to the uniquely successful school, praised by the Black Deaths inquiry, had dropped out completely. Foley testified that they were back on the cycle of poverty and crime which is the first step leading to black deaths in custody. Karkar QC, for the Victorian government, incredibly, sought to cross-examine about young Foley's discipline and performance record: Foley exploded.

In that same week 600 Kooris, women and men of the 'stolen generation', went to the 'Going Home' conference in Darwin. Lawyers will now claim for about 10 of them that their official removal and institutionalisation was not only unlawful and unconstitutional but a breach of the state's fiduciary duty to Aboriginal children. They will sue, and they also resolved, at the end of the conference, to seek access to the Mabo social justice package, and the \$1.46 billion land acquisition fund. Most of the stolen children are also lost to their land under the Mabo principle.

Colleen Richman, lost daughter of the stolen generation, made her own land claim. She is now eternally a part of a small grave on her ancestral land near Marree in South Australia. ■

Moira Rayner is a lawyer and a freelance journalist.

At least we know a Catholic will get the job



Pope John Paul II in less testing times: as Karol Wojtyła, visiting Melbourne in 1973.

DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS there has been a spate of media reports about the health of the 263rd successor of Saint Peter, Pope John Paul II. Although no one outside the inner papal circle can claim to know the exact state of the Pope's health, the fact of his mortality is becoming increasingly obvious. Inevitably, it is a subject that raises the larger question of papal succession: who might be considered a candidate for election? And finally, the announcement that this month the Pope will appoint a group of 30 new cardinals, from a variety of national backgrounds, reinforces the view that he is preparing for the election of his successor.

The Pope is elected by those members of the College of Cardinals who are eligible to vote in a conclave, the secluded assembly convened for the purpose of choosing a new Pope. The word 'cardinal' is derived from the Latin 'cardo' which means 'hinge'; in this sense the word refers to the men on which everything hinges. This is certainly true in times of *Sede vacante* ('while the See is vacant'), the period between the death of a pope and the election of his successor.

Cardinals lose their right to vote in a conclave once they turn 80—a restriction which is all that remains of a radical reform of papal elections proposed

by Pope Paul VI. He considered allowing the patriarchs of Eastern-rite churches in communion with Rome, and bishops who were members of the secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, a vote in papal elections. But nothing came of this move towards a more collegial church.

With the appointment of the new cardinals, the college will have a full contingent of 120 eligible electors. Seventeen of these were appointed by Paul VI, and the rest by the present Pope. Twenty-nine of them work in the Roman Curia; the others are bishops of dioceses throughout the world.

The word 'conclave' (from the Latin *cum clave*, 'with a key') refers to the custom of incarcerating the cardinals until a pope is elected, a practice adopted in 1271 to hasten the result and to try to protect the electors from outside influences. Even at the beginning of the present century, however, external pressures were still at work: in 1903, Cardinal Prince Puzyna successfully blocked the election of a pro-French cardinal, Mariano Rampolla, by the introduction of a disputed but successful veto on behalf of Emperor Franz Josef II of Austria-Hungary. Interestingly, Puzyna was Archbishop of Cracow (then within the Austro-Hungarian empire), the see held by Karol Wojtyła before he was elected as Pope John Paul II.

These days imperial vetoes are very unlikely, and popes are normally elected within two to four days. The ballots are held in the Sistine Chapel, which, with adjoining apartments, is sealed off from the rest of the Vatican for the duration of the conclave. The *Sede vacante* period is regulated by an apostolic constitution promulgated by Paul VI in 1975, *Romano Pontifici eligendo*, which strictly excludes outside interference in the election. There is still considerable international interest in papal elections, however, as it is widely recognised that the Pope wields considerable influence.

There has been a strong tendency by recent popes, especially Paul VI and John Paul II, to internationalise the College of Cardinals and Italian domination of it has gone, though Italy still has the largest group, with 19 cardinals. The United States is second, with ten. Brazil and France each have five; Germany and Spain have four each; Argentina, Belgium, India, Mexico, the Philippines and Poland have three each; and Australia, Canada, Colombia, Nigeria, Switzerland, Slovakia and Venezuela, two each. The list of countries with one voting cardinal is extensive: Albania, Angola, Austria, Benin, Bosnia, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Chile, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, the Dominican Republic, England, Ethiopia, Hong Kong, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Ivory Coast, Japan, Korea, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mauritius, the Mala-

gasy Republic, Mozambique, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Puerto Rico, Portugal, Samoa, Scotland, Senegal, Thailand, Uganda, Vietnam and Zaire.

The two Australians eligible to vote in the conclave are the Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal Edward Clancy, and a member of the Roman Curia, Cardinal Edward Cassidy, who is President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

THE COLLEGE OF CARDINALS has never been so international. Even the Dean of the College, Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, is not an Italian but an African, from Benin. (Gantin, who was forced into exile by his country's Marxist government in 1971, is really more of an accidental than a career curialist.) However, as the BBC's Roman correspondent, David Willey, points out: 'It would be misleading to suppose that the seemingly cosmopolitan character of the curia makes it a true cross-section of world Catholic opinion. The Pope's men remain very much the Pope's own appointees' (*God's Politician: John Paul at the Vatican*, p192).

It is wrong to interpret, as does *The New York Times* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the appointment of the new cardinals as an attempt by Pope John Paul to ensure the election of a clone of himself. It is actually an effort to internationalise the College even further and to get representation for countries (such as Mexico) which were without cardinals. It is significant that most of the new cardinals are from third world countries, especially Latin America.

There is a significant lack of representation in the college, however, from Eastern-rite churches. This has not been corrected by the recent John Paul appointees. The election of the Maronite Patriarch, Nasrallah Pierre Sfeir, only adds one. The other is Anthony Padiyara, the Syrio-Malabar rite Archbishop of Ernakulam, in Kerala, India.

Several things about papal elections can be noted from recent history. First, no one should forget the saying 'the cardinal who goes into the conclave "a pope" comes out a cardinal!'. This is not always true; the Secretary of State, Eugenio Pacelli, was a foregone conclusion in 1939 and he was quickly elected as Pope Pius XII. But the warning ought to be taken seriously, especially since the press in Italy and elsewhere have already virtually 'elected' the Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, as the next pope. Martini, a former rector of Rome's Jesuit-run Gregorian University, is certainly not the only cardinal to be considered, and speculation about his chances might largely be wishful thinking on the part of progressive Catholics. In my view, in fact, there are grounds to expect that a moderate progressive like Martini would move in a more conservative direction as pope. Normally, it is moderate conservatives who are more likely to become moderately progressive.

Second, during the past 150 years there has been a pattern of reactionary popes being followed by moderate conservatives. John Paul II's pontificate is hard to classify, but in many ways it has reached a new level of centralised papal power, abandoning the collegial emphasis of the Second Vatican Council. After this long pontificate, the election will be hard to call. Personally, I would favour a moderate conservative. Generally such a person will be able to draw on the resources of tradition to develop their own policy. Progressives often feel constrained by the heavy weight of institutional responsibility and turn repressively inward.

Because there is no actual job description for the Pope there is no clear profile of the candidate most likely to be elected. The fact that John Paul's pontificate has been a long one also makes it more difficult to develop a set of prerequisites. In the minds of many, the present pope becomes the normative model.

This is further complicated by the hierarchical nature of the church, for most cardinals assume that it is their responsibility alone—without consultation of ordinary mortals like us—to develop a profile for the pope. This is reinforced by the obsessive secrecy that surrounds everything to do with the highest echelons of the Roman church. No doubt there is muted thought and discussion going on right now about the preferred papal profile in Roman curial circles and among various constellations of cardinals. It would be irresponsible of them not to be thinking about it: the Spirit works through human agency.

Let's try to draw a profile of the candidate most likely to be elected. In my view the cardinals will want the new pope to have many of the following characteristics: he will need to be of good health, and aged somewhere between 60 and 70 (with an emphasis on the lower end of that range). This gives a reasonable expectation of a pontificate long enough to provide real stability. He would need to be a spiritual person in a relatively conventional sense. By this I mean that his spirituality will be rooted in one of the major Catholic traditions: Benedictine, Carmelite, Franciscan, Dominican, Ignatian. He will probably need to have done some pastoral work in parishes, missions or other forms of conventional ministry. It would certainly help to have been a diocesan bishop with administrative experience. He would need to be a moderate conservative in theology, but with a pastoral bent. Someone without abrasive opinions (progressive or conservative) would be preferred.

The new pope will need to be accessible and willing to travel, but I think that there will be a retreat from the highly centralised papal style of this pontif-

The press have virtually 'elected' the Archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Martini, as the next pope. Martini is certainly not the only cardinal to be considered, and speculation about his chances might largely be wishful thinking on the part of progressive Catholics.

It would be misleading to suppose that the seemingly cosmopolitan character of the curia makes it a true cross-section of world Catholic opinion. The Pope's men remain very much the Pope's own appointees.

—David Willey

icate. A more genuinely international approach needs to be emphasised. By this I mean that the new pope will have to be able to embrace and understand a number of cultures other than his own. And this still gives Italians the edge. Italy is an open enough society to have had a long cross-cultural tradition, and Italians are used to dealing with peoples of many races. The style of the new pope will, one hopes, be less confrontational than that of John Paul II, though his record will need to have been in general public accord with the present pontificate. Once elected, a pope can make changes. Do not, however, expect radical change on issues such as contraception and abortion, but rather a shift of emphasis to other issues.

Until the election of John Paul II in 1978, every pope since 1523 had been Italian. The last non-Italian, Adrian VI (1521-1523), was from the Netherlands. From now on papal elections will be much less predictable affairs; the person elected could theoretically be from anywhere. But at present you can probably discount some regions. Given American dominance of the 'new world order', cardinals from the United States would be seen as problematic because of their connection with the sole world superpower. If, in the unlikely event that an American were to be considered, it would most probably be Cardinal Joseph Louis Bernardin, the Archbishop of Chicago. Born in 1928 and ordained in 1952, he was Archbishop of Cincinnati from 1972 to 1982, when he was appointed to Chicago. He has been a cardinal since 1983.

I cannot see that another Eastern European will be elected for some time, and the Eurocentric world

view of many in powerful positions in the church means that the time for the election of a Third World cardinal has probably not yet arrived. Nevertheless, the Brazilian Cardinal Aloisio Lorscheider of Fortaleza is an outside possibility if there is a decisive swing against the emphases of the Wojtyla pontificate. Lorscheider fits the papal profile very well. He has had long experience as a bishop. He was born in 1924 near Porto Alegre in southern Brazil. He is a Franciscan who was ordained in 1948. Between 1962 and 1973 he was Bishop of Santo Angelo (and thus attended Vatican II). In 1973 he became Archbishop of Fortaleza, in northern Brazil, and like Bernadin he was made a cardinal in 1983.

It is unlikely that the appointment of five more Latin American cardinals (two Mexicans, a Chilean, the Archbishop of Havana, Cuba and the Jesuit Archbishop of Lima, Peru) will lead to the election of a Latin American, especially a progressive Latin American. In fact, the most influential of them in Rome is the 58-year-old Colombian cardinal, Alfonso Lopez Trujillo; he is the conservative President of the Pontifical Council for the Family. This means that the spotlight will be on the Western Europeans, which probably means an Italian.

And certainly, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Archbishop of Milan since 1979, would be a serious candidate. Martini, who was born in Turin in 1927, is a Jesuit and was ordained in 1952. A well-known biblical scholar, he was rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute from 1969 to 1978, when he became rector of the Gregorian. His appointment to the prestigious Archdiocese of Milan a year later caused an enormous shock in Italy, where it is most unusual for Jesuits to become local bishops.

Another Italian who fits the profile is Michele Giordano, the Archbishop of Naples since 1987. He is 64 and has had long pastoral experience, as priest and bishop. Born in 1930, he was ordained in 1953 and became a bishop in 1972, and became a cardinal a year after his appointment to Naples, in 1988. Three other Italian contenders are Silvio Piovanelli (born 1924) who was made a bishop in 1982 and Archbishop of Florence in 1983; the Archbishop of Bologna, Giacomo Biffi (born 1928), who was made a cardinal in 1985; and the Patriarch of Venice, Marco Ce (born 1925).

SEVERAL NON-ITALIAN CARDINALS are possible candidates. One of them is Godfried Danneels, Archbishop of Malines-Brussels since 1979. He is 61. Ordained in 1957, he became Bishop of Antwerp in 1977 and two years later was appointed to Malines-Brussels. He was made a cardinal in 1983. Another is Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, a man with wide experience, both as a local bishop and as a curialist. Born in 1922 and ordained in 1947, since 1984 he has been President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Before that he was Archbishop of Marseilles (1970-84), and

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he is a former president of the French Episcopal Conference (1975-81), and of the European Episcopal Conference during its most effective period (1971-79). He was made a cardinal in 1979.

Although progressives tend to dismiss Cardinal Josef Alois Ratzinger, he has had an ecclesiastical career that fits the papal profile. Born at Marktl in southern Bavaria in 1927, he was educated at the University of Munich, where he was chaplain from 1951 to 1958. Successively he was professor of theology at Freising, Bonn, Munster, Tübingen and Regensburg. He was a *peritus* ('expert', i.e. theological adviser) at Vatican II, where he was viewed as a progressive, but after the council he became increasingly conservative.

His book *Crisis in the Church* (1980) was a symptom of his disillusionment with developments in the postconciliar church. He was appointed Archbishop of Munich-Freising and a cardinal by Paul VI, in 1977, and in 1981 he became Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. His theological stance would make him appealing to some cardinal voters, though his poor health might well make him an unlikely candidate.

Perhaps the most interesting of the new cardinals is the Belgian Jan Schotte, CICM, the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops. He was born in 1928, ordained as a Scheut Father in 1952 (the Scheut Fathers are the Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM) founded in 1864). He was ordained bishop in 1984. He is a good linguist and has extensive contacts with the world episcopate. If a curialist were to be elected Schotte would certainly be a contender. An outside possibility among the curialists is the Spanish cardinal, Eduardo Martinez Somalo, who accompanied the Pope to Australia in 1986 as the Substitute Secretary of State.

A number of other names are mentioned as possible outside candidates: the erudite and conservative Archbishop of Paris, Jean-Marie Lustiger, born in 1927 of Polish/Jewish origin; the 61-year-old Joachim Meisner, Archbishop of Cologne, whose pastoral experience has been almost entirely in the former East Germany; the Sydney-born (1924) Edward Idris Cassidy, a priest of the diocese of Wagga Wagga. Cassidy is President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and has vast experience in the Vatican diplomatic service, which he joined in 1955. Finally, there is George Basil Hume, the Archbishop of Westminster. Born in 1923, he is a Benedictine with a wide reputation as an ecumenist and a spiritual writer.

There is no doubt that the election of the next Pope will be an important event in the evolution of a new world order: the influence of 'the Pope's divisions' extends a lot further than Stalin ever imagined. In the light of this, the fact that it is so hard to call makes the election a very serious business indeed. ■

Paul Collins MSC is an ABC broadcaster.

Byte-sized theology



An extract from Umberto Eco's column 'La bustina di Minerva', published in the 30 September edition of the Italian weekly news magazine Espresso and currently doing the rounds on Internet

INSUFFICIENT CONSIDERATION has been given to the new underground religious war that is modifying the modern world. It's an old idea of mine, but I find that whenever I tell people about it they immediately agree with me.

The fact is that the world is divided between users of the Macintosh computer and users of MS-DOS compatible computers. I am firmly of the opinion that the Macintosh is Catholic and DOS is Protestant. Indeed, the Macintosh is counter-reformist and has been influenced by the *Ratio studiorum* of the Jesuits. It is cheerful, friendly, conciliatory, it tells the faithful how they must proceed step-by-step to reach, if not the Kingdom of Heaven, then the moment at which their document is printed. It is catechistic: the essence of revelation is dealt with via simple formulae and sumptuous icons. Everyone has a right to salvation.

DOS is Protestant, or even Calvinistic. It allows free interpretation of scripture, demands difficult personal decisions, imposes a subtle hermeneutics upon the user, and takes for granted the idea that not all can reach salvation. To make the system work, you need to interpret the program yourself; it is a long way from the baroque community of revellers and the user is closed within the loneliness of his own inner torment.

You may object that, with the passage to Windows, the DOS universe has come to resemble more closely the counter-reformist tolerance of the Macintosh. It's true, Windows represents an Anglican-style schism: big ceremonies in the cathedral, but there is always the possibility of a return to DOS to change things in accordance with bizarre decisions. (When it comes down to it, you can decide to allow women and gays to become ministers if you want to.)

And what of machine code, which lies beneath both systems (or environments, whichever you prefer)? Ah, that is to do with the Old Testament, and is Talmudic and cabbalistic ... ■

A Colonists' pastime fuels passion of the colonised

ALTHOUGH TRAVELLING ON AFFAIRS of state, to the Fourth Conference of Australian Studies in China, at Guangzhou, I'd entertained the delinquent hope of attending a race meeting. In Australia I had obtained 'General Information on Horse Racing in Guangzhou', by one Yin Peilin. Guangzhou, he declared proudly, has 'the biggest race ground best furnished so far in China'. It has a Jockey Club, and sees racing as a fund-raiser for 'welfare and sports projects'. Of course, he emphasised, racing 'is not gambling'.

Spectators pay ten yuan (\$1.50) for a lottery ticket and 70 per cent of this (if you can follow the mathematics and the casuistry) goes 'to the lucky bettors whose lucky horse runs the first in the same race' ... except that, by definition, there have been no bettors, lucky or otherwise. No surprise then, that a contented central government 'is keeping a blind eye to these events'. As it happened, I could find neither the course, nor a form guide in Guangzhou. In consequence, I waited until the end of academic deliberations allowed my return to Hong Kong.

There the racing season, which runs from mid-September till mid-June, was just four meetings old. Programs are scheduled twice a week, on Wednesday nights, when all but one of the 19 Happy Valley meetings are held, and on Saturdays, when the bulk of racing at Sha Tin takes place. Happy Valley, on Hong Kong Island, is built on a drained swamp; Sha Tin, in the New Territories, on land reclaimed in the 1970s from the sea.

The British introduced horse racing to Hong Kong in the 1840s. The vital players in the industry are still imports. All horses come from the great breeding centres of Australasia, Europe and the United States. These are divided between those which have previously competed, and the romantically named griffins, unraced performers bred for the Hong Kong circuit. The leading jockeys are also high-priced outsiders. Eight from abroad are retained by local trainers each season. Three more ride as 'club jockeys'.

So lucrative is a Hong Kong retainer that competition for them is intense. Michael Kinnane, who won last year's Melbourne Cup on Vintage Crop, comes in annually at the end of the Irish season. Darren Gauci turned his back on Melbourne racing for the richer pickings in Hong Kong. For years Mick Dittman has tried without avail to break into the scene. And it was no surprise that Darren Beadman burst into tears when given a nine months' disqualification last season. Subsequently he returned to Sydney, found Christ, and took up riding winners again, more or less in that order.

On a humid night at the end of September, I went back to the crowded, amphitheatrical course at Happy Valley. As part of the carefully controlled 'Come Horse-Racing' package deal, I'd paid \$A90 for entrance, buffet dinner and a private enclosure with a balcony that offered a vertiginous nine-storey view of the tightly-turning track beneath. Happy Valley is an amphitheatre within another, being ringed by high-rise apartment blocks, whose hedge is broken only by a small grey church which yet survives the thrust of the island's buildings

towards the clouds. To the left of the balcony one glimpsed behind glass the jockeys' swimming pool. To the right was the thronged public enclosure. Midfield, a giant television screen allowed one to follow each event with a steward's sceptical eye. The laconic race commentary was given in English. Preliminary turf talk was in animated Cantonese.

The main Chinese inflection of the English institution of thoroughbred horse-racing in Hong Kong is, of course, in the scale of gambling. More than \$HK66 billion was wagered last year, or, put another way, not much less than \$A2000 for every living person in the colony. Owners profit accordingly. In a six-race card, contested by only 58 horses, most of which would struggle to make ground in an Improvers' at Moe or Quirindi, stakes of \$HK2.5+ million (a touch under \$A500,000) were on offer.

The first event was a 975m sprint around a horse-shoe bend. The improbably-bred victor was Orchestra, by the outstanding stayer and Melbourne Cup winner At Talaq. Doubtless he was shaking his mane somewhere at what becomes of his lesser progeny when sent offshore. In the next race, the infelicitously named Lik King saluted at 16/1 by a head for the English jockey, Darryl Holland. In the following race Holland won again, on Shining Star, trained by the former champion Australian jockey Geoff Lane, who is one of nine expatriates among the 24 licensed trainers in Hong Kong. If not easy, the living is evidently good. Race four saw Gauci aboard the 25/1 outsider Joyful Delight, an At Talaq gelding who has been winless in 20 starts. Gauci rode him perfectly, never leaving the rails until he claimed the favourite just short of the post to win by a short head. Helping the cause of Joyful Delight was the shocking ride by J.K.S. Ho on Rabbit Bo Bo (who sounded better placed among greyhounds).

BUT HONG KONG RACING PEOPLE are solicitous of local riders. Overseas jockeys were excluded from the fifth race, to give the home-grown products a gentler opportunity to show their wares. A more emphatic statement of faith was made by the Hong Kong owner of the brilliant Australian colt, Danewin. A few days after this Happy Valley meeting, he sent Jackie Tse to Sydney to ride his horse in the Spring Champion Stakes. Danewin obliged with a strong victory. 'Jocked off', Shane Dye whinged at two years' work with the horse down the drain. He may be back aboard for the Victoria Derby. Bigger news still, and an indication of how much more integrated world racing is becoming, was that Hong Kong's best horse, River Verdon, was heading south for the Cox Plate and Melbourne Cup. A plain eight-year-old gelding, he is most likely due for windburn as he tries to keep up with horses of a quality that he has never met. But the challenge has been accepted. The daring and dollars which put such a successful racecourse as Happy Valley on the harsh rock of Hong Kong Island will reap dividends sooner or later, in these softer pastures. ■

Peter Pierce is *Eureka Street's* turf correspondent.

Even the pure need money

GEELONG IN THE GRIP of Grand Final fever provided a fitting backdrop to this year's biennial ANZAAS Congress. As the locals were exhorting their team to roll the West Coast juggernaut, delegates to the Congress were discussing the future of Australian science. West Coast extinguished the hopes of a depressed Geelong. Science could be facing its own nemesis in the guise of current methods of funding university research. The Commonwealth's much-vaunted desire to build a comprehensive, well-equipped and relevant research base may not be realised.

Nothing excites the passions of the higher education sector more than its research effort. It is seen as the pinnacle of academic achievement, so it is not surprising that the standard of the investigative work across the disciplines is regarded as a litmus test of our university system.

But since the Dawkins reforms, which seven years ago led to the abolition of the old binary divide between colleges and universities, there has been a shifting of the goal posts. Universities are now more attuned to national goals, whether they like it or not, and there is an ever-increasing demand for the available resources. It is in this new environment that the effectiveness of our research culture is being questioned.

There is increasing disquiet expressed by academics that basic 'blue sky' research in the sciences is being compromised in favour of applied research. Basic research entails investigation which is inspired purely by the curiosity of the researcher, whereas applied research has a goal in mind—the development of a drug, for example.

As part of John Dawkins' reforms back in 1988, the Commonwealth changed the funding of research in higher education. Instead of relying so much upon universities funding

research through their general operating grants, the government expanded the direct granting of research funds which are awarded on a competitive basis. In conjunction with this, areas of funding priority have been identified by Commonwealth agencies from year to year. For 1994 they include material science and minerals processing, scientific instruments and instrumentation, cognitive science, and Australia's Asian context.

The aim of these reforms is to construct a research culture that is focused on our national and, to some extent, commercial needs. The impact of these recent changes has been felt across the board in terms of re-routing the course of research work, but the sciences have been affected more profoundly.

The 60 per cent increase in university enrolments in the last decade has resulted in the number of postgraduates doubling over the last four years. This inevitable flow-through puts pressure on the government-directed funding programs, as universities struggle to keep up with the demand on their operating grants. However as well as competing for funds, science research, with its expense and potential for commercial gain, must contend with becoming a creature of policy as the Government attempts to get more value for the research dollar.

Although there has been much debate over the wisdom of picking certain fields of research for emphasis over others, more recently it has been added to by those concerned over what kind of research we are doing. The question they are asking is whether the current method of

When people say the country can't afford 37 world-class universities, well, of course it can't. It can't afford any world-class universities on the Harvard scale.

—Don Aitkin



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funding research is able to support the full range of research activity and not preclude certain types of research in favour of others.

The Australian Research Council, established in 1988 and financed in part by \$65 million taken from the operating grants of the pre-1987 universities, is responsible for the distribution of the bulk of research program funds—this year it handed out nearly \$240 million. The ARC supports applied research but is the sole source of direct government grants for pure basic research. Professor Max Brennan, chair of the council and himself a physicist, believes that much more can be done to promote pure basic research in the higher education sector; 'We can only support, each year, around 20 to 22 per cent (of grant applications) and we know when we look at them there's at least another 10 per cent which are really very high quality ... a lot of that research does not get done.'

Brennan also notes a trend in government funding away from basic research. 'It is certainly true to say that over the last five years there has been a substantial shift in government funding in percentage terms to strategic and applied research.' Unlike basic research, goal-oriented work has started to expand its source of funding.

Previously, strategic and applied research in higher education has been conducted primarily in medicine, but the development of co-operative research centres and the collaborative grants program has rapidly expanded applied research in other fields. Both initiatives cultivate associations between universities and industry, and they are already responsible for 15 per cent of directed government research funds.

This growth in the strategic end of the research spectrum is evidence of the Commonwealth's commitment to integrate higher education with the needs of the economy, a commitment made first by Dawkins and reaffirmed by his successors Kim Beazley and Simon Crean. But while there is enthusiasm for the increase in applied research, concerns have been raised recently that Australia's research effort may be slipping in 'curiosity-driven' work.

Paul Bourke and Linda Butler, from the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, who have studied the citation rate of Australian science in international journals from 1982-91, point to an alarming drop in that rate. Up till 1987 it remained static, at two per cent of world output, but since 1988 it has fallen to 1.5 per cent. And since it is basic research work that receives recognition and publication in journals, the Bourke-Butler study raises the question of whether Australian science is losing its quality in this area.

Bourke is quick to point out that more work needs to be done to determine whether the drop in the citation rate is an aberration or a definite trend, and whether the changes in funding have undermined basic research. He concedes, however, that 'if you ask scientific practitioners they all say they have this intuitive feeling that this is exactly the route that we are on.' At a time of increasing demand for research funds, there is pressure on researchers to tailor their work to priorities set by industry and government.

The Bourke-Butler study proposes a number of reasons that might explain the drop in the citation rate, such as an increase in the average age of Australian scientists and the publication in English of research carried out in Asian countries. It is difficult to blame policy for these developments. But the study also suggests that variations across academic disciplines show that Australia has kept its position in the cheaper areas of study and lost ground at the more expensive end of the market.

Although the study has raised the question of a possible slide in Australian science, not everyone in the higher education sector is equally concerned. Professor Don Aitkin, vice-chancellor of the University of Canberra and the first chair of the Australian Research Council, argues that what matters most is not Australia's comparative international standing but whether Australians are carrying out research in appropriate fields. 'We're only two per cent of the world research system and two

Continued p32

What the doctors ordered

HEALTH IS FAR AND AWAY THE LEADING field in the sciences for research activity. Medical research receives about 15 per cent of total government research spending. In the same style as the ARC the National Health and Medical Research Council supervises the distribution of directed grants for medical research.

The distinction between basic and applied research is blurred somewhat in the life sciences, because problems that present themselves for investigation tend to arise from community health issues. That aside, the NH&MRC is confronting a similar set of circumstances to the ARC in funding the full spectrum of research activity. However, whereas the ARC has difficulties in funding certain types of research, for the NH&MRC there are problems in funding across the respective fields.

The council's Medical Research Committee is responsible for distributing the medical research endowment fund and, like the ARC, it does so by a system of grants awarded on the basis of peer review. Professor Judith Whitworth has taken up the chair of the committee at a time when the number of proposals funded by the MRC is falling as a proportion of applications. At the

end of the last decade almost 35 per cent of applications were funded; by 1991-92, however, the figure had dropped to 25 per cent. Professor Whitworth cites three causes for this: a significant rise in the number of applications, an obligation to honour commitments stemming from the 1989 science and technology white paper, and a lack of available funds.

Not surprisingly, the latter question is the most contentious. The government can point to a significant rise in the funding of the NH&MRC in absolute terms during the past three to four years, but the current level of \$122 million still fails to meet demand. In the light of the Commonwealth's commitment to raise medical research funding to two per cent of total health expenditure, Judith Whitworth feels that, 'there has been growth in the medical research system but it hasn't kept pace either with increasing overall health expenditure or quality research demand, or the needs of the Australian community, if you accept that the two per cent figure is an appropriate one for developed countries. The US spends about four per cent'.

Whitworth estimates that on top of the 25 per cent of applications that the council now funds, a further 25 per cent could be approved without compromising quality.

However, although conceding that overall government support of science in Australia is poor when compared to other countries, she believes that the private sector must share the blame: 'Where this country is particularly deficient is in the non-government sector. Not just in commercially applied research but in other countries there's a lot more funding from non-government sources, which may be philanthropic, from certain foundations and so on'.

An external review of the NH&MRC by Dr John Bienenstock, released at the end of last year, also concluded that medical research was short of funds. The report suggested that although the council forms a vital link in the national research chain, it is not being used to

its full potential. In particular the report argued that not only should general research funding be improved but also of an urgent need for spending in infrastructure development as well.

Another recommendation of the review was for the council, through better co-ordination of its committees, to play a more visible role in the setting of national research priorities. The point finds ready agreement from Whitworth, who believes that a body such as the



NH&MRC is ideally placed to determine, without political pressure, which areas of research should receive support.

'I think it's important to recognise though that lobbying and the political process wouldn't seem to be the ideal ways of determining national priorities, and that if priorities are to be set in that way then one has to have anxieties about those groups who can't make their views be known—old people, disturbed adolescents, all those who don't have an effective lobby group spring to mind.'

However, although acknowledging that doctors alone have set the agenda for too long, Whitworth suggests that at a time of financial shortage few are better placed than the researchers themselves to ensure that the limited funds available are used as equitably and effectively as possible; and that an accountable body such as the NH&MRC represents an appropriate vehicle for this.

'We believe that the appropriate way to set the priorities is to look at what are the national needs, what is the national disease burden in relation to those particular conditions, where the current national research effort is and how that relates to what the needs are and to look at it in that way rather than just a knee-jerk response.' ■

—Jon Greenaway

Emphasis on universities as instruments for coping with short and medium term economic problems shackles their intellectual potential.

—Peter Karmel

From p30

per cent is not a very big slice,' Aitkin says. 'It's vastly more important that we use our research in ways which are useful to Australia than that we are cited by people somewhere else. I don't think it matters a damn whether people cite Australian research or not, as long as we can use theirs.'

Aitkin believes that Australia's research effort is best tied to economic and social goals, and he argues that ecological sustainability and the biological and mineral sciences are the areas of scientific endeavour that will benefit the country most. And it is inevitable, according to Aitkin, that some will miss out: 'Dawkins never intended to wave a magic wand and create 37 universities. And when people say the country can't afford 37 world-class universities, well, of course it can't. It can't afford *any* world-class universities on the Harvard scale.'

Aitkin admits, too, that it is the pre-1987 universities that are succeeding in the competitive bargaining process: they have the resources and a research culture already in

place that the old CAEs cannot easily emulate. But for him this is not a concern: 'You don't have to be a great research place to be a good university. In fact, for most undergraduate students it's a matter of absolute indifference whether the place is good at research. It's whether it's good at teaching that's important.'

With the rapid expansion of enrolments since 1987, the difficulty the university system is having in keeping up can be measured by the level of funding available per student. Compared with 1983, the funds available per student last year had fallen by around 15 per cent. With funds scarce, universities are looking to direct grants for support and that means framing proposals for applied research in areas of designated priority.

SO WILL THIS TREND towards goal-oriented work compromise the research effort? Should we worry about our 'basic' research not being quoted as often as it used to be? After all, the Bourke-Butler study showed that productivity seems to have been maintained in basic research, in terms of the rate of publication, and the one-in-five success rate for applications to the research council is consistent with similar funding arrangements in other OECD countries. Professor Peter Karmel,

who was chairman of the Universities Commission from 1971-82 (known as the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission from 1977), is one of those who believes that the Commonwealth regards pure science research as something of an indulgence. He disagrees with Don Aitkin's argument that research should be conducted on the basis of what is regarded as useful to the country. 'If you put most of your effort into applied research you're using up your scientific capital all the time,' he says. 'The time will come when you simply will be behind the best international science in dealing with applied problems.'

Aitkin and Karmel agree that Australia cannot fully fund research in 37 universities. But Karmel believes that the Commonwealth should treat some institutions differently to prevent a slide into mediocrity. 'I think we ought to recognise that a small number of institutions should be given some special funding to allow them to pursue pure research untrammelled by some of the conditions that have emerged through pursuing applied research.'

The unprecedented growth in higher education in the past decade is likely to abate in coming years, as the number of commencing students levels off. But, as the Dawkins reforms come to maturity, what kind of university system are we inheriting? Will the attempt to make scientific research relevant to Australia's social and economic needs jeopardise the quality and independence of our universities?

This is what Peter Karmel would like to see happen: 'The business of universities is conserving, transmitting and extending knowledge. They prepare people to deal with problems, and, above all, the as yet unknown problems of an uncertain and unpredictable future. Emphasis on universities as instruments for coping with short and medium term economic problems shackles their intellectual potential. At least some of our universities should be able to run free.'

Jon Greenaway is a *Eureka Street* staff writer.



*Quixote took a wrong turn on the Hume Highway.
We're expecting him back next month.*



Building on research

*Work in progress from the Research School of Social Sciences,
Australian National University.*



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Introduction

Geoffrey Brennan

WHEN THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL University was first conceived as a research university over 50 years ago, the founders dreamed of establishing in the national capital an institution that would, in due course, become one of the great universities of the world. They planned for a place where scholars would come from all over the globe

to work out their ideas, to discuss, to create through their interactions an exciting intellectual environment in which all would be led to do their best work. They wanted a university that would rival Harvard and Princeton, Oxford and Cambridge, Paris and Bonn, in reputation and status and quality.

All this might seem a peculiarly scholarly fantasy in these days of international competitiveness and GDP maximisation. Yet it is a fantasy that has impelled academic life in the Research School of Social Sciences, as in the ANU more broadly, and still plays a role as a kind of longed-for ideal in the minds of most of the scholars who work here.

It is also an ideal that we have not been too far from realising. The School, for example, has a steady stream of visitors, as many as 100 a year, who do come from all over the world. Most of them seem impressed with what they find. A number are quite enraptured—partly with the birds, and the weather, and the bush, but also with the quality and energy of the intellectual life. And I discover, on my own travels, that the ANU (and RSSS as part of it) enjoys an impressive reputation overseas. So, of course, do other Australian universities. But the ANU is seen to be distinctive—partly by virtue of the fact that such a large proportion of its academic staff hold ‘research only’ appointments, and partly because of other features which the research-only character of the institution encourages.

One of the most notable such ‘other features’ in RSSS’s case is the genuinely multidisciplinary nature of the intellectual life. In the normal course, it is in fact quite rare for engagement at any serious intellec-

tual level to occur between economists and political scientists, or between philosophers and historians. Indeed, the professional antipathy between economists and sociologists is notorious. It is virtually unheard of for an historian or a sociologist to publish in any of the top economics journals. Or, equally, for historians or sociologists to publish in the best philosophy journals. Serious intellectual collaboration across the disciplines in the social sciences is decidedly unusual—or, at least, it is so outside RSSS.

Of course, not every scholar in the School collaborates with other disciplines in any major way. But many do, and some promiscuous types seem to write joint papers with just about *all* the other disciplines. Even where conversation across disciplinary boundaries does not result in joint papers, much of the work in the School nevertheless bears a distinctive colouration from being developed in a genuinely multidisciplinary environment. It is this fact, more perhaps than any other, that makes the RSSS an unusual place.

THERE ARE CERTAINLY OTHER research institutes, including some that are of a multi-disciplinary character. But there are none, anywhere, of which I am aware, that are of the same scale (say 75 academics) exhibiting a comparable disciplinary range. The Kennedy School at Harvard, for example, is like RSSS in that it has no undergraduate students and a social-sciences base, but its representative disciplines include only economics and political science and some law, but not much else.

The Wilson School at Princeton is very like the Kennedy School in this respect. Nuffield College at Oxford houses about 50 scholars in the social sciences, but accommodates only three disciplines—economics, political science and sociology. In Germany, there have been Max Planck Research Institutes formed in social science disciplines—there is, for example, one recently established at Jena, in the old East Germany, to focus on economics. But all are single-

Photograph: Geoffrey Brennan, Director of the Research School of Social Sciences, in front of a portrait of H.C. Coombs, one of the founders of the University and former Chancellor, who gives his name to the Coombs building, home of the RSSS.



discipline enterprises, and most of them relate to the physical and natural sciences.

This means that the RSSS is uniquely placed in the world of scholarship to support work between social science disciplines. And that kind of work represents, in my view, some of the most intellectually exciting work in the social sciences.

Let me mention one example that is of particular interest to me personally. This is the work involving the application of the methods of economics to the study of political processes. Various described as 'public choice theory' or 'rational actor political theory', the study takes its subject matter from political science but takes from economics its methods and techniques and underlying assumptions about the nature of human interactions.

Not everyone approves of the resultant marriage of course. Economics is the most formal and deductive of the social sciences, and not everyone believes that study of politics is amenable to being squeezed into mathematical form. And the assumptions about human behaviour and the methods used in analysing that behaviour are derived from market settings: whether those assumptions and methods are equally applicable to the political setting is a contested issue.

Nevertheless, the methods of economics are powerful and elegant. Those methods impose a grammar of argument in which one can develop long chains of complex logical reasoning. And the techniques of economics are of sufficient generality that they seem, at least on their face, to be applicable to a wide range of social phenomena, of which the narrowly 'economic' are a small subset.

Critics loudly assert that 'rational actor political theory' simply extends to a broader area of social life a method that has already been shown to fail spectacularly in the study of the economy. Of course, I do not believe such claims to be justified: and neither, it seems, do increasing numbers of political scientists.

My point here relates, however, less to the pros and cons of rational actor methods in the study of political processes and more to the claim that RSSS is an especially apt location for those pros and cons to be debated. The fact that the economists and the political scientists are located in the same division within the School makes engagement virtually unavoidable and promotes a kind of debate difficult to

replicate anywhere else in the country, and probably in most other places in the world.

BUT, OF COURSE, RSSS DOES NOT exist only to excite intellectual energy. The School has a responsibility to study issues that are of significance to Australia—and in this area too, the School's multidisciplinary character represents a huge strength. Most of the 'Big Questions' that Australia will face during the next 20 years are social questions, and few of them fit neatly into one specific discipline. Even apparently narrow 'economic' questions, such as whether Australia's

foreign debt does or does not represent a 'problem' for the economy, cannot be engaged without some allowance for the political context.

Suppose for example that the best economic analysis indicated that foreign debt is *not* an important problem for Australia. Suppose also, however, that there is a widespread perception within the electorate that foreign debt *is* a problem of major proportions. Then no political party that does not address the question of foreign debt will be taken entirely seriously. Electoral pressure will more or less force governments to put in place policies that are seen to address the public debt problem, and the real problem in this regard will be as much to design plausible policies that do the least harm as to persuade the electorate that foreign debt is not worth worrying about. Since some of the policies actually used in this connection can do huge harm (as we have discovered), the issues here are by no means trivial.

Broad questions, such as Australia's position on environmental problems, or the issue of population growth (both natural and immigrant), or the appropriate framework for policy in relation to native peoples, cannot properly be handled without simultaneous engagement from the various disciplines. We need to be able to bring to bear both the accumulated wisdom and the variety of methods and styles of analysis those disciplines represent.

THERE ARE GREAT ADVANTAGES in doing this collaboratively and co-operatively rather than in a piecemeal fashion.

RSSS is a location especially congenial to this kind of work. The real challenge for the School is to ensure the correct balance between academic disciplinary excellence and collaborative thematic multidisciplinary engagement with the 'big issues'. Appropriately managed, these can be complementary rather than competitive goals.

All these things are centrally on my mind at the moment because RSSS and the Institute of Advanced Studies are to be reviewed next year—with an explicit eye to the level of public funding the ANU will secure. Such reviews tend to concentrate one's thoughts on the question of whether the RSSS's existence can be justified—and if so, on what grounds.

I believe that Australia *needs* good universities; it needs to nurture its best and most imaginative minds and it needs to bring those minds to bear on the major social and economic and political issues that confront us. ■

Geoffrey Brennan is Professor of Economics in the RSSS and currently Director of the School. He is the author, with James Buchanan, of *The Power To Tax*, and *The Reason Of Rules*, and, with Loren Lomasky, of *Democracy and Decision*.

Why Don't Men Do More Housework?



Janeen Baxter

WOMEN HAVE MADE MANY GAINS in access to social, economic and political resources in the public sphere over the last two decades. Few would deny that there has been substantial progress in terms of women's access to education, employment, political power and social welfare representation.

In addition, demographic data show that levels of fertility have declined, age at first marriage is being delayed, divorce rates are increasing and women are spending more time living alone or as heads of households. These factors, in combination with increased government spending on social welfare, are leading to greater economic self-sufficiency and greater financial and social autonomy for women than at any time in the past.

Of course, there is still a long way to go. Women are still concentrated in a small number of industries and occupations, women's incomes are substantially lower than men's, women tend not to advance up the managerial hierarchy at the same rate, or to the same levels as men, and discrimination and sexual harassment on the job are far from eradicated. Nevertheless, it is possible to document some erosion of gender inequality in the public sphere.

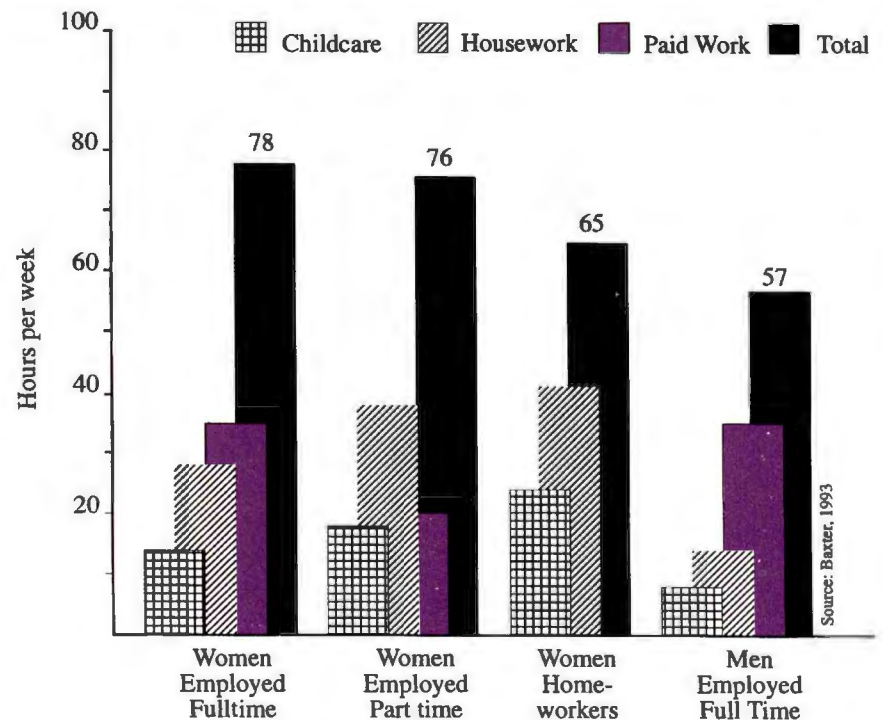
It is not the case however that these broader changes in women's position are being translated into a reduction of gender inequality at the level of the household. Clearly, having fewer children and spending less time in a conventional, nuclear-family household will lead to a reduction in the amount of time women spend on childcare and housework over the course of their lives. But it is not clear that improvements in women's circumstances in the broader political and economic spheres are being reflected in more egalitarian divisions of labour between men and women within the household.

On the contrary, the available data suggest that the division of domestic labour has changed very little in recent years, with women continuing to spend substantially more time on domestic labour than men. I have examined these issues using data from the Class Structure of Australia Project, an ongoing collaborative project between sociologists at the University of Queensland and the Australian National University. The results indicate that women in full-time employment spend about 28 hours per week on housework, women in part-time employment spend about 38 hours per week on housework and women who are

full-time homeworkers spend about 41 hours per week on housework. This compares with approximately 14 hours per week for men.

The average time spent on childcare is similarly unequal between the genders. Men with children under 10 years at home spend about 8 hours per week on childcare tasks and women spend somewhere between 14 and 24 hours per week on childcare depending on their employment status. If we combine these figures with the average time men and women spend in paid employment, they suggest that the longest working week is experienced by employed women with small children (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Hours per Week on Childcare, Housework and Paid Work in Australia. (N=831)



There is some suggestion that the gap in the amount of time that men and women spend on domestic labour, if not the distribution of domestic tasks, may have narrowed in recent years. Reviewing data from a series of time-use surveys in the United States and the United Kingdom conducted between 1960 and 1985, Gershuny and Robinson (1988) argue that domestic work time has declined for women, while men's domestic work time has increased. They



suggest that this is due to greater sharing of tasks between men and women, the increasing participation of women in paid work, and greater access to domestic equipment within households.

OTHER STUDIES, HOWEVER, ARE LESS OPTIMISTIC. Most feminist research on the impact of domestic technology has argued that the introduction of mechanical devices into the home, such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines, has done little to reduce the amount of time women spend on housework. On the contrary, it has been argued that these devices actually led to an increase in the amount of time women spend on domestic work since they contributed to higher standards of domestic cleanliness. For example, the idea of the 'spring clean' disappeared and was replaced with a regime of daily or weekly dusting and vacuuming.

Similarly the introduction of washing machines into the majority of homes has meant that daily clothes washing has become both feasible and a necessity; clothes are changed more frequently than in the past and consequently must be cleaned more frequently. This of course increases the amount of time spent hanging them out to dry, folding them, ironing, putting them away and so on.

Furthermore, even if there has been a reduction in the gap between men's and women's contribution to household labour, some researchers have suggested that it is because women have reduced the amount of time they spend on domestic work, rather than because men have increased their time on domestic labour. In other words, as paid employment takes up an increasingly larger share of women's time, women find ways of reducing household work, either by living in messier, less well-organised households, or by using part of their earnings to employ outside domestic help.

The Class Structure of Australia Project has recently fielded a second national survey. Analyses of these data will enable, for the first time in Australia, accurate estimates of change in housework patterns over time. Data from the first wave of the project indicate that men with wives in paid employment *do not* spend substantially greater amounts of time on domestic labour than men with wives who are full-time home-workers.

Moreover it shows that having young children in the household substantially increases the amount of time that women spend on housework, but actually reduces the amount of time that men spend on housework. It may be that the presence of young children typically coincides with the early stages of men's career paths. In other words, this is the time in their lives when men are expected to devote most energy

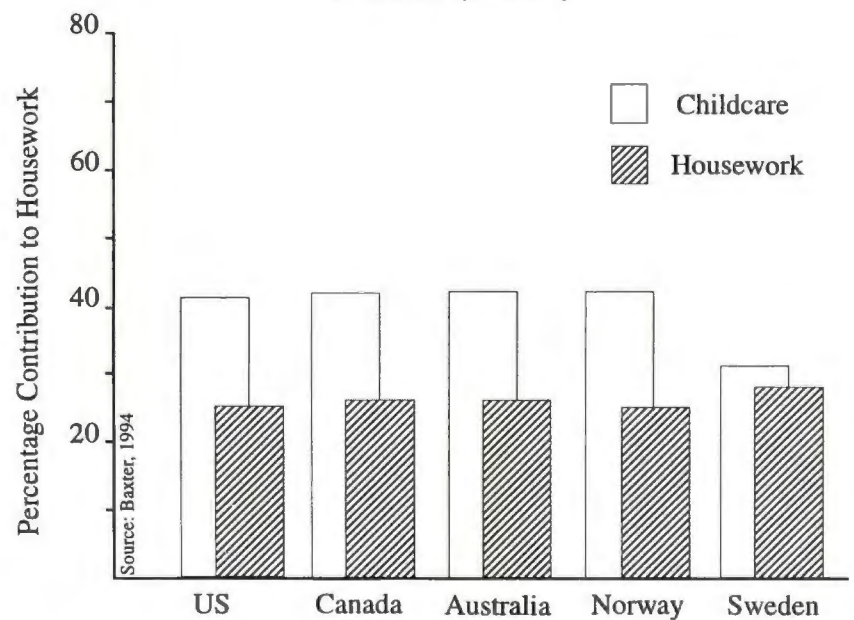
to establishing their career and obtaining work experience in order to adequately fulfil the major breadwinner role. In contrast, this is a time when women are more likely to be at home full-time, or at least part-time, and to be more focused on domestic activities. Nevertheless this implies that during the child-rearing years men's careers are able to continue to move forward while all of the available evidence suggests that childbearing and childrearing slow down, if not halt altogether, women's career progression.

In addition to examining these kinds of patterns in the Australian context, I have also explored the extent to which they are evident in other countries. My aim here is not just to identify cross-national variation, but to examine the extent to which variations in women's levels of independence from men at a societal level are reflected in greater levels of independence from men at an individual level within households.

In other words, in countries where women have made greater progress toward achieving gender equality at the macro-level we might also expect to find evidence of progress in gender relations at the individual level, for example in terms of the division of labour between husbands and wives within house-

Housework is more than just invisible and unpaid labour, it is also gendered labour; that is a set of culturally and historically specific tasks that convey social meanings about masculinity and femininity and therefore about power

Table 2. Men's Percentage Contribution to Domestic Labour in Five Countries. (N=1726)



holds. I have used data from the Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness to examine housework arrangements in four countries in addition to Australia—the United States, Canada, Norway and Sweden. In each case the results indicate that men do about 25 to 28 per cent of housework and somewhere between 30 to 40 percent of childcare (see Table 2 above).

What is so remarkable about these figures is their consistency across countries. Sweden and Norway are typically considered to have made considerable progress toward gender equality by implementing a variety of welfare programs designed to alleviate the conflicting demands of home and work. The introduction of parental leave policies, a progressive taxation system, extensive childcare facilities and flex-time have all been developed in an effort to minimise the conflicts between paid and unpaid work. Additionally, attitudinal studies show that men and women in Scandinavia are far more supportive of egalitarian gender roles than men and women in North America or Australia. Despite these differences in attitudes and policies however, there is no evidence that Swedish and Norwegian women enjoy more egalitarian household arrangements than women in Australia, Canada or the United States. Women still undertake the bulk of domestic work.

The implications of an inegalitarian gender division of labour in the home are considerably more far-reaching than the obvious fact that women are required to undertake a double load. The gender division of labour has consequences for women's social, economic and political welfare and for social justice within society as a whole. To cite one specific example: Hobson (1990) has noted that social benefits such as superannuation payments are typically based on wage contributions. Women who devote a significant proportion of their lives to unpaid domestic work and who experience career interruptions as a result of family responsibilities, will clearly be disadvantaged in this respect compared to men whose work lives are not restricted in this way.

SO WHY IS THE GENDER DIVISION of labour in the home so persistent across time and across countries? Social researchers have offered a variety of explanations. These include women's relative lack of resources compared to their husbands, particularly their lower earning power in the market, which means that it is more economically rational for women to devote primary attention to household responsibilities. It has also been suggested that women, again because of their lower earning power and greater involvement in part time employment, will have more time available than men to undertake domestic work. Attitudinal arguments concerning men's and women's ideological support for traditional household arrangements have also been advanced to explain men's failure to undertake a greater share of domestic labour, and women's 'willingness' to shoulder the bulk of domestic responsibilities.

While there is some support for each of these explanations in the literature, there is also evidence that none of them are able to account fully for the continued existence of gender divisions in the home. For example, in terms of time availability, research has shown that in households in which men and wom-

en are both employed full time, women continue to do substantially more of the domestic labour than men. Additionally in households where men are unemployed or retired, the division of labour remains substantially unequal; in fact in some cases, unemployed men have been shown to spend less time on domestic labour than employed men. Similarly while attitudes to gender roles have been shown to be significantly related to the domestic division of labour with more egalitarian attitudes leading to more egalitarian divisions of labour, attitudes do not always translate directly into behavioural practices. As noted above, even in Scandinavia where there is a very high level of support for gender equality, women bear the brunt of the domestic burden.

While each of these factors—relative earnings, time availability and gender attitudes—might have some influence on the division of labour and time within households, it is clear that gender has a much greater impact. In other words, the key factor determining who does what in the household, and how much time is spent doing it, is gender. This has led some feminist theorists to argue that the division of household labour involves two production processes: the production of goods and services and the *production of gender* (Berk, 1985: 201). In other words, when men and women do childcare and housework, they also reproduce relations of gender inequality. Housework is more than just invisible and unpaid labour, it is also gendered labour; that is a set of culturally and historically specific tasks that convey social meanings about masculinity and femininity and therefore about power (Ferree, 1990).

Doing childcare and housework affirms women's status as 'good' wives and mothers, while not doing domestic work and concentrating on paid work outside the home, affirms men's status as 'good' husbands and fathers. To challenge the gender division of labour therefore is tantamount to challenging prevailing assertions about what it is to be a woman or a man.

This is not to suggest that the gender division of labour in the home is immutable. Rather it suggests that long-term structural change must be based on more than just a reallocation of time, resources and attitudes. Women's increased participation in paid labour, increased earnings relative to their husbands and changes in men's and women's attitudes to gender roles will not be enough to undermine the gender division of labour in the home. Nor as the Scandinavian results show, is it sufficient to implement a range of social policies within the public sector aimed at promoting gender equality. We need also to challenge the construction of housework as women's work.

Part of the strategy for achieving this is to keep housework on the agenda. Interest in studying housework has fluctuated over the last twenty years or so. While there is clearly a substantial body of feminist, sociological and even some economic literature on

The real issue, it seems to me, is not to pay women to do housework, nor to devise an equation that enables housework to be included in GDP estimates, but rather to develop strategies that will change the gender division of labour in the home.



the topic, during the 1980s most attention focused on gender equality in paid employment.

There is now some evidence that attention is shifting back to include recognition of the 'invisible economy' of the household. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has recently fielded a national time-use survey, one of the aims of which is to gather detailed data on the amount of time men and women spend on domestic labour. And there is increasing discussion amongst economists and others about wages for housework, payment for caring work, and the value of unpaid labour for the Gross Domestic Product. (The Australian Bureau of Statistics for example has recently estimated that the GDP figure could increase by about 40 per cent if housework was included).

While I welcome this renewed interest in housework as real work, my own view is that, as previous debates about wages for housework and the economic value of housework in the 1970s suggested, focusing on economic issues alone overlooks the more fundamental question of why men are still able to avoid responsibility for domestic work. The real issue, it seems to me, is not to pay women to do housework, nor to devise an equation that enables housework to be included in GDP estimates, but rather to develop strategies that will change the gender division of labour in the home. These strategies will need to be multi-faceted, focusing on both public and private dimensions of gender inequality and those dimensions which cross over these 'boundaries', as issues relating to childcare and housework surely do. ■

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Undermining Sydney

Tim Bonyhady

IN AUGUST 1895 ARTHUR STREETON returned from Melbourne to the artists' camp at Little Sirius Cove on Sydney Harbour. As Streeton recalled almost 40 years later, 'the long tree-covered slopes of Mosman, Athol and Bradley's Head were lovely in the late afternoon; amber and gold lighting up the myriads of eucalypts, light echoing upon light, and the surface of the bay below like a robe of intense blue satin.' Suddenly all was in jeopardy: 'A coaling company was formed, and in some clever way acquired permits to bore for coal. One day the thousands of gum trees had been cut down. The multitude of trees lying low was a shocking sight.'

The outcry which followed is significant because it illustrates how protection of the environment was already the stuff of Australian politics in the late 19th century, involving many of the same arguments and forums as today. The Sydney Harbour Colliery Company's plans for a mine at Bradleys Head were even more controversial than recent proposals for sand-mining off Sydney's beaches. The opponents of the mine at Bradleys Head were as effective as contemporary conservationists in their efforts to preserve the harbour.

This dispute arose after geologists realized that there should be coal under Sydney because the deposits in the Hunter Valley and the Illawarra were probably part of the same seam. Soon speculators were putting down test bores with the help of the New South Wales government, which not only granted mining rights under all of Port Jackson but also lent its own diamond drill to explore the harbour to a depth of almost 3000 feet. After a first test bore at Cremorne had struck worthless cinder, the government contributed half the cost of a second bore in 1893 which struck a rich seam of steaming coal beneath Bradleys Head.

The miners looked on this discovery as the start of 'an epoch in the history of the development of the coal resources of Australia'. The government was equally enthusiastic. When a member of the Legislative Assembly asked whether it could stop mining under the harbour, the government replied that it was 'not clear how the state would be served by locking up this seam of coal'. Eighteen months later, the gov-



ernment granted the Colliery Company a lease over six-and-a half acres with a water frontage near Bradleys Head—charging the company rent of less than £1 a year for land worth at least £6000 so that it could erect its equipment and sink its pits.

Opposition to the company's plans came almost too late—when it had obtained nearly all the rights and permissions it needed to start mining. Characteristically of urban environmental disputes, the mine's first opponents were local landholders who protested through the Mosman Council. These landholders were primarily concerned for their property values. They were happy for the coal to be reached from other 'more secluded and less peopled shores' even though, as the company was quick to reply, the great advantage of mining at Bradleys Head was that so few people lived nearby and it had 'no wish to open the works in a thickly populated suburb'.

Meanwhile the issue was taken up by the local member of parliament, E.M. Clark, who discovered early in 1895 that the company had also applied for the right to mine under the public reserve along the foreshore at Cremorne. This reserve had just been the subject of litigation, contested all the way to the Privy Council in London, upholding the public's rights against an adjoining landholder who claimed to own it. The company's application jeopardised this victory. Clark sought to defend it by exercising the right of all members of the public to object in the mining warden's court—a forum frequently used by conservationists since the mid-1960s.

LIKE MODERN CONSERVATIONISTS, Clark was appalled by the inadequate provisions for public notice of mining applications which meant he only found out about the company's application by accident. He was equally angry that he had to pay to exercise his right even though he was acting 'in the public interest, and had no personal motive to serve'. But Clark made the most of his opportunity. His arguments about the public interest in the harbour's foreshores appear to have persuaded the Warden to recommend against granting the lease.

This local conflict was transformed into a major political issue when the company began clearing part

of Bradleys Head. At once mining of the harbour became the subject of letters, long articles and editorials in the press. According to his reminiscences, Arthur Streeton himself wrote a letter which stirred public concern and became known as 'Streeton's shriek'. E.M. Clark also raised the issue in parliament and, when he failed to extract adequate answers from the government, successfully moved

that the Legislative Assembly debate the company's plans as a matter of public importance.

The main argument against mining at Bradleys Head was aesthetic—that the coal mine would 'disfigure' and 'defile' one of the most prominent parts of the harbour. While the company argued that the public had nothing to fear because it would ensure that all its works were 'as sightly and as unobjectionable as possible', no-one seems to have believed it. Everyone knew, as one letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* put it, that 'the hideous erections of various kinds ... the grimy wharfs and barges, the general blackness and repulsiveness' would destroy the harbour's beauty.

Another argument was economic—turning, as with so many environmental disputes, on the balance between private gain and public benefit. The company claimed that its mine would produce more than £3 million for the Crown in royalties and create 300 jobs while it was sinking its pits and then 1500 while it was mining. Its opponents argued that the only significant beneficiary would be the company which would have to make a profit of £20 million for the Crown to receive £3 million. Moreover, any revenue and jobs created by mining at Bradleys Head would be at the expense of revenue and jobs in the Hunter and the Illawarra because there was no unmet demand for coal in New South Wales. Whatever market was found by Sydney would be lost by Newcastle and Wollongong.

Another issue was the privatisation of a public resource, 'robbing the people' of their birthright. The *Daily Telegraph* argued that there was no part of the 'public inheritance' of New South Wales which needed to be 'more jealously guarded than the all-too-small remnants of the Port Jackson foreshores' that had escaped the 'sordid scramble' which had resulted in most of the harbour frontage being alienated. One member of parliament called on the government 'to preserve the rights of the people ... instead of giving them to any company or syndicate to do what they like with'. Another parliamentarian declared that 'Not one inch of the foreshore should be parted with'.

A final issue with a modern ring to it was the colony's need to attract foreign investment. Whenever

Even opponents of mining feared that New South Wales could not afford to play 'fast and loose' with its credit in England without 'disastrous' consequences for the colony. But this prospect did not prompt them to abandon the headland to mining. Instead they argued that, as a last resort, the government should pay the Colliery Company reasonable compensation, just as even the 'utilitarian citizens' of the United States had bought back a large tract of the Yosemite Valley so that it could be preserved as a 'national heirloom'.



er someone attacked the mine, they were accused of 'driving capital out of the country' — 'a very dangerous thing to do'. Even opponents of mining feared that New South Wales could not afford to play 'fast and loose' with its credit in England without 'disastrous' consequences for the colony. But this prospect did not prompt them to abandon the headland to mining. Instead they argued that, as a last resort, the government should pay the Colliery Company reasonable compensation, just as even the 'utilitarian citizens' of the United States had bought back a large tract of the Yosemite Valley so that it could be preserved as a 'national heirloom'.

So great was the outcry that, had Clark pressed the issue in Parliament, *The Bulletin* reckoned the government might have fallen. Seventy-five years before sand-mining at Cooloola almost brought down Joh Bjelke-Petersen, coal mining under Sydney Harbour nearly had the same effect. But Clark chose

'no consideration in the nature of rent could be any compensation or consolation for the disfigurement of a harbor' which all Australians had 'been taught to cherish as one of nature's choicest masterpieces'.

At the end of the year, the government duly announced that it would not grant the wharfage rights which were all the company needed to start mining. But as so often with environmental disputes, this defeat did not put an end to the company's plans: it simply shifted them to a different part of the harbour, which had two attractions. One was that it was not quite as prominent—it would not be in the path of 'all the inward and outward passenger traffic'—and hence not as open to criticism on aesthetic grounds. The other was that the local residents were both more welcoming of the company and less able to defend themselves despite being much more numerous than around Bradleys Head.

The location chosen by the company was

Balmain, which, in the late 19th century, was a largely working-class suburb rapidly being invaded by industry. Because there was already substantial industry in Balmain, local landholders had less to lose from the addition of another plant. They also had more to gain because the company sought a lease of parkland held by the local council. As Balmain's mayor explained it, 'the park could be let on an improving lease, and could be made to earn a good round sum'. He did 'not think the park was sufficiently patronised to warrant them sacrificing such an opportunity to lease the park on favourable terms'.

When the council held a plebiscite on the issue in 1896, Balmain ratepayers voted by a majority of two to one

in favour of leasing the park to the colliery. Within a few years, the company had sunk two more shafts and started mining, only to find that the coal was of such poor quality that its operations were uneconomic. When the mine finally shut down in 1931, having already closed and opened several times, it had not even produced one year's anticipated output. Balmain started resisting industrial invasion only in the 1960s when the peninsula began to be gentrified. ■

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instead to accept an assurance from the Premier, George Reid, that his sympathies were 'entirely' with those who objected to mining and that, if he could honourably stop the company proceeding, he would do so.

THE GOVERNMENT'S OPPORTUNITY came six weeks later when the colony's Land Court decided an appeal brought by the company over its rent for a lease on a wharf near Bradleys Head. In a remarkable judgment the court went out of its way to recommend that the lease should not be granted at all. According to the court, the foreshore was a scarce resource which the government should resume, not alienate. In its view,





Changing Workplace Culture

Valerie Braithwaite

IN 1986, THE HAWKE LABOR GOVERNMENT strengthened its legislative program to remove discrimination against women in the workforce through the Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act (1986). The legislation, unlike its sister legislation, the Sex Discrimination Act (1984), is not based on individuals lodging complaints.

Instead, higher education institutions and larger employers are required to introduce procedures to identify practices giving preferential treatment to men, and to change these practices to allow men and women equal opportunity to develop their potential. Implementation of the affirmative action legislation should serve a preventative function, reducing the need for complaints of sexual discrimination in the future.

Higher education institutions, and private sector employers and voluntary bodies with more than 100 employees are required by law to follow an eight-step plan: a senior officer has to be assigned responsibility for the EEO program, a company statement on EEO must be developed, consultations with trade unions and employees are required, selection, training and promotion procedures need vetting for gender bias, an employment profile broken down by gender and position must be compiled, and future goals and targets for the workplace have to be specified, with provision for regular internal review of the organization's progress.

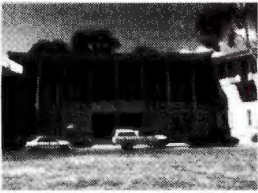
Through implementing their EEO programs employers and employees alike are expected to gain insights into the way in which their work practices advantage men and disadvantage women. Problems can be corrected without attracting outside attention and government interference. The only form of accountability required under the legislation is for em-

ployers to report on their progress, annually and in writing, to the Director of the Affirmative Action Agency. Failure to do so results in companies being named in the Federal Parliament. More recently, penalties have been extended so that companies can be denied federal government contracts if they have not complied.

The purpose of the Affirmative Action Act was to give impetus and direction to changing the culture of the workplace. Early advocates realized the limits of law for achieving the changes they wanted and expected progress to be slow. The model for change was based on building commitment to the goals of the legislation among the business community, the higher education sector, the trade union movement, the women's movement, and government. With the clear intention of maintaining the cooperation of all major groups, the legislation was very much consensus based. It had a strong self-regulatory component: No one could check an employer's progress except through their written annual reports lodged with the Agency.

The Act explicitly denied any intention of overriding the merit principle. While workplace practices were expected to change, all positions were to be filled by the best person available for the job. And perhaps, most strikingly, the legislation gave autonomy to companies to determine their own rates of change.

Compliance with the legislation in terms of reporting to the Affirmative Action Agency has been remarkably high. But the quality of the programs has been judged widely as less than impressive. These concerns have mushroomed as further evidence accumulates that employment profiles have changed little, women are still absent from senior positions, and men's wages continue to outstrip women's.



The most popular explanation given for why the workplace has not changed in response to the Affirmative Action Act has been the inadequacy of the legislation itself. Critics have called it a 'toothless tiger' because of its limited scope for sanctioning non-compliant employers. Others have been concerned about lack of specificity, arguing that the wording of the Act leaves too much open to interpretation. Over time, the Affirmative Action Act has acquired the aura of a poorly drafted piece of legislation, leaving bureaucrats and EEO officers in the dark as to what constitutes compliance. The 1992 Effectiveness Review of the Act, therefore, heard calls for stronger sanctions as well as the specification of benchmarks and performance standards.

ALTHOUGH STRONGER SANCTIONS and more specific implementation guidelines could change workforce profiles and compliance statistics, there is no reason to assume that the desired change in workplace culture would also occur. Workplace culture is much more than a set of performance indicators. It refers to the shared understandings that men and women have that make it possible for them to act in concert with each other. To change culture is to re-socialise every man and woman according to a shared vision of how the workplace should operate.

Changing workplace culture is slow and sometimes difficult. Organisations must take time to be self-reflective and self-critical, to commit themselves to problem-solving strategies and to be open to new ideas, to involve all employees in their deliberations, and to have the determination to follow through with action plans. At the time of drafting the affirmative action legislation, the Business Council of Australia and the Confederation of Australian Industry put their weight behind the legislation to ensure that 'meaningful and effective reform in the longer term interests of women in the workforce' became a reality. They established their own Council for Equal Opportunity in Employment to assist the private sector develop their programs. The combined forces of this Council and the Affirmative Action Agency should have been sufficient for Australian organisations to rise to the challenge laid down by the legislation.

Eight years on, and with a few notable exceptions, the changes have been at best limited, and at worst cosmetic. The recession and the associated shrinkage of resources must assume some blame. There is reason to believe, however, that the legislation overestimates the sophistication of Australia's private and tertiary education sector and their will to honour their part of the bargain. The cooperative basis of the legislation has been abused widely, partly through ignorance and partly through dismissing the legislation as unimportant. Research findings suggest that organizations have been neither willing nor able to look at themselves critically, they have been reluctant to involve their employees in serious consultation to bet-

ter understand the ways in which some are advantaged over others, and they have shirked their responsibility for making the hard decisions about who is to lose their advantage.

Reactions to the Affirmative Action Act were captured in a study of 153 organisations randomly selected from the public report data base compiled by the Affirmative Action Agency. The majority of EEO contacts saw the legislation as reasonable, legitimate and even helpful in making them aware of the better ways in which they could utilise women's skills.

At the same time, organisations were remarkably resistant to the idea that sex discrimination was a problem. Furthermore, they recoiled from any suggestion that some groups who have been discriminated against in the past may need assistance to become fully integrated into the workforce. These two attitudes capture the major stumbling blocks to giving women an equal footing with men in the workplace in Australia.

Lack of awareness of discrimination in one's own backyard is not surprising given the degree to which the workforce is segregated both horizontally and vertically. The majority of women do different jobs from men and have little representation at the levels of senior management. Women are virtually absent from Australian boardrooms. It is easy to see how information that is freely circulated among female workers never reaches the ears of those who are in a position to do something about it. With such distinctively different social networks, some EEO officers see little point in doing anything but patiently wait for the new generation of directors to come on board, a generation who have learnt about sex discrimination through the experiences of their wives and daughters. At the other extreme are formal complaints to the Human Rights Commission under the Sex Discrimination Act. There is a growing body of evidence that companies and tertiary institutions become more attentive to the effectiveness of their EEO programs when their resources are diverted to legal wrangles that may ultimately threaten their reputations.

Is there a better strategy for improving communication between those who bear the brunt of discrimination and those who can do something to prevent it? Step 4 of the Affirmative Action Act, consultation, stands out as being remarkably efficient and effective if implemented properly. The public reports, however, show that fewer than 20 per cent of business units have consulted with all staff on EEO issues. Even where Step 4 has been undertaken, the form of consultation often leaves much to be desired. Too frequently, management maintains high control over communications to ensure that they are not 'opening a can of worms' and to guard against 'raising women's expectations'. Companies that take slices through their organisation, bringing people together who do not normally have contact with each other, to identify problems, share ideas and propose solutions are rare.

Within Australian organisations ... well-networked women are showing that different communication styles, different work practices and different leadership styles enhance work effectiveness. Their accomplishments challenge dominant conceptions of the qualities that make for 'success'.

Yet it is only in these settings where a dialectic is possible that different understandings confront each other and new shared understandings unfold.

While consultation is the antidote for lack of awareness, removing discrimination requires hard decisions and leadership. The second impediment to change, that special consideration for under-represented groups is neither practical nor desirable, is deeply entrenched in many work cultures. The principle has not stood in the way of family programs which are seen to benefit all (e.g. child care, parental leave), but it has stood in the way of training programs, positions and promotional opportunities set aside specifically for women. Those who have opposed affirmative action programs on principle adopt a highly individualistic analysis of the problem. Denying history and the legacy of past discrimination, they call for a clean slate, and express faith that the race can be run fairly and squarely from this point on. The alternative view is that sex discrimination has shaped the behaviour of men and women for centuries. To legislate against sex discrimination and blow the whistle for the race to begin is as futile as legislating against bound feet and then proclaiming that everyone has equal opportunity to run the mile and win. Out of these opposing views arises the moral dilemma of affirmative action: Do we cling to the rules of the game and sacrifice the contribution of individuals who cannot play by these rules or do we change the rules so that all groups can participate?

It is indisputable that by changing the rules, those who currently are advantaged lose ground. But the specification of the rules should not be determined by the preferences of those who win. The major criterion should be how best our institutions meet the needs of our society. Increasingly, those involved in management research and practice are recognizing the inevitability of heterogeneous workforces and the necessity for accommodating human diversity, even harnessing it as a new resource that can add vitality and the competitive edge.

A philosophy of managing diversity means that all employees cannot be treated in the same way and that different programs must be put in place to cater for different gaps in knowledge and skills. The first Director of the Affirmative Action Agency, Valerie Pratt, was quick to recognise the opportunities that this management strategy offered women. Under her leadership, the Affirmative Action Agency became adept at identifying the legislation as 'a blueprint for good management of human resources'.

WHILE THE CONCEPT OF MANAGING DIVERSITY has been in the interests of furthering women's full participation in the workforce, there are limits to its success. Managing diversity may take the form of moulding employees to existing work structures rather than allowing work structures to change to suit the lifestyles

of employees. There is the risk that certain types of diversity will be deemed more manageable than others because they fit the organisational mould and fail to challenge practices that are unjust and exploitative. In Clare Burton's words, managing diversity 'allows much that needs to be changed to be left intact'.

The potential of the human resource management philosophy for changing work cultures is highly dependent on regarding diversity as an enriching and precious attribute, to be nurtured rather than controlled. Where management is open to institutional reform to capture new talents and skills, the Affirmative Action Act has the opportunity to become a vehicle of change. In such environments, the legislation points to women as an undervalued resource and legally empowers them to voice their frustrations about under-representation and inadequate recognition of their skills and talents.

With open and adaptive management and the Affirmative Action legislation, women are ideally placed to be heard, noticed and influential. Within Australian organisations there are pockets of activity where committed and well-networked women are showing that different communication styles, different work practices and different leadership styles enhance work effectiveness. Their accomplishments challenge dominant conceptions of the qualities that make for 'success' and ultimately will uncover the biases inherent in the sacrosanct phrase, 'appointment by merit'.

Challenging and changing workplace culture is a battle which must be fought on many fronts. Strengthening the legislation through negative and positive sanctions will increase the priority given to EEO programs. Providing more specific guidelines for implementation will make inaction inexcusable. At the same time, philosophies of best business practice label resistance to EEO inefficient and noncompetitive. Just as there are many institutions that have acted in concert to marginalise women in the paid workforce, many institutions must be put in place to clear the way for women's advancement.

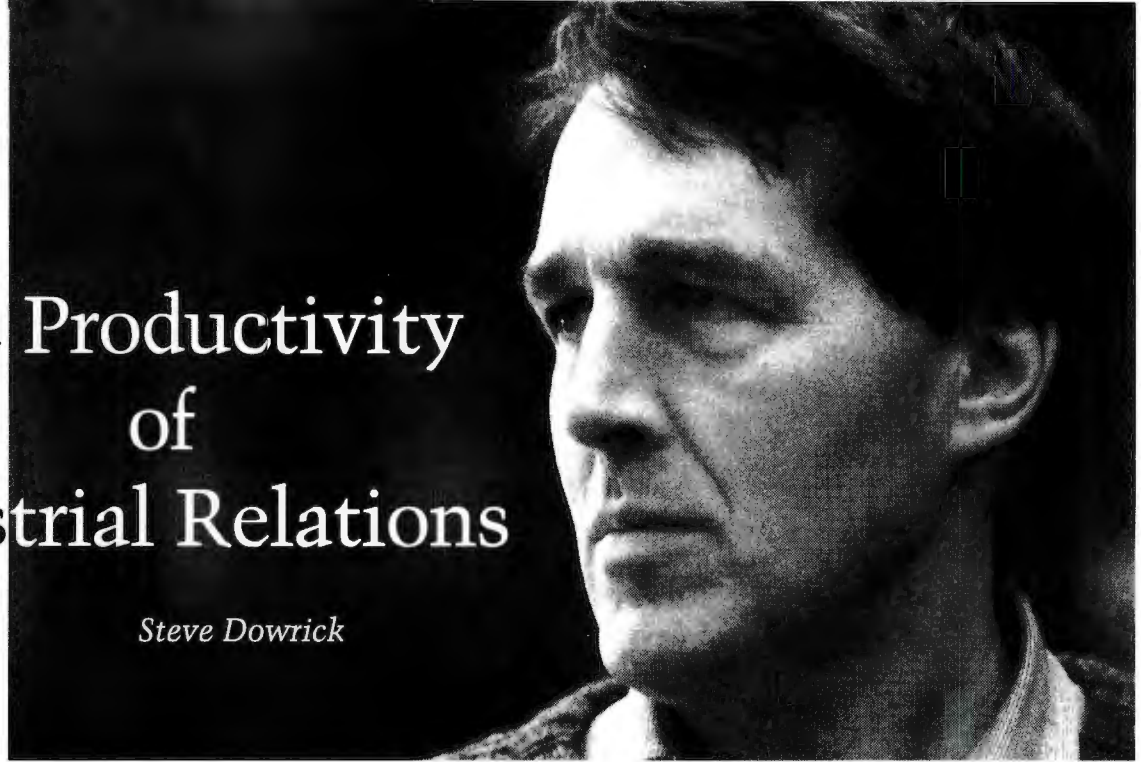
Ultimately, however, the effectiveness of these institutions depends on willingness to use them. As Naomi Wolf has recently pointed out in *Fire with Fire*, women run the risk of failing to take advantage of 'the open moment'. Many have looked to the legislation, expecting it to deliver equality on a plate. Others have been content with their lot, maintaining that discrimination in the workplace is not their concern. Yet, if women mobilise, share a vision of the way in which the workplace should function, negotiate for change and take what is rightfully theirs, the wave of change toward a gender-fair workplace will be unstoppable. ■

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To legislate against sex discrimination and blow the whistle for the race to begin is as futile as legislating against bound feet and then proclaiming that everyone has equal opportunity to run the mile and win.

The Productivity of Industrial Relations

Steve Dowrick



THE SUCCESSFUL CENTREPIECE of Australian labour market policy for the 1980s, centralised wage bargaining in the form of the Prices and Incomes Accord, is in the process of being disbanded with remarkably little debate. The move to enterprise agreements is supported by a common belief that technological progress and productivity growth have been impeded by the rigidities of the centralised system—as in Business Council of Australia, 1989 (see references). This orthodoxy appears to have evolved through political osmosis rather than through any presentation of conclusive argument and evidence.

There are two key questions to be debated. First, does the centralised system of wage fixing necessarily inhibit productivity growth? Second, can a decentralised system avoid the inflationary pressures which the Accord was designed to counteract, particularly in the context of economic recovery?

During the 1970s and early 1980s each attempt to reduce burgeoning unemployment had been stifled by an accompanying breakout of wage and price inflation as both employers and unions exploited positions of monopoly power to try to grab bigger shares of the economic cake. The Accord was remarkably successful in meeting its stated aim that collective interests should over-ride sectional interests in restraining inflation and expanding employment. The creation of over one million jobs between 1983 and 1990, while holding inflation steady at around eight per cent per year and minimising industrial disputation, was indeed a remarkable achievement for collectivist industrial relations. The current spate of strikes and large wage claims, and the government response of tightening interest rates, is an indication that both industrial relations and macroeconomic policy may be reverting to their pre-Accord state of conflict.

Critics of the Accord have pointed to a slowdown in the rate of growth of output per hour of work from a rate of 2.0 per cent per year in the 1970s to a rate barely above one percent per year in the years after

1983. Such critics often miss the point that this slowdown in the 1980s was largely attributable to the success of the Accord in restraining wage pressure. Lower real wages encouraged labour-intensive production during the expansion of 1983-89 which necessarily involved jobs growing fast relative to output.

There is some evidence that there was a slight slowdown in the rate of technological progress in the 1980s (Dowrick, 1990), taking into account the changing capital intensity of Australian production. This slowdown was, however, small—about 0.3 percentage points of annual growth. Moreover, the slowdown was a common experience in the industrialised economies, not necessarily related to the system of industrial relations.

International comparisons of economic performance do not lend support to the claim that centralised industrial relations are a hindrance to growth. Indeed, comparisons of economic performance over the turbulent years of the 1970s and 1980s suggest that the highly centralised wage systems of Scandinavia outperformed the other industrialised economies of the OECD—see Table 1 (right) and more details in Dowrick, (1993a).

The poorest performers are those nations with strong economic interest groups bargaining and competing at a sub-national level. The extremes of the spectrum, the centralised Scandinavian systems or the decentralised systems of North America and France, have tended to produce better macro-economic outcomes. In other words, if you were to choose an industrial relations system conducive to strong employment and productivity growth you should go to one end of the spectrum or the other, not get caught in the middle.

SOME RELATIVELY STRAIGHTFORWARD economic theory explains why the middle road in industrial relations is inferior to either the left or the right verge. Craft-and-industry-based bargaining gives rise to a classic 'prisoners' dilemma' problem. Both union and

employer groupings have sufficient economic power to raise wages and the prices of their products; if the other groups are exploiting this economic power, rational self-interest dictates that any one group on its own must do the same even though they realise that their collective efforts lead just to an inflationary wage-price spiral which damages overall economic performance. Decentralisation of bargaining to enterprise-based groupings overcomes this problem by reducing the market power of any one group and setting each group in competition with its previous colleagues—members of previously constituted employers' associations and industry unions become competitors. The alternative solution is to centralise wage negotiations in order to internalise the negative impact of one group's actions on other groups. This latter solution was both the purpose and the effect of the changes which we witnessed in Australia after 1983, moving away from the 'middle of the road' system which characterised the previous institutions of industrial relations.

The middle of the industrial relations spectrum is, however, just the area to which Australia appears to be returning now. Our Anglo-Saxon tradition of industry-based and occupation-based economic groupings (on the sides of both labour and capital) is still in place. Abandoning the centralised structures of the Accord is likely to unleash just the same interest group competition which we have observed previously in both Australia and the UK.

There is a considerable evidence that such competition between interest groups with market power

in productivity as unions and management are motivated to discard outmoded technologies and working practices. There is certainly some evidence that such improvements in productivity have indeed taken place in Australia over the last couple of years. But there is no guarantee that such improvements will continue into the future. Nor are such one-off improvements incompatible with centralised bargaining. There is no reason why one-off payments should not be negotiated in return for the removal of outmoded working practices, but such payments need not be built into future relativities.

The small scale of the Australian economy and its geographic isolation also pose problems for decentralised industrial relations. Many domestic industries, such as airlines, are monopolistic (despite deregulation). Where employers can pass on cost increases to the consumer, they are likely to take the easy option of 'sweetheart deals' with the unions. In such situations 'productivity bargaining' is likely to be a public relations exercise which is paid for by the consumer.

On the other hand, those workforces with less bargaining power in more competitive industries may well be the losers from enterprise bargaining. A recent study by Whitehouse (1992) finds, for instance, that women's pay and employment opportunities tend to suffer in countries where industrial relations are decentralised.

One conclusion which might be drawn from this analysis is support for the 'big bang': drastic policies to reduce or abolish union bargaining strength alto-

Table 1

Macro Economic Performance and the centralisation of industrial relations

	Unemployment rate		Inflation rate		Growth of output per worker	
	level 1974-85	change from 1963-73	level 1974-85	change from 1963-73	level 1970-80	change from 1960-70
Centralised economies	4.0	2.3	9.0	3.8	2.8	-1.0
Intermediate economies	6.1	4.8	8.4	3.9	2.1	-1.2
Decentralised economies	5.8	2.9	9.4	4.8	2.4	-1.8

Columns 1-4 from Calmfors and Driffill. *Economic Policy*, April 1988. Centralised: Austria, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland. Intermediate: Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, New Zealand, Australia. Decentralised: France, UK, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, USA, Canada.

(both trade unions and employer organisations) is likely to lead to a wage-price inflationary spiral, particularly in a period of economic recovery.

It is certainly true that we might expect a freeing up of the wage system to allow some one-off increas-

gether and to use deregulation and tariff abolition to blow the icy wind of international competition through Australian industry. But there are several reasons to ponder hard the advantages of retaining the Accord. First there will inevitably be substantial tran-



sition costs in moving rapidly to a US or NZ style system. More important, however, is the choice Australians face over the type of society which we want to shape for ourselves, for industrial relations will inevitably both reflect and influence our social values. The choice at its starkest is between the collectivist industrial relations of Scandinavia and the competitive free-for-all of the US, a contrast which is reflected in their respective attitudes to welfare state provision and inequalities in incomes and opportunities.

The events of the next couple of years in Australian industrial relations will provide a crucial test, as decentralised bargaining and economic recovery coincide. Will 1970s style price-wage inflation ensue? Will the productivity benefits of enterprise bargaining prove to be short-lived? ■

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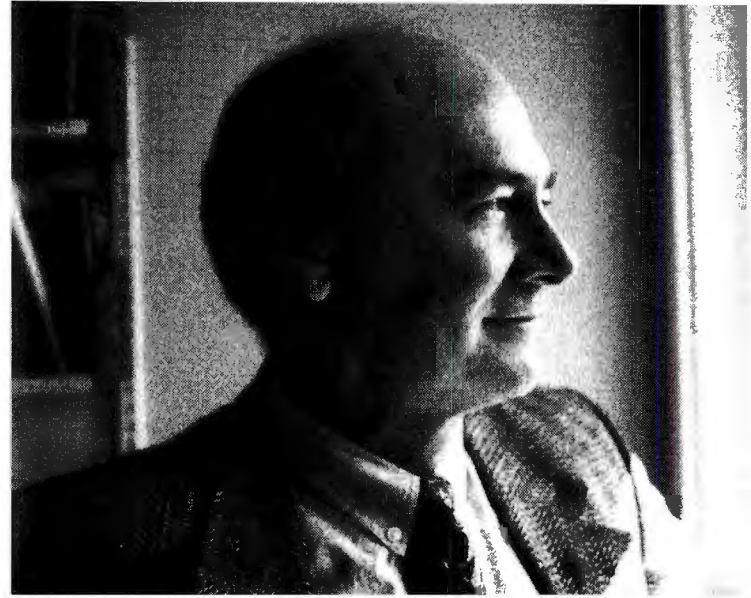
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AUSTRALIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM of government is essentially federal and republican rather than parliamentary and monarchic. To be sure, it incorporates parliament and Westminster-style responsible government in its legislative and executive parts, and retains monarchical forms for the head of state. But its substance is federal and republican. Protagonists on both sides in the current republican debate emphasise the trappings of petty monarchism while ignoring the deeper constitutional reality of popular sovereignty. Others persist with a flawed orthodoxy of parliamentary supremacy which, they mistakenly believe, is more democratic than a constitutional system of parliaments and governments with limited powers. Some go further and call for abolishing the states in order to further concentrate power in the Commonwealth parliament.

In the centenary decade, when there will be increasing critical reflection on the Constitution, it is important to be clear about its basic character. Otherwise, proposals for change will be ill-conceived and doomed to failure. If we already have a republic in substance, then changing the formal trappings is not so important, but nor will it likely generate much enthusiasm because nothing much changes. Moreover, if the changes are technically complex, as they are because of the need to revise the whole executive chapter of the Constitution, and to change state constitutions as well, there will need to be consensus among Commonwealth and State leaders and between the political parties, and sustained commitment to a difficult process. Regularising the Australian federal republic, the national task for the 1990s, is more modest than creating it, which was the crowning achievement of the people of the Australian colonies and their leaders a century ago. So it is vitally important to recognise that what we already have is a federal republic.

In being federal, the Constitution sets up two spheres of government, Commonwealth and state, and divides powers between them. Clearly, as the legislative branches of such governments are controlled by the basic law of the Constitution, parliaments in the Australian system cannot be sovereign or supreme in a Westminster sense. The Australian Constitution is

Recognising Our Federal Republic

Brian Galligan

republican because it is entirely the instrument of the Australian people, who are sovereign. The monarchic forms of Queen and viceregal surrogates remain as the formal parts of the executives for both the Australian and State constitutions, but are entirely subject to the will of the people, as are the legislatures or parliaments. Hence, in substance and effect, the Australian constitutional system is truly republican because the people are sovereign and all the institutions of government are subject to the rule of the Constitution with its checks and balances.

Those who do not recognise this to be the case would point to the fact that the Australian Constitution was passed by the British Parliament and owes its status and legitimacy to that source. Such a position fails to distinguish the real from the formal source of legitimacy. The Australian people were politically sovereign as the determining political force and morally sovereign as the legitimate source of power. Passage by Westminster was the way Australians at the time of federation chose to enact their new Constitution. In so doing they recognised the legal sovereignty of the British parliament for such an initiating purpose.

Similarly, Australians at federation chose to retain monarchic formulations and forms in the executive part of the new federal Constitution and to preserve existing monarchic forms in the State constitutions which it guaranteed. There was no implication that the Queen could claim on her own behalf or that of the British government any inherent right to rule or share in ruling Australia. Rather, the Australian colonists in creating a new system of government chose, for obvious historical and sentimental reasons, not to jettison monarchic forms and their ties with the 'mother' country.

This is not to deny the obvious historical evolution in the relationship of Australian governments, both Commonwealth and state, with Britain. In choosing not to sever the links of Empire and monarchy at federation, Australia retained a series of institutional linkages and strategic and trade dependencies which were only gradually eliminated. For instance, Australia remained within the protective sphere of the Brit-

ish Empire and did not develop a clearly independent foreign policy until World War II. Special trade and defence arrangements survived into the 1950s and 1960s. Until the 1930s, the viceregal office at both Commonwealth and state level was filled by British appointees who acted as agents of the British government. Not until the 1926 Imperial Conference was it recognised that the Crown and its viceregal representatives acted on the advice of the governments of the respective countries. At Australia's instigation, the 1930 Imperial Conference agreed that the King would appoint a Governor-General on the advice of a dominion government even if he were personally opposed to the appointment, as George V had been to the appointment of Sir Isaac Isaacs as Australia's first Australian Governor-General. And it was not until the Australia Acts in 1986 that the role of the British Government was finally eliminated in the appointment of state governors, although it had long since become a formality.

To a limited extent, the continuation of these British links might be seen to derogate from full and complete sovereignty of the Australian people in 1901. The important point is that this is what the Australian people chose because it suited their sentiment and interest. In somewhat similar fashion today, nation-states like Great Britain voluntarily give up quite large parts of their sovereignty in order to achieve the benefits of membership in the European Community. Australia can become party to various defence and trading agreements, for example an Asia Pacific Economic Community if APEC becomes more than the cooperative association which it currently is; or if Australia entered into closer political relations with New Zealand some national sovereignty in both countries would be sacrificed. The key point is that sovereignty does not necessarily entail creating a wholly autonomous national system, but in being able to choose either that or something lesser with arrangements which compromise pure national sovereignty.

Despite the continuation of links with Britain, the Australian people's assertion of sovereignty in establishing their federal constitution was in sharp contrast to that of the Canadians three decades earlier. The British North America Act of 1867, as Canada's constitution was called until recently, was drafted by political élites who quite deliberately excluded the people. Canada's colonial leaders rejected 'the heretical idea that a constitution should be derived from the people', opting instead for élite accommodation and imperial legislation which fitted their Burkean and strongly British sentiments. Canada 'continued to lean on the legal crutch of imperial sovereignty', as leading Canadian constitutional scholar Peter Russell so aptly puts it (1993, 58), until finally patriating its constitution in 1982 because there was never sufficient consensus on an amending formula. It was only in voting down the cumbersome Charlottetown Accord in October 1992 that the Canadian people final-

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ly got to exercise directly their sovereignty as a people. The Australian Constitution was quite different from that of Canada, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, noted in introducing the Commonwealth Bill into the British House of Commons in May 1900, because it 'had been prepared by the Australian people', albeit with some slight meddling by Chamberlain at the last minute (quoted in Quick & Garran 1901, 243).

Popular sovereignty is the foundation of both modern republicanism and of constitutional federalism. The original model of such a federal republic was the American where, as veteran Harvard political scientist Samuel Beer explains in a recent book, the 'principle that made possible the distinctively American form of constitutionalism and so of federalism was popular sovereignty'. Beer concludes: 'This fundamental principle of American republicanism was irreconcilably in conflict with the principle of hierarchy which, as embodied in the Old Whig constitution, necessarily implied parliamentary sovereignty over a unitary system' (1993, 137).

When the Australian nation was founded in 1901 it was as a federal Commonwealth established by the people of existing colonies. That is clearly set out in the preamble to the Constitution which states: 'the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and under the Constitution hereby established'. The Constitution that created the Australian nation was drafted by delegates elected by the people of the colonies to the 1897-98 Federal Convention and approved by the people of each colony in a series of referendums before being formally enacted by the British Parliament.

These two facts are crucial for establishing the republican basis of the Australian Constitution. The idea of a popularly-elected constitutional convention originated in the American experience and was a significant innovation in institutional design. This was adopted in Australia after the abortive 1891 Convention, where delegates had been appointed by the colonies. The Australians went further than the Americans had a century earlier by requiring popular endorsement of the draft Constitution by the people voting in referendums. Endorsement by popular referendum is the ultimate republican legitimator, and is superior to endorsement by constituent states which the Americans followed. The requirement of popular endorsement imposed a strict republican discipline upon the process of constitution drafting ensuring that it reflected the popular will.

When the draft constitution was approved by majorities in all four participating colonies in 1898 but failed to win the 10,000 majority required in New South Wales, a Special Premiers' Conference made

concessions to New South Wales, including location of the national capital in that state, termination of the Braddon financial clause and substitution of a simple for a three-fifths majority at joint sittings of Parliament when the Houses were in disagreement. A concession was also made to Queensland that if it joined as an original state, it might divide the state into electorates for Senate elections until federal legislation provided otherwise. The amended draft constitution went back to the people and was approved by requisite majorities in all five participating Colonies in a second round of referendums in 1899. (This time Queensland was included but Western Australia continued to sit on the fence.)

The only modification to the Constitution not endorsed by the Australian people, broadening appeals to the Privy Council under Section 74, was made in London at the insistence of Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies. This was despite strong representation from the Australian delegation charged with securing passage of the Constitution. They maintained that 'the Bill as prepared was an Australian Constitution in a double sense—Australian not only in origin, but by the deliberate endorsement of Parliaments and peoples'. In responding for the British government, Chamberlain acknowledged that 'the Bill had been prepared by the Australian people', but denied that the Australian people thereby deemed the Imperial Parliament 'merely as a court for the registration of their decrees'. Chamberlain insisted on broadening the right of appeal to the Privy Council because the interests of the British Empire—really, of British investors in Australia—were concerned. This change was reluctantly accepted and is the exception which proves the rule that the Constitution was made in Australia. ■

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- The argument of this short paper is developed at length in Brian Galligan, *A Federal Republic: Australia's Constitutional System of Government*, Cambridge University Press, 1995 forthcoming.

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Australia's Asian Connection

Regina Ganter

SINCE THE OVERTURES of the federal Labor government, Australia's Asian connection has become part of a national economic outlook, and the Northern Territory government promotes Darwin as the gateway to Asia not only because of its geographic proximity but also because of its historical links. Darwin, like most settlements on the far north coast, has been substantially peopled by Asians. 'There were very few European families in Darwin when I arrived in 1939' says Ivy Que Noy, a war veteran born in Albury, daughter of Amelia Lee-Suey and Harry Wan Goon. Darwin's Asians are not curios, and one is constantly reminded of the two Chinese mayors the town has had.

The Asian presence in the North was not by chance, nor was it fleeting; it was also part of a national economic outlook. They were imported as indentured labourers for railway construction and other physically demanding work, in order to aid the development and settlement of the tropics, where it was felt for a long time that whites were unable to toil. Their construction as sojourners plays down their lasting impact, which in the North well survived the introduction of the White Australia Policy. The pearl-shelling industry was exempted from the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 and continued to import Asians until World War II.

Particularly in the 'pearling belt' extending from Broome in Western Australia across to Thursday Island in Queensland, the frontier did not consist merely of a black/white conflict. Aborigines had much contact with Asians such as the Japanese pearl-shellers, the Chinese goldminers, the 'Afghan' camelers, and the Macassan trepanners. Not least the large population of Asian-Aborigines testifies to the intensity of that contact.

There was a strong concern over Asian contact with Aboriginal communities, particularly over inter-racial sexual relations and the increasing number of mixed-race descendants. Recruiting relations in the pearl-shelling industry were described in terms of bribery and prostitution and this view is ineradicable from the documentary sources. Oral history, on the other hand, gives a different gloss on these relationships. Interviews with over 100 Whites, Japanese and Aborigines who had participated in Queensland's



pearl-shelling industry gave a harmonious portrayal of Asian/Aboriginal relations:

After next year, we still go. ... everytime in the lugger. Diving, you know. I never learn horse. I learn boat. I don't learn station. I never been learned it. ... I always boat. Work on the boat, Japanee. Every year. ... Japanese gave good tucker. We ate all sorts of Japanese tucker sometimes, but we helped out with turtle, dugong, and mackerel. They look after the boys properly.

—Sandy Yielia, from Lockhart River

We treated them like one of the family. Everyone had their own work to do, we didn't have to communicate very much ... The people on the boat were like one family.

—Takao Koonosuke, from Ehime

These close relationships were well known to the white pearling masters. They feared that all Aborigines would abscond if the Japanese captains were replaced by whites. One of them testified to a Royal Commission in 1908: 'When a Japanese is recruiting boys in the north, a European has little or no show of getting any boys'. Indigenous groups conducted long-standing trade relations independently of white Australia and the Asian presence gave them different mechanisms to deal with white colonisation. They often preferred to work for Asians or make their purchases in Asian-owned shops. This competition between Asians and Europeans casts some doubt on the latter's perspective of recruiting relations.

The far north became a lasting frontier where white hegemony was embattled and contested by the entrepreneurial competition of Asians and by the sheer weight of their numbers, and the outcome of that contest was uncertain for far longer than in the more settled parts of Australia. Although practically all histories of the north as well as many histories of race relations in Australia make some reference to Asians, they take Anglo-European Australia as the fulcrum around which other ethnic groups accommodated themselves. However in areas where significant groups of Asians dominated particular industries, social relations are best conceived of as a triangulated



Harry Ah Lin was taken away as a child and placed in an institution for mixed-descent children. He has only tenuous links to his mother's Aboriginal background. 'I am a half-caste, that's how I see it'. Officially this category no longer exists.

set of conflict and accommodation between Whites, Asians and Aborigines. These three groups are clearly delineated in colonial legislation and regulation which excluded Asians from certain economic and political rights and shielded Aborigines from Asian contact. The Asian contestation of white hegemony can be inferred from, for example, Aboriginal protection legislation in all three northern states, which makes specific reference to Aboriginal employment on boats, because pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer vessels were substantially crewed by Asians. Queensland's 1897 *Aborigines Protection and Prevention of the Sale of Opium Act* carried its anti-Asian punch in the title. It prevented Chinese from employing Aborigines and became the model for legislation in other states.

The lived experience of such regulation cannot be inferred from the documentary sources. The life histories of people in the north transgress the official policies in every possible way, and the accounts of people who have personal experience of such administration often challenge the interpretation of race relations embedded in official documents. As I am researching a history of race relations in north Australia which takes the strong impact of Asians as its centrepiece of frontier relations, I need to take heed of Hancock's advice to historians, that they need a good pair of gumboots and fair riding skills—or some modern equivalent. ■

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Topsy Ah Kui escaped the policy of institutionalisation and is living as a full member of the Aboriginal community at Daly River.



Lily Ah Toy and Judy Jiluk look back on a good working relationship as Chinese employer and Aboriginal employee.



Maria Pederson (née Cesar) has a Filipino father who came with the pearl-shelling industry to the Northern Territory. An acquaintance arranged a suitable marriage partner in her Portuguese-Chinese mother, a Canton Catholic. They both arrived early enough not to be repatriated under the Immigration Restriction Act.



Harry Ah Lin introducing the author to his mother's country, Binjari community (NT), Hune, 1994.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF REGINA GANTER



Studying the immigrant country

James Jupp

projects of policy interest to government. The Commonwealth maintains a distinct Bureau of Immigration and Population Research in Melbourne and Canberra, which is one of the major sources of such funds. It is not, however, an academic institution though it maintains high standards of research.

The impetus for the establishment of a Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies within the Research School of Social Sciences came from the Bicentennial celebrations of 1988. The school was responsible for producing an encyclopedia of the Australian people, focused on ethnic variety and immigration history and current policy. This was edited by Dr James Jupp and published in 1988 by Angus and Robertson as *The Australian People*.

Running into one million words in 250 articles, this major work remains as the most important single source on over one hundred Australian ethnic groups, their history and characteristics. Its importance has been recognised by the Centenary of Federation Advisory Committee which recommended in its *2001: a Report from Australia* the 'publication of a revised edition' to commemorate the centenary.

The material collected for the encyclopedia included a range of thousands of photographs and many books and articles which are otherwise unavailable. The Research School of Social Sciences decided to utilise these resources by setting up a Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies under the direction of Dr Jupp. This was initially funded as a resource centre and clearing house by the Department of Employment, Education and Training and it has continued to be a major source of information for academics, journalists, students and overseas visitors. Its collection of books and journals is widely regarded as among the best in Australia in this area, as is its photographic collection.

IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC STUDIES are necessarily interdisciplinary. The centre is located within the Research School's Division of Sociology and Demography but has close relations with History. Its essential orientation has been towards public policy and most of its publications have been completed for such official agencies as the Bureau of Immigration and Population Research and the Office of Multicultural Affairs. However it remains completely independent of government and encourages links with other academic institutions through the attraction of visiting scholars and students. These have come from a wide range of countries, including such immigrant sources as

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY has a long record in immigration and multicultural studies through such scholars as Professor Charles Price, Professor Mick Borrie and Professor George Zubrzycki. Its Demography Department is one of the few in Australia and, through the work of Professor Frank Jones and Dr Mariah Evans, the Sociology Department of the Research School of Social Sciences has also made regular and major contributions in this important area. In recent years they have been joined by historians of immigration with a special interest in Irish settlers, such as Professor Oliver Macdonagh and Dr David Fitzpatrick.

Many of those working on immigration and ethnic variety have now retired. The major interest of the demographers has shifted towards Asia and Africa where population pressures are much more urgent than in Australia. However, Australia continues to be an immigrant society in which one quarter of the population is overseas-born, among the highest levels in the world. It is officially a multicultural society, with all nine governments and all major parties accepting a universal immigration program free from the racial discrimination of the past. Multiculturalism and immigration continue to be controversial, although in practice Australia is a remarkably harmonious society with few of the tensions found elsewhere. Events such as the Gulf War or the breakup of Yugoslavia, which might have had an impact on our large Arabic and Slav populations, have caused little domestic disturbance.

The linking of immigration and ethnic studies is natural in Australia, where most cultural diversity is based on fairly recent arrivals. Aboriginal studies are well entrenched and generously funded, for example through the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra. The study of other ethnic elements and of immigration policy is much less firmly accepted by universities. Most funding comes through competitive tendering for



former Yugoslavia, Finland and Taiwan as well as from the more usual English-speaking centres of Britain, the United States and Canada, and from Japan. The director has been a member of the ethnic politics panel of the International Political Science Association for many years and has visited and lectured at centres in the United States, Canada, Britain, Croatia, Taiwan, Finland, Sweden, Greece, Poland and Macedonia.

The work of the centre includes the collection and dissemination of information, the supervision and assistance of students, service to government, publication of books and articles, relations with ethnic communities and academic links within Australia and overseas. It is one of six or seven such centres in Australia but is the only one concentrating exclusively on research and publication.

'National identity and social cohesion' is supposed to be a research priority in the social sciences. There is little direct support for ethnic studies in Australia compared with the situation in Canada where over a dozen chairs in ethnic studies were funded under the multiculturalism program. Consequently, the future of this major field is always in doubt and the various centres need to struggle with limited resources against becoming marginalised. Fortunately the long record of the Australian National University in this area and its considerable scholarly resources, have ensured the viability of the Centre over the past six years.

Since the completion of *The Australian People*, the major books produced from the Centre have included *Australian Perspectives: Immigration* by James Jupp and *Empire and Race: the Maltese in Australia 1881-1949* by Dr Barry York, published respectively by Sydney University Press and NSW University Press in 1991. The first provides a broad overview of Australian immigration history and includes a discussion of issues still controversial today, including Asian migration and multiculturalism. Dr York's study is one of several which have made him the undisputed authority on the Australian Maltese, the largest such community outside Malta.

The centre's role in developing government policy has been particularly important. Its staff have completed consultancies for the Office of Multicultural Affairs, for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the Office of the Status of Women. Dr Jupp currently serves on the planning committee for the Global Diversity international conference to be held in Sydney in April, 1995. He has also been chairman of the ACT Multicultural Advisory Council and the ACT Reference Group of the Bureau of Immigration and Population Research. Among books completed for the Bureau have been the study *Settlement Needs of Small Newly Arrived Ethnic Groups* (1991) and *Exile or Refuge? The Settlement Needs of Refugee, Humanitarian and Displaced Immigrants* (1994). An important policy advice role

was also taken in editing the research for the Commonwealth review of Access and Equity in 1992.

Australian immigration involves political processes and these have been studied uniquely in *The Politics of Australian Immigration* edited by James Jupp and Marie Kabala and launched by Bob Hawke at a Brisbane conference in 1993. A previous edited collection, *Nations on Immigrants* was published by Oxford University Press in 1992. This was the product of co-operation with the Australian Studies Center at the University of Texas and was based on seminars held in Melbourne and Austin, Texas organised by the editors James Jupp and Gary Freeman. It is the only comparative study of Australian and United States immigration. The *American Political Science Review* described it as 'a stimulating beginning in a promising area of research, and contains valuable suggestions for more comprehensive projects'.

As the American reviewer remarked, there has been far too little research and publication on one of the most important phenomena of this century, mass migration. This is now a major topic of concern in Europe as well as in the traditional trio of immigrant societies, Australia, the United States and Canada. Ethnicity, too, is now extremely salient, with the breakup of the Soviet bloc and the eruption of nationalism in the place of defunct communism.

While Australian scholars have tended to concentrate on the local scene, it is becoming increasingly necessary to understand what is happening in the world outside. The centre plays a significant, if necessarily limited part, in studying overseas trends. It uses e-mail bulletins to keep in touch with refugee developments through the Oxford University Centre for Refugee Studies and with American and European trends through the Californian e-mail journal *Migration News*.

BECAUSE AUSTRALIA is undoubtedly an immigrant society, drawing its people from throughout the world, the studies developed by the Centre must continue to be important both to government, to scholars and to the general public. Discussion of Australia's national identity cannot be meaningful without recognising that we are no longer a British-derived society. Discussion of multiculturalism must be informed by facts and realities to move it away from fears and prejudice. The settlement of refugees needs particular attention, as there is no sign of a reduction of dictatorial or collapsing regimes, despite the ending of the Soviet system. Because the ethnic composition of the population is a very emotive subject, scholarly detachment is necessary for sensible public policies to evolve. Because government often has its own agenda and concerns, a degree of independence must be preserved.

It would be exaggerating to argue that the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies can fulfil all the demands made on it in this rapidly ex-

Multiculturalism and immigration continue to be controversial, although in practice Australia is a remarkably harmonious society with few of the tensions found elsewhere.

panding and highly complex field of study. Its resources are very limited and it sometimes faces opponents of immigration and multiculturalism within, as well as outside, the academic world. Australia has been neglectful of ethnic and immigrant studies in the past. We consequently depend on analyses and arguments from overseas, principally from the United States where the social situation and historic legacy are quite

different. The main function of the centre in the future must be to work with others in the social sciences, regardless of discipline or institution, and to feed professionally developed information into public debate. The issues it has worked on over the past six years will not go away! ■

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Drugs Law and Public Opinion

Toni Makkai

PUBLIC POLICY TOWARDS DRUG use consists of a series of paradoxes. For example, very few people die from illicit drug-related use yet many people die from the legal consumption of alcohol and tobacco; vast sums of money are spent on trying to eliminate illicit drug use yet many Australians continue to break the law; the control of illicit drugs is used to extend the powers of the state to violate civil rights, yet many Australians oppose the state regulating their daily lives to ensure good health, education and equitable distributions of welfare; most Australians believe that the use of hard drugs leads to instant addiction, yet the most addictive recreational drug is the legal drug nicotine; and most Australians believe that there is a slippery slope of addiction that begins with cannabis, yet few cannabis users ever use drugs like heroin or cocaine, while many drinkers and smokers use cannabis.

How and why do such paradoxes continue to exist? Three factors can be seen to account for these contradictions—historical precedents; international posturing and control; and the complex relations between public opinion, policy and politicians.

Prior to Federation there was an open and unregulated drug market in Australia for those drugs which are illegal today such as heroin, cocaine and marijuana. Heroin and cocaine were available from grocery stores or via mail order, and the use of these drugs was not considered a social problem by the state; marijuana was rarely used. The usual method of con-



sumption was in the form of medicinal potents and the largest clientele was female; males were to be found in drinking halls where 'respectable' ladies were not present. By the turn of the century a coalition of forces resulted in a more regulated market. Mander-son in his book *From Mr Sin to Mr Big* (Oxford University Press) refers to the 'crusades' in which the opium smoking and the Chinese were targeted, and the temperance movement opposed the use of patent medicines, tobacco and alcohol.

By this time drug use was being defined as a social problem that warranted government intervention. The medical profession was also attempting to establish the jurisdiction of their practice and the prescribing of medicines was a significant component of this agenda. There was also an increasing belief in the efficacy of the state to regulate or control human behaviour via state sanctions. This combination of forces resulted in a number of pieces of legislation being passed in the various states, such as the Public Health Acts and Pure Food Acts that ensured that particular drugs were brought under the control of both the medical and legal institutions.

The gradual prohibition of drugs like heroin, cocaine and marijuana was aided by Australia's international treaty obligations. We became a signatory to the Opium Convention at The Hague in 1912 which was later ratified in the Treaty of Peace at Versailles in 1919. Since that time Australia has signed a further 12 international agreements culminating in the



1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. The purpose of all these agreements was to institute a global regulatory order that prohibited the sale and use of such substances. After the Second World War international drug policy was heavily influenced by the United States, which promoted a prohibition model where drug use was viewed as a criminal rather than a social problem that needed to be regulated by legal mechanisms based on a deterrence model.

The globalisation of US drug policy was nowhere more evident and effective than in the case of heroin. Heroin had been banned in the US since the 1920s but Australia had resisted calls for its prohibition. Heroin continued to be legally available for use in various medicinal products, as a painkiller for various ailments including child birth, and for the few registered addicts (who were mainly medical practitioners).

As part of our international treaty obligations the Commonwealth provided the United Nations with figures on our per capita consumption of heroin. By the early 1950s comparative data showed that we had the highest per capita consumption of heroin in the world. Despite the fact that this use was for legitimate means, international pressure was directed toward the Commonwealth government to ban heroin use. Although the states and the medical profession opposed the banning of heroin for medical purposes in 1953 the Commonwealth prohibited its importation. By the end of that year the states had acquiesced to the Commonwealth's demand to ban the manufacture of heroin within their jurisdictions.

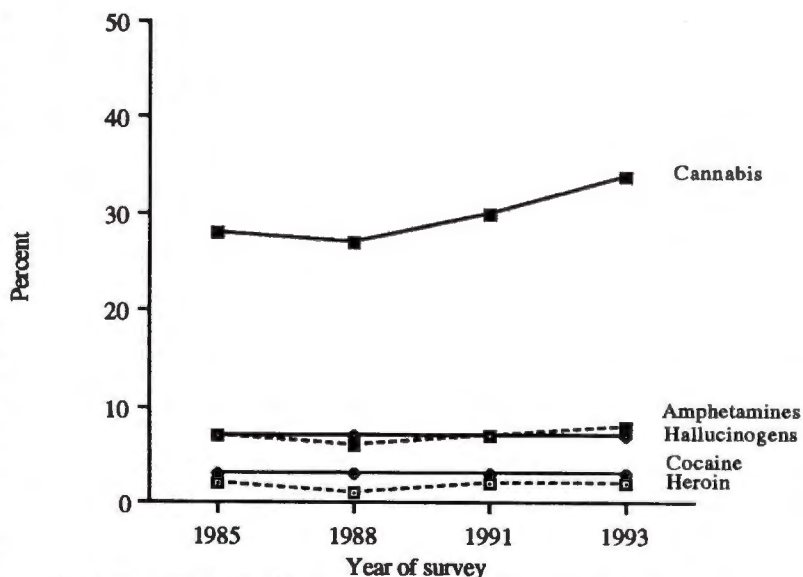
This effectively ensured the transfer of control from the medical profession to law enforcement. It had taken over one hundred years for drug use to be redefined so that what had originally been an individual and personal right to self-prescribe, became a social problem that was controlled by the medical profession via state regulations, to eventually be seen as a criminal problem controlled by law enforcement via punishments determined by the state.

DESPITE THE FACT that some drugs had been prohibited, that heavy sanctions applied to their use, and that drug use had become synonymous with addiction and moral impropriety, a decade later recreational users of these banned substances increased. This was most evident with cannabis. *Drugs in Australian Society* by McAllister, Moore and Makkai (Longman Cheshire) documents that since the late 1970s there has been a steady increase in the percentage of people who have tried cannabis. Although males are more likely to self-report higher rates of exposure than females, the actual increase in consumption is simi-

lar for both. However, considerably fewer people self-report exposure to other illicit drugs like heroin and cocaine. Since the mid 1980s the national surveys conducted by the Commonwealth National Campaign Against Drug Abuse show that life-time prevalence is around 1-2 percent for heroin, around 7-8 per cent for amphetamines and hallucinogens, and around 30 per cent for cannabis (see Figure 1 below) The

The language of drug control has moved from prohibition to arguing that minimisation of harm should be the primary goal even if this means continued use. Drug use is being redefined as a social rather than legal problem.

Figure 1: Percent who have ever tried the substance*



* The exact wording of the question was "Have you ever tried ...?"

percentage of people who report regular use of these drugs is considerably lower.

The 1980s is often regarded as a period of deregulation. In terms of drug control, however, it was a decade in which individual rights were increasingly violated by the state by 'anti-drug' strategies aimed at curbing the demand and supply for so called 'hard' drugs like heroin and cocaine. Some states introduced mandatory sentencing for drug offences regardless of whether or not the drug involved was marijuana or heroin, and all states increased the maximum penalties for various drug offences. Proceeds of crime legislation was enacted which effectively reversed the burden of proof from law-enforcement agencies to the defendant. Individuals could now be stripped of all their assets if they could not prove the assets were accumulated via legitimate means.

Greater powers have also been given to law enforcement for telephone and postal interceptions and banks are now required to report cash transactions above \$5000. Law enforcement proceeded to create large inter-linked databases and they were given access to confidential taxation files. Illicit drug use continues despite a legal environment that prohibits it, a social environment that sees drugs as a serious community problem and as harmful to one's health, and an international regulatory regime which bolsters domes-

tic prohibition policies. This continued use of illicit drugs has increased concern about the associated health, social and economic costs of a prohibition model that appears to have had little effect on consumption patterns (or when there is an effect it simply results in one drug being substituted for another) and increased negative side effects such as corruption, contempt for the law, and health-related problems such as AIDS and hepatitis. The debate over current policies has intensified in recent years.

The language of drug control has moved from prohibition to arguing that minimisation of harm should be the primary goal even if this means continued use. Drug use is being redefined as a social rather than legal problem. As elite groups within the drug and alcohol field argued about the pros and cons of prohibition, public opinion has also diversified, most notably in regard to cannabis. Public opinion data since the 1970s indicate a small but steady increase in the proportion of people who favour 'decriminalisation' of cannabis.

This change in attitudes toward the regulation of cannabis represents a re-evaluation of policy preferences based on changing conditions, information and exposure. As a significant minority of the general public have become exposed to cannabis either through personal use or use by family members and friends the 'demonic' qualities associated with the drug have proved unfounded. As the composition of the population changes the new generation brings with it a re-evaluation of the harm associated with cannabis use. State governments are starting to respond to this generational change. In 1987 South Australia greatly reduced the penalties associated with the possession and cultivation of cannabis for personal use; in 1993 the ACT followed suit; the recent report from the Queensland Criminal Justice Commission has recommended reform of the drug laws where they refer to minor cannabis offences; and nationally, the Young Liberals have publicly called for drug reform.

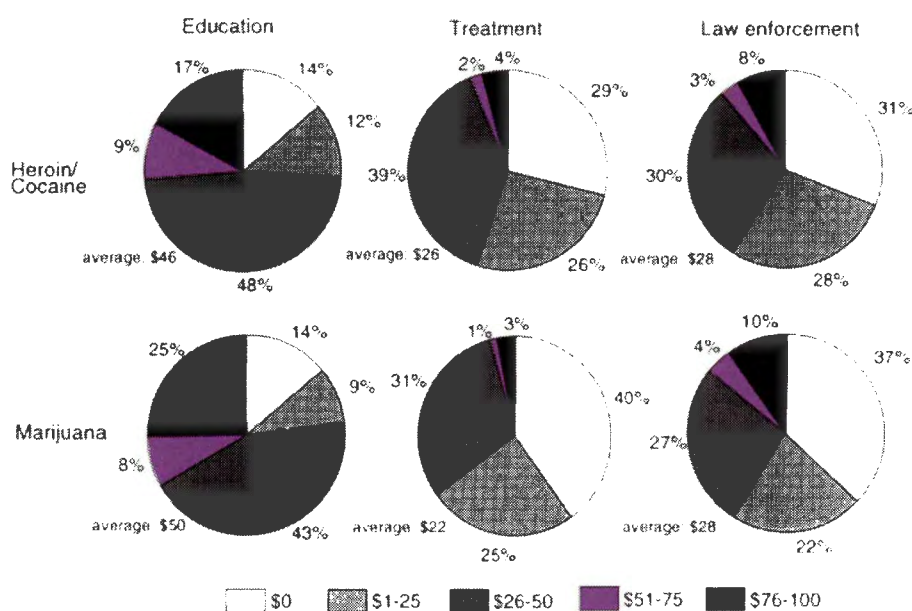
A closer analysis of public opinion indicates a more complex picture. There is no doubt that when the Australian public are asked about the decriminalisation of drugs such as heroin, cocaine and amphetamines there is an overwhelming consensus that these drugs should not be legalised. From this one might think that law enforcement was the most favoured regulatory strategy for dealing with illicit drug use. Not so. When asked how much money government should spend on education, treatment and law enforcement as mechanisms for reducing substance abuse, education receives the largest share followed

by treatment and law enforcement.

Table 1 (see below) shows that on average the Australian public would spend \$46 on education as a strategy to reduce use of heroin/cocaine, but only \$26 on treatment and \$28 on law enforcement. These data suggest a rational policy choice; in terms of overall values, the Australian public regards the use of these drugs as highly problematic but they also realise that the deterrent effect of law enforcement has not succeeded in stopping demand or supply. To cope with the problem other regulatory options like education are seen as better value for money.

Discussion over drug reform is highly controversial; everybody has an opinion and it is difficult to discuss these issues without reference to a preferred value position. Opinions are often not based on factually correct premises but when such information sources and values are taken into account the policy preferences of the Australian public are understanda-

Table 1: Dollar allocations to education, treatment and law enforcement, 1993*



*The exact wording of the question was 'If you were given \$100 to spend in reducing [cocaine or heroin use, marijuana use] how much would you allocate to each of these? Education (eg information), Treatment (eg counselling, therapy), Law enforcement (eg stop illegal sale or use)'

ble and predictable. We are today witnessing a social experiment—reform in the regulation of drug control which concerns not only illicit drugs but licit drugs, as any smoker will tell you. The opinions of the Australian public are more subtle than law and order politicians give credit for. Collective public opinion demands a nuanced policy response from government which is not predicated on an all or nothing law enforcement model but a rearrangement of the institutions and practices which deal with this issue. ■

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The future of the Australian welfare state

Deborah Mitchell

Unlike many European and Scandinavian countries which are locked into long-established and often expensive patterns of welfare provision, Australia has far greater scope for adapting and developing its welfare programs in order to make the transition to a 'post-industrial' welfare state.

ALITTLE OVER 15 YEARS AGO the talk of welfare-state theorists was of impending crisis, expenditure cutbacks and wholesale dismantling of modern welfare states. By the late '80s many of these same theorists were breathing sighs of relief and quietly acknowledging the fact that, by and large, welfare-state expenditures had been maintained and had, in most countries, actually increased during this period of perceived 'crisis'. And yet from the vantage point of the (almost) mid-nineties it is clear that the apparent maintenance of welfare expenditures was the product of a long-term growth and persistence in unemployment and the ageing of the population, rather than a continuation of the development and diversification of the welfare programs which emerged in the post-war period.

Moreover, a focus on the total level of welfare expenditure disguises underlying shifts in the patterns of welfare provision and the means by which welfare programs are financed. These quite dramatic shifts are now leading observers, predominantly in the older European welfare states, to regard the period up to the 1980s as something of a 'golden era' of welfare statism and to now talk of the need for a 'post-industrial' welfare state which can adapt to the new realities of the international economy, the consequences of changes in family life, and uncertain employment prospects for a significant proportion of the population.

On many counts Australia has always been viewed as lagging behind the post-war growth in welfare provision seen elsewhere. In recent years debate over the future direction of the Australian welfare state has rested on the assumption that policy development is boxed in by financial and budgetary constraints. In fact, by OECD standards, Australia is both one of the lowest-taxing and lowest-spending welfare states. This means that, unlike many European and Scandinavian countries which are locked into long-established and often expensive patterns of welfare provision, Australia has far greater scope for adapting and developing its welfare programs in order to make the transition to a 'post-industrial' welfare state. In short, Australia could move from being a welfare laggard to a welfare leader. In order to accomplish such a transition we first need to identify the welfare needs emerging from post-industrial economic and social change, and second, to think creatively about policy responses and how these could be funded.

Changing patterns of need

From an Australian perspective, we can identify two types of change that emerged during the 1980s which have placed significant strains on the functioning and structure of established patterns of welfare provision.

The first were slower moving demographic and social changes, primarily the ageing of the population and the changing role of women; while the second emerged rapidly alongside of the raft of reforms introduced in the 1980s to force the pace of the restructuring of the economy. These latter changes resulted in the growth of long-term unemployment, falls in real wages at the lower end of the wage distribution, a pronounced shift away from manufacturing industries to the service sector, and new patterns of labour force participation.

In response to the ageing of the population a number of policies have been introduced with the primary aim of reducing future public outlays on pensions and various support services. For example, the compulsory superannuation guarantee levy; the re-direction of community support services away from institutionalised care and toward home-based care programs; and current moves to encourage greater private health insurance.

The changing role of women has been recognised in a number of ways—for example, the increased provision of childcare support for working mothers, either through direct service provision, child care subsidies and rebates; the use of the income transfer system to direct payments to women; the White Paper decision to allow separate entitlements for husbands and wives for unemployment benefits; and the recent moves to introduce maternity leave for women in the private sector. The problems which remain to be addressed are:

- the continuing adaptation of policy to the consequences of the ageing of the population—in particular, the health and community support services which will be required to maintain current policy direction in favour of home-based care;
- the additional strains placed on the income support systems by the exodus from the workforce of older manufacturing workers who have so far been unable to return to the workforce;
- ensuring that income support and welfare services are able to maintain and improve the position of women over the life-cycle, whether as workers, carers, as sole parents and in old age.

Policy responses to the changed economic environment however have been far slower. In 1987 the OECD released a report on structural adjustment and economic performance. In this document, the OECD noted that economic restructuring was not a 'painless process' and warned member countries of the social consequences of such change and of the need to make timely reforms in social policies, rather than having to 'implement crisis solutions when the situation has become untenable'.¹ To date, the White Paper on Employment represents our only considered

response to the rapid changes of economic restructuring and its recommendations are in keeping with the 'minimalist' style of policy-making currently in vogue at the federal level. The main thrust of the White Paper recommendations has been the attempt to reduce the level of long-term unemployment through a combination of employer subsidies and placement services slanted toward those out of the labour force for more than one year, and relying on general economic recovery to improve the position of the short-term unemployed. Briefly the major problems emerging from the re-structuring process which need to be addressed are:

- to adapt income support systems for the under-employed and those in non-standard employment to ensure adequate current incomes as well as retirement incomes;
- to offset falls in real wage levels so that a class of working poor does not become a permanent feature of our society;
- in the context of increased economic vulnerability as a result of opening up the economy, to re-think the basis of social protection for the unemployed.

Policy responses and funding

Considered overall, the adjustment of welfare policies and programs in response to demographic and social changes has been far more successful and visible than have been policy adjustments to the changes brought about by the economic reform agenda. Indeed it will be our responses to the problems brought about by economic re-structuring which will signal Australia's transition to a post-industrial welfare state, and determine the course which the welfare state will take over the foreseeable future.

IN THE PAST, the development of welfare state policies has been debated in terms of an either/or choice between universal versus selective approaches to welfare provision. Just as it is not inevitable that welfare spending has to be reduced, so there is no compulsion to move in the same direction on all fronts. Instead, the future lies in combining some of the existing elements of Australia's distinctive targeted style of welfare with policy approaches which encourage a 'mixed economy' of welfare provision and funding.

On the provision side this entails a recognition that in some instances publicly provided benefits, goods and services are the most efficient solution, while in other instances private provision, particularly of client-differentiated welfare services, produces better welfare outcomes.

Similarly, the funding of welfare needs to move beyond the standard taxation-based financing approach. In the past ten years Australia has in fact moved toward alternative forms of funding for a wide range of welfare services. These alternative forms of



funding include the use of:

- general taxation which provides the largest funding base for social security, health, and education programs;
- hypothecated taxes where the money raised is earmarked for a particular form of spending, for example, the Medicare levy;
- contributions where the amount an individual pays has an effect on the level of benefits received at a later time, a form of funding not widely used in Australia although the superannuation guarantee charge is a private form of this type of welfare funding;
- user charging where part of the cost of provision is recovered from those using a welfare service, for example, child care costs, some health and housing services;
- ex post cost recovery of the cost of services from beneficiaries at a later date, for example, the Higher Education Charge.

While all these approaches represent feasible alternatives for funding expanded welfare services, it is important to recall that general taxation levels in Australia (measured as a percentage of GDP) are nearly 10 per cent below the OECD average and so there remains scope for some moderate increases in personal taxes to fund both labour market and welfare support programs for those disadvantaged by the economic reforms enacted in the 1980s. Over the course of the next decade it will be necessary for Australia to carry out a re-structuring of its welfare state which complements the economic re-structuring which took place in the 1980s. As I have indicated above, part, but not all, of this process will involve some taxation increases. If we ignore the fact that we are now well and truly into the post-industrial era, and choose not to embark on fundamental changes to our welfare state, we will remain a welfare laggard and miss the opportunity of regaining our past reputation as an egalitarian society. ■

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¹ OECD (1987) *Structural Adjustment and Economic Performance*. Paris. pp36-7.

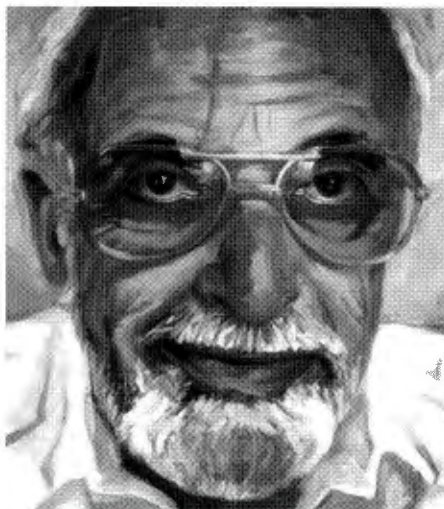
Memoirs from the left

THIS IS THE STORY of Bernie Taft's life and a chronicle of the Communist Party of Australia from 1941 until 1984, when he and most of the party called it quits. It also gives us some illuminating insights into the world communist movement during that period, with snapshots of some of its leading actors and intellectuals.

It is a world that has gone, having slipped from our grasp even before many of us knew what happened, let alone why it happened. We are already moving into archaeology and necrophilia. But the same might soon be said of conservatism, of liberalism and of laborism, as we have hitherto understood those terms. All the signposts are disappearing.

En passant: My German father once said that starting a communist party here was like establishing a nudist colony in Antarctica. This was hindsight, for he had tried the Wobblies, and then the new Communist Party. He left both, irritated at their built-in irrelevance. Finally he joined the ALP, which merely made him sick.

Bernie Taft was a young German Jew who left his country in the face of the rise of the Nazis and settled here in 1939. He saw the Communists as the only people who were willing or able to take on the Nazis, and for a long time they were. Also, when compared to other parties, they were not noticeably anti-semitic. Taft tells of his slow rise through the party ranks in the face of opposition from the hardliners, especially the Victorian secretary, Ted Hill. He writes of the permanent problem of 'ultra-leftism' in the CPA, and attributes it to Moscow's imposition of an ultra-left leadership on the party in the early '30s. They ruled for decades



Crossing the Party Line: Memoirs of Bernie Taft, Scribe, Newham, VIC, 1994. ISBN 0 908011 27 X RRP \$26.95

and, like all élites, reproduced themselves. This might explain the strong grip of ultra-leftism in the CPA, but doesn't explain its persistence in other parts of Australian society. Its half-brother, 'infantile communism', is identified by Taft as a powerful element in Australian Maoism and the student radicalism in the '60s. The same phenomena now flourish in the single-issue 'social movements'.

To return to Taft's CPA. He describes how the leadership rejected Khrushchev's 20th Congress speech for as long as they could ('a CIA fabrication'), then simply went on as if nothing had happened. By '68 and Czechoslovakia however, the truth was gradually being made public. To paraphrase Camus, the party has remained discredited by its casual resort to future history to justify present crimes, and by the ease with which they asserted that others must suffer for the sins of their own fathers.

The temporary attractions of Mao and his cultural revolution, especially for the young, more or less forced the CPA to start putting its house in order. After all there was no equivalent of a Chinese Twentieth Congress, or even a Robert Conquest, totting up the number of victims in China. But, Maoism or not, the CPA

was slowly slipping and all the efforts of Taft and his new guard were to be in vain. Rifts between Melbourne and Sydney refused to disappear and younger members, who had joined enthusiastically when the Soviet Union and the CPA looked like cleaning up their acts, drifted away. Eurocommunism had turned out to be a chimera, after Aldo Moro's convenient murder. No capitalist economic crisis seemed imminent, and even the super power arms race had stabilised. Labor was gaining in strength and professionalism, and starting to acquire power. Communism was losing its point.

For most Australians, a fatal flaw in the party was the perception that it was controlled from Moscow, and thus was expected to follow the Soviet line and defend Soviet policies and actions. This expressed itself in an derivative dogmatism, ungainly rectitude and what Orwell called 'transferred patriotism'. Only people seriously alienated from their own national political system were going to make such a transfer, so communists in Australia were always a small minority, and a suspect one.

Australians also suspected that the CPA took Russian gold. The CPA denied this for years, and counter-charged that the US was subsidising the Australian right. But Taft calmly states that money always came, in various guises, from the Eastern bloc. It was only a fraction of the party's needs, but presumably if more had been offered it would have been accepted. Taft gives an amusing account of ASIO's operations against the party and its sympathisers. But these operations *weren't* amusing—the excuse, catching spies, became a pretext for harassing peace movements, student bodies, migrants, academics, conservation and Aboriginal reform groups.

Taft and his friends gave all for their cause, over many bleak and isolated years. It is not for us to say they wasted their time: they kept the Labor and union bastards hon-

Taft and his supporters, having left the CPA, formed the Socialist Forum, joined the ALP and went on to fill many positions in the Hawke and Cain governments. The timing was bizarre, for Hawke and Co. were turning the ALP into a new animal, bereft of socialist or interventionist taints, with public ownership on the nose.

est, so far as that was possible. And they demonstrated a fierce, if narrow, integrity and a complete disinterest in money rorts or bludging. But, over the ocean, their counterparts were doing just that, while running a vicious, joyless dictatorship. Everyone noticed this except western communists, whose blanket denials helped consign them to Marx's dustbin of history.

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turning the ALP into a new animal, bereft of socialist or interventionist taints, with public ownership on the nose. Strange. It has meant that now there is no party, no movement, no coherent body of thought to oppose the Tweedledum and Tweedledee versions of capitalism.

Yet the current social and economic situation—a crisis if ever there were one—is tailor-made for a communist party. But the author has said he is no longer a socialist but a social democrat. Fair enough—he's done his stint, and it is time to write more books, one hopes as interesting as this one. ■

Memories from the right

Memories of a Slow Learner, Peter Coleman, Angus & Robertson, Sydney 1994. ISBN 0207182485 RRP \$16.95

More and more people are writing about their lives, or someone else's. Now politicians are weighing in with stories of how they did or didn't do it. Peter Coleman's tale, just the first instalment, is neither self-revelation, nor a sensational exposé of the misdeeds of others. The tone is cool. In fact, we get a history of political culture rather than an autobiography.

Coleman speaks laconically of being brought up, first, in Melbourne by his mother and grandmother. His father had been virtually ejected to New Zealand when his job went in the Depression. But the father returns, with the other son, to a job in Sydney, and young Peter thereafter lives with them. No further mention of mother. But Dad, a journalist, had a problem with drink; so life for our author wasn't exactly a barrel of laughs.

Which is why going up to Sydney University, and immersing himself in the literary, political and hoboemian subcultures of the city and its university was such a liberating and permanently influential experience for Coleman.

Bestriding the whole scene was the philosophy professor and guru, John Anderson, whose journey through Trotskyism and anarchism to Cold War polemics was to be aped by his numerous devotees. Anderson insisted that he was a stoic and a classicist, opposed to relativism

and irrationalism, but his final crop seemed to me small-town nihilists and élitists. Right-wing for many years, they were destined to become supporters of the new Labor Party—'Where the gravy floweth, there flow I.'

Coleman, who was a schoolboy at the start of World War II, reminds us of things no longer mentioned. We went to war politically and psychologically unprepared. There was nothing about saving Jews or opposing Fascism. As he recalls, the government had 'even servilely removed the Digger from the great Sydney cavalcade of floats that celebrated the nation's sesquicentenary in 1938, in case it offended the Japanese or Germans'. Suharto would understand. The left, and not only the left, saw it as just another trade war. The unemployed young, supposedly, weren't interested, and Calwell called the diggers '5 bob-a-day murderers'. Most volunteers *had* been unemployed.

This was the heyday of 'Inky' Stephensen and the Australia Firsters, some of whom the young Coleman knew. They opposed the War, printing Hitler's speeches and wishing the Emperor *Banzai* on his birthday. They wanted to 'de-Pommify' Australia, banish American materialism, Jewish and Christian universalism, and cultural modernism. In 1938 they also sponsored a National Day of Mourning for the Aborigines,

to mark the anniversary of the British invasion of Australia.

Coleman describes the entry of the Congress of Cultural Freedom and *Quadrant* into Australian politics (he later edited *Quadrant*). The use of overseas money to help things along is OK by him. Coleman speaks of what Donald Horne once called 'the Great Australian Culture Fraud, now subsidised'. The CPA fellow-traveller class is the villain in this story, but the Australian right also had fairly chummy relations with ASIO and its overseas buddies. On Menzies' suggestion ASIO vetted all Commonwealth literature grants from 1952-70, and the universities were similarly treated. The rejects made up a roll of honour—the rewarding of friends and punishing of enemies didn't start or end with the CPA.

Coleman is correct nevertheless, but sticks to the easy area. He should tell us about the lack of intellectual tolerance, and variety, in our mass media—a subject he knows well. This book is another interesting piece for Australia's historical jigsaw, and Coleman intends to continue the story from 1960. I hope he does, and I hope there is to be more of Coleman in it; he comes out a lot nicer than many of the people he presents and, sometimes, admires. ■

Max Teichmann is a Melbourne writer and reviewer.

1996 Churchill Fellowships for overseas study

The Churchill Trust invites applications from Australians, of 18 years and over from all walks of life who wish to be considered for a Churchill Fellowship to undertake, during 1996, an overseas study project that will enhance their usefulness to the Australian community.

No prescribed qualifications are required, merit being the primary test, whether based on past achievements or demonstrated ability for future achievement.

Fellowships are awarded annually to those who have already established themselves in their calling. They are not awarded for the purpose of obtaining higher academic or formal qualifications.

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The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust
218 Northbourne Avenue, Braddon,
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Completed application forms and reports from three referees must be submitted by Tuesday, 28 February, 1995.



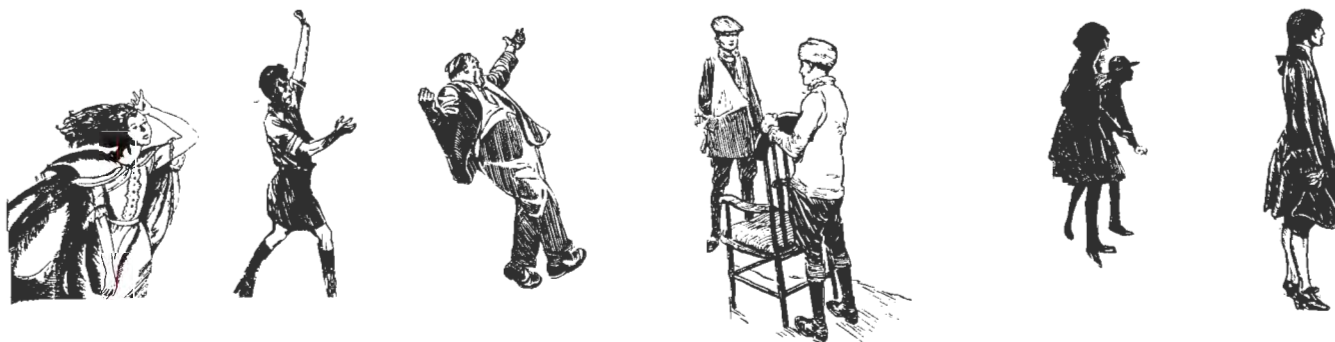
The old school TIE, it ain't what it used to be

'TIE IS DEAD!' proclaimed the Arena Theatre press release, 'Long live theatre for young audiences!' Arena, Melbourne's biggest provider of professional theatre for young people, was touting its school-holiday attraction *The Emperor's New Clothes*. The release quoted the company's artistic director, David Carlin, thus: 'The old-style Theatre in Education format of didactic, earnest, "it's good for the little blighters" theatre is dead and buried. Young

umbrella term for all forms of theatre performed for young audiences. 'Youth theatre' (of which space does not permit an extended discussion here) is theatre performed by young people (usually under the guidance of professional directors, designers, technicians, etc) for their peers and their families. 'Children's theatre' is professional theatre created and performed by adults for young audiences, principally for entertainment and generally in theatres, although ven-

material comes from every corner of Australia and is tailored to younger children in the mornings and older ones in the afternoons.

There are also numerous (mostly unsubsidised) organisations which specialise in children's theatre. REM Theatre in Sydney is one such (although receiving occasional Project Grant support), focusing typically on storytelling at the Bondi Pavilion. Garry Ginivan, a Melbourne producer who has regularly collabo-



people these days are very sophisticated—they're only interested in theatre if it's imaginative, lively, provoking and as fast-moving as their young minds ...'

Carlin's description of the 'theatre in education' (TIE) style is a bit lop-sided, but there is no doubt that during the past decade there has been a change of attitude among Australia's erstwhile TIE companies. Most now call themselves 'theatre-in-schools' companies or use the generic description 'theatre for young people', and most perform as often in theatres as they do in schools, using more sophisticated production values to capture the TV-fed imaginations of young audiences. The boundary between the TIE approach and commercially-oriented children's theatre is increasingly blurred.

Readers not familiar with the jargon of this large—if often invisible—branch of the theatre industry might appreciate some definitions of terms. 'Theatre for young people' is the

ues such shopping centres and parks and gardens are also used for children's theatre in this country.

Christmas pantomime is one of the oldest forms of children's theatre, although by no means all of what newspaper reviewers call 'panto' really belongs in that traditional category. Many so-called 'adult' theatre companies often essay a kids' show at Christmas and in other holiday periods. In Melbourne, Glenn Elston's enormously successful Royal Botanic Gardens productions of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have also had regular daytime productions of shows like *Wind in the Willows* and *Alice in Wonderland* as children's theatre staples. And for more than a decade Philip A'Vard, theatre manager of the Alexander Theatre at Monash University, has entrepreneurship a children's theatre program each Saturday and throughout the school holidays alongside the student and professional adult program. A'Vard's

rated with the commercial arm of the Alexander Theatre, has for some years staged lavish adaptations of *Pinocchio*, *Little Noddy Goes to Toyland*, *The Tales of Peter Rabbit* and the ubiquitous *Alice in Wonderland*.

Also in Melbourne, the veteran Joy Mudge and her famous Oxford Children's Theatre in suburban Box Hill have all but cornered the eastern suburbs holiday and Saturday afternoon market for many years with her own adaptations of ever-green fairy-tales like *The Three Little Pigs*, *Cinderella*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Pinocchio*. (Oxford's structure is interesting in that it is both a children's theatre and a youth theatre—the performances are mostly given by teenagers studying with Joy Mudge.)

Puppet companies have also long been associated with children's entertainment. Puppetry has been one of the real growth areas in this country over the past 15 years and much

is changing in that world; not all puppet companies are now solely devoted to entertaining children, and some—like Handspan and Polyglot in Melbourne, Spare Parts in Fremantle, Skylark in Canberra, Terrapin in Hobart and Carouselle in Adelaide—have created remarkably effective educational programs alongside their more traditional entertainments.

There is clearly a sizeable niche market in children's theatre, and a number of recent graduates from the training schools have been quick to seize the opportunities. In Sydney, new groups of young actors—like Bareboard Theatre Company, with a rather good *Snugglepoot and Cuddlepote*, and Young at 'Art, with adaptations of *The 1001 Nights* and of Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant*—

most commonly performed for young audiences. Bruno Bettelheim would have a field day in the Australian young people's theatre! (Also going around on Melbourne stages at the time of writing are a *Jack and the Beanstalk*, yet another *Cinderella* and a *Shoemaker and the Elves*, plus another Oscar Wilde adaptation, *The Happy Prince*.) The variant in this scenario is an interest in dramatic adaptations of more recent children's fiction, though not always from England and Europe, as the recent stage popularity of Roald Dahl, and of Australians like May Gibbs—and, in another context, Morris Gleitzman—suggests.

Since children's theatre is largely the province of unsubsidised commercial organisations, we are evidently seeing the juvenile equivalent

of the imperative to entertain at all costs, which in adult commercial theatres in recent years has meant a steady diet of revivals of popular musicals.

So what of 'theatre in education'? It was a theatrical and educational movement, born in England in the late 1960s, that grew reached its peak in this country during the 1980s. According to Peter O'Toole, in his landmark book on the subject *Theatre in Education: New objectives for theatre—new techniques in education* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1976), theatre in education 'was conceived as an attempt to bring the techniques of theatre into the classroom, in the service of specific educational objectives. It based itself on ... an extension of children's play, theatricality and classroom techniques to provide an experience imaginative in its own right ... [and] a stimulus and a context which are not normally available to the teacher.' TIE companies that emerged with these aims in mind (like Magpie and Troika in Adelaide, Acting Out in Perth, Brolgan in Brisbane, Toc Truck in Sydney, Freewheels TIE in Newcastle, Salamanca in Hobart and Arena and Bouverie St TIE in Melbourne) typically presented small-scale plays on subjects drawn from schools' curricula and wider social issues, commissioned from skilful writers or devised by the TIE teams themselves.

In those days TIE teams frequently employed graduates from the drama programs of the now-defunct teachers training colleges, who were often multiskilled as performers, writers and—crucially—also as teachers. It is true that some of the productions developed out of this movement were didactic (but that was what the schools were asking for in order to justify the presence of



have tried their hands at children's theatre during the past two years. New Melbourne groups have also emerged during the same period, like Tusk (with a nicely swashbuckling *Robin Hood and his Merry Men*, and an *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*), Melbourne Maskworks (with good old *Cinderella* and others like it) and Raucous Children's Theatre (who alternate between adaptations of the tales of Roald Dahl and traditional children's stories like *The Three Little Pigs*).

AS THIS SURVEY INDICATES, that the greatest appeal among children's theatre companies (and almost certainly among the parents of the children attending their productions) lies in retelling well-known fairy tales and nursery tales from the (mostly European) past. If Shakespeare is Australia's most-performed adult playwright, plays based on Hans Christian Andersen, Perrault and the brothers Grimm appear to be those

most commonly performed for young audiences. Bruno Bettelheim would have a field day in the Australian young people's theatre! (Also going around on Melbourne stages at the time of writing are a *Jack and the Beanstalk*, yet another *Cinderella* and a *Shoemaker and the Elves*, plus another Oscar Wilde adaptation, *The Happy Prince*.) The variant in this scenario is an interest in dramatic adaptations of more recent children's fiction, though not always from England and Europe, as the recent stage popularity of Roald Dahl, and of Australians like May Gibbs—and, in another context, Morris Gleitzman—suggests.

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'hippy' actors in their classrooms); it is also true that many scripts of their day fell victim to the 'earnest' political and social agendas of their creators, and it is true that, as the most prolific and articulate TIE writer of our era, David Holman, has said, TIE was more concerned with providing children with a social experience than an aesthetic one.

But David Carlin's view that TIE as we knew it is 'dead and buried' in the 'sophisticated' 1990s remains a debatable proposition, as is his assertion that an entry into the commercial *Emperor's New Clothes* territory is the solution to a perceived problem in an industry clamouring for entertainment first and a message after that. This is a question to which I should like to return. ■

Geoffrey Milne is head of the Theatre and Drama Department in the School of Arts and Media, La Trobe University.



Gump-tion

Forrest Gump dir. Robert Zemeckis (UIP, through selected cinemas) fleshes out an old motif of the Christian imagination (Blessed are the simple) in a very American manner (The blessed shall be prosperous), while making fun of both the message and its packaging in a way that undermines neither. It is rather as if James Thurber had set out to write a parodic blend of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* and Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking*, and then fallen in love with his creation.

Like the simple-minded everywhere, Forrest Gump (Tom Hanks) is fond of chatting to strangers at bus stops, and this corny-but-reliable device is used to parade his life in retrospect, from boyhood in rural Alabama in the '50s, through the era of the Kennedy assassinations, Vietnam and Watergate, to wealth and a muted kind of happiness under Reagan. Not that the jellybean president gets any credit for Forrest's state in life and state of mind—our hero's successes come about simply because he is too stupid and too decent to understand the 'right' thing to do.

Three characters are central: Forrest, God and America itself. God has to be there, of course, because the US is unique among modern societies in the intensity with which it is at once avowedly secular and fervently religious. But the deity also functions as a kind of wild card, a joker who keeps projecting Forrest into the foreground of American life (presidents honour him, rock idols

mimic him, and *Fortune*, *Sports Illustrated* and the *National Enquirer* feature him on their covers) while never allowing him to get the picture.

The satire lashes both junk culture (inane T-shirt slogans, jogging as a yuppie communion rite) and literary 'high' culture (*The Red Badge of Courage* reprised in Vietnam, *Moby Dick* spoofed in a shrimpboat), and is intricately layered. The Vietnam sequence, for example, unravels not only America's actual response to the war but the subsequent mythologising of that response in films such as Oliver Stone's *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*, and television series like *China Beach*.

A verdict? *Forrest Gump* deserves that ultimate of movie accolades, a second viewing. —Ray Cassin

Eureka Street Film Competition

As *Eureka Street* went to press, news came of the death of Burt Lancaster, seen here with Jorge Luke in *Ulzana's Raid*. Caption the still, and we'll award two tickets, to the film of your choice, for the answer we like best. Send entries to: *Eureka Street* Film Competition, PO Box 553, Richmond, VIC 3121. The winner of September's competition was Jean Mann, of Reservoir, VIC, who thought Groucho was saying: 'Get on with the job, boys, and cut out the wisecracks.'



Woe without end

Ladybird Ladybird, dir. Ken Loach (independent cinemas). Ken Loach has a reputation for making the kind of 'quality' *cinéma vérité* stuff that ends up being shown to secondary social studies students. But, although

his films usually do have a documentary texture, he is never constricted by this. In fact, long before *Frontline* he helped to redefine the documentary approach by pointing out the ways in which it can marginalise its subjects.

Loach's achievement has been to focus continually on the central character's dilemma, so that we are forced to evaluate what is happening. Even when the story may be charming and entertaining, as in *Raining Stones*, we never forget *why* the character is suffering.

In *Ladybird Ladybird*, the story is 'true': 'Maggie' does exist, and six children were removed from her care by British social services in circumstances that appear to have been gruesomely unjust. Easy targets for calumny, she and her children were outrageously treated by the very services set up to protect them.

British social workers seem to have earned the odium of Joan Kirner's Rottweiler joke. In *Ladybird Ladybird* they are all middle-class and nosy, and would be pathetic if their powers were not so extraordinary. Loach's compassion for Maggie's plight is honest—there is no pretence of 'balance'—and it is an antidote to the usual tabloid blame-the-victim approach.

The roles are taken by inexperienced actors, a familiar device of Loach's, and the results are impressive. Chrissie Rock, as 'Maggie', won the Golden Bear award for best actress at this year's Berlin film festival, and the film itself won the critics' prizes at the Berlin and Sydney festivals. It is probably too much to hope that *Ladybird Ladybird* will get the large audiences it deserves, but keep an eye out for it.

—Juliette Hughes

Showtime!

Natural Born Killers, dir. Oliver Stone (Village). At the Venice Film Festival, where this film received the jury prize, Al Pacino was asked in a press conference about the film's violence. He replied that *Natural Born Killers* was what Oliver Stone felt, not what actually is. It is a useful insight into this film about

violence, the media's exploitation of two tawdry spree killers and the public's avidity for the sensational. Stone insists that it is satire, and it is—satire in Stone's blunt, unsubtle style, using all the fashions and techniques of MTV photography and editing. (That alone makes the satire an assault on the senses—for many viewers who have a nostalgia for the Golden Years of Hollywood, it will be too much.)

Satirists, of their nature, are angry perfectionists and this film is angry, though more at the media and the public than at the killers. Woody Harrelson and Juliet Lewis offer sociopathic flair as the average American murderers, and Tommy Lee Jones seethes as the prison warden; but it is Robert Downey Jr, complete with mock Australian accent, who steals the show as the conscienceless host of a tabloid TV show that is not too far from the real thing. (The conclusion to the film even depicts a gallery of real killers, including O.J. Simpson, highlighting actual media mania of recent years.)

The question, of course, is whether, despite avowals to the contrary, Stone is in fact substantially different from the character portrayed by Downey. The film offers two frantic hours of pop cinematic style, two hours of extraordinarily ugly and violent depiction of American society, and two hours of satirical frenzy. Audiences have differed with Stone before (especially about *JFK*) and are doing so now. But there's no mistaking how he feels.

—Peter Malone

Me an' you, an' ...

Love and Human Remains dir. Denys Arcand (independent cinemas) is a confronting yet enticing package of sexual adventurism that explores virtually every imaginable expression of the libido. At times it is both dark and menacing and outrageously funny. But underneath the lustful meanderings is a quest for meaning in relationships that is laced with the insecurity and fear of the angry era of AIDS.

The central character is David (Thomas Gibson), a former actor who

is content to wait on tables and casually move from one homosexual engagement to the next. His self-assured denial of the need for love frustrates his ex-girlfriend Candy (Ruth Marshall) and attracts the ardent admiration of his busboy, Kane (Matthew Ferguson). David's apparent immunity to the reassurance a secure partnership gives stands against their confused and aimless searching for the very affection he spurns. His aloofness leads to disastrous consequences for his friend Bernie (Cameron Bancroft) and this brings his existential purity crashing to the ground.

Denys Arcand's hand is clear in the potent imagery that complements the script of *Love and Human Remains*. Based on a play by Brad Fraser, the screenplay has plenty of snappy lines to maintain interest, and the crowning achievement is an hilarious and poignant scene in which Candy is confronted by both her gay and heterosexual lovers.

Love and Human Remains is a fast-paced piece of cinema. Unfortunately Arcand doesn't quite manage to bring it to a clean stop: the ending is contrived and misses its mark. But then again, it's hard to stop a car on a coin when you're travelling at 100 miles an hour. —Jon Greenaway

China blue

The Blue Kite, dir. Tian Zhuangzhuang (independent cinemas). The best seller *Wild Swans* has helped greatly to make the wretched years of Mao's rule accessible to a Western audience. *The Blue Kite*, from the director of *Horse Thief* (1986), takes us further. Through the eyes of Tietou (played as infant by Yi Tian, as a boy by Zong Wen Yao and as a youth by Chen Xiaoman) we see the fate of his loyal Maoist family and their friends, from idealistic early married days in a poor district of Beijing through the repeated nurture and betrayal of their beliefs under Mao's paternalist despotism.

The persecution of 'rightists' who failed to answer Mao's call to criticise



Maggie (Crissy Rock) cuddles her baby, Zoe (Laura Tullio).

Ladybird Ladybird

Eureka Street has 10 free passes to see Ken Loach's new film (see review on opposite page) *Ladybird Ladybird*, valid at Melbourne's Kino and Longford cinemas, or at the Dendy in Sydney. To win a double pass, write to *Eureka Street Film Offer*, PO Box 553, Richmond, VIC 3121, stating your name and address. The passes will go to the first 10.

the party in the 1957 Rectification Movement, the confused optimism of the Great Leap Forward and the bloody eruption of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 are presented not as distant epic movements but, more devastatingly, as local and domestic events, penetrating every level of family life and testing love and trust to the limit.

That *The Blue Kite* should have been banned in China, and Tian forbidden to leave the country, is not surprising. For one thing, it is the first Chinese film to refer to the secret use of young women in the army as prostitutes for party leaders, and to the personal consequences for those who resisted such 'political duties'. But above all, *The Blue Kite* depicts a people whose eagerness to serve party and state amounted to a kind of collective psychosis brought about by a corrupt leadership.

—Jane Buckingham



Long before Madonna made sexual ambivalence and sadomasochism into lucrative but boring pastimes, there was Marlene. So if

you're feeling a little jaded and live within striking distance of Melbourne's Valhalla Cinema, we recommend you take in the festival of Dietrich films which begins there on 4 November. It includes *The Blue Angel*, of course, but our favourite is *Scarlet Empress*.

Also getting a retrospective is Federico Fellini, whose entire work will be screened at the Cinema Nova, Melbourne, from 18 November. And if you don't live within striking distance of the Nova, don't despair. *Tutto Fellini* is on world tour, so it should soon come to a cinema near you.



Big girls don't cry

THE EXPRESSION 'BIG GIRL' is used as a euphemism by women to describe other women as excessively buxom; the expression 'ya big girl's

blouse' is used as an insult by men to accuse other men of effeminacy. Well might Jane Turner, Gina Riley and Magda Szubanski, in the opening shot of their one-hour Channel 7 comedy special, gaze anxiously into a mirror upon which the words 'Big Girl's Blouse' are inscribed in neon-pink lipstick copperplate. No doubt the trio picked it as their title precisely because it is, like a bad poem, so heavily freighted with internally contradictory suggestion. Demented juxtaposition is, after all, what most good comedy depends on.

(Lipstick, incidentally, turns up in this show a lot—as when Szubanski, watching Riley apply her lippy in the same mirror, observes 'You know they test that stuff on cats' lips.' Riley looks unbelieving: 'Cats don't have lips.' 'Yeah, well,' says Szubanski, 'not any more.')

One of the most endearing features of this show is its continuity, maintained by devices that are obvious clichés and lovingly presented as such. The narrative frame for the whole hour, and a scene to which we are repeatedly returned, is the upstairs bedroom of a suburban house where Turner, Riley and Szubanski, clad in icky pastel nightwear, are working on their show: thinking up funny ideas, writing dialogue, testing out jokes on each other.

From this room the sketches open out, through the blowing lace curtains at the open window, or through the blue and sinister TV screen, or through a shadowy picture on the wall. There are the medieval schoolgirls, the TV journalists dreaming up Gary Sweet headlines, and the Failed Entrepreneurs' Wives stubbing out their cigarettes in the untouched crayfish and hooting at the restaurant's Rubens. ('Listen, Fron-swar, if I wanted to see a fat sheila in the nuddy I'd just take me clothes off an' look in the mirror'.) And not all the characters are female: Turner's garage guitarist and Szubanski's creepy Peeping Tom are convincing enough to be a bit frightening. There is also a 'real' drag act, raising questions about what, and whom, drag is really for.

Much of the show's originality can be attributed to its departure from the usual wham-bam sketch-comedy timing. Three of the sequences in particular are developed at leisure, making the comedy as much circumstantial or situational as verbal, not focusing on or building towards a single punch line but rather riding waves of comic effect.

The 'fashion' sketch is a case in point. It opens with Szubanski playing the latest thing—as decreed by Turner's somnolent Yves St Laurent—in models: 'Fat.' High-fashion magazine cover shots of Szubanski in a variety of caftans and poses are followed by an interview: 'I'm lucky 'cos I'm naturally fat,' she says in a sort of London Grunge accent, 'so I can wear tent dresses wivout looking ridiculous.'

'Do you have to watch what you eat?'

'Nah, I just close my eyes an' shovel it in.'

Normally such a sketch would leave it at that, but the 'fat model' gag is followed by what is perhaps the sharpest satirical point in the show: the moment when Yves St Laurent decides that next season women will have *no* bodies. The next shot is one of bloodily severed female heads rolling down the catwalk, to wild applause.

In the same kind of collaborative spirit that characterises this show, I want to pick up on some of the excellent points made about it by *The Age's* TV critic Philippa Hawker (13/10/94). Hawker was unreservedly positive about *Big Girl's Blouse*, and spent two well-argued paragraphs resisting the temptation to make gender-based generalisations: 'Inevitably, and understandably,' she says, 'a show such as this raises questions about the nature of so-called "women's comedy". This can be a very reductive exercise: it almost implies that a female sense of humour can be quantified or defined ...' She concludes by looking forward to 'a television climate in which a show written, produced and performed by women is nothing out of the ordinary.'

Well, amen to that. But in the meantime, the gender specificity of this kind of comedy can't be ignored, if only because of the degree to which *Big Girl's Blouse*, from its title onwards, is in itself a show about gender, and about the assumptions, limitations, stereotypes and prejudices—like the misogyny and homophobia signalled by the show's title—surrounding gender difference.

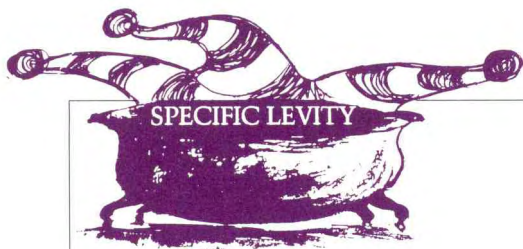
And let's (as Julia Roberts said when asked if it bothered her to be called 'pretty woman' all the time) get real here. These women are feminists and their comedy is political. Their work is hilarious and non-destructive, but it offers a pretty sharp corrective angle on a largely androcentric universe.

I wouldn't want to generalise about 'women's comedy' either, but this show seems to me to be directly challenging an insidious notion that has characterised comedy by women for many years: that for women, comedy and beauty are mutually exclusive. Think of the lengths Phyllis Diller went to in order to look that bad. The sketch in which Gina Riley plays a sort of cross between Barbra Streisand and Shirley Bassey sums this up: to brassy '60s accompaniment, Riley sings 'Funny lady, not so pretty/Tried to make up by bein' witty ...'

What Szubanski, Turner and Riley do in this show is claim women's right to practise comedy as something more than a displacement activity or a consolation prize. In order to be a comedian you have to be prepared both to attack things you think are ridiculous, and to look ridiculous yourself; in a culture still largely unforgiving of women who do either, these three women show in *Big Girls' Blouse* that their talent is outweighed only by their courage.

They're all pretty cute, too. ■

Kerryn Goldsworthy is a Melbourne writer and teacher.



Eureka Street Cryptic Crossword no. 28, November 1994

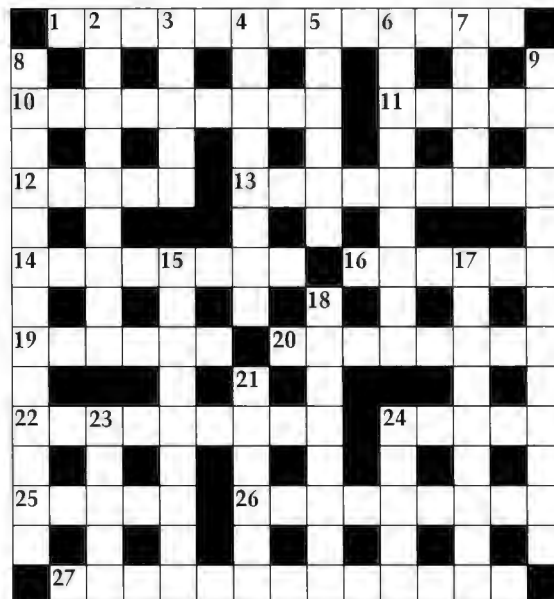
Devised by Joan Nowotny IBVM

ACROSS

- 1 This clue cannot be specified. It was Belinda Brice's downfall. (13)
- 10 Peer loved to make chemical solution needed in the dark room. (9)
- 11 Give utterance to the emptiness of sin. (5)
- 12 It shows that something's missing! (5)
- 13 Correctly replicate writer's legal control. Could take fifty years. (9)
- 14 The sort of political system that has double celebrations? (3-5)
- 18 The précis is somewhat indigestible! (6)
- 19 Unfortunately, no seed is to be found in this Russian town. (6)
- 20 This seems to be like cynosure's emblematic states, in part, anyway. (8)
- 22 Could it be the greenhouse effect? Tree's burning in English military town. (9)
- 24 Left in roof. Returned to find on ground level. (5)
- 25 Breathing apparatus I use as loincloth in India. (5)
- 26 If you're sick in Italy, try MD in Roma, perhaps, lest you suffer undue torment. (9)
- 27 Do they offer their services in Courts around the world? The best of them do. (6,7)

DOWN

- 2 'Not again!' Quite so, the raven said, according to Poe. (9)
- 3 Burst of applause for the Frenchman or acclaim for a Celt, maybe? (5)
- 4 Upper limit on a city's holding power? (8)
- 5 Burst in suddenly to make Rupert change 'e' to 'ego'? (6)
- 6 Make public counsel about the beginnings of early road transport. (9)
- 7 A false sort of reclining? (5)
- 8 Have tuition with friend in an instructive way. (13)
- 9 What the tympanist does with medley of absurd themes to start with. (5,3,5)
- 15 Statement that animal queen has tin with nothing in it. (9)
- 17 Red robe I'm about to decorate. (9)
- 18 Lightly kissed about the mouth or on the chest. Sounds like it! (8)
- 21 Topics found in the Mesopotamian literature. (6)
- 23 Badly caned for doing the rumba, perhaps. (5)
- 24 Speed past for aerial inspection. (3-2)



Solution to Crossword no. 27, October 1994



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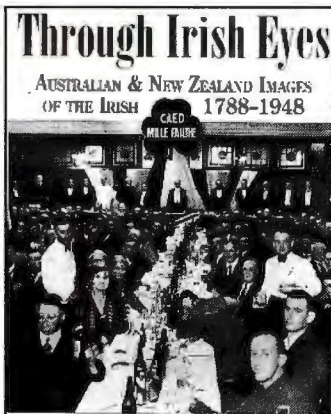
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