

# FORTHCOMING FUNCTIONS AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

- SPEAKER** : **BILL SCALES AO** (Chairman, Industry Commission)  
**TOPIC** : *Australia: A Nation in Transition*  
**DATE** : Monday 8 December 1997 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm  
**VENUE** : Mallesons, Conference Room, Level 60 Gov Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney
- 
- SPEAKER** : **MONICA ATTARD** (ABC Radio Presenter & Author *Russia: Which Way Paradise?*)  
**TOPIC** : *Russia: Which Way Paradise*  
**DATE** : Wednesday 28 January 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm  
**VENUE** : Museum of Sydney Theatre, cnr Bridge & Phillip Sts, Sydney
- 
- SPEAKERS** : **COLIN TATZ** (Criminologist) & **ANDREW RIEMER** (Sydney University)  
**TOPIC** : *The Gift of Evil: Who Owns Property Stolen in Times of War?*  
**DATE** : Tuesday 3 February 1998 **TIME** : 5.00 for 5.30pm  
**VENUE** : BT Function Room (Level to be advised) 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- 
- SPEAKER** : **DEBORAH TARRANT** (Editor, *Business Class*)  
**TOPIC** : *Women & Business - A Class Apart?*  
**DATE** : Tuesday 10 February 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm  
**VENUE** : 41 Phillip Street, Sydney **LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**
- 
- SPEAKER** : **TED EVANS** (Secretary to the Treasury)  
**TOPIC** : To be advised  
**DATE** : Tuesday 17 February 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm  
**VENUE** : Mallesons, Conference Room, Level 60 Gov Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney
- 
- SPEAKER** : **HELEN IRVING** (Academic and Author/*To Constitute A Nation* [Cambridge, 1997])  
**TOPIC** : *Celebrating Federation*  
**DATE** : Tuesday 24 February 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm  
**VENUE** : To be advised
- 
- SPEAKER** : **FRED HILMER** (Author, *Management Redeemed*)  
**TOPIC** : *Reflections on Economic Reform*  
**DATE** : Wednesday 4 March 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm  
**VENUE** : Mallesons, Conference Room, Level 60 Gov Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney
- 
- SPEAKER** : **PRU GOWARD** (Head, Office Status of Women)  
**TOPIC** : To be advised  
**DATE** : Wednesday 15 April 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm  
**VENUE** : Museum of Sydney Theatre, cnr Bridge & Phillip Sts, Sydney

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THE

# Sydney Institute

## QUARTERLY

VOLUME 1, NO. 1  
NOVEMBER 1997

STUART  
LITTLEMORE  
- An Update

LORD  
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on the British  
Press

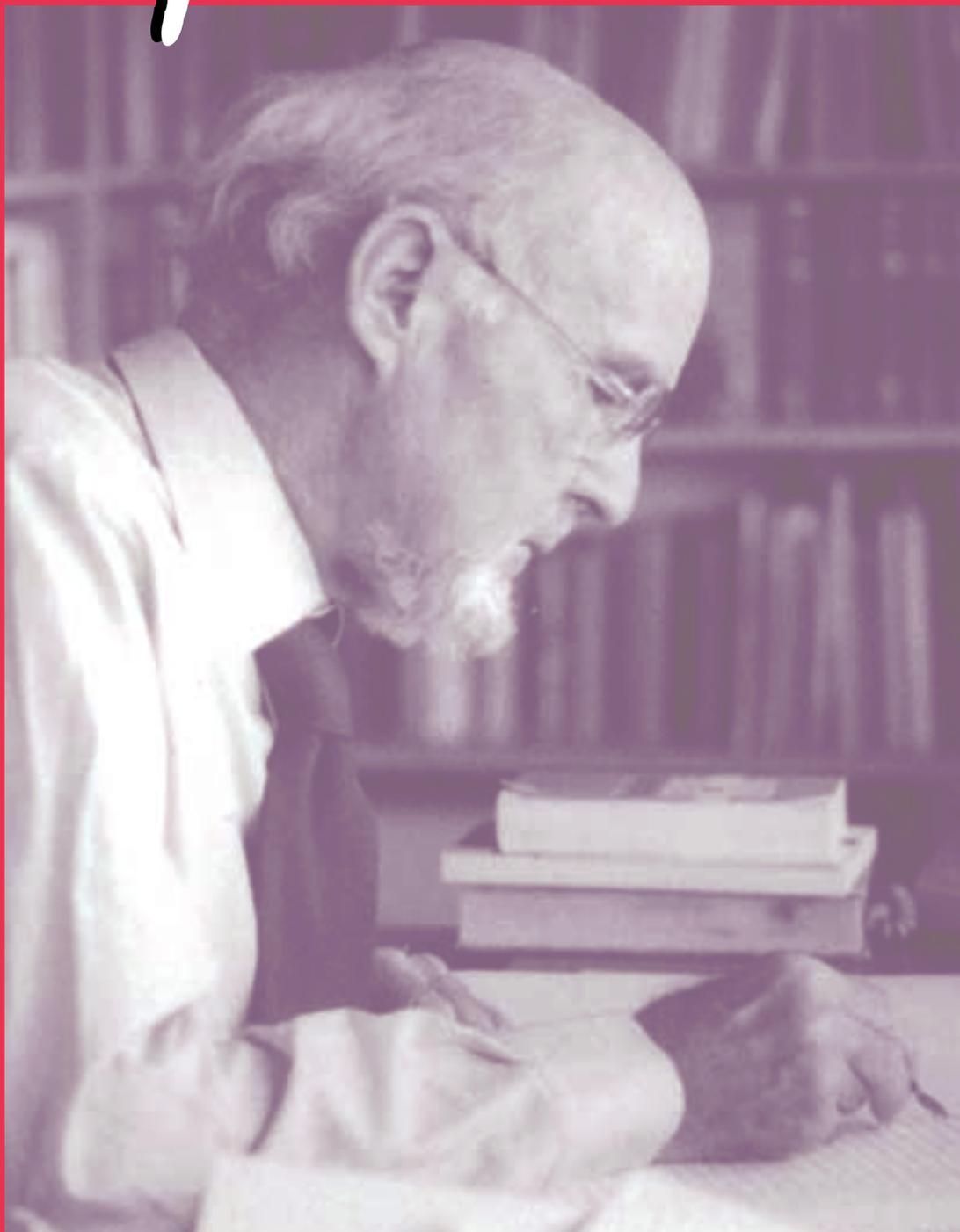
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on Moral Rights

THE  
IMMIGRATION  
DEBATE -  
WHY ENGLISH?

STEPHEN  
MATCHETT  
tackles  
Manning Clark

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*with Gerard Henderson's*

# MEDIA WATCH

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## STUART LITTLEMORE QC - AN UPDATE

During the 1996 Federal election campaign, ABC TV's *Media Watch* program showed footage of the first inaugural John Howard/Paul Keating debate. Presenter Stuart Littlemore saw fit to comment about John Howard's uncomfortable body language which was evident in the first (but not the second) debate. This had nothing at all to do with media watching. It seems that Littlemore QC just wished to make a point.

On 11 November 1997 Stuart Littlemore appeared on the ABC TV *Lateline* program in a discussion with Steve Brill (in New York) and Pilita Clark (in Sydney). Jennifer Byrne was in the presenter's chair. The subject was media watching. Littlemore put in a shocker of a performance, replete with manifestly uncomfortable body language. Don't expect to see this on ABC TV's *Media Watch* - despite its relevance to media watching.

The 11 November 1997 *Lateline* program commenced unexceptionally. For a while it seemed that trans-Pacific back scratching was all the rage as Messrs Littlemore and Brill praised each other's media analyst skills. Yet, over time, it became evident that Brill was interpreting Littlemore's responses to Byrne and Clark as yet another manifestation of media arrogance. Brill was particularly angered by Littlemore's refusal to acknowledge that he (Littlemore) made errors.

And so it came to pass that two media watchers commenced trading verbal blows at one another. Brill commented: "Stuart you sound more arrogant than the most arrogant journalist I've ever heard." Caught short for a response Littlemore replied: "You've got a good sense of the dollar, Steve."

There followed an exchange which goes to the heart of Stuart Littlemore's future credibility as the ABC TV media watcher:

*Stuart Littlemore:* This is a business. I mean. Steve Brill, I've been sitting and listening, obviously thinks there's a quid to be made, a dollar to be made, out of writing about the media. Go for your life. But that's not the game we're in. We're in raising standards.

*Steve Brill:* Do you work for free?

*Stuart Littlemore:* Yeah, I do, actually.

*Steve Brill:* I guess I missed the part where she [Jennifer Byrne] said you worked for free.

*Stuart Littlemore:* Well yeah, sure.

*Jennifer Byrne:* But you don't work for free. You work for Australian Broadcasting Corporation it's true. But why are you assailing Steve Brill for wanting to make a dollar out of journalism?

*Stuart Littlemore:* Good luck to him. That's the American way. It's just not what we're on about.

Senior ABC sources have confirmed that Stuart Littlemore *does* get paid for presenting ABC TV's *Media Watch*. In other words, he does *not* do the *Media Watch* program for free. So far Stuart Littlemore has not explained his comments of 11 November 1997 on *Lateline*. Keep watching this space.

# PRIVACY AND THE PRESS AFTER DIANA - A DISCUSSION WITH LORD WAKEHAM

**D**uring a visit to Australia in November, Lord Wakeham, Chairman of the UK Press Complaints Commission (PCC), addressed The Sydney Institute. Lord Wakeham argues strongly that the news can never be only about issues but must also be about people. But in reporting the lives of people, newspapers invariably intrude into areas regarded as private by some and in the public interest by others.

In Lord Wakeham's view, the answer lies not in law but in effective self-regulation by the print media. In Britain the Press Complaints Commission acts as the spur. "Editors respect the PCC," says Lord Wakeham. "Newspapers fight like fury to avoid a critical adjudication - which many of them see as devaluing their product - and the best way to do that is not to breach their own Code of Practice in the first place."

In the wake of the tragic death of Princess Diana, and criticisms of the role of the paparazzi in contributing to the car accident along with accusations of more general press harassment, Lord Wakeham has announced a strengthening of the UK press Code of Practice in the area of intrusion into privacy. During question time, at The Sydney Institute, Lord Wakeham discussed some of the ramifications of this new Code. What follows is an edited transcript of that discussion.

**Q:** You talked about that very important principle of freedom of expression. How does your PCC assess the dilemma of selectivity in the information published. Material may in fact not necessarily be breaching privacy of itself but by not presenting the whole story, perhaps some reports do more harm.

**LW:** We try very hard in our adjudications to draw a distinction between factual reporting and comments. We take the view that a newspaper is publicly entitled to be biased, to be bigoted if necessary, in the

opinions it expresses. But we do not accept that newspapers have any right to be inaccurate in what they state - missing out essential facts, distorting the picture or asserting what there is no evidence to assert. Opinion is another matter.

Now, of course that's a slightly easy answer, but some of the tricky areas are where a comment piece slips in a few facts which are not proven. I'm in severe trouble at present with a journalist where I criticised him for expressing some unproven facts which subsequently were shown to be correct. But I didn't argue whether I was right or wrong. I said, at the time, that he didn't have the scientific evidence to support what he said and he should not have said it in quite that fashion. And that was in a comment piece. I still think he had to get his facts right.

**Q:** Could you consider a more direct example. A chap in Glasgow bashes his wife. Photographers take pictures of her and stick them in the paper. This man is, for example, a professional footballer who's in the English soccer team. If the publishing of those photographs is subject to a complaint, either by the person concerned or if the public sees it as an improper breach of privacy, is that something that would be followed up by your Commission. Or does it depend upon the context in which the photographs are used? For example, if it was an article about wife bashing? Does it depend on who they are? Whether this man is in the English soccer team or not?

**LW:** Well let me answer that question first of all by saying that one of the first things I learnt when I went to the Press Complaints Commission was not to express a view on an individual case without first hearing from the newspaper as to why they published it and the complainants as to why they felt this was an intrusion into their privacy. Anything I might say in this merely hypothetical case has to be treated in that light. I would certainly want to hear both sides of the story before I committed myself.

And of course it would depend very much where the event took place, and the way the pictures were obtained. Basically, if the pictures were obtained in a public place in full view of everybody without any attempt to do something privately. The facts of the matter in a free society make it extremely hard to say that a newspaper shouldn't publish them. But if the photo was taken with a telephoto lens, or by barging into a hotel bedroom or anything of that sort, then I think there would have to be some very strong public interest to justify it. So I doubt very much whether we would be critical of a newspaper publishing a story of that sort if it was obtained by perfectly legitimate means.

**Q:** There have been many cases where biased reporting has interfered in the fair process of the law, even to the extent of causing a learned judge to abort a murder trial. Does the UK Code of Practice take care of that?

**LW:** We would take a matter to the courts where there is legislation to deal with cases of that sort. And we expect the judges to use it. If we think there has been a breach of the criminal law it is not for us to interfere, it's for the judges and courts and the process of law to be obtained. We are not there as a substitute for legal process matters.

**Q:** You mentioned modern technology. Given the rise and rise of the Internet, does that come within your mandate?

**LW:** I operate a system of self regulation. I have just agreed with the United Kingdom magazine and newspaper industry that, in so far as they are responsible for putting out information on the Internet, the PCC will be the regulator and deal with any complaints in connection with the Internet. I don't know of anybody else, certainly in the United Kingdom, who is acting as a regulator of material on the Internet. I'm not responsible for all the Internet, only those publications or periodicals that come under the Press Complaints Commission. I have to say that I'm going to insist they give me a hard copy of the document - I'm not going to sit up there with green eyes all day trying to follow the screen.

**Q:** In the 1930s, in England, there was collaboration between Fleet Street and the Prince of Wales over the terms of the publication of any details about his relationship with Mrs Simpson. Today it's a very different media, a very different attitude towards the present Prince of Wales and his relationships. Can you inform us as to how you see the difference between Fleet Street in the 1930s and Fleet Street today, bearing in mind what you've told us about the Code of Practice?

**LW:** I'm not a great expert on Fleet Street in the 1930s and I'm not sure that your opening remarks are totally non-controversial in certain circles. But I certainly am not, at the Press Complaints Commission, censoring sins of omission. If things

are not published in the newspapers, there isn't any role for me to complain. If things are published which are misleading then I do complain about it.

On the wider question, or the more current question, of the portrayal of high profile people, Prince William



or Prince Charles and a lot of other people, the real world is different from what it was in those days. Then it was possible to have a word with the newspapers and information didn't get out. That was the society we lived in and most people thought that was an appropriately reasonable way of conducting themselves. Today if you wish to be a successful public figure, you have to handle the media properly. Just recently Prince Charles and the boys went on holiday in Scotland. They gave a photo call at the beginning of the holiday, pictures of them went around the world and then they had a media free holiday. It was a gamble

whether they would be left alone or not, of course. But they were.

**Q:** Has there ever been any consideration given to pre-censoring or stopping a story before the damage is done?

**LW:** Well I do argue that the system we operate does much less damage, when there is a breach of privacy, than there would be in the courts. If somebody took a case to court and it lasted for several days, examples of previous conduct would be brought out and a private life would be exposed. There's a second aspect also. If there is a privacy law, newspapers are extremely unlikely to be allowed by their lawyers to make an apology or correction, or anything of that sort, without legal constraints. Whereas with the PCC, they do try and put things right in the British press.

On the question of pre-censorship, I am in favour of a free press. I won't say that I've never spoken to an editor before publication, but I've always made it abundantly clear that the responsibility for publishing is the editor's and not mine. I'm in no way going to give him any guidance as to whether it is right or wrong. To do that would affect the impartiality with which I could adjudicate the case afterwards and would call into question the free

press. What I do, and what some of my key colleagues do from time to time, is discuss some of the issues that are involved and also perhaps draw the attention of the editor to cases which have on the face of it some similarities. I have been known to tell an editor the sort of charge which would be levelled if he published, and query what sort of answers he would give in those circumstances. But the responsibility is the editor's not mine.

**Q:** It seems in this debate over the press that many public figures, not least of all the Prince and Princess of Wales, have learnt well how to handle the media. What happens in cases where public figures are deliberately using the media, very cleverly sometimes, and playing their own game for publicity or to get stories out. This makes it a rather murky affair with groups like the PCC trying to keep the media in some sort of control while certain public figures are actually using the media. When the media aren't necessarily the bad guys, what happens then? How has that made your job more difficult?

**LW:** It has made it more difficult. And I actually share that view. I was personally involved in this business in the 1980s, in the United Kingdom, when we had two private members bills in parliament about privacy. That was the start. Then we set up the Calcutt Committee. It was quite clear during that whole process that a number of things had happened which created a bad climate.

**“In one case it was the News of the World. I took it up with Rupert Murdoch and he did make a public statement which was that the conduct of his editor was unacceptable.”**

First there was the technological change in the way newspapers were produced, the vastly increased competition amongst newspapers, and also the way in which the politicians were treating the media generally. There was a 24 hour approach of ringing them up, telling them they'd got it wrong, not enough emphasis on this and so on. And it went on, and goes on still, all the time. The nine o'clock news goes out and I can assure you the spin doctors for the government, the spin doctors for the opposition, and some tell me our Liberal Party as well, will be ringing the editor of that program and saying, "I can't understand why you decided that Mr Blair's speech was number two on the news and this was number one".

The media has been strongly harassed. A number of newspapers became extremely fed up with the way they were pushed around and told what judgments they should be making. That created a bad impression. And it did produce the threat of statutory control because of the bad relations. The fact of the matter is that relations between the press and politicians have always been bad. In Victorian England the *Morning Post* referred to Queen Victoria and the then Prince of Wales as that widow woman and the unemployed youth.

The only redeeming feature about *The Times* is that every 25 years they publish a book to explain how they have been wrong on every public issue of the day during the past 25 years. But there has never been a suggestion of statutory control of the press. A free press has always been tolerated although pretty disagreeable. Something happened, however, a series of things, where the press and the public got out of kilter. But I hope we get it back to a more reasonable basis.

**Q:** What power does the Press Complaints Commission have over retractions?

**LW:** We're in the process of tightening up. We've always had, as a condition of membership of the Press Complaints Commission by the Press, an agreement that they publish our adjudications in full. And we would then set out the points of the complaint if they were substantial, so they would be published in the newspaper.

I'm actually changing the Code, or persuading the industry to change the Code, to say that they will not only publish adjudications but publish them with a prominence and in a way which is acceptable to me as well as to the editor. For example when the apology is put on page 19 at the bottom and the issue under complaint was on page one. We need a proper balance.

**Q:** Are there other options available to the Commission?

**LW:** Yes there are. Most of our journalists now have, in their contracted employment with their employer, a clause which says that they will abide by the Press Complaints Code - the Code of Conduct. So in bad cases I will write not to the editor, but I will take it up with the proprietor. In one case it was the *News of the World*. I took it up with Rupert Murdoch and he did make a public statement which was that the conduct of his editor was unacceptable.

Now that sent a message through the industry which was very valuable to me. Frankly you couldn't do that

twice. It was perfectly acceptable the first time but a second time tougher measures are required. So there is a feeling now amongst the industry that jobs are on the line if breaches are flagrant and too frequent. And that's a perfectly healthy sign in my view.

**Q:** Could you background the details of the Rupert Murdoch *News of the World* case?

**LW:** Well the *News of the World* case was a case (as best as I can remember) which involved the use of a telephoto lens camera to photograph somebody who was in a private hospital with a mental breakdown. She was the wife of Charles Spencer, the brother of Princess Diana. She was photographed walking in the grounds of the hospital and there was no, in my view, possible justification for such a flagrant breach. The newspaper industry agreed that such conduct was unacceptable. It was a very important case in establishing that I wasn't messing about; I meant business.

**Q:** Is it only the print media that you deal with and if so do you consider that a serious limitation? And you've talked about your concern with truthfulness and privacy. But privacy of course depends on who's at the helm so to speak. Are you concerned with or do you deal with allegations about defamation?

**LW:** We are not a legal body. If there is any suggestion of legal proceedings we tell the people concerned to go ahead with legal proceedings. We're not a court of law and we don't want to get involved in that. Where we have some difficulties is if people keep extremely quiet about the possibility of legal proceedings, seek to get a ruling out of us and then use that as part of their case for subsequent proceedings. It hasn't happened yet but I'm sure it will in the future.

So far as other media outlets are concerned, we are only concerned with the public press. There is a Broadcasting Complaints Commission which does similar work, but it is a statutory body whereas we're a voluntary body. The statutory body involves judicial review. The law is brought in, I feel, in a very cumbersome way.

Under the statutory system we have no remedies. Under my system I would not find it acceptable to be publicly criticised over what I do. The media accept what I do. When one newspaper refused to publish the judgment I had made, I rang the chairman of the company. There were around 95 newspapers in the group. I rang him up and I said, "I want to make it abundantly clear I am not running an à la carte system. Unless that judgment is published tomorrow I will not accept any more complaints from any newspaper in your group." The judgment was published the next day.

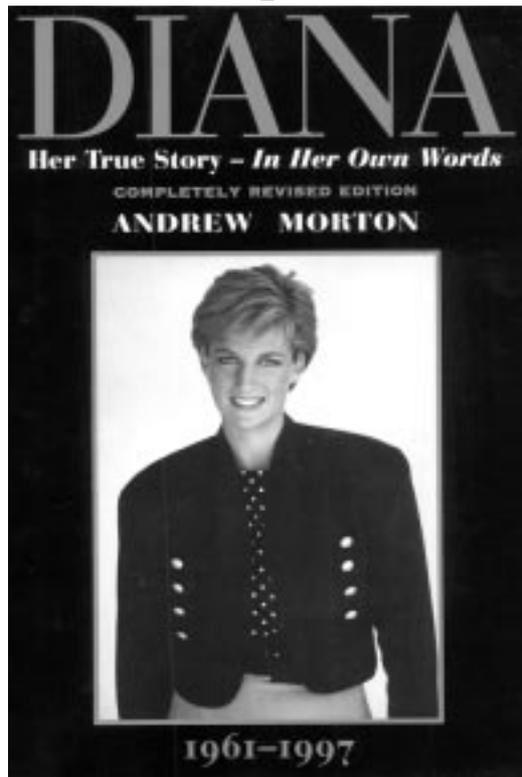
**Q:** I'd be interested to hear more about your proposed enquiries into formulating a definition of private space and how exhausted you expect that definition to be.

**LW:** A good question. We have attempted to define privacy because nobody's done it before. We have lent heavily on the European Convention on Human Rights to get a definition. It's not too difficult to know what private places are. But I am saying that a person has a right to expect privacy in public places in certain circumstances. And I have deliberately not been more specific than that. You're absolutely right to ask the question, because that is exactly the sort of thing that is going to be an important challenge for us. And you will find that comes up time and time again, in my view, in the future.

And you have to remember this. The Code is about newspaper editors not publishing in certain circumstances that which they know their readers

would like to read and which they know to be true. It's tough for editors to not publish. That's what the Code is about. It stops editors in certain circumstances. If editors act professionally and make proper judgments, even if I might disagree with it from time to time (and this will be one area where there will be legitimate disagreements) I think we're moving into a more mature relationship with the press.

*(Lord Wakeham spoke for The Sydney Institute on Wednesday, 5 November 1997.)*



# TO THE REPUBLIC

## CONFUSION AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL BOX

Cherie Burton

Next year's Constitutional Convention provides Australians with a rare opportunity to debate future changes to our Constitution and form of government. There have been few times since Federation where Australia has reached such an important juncture in its historical development. But while Republicans and Monarchists campaign feverishly to be elected to the convention, many Australians seem confused and alienated in the convention process.

When the Federal government finally passed its legislation to hold a non-compulsory postal vote to elect delegates to the Constitutional Convention, it signalled a flurry of campaign activity throughout the country. But rather than ordinary Australians actively being involved in the process many feel the Convention bears no relevance for them. Polling undertaken by the Australian Republican Movement (ARM) in mid 1997, showed a general lack of understanding as to how the Convention will operate. This of course reflects more upon the deficiencies of the legislation setting up the ballot and convention, than a willingness of Australian people to embrace one of our own as Head of State.

Many Australians are confused about our Constitution and form of government. Many have basic beliefs or ideas of whether they support the retention of the monarchy or the move to a republic, but many have not thought deeply about the issue. The arguments in support of a republic can seem complex and academic, thus difficult to grasp.

Not only are the issues difficult to grasp, but an important question being asked by voters in this ballot and subsequently the largest barrier confronting Republicans, is how will Australia becoming a republic affect the average Australian's life? Some see no significant or material gain in becoming a republic; the debate for them has no immediate importance when compared with some of the other pressing social priorities facing the nation,

such as unemployment, education, healthcare, etc... This trend may cause problems for Republicans, because it is more likely that people who support a republic see it as inevitable anyway and because there are more pressing priorities confronting them, many may be content not to force the pace.

Despite these difficulties, the Republican Movement has gained ground in the electorate. Polling undertaken during the campaign for election of convention delegates shows that there has been a dramatic drop in opposition to a republic and a huge rise in the number of people who support an Australian as the country's Head of State. For instance, a Newspoll published on 11 February this year showed that while support for the republic remained consistent at 47 per cent, the proportion against change has dropped from 35 to 28 per cent. Opposition to a republic has now dropped from 64 per cent ten years ago to 28 per cent currently.

As increasing media attention focuses on the ballot with its concurrent (though somewhat flawed) government-sponsored public education program, Australians will think more deeply about the issue. While Australians are not overly nationalistic people, feelings of national pride and belief that we should be an independent nation run very deep. Australians despite a level of national anxiety believe this to be the best country in the world. Given our history of tolerance, democracy and a fair go this is a highly sustainable proposition. Republicans believe it is these core beliefs which, if appealed to, will result in an increase in support for a republic and a satisfactory result in the ballot.

The ballot itself has thrown up many problems on both sides. The ballot papers are confusing. There is a multiplicity of Republican and Monarchist tickets and little is being done to assist those from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB). There is no government funding; as a result both sides have run limited campaigns, relying predominantly on the support of volunteers. For instance the Australian Republican Movement distributed five million "How to vote" leaflets nationally over the first two weeks of November, in letterboxes and at train stations or bus stops. This work was carried out by volunteers and was a significant achievement given the organisation's limitations. Both sides would agree that it has been difficult to distribute the material necessary to ensure that when people vote that they are making an informed choice. More importantly, the ballot papers are complex. For example many people think that the convention is about changing the constitution or that the delegates will vote on whether to become a republic or not. They do not realise that the

convention will discuss the issues and attempt to reach a consensus with a view to forming a proposition to put to the Australian people who will then vote on the issue by way of referendum.

The voluntary ballot is an imperfect and flawed system. Our country's compulsory voting system is one of the cornerstones of our democracy. It accepts that participation in the democratic process is not just a right but a responsibility. As a result of the postal ballot, however, returns are likely to be low, with some commentators predicting a return rate of only 35 per cent or even lower. If 65 per cent of Australians have not had a say in who the delegates are then there is likely to be some public cynicism about the result. This does not help the democratic process. The proportion of uncommitted people is 25 per cent, according to the February Newspolls survey. The reason for this, many believe, is confusion about the issue. This makes it even more critical to ensure that this convention is representative of the Australian people and that all Australians actively participate not only in the process of deciding whether Australia will become a republic but what kind of republic it will be.

*(Cherie Burton is Constitutional Convention Campaign Co-ordinator, ARM, Sydney)*

## The ten most asked questions from voters in the Constitutional Convention Campaign:

1. What is this election about?
2. Where is my ballot paper?
3. How do I fill it?
4. What is this Ballot paper for?
5. Are we voting for a Republic?
6. Can you send me some ballot papers for my friends?
7. Who are all these people on the ballot paper?
8. How will this affect me?
9. I didn't get a return envelope, can you send me one?
10. How do I preference and who should I preference?

# TO THE REPUBLIC TANE REMOVED

David Greason

Late last month, the anti-republic campaign of Australians for Constitutional Monarchy hit a bump on the road when it was revealed that one of its candidates for the forthcoming constitutional convention had, in the past, sold Nazi literature. Emma-Kate Symons of Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* revealed that Arthur Tane, an ACM candidate from East Maitland in NSW, and an office bearer in the local Liberal Party, had once sold Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. The ensuing uproar saw Arthur Tane resign from the ticket, citing doctor's advice. He is, however, still on the ballot paper.

Arthur Christian Tane is not a name unknown to those who monitor the lunar right. He first came to the notice of the general public in November 1975 when he wrote a letter to *Nation Review* announcing the formation of the National People's Party:

**Our members come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but we all share four things in common: First, a deep and vital concern for our Western racial-cultural heritage... Second, a recognition of the natural inequality of men... Third, an absolute rejection of neo-liberalism in all its sickly and destructive manifestations... Fourth, an eager willingness to take part in promoting our ideals and combating the enemies of those ideals, even when considerable self-sacrifice might be involved. ...We want to safeguard our racial identity by putting an end to the present insanity of enforced racial integration which is threatening all involved with social chaos, cultural dissolution and racial death.**

The next issue of *Nation Review* carried a letter from Rowland Gough of Kew, Melbourne, who pointed out that Tane's outburst was rather peculiar, particularly as Tane was a member of the small "I" liberal Australia Party (which later formed the backbone of the Australian Democrats), and to prove this, quoted a letter of Tane from the Australia Party magazine *Reform*.

The very next month, on 31 December, Arthur C Tane of Raymond Terrace Road, East Maitland, issued a press release to no one in particular, headed "I was a spy in the Nazi Party". There followed four pages "exposing" the operations of Australia's tiny Nazi movement, and although the intelligence was hardly earth-shattering, the revelation of certain obscure names did indicate that the writer had had some involvement with the local Nazis. It did not, however, explain the role of the National People's Party, whose policies seemed not too dissimilar to those groups that Tane had supposedly infiltrated.

In January 1976, the National People's Party released the first issue of its newsletter, *Australian Action*. Those subscribers expecting a good old-fashioned dose of racial nationalism and hard-line anti-communism, as foreshadowed in Tane's letter to *Nation Review*, must have been greatly disappointed. Articles headed "Gough Whitlam - Hero of Democracy", and "CIA agent Kerr" ran alongside bewildering NPP policies which called for the "establishment of a Democratic Federal Republic of Australia; legalisation of marijuana, prostitution, homosexuality and abortion; encourage multi-racial female immigration".

The icing on this rather peculiar cake was the call for electors in the upcoming Victorian state poll to vote for Andrew Jamieson and Lou-anne Barker of the Socialist Workers' Party - "The Australian Labor Party is the party of Labour and Democracy, and it represents the interests of working class people in Australia. A first vote for the Socialist Workers' Party candidates is a vote for a progressive program, and a call for Labor to adopt such policies."

Subsequent issues of *Australian Action*, however, indicate a dramatic right-ward shift in the NPP's policies. Issue 5 (September/October 1976) featured an advertisement for People Against Communism, an organisation that Tane had earlier - and correctly - identified as a target of infiltration by Nazis. Issue 6 (November/December 1976) announced the formation of a "New Political Front" - the National Democratic Front, which was to be a popular front of the National People's Party -

**The National Democratic Front, and its youth wing, the National Youth Alliance, are up at the front of the campaign to fight the twin monsters of Capitalism and Communism... They both seek to destroy all obstacles in their way, such as nation states, and even seek to destroy the very existence of separate races, through their promotion of race-mixing.**

The following issue of *Australian Action* published a contact address for the British National Front, which took some doing on Tane's part, given that he had shamelessly plagiarised the British NF's Statement of Policy when announcing the formation of his own National Democratic Front.

Then again, perhaps Tane was not responsible for everything that appeared in *Australian Action*, given the large number of fellow office-bearers whose names appeared regularly in its pages. Besides Tane, the party's National President, there was also Phillip J Dent (National Chairman), Patricia Buckland (National Vice President), Elizabeth Sutherland (Secretary to the National Secretariat), and Linda Randall (Secretary for Financial Affairs). If this seems a lot of positions for what was otherwise a tiny and insignificant organisation, whose only known function was the monthly publication of *Australian Action*, it should be noted that the NPP was affiliated to a vast number of other grouplets, all of which operated out of PO boxes close to or in East Maitland.

There was the Liberal Reform Alliance and the Sons of Rhodesia Foundation, both of which operated out of a PO box in Jesmond. There was Arthur Christian's Publications of a PO box in Thornton. Also based in Thornton was the wonderfully named "League of Taneish Group", which published *National Tane*, a journal devoted to the multifarious activities of Arthur C Tane; and the Libertarian Club, which distributed South African Digest, a weekly propaganda journal issued out of Pretoria. Another pro-white outfit was the Sons of Rhodesia Foundation, which shared an East Maitland PO box with the NPP.

Lest anyone suggest that this Tane, with his tapestry of interlocking organisations and PO boxes, was an odd character, it should be said in his favour that at least he did appear to exist. More than one recipient of letters from Tane's fellow comrades in the struggle had cause to note that the signatures of, say, Patricia Buckland or later Roger Phillips, looked remarkably like Tane's own signature.

Granted, the only evidence that Tane did exist was the publication of a photograph of the man himself, in 1978. The photo was published in a glossy six-page, two colour pamphlet announcing the formation of the National Democratic and Popular Co-Ordination Centre, based once again in East Maitland, NSW. It was a shame that our man's name was misspelt throughout the publication as "Arthur C Thane", but on the other hand, a rogue "h" was nothing compared to some of the names that appeared from Tane's

imaginative pen. The basic policy of the NDPCC was identical to the NPP policy as appeared in *Nation Review* just two years earlier. Other parts appeared in their wording to have been lifted from a US racist pamphlet.

But by now, Arthur Tane and his National Democratic Front/NDPCC had moved on to harder things. It was now selling, through the auspices of Arthur Christian's Publications, the magazine *White Power Report*, an openly and unashamedly pro-Nazi journal published by George Dietz, a leading world-wide distributor of Nazi literature, based in West Virginia. His publications were running advertisements for Spanish fascist groups; Tane was even attributing quotes from the notorious British fascist and anti-semitic Arnold Leese to himself.

Arthur Christian's Publications soon expanded its stocks and its clients base. Its 1982 Book and Record Catalog offered such racist and anti-Jewish classics as *The White Man's Bible* by Ben Klassen, *The Turner Diaries* by US Nazi leader William Pierce, *The Plot Against Christianity* by Elizabeth Dilling ("Most complete revelation of the Talmud ever published"), the Holocaust-denying *Hoax of the Twentieth Century* by Arthur Butz, *For My Legionaries* by wartime Rumanian fascist leader Corneliu Codreanu, *White Power* by the US Nazi Party's George Lincoln Rockwell, and *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler.

**"Lloyd Waddy, defended their candidate, citing a long winded statutory declaration from Tane in which he strenuously denied any Nazi sympathies"**

Naturally, Tane found a few clients for this type of material. Oddly enough, few of them came from the orthodox extreme-right; they thought Tane a suspicious character prone to fantasising about his own organisational strength. It was not only Jewish organisations that had recognised the numbing similarity of all the signatures that came out of East Maitland. But others took him up on his offer: the Melbourne-based Libyan-Arab Cultural Centre, for example, bought a substantial amount of anti-semitic books from Tane for their library. Relations between the two soured slightly when a package of already purchased books failed to arrive at the Libyan HQ, but by then Arthur Christian's Publications had already managed to move a good quantity of offensive stock.

Tane and his colleagues showed a considerable interest in books. In June 1984, Patricia H Buckland

(Mrs) wrote to the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith in New York, requesting a large quantity of books on behalf of the Australian Committee on Africa. This East Maitland-based organisation boasted none other than A. C. Tane as its director. The ACOA planned to distribute the books to various public libraries throughout Australia and New Zealand. "It is the purchase policy of ACOA not to prepay any Foreign Order unless the required items have been received in advance and in good condition," Patricia Buckland wrote. "Once these books have arrived, a Bank Cheque will be drawn in your favour."

In case the ADL thought this odd practice from an unknown group, Patricia Buckland hastened to point out the ACOA's credentials:

**Due to the rapid rise in this country of Racism, we felt more than ever before that the publications so required as of vital importance in preparation of a program to combat this sickness. Indeed, this Organisation has established a select group to monitor all racist propaganda in Australia, from which legislative action may in the future become necessary. Already ACOA has been successful in having a number of regional Television networks rebroadcast the epic film Holocaust and from this we have started a \$A25,000 Fund campaign to raise finance for the Keren Kayemeth Leisrael in Jerusalem from our 3500 members.**

Needless to say, it is hard to reconcile Patricia Buckland's claims with any known facts. The books were not supplied. Not that this was the first time she had been rebuffed by a Jewish organisation: in 1981, she had asked *Australia/Israel Review* to add ACOA to its mailing list. Again, she was unsuccessful. The year before that, as the Senior Vice Chairperson of the National Democratic and Popular Co-Ordination Centre, she had tried to get "as many copies as possible" of *Palestinians and Isreal* (sic) from the Israeli Embassy. No luck was to be had there either.

In 1986, another tack was tried. This time, one "Andrew Harper" of the Conservative Action and Victory Fund of East Maitland wrote to *Australia/Israel Review*, asking for six years, of back issues. These were not sent. However, a couple of years later, the Conservative Action and Victory Fund apparently had a little more success - initially at least - in its dealings with Robbie Swan, the Canberra-based X-rated video promoter.

In 1988, the CAVF's "Roger Phillips" (whose

signature bore an uncanny similarity to those of Arthur Tane himself and his trusty sidekick Patricia Buckland) contacted Swan, offering to send Swan's protest note on video censorship to his 18,000-strong mailing list. The cost to Robbie Swan of this mailout was \$3000, although as Phillips noted in a later letter, CAVF contributed nearly \$1400 of its own money to the mailout, not counting the cost of envelopes and labels.

Why any mailing organisation would spend its own money to send out someone else's material is hard to fathom; why Phillips was explaining all this was that Robbie Swan had subsequently discovered that the CAVF had been sending out pro-censorship material, and he wanted an explanation.

Not much more was heard of Arthur Tane in the intervening years. In 1994, he was sending out pro-Inkatha material under the auspices of Roundtable Associates of Maitland. And then, the man who had once promoted the establishment of a Democratic Federal Republic of Australia popped up as a NSW candidate for Australians for Constitutional Monarchy.

When confronted with examples of his previous writings, including an article in the Hungarian Nazi magazine *Perseverance*, entitled "Good Old Adolf", Mr Tane denied all knowledge of them. "I have never written anything like that," he told the *Daily Telegraph*. "They may well have my name on them, but they certainly do not come from me." He also denied any knowledge of Arthur Christian's Publications.

The next day, ACM's director Kerry Jones and its chairman, Lloyd Waddy, defended their candidate, citing a long winded statutory declaration from Tane in which he strenuously denied any Nazi sympathies. Without making any reference to the specific allegation that he had sold Nazi literature through Arthur Christian's Publications, Kerry Jones told the *Telegraph* that she "suspected the attack on Mr Tane was a republican plot to discredit the monarchist campaign". Just how this was the case, Kerry Jones never explained.

With pressure mounting on two Jewish ACM candidates to denounce Tane's candidacy, and rumours of splits in the ticket, Tane announced a couple of days later that he would be stepping down as a candidate and resigning from the ACM. A letter from Tane's solicitors, dated 28 October, quoted their client saying:

**I deny the allegations which have been made against me in the Press. I distance myself from the abhorrent views and opinions which have been attributed to me. I have instructed my solicitors to commence court proceedings to vindicate my reputation. The comments made in the Press have caused me considerable stress and anxiety and after having consulted with my Doctor, have decided to withdraw my Candidature for the constitutional convention and resign my membership from (sic) ACM.**

The same day, Lloyd Waddy issued a statement confirming Mr Tane's resignation from the ticket and the movement. No reason was given for the resignation. Kerry Jones did not withdraw her allegation that the attack on Tane was "a republican plot".

Later that day, I spoke to Kerry Jones, who was still defending her one-time candidate. "You have to realise that we still don't know for sure that he held the views that were attributed to him," she said. I assured her that whatever she did or did not know, I certainly knew that Arthur Tane had held those views - and worse.

Arthur Tane had, she said, been recommended to the campaign by the NSW Liberal Party, and had been a party member for ten years. "How were we to know about his background?" she asked, before launching into another attack on the Australian Republican Movement's so-called "smear campaign" against Tane. "We don't want to at this moment run a smear campaign," she said, "although the things we hear every day about their candidates are pretty bad." "Anyway, as Lloyd Waddy said to me, he went down to Dymocks and saw 30 copies of *Mein Kampf*, so he wasn't the only one selling it."

Kerry Jones had a point when she complained that the ACM was hardly likely to know about Tane's background. In the often secretive world of the extreme right, Arthur C Tane was always a marginalised player, although he was known to those whose job it is to keep an eye on the fringe dwellers. And coming as he did with an apparent reference from the Liberal Party, one could almost feel sorry for the ACM, which found itself in an unenviable situation. But if Kerry Jones and Lloyd Waddy seriously believe that a man who spent the 1970s running a lunar right one-man band, subsidised through anti-semitic and racist literature sales, is no worse than a mainstream bookshop offering an acknowledged historical text, then they deserved to be duped.

The Saturday following Tane's resignation, Kerry Jones was debating the Republicans' Malcolm Turnbull on television. When Turnbull made reference to the Tane affair, Jones shouted bizarrely that this was a "25-year old allegation". If Kerry Jones would like to track down the February 1996 issue of the anti-semitic Bendigo paper *The Strategy*, she will see on page two a review of the US anti-semitic paper *The Spotlight*. If she reads that review, she will see a plug for a US far-right conspiracy book, *The Clinton Chronicles*, which supposedly reveals the US President's "drug-taking, hit and run executions of his enemies, media bias...and his complete unfitness as commander-in-chief of the armed forces". And, as the article points out, if she wants to get a copy of that book, she should send \$12 to "Arthur Tayne", whose address is, oddly enough, a post office box in East Maitland. In fact, it's the very same post office box in East Maitland which was once home to Patricia Buckland and the Australian Committee on Africa.

(David Greason is Contributing Editor, Australia/Israel Review)

# NO ENGLISH, NO TICKET, NO START?

Anne Henderson

Like a giant Club Med, Club Australia is once again taking on form, small in population, isolated and hard to get into but a great place to visit.

Alone among the immigrant nations of the world, Australia is giving off signals it no longer needs an increase in people to survive. Immigrant numbers are contracting by popular demand. Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock has announced a 13.5% drop in immigration numbers to Australia in 1996-97, especially those coming from our region - South Asia (down 27.3%) and North East Asia (down 19%).

A perusal of the Immigration Department's glossy handouts suggests that Australia's approach to immigration now reads as a defensive answer to the anti-immigration rhetoric of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party. In a 22 page booklet titled "Dispelling

the Myths about Immigration" applicants are given answers to 20 questions that might have been written by Ms Hanson herself.

"Does immigration really benefit Australia?... Why do we have to have an immigration program?... Why do we take in people who don't speak English? ... Is it true that migrants get preferential treatment from the government when they arrive - like land, a house, a car and a job? ... Why do we see so many foreign faces in the street?... Do migrants gather together in ghettos? ...Shouldn't Australia be preventing migrants from bringing diseases into Australia? ... Don't migrants push up unemployment rates? ..." And on and on and on it goes.

Sadly, Australians are biting the hand that has fed them. Immigrant Australia has forgotten its life blood. As the Mortimer Report, *Going for Growth*, makes clear, high economic growth in Australia has always been driven by high population growth. And ageing Australia, with low growth from natural increase, can only increase its population by healthy intakes of immigrants.

But the times are not logical in Australia. They're emotive and somewhat narrow minded, although not new. Pauline Hanson types and the rhetoric against immigrants have come with every economic downturn - when Anglophile xenophobia runs rampant in "Club Australia". And the no riff-raff (read certain types of immigrants) ideology comes to the fore.

At the turn of the century, off the back of the 1890s depression, it was the White Australia Policy. In the 1930s, non-Anglo Australians like Italians felt the heat. After World War II we carefully limited the intake of Jewish migrants and those of "non-Nordic" appearance. And now it's those who aren't fluent in English, not to mention the family reunion category immigrant.

Australia is becoming obsessed with English. "Good English is essential to work in Australia" is the advice given by the Department of Immigration's information form "Migrating to Australia - Who can migrate?". This in spite of the fact that some fifty per cent of Australian small business, which accounts for around half of Australia's private sector employment, is owned by first and second generation immigrants who are overwhelmingly of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB). NESB success stories include the likes of Frank Lowy, Arvi Parbo and Franco Belgiorno-Nettis of Transfield Holdings.

Immigrants from Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Korea and Taiwan lead the way in the establishment of successful small businesses in Australia, far outstripping those established by the Australian born. None of these small business owners could claim to have had "good English" as a factor in their settlement in Australia. Yet they are not only employed themselves but are employing thousands of other Australians.

With the ending of the White Australia Policy in the 1960s, and its actual adoption with the influx of Vietnamese refugees in the 1980s, Australia became proud of its inclusive, non-discriminatory immigration intake.

More recently, however, in his address to the Australia-Asia Society, Prime Minister John Howard felt the need to emphasise this ethic saying, "Every Australian, regardless of colour, race or creed, is entitled to walk our streets, ride our buses and trains, play sport on our fields and pursue their work with confidence." But why the need to defend Australia's decades of supposed non-discrimination?

It is true that Australia has conducted a non-discriminatory immigration policy for some 25 years, at times with record intakes. But studies also show that Anglophile preference for English speaking backgrounds has persisted. Especially in the workplace when times get tough.

In the recently released *Loyalty is a One Way Street*, Toni O'Loughlin and Ian Watson demonstrate that for many NESB immigrants their difficulty in finding work may lie with the cultural preferences of employers rather than their lack of skills.

In the recessed years of the early 1990s, the unemployment rate for Lebanese immigrants with no post-school qualifications was 2.7 times greater than the equivalent Australian-born figure. But for those with tertiary qualifications, the unemployment rate amongst Lebanese immigrants was 7.2 times higher than the equivalent Australian-born figure. It was similar for Vietnamese immigrants.

Quite clearly the cause of these immigrants' unemployment is more than lack of skills, training or English. In addition, O'Loughlin and Watson demonstrate that it is also not because of Australia's failure to recognise overseas qualifications per se. They found it made little difference whether NESB immigrants' overseas qualifications were recognised or not. As a group, the overseas educated NESB immigrants remained strongly disadvantaged

compared with equivalent English speaking immigrants.

Australia is quite clearly in a conundrum over its English speaking identity versus its multicultural identity. Boasting of Sydney's multilingual population, Premier Bob Carr points to American Express' Asian Regional Operations Centre in Sydney just for this reason. And regional offices for Cathay Pacific and the huge Frensenius Medical Care company. In Sydney, the multilingual city, *Macquarie Dictionary* editors have challenged Australians to regard English as an Asian language.

Yet, on the day this esteemed publication's third edition was launched by writer David Malouf, at NSW State Parliament, just a few streets away striking English teachers of NESB students demonstrated against budget cuts outside the Prime Minister's office. Premiers and prime ministers may boast of the economic benefits of our non-English speaking citizens, but loyalty is a one way street when NESB students are not given every help to become fluent in English.

And as O'Loughlin and Watson point out, the massive job shedding in manufacturing in Australia has mostly impacted on NESB workers who migrated to Australia with little English in the 1950s and 1960s. Later, as Professor Nancy Viviani points out, many Vietnamese were similarly affected. NESB migrants made up the labour force of Australia's factories and now are heavily concentrated in the queues of the long term unemployed. And why? Because their adopted country left them to make do without English language classes in jobs where there was little chance of improving their language skills.

Immigration hasn't caused these migrants' unemployment. They are the victims of massive economic restructuring compounded by a sink or swim, make it on your own attitude to settlement by Australian governments when migrants to Australia were expected to pick up English on the job.

English fluency is certainly important to success in Australia. But we also know that a multilingual Australia is a plus in an increasingly globalised economy. Getting pugnacious about English language as part of the Australian culture is one thing. But using it to screen out immigrants is a worrying prejudice, reminiscent of earlier prejudices.

Prejudice that made Australia narrow, dull and limited.

(Anne Henderson is Deputy Director of the Sydney Institute).

# WHICH WAY RUSSIA?

MONICA ATTARD'S NEW BOOK, *RUSSIA: WHICH WAY PARADISE?* HAS ACHIEVED A LOT IN ITS SHORT LIFE. APPARENTLY IT SINGLE HANDEDLY EXPLAINED THE SOVIET COLLAPSE TO DAVID MARR. SAYS MARR:

**"THE GENIUS OF THIS TERRIFIC BOOK IS TO TRACK THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION THROUGH RUSSIAN EYES - SO IT'S ABSOLUTELY ALIVE AND ALL MAKES SENSE AT LAST."**

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**SPEAKER** : MONICA ATTARD (ABC Radio Presenter & Author *Russia: Which Way Paradise?*)

**TOPIC** : *Russia: Which Way Paradise*

**DATE** : Wednesday 28 January 1998

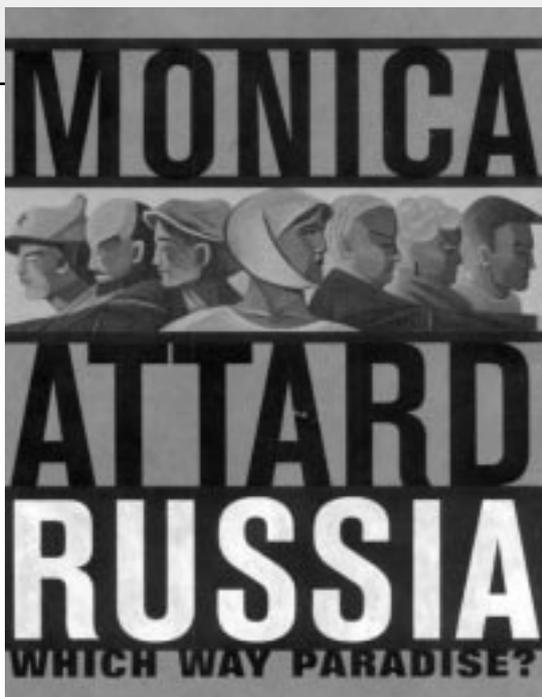
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# MORAL RIGHTS

## WISH THE PRODUCER LUCK IF THE WRITER DOESN'T WAIVE IT GOODBYE

Therese Catanzariti

The Copyright Amendment Bill, which is currently before the Senate, proposes to grant moral rights to authors of literary, dramatic or artistic works and to makers of a film. The person will have the right to be properly attributed, and the right to protect the "integrity" in their work. Labor and Democrat senators sitting on the Senate Committee recommended that these rights should not be waivable in advance. A contrary view was taken by the majority report.

There has been a lot of hoo-ha in the press about the "maker" of a film. So who is the maker of the film? The Australian Writers Guild says that's easy - obviously the writer. The United Kingdom says it's the director. France includes the composer. Germany includes the sound recordist. And the Americans give the Academy Award for the Best Picture to the producer.

So what's the problem? Why not give moral rights in the film to everyone - the producer, the director, the writer. What about the great costumes in *Priscilla*? They made the film. You'll have to include the costume designer. And the sets in *Romeo and Juliet*? Must include the set designer. And the cinematography in *The English Patient*? Wouldn't have been half the film without the director of photography. And what about the guys who did the animatronics in *Babe*? Whack them in as well. And that Oxygene music as they are going over the top in *Gallipoli*? Surely the composer should get moral rights in the film.

So now everyone has moral rights in the film. But they also have moral rights in their little bits and pieces. The costume designer has moral rights in the costumes. The set designer has moral rights in the set. The composer has moral rights in the music. The writer has moral rights in the script.

And everyone is happy, flush with rights. And then they disagree.

They are all set. Tight budget, tight timetable. They are a bit over budget, and a bit behind schedule. And it starts raining. And one of the actors gets appendicitis. So the producer has to cut a scene. Just a small scene. "Just a small scene," says the writer. "Pivotal it is, Pivotal." "Not the scene with the fluoro volleyball net in the middle of the rock formation," says the set designer. "My daughter helped me design that and I promised her it would be there." "OK," says the producer. "We'll cut the next scene." "Not the next scene," says the writer. "I wrote that scene specially for my ex-next door neighbour." "Not the scene with my specially designed bikini," says the costume designer. "you can't cut that scene." "Well I'm not sticking around," says the actor. "I've got to be in Prague next week, so hurry up and make up your minds."

Films are collaborative. But at the end of the day, someone has to blow the whistle, call time out and make a decision. It's tough. But that's what the producer does. Balance all the different interests and make a decision. And that's why the writer sold her script to this producer. Because she trusts him with her script. That's why the set designer decided to work with this producer. Because she trusts him to respect her sets. That's why the distributor is willing to pay an advance for the film produced by this producer. Because it trusts him to deliver the film that they agreed upon on time. That's why the investors invested in the film produced by this producer. Because they trust him to bring it in on budget, on time and in line with what they were promised.

The producer is the catalyst, bringing all the elements together. And the producer needs to have final control. As circumstances change, the film has to evolve and change to meet revised budgets or timetable.

And what about after the film is made? There's a sale to German television. The set designer is thrilled - her second cousin lives in Munich and will see her name in television lights. The costume designer is delighted - she is trying to get work in Frankfurt and this will raise her profile. The investor is over the moon. It will recoup 20 per cent of its investment. But the broadcaster tells the producer to cut the film by two minutes to fit it into primetime. The producer looks at the new cut, balances all the interests, and then agrees to sign on the dotted line. The television station schedules the film. The writer goes ballistic.

# TED EVANS AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

AS SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, TED EVANS PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE ONGOING PROCESS OF ECONOMIC REFORM. HIS DISTINGUISHED CAREER HAS TAKEN TED EVANS FROM HIS HOME TOWN OF IPSWICH THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND, WHERE HE RECEIVED THE UNIVERSITY MEDAL, TO THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND IN WASHINGTON, EXECUTIVE POSITIONS AT THE COMMONWEALTH BANK AND THE RESERVE BANK OF AUSTRALIA AND ON TO HEAD THE TREASURY IN CANBERRA. WITH TAX REFORM ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S AGENDA, HEAR TED EVANS EVALUATE THE FISCAL LANDSCAPE AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE.

SPEAKER : TED EVANS (Secretary to the Treasury)  
DATE : Tuesday 17 February 1998  
TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm  
VENUE : Mallesons' Conference Room, Level 60  
Gov Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney

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The writer seeks an injunction. Set designer and costume designer are angry. Producer is angry, but also very scared because the television broadcaster looks like suing him. Its taken off the air. Court case heard. Case is thrown out of court. But who cares about the court case. It's already been taken off air. It will not go back. The schedule is full. The producer has lost all credibility and goodwill in Germany. The producer contemplates the future. How will he pay his legal bills? How will he ever make another film?

Many commentators in the press have been arguing that investors, distributors and producers have been scaremongering. But these are not idle threats. Moral rights cases are not imaginary. Salvador Dali once threatened a theatrical production because he said that the accessories "denatured" his costumes. The accessories were not even visible by the audience, and the case was ultimately thrown out of court. But not before the play was put on hold. The estate of the original set designer of the Passion Play in Oberamagau stopped the director changing the sets. The estate of Samuel Beckett stopped a staging of his play *Waiting for Godot* because they did not approve of women playing male characters. It clearly is an "everyman" play.

Distributors are scared. Investors are scared. There is a risk that the film will not be delivered on time, or at all. A small risk. The writers have said in the

press, they are not economic vandals. But a risk is a risk. And, give an investor the choice between bricks and mortar investment, film loses out. Give a distributor the choice between committing upfront to an Australian film and a New Zealand film (where moral rights waivers are possible upfront), it significantly increases the risk of the Australian film missing out. Distributors and investors need to be assured that there will not be any nasty little surprises, and will require the producer to obtain upfront waivers from everyone involved in the film. If the writer does not trust the producer enough to waive moral rights in advance, then the writer should not sell their script to the producer and should find another producer. If the set designer does not trust the producer enough to waive their moral rights in advance, then they should seek work on someone else's film.

Film production at present is a difficult and drawn out process, exposing the producer to many risks. Making that process more difficult and riskier is unlikely to improve the quality of films or encourage the growth of the industry in Australia. It is necessary to have the ability to obtain upfront waivers from creative contributors.

*(Therese Catanzariti is a film and television lawyer with Mallesons Stephen Jaques)*

## BAZ LUHRMANN REPLIES

Dear Editor

As a film maker who has worked all over the world, I think Australia should be proud of the great contribution its writers make. Without them, our wonderful, unique and extraordinary stories would not be told.

It is my passion to tell stories and moral rights are essential for me to protect that telling. With moral rights protection, when an audience sees a film that I've written, whether it is today or in 50 years, they will know they are seeing the work as I want them to see it.

For some ridiculous reason, the proposed Moral Rights legislation plans to give moral rights with one hand and take them away with the other, through a waiver.

This is a bad joke.

The screen Producers Association of Australia (SPAA) has said it has no objection to me having moral rights over works I've written, but insisting on an automatic waiver would suggest otherwise. Producers seem to trust writers' judgments on creative matters, but only up to a certain point - the point they decide they don't need them any more. If they expect a writer to have a responsibility to the work and the producer, surely that responsibility should be reciprocated. That's what moral rights are all about.

The introduction of Moral Rights legislation is long overdue in Australia - to allow these Moral Rights to be taken away with a waiver would not only be offensive, but immoral.

*Warm regards  
Baz Luhrmann*

# BOOK REVIEWS

John McConnell

## THE MINISTRY: CAN ONE SMALL BUREAUCRACY SABOTAGE WORLD MARKETS?

By Peter Hartcher  
HarperCollins, pb 1997, rrp \$24.95  
ISBN 0 7322 5772 7

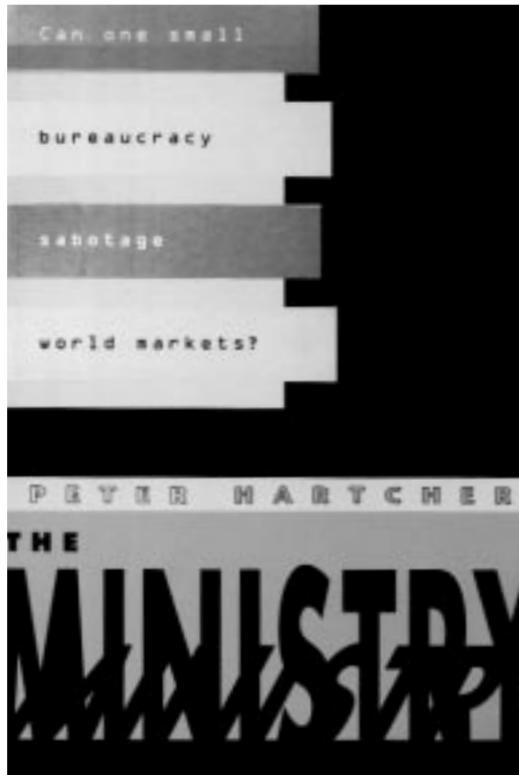
Imagine an association of people, a club. Now, applications to join this club come under the domain of the club's leaders. Nothing unusual about that. Wait, this club is funded out of the public purse. Not uncommon, these days. But this club makes policy on the running of a national economy. Unusual, but not unique.

The club in question is in fact a government department. It is a government department that runs rather like a club. A very powerful government department. Probably, the most powerful department in the country. Indeed, it is one of the most powerful government departments in the global economy. The country is Japan - runner-up only to the United States economy in size.

No, the department is not the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, known widely to foreigners as MITI. It is Japan's Ministry of Finance or Okurasho (Great Storehouse Ministry). You may be wondering whether a book about a government department can be very interesting. Well, Peter Hartcher - a journalist with the *Australian Financial Review* - has crafted this work very carefully indeed. In *The Ministry: Can One Small Bureaucracy Sabotage World Markets?* Hartcher argues that the Okurasho is more than just another government department. In addition to its powerful economic and financial role in Japan's policy-making process, the Okurasho runs a

selective recruitment program, and even a marriage bureau for elite members of the club. Down the track, when these elite officials are ready to retire, it places them in key posts in other institutions. In between, the ministry has promoted these career officials along a fast well-paid track, and maybe even protected them where they have acted improperly. It gains commitment and sacrifice from its members. It shelters them from external attacks.

One should never be surprised at the human propensity to form (exclusive) clubs. Or at the outcome. Not only does the Ministry of Finance predate the post World War Two constitution by (a mere) 1269 years; its prewar personnel and principles survived the post-war changes. Cultural and financial foundations form a powerful alliance. Continuity in leadership results in continuity in practices and values. And so the Ministry of Finance has developed a culture resistant to outside pressure, even to pressure exerted by Japan's political leaders. The result? The ministry's primary goal, the author argues, has become self-interest. Peter Hartcher believes that the Okurasho has abused power, favoured political allies, and intimidated potential enemies.



The servant, Hartcher says, has become the master. The ministry recruits mainly lawyers to its elite streams, especially Tokyo University law graduates. There is an overwhelming preference for lawyers rather than economists. Not that economics is regarded as unimportant. Far from it. But the ministry's way is to train its own in economics. Its preference is for generalist administrators who see economics as but one of the buttons to be pushed on the policy panel. The preponderance of (Tokyo University) law graduates is evident in policy outcomes, according to the author.

Is it any wonder, asks Peter Hartcher, that the Okurasho displays an institutional preference for regulation over market forces? Yet, this is not without paradox. The ministry favours an expansive state role in microeconomics, while its macroeconomic shingle supports a shrunken state. Resolution: "both approaches resist change in Japan's status quo and

preserve the power of the Okurasho". Self-interest surfaces also in the ministry's success at ensuring that the job of stimulating the economy falls on monetary policy rather than fiscal measures. For this leaves the Okurasho, which is responsible for the Japanese budget, free to achieve its particular fiscal aims.

Naturally, there is considerable discussion on the role of the Ministry of Finance in the bubble economy years, and the recessionary aftermath. Peter Hartcher portrays a macroeconomic stage where players "lose money" and "tight budgets" shift the script into the excesses of the bubble economy. It was a time of asset inflation and hyperliquidity. A time when brokers traded in membership rights to golf clubs that soared above the value of some stockmarkets in medium-sized countries. A time when a Japanese firm (Mitsui Real Estate) paid US \$610m for a Manhattan building (Exxon) when Exxon's asking price was US \$375m - just to rate a mention in the Guinness Book of Records. A time when the value of Japanese real estate was equal to about half the value of all land on the face of the earth. A time which led to the questioning of the Ministry of Finance's competence:

**After pumping Japan's economy up into an unsustainable "bubble" in the late 1980s, the Okurasho then punctured it, plunging Japan in the early 1990s into its first homegrown recession since World War II. Cabinet ministers accuse it of sacrificing the national good for its own lust for power. Other government agencies publicly criticise it for suppressing change, protecting its private-sector friends and penalising commercial initiative. Eminent foreign observers challenge its credibility and question its statistics.**

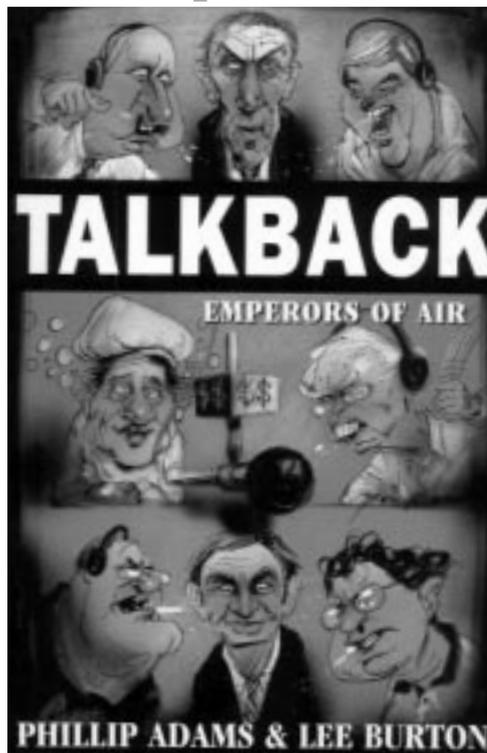
Peter Hartcher weaves this story together in an absorbing way, building a strong case that here is "a political, economic and intellectual force without parallel in the developed world". He concludes that the Ministry of Finance has become a liability. That it is a civil service institution that has lost its way. He believes that reforms to date have been inadequate. The author presents a convincing case in favour of further reform of Japan's Ministry of Finance.

**TALKBACK: EMPERORS OF AIR**  
By Phillip Adams and Lee Burton  
Allen & Unwin, pb 1997, rrp \$16.95  
ISBN 1 86448 325 3

Forget rises and falls in interest rates. Put to one side the roller-coaster ride on the stock exchange. For here is talkback radio, where emotions shoot up and down as contact is made with the magic microphone, and where crusades constitute the daily agenda. Or should that read personal ambition instead of crusades? Talkback radio is where the daily dealers in "moral panics" reign. The shock jocks. The talkback tyros.

*Talkback: Emperors of Air*, by Phillip Adams and Lee Burton contains edited extracts of exchanges between the emperors of the airwaves and their callers. John Laws, Alan Jones, Stan Zemanek, Steve Price, Wayne Roberts, Bob Francis, Brian Wilshire and Howard Sattler - and their listeners struggle to set the record straight - or at least to get their point across the airwaves. Lee Burton teaches media studies at RMIT. Phillip Adams and Lee Burton share an attachment to the ABC.

*Talkback: Emperors of Air* was inspired by a 1996 SBS television documentary, *Demons at Drivetime*. Phillip Adams has contributed the introductory chapter. Radio, he says, encourages arrogance. It rewards opinionated people. Not so TV. There, the bland reign. But the personality is the (radio) program. So radio both develops and depends on self-aggrandisement. Talkback radio, Phillip Adams states, "relies self-reliance, on self-confidence, on raw, insatiable ego." The world of radio consists of clear-cut issues, as well as goodies and villains. Emotions pour out across the airwaves at the push of a button.



Phillip Adams, principal focus is on John Laws, Alan Jones and Stan Zemanek, for he was working at Sydney's 2UE when each of these broadcasters joined the staff. "I was able to learn from their example," Phillip Adams observes, "and refuse to follow it." Adams labels Alan Jones "a genuine ideologue". He describes John Laws as "detached, disinterested, feigning rage and enthusiasms".

Phillip Adams is scathing towards Stan Zemanek. He once compared the Zemanek brain to a Surprise pea prior to immersion. Subsequently, Adams issued an apology - to the Surprise pea. Mind you, Stan Zemanek is not averse to stating his point of view, to put it mildly, and has fired insults at Phillip Adams on more than one occasion.

Phillip Adams sees himself as an ageing leftie surrounded by conservative colleagues. He suggests some reasons why this is so, including the dynamics of radio. This leads Phillip Adams into simplistic territory. He seems to have Alan Jones mainly in mind, but strays into sweeping generalisations. A right-winger "is a political reductionist, a populist, a sloganiser" with "the ability to find somebody to blame". So "right-wingers bang the table, sink the boot, blame the victim", while "broadcasters with social democrat credentials try to be reasonable, to see the other side of the story, to be compassionate and socially responsible". Unless they've got Stan Zemanek or Alan Jones or some such person in their sights, of course.

Meanwhile, Phillip Adams presents John Laws as an ego intoxicated with the fame (and fortune) that accompanies celebrity status, remarking that Laws "will happily adjust his politics to the winds of change". He also suggests that talkback radio is a shining example of the "dumbing down" of the media. The extracts published in the book support that proposition. They are based on monitoring undertaken in September 1996 and May 1997. These periods happened to coincide with Pauline Hanson's maiden speech in the House of Representatives, and the subsequent release of what is said to be her manifesto.

*Talkback: Emperors of Air* includes selected exchanges between the emperors and their callers. These discussions - if we can call them that - are grouped into sections related to "emperors" and themes. Some brief observations are included on the transcripts. There are plenty of examples of a trait common to many talkback hosts. When confronted with a reasonable claim, they overreact. A caller tries to put a reasonable argument about crime in Cabramatta, to be met with the response: "So there's no problem in Cabramatta, Jane?" Bingo!

The transcripts contain many other practices common to such programs. There is a brief chapter in which Leonie Lamont recalls ten great (i.e. low) moments in talkback radio. The book does include, however, some material on talkback techniques; for example, the screening of callers and reliance on (anonymous) scribes. Talkback radio is a topic that could do with much more attention and analysis.

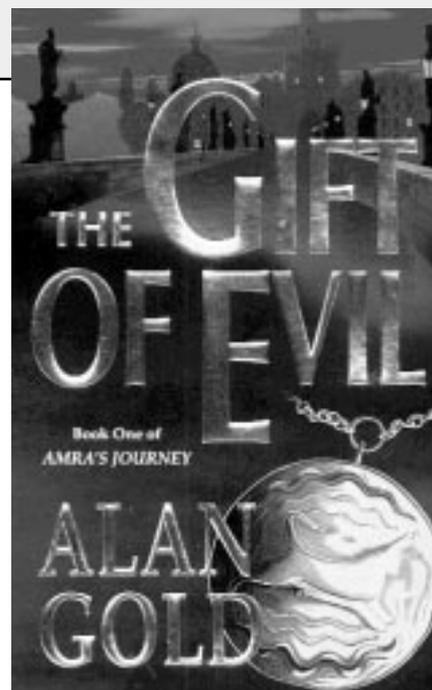
*(John McConnell is the co-author of several senior economics text books)*

# STOLEN PROPERTY

ALAN GOLD'S *THE GIFT OF EVIL* WILL BE LAUNCHED AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE IN FEBRUARY. IT IS A TALE OF MURDER AND RETRIBUTION WHICH TOUCHES ON ONE OF THE MOST BURNING ISSUES OF THE LATE 20TH CENTURY - THE RETURN OF PROPERTY STOLEN IN TIMES OF WAR. STALIN'S RUSSIA, NAZI EUROPE AND OUR OWN INDIGENOUS CULTURES UNDER WHITE SETTLEMENT OF TERRA AUSTRALIS ARE ALL CENTRAL TO THE DISCUSSION. LIVES HAVE BEEN WASTED, SURVIVORS RETURN TO REMNANT BELONGINGS STRIPPED OF EARLIER MEANING. WHETHER AN APARTMENT IN A EUROPEAN CITY, FAMILY ESTATES, OR A WILDERNESS HABITAT, LAND AND POSSESSION OF LAND, HAS COMMUNITIES IN TURMOIL ACROSS THE GLOBE.

**SPEAKERS** : COLIN TATZ (Criminologist) & PROF ANDREW RIEMER  
**TOPIC** : *The Gift of Evil: Who Owns Property Stolen in Times of War?*  
**DATE** : Tuesday 3 February 1998  
**TIME** : 5.00 for 5.30pm  
**VENUE** : BT Function Room (Level to be advised)  
2 Chifley Square, Sydney

FREE TO ASSOCIATES / ASSOCIATES' PARTNERS \$2  
STUDENTS \$5/ OTHERS \$10  
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# REVIEW OF THE REVIEWERS

Stephen Matchett

The canonisation of Manning Clark is delayed by apostates disputing his central importance to Australian history. That, at least is the implication of a range of essays and reviews on Clark catalysed by Humphrey McQueen's recent, *Suspect History: Manning Clark and the Future of Australia's Past* (Wakefield Press 238pp \$16.95).

The study of history always focuses on the reconstruction of ur-pasts to suit the intellectual agendas of those with the time and the inclination to conscript the dead into contemporary disputes. And with the old left coalition of the public sector unions, cultural studies academics and Democrats politically irrelevant in public policy, its theologians are retreating to Australia's past as the one doctrinal field where they may still prevail. Sadly they are still presenting the nostrums of the 1970s; that the function of tertiary education is to inculcate a hatred of free enterprise and a belief that government intervention alone can make Australian an egalitarian democratic society.

The argument of the Whitlamites is sadly familiar, the ruling class and their servants control the popular construction of Australian history to exclude the oppressed (variously constructed to include indigenous Australians, post 1945 migrant Australians, female Australians and all other hyphenated Australians other than the Anglos).

It is an argument with much to commend it. To criticise the Whitlamites is no reason to praise their opponents. But the fact that the conservatives have an historical line of their own is neither unusual nor particularly sinister. John Howard, who inexplicably appears to lack an intellectual champion, wants his version of Australian history to be accepted as much as Don Watson wanted the version he wrote for Paul Keating. It was ever thus. The interface between historians and politicians in need of the sanction of the past has existed since Thucydides was a lad. But in the last couple of years the keepers of the Whitlamite faith, what Gerard Henderson calls "the

Gough is great" school of historiography is fighting the good fight with a last ditch ferocity.

Having lost the policy battle to the economically literate and the political struggle to the Coalition they do not want to lose their control of Australia's past. Sean Brawley "*A Comfortable and Relaxed Past*": *John Howard and the "Battle of History"* Electronic Journal of Australian and New Zealand History (<http://www.jcu.edu.au/aff/history/home.htm>) put it well in his "report from the front":

**With the events of 1996 only adding further weight, it is hard to imagine that any historian in Australia is not now aware of the political implications and potency of their craft.**

And as they make their last ditch stand, the banner many historians are rallying to is Manning Clark's. The defence of Clark has three basic tenets. Firstly that the *Courier Mail's* claim that Clark was at worst a Soviet agent or at best "an agent of influence" was ludicrous but useful to discredit him and, by implication, the broad-left domination of Australian history. Secondly, that criticisms of Clark's scholarship have the same ill-intent. Thirdly, that the near terminal decline in interest in Australian history results from conservative attempts to cover up the grim realities of our nation's past.

The tone for the latest sortie in defence of Clark was led by Don Watson in an essay (*Australian's Review of Books*, July 1997) which demonstrated that close connection with the mood of the Australian people he so brilliantly displayed in the 1996 campaign as Paul Keating's chief of doctrine.

Watson does not fear the sweeping generalisation and covers a lot of ground to make a variety of points. His various concerns include; our lack of respect for innovators in Australian history, the wilful misunderstanding of Manning Clark's conception of history as story, the villainies of conservatives who will not acknowledge Clark's truth and the need for us all to learn the dark themes of our national past.

In essence the essay is a partisan defence of people and subjects Watson approves of and a vigorous exercise of his own favourite hobby-horses. It is a long, self-indulgent piece characterised by writing best described as colourful. Consider for example Watson's denunciation of people seduced too-young by what he implies, but carefully does not state, is an obsession with history as a chronicle of antiquarian evidence.

**Cliches tumble from their mouths, they fall prey to fantasies of lost fortunes or gentility, they imitate their fathers when they should be defying them, they dress too old, go a bad colour and repel all but fellow pedants from their circle. They become the dreary caricatures of history, the subject's mummies, its shrunken heads. Yet, unthinkable as it seems, they have been known to find their way into history and education departments. The places where history is most influentially taught and written have often harboured history's own worst enemies.**

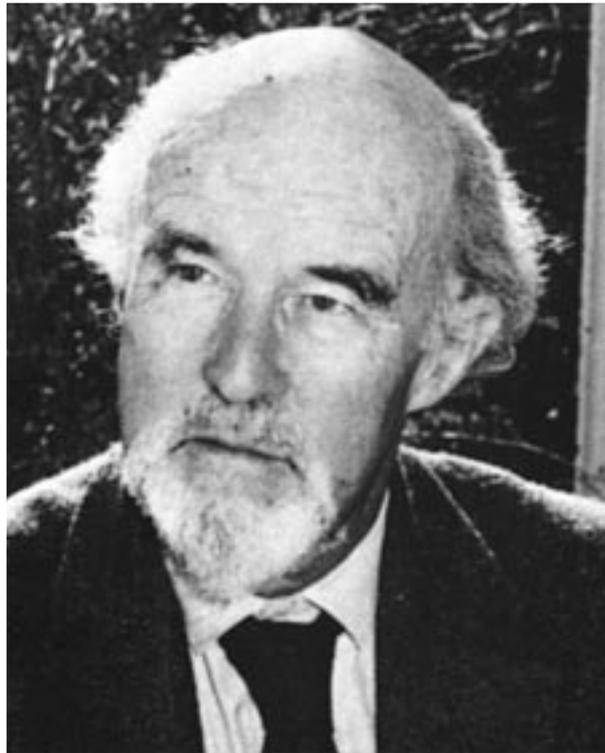
Watson probably also disapproves of advocates of child labour but there is something sinister in his denunciation of the historical narrowers and straighteners. The best historians, "set themselves tasks that require more imagination, passion and skill than mere fact grubbing". In fact, he argues that to let the grubbers of facts run the discipline will only lead to a further decline in the study of Australian history. Watson proceeds to talk about the real craft of history, the search for signs and meanings behind the dull litany of names and dates. He praises at length the work of cross disciplinary historians, Greg Denning and the Pulitzer Prize winning Rhys Isaac and warns against the dullness which has laid the study of Australia's past so low.

Which is all sound enough, in a florid hand-wringing way, but Watson's purpose is not merely to lament the dullards and praise the innovators among those who profess Australia's past. It is also to establish a demonology which renders those who do not share Watson's idea of what makes good history responsible for the discipline's decline.

Which is where after some thousands of words Manning Clark comes in. To include Clark in the same class as Denning and Isaac is tendentious at best. Whatever critics of their methodology claim, none would dispute Denning and Isaac's technical skill, breadth of vision and commitment to

understanding the past in its own terms. In Clark's case there are many scholars who will do just that. By coupling Clark to Denning and Isaac, Watson seeks to rescue his work from the critics:

**Australian history will not be revived by proscribing certain varieties or closing the door on new ways of approaching it. That applies to Denning and equally to Clark. The vilification of Clark destroys more than his reputation. By attaching personal slander to (arguable) critique, Clark's worst critics threaten to put all his work beyond our reach and with it a conception of history which gave birth to our best historians, a sustained pride of excitement about the story of this country and an unexampled six-volume history - which for all its flaws, continues to enlighten and threatens no one. The assault is not only on Clark and his work but on history itself.**



Don't worry about the quality of writing, don't concern yourself about matters of fact and certainly do not attack the generous spirited Clark as a historian lest the blows bring down the crumbling temple of the just and virtuous interpretation of Australia's past.

This is a manifesto for history as homily and Watson goes on to argue that the historian as story teller is an honourable and necessary function. This is sound common sense, the huge market for popular history as narrative yarn attests to the existence of an audience which would love to read Australian history if presented in a form which it could comprehend. The problem is that in praising Clark as a story teller, while excluding him from the standards of scholarly rigour, Watson is selective. He makes a sound case against the political conservatives for refusing to acknowledge that Australian history is more than a triumphal long march of every whig:

**Even if it could be justified on moral and intellectual grounds (which it simply can't be), leaving out the grisly and sad bits is precisely the thing to do if you want to drive kids away from history. Without the bad they won't believe the good - and they won't believe *in* it either. Without it, you deny everything we know about the structure of human minds. Without it, you may as well join up with the politically correct, who also want to instruct the young in pieties rather than realities.**

The problem is that Watson uses this argument to avoid the common criticism that Clark was simply not much of an historian, at least as measured by the competencies of the craft practised by Denning or Isaac.

Which reduces the debate to one over which pieties lead to historiographical salvation, those of the reactionaries or the true followers of Clark. There is little doubt where Watson's sympathies lie:

**If historians choose to pursue the melancholy themes of our history in the story of the frontier, the immigrant ships, among women, in the loss of the natural environment, in the story of the suburbs or the selections, it just may turn out that the "guilt industry" is a very productive, useful and even "uplifting" one.**

The Watson defence set the tone for the reviews of Humphrey McQueen's *Suspect History*. The Whitlamite faith, that only right-thinking defenders of the deserving oppressed have anything to say on the nation's history, was expressed with passion in a range of reviews which shared Watson's judgement if not his erudition.

Peter McPhee (*The Age*, 7 June) wrote from within

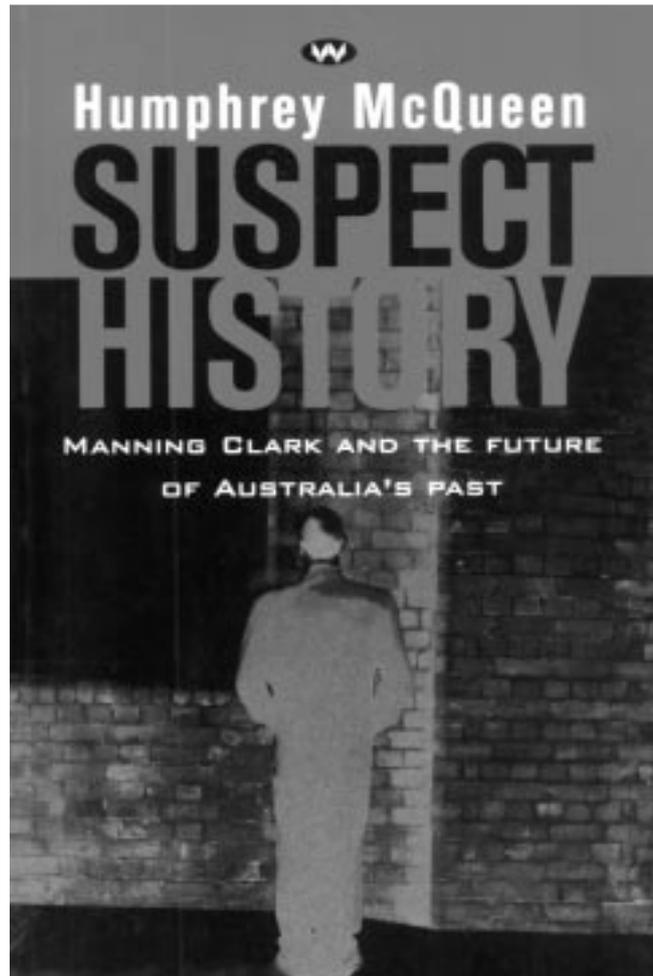
the Watson paradigm in reviewing McQueen's book. On the battlefield of history the forces of all that is good and true form a line of battle behind Clark's standard: "Clark has come to personify the demon stalking through the nightmares of Australian elites, the accumulators and 'narrowers' as he called them."

Like Watson, McPhee made the point that Clark's idea of Australian history as a battlefield was not straightforward leftist determinism. But while carefully avoiding a judgement, McPhee accepted the importance of McQueen's purpose in defending Clark: "Collective memory is the core of national identity and historians who remind us of the unpalatable truths of our past are thereby interrogating our present and future."

Roger Marwick (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 June) produced a silly, self-righteous review which demonstrates why so many ordinary readers who could become interested in history as a means to help them work out why things are as they are ignore the discipline. He began by lamenting that history had become

caught up in contemporary politics, "we might have shot our Aborigines but not our historians", and then proceeded to do exactly what he denounced. The review was a partisan litany endorsing McQueen's criticism of those who had sullied Clark's reputation.

But the extraordinary stupidity of the *Courier Mail's* absurd accusation on Clark's links with the Soviet Union does not have much to do with his quality as an historian. This is a point which does not bother Marwick at all because Clark is all that stands between the dispossessed and the miseries caused, you guessed it, by economic change in contemporary Australia.



**No ruling class can tolerate too long a written history that does not reinforce its legitimacy... Discrediting Clark as Stalin's apologist is a vital part of rendering unthinkable any Left alternatives to the rampant market. And silencing those who might espouse them.**

Among the broad left jeremiads Peter Ryan was a voice in the wilderness, but sadly an intemperate and unreasoning one. Ryan was actually foolish enough to provide some evidence for Marwick's claim in a review of McQueen's book which added nothing to the debate beyond apoplectic abuse, (*Courier Mail*, 14 June). Ryan offered no discussion of McQueen's argument beyond a rant, calling the book "an incontinent expulsion of bile, with all the other disagreeable humours of the human mind and body".

A review which rendered the case for Clark almost sympathetic.

Brian Matthews (*Australian*, June 28) did not much care for the dispute. His review tried to remove it from the realm of the political to that of the personal and discussed Clark's private, spiritual life as the crucial factors that shaped him as an historian. It was a scholar's review which chose not to clamber up onto the barricades and as such probably made its author no friends among the urgers of the Clark legend. Matthews, quite rightly belled the reactionary cat by arguing that Clark's work should focus on his six volume history of Australia rather than any alleged political follies:

**Regardless of whatever may have been Clark's meanderings and statements in Moscow, the *History* remains central: if it didn't exist, there would be no apparent need to expend huge energies on discrediting Clark because there would be no potent Australian historical monument to fight over.**

The problem for Clark's acolytes is that the *History* is shaped by its author's own highly individual spiritual struggles. Matthews is not critical of Clark as historian, but his description of the personal factors that shaped his work speak for themselves:

**Throughout his life and in all his important writing, Clark, was among other things a messianist. He deeply desired the comfort of a Messiah - the bearer of the explanation that would show what it had**

**all been about. he imposed this need on a variety of figures - Lenin was one, Henry Lawson and Dostoevsky were others - distorting them and often misconceiving them one way and another in the process. He found no Messiah as consistently interesting as Jesus Christ with whom he had a lifelong, rocky negotiation.**

It was left to Imre Salusinszky (*Australian's Review of Books*, August 1997) to point to the folly of the whole argument over Clark. Salusinszky's review of McQueen made the fundamental point that the debate was antiquarian, that as the policy caravan had moved on there was no point in arguing over the moral strength of Clark's work. The triumph of the market economy rendered Clark as political sage irrelevant:

**As a political commentator (not as a historian), Clark is little more than an index of the way the 50s have retreated into the exotic: neither of the terms in which he habitually stated the political alternatives available to him - Christ or 1917 - figures to any noticeable extent in the politics, economics, social policy or statecraft of the 1990s.**

Salusinszky is too clever by half in writing off ideology as an engine of politics and history. The last time this was done was the 1950s, the decade he dismisses, when Daniel Bell also pronounced its demise. But he does so for a purpose, to argue that if the ideological environment of Clark's concerns is now irrelevant, perhaps he should not be assessed as an historian at all in a conventional sense.

**Some of the criticisms of the *History* may be answered by the suggestion that Clark is less a historian in the tradition of Macaulay than a mythographer in the tradition of Vico, Frazer or Spengler.**

And for the acolytes of Manning Clark and his exotic, profoundly despairing idea of Australia's past, that is the problem. Put simply, his tale is one for long past times and as those who share Clark's concerns similarly pass so will interest in his work.

This is not because the conservatives have triumphed. Manning Clark probably still sells more books than Geoffrey Blainey and the monarchist version of Australian history as a

boy's own adventure is a good deal more fatuous than Clark's manichean vision.

Nor is it because Australians have no interest in our evolution into a relatively tolerant, pluralist democracy. The stories of this accomplishment are ones people want to hear. Working historians like Eric Rolls and Patsy Adam-Smith have tales that people outside the academy delight in. The political histories of Gerard Henderson and Paul Kelly have shaped the interface between history and public policy for a decade.

But the generality of university historians and the reactionaries of both right and left who use the scholarly practice of history as an armoury are preaching in the wilderness precisely because their arguments simply do not interest people who read history for pleasure and instruction rather than for a living.

In common with the humanities, academic history suffers a problem of accessibility, Greg Denning is a fine historian but when it comes to telling a tale Robert Hughes he is not. The fact that one sells large numbers of books on aspects of history to general readers is no criticism of either of them.

But to argue that the decline in the study of history is caused by conservatives denying the grim realities of our national past is a nonsense. There was never much of a market for narrowly academic history simply because its concerns and language are the preserves of specialists.

It does not have to be so. There are excellent examples of scholars who participate in public life and whose research is accessible to ordinary readers without any sacrifice of professional integrity. Henry Reynolds, epochal scholarships on the dispossession of indigenous Australia and Helen Irving's work on federation make the point.

This is entirely as it should be, the fact that so few academic historians bother to acknowledge a world beyond the departmental tea room is a tragedy of Australian intellectual life.

But to argue that if the people would but listen they would learn why Australia's history justifies whatever the broad-left verities of the week happen to be is naive at best.



# CELEBRATING FEDERATION

AUSTRALIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN FEBRUARY 1998, WILL BE ONE IMPORTANT STEP ON THE ROAD TO AN AUSTRALIAN REPUBLIC. LIKE FEDERATION, A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, AUSTRALIA'S DIVERSE INTEREST GROUPS SEEM MORE APART THAN LIKELY TO COME TO A CONSENSUS. BUT AS HELEN IRVING SHOWS IN *TO CONSTITUTE A NATION* (CAMBRIDGE, 1997) ORDINARY AUSTRALIANS ARE CAPABLE OF EXTRAORDINARY MOVES. FEDERATION WAS ONE SUCH UNDERTAKING.

HEAR HELEN IRVING AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE EVALUATE 100 YEARS OF FEDERATION AND WHAT MIGHT BE AHEAD WITH FURTHER CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.

**SPEAKER** : **HELEN IRVING** (Academic and Author/*To Constitute A Nation* [Cambridge, 1997])

**TOPIC** : *Celebrating Federation*

**DATE** : Tuesday 24 February 1998

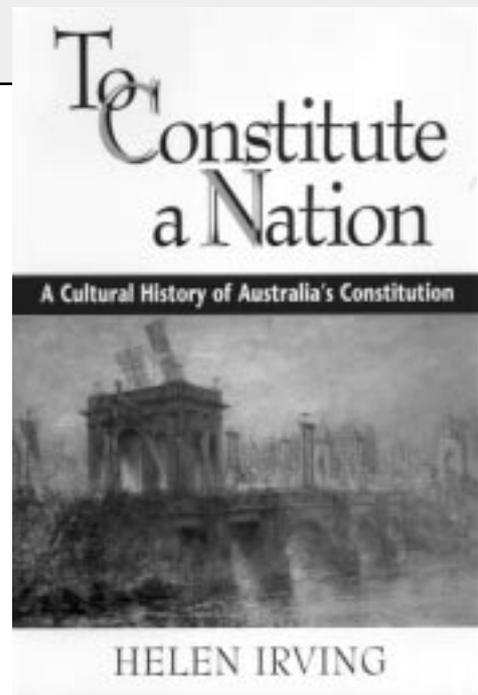
**TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm

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## GERARD HENDERSON'S

# MEDIA WATCH

### CONSTITUTIONAL CAPERS

Many are called. But few are chosen.

A surprising number of Australia's newspaper columnists wanted to be delegates at the February 1998 Constitutional Convention in Old Parliament House, Canberra. There are two roads to the Constitutional Convention. By nomination or by election. Australians could nominate themselves or agree to have their names placed on a ticket submitted by political parties - Labor, Liberal, National and Democrats. Columnists who agreed to have their names go forward to the Federal government as (potential) nominated delegates for the Constitutional Convention included :

- Paul Kelly - *The Australian's* international editor
- Robert Manne - columnist for *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*
- Malcolm Fraser - columnist for *The Australian*

Paul Kelly was on New South Wales Liberal leader Peter Collins' ticket. Robert Manne and Malcolm Fraser were proposed by (then) Democrats leader Cheryl Kernot. As it turned out, all three were overlooked by Prime Minister John Howard and Special Minister of State Nick Minchin when they hand-picked the nominated delegates. Paul Kelly, Robert Manne and Malcolm Fraser believe that Australia should have an Australian head of state.

It is a matter of record that prominent monarchists scored much better than prominent republicans for nominated places at the Constitutional Convention. John Howard and Nick Minchin looked favourably on Dame Leonie Kramer (Australia's last dame - she was gonged in Malcolm Fraser's time) and Sir David Smith (Australia's last sir - he was gonged by the Queen herself). Other prominent monarchists to get a free ride to Old Parliament house talk-fest include Lloyd Waddy, Digger James and Geoffrey Blainey. The latter is not a regular columnist but writes occasionally for newspapers.

The only weekly or bi-weekly columnist to get the nod from the Prime Minister and the Special Minister of State was the *Daily Telegraph's* Miranda Devine. It's not clear just what the Federal government had in mind with this nomination. In any event, soon after the nominations were announced, it was reported in *The Australian* that Ms Devine

supported Australia having an Australian head of state. Can this be correct?

When the Australian Electoral Commission announced the names of Australians who were standing for the 76 elected positions at the Constitutional Convention it became evident that, lo and behold, some columnists put their hands up. Not Paul Kelly or Robert Manne or Malcolm Fraser this time around. Obviously they preferred the nominated to the elected option. But there are some braver souls who are willing to test their appeal in the (postal) ballot market place. Step forward:

- P. P. (call me Padraic P.) McGuinness - columnist for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and
- John Stone - weekly columnist for the *Australian Financial Review*

So what have Australia's columnists been up to lately? Apart, that is, from touting for a place at the Constitutional Convention.

### P. P.'S BUNYIP MONARCHY DREAM

Writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 30 October 1997, P. P. McGuinness proudly declared: "I...have been a republican all my adult life." Oh yeah? Well, then, how does P.P. explain his column in *The Australian* on 27 January 1994? Headed "How about a dinky-di monarch?", the column consisted of McGuinness's thoughts on matters monarchical, P. P. commenced with the question "Is the Windsor family thinking of splitting the monarchy?" After supplying an affirmative answer, P.P. asserted that:

- "there is no reason why Australia should, if it remains a monarchy, accept the automatic succession of the British throne.
- "there seems no particular reason why the Australian Parliament could not determine the line of succession for the Australian throne".
- "there does not seem to be any real obstacle to the Queen abdicating in the not too distant future as Queen of Australia in favour of the present heir to the throne" and that
- "there are clear advantages for the British monarchy in such an act"

Then P. P. McGuinness put forward his very own proposal for an Aussie monarchy:

**There is absolutely no reason (as long as we remain a monarchy), why Charles should not become king of Australia renouncing his rights to any other throne and residing permanently in Australia. All his current problems would fade away. Australians have got too much sense to care much about private sexual peccadilloes, and instead of the hypocritical morality of the Brits we tend to laugh such things off. Nor would many Australians worry about a king who might divorce or remarry, since he would not be nominal head of an established church, and certainly we would impose no religious restrictions, nor worry about whether a future royal bride might be herself a divorcee, let alone an American (the problem for Edward VIII).**

**There are clear advantages for Britain in such an arrangement, since if William were heir apparent to the British throne he would be visiting his father frequently in Australia (and vice versa), and of course on his accession there would be a close personal link between the two monarchs (as of course would be the case while the Queen remains on her throne). With issues, however phoney, of supposedly limited independence in the present shared monarch set aside, the republican movement would be likely to wither on the vine.**

Now, just four years after advocating the creation of "an indigenous Australian monarchy", P. P. McGuinness sought election to the Constitutional Convention as a republican. However, just to be safe, he directed his preferences (if such there be) to avowed monarchist David Flint.

## **JOHN STONE AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

In his *Australian Financial Review* column of 6 November 1997, John Stone proudly announced that he was standing in Victoria for a Constitutional Convention place on the ticket "For a Non-Political Head of State". Yes, we know. That was the first half of the column. The latter half was devoted to correcting two typographical errors from the previous week. An "of" had been inserted for an "or" and "guff" appeared as "gruff". It was as serious as that. Believe it or not, John Stone moved from typos to (yet more) comments bagging the republican

cause. According to this (confused) line of Stonian thought, Malcolm Turnbull and his Australian Republican Movement cronies don't care much for the Queen. Consequently Turnbull and company won't care much about the Queen's English. Wrote Stone:

**Of course, if the kind of republicanism for which Mr Turnbull's team of glitterati seems to stand should come to pass, we could doubtless stop worrying about such niceties. After all, if you are so demented about getting rid of "an English Queen", whose only remaining power is to appoint our effective head of State (the Governor-General) on our own Prime Minister's recommendation, why would you go on putting up with that really powerful symbol of British imperialism, the English language?**

So there you have it. According to John Stone. An Australian head of state will go hand-in-hand with the dumping of the English language. For such logic, Vote 1 John Stone, "For a Non-Political Head of State".

## **HANG'EM MIRANDA STATES HER CASE**

Then there is Miranda Devine. In some of her August 1997 offerings in the *Daily Telegraph*, Ms Devine:

- Defended Mel Gibson's comments, as told to *Vanity Fair's* Cathy Horyn, that the Fabian Society is intent on controlling the world and that Australia under Bob Hawke had been effectively ruined as part of a "quite well conceived" plan.
- Declared that "the most putrid scourge of a big city is the preponderance of dog poo" and described dogs - all dogs, apparently - as "worm-infested, stinking, slobbering, flea-ridden mutts" who have established "turd tyranny".
- Described critics of the *Daily Telegraph* as "members of the so-called chattering classes", afflicted by "naked snobbery". Miranda Devine was upset by criticism of the *Daily Telegraph* and its various columnists for opposing Kate Carnell's proposed heroin trial in the Australian Capital Territory. Ms Devine reckoned that just over 50 per cent of Australians were opposed to the ACT heroin trial. So, in the name of democracy, it had to be junked: "Democracy is supposed to be rule of the people; it is not elite control which the cappuccino crowd still pines for". Interesting principle. But what about euthanasia which, according to all polls, has clear majority support in Australia? Well the *Daily Telegraph* is opposed to voluntary euthanasia. So that's different, then?

By October 1997 Miranda Devine was still standing tall for propriety and all that. At this time there was a coming together of two momentous events. American sociologist James Q Wilson visited Australia. According to Devine, Wilson is "the architect of the zero-tolerance policing which has slashed New York City's crime rate to a 30 year low...". James Q Wilson's visit to Australia coincided with Year 12 muck-up day. The students of SCECGS Redlands had been out on the town on a treasure hunt which yielded road signs, letter boxes, even a wheel chair (of the empty variety). Shame.

It turned out that, around lunchtime after the night before, Devine had lunched with Wilson. She had been impressed with Wilson's theory that "public drunkenness, street prostitution and pornographic displays can destroy a community more quickly than any team of professional burglars". You bet. And, according to Miranda Devine, there was more:

**Wilson's theory extends to the SCECGS Redlands students in trouble for an overzealous muck up day "treasure hunt" in which 30 road signs, letter boxes and a wheelchair were stolen. North Sydney police have not pressed charges of stealing or malicious damage against the teenagers, leaving discipline to the school.**

**But, over lamb cutlet lunch...yesterday, Wilson said the students should be punished more harshly. An appropriate penalty might be a weekend in jail, community service, "some significant deprivation of liberty". "For the criminal justice system to prevent future crime it has to focus its energies on young offenders."**

**Sixteen-year-olds commit more offences than at any other time of their lives. Only 20 per cent go on to commit more offences, "but you don't know in advance which ones. So the solution is to severely punish early signs of misconduct".**

Let's hope Miranda Devine does not take such wimpish views to the Constitutional Convention next February. Surely she cannot be fair dinkum? Just a weekend in the slammer for the muck-up day pinching of a letter box? Why not corporal punishment, administered by the school? Come to think of it, why not capital punishment administered by the state? Alas it seems that, on this occasion at least, Ms Devine's much acclaimed tough-mindedness was weakened by lamb cutlets over lunch. Shame. Let's hope that Ms Devine returns to her ice-maiden persona as soon as possible.

Many are cold. But few are frozen.

## MIKE GIBSON ON WIMPS, TOPPERS, ETC

Perhaps Miranda Devine could take a lead from Mike (no-nonsense) Gibson. On 8 October 1997 Mike Gibson devoted his *Daily Telegraph* column to Labor Senator Nick Sherry - whose unsuccessful suicide attempt had led the news over the previous days. Tough. You bet. How tough. Well, try these Gibsonisms:

**Which brings me to Senator Sherry, this wretched person for whom we were all supposed to feel sympathy, after he attempted to take his own life. As a dyed-in-the-wool Liberal supporter said to me over a beer the other evening, "No doubt about the Labor mob. They're so bloody hopeless, they can't even neck themselves." Poor taste? Maybe. But what has taste got to do with Australian politics?**

That's tough. That's tasteless. That's Gibson. In case his readers missed the point, Mike went in hard again:

**As one of my mates - who is a staunch Labor supporter - lamented last night, "Why do Labor blokes turn into such wimps?" Hawke was always bursting into tears. Beazley was blubbering in Parliament the other month about stolen Aboriginal children. We have Sherry trying to take the coward's way out. We have Keating declaring that he couldn't accept his life membership of the party, because it would be inappropriate at such a sensitive time. What sort of pussycats are they?**

And, again. Same point. Same issue. Same toughness.

**Kim Beazley and Gareth Evans spoke of Sherry's suicide bid in hushed tones, as though we are supposed to respect the man. As though there should be apologies for what happened.**

**As though we should appreciate the dreadful ordeal to which their unfortunate colleague had been subjected. I don't respect Nick Sherry at all. Nor do I sympathise with him, for the manner in which he attempted to take his own life.**

And yet again. In case *Daily Telegraph* types only read the last paragraph, Gibbo repeated his point that he had no time for Nick Sherry:

**Senator Sherry? He elicits no sympathy from me. Talking of shame, he is a shame. If he is to pick up the remnants of his career, my advice to the Senator is this. Stop snivelling, get a bit of iron in your backbone, and get on with the rest of your life.**

The following week Mike Gibson returned to a familiar topic. Himself. And, as is often the case, his wife Jilly and dog Tilly Devine (no relation) got a mention. You see Mike and Jilly have just bought a house. How about that? With water views? How about that? *Daily Telegraph* readers were provided with a photograph which was captioned: "Dawn of a new house era...views from Mike Gibson's new home". As Mike put it in his cliché-ridden way:

**I am glad we are moving house. We have been extremely happy in the home in which we have lived for the past five years. But life is a series of chapters, and we have turned the page and moved on. I trust that Tilly Devine, our faithful blue heeler, will be accepted by our new neighbours.**

Well done Mike. But let's hope you're not proposing to domicile near Miranda Devine where Tilly can impose "turd tyranny" upon the neighbours. On the other hand...

## **STOP PRESS: ROBERT MANNE ON ROBERT MANNE**

Still Mike Gibson is not the only columnist who feels the need to write about self. Consider your man Robert Manne, for example. Some people regard Professor Manne as conservative, others as a radical. The explanation does not lie in personal pluralism. It's just that Robert Manne has a propensity to change his mind - and to deliver moral lectures before and after each (personal) conversion. Once a Vietnam Moratorium marcher (in the 1970s) he became an outspoken critic of Vietnamese communism (in the 1980s). Once an advocate of the free market (in the early 1990s) he became an economic interventionist (in the mid 1990s). Once a constitutional monarchist; he became a republican. Once an opponent of war crimes trials; he became an advocate of war crime trials. Once an editor of *Quadrant*; he became a former editor of *Quadrant*. And so on.

Previously a columnist for *The Australian*, Manne switched to *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* in August 1997. Since then there has been lotsa Manne self.

- 11 August 1997. Robert Manne explains how he (Robert Manne) "was converted to the republican cause rather late in the day". Again.

- 25 August 1997. Robert Manne writes a sensitive and informative account of the murder of the Latvian Jews by the Nazi aligned Arajs Kommando. The occasion turns on Canada's expulsion of Konrad Kalejs to Australia. Kalejs is alleged to have been a senior operative in the Arajs Kommando. Manne argues, correctly, that "Australian Jews cannot...forgive Konrad Kalejs his crimes". But he maintains that there is nothing that Australia can do about Kalejs. He cannot be deported, apparently. Manne continues: "As everyone acknowledges, it is far too late to try him; an acquittal would be worse than no trial at all". Manne neglects to mention that, not so long ago, he was vehemently opposed to the very concept of war crime trials in the West for murders committed in Europe between 1939 and 1945. So *Age/SMH* readers were denied yet another explanation for yet another Manne conversion.
- 8 September 1997. Robert Manne writes an intelligent assessment of Independent MP Pauline Hanson and her relationship with the Coalition. He comments: "To judge by the opinion polls of the past 20 years and the explosion of press and popular interest whenever dissident voices are heard - Geoffrey Blainey in 1984, John Howard in 1988; Hanson in 1996 - it would seem that many Australians have never accepted the idea of a non-discriminatory immigration policy". And he expresses astonishment at "Mr Howard's reticence and ambivalence on the Hanson front". But Robert Manne neglects to mention that in 1988 he was ambivalent about John Howard's comments and that, as *Quadrant* editor, he proudly published Geoffrey Blainey's critique of the so-called black armband view of history.
- 22 September 1997. It's a return to the self. Again. Robert Manne commences: "If public intellectual life is to have meaning one must argue with one's critics. I am one of the main targets of Mark Davis' new book on the cultural politics of generationalism, *Gangland*. I feel I owe him some response". There followed some 1000 words along with two specific references to Robert Manne's most recent book.
- 6 October 1997. Reflecting on the travel rorts shock/horror/scandal which ended in Nick Sherry's attempted suicide, Robert Manne declares: "What are we to make of the past fortnight of our national politics? For my part, before its shocking conclusion, I had come to think of it as an ugly and ungracious game in which we had all be condemned - as players or commentators or spectators - to play our prescribed parts". He concludes that "like others"

he “can find no easy answer” to the question about whether there is a “better way” in Australian politics. Or something like that.

- 20 October 1997. Robert Manne divides Australia between the elites and ordinary people. The elites can be sub-divided into two sub groups. Business (and the professions associated with business) support “economic rationalism”. Cultural elites (compromising academics, writers, artists and journalists) support “cultural revolution”. Then there are the “ordinary people” who support “sexual morality” and “protective tariffs”. According to Robert Manne.
- 3 November 1997. Robert Manne discusses Jenna Mead’s *bodyjamming* (Random House, 1997) - a response to Helen Garner’s *The First Stone*. The line is that Mead and her fellow contributors have been too tough on Helen Garner. Not to be let out of the picture, Manne devotes the final third of his column to a discussion of what he (Manne) and Judith Brett really said when they debated Mead at the La Trobe University Politics Society some time ago.
- 17 November 1997. Finally it’s back to self again. Robert Manne writes a full column on why he resigned as *Quadrant* editor. He argues that he was opposed “by one group of the [*Quadrant*] old guard [who] had hoped I would turn *Quadrant* into an Australian Thatcherite magazine, socially conservative and economically dry”. Robert Manne declares that “such a direction was not open” to him. Which must have confused all those who recall that, just after becoming *Quadrant* editor, Manne wrote to all Liberal and National Party senators. In a letter dated 30 April 1990 (and written on official *Quadrant* letterhead) Manne boasted that “it was in our pages that the Industrial Relations Club was first identified” and proclaimed that *Quadrant* was “committed to the values of free enterprise, traditional morality, and the open unregulated society”.

Robert Manne’s Thatcherite stance circa April 1990 was not mentioned in his “*Quadrant* and I” *Age/SMH* column of 17 November 1997:

**In the 1980s a new kind of spirit emerged at *Quadrant*. While much superb writing could still be found in its pages, what was most valuable was undermined by too many articles of thoughtlessly reflexive anti-leftism, often written in a bitter and sneering tone.**

**Some readers, even loyal ones, were repelled by this new style. Others found it attractive. For such readers, *Quadrant***

**provided a monthly ideological fix. They became addicted to its hard, polemical style and were convinced by the illusion it fostered: that the issues generated by the cultural revolution of the ‘60s - feminism, environmentalism, multiculturalism, indigenous rights, sexual liberation - were as simple as the communist issue and could be disposed of by a few sharply delivered knockout blows. The 1980s *Quadrant* appealed to a narrower circle than the magazine once had. But it appealed to this circle deeply.**

One-time *Bulletin* editor Peter Coleman was editor of *Quadrant* for most of the 1980s. In January 1988 he stepped down in favour of Roger Sandall but resumed the position a year later before the *Quadrant* editorship was handed to Robert Manne in January 1990. For a brief period in 1989 Peter Coleman and Robert Manne were co-editors of *Quadrant*.

In January 1988, on the occasion of Peter Coleman’s inaugural resignation, Robert Manne wrote to *Quadrant* in the following terms:

**Sir,  
It is for me and I am sure for many other Melbourne contributors a great sadness that Peter Coleman is leaving the editorship of *Quadrant*. Through Peter Coleman’s determination *Quadrant* has kept alive an intellectual tradition in Australia which would otherwise have existed only on the margins. I am deeply grateful to him.**

So, in January 1988, Robert Manne made no criticism whatsoever of being “repelled by this new style” of “thoughtlessly reflective anti-leftism, often written in a bitter and sneering tone” which had developed under Peter Coleman’s editorship in the 1980s. How strange. But how Robert Manne-ish.

## **PETER COLEMAN SOUNDS OFF**

The day after Robert Manne detailed his falling out with Leonie Kramer and the *Quadrant* management committee, Peter Coleman wrote an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* (18 November 1997). Peter Coleman reminded readers that it was he who “recruited” Manne as co-editor. He implied that in 1989 Manne had gone to Kramer over his head and that, after Kramer backed Manne, he (Coleman) tended his resignation. There followed some sensible points about the difficulty of any editor having to report to a board.

The following Thursday, however, Peter Coleman lost it on the ABC Radio’s *Media Report*. Presenter

Robert Bolton interviewed, in turn, Peter Coleman and Max Suich. Then, after the Suich interview, Bolton reported that Peter Coleman “has come storming back into the studio and has a last word”.

Peter Coleman’s “last word” was to claim that Max Suich’s statement that *Quadrant* was essentially an anti communist Cold War magazine was “absolute garbage”. The fact is that in March 1989 Peter Coleman and Robert Manne signed off as co-editors on a *Quadrant* entitled “A Short War With Dissenters”.

**Let’s not mince words. At its origins, in the mid-1950s, *Quadrant* was committed to the struggle against the fellow-travelling and pro-communist tendency of Australian intellectuals and writers. This is where its founders believed the contemporary threat to cultural freedom was located. *Quadrant* began as a Cold War journal. It waged battle against what Jean-Francois Revel has called the totalitarian temptation.**

Nothing wrong with that. But why does Peter Coleman now wish to deny a truth which he once wanted to proclaim?

The evidence suggests that Peter Coleman is something of an angry man. These days he appears regularly in Christopher Pearson’s (taxpayer subsidised) *Adelaide Review* where he bemoans this and that. And that as well. In June 1997 Coleman reviewed the late Paul Hasluck’s *The Chance of Politics* (which was edited by Nicholas Hasluck).

Paul Hasluck’s contemporary sketches of his parliamentary years are lively and replete with insights. There is little of this style of writing in Australia and Nicholas Hasluck performed a valuable task in editing the recollections of his late father. *The Chance of Politics* was well received. Except by Peter Coleman. In the *Adelaide Review* and subsequently in B. A. Santamaria’s *News Weekly*, Coleman described *The Chance of Politics* as (variously) “awful”, “thoroughly unworthy”, “deplorable”, and “small and resentful in spirit”. That’s all.

The latter half of the review had something - but not much - to say about the content of *The Chance of Politics*. Initially, however, Coleman sounded off about how, about half a century ago, Hasluck’s poems were rejected by *Quadrant* editor James McAuley. According to Coleman this may (or may not) have motivated Hasluck to reject two applications by *Quadrant* for government funding. Circa 1957. Or was it 1963? Gee wiz. All this brought to you via the contemporary *Adelaide Review* and *News Weekly*.

## CLIVE FAWNS

Meanwhile from London comes many a revelation about Australia’s very own Clive James. The British social historian Lytton Stratchey once wrote that all humans like flattery. But, according to Stratchey, when dealing with the Royal Family it helps to lay it on with a trowel.

This Clive James did in abundance in his personalised itinerary which appeared in *The New Yorker*, 15 September 1997. Before the separation/divorce of Charles and Diana our Clive wrote a piece in *The Spectator* calling on them to stay together. As history records, they didn’t. Still, even after the separation/divorce, our Clive knew that it pays not to get off-side with any member of the Royal Family. So he dined privately with Diana. But not in such a way that would, or should, diminish his relationship with the future King of Britain - and Australia.

James’ *New Yorker* piece was of the gush genre. According to our Clive:

- Clive “loved” Diana
- Diana’s “failings and follies” made Clive want to “love her more truly”.
- Clive suspected that Diana “would get herself killed”; this conviction made Clive want “to love her to distraction”.

Get it? But there is more. For Clive also admired Charles - in a chap’s sort of way. A fawning chap, in fact. Clive told *New Yorker* readers that he was “once on the outer ring” of advisers to Prince Charles. What’s more Mr and Mrs James have had Charles over for dinner. Wow. According to our Clive:

- “Prince Charles...is man as good and honest as any I have ever met.”
- “Prince Charles is “impeccably sensitive, courteous and just plain thoughtful - a quality of his which is continually underestimated and one which will make him a great king when his turn comes, as come it must.”
- “Prince Charles will be “the most intelligent and concerned monarch this country has ever had.”

Get it? It’s Clive the self-confessed “commoner” and “colonial” in full-fawning mode. James concluded his *New Yorker* article by recalling his last meeting with Diana:

**Our last lunch was at Kensington Palace and Harry was present with one of his friends, so there were no cahoots. She was putting distance between us. Later on, quietly and nicely, I was dropped from her list. I understood completely.**

Well, he would. That's the sort of chap our Clive is. A monarchist. A gentleman. And a fawner.

## FIONA FIGHTS BACK

From the *New Yorker* to *Punch* (via the *News of the World*). Sadly Clive James had a (very public) falling out with a former female acquaintance named Fiona Russell Powell. *The Present Crisis* will pass over the details except to say that the details turn on whether or not Ms Powell was the central character in James, novel *Brrm Brrm*. Well, it is a matter of record that the (allegedly) wronged woman turned the tables on him initially in the *News of the World* and later on in *Punch*. Ironically she refused to buy the English hardback of James' novel and only obtained a copy of the remaindered United States edition. Only then she sought revenge. And how.

Of particular interest was Fiona Russell Powell's revelation that, in private conversation. Clive James "said he thought he was descended from Joan of Arc" and that "he seemed to think it was only a matter of time before he got a knighthood" while confiding to Ms Russell that his Royal friends were rather "thick and boring".

That's our Clive. From Joan of Arc (c. 1412-1431). To St James and Kensington palaces. Via Kogarah, Sydney. And what about the historical evidence that Joan of Arc was, er, a virgin when she died? Oh well, perhaps Clive James of Kogarah was the (eventual) product of a virgin birth. That's our Clive.

## BARNETT OBE ON DIANA RIP

And then there is the case of David Barnett, OBE (as in Order of the British Empire). Once he wore red socks and proclaimed leftist beliefs. Later on he worked for Malcolm Fraser and was honoured with an OBE. Now he is the proud author of *John Howard: Prime Minister* (Viking, 1997). He also writes a weekly column for the *Australian Financial Review* and, on occasions, for *The Bulletin*.

David Barnett sure knows a soft target when he sees one. Diana had only been dead a few days when Barnett weighed in under the heading "The myth of royalty a blow to republic". The general line of this particular (OBE driven) rave was that "weeping women" were treating Diana's death with emotion whereas blokes (real blokes like Barnett Himself) were much more matter-of-fact. However David Barnett managed to draw some lessons from Diana's death for use in the republic/monarchy debate.

According to David Barnett:

- Diana "seemed shallow, consumed by spleen, and determined to wreck vengeance on Charles, even to the extent of undermining a 900-year-old institution".
- The Royals "fill a vacuum which might otherwise be taken by a dangerous demagogue, by a Hitler or Stalin, or a Saddam Hussein".
- The Royals "are a bulwark of democracy.. The myth of royalty is infinitely preferred to the real risk of tyranny which arises once the offices of ceremonial head of government and ruling head of state are merged into one person".

In other words, David Barnett seems to believe (i) that Australia has two options - the British Royal Family or Hitler/Stalin/Saddam and (ii) that the United States President (who is both head of state and head of government) presents a "real risk of tyranny".

## LIFE IN THE FIN LANE

To be fair to the *Australian Financial Review*, sometimes its editor-in-chief and publisher Greg Hywood plays tricks. A couple of examples illustrate.

On the morning of the South Australian State election the *AFR* saw this caption under a photograph of Liberal premier John Olsen on water skis:

**John Olsen walks on water. Water-skiing marathon man John Olsen is set to cruise back as Premier in the South Australian election this weekend.**

On the Monday after the election the *AFR* headlined a report on the election outcome with the heading: "Olsen the loser of the century."

That's two jokes for the price of two (newspapers).

A few days earlier (on 10 October 1997) the *AFR* reported on the Constitutional Convention and, in passing, the candidature of P. P. McGuinness and avowed Canberra based monarchist Malcolm Mackerras. Mr Mackerras was described as an "election expert". Here's hoping. But, alas, there was no mention of the *AFR*'s very own John Stone. Ah well. He got lotsa publicity on the Joh Bjelke Petersen for Canberra bandwagon of a decade ago.

