

FORTHCOMING FUNCTIONS AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

- SPEAKER:** RICHARD WOOLCOTT (Fmr Sec, Foreign Affairs & Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, author *The Hotseat* [HarperCollins 2003])
TOPIC: *Reflections on Diplomacy: Australia's Role in the World*
DATE: Tuesday 18 March 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: Clayton Utz Seminar Room, Level 25, 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney
-
- SPEAKER:** DR DAVID DAY (Academic & Author)
TOPIC: *The Politics of War*
DATE: Tuesday 1 April 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: 41 Phillip Street, Sydney **LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**
-
- SPEAKER:** IAN MACFARLANE (Governor, Reserve Bank of Australia)
DATE: Thursday 3 April 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: BT Training Room (Room 401) Level 4, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
-
- SPEAKER:** SENATOR NICK MINCHIN (Minister for Finance & Administration)
TOPIC: *Pressures on the Budget*
DATE: Tuesday 8 April 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: Mallesons Conference Room, Level 60, Governor Phillip Tower, Sydney
-
- SPEAKER:** IMRE SALUSINSZKY (Former Academic & Staff Writer, *The Australian*) & MARGO KINGSTON (Political Editor, smh.com.au)
TOPIC: *The Left: Two Views*
DATE: Wednesday 16 April 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: Clayton Utz Seminar Room, Level 25, 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney
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- SPEAKER:** MARY ZOURNAZI (Writer & philosopher, author of *Hope - New Philosophies for Change* [Pluto])
DATE: Tuesday 22 April 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: 41 Phillip Street, Sydney
-
- SPEAKER:** ANNUAL DINNER - KATE JENNINGS
DATE: TUESDAY 29 APRIL 2003 **TIME:** 6.30 for 7pm
VENUE: GRAND HARBOUR BALLROOM, STAR CITY **BOOKINGS:** (02) 9252 3366
-
- SPEAKER:** DR FIONA TERRY (Director of Research, Medecins Sans Frontieres, Paris & author *Condemned to Repeat - The Paradox of Humanitarianism*)
TOPIC: *The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*
DATE: Wednesday 30 April 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: BT Training Room (Room 401) Level 4, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
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- SPEAKER:** HIND KOUROUCHE (First female President of the Arabic Welfare Council & currently Director, Islamic Resource Management)
TOPIC: *Islam - In Australia and the US*
DATE: Tuesday 6 May 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: BT Training Room (Room 401) Level 4, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
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- SPEAKER:** SENATOR STEPHEN CONROY (Shadow Minister for Finance, Small Business and Financial Services; Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate)
TOPIC: *Corporate Governance: Labor's Approach*
DATE: Monday 12 May 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: Clayton Utz Seminar Room, Level 25, 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney
-
- SPEAKER:** DR IHAB HASSAN (Writer & Vilas Research Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Uni of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)
TOPIC: *Postmodernism: What Went Wrong?*
DATE: Wednesday 4 June 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: Clayton Utz Seminar Room, Level 25, 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney
-
- SPEAKER:** GENERAL PETER COSGROVE, AC, MC (Chief of the Defence Force [CDF])
DATE: Tuesday 10 June 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: BT Training Room (Room 401) Level 4, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney

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QUARTERLY



*ISSUE 19, VOL. 7
NO. 1 MARCH 2003*

What's left of the Left
revives in protest -
STEPHEN MATCHETT
takes a look

Vietnam - response to
The Quiet American from
QUYNH DAO

GOUGH WHITLAM -
in reply

ANNE HENDERSON
looks back on Australia's
wartime paranoia

A new Franco-German
unity - **JOHN KUNKEL**

IAN HENDERSON on
the global HIV/AIDS
epidemic

MEDIA WATCH tackles
John Carroll,
Clive Hamilton,
Christine Jackman,
Phillip Adams and
P.P McGuinness

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with Gerard Henderson's

MEDIA WATCH

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LEUNIG'S INFANTILE DISORDER

Michael Leunig - *The Age's* in-house cartoonist (whose work also appears in the *Sydney Morning Herald*) - does not often express himself in prose. His preference is for a drawing - followed by a clever line - or a set of words produced, cartoon style, alongside a number of illustrations. So it came as some surprise when, on Christmas Eve 2001, *The Age* ran a Leunig written piece on its opinion page. The column opened with a translation of a Lao Tzu poem and concluded with a quotation from the contemporary poet Sheenagh Pugh. In between the poetry, there was Leunig's text.

It being Christmas, Leunig reflected on "peace and goodwill" and all that. He presented Jesus Christ as a man of "genius" - because "he taught that we should love our enemies and turn the other cheek". It was a Christ-the-pacifist tale. Leunig depicted Christ's teaching about "loving our enemies" as "brilliant" and urged his readers to follow his message of "mercy, forgiveness and compassion". Then Leunig called for all of us to "find a place in our heart for the humanity of Osama bin Laden and those others" declaring: "On Christmas Day can we consider their suffering, their children and the possibility that they too have their goodness." He concluded: "It is a family day, and Osama is our relative."

It is far from clear that Osama bin Laden and his followers in the al Qaeda terrorist organisation would want to be considered by Leunig - and his leftist luvvy mates - at Christmas. Bin Laden is an avowed enemy of Western democratic culture - and of Arabs and Muslims alike whom he regards as in any way sympathetic to the West. It is instructive to note Leunig's call for "mercy, forgiveness, compassion" is not extended to elected democratic politicians. Like Tony Blair, George W. Bush and John Howard - for example.

On 30 January 2003 *The Age* published a Leunig cartoon - consisting of the cartoonist's words imposed on a photograph of Messrs Bush and Howard. Both men, intentionally, looked somewhat ridiculous. Leunig had chosen a photo from the 2001 APEC meeting where - as is the custom for such occasions - the political leaders are required to dress up in traditional costumes chosen by the host nation. In 2001, the United States president and the Australian prime minister were dressed in colourful Chinese shirts.

Anystate, the cartoon depicts George Bush telling John Howard, with reference to a possible conflict in Iraq: "...So we disembowel the children, decapitate the mums and dads, dismember the old folks and then we disarm Saddam." A laughing John Howard replies: "George, that's delightful." In other words, the US president is a mass-murdering war criminal and the Australian prime minister is his willing partner in atrocity. This is unadulterated extreme left-wing propaganda.

Here is Leunig (in December 2001) calling on his fan club "to find a place in our heart for the humanity of Osama bin Laden". And here is Leunig (in January 2003) consciously choosing not to extend any of his own humanity to George W. Bush and John Howard - or to Tony Blair, who supports the US and Australian position that Saddam Hussein should be compelled to rid Iraq of the weapons of mass destruction.

This suggests that Leunig has moved beyond moral equivalence to embrace the idea that Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein are less reprehensible than Messrs. Blair, Bush and Howard. This demonstrates that contemporary leftism remains an infantile disorder (to re-state Vladimir Lenin's proposition).

THE QUIET AMERICAN - VIETNAM WAR REVISITED

Quynh Dao

For those still reminiscing about the Cold War period - and remaining sentimental about anti-American pro-communist propaganda - *The Quiet American*, Phillip Noyce's film based on the 1955 novel of the same name by Graham Greene, will not disappoint. A product of such "dyed-in-the-wool" lefties Noyce and Greene, such a theme should come as no surprise.

Set in Vietnam between 1952 and 1955, the film tells how America's involvement in the Vietnam War, in its endeavour to help South Vietnam defend against the Northern communists, ended up harming the very people the United States intended to help. America is represented by a young American intelligence agent posing as a kind-hearted aid worker. South Vietnamese, those who embrace liberal values and refuse communist indoctrination, are represented by a prostitute happy to sleep with any Westerner for a feed and a thuggish general who has no qualms in conducting a terrorist attack on his own people using bomb making materials supplied by the Americans. His aim is to put the blame on the communists and to create a ghastly photo opportunity for American anti-communist propaganda.

In case the audience is still not getting the point from these caricatured characters, the film provides a telling image: in the midst of the devastation caused by the bombing, the American ignored the hand stretched out for help from a badly injured woman, calmly bending down to wipe his blood stained pants then frantically urging the photographers to keep on taking more pictures of dead and blown up bodies for his sordid purpose.

There is enough degradation and evil-doing on the part of the American and the non-communist camp in the film that the brutal death of the American at the hands of the communist sympathisers comes almost as poetic justice. The communists, innocent bystanders from beginning to end, framed for the crimes they did not commit, are the good guys.

The film's blatant one-sided approach begs for a complementary, factual and up-to-date perspective.

William Duiker is the leading scholar on Vietnam's contemporary history and an admirer of communist leader Ho Chi Minh. Yet in his book *Ho Chi Minh: A Life* he concedes that communist brutality occurred frequently during Ho's time. Since its early days in the 1940s, the Vietnamese communist movement Viet Minh "applied the tactics of brutality and terrorism on the local population to enforce allegiance. Areas under the control of religious [organisations] were attacked, and [religious] leaders who refused to place themselves under [communist] command were sometimes assassinated" (p 376). The founder of the Hoa Hao Buddhist branch, the Most Venerable Huynh Phu So, is one case in point.

A short time after Ho Chi Minh's declaration of national independence in 1945, Vietminh troops rounded up "at least two hundred opposition figures...and placed [them] in detention camps" (p 386).

In the 1950s, the period the film was set and the book was written, "[communist] activists, urged on by their Chinese advisers, reportedly carried out the immediate execution of individuals [deemed wealthy by the local community] thus judged guilty of 'crimes against the people'" (p 445). In backward impoverished war torn Vietnam, wealthy might mean owning a few blocks of land, a brick house with tiled roof or a fabrics shop.

Duiker commented that "even sympathetic observers concede that a minimum of 3,000 to 5,000 may have died in the process. There are other estimates that 12,000 to 15,000 people were unjustly executed" (p 488). The number given by the North Vietnamese who fled communist North to the South when the country was divided in 1954 was several hundred thousand - this is the recollection of Vinh Noan, the renown Vietnamese film director.

Graham Greene, reflecting on *The Quiet American* in his 1980 book *Ways of Escape*, insisted that his story was based on a real event. He attributed to the Americans the responsibility for "the great explosion in the main square of Saigon". According to Greene, the ruthless general who masterminded the bomb attack "had promptly and proudly [and may we add, very stupidly] claimed the bomb as his own". Nevertheless, for those wanting to verify these facts, what Greene revealed was not of much help. Which explosion of the many explosions in a country at war, which one of the numerous "main squares" of Saigon? We still do not know the real name of the general who (allegedly) shamelessly bragged to the world that he was behind that despicable act and Greene, rightly affronted by the criminality of it all, was shy to give it to us. In the preface to his 1955 book, Green conveniently informed readers that the general was dead. We just have to take his word.

It is novels such as *The Quiet American* that gave the Vietnamese communists the legitimacy and the respectability they do not deserve.

After the end of the Vietnam war in 1975, the true face of Vietnamese communism was revealed for all to see. The eyewitness accounts of nearly two million Vietnamese refugees fleeing communist terror had put an end to the relentless sanctification of the communists and the demonisation of their non-communist opponents from the anti-American pro-communist lobby. Human rights organisations around the world have repeatedly raised their extreme concern at the appalling human rights record of this regime. Catholic priests, Buddhist monks, poets, intellectuals, tribal people, even highly accoladed veterans of the communist revolution - such as war time hero General Tran Do - were subject to execution, imprisonment, harassment or put under house arrest for their peaceful demand of freedom, democracy and an end to corruption.

Many Vietnamese refugees believe the anti-war, anti-American lobby is largely responsible for their country's descent into misery. After helping the communists on the crucial propaganda front in the West to succeed in imposing a totalitarian regime on Vietnam, the heartfelt sentiments expressed in the anti-war protests - to fight for freedom from oppression, to put an end to exploitation - are nowhere to be heard now that the acts of oppression and exploitation are committed by the communists.

Vietnam now ranks among the poorest countries in the world, its government one of the most brutal and corrupt. According to a recent UNICEF report, one-third of Vietnamese children suffer from malnutrition, an alarming number of children have been sold into prostitution.

Amnesty International is currently running a worldwide appeal calling for the release of 30 year old lawyer Le Chi Quang. Mr Quang posted an article on the internet about the communist authority's ceding of Vietnamese land and sea territory to China in return for the latter's massive aid in advisers and weaponry during the war. He was sentenced to four years in prison and three years under house arrest. He is suffering from severe kidney failure but the authorities have denied him medical treatment. Amnesty International's request to visit the many prisoners of conscience in the country has been consistently rejected. The Red Cross's presence is allowed in the country to provide humanitarian assistance but the society is not allowed to help detainees like Le Chi Quang. Presumably detainees are not human.

There are three images which are often relayed in the Western media as poignant reminders of the Vietnam War:

The picture of a naked girl running away from napalm bomb in terror;

The picture of a South Vietnam soldier shooting a captive Vietcong point-blank;

And a communist tank rolling on to the lawn of the Independence Palace, a symbol of South Vietnam authority, heralding the end of a heart-breaking war.

Kim Phuc, the girl in the picture, escaped from Vietnam and now lives in Canada. In Denise Chong's biography, aptly titled *The Girl In The Picture, the Photograph and the Vietnam War* (Viking Press, 1998), Kim Phuc described how the communist regime made her feel she was no longer a human being with feelings and pride but a prized Elephant Man in a freak show whose over-protective communist owner brought along its money begging expeditions for her value as a perfect live display of American war atrocities and as a guilt trigger for the West.

General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, the South Vietnamese soldier in the picture, passed away in 1998. Neil Davis, the heroic Australian war correspondent killed on assignment in Thailand, set out the background to the killing when interviewed for David Bradbury's 1980 documentary *Frontline*. The Vietcong operative shot by General Loan had, not long before this picture was taken, led a team of communist terrorists in a killing spree, massacring the whole family of a South Vietnamese officer in the process - including his 80 year old mother, his wife and his small children. Eddie Adams, the Pulitzer winning photographer who took that picture, apologized in person to General Loan and his family for the irretrievable damage it did to his honour when he was alive. When General Loan died, Adams praised him as a hero of a just cause. "America should cry at his passing," he said.

Communist Colonel Bui Tin was among the delegates who entered the Independence Palace to accept the surrender of the South Vietnam government following that tank. Later he defected to the West and now lives in America. He is among the most outspoken critics of the Vietnamese communist government which he described as uncivilised and barbaric - see Bui Tin *Following Ho Chi Minh* (1995).

The communist block collapsed over a decade ago. In his address to a Columbia University audience on 28 October 2002, Mikhail Gorbachev told us the communist system is "pure propaganda".

As to Phillip Noyce, he went to Hanoi in December last year to receive an accolade from the Vietnamese dictatorship for his film *The Quiet American*.

- *Quynh Dao is a member of the Australian-Vietnam Human Rights Committee.*

WAITING, WAITING ...

Ian Henderson

United States ambivalence towards the plight of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria victims in the Third World is jeopardising international efforts for further global trade liberalisation.

While that might not worry some sectors of Australian industry, notably film-makers and the public health and education providers, it is to the disadvantage of most of Australian business, which is keen to exploit the opportunities promised by advocates of the opening up of remaining barriers to free trade, especially in the three large economic blocs of the First World: the United States, Europe and Japan.

In his 2003 "State of the Union" address, that pushed the case for a US-led war with Iraq, US president George W Bush pledged \$US15 billion over five years, of which \$US10 billion was actually "new money" to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean. It might have seemed like a generous offer, aimed at combatting at least one of the most serious public health scourges in the developing world.

After all, the World Bank estimates that more than 20 million Africans are now dead from HIV/AIDS; 12 million are orphaned; and more than 29 million people in the sub-Saharan region of Africa are now living with the virus. It is, according to the World Bank "the leading cause of death in sub-Sahara Africa and the paramount threat to the region's development".

The incidence of HIV/AIDs is not the only such public health crisis in the Third World. The World Bank says malaria is currently causing the deaths of over one million people – and up to 500 million clinical cases - each year, and most of the three thousand deaths a day are in Africa.

And, the Bank says, despite the discovery half a century ago of drugs that can cure TB, that disease killed an estimated two million people in 2000, 98 per cent of the deaths occurring in the Third World.

It would be nothing short of churlish to do other than welcome Bush's promise to do something to alleviate at least one of those causes of millions of deaths, not to mention personal, family and community tragedy and economic backwardness, in the poorest parts of

the developing world. But, while Bush was preparing to make that promise, and while he was actually delivering it, US officials were failing to honour another promise that would, if it ever materialises, offer much greater hope to Third World sufferers of HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB.

In November 2001, the ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation met in Doha, Qatar, with most participants publicly keen to advance the cause of multilateral global trade liberalisation, and acutely conscious of the embarrassing failure of the previous such conference, in Seattle two years earlier, to make any progress at all.

The Doha meeting issued a declaration that set out a program, including timetables, for a wide range of initiatives. The most notable, especially from Australia's perspective, were for negotiations about "fair and market-oriented" trade in agricultural products, for further cuts in tariff protection for non-agricultural products - that is, manufactured goods - and for a General Agreement on Trade in Services.

But there was also a promise to implement and interpret the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights - the agreement that safeguards developed nations' patent and licensing rights - in such a way as to "recognise the gravity of the public health problems afflicting many developing and least-developed countries, especially those resulting from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics".

The Doha declaration noted that many WTO members - Third World countries - lack the manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical industry that would allow them to gain ready access to the drugs they need to fight such devastating public health epidemics, if all they had to rely on was the orthodox economic remedy of TRIPS-authorized compulsory licensing (that is, the domestic manufacturing of patented drugs in certain conditions, as permitted under WTO rules).

So in November 2001, the senior authority of the WTO instructed "the council for TRIPS to find an expeditious solution to this problem and to report it to the general council before the end of 2002".

Last November, twelve months after the Doha declaration was issued and less than two months before its deadline expired for action on what is called "TRIPS and public health", Australia's Trade Minister Mark Vaile convened a meeting in Sydney of senior representatives of selected nations - including the US and Europe, on the one hand, and African, Asian and Latin American developing countries, on the other.

"The first item and probably the most crucial item that needs to be address and discussed at this

meeting is that of 'TRIPS and public health'. Access to medicines for developing countries, particularly medicines to address diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. It is a crucial issue for the developing world," Vaile said a week before the meeting. "The intellectual property for a lot of these drugs is obviously held and controlled in developed or wealthier economies and there are strict rules. There needs to be some compromises reached to be able to accommodate reasonable access to those medicines for developing countries without compromising the intellectual property rights that these countries have."

Only weeks away from the WTO-imposed deadline, the Doha process had stalled and appeared to be going nowhere on the TRIPS and public health issue.

But why was Australia trying to play a role in the negotiations? Self interest. "It's not an enormous issue for Australia, other than it holds the key to the door to move forward into the substantive negotiations. Until the developing countries of the world feel comfortable and have confidence that their issues and their concerns are being taken seriously, then we just won't be moving ahead," Vaile explained prior to the Sydney meeting.

The next WTO deadline that matters to Australia is 31 March 2003. That's when there are scheduled stocktakes on the three issues in which Australia does have a direct interest; GATS, progress towards freer trade in farm products and progress towards reduced protection for manufacturing industries.

The point Vaile was making last November is this: By far the majority of WTO members are Third World countries; by far their most important priority is ready access to life-saving drugs; and unless that is delivered by the developed nation members of the WTO urgently, the trade reforms that are of most interest to the First World will face Third World - and therefore WTO - obstruction.

So what was the upshot of the Sydney meeting, where Vaile had said progress on TRIPS and public health was crucial? For one thing, participants endorsed the urgent need to meet the WTO-imposed 31 December deadline; and for another, in Vaile's words, there was "a very productive discussion ... forward movement, convergence of views". And he added, the areas where "fine tuning" was needed had been identified.

But that was as far as any "progress" on this issue went.

On 20 December 2002, the office of the US Special Trade Representative Bob Zoellick published a statement announcing an "interim plan to help poor

countries fight HIV/AIDS and other health crises in the absence of WTO consensus".

That failed to break the deadlock in time to meet the 31 December 2002 deadline. On 8 January 2002, WTO secretary-general Supachai Panitchpakdi again noted the importance of finalising the TRIPS and public health issue, in a speech he gave in Hyderabad. Supachai highlighted the importance of finding a satisfactory solution to the fuller Doha agenda, and expressed a hope "that a solution can be found in the early part of 2003".

A day later, EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy said the EU had launched an initiative to break the deadlock. Failure.

Vaile says he spoke to both Zoellick and Supachai a week later, in an effort "to find a last minute solution". Another failure.

Three weeks later, the *Financial Times* newspaper reported that the major US drug companies were considering their own deadlock-breaking initiative. At the very least, a paradox, given that the same companies are themselves widely blamed for the deadlock.

If President Bush were as keen as his State of the Union address suggests to do something extra to help combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Third World - and to save at least some of the millions of lives threatened by that disease, not to mention a number of other severe threats to public health - he would be pushing for an urgent deal on TRIPS and public health.

Indeed, he would have been pushing for such a deal for more than a year, ever since November 2001 at least.

If he wants to know why, he should ask Mark Vaile who, despite his failed efforts to nudge the WTO to meet its 31 December deadline on that matter, does at least understand that its urgent resolution is a key to further multilateral trade reform.

Ian Henderson is Economics Correspondent, ABC Radio current affairs



IS THE FRANCO- GERMAN MOTOR ALL SHOW?

John Kunkel

The covers are off the latest Franco-German “motor” – the self-styled driving force of European integration and cooperation. Joint initiatives and position papers have tumbled forth in recent times at a speed that suggests the Paris-Berlin axis is alive and well.

Acting together, France and Germany can turn heads in a way few other international partnerships can match – whether it be war with Iraq (they’re against it), farm subsidies (they still want them), or reforming European institutions (they like the idea of a European president so much they want two).

This last proposal, a messy compromise to be sure, may yet be the major outcome of the constitutional convention on the European Union (EU) due to report later this year. It would involve a new position of president of the European Council (chosen by EU heads of government), sitting alongside the president of the European Commission (elected by the European Parliament). Other Franco-German ideas include plans for greater EU tax harmonisation, for a single European foreign minister and for defence cooperation less bound to the United States and NATO.

All this activity culminated in January with the 40th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty, a pledge by Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer to replace a century of bloody conflicts with a new era of partnership. Joined by over 900 parliamentarians from both countries in the opulent (if historically vexed) setting of the Palace of Versailles, French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder resolved that their countries would continue to steer the European mother ship. The two leaders announced joint cabinet meetings when legislation was being discussed that might affect both countries. They also agreed to examine dual nationality for

The Sydney Institute's
Night of Nights

ANNUAL DINNER

with New York based
Australian writer

KATE JENNINGS

Kate Jennings is an Australian writer who lives in New York. Her most recent book *Moral Hazard*, is a radical portrayal of the top end of investment banking which Kate experienced while working as a speech writer in a Wall Street investment bank in the 1990s.

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French and German citizens. From now on, 22 January will be celebrated in both countries as “Franco-German day”.

BUT WHERE'S THE ECONOMIC SPARK?

So what should we English-speaking onlookers make of all this? By some accounts, not much.

The acerbic US Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, pointedly brushed aside opposition from France and Germany to an attack on Iraq as the bleatings of “old Europe”. Behind Rumsfeld’s insensitivity lies a serious point that even the most finely-tuned of Franco-German motors will struggle to drive an enlarged European Union of 25 members. Skeptics note other wrinkles. The personal chemistry between Chirac and Schröder is said to be non-existent. The German chancellor is of a generation less inclined to defer to worldly-wise French statesmen.

Also, both countries have quite different visions of Europe – French Gaullists remain wedded to their own conception of the national interest, while Germans are avowed federalists. France jealously guards its independent foreign policy, as the Iraq debate shows. Germany’s ugly past tends to foster a particular brand of post-modern pacificism. Schröder has ruled out any circumstances in which Germany could take part in a military operation in Iraq. The foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, has conceded that “it would be entirely wrong to place us in the same rank with France and Britain on foreign and security policy”, noting that Germans “are still discussing who we are – a question that appears absurd to any French person”. One French official was overheard recently complaining that “Germany just wants to be a big Switzerland”.

And don’t forget there is a downside to Franco-German bonhomie for Australia. A deal struck last October by Chirac and Schröder, over spending on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), constrains the EU from negotiating deep cuts in agricultural support in global trade negotiations in Geneva. Vain hopes that Germany – the biggest contributor to the CAP – might finally challenge French intransigence over farm subsidies turned out to be, well, vain hopes.

Indeed, the farm deal hints at the glaring omission in the modern Franco-German partnership, namely a shared commitment to boosting European economic growth and competitiveness. Both countries are wary of Anglo-Saxon “neo-liberalism” and reluctant to tackle deep-seated structural problems.

TOO LITTLE GROWTH, TOO MUCH STABILITY

At a time when Europe could be picking up the slack from sluggish American and Japanese economies, growth in Germany and France is feeble.

For the past eight years, the German economy has been the slowest growing in the European Union. Growth in 2002 was a miserable 0.2 per cent (the lowest level since 1993) and the most optimistic forecasts put it at about 1 per cent in 2003. With an economy larger by a third than Britain’s or France’s, that spells bad news for Europe as a whole. France has performed better in recent years, but its economy has also slowed to a crawl with growth of 1 per cent in 2002.

At the same time, both countries are struggling to meet the requirements of what now appears as an ill-conceived experiment in European macroeconomic rule-making, known as the Stability and Growth Pact. This all dates back to German unification and the simultaneous decision of France and Germany to pursue European monetary union with a single currency, a single euro-zone interest rate and strict budget rules.

The Stability and Growth Pact begins from the reasonable premise of wanting to curb fiscal profligacy. But like all strict economic rules, rigid implementation can cause problems. The European Central Bank already runs a highly restrictive monetary policy. And with budget deficits not supposed to go beyond 3 per cent of GDP, the pact now requires Germany and France to cut spending and increase taxes even though their economies are flat. Even the European Commission’s president, Romano Prodi, has labeled the pact “stupid”.

With 9 per cent unemployment and the cost of President Chirac’s election promises of last year, France (an indignant voice for multilateral rules when it suits) has basically chosen to ignore demands to bring its budget back into balance. For Germany, the irony is even more acute. It was the country that insisted on the strict rules as the price for swapping its beloved D-Mark for the euro. Last year, however, its budget deficit soared to 3.8 per cent of GDP and it looks set to exceed the 3 per cent rule again in 2003.

In theory, France and Germany could face fines for breaching the pact. In practice, the small print suggests that penalties are more or less unenforceable.

THE MODEL - NOT THE MOTOR

Macroeconomic woes are only part of the story. In their different ways, Germany and France embody Europe's distinctive approach to civilising capitalism from cradle to grave. You don't find many politicians singing the praises of free markets or threatening to overhaul the welfare state à la Reagan and Thatcher (or even Clinton and Blair). Most Germans are proud of their "social market" economy. In France, the state still has a majority stake in some 1,500 companies and a minority in 1,300 others.

Yet the costs of continental *dirigisme* – and the cosy, corporatist politics that go with it – are starting to mount. Two areas where this is most apparent are labour markets and pensions.

German workers are in many ways the princes of modern Europe – high wages, long holidays, good pensions and benefits. It's just that there are 4.2 million Germans unemployed. Job creation has been crippled by non-wage labour costs of over 40 per cent of gross wages. A highly regulated labour market and powerful trade unions discourage temporary and part-time work. Laws stipulate which employees companies can lay off, usually disadvantaging younger workers. The country's small and medium-sized firms (the *Mittelstand*) encounter a web of restrictions even tighter in some cases than those on big companies.

Regulation of French employers is similarly onerous. The 35-hour week imposed by the former socialist government of Lionel Jospin was especially controversial, though the effects were softened by various tax incentives and flexible work rules. Firms still struggle with Jospin's "Law on Social Modernisation" that tightened redundancy legislation, placed new requirements on ailing businesses before they could reduce their workforces, and instituted extremely complicated employee consultation procedures.

Both countries run generous state pension systems gobbling up 12 per cent of GDP. But these pay-as-you-go schemes, where today's workers pay for today's pensioners, are increasingly unsustainable. Demographic trends mean that whereas there are two workers in Germany and France for every pensioner at present, by 2035-2040 there will be only one. A third of the population of each country will then be over 60.

Political leaders acknowledge the need for structural reforms. After squeaking back at elections last September, Germany's Gerhard Schröder is having to contemplate labour market, pension and health

care reforms. His somewhat oblique message to his countrymen is that: "Everything must change so that everything can remain the same." But he faces stiff opposition to any dilution of the welfare state or job protection laws from trade unions and elements in his Social Democratic party.

In France, the centre-right government headed by Jacques Chirac's hand-picked prime minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, is pledging to lower taxes, cut red-tape and introduce more labour market flexibility. It also wants to change a situation where private sector workers have to work longer, contribute more and yet receive a smaller proportion of their salaries as pensions than those in the public sector. In response, public-sector transport unions are threatening a rerun of 1995 when strikes crippled reform attempts of the last conservative government.

LIMPING TOWARDS LISBON

Powerful sectional interests in Germany and France seem not to have read the script. At a summit in Lisbon in March 2000, EU leaders resolved to produce the "most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010". The Lisbon strategy set targets for full employment, a substantial rise in research investment and higher productivity.

But nearly a third of the way along, such pronouncements are starting to look faintly ridiculous. In recent years, productivity growth in Europe has fallen further behind that in the United States. A benchmarking report by the European Commission in January painted a picture of policy backtracking and missed opportunities stemming from a lack of political will. France and Germany got mediocre report cards compared with countries like Finland, Denmark and Sweden.

It is true that Franco-German ailments need to be kept in perspective. They are at the heart of a wealthy continent with the sort of standard of living, civic culture and rule of law that much of the world can only envy. The majority with jobs tend to be well off and have access to good public services.

But individually or collectively, France and Germany face some tough choices if they want to preserve their social market models. The motor looks nice and shiny, but the economic fuel lines still need clearing.

John Kunkel is currently a Visiting Fellow at the National Europe Centre at the Australian National University. He writes here in a personal capacity.



BE ALERT - BUT WATCH OUT FOR PARANOIA

Anne Henderson

Be alert but not alarmed, the federal government's \$15 million anti-terror advertising campaign tells us. Some \$1.4 billion is being spent on strengthening Australia's counter-terrorist capabilities.

A recent Taverner Poll shows about 80 per cent of Australians believe their country is a genuine terrorist target; more than a quarter now suffer fear of attack or what some have called "general paranoia". Prime Minister John Howard has conceded that the Bali bombing and attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York of 11 September 2001 have changed the easygoing Australian mentality.

The government's "Let's look out for Australia" advertising campaign, released in January 2003, is an attempt to ease such fears - fears the government believes have been foisted on Australians by international terrorists. Yet a glance at the historical record suggests that, as a community, wartime paranoia and bigotry are as familiar to Australia as are diversity and tolerance at other times.

While Australia, in the latter decades of the twentieth century, rejoiced in its multicultural and tolerant character, this was a first Down Under. So new was the concept, in fact, that for many traditional Australians the very word "multicultural" remained controversial.

This feeling owed its existence not only to a long history of connections to Britain for older Australians, but also to a history of xenophobic responses in times of uncertainty - most notably during times of war and especially those of 1914-18 and 1939-45. This is best illustrated in Australia's internment or detention policies over decades. Although reasonably remote from the main theatres of conflict, during World War I and World War II Australia chose to incarcerate thousands of innocent civilians.

During World War I, 6890 people were interned in Australia - 4,500 of them were residents of the Commonwealth, the rest sailors taken off ships or residents from other British dominions sent to be

interned in Australia by the British Government. Most were of German or Austrian background and thus regarded as enemy aliens.

However, so great was the hysteria as to the "enemy" at the time, some 700 internees were in fact "naturalised British subjects" and another 70 Australian by birth and of these some were second or third generation Australians. Among the 1,100 regarded as Austrian, around 700 were residents of Western Australia and of Serbian, Croatian and Dalmatian backgrounds. They were only technically Austrian due to the hegemony of the Hapsburg Empire.

Interesting also, even sinister, is the fact that many were interned as much for their alleged German and Austrian connections as for their perceived associations with radical groups who opposed the war effort; groups like the WWW and anti conscription advocates. As Gerhard Fischer put it in *Enemy Aliens*, "The Defence Department had, in fact, the power to arrest and to detain any person on a charge of simply being a hostile enemy alien, and it was then up to the individual to prove that he was not."

The case of Franz Wallach demonstrates something of the victimization of the innocent that followed from such a policy. A resident of Melbourne since 1893, Franz Wallach had been released of his German citizenship on immigration to Australia. He had married an Australian of British birth and in 1915 his wife's two brothers were fighting with the AIF at Gallipoli.

In July 1915, Franz Wallach was interned as an enemy alien by order of the Minister for Defence, Senator George Pearce. Wallach was the ex-manager of the Australian Metal Company which had been closed down as an enemy company. The Minister claimed the internment was because he had "reason to believe" Wallach was disloyal.

Wallach's internment case was taken to the Victorian Supreme Court and Pearce was forced to appear. However, the Minister refused to make a statement claiming privilege "in the interests and safety of the Commonwealth". And although the Court found in Wallach's favour, and ordered his release, he was immediately rearrested under new legislation approved a week before to allow the government to circumvent the Court's possible decision for Wallach.

For four years Wallach remained a prisoner. On his release in 1919, memos written for Cabinet admitted there was no evidence of disloyalty or hostility against him. Pearce's silence in court was suddenly explained. The story of Franz Wallace can be read in *Enemy Aliens*.

Likewise there is the case of Dr Max Herz, a doctor from Macquarie Street, Sydney, and at the time Australia's most distinguished orthopaedic surgeon. His reputation was widely recognized. He had practised in New Zealand from 1903 before moving to Australia in 1910. His wife was Australian.

Blacklisted by the British Medical Association, after the outbreak of war, as much for reasons of xenophobia as professional jealousy among members of the BMA, Max Herz spent nearly five years behind barbed wire at Trial Bay. No amount of public protest at the injustice of what was done to Herz made any difference. The public mindset was such that reason had no place. Hysteria and suspicion ruled the day.

Even the federal government's response to anti-conscription protests indicated a siege mentality. Australia's Prime Minister (Billy) Hughes confided to Britain's Prime Minister Lloyd George that in the case of Victoria's (anti-conscription) Catholic Archbishop Dr Daniel Mannix, he was trying to make up his mind whether to "prosecute him for statements hindering recruiting or deport him".

In an interview for the *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society* in 2002, former prime minister Malcolm Fraser recalled how his father, a reasonable man, was convinced by Billy Hughes' arguments about "Irish Catholics opposing the war being traitors".

But the prejudice outlived the actual war. Shortly after the armistice, in 1919, during the flu epidemic that claimed 12,000 Australian lives, Victorian health minister John Bowser accepted Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix's offer of the services of the Sisters of Charity from St Vincent's Hospital to work in the temporary hospital set up hastily in Melbourne's Exhibition Buildings.

However, long time Mannix opponent Rev Henry Worrall of the Wesley Church attacked the offer, rejecting "the garb worn by the nuns and the brothers, the ceremonies they observed, the customs they followed". These were things, he said, "that should not be introduced into a state hospital."

Letters to newspapers reflected dismay at Worrall's remarks but this did not stop a bitter public stand-off between Protestant clergy supporting Worrall and Mannix who refused to bend to sectarianism. It got so bitter that Mannix had to cancel his offer. His story is echoed seven decades later in New South Wales MP Fred Nile's tirade in 2002 against Muslim women wearing veils in public.

Similar bigotry and xenophobia characterised Australian public sentiment during World War II,

although in practice the Defence Minister's power was delegated to the General Officers commanding the Military Commands. At the outbreak of war the policy of internment was enforced only moderately, but with Italy's entry into the war and the fall of France internment was stepped up. Later when Japan entered the war all Japanese in Australia were interned regardless of their status.

As Paul Hasluck in *The Government and the People 1939-41* writes: "Internment of enemy aliens, which had hitherto been exceptional, tended for a time to be general, and individual hardship was imposed on alien refugees who were interned for no other reason than their foreign birth."

In 1940 more than 2000 German and Austrian Jewish refugees were deported from Britain to Australia, on the *Dunera*, as aliens - in spite of having fled Nazi persecution. They were interned on arrival.

Australian Italians endured worse than most foreign born in Australia at the time, with many sent to alien conscription camps, while others were accused of spying, disloyalty, and of making money while "good and loyal" Australians were fighting abroad.

Australia's internment of wartime aliens was a rude and raw policy coming out of the hysteria present at a time of world conflict. As with World War I, it was also a slavish following of British example. And while public protest eventually diluted the policy during World War II, throughout the period of internment it was the Italian community which seems to have suffered most.

While the population of those in Australia of German and Italian background was roughly the same, the number of Italians interned was three times greater than the number of Germans. Italians being the more recent arrivals, or "last off the boat" settlers, were treated as less trustworthy and suffered the bulk of the backlash.

Historian Michael Hogan in *The Sectarian Strand* argues that one of the myths of Australian history is that the experience of Gallipoli "cemented a new unity and national resolve". In fact, so strongly felt was sectarianism in the first decades of Federation that it was a period, Hogan tells us, of "great social division . . . especially on the bases of class, ethnicity and religion".

In spite of the celebrations of Christmas and New Year, Australians have a sense of foreboding at the beginning of 2003. But it is worth considering our own part in that unease. The subliminal message of "Let's look out for Australia" is its attempt to hose down growing community bigotry surrounding Australian Muslims.

But, in spite of the anger following the Bali bombings, intolerance in Australia to Middle Eastern migrants has been building for years. This suspicion was exploited by Peter Reith when defence minister during the *Tampa* incident in 2001 when, in August the Norwegian freighter MV Tampa picked up 433 Middle Eastern asylum seekers from a sinking boat that had left Indonesian waters. The Australian government refused the vessel the right to land, boarded it with SAS troops and legislated so that the refugee cargo would be prevented from coming ashore and thus able to claim asylum status.

Days later, just hours before the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York, Reith told journalist Steve Price of 3AW that the Australian Defence Force was needed to stop “people coming into Australia who have no permission . . . who have breached a lawful direction”, undermining claims of refugee status by the unwanted humanity on the *Tampa* by saying they had “paid very large money to people traffickers”.

Two days later, Reith did four interviews in which he connected the government's clampdown on boat people with efforts to combat terrorism.

Not surprisingly then, even before the full impact of the New York tragedy, most Australians believed their government acted in Australia's best interests over *Tampa*, with many being encouraged to confuse (as with Jews in the *Dunera* case) Muslims fleeing aggression with those who might perpetrate acts of terror.

After a year of such confusion, there have been outbursts of intolerance reminiscent of Melbourne's sectarianism in 1919. A proposal to build a Muslim place of prayer in Sydney's Annangrove was voted down after 5000 letters of objection and weeks of protests from residents.

In the New Year period 2003, Prime Minister John Howard encouraged Australians to embrace Muslims as part of mainstream society. The fact that he needed to say this was telling enough. Perhaps though, if that had been Mr Howard's message at the start of 2002, Australians would feel less paranoid today.

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THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT & INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES

The Sydney Institute Quarterly publishes – for the historical record – a copy of the recent correspondence between former prime minister Gough Whitlam and Gerard Henderson – concerning the policy adopted by the Whitlam government to Indochinese refugees /asylum seekers in 1975. Mr Whitlam's initial letter was in response to Gerard Henderson's column published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* on 3 December 2002.

GOUGH WHITLAM TO GERARD HENDERSON, 30 DECEMBER 2002

Dear Gerard,

The passage on asylum seekers in your *SMH* article on 3 December gives the readers of that newspaper a sample of the obituary which it will be disposed to publish. On the basis of Clyde Cameron's hostile book published in 1980 you concluded that as Prime Minister I “denied refuge to Vietnamese who were entitled to seek refuge in Australia”.

You are not the first or only *SMH* commentator who fails to check contemporary editions of the paper or to check public and contemporary documents, such as *Hansard*, which are not on the internet. RAAF planes brought more than 200 Vietnamese war orphans to Sydney on Saturday 5 April 1975. On the front pages of the *SMH* and *Australian* of 7 April there are large photographs of me nursing a 7-month orphan at North Head quarantine station. Both papers report my wife's and my visit at some length. On the following day I made a statement in the House of Representatives on Indo-China in general and the evacuation of the refugees from Da Nang in particular. On Thursday 10 April, I answered two questions from Connolly.

On Monday morning 21 April I answered questions from MacKellar and Sinclair. At 4 p.m. I had the meeting with Cameron and Don Willesse before the latter left to attend the ANZUS meeting in Wellington. On Wednesday morning I answered questions by Sinclair and Fraser. In the afternoon I arranged with the Australian National University for a five-year study



into the settlement experiences of the Vietnamese refugees admitted to Australia during 1975 to be carried out by a senior research fellow in sociology, Dr Jean Martin. (She was the wife of A.W. Martin, Menzies's biographer.) At 10 p.m. I left Sydney for the 1975 CHOGM meeting.

I arrived back in Canberra from CHOGM on 11 May. My engagement lists, available in the Whitlam Institute of the University of Western Sydney, show these meetings:

- Monday 19 May:** 1.30 pm Cameron and his secretary Wayne Gibbons
- Wednesday 21 May:** 8.30 pm Willesee
- Thursday 22 May:** 1pm Mr P Habib, U.S secretary for Pacific and S.E Asia department
- Thursday 29 May:** 5.30 pm Willesee and Renouf, Secretary of Foreign Affairs
- Thursday 5 June:** 4.30 pm Cameron, Hayden, Cairns
5.30 Cameron, Hayden

On Friday 6 June I replaced Cameron with Jim McClelland as Minister for Labor and Immigration.

On 16 July I confirmed Dr Martin's study in writing. My engagement list shows that on Wednesday 23 July I lunched at the Lodge with Barnard, Renouf, Morrison (representing Barnard in the house) and Willesee. I attach my press statement of 23 July concerning Dr Martin's study and Fraser's answer of 26 April 1977 (*Hansard*, p.1263) and MacKellar's answer of 2 May 1978 (*Hansard* p.1680) concerning the termination and resumption of her study.

Hansard shows the views I expressed on Vietnamese refugees later in 1975:

- Thursday 31 August:** pp. 380, 381, my answers to Sinclair
- Thursday 2 September:** pp. 828-836, Debate on Matter of Public Importance, Vietnamese refugees in Australia p.896, answer to question on notice by minister representing McClelland
- Wednesday 3 September:** pp. 914, 915, my answer to Kevin Cairns ('already 1000 adult refugees from Vietnam')
- Thursday 2 October:** pp. 1717, answer to Peacock by minister representing McClelland ('since 1 April 1975, 1133 Vietnamese have arrived in Australia')

I attach pages pp. 1822 and 1823 from *Hansard* of 13 October 1976 to illustrate the actions my Government took to assist tertiary students from Vietnam and Cambodia.

Cameron's book is an elaborate effort to disparage my sustained and successful campaign to establish diplomatic relations between Australia and China. He downgrades everything that Freudenberg and I have written on that subject. His excursus on Vietnamese immigrants arises from my countermanding his agreement that the RAAF would evacuate children from an "orphan" school run by one Rosemary Taylor, if I correctly remember her name. She had bypassed the South Vietnam government and phoned Cameron directly from Saigon.

I realise that the *SMH* and *The Sydney Papers* would not be likely to publish this letter. I trust, however, that you will write to me acknowledging that you have received it.

Yours sincerely,

Gough Whitlam

GOUGH WHITLAM TO SYDNEY MORNING HERALD 2 JANUARY 2003

(An almost identical letter was published in *The Age* on 1 January 2003)

In his survey of 2002, Gerard Henderson (*Herald*, December 31) states that "in 1975 Gough Whitlam opposed the entry of Vietnamese refugees to Australia, en bloc".

If he had checked the *Herald* files he would have noticed the April 7, 1975, front page story and picture of me nursing an orphan in a bloc of more than 200 evacuated by the RAAF.

If he had checked *Hansard* he would have noticed that in 1975:

- **On April 3**, I announced that students from Vietnam and Cambodia would be allowed to defer their return home.
- **On April 8**, I made a statement on Indochina in general and the evacuation of the refugees from Da Nang, in particular.
- **On April 23**, before leaving for CHOGM, I arranged with the ANU for a senior research fellow in sociology, Dr Jean Martin, to carry out a five year study into the settlement experiences of Vietnamese refugees.
- **On May 2**, I announced a special fund to provide living allowances for Vietnamese and Cambodian tertiary students.
- **On September 2**, I spoke in a debate on Vietnamese refugees.

- On September 3, I said there were 1000 adult refugees from Vietnam.
- On October 2, my minister for immigration said that 1133 Vietnamese had arrived since April 1.
- On November 11, my minister announced that government sponsored students from Vietnam and Cambodia were eligible for resident status whether or not they had completed their studies.

I also answered many questions in the parliament.

On refugees in general, my government in 1973 acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the 1961 Convention on the Status of Statelessness and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and repealed the odious 1949 Wartime Refugees Removal Act.

E.G. Whitlam

Sydney

31 December 2002

GERARD HENDERSON TO GOUGH WHITLAM, 9 JANUARY 2003

Dear Gough

I refer to your letter of 30 December 2002 (which I received on 31 December 2002) – and to your letter which was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 2 January 2003 and *The Age* on 1 January 2003.

Background

The letter of 30 December 2002 was a response to my *Sydney Morning Herald/Age* column of 3 December 2002 where I wrote:

These days Gough Whitlam constantly lectures-at-large about the rights of refugees. Yet no incumbent prime minister worked harder to keep genuine asylum seekers out of Australia when he had a chance to demonstrate fairness and empathy. Not even John Howard.

The Gough Fan Club has never disputed Clyde Cameron's account in *China, Communism and Coca-Cola* (1980) about how Whitlam told Cabinet in 1975 that he was "not having hundreds of f_ _ _ _ _ Vietnamese Balts coming into this country". The Whitlam government's excessively harsh policy to potential asylum seekers is documented in Hal G. P. Colebatch's recent Ph.D. thesis at the University of Western Australia.

The fact is that Whitlam did not want anti-communist Vietnamese entering Australia. But it was the anti-communists who were

the genuine asylum seekers at the time - fleeing the communist regime which conquered South Vietnam in April 1975. In her book *The Long Journey* (MUP 1984), Nancy Viviani suggested that the Whitlam government's hostility to Vietnamese refugees was partly motivated by "a care for the attitudes" of the North Vietnamese communist leadership.

Writing in *Quarterly Essay* (Issue 6, 2002) Mungo MacCallum - one of the Gough Fan Club's leading barrackers - has described Whitlam's 1975 statement as "a few lines of rhetoric". This is completely disingenuous. The fact is that Whitlam's attitude, as reported by Cameron and others, denied refuge to Vietnamese who were entitled to seek asylum in Australia.

The letter published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 2 January 2003 was in response to my column, published on 31 December 2002, where in a summary of hyperbole in 2002 – I wrote :

Melbourne barrister Julian Burnside informs readers of the *Times Literary Supplement* that "since the dismissal of the Whitlam government in 1975, Australia's treatment of asylum seekers" has been "based on a deeply anti-Asian prejudice". Conveniently overlooking the fact that in 1975 Gough Whitlam opposed the entry of Vietnamese refugees to Australia, en bloc.

Response

In neither your letter to me – nor your letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* – did you deny Clyde Cameron's report of the discussion on refugees which took place on 21 April 1975 between you, Clyde Cameron (Minister for Labor and Immigration) and Don Willesee (Minister for Foreign Affairs). I know that, at times, Clyde Cameron is less than a reliable witness. But this quote has been on the public record for over two decades – and, as far as I am aware, has never been challenged by you or your supporters. In your letter of 30 December 2002 you state that Mr Cameron's "excursus on Vietnamese immigrants" arose from you "countermanding his agreement that the RAAF would evacuate children from an 'orphan' school" run by a person who "had bypassed the South Vietnamese Government and phoned Cameron directly from Saigon". This overlooks that fact that, in his book, Clyde Cameron makes it explicitly clear that he agreed with what he regarded as your hard-line on Vietnamese refugees circa 1975. Indeed he wrote that he "could have hugged" you at the time for adopting a position on Vietnamese refugees which was the same as his.

In the early 1990s (at a private dinner in the Foreign Affairs and Trade Department in Canberra) I was approached by Peter Wilenski concerning published comments I had made about the Whitlam government's attitude to Vietnamese refugees. The late Dr Wilenski's position was that the Whitlam government was willing to admit Vietnamese into Australia in 1975 – but was looking for candidates from other than those who had – or were alleged to have had – an association with the anti-communist government in Saigon which was overthrown in 1975. I said to Dr Wilenski that his analysis was consistent with my critique. Namely, that the Whitlam government did not want to accept genuine refugees from Vietnam – i.e. those who wished to flee the new communist rulers of South Vietnam because they had a genuine fear of persecution. In short, the Whitlam government was hostile to genuine asylum seekers – or refugees – from Vietnam. Dr Wilenski did not refute this analysis.

In your letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* you made the following defences/rationalisations for your government's record on Indochinese refugees. Your claims are set out below – along with my responses:

• **On 7 April 1975** the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a photograph of you “nursing an orphan in a bloc of more than 200 evacuated by the RAAF”.

- Australia's decision to receive Vietnamese orphans in 1975 was a fine humanitarian gesture. But the recipients of this decision were infants – none of whom, by definition, were refugees/asylum seekers.

• **On 3 April 1975** you “announced that students from Vietnam and Cambodia would be allowed to defer their return home”.

- Once again, this was a proper decision. It's just that students studying in Australia at the time were not attempting to flee from persecution.

• **On 8 April 1975** you made a statement “on Indochina in general and the evacuation of the refugees from Da Nang in particular”.

- A reading of this speech indicates that you had nothing whatsoever to say about (potential) refugees from South Vietnam. The reference to Da Nang occupied less than one per cent of the entire speech.

• **On 23 April** you “arranged with the ANU for a senior research fellow in sociology, Dr Jean Martin, to carry out a five year study into the settlement experiences of Vietnamese refugees”.

- This was a proposed academic study into refugees - it was of no immediate benefit to asylum seekers. The first issue which the study was to “encompass” turned on “the refugees' reasons for leaving their country” In view of the fact that South Vietnam had

fallen to a totalitarian communist state – which had a brutal record of repression in North Vietnam – this was hardly an issue which warranted a five year study by an academic (who had no particular expertise in either contemporary political history or Indochina). I note that in your letter to me you point out that, in 1975, Dr Martin “the wife of A.W. Martin, Menzies' biographer”. I don't know what this is meant to imply - in view of the fact that Dr A.W. Martin was an ALP supporter circa 1975.

• **On 2 September 1975** you “spoke in a debate on Vietnamese refugees; on 3 September you said that “there were 1000 adult refugees from Vietnam” and on 2 October 1975 your Minister for Immigration (by then Jim McClelland had replaced Clyde Cameron) “said that 1133 Vietnamese had arrived since April 1”.

- The fact is that this debate took place in a climate where the Coalition (in opposition) under Malcolm Fraser's leadership was calling on Australia to be much more generous in its handling of applications for refuge from Vietnamese.

According to *Hansard*, you did *not* speak on the debate on Vietnamese refugees which took place in the House of Representatives on 2 September 1975. *Hansard* actually records John Howard interjecting that you were “not in the House” during the debate on that day. *Hansard* records that Bill Morrison and Joe Riordan spoke for the government during the *Matter of Public Importance* debate on 2 September 1975. Your answer to a *Question Without Notice* on 3 September 1975 was essentially directed at justifying your government's decision to prevent a number of Vietnamese, who had been allowed into Australia, from taking part in political debate in Australia.

• **On 11 November 1975** the Minister for Immigration “announced that government sponsored students from Vietnam and Cambodia were eligible for resident status whether or not they had completed their studies”.

- Once again, the individuals in question were living in Australia at the time. Not one was attempting to enter Australia from Vietnam or Cambodia.

In short, there is nothing in your recent correspondence to refute my comment that you worked hard to keep genuine asylum seekers from Indochina entering Australia in 1975. A few got into Australia. But your general policy was to oppose their entry en bloc – to the best of your ability.

A similar finding was reached by Nancy Viviani in *The Long Journey: Vietnamese Migration and Settlement in Australia* (MUP, 1984) - where she wrote:

On the evidence, it is clear that Australian refugee policy in 1975 was made by

Whitlam. It lacked strong support in Cabinet and in the Caucus, and the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Immigration had been largely excluded from the policy process. and in the later “international” effort, the intention of policy was to be as restrictive as possible. Not only were numbers restricted, but those with ties to the Saigon regime were avoided by not allowing students’ parents to join them. It seems fair to conclude that Whitlam’s chief motives were a straightforward concern to avoid a new influx of emotional anti-communists into Australian politics together with a care for the attitudes of Hanoi.

As you will be aware, the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence – which reported on this issue in December 1976 – reached a not dissimilar conclusion. The committee was chaired by Senator J.P. Sim (who was a “moderate” Liberal) and included Labor MPs (Senator Gordon McIntosh, Senator Cyril Primmer and Senator Kerry Sibraa). The members of the committee agreed unanimously:

In view of the Committee’s belief that the Australian Government had been informed of the gravity and magnitude of the situation in South Vietnam some three weeks before the evacuation of the Australian Embassy, we are unable to come to any conclusion other than one of deliberate delay in order to minimise the number of refugees with which Australia would have to concern itself. In addition, we believe that the guidelines of 22 April [1975] were so narrowly drawn that very few refugees would qualify for entry to Australia. In all, 5629 nominations were received but only 542 were approved – 355 for permanent residence and 187 for temporary residence. Of the 542 approved cases, less than 342 persons were informed of their approval in the four-day period prior to the Embassy’s evacuation. Other than orphans, 78 Vietnamese nationals were evacuated from Saigon by Australia...

As unpalatable as it may be, we are forced to conclude that the [Whitlam] Government acted reluctantly and, as expressed by one witness, in order to placate an increasingly suspicious Australian public.

See Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence *Australia and the Refugee Problem*, Parliamentary Paper No. 329/1976, 1 December 1976.

An even more critical assessment was made by Hal G. P. Colebatch in his recently completed Ph. D. thesis at the University of Western Australia. I note that, in *The Long Journey*, Nancy Viviani wrote that, in 1975, you were reported to have said: “These Vietnamese sob stories don’t wring my withers”. The source for this quote is, apparently, contained in the background papers to the 1976 Senate report – I am currently attempting to locate this material. In any event, Dr Viviani (who was private secretary to Senator Willesee from 1974 to 1975) thought it appropriate to cite the quotation in her book.

On 1 January 2006, the record of the Whitlam government’s response to the Indochina refugee crisis of 1975 will be released. I expect that the evidence, when released, will support my claim that, as prime minister, you went out of your way to prevent Vietnamese refugees from entering Australia – and will refute your assertion that you were not opposed to the entry of Vietnamese refugees into Australia.

I look forward to a discussion on the facts on this matter on New Year’s Day 2006.

Historical Precedents

My interpretations of your actions in 1975 have been influenced by similar fact evidence – namely, your attitude to Indochinese refugees in 1977 (when you were Opposition leader) and, again, in 1979 (after you had left politics).

In November 1977, just before the Federal election of that year, the HMAS *Ardent* intercepted a boat containing some 180 Vietnamese refugees, heading for Darwin. Bob Hawke was ALP Federal president at the time. In words that sounded remarkably similar to John Howard’s over two decades later, the (then) ALP president opposed the arrival on Australian shores of “queue-jumping” boat people. Bob Hawke told a media conference in Hobart on 28 November 1977:

Obviously there are people all around the world who have a strong case for entry into this country and successive governments have said we have an obligation, but we also have an obligation to people who are already here...Of course we should have compassion, but people who are coming in this way are not the only people in the world who have rights to our compassion. Any sovereign country has the right to determine how it will exercise its compassion and how it will increase its population.

Bob Hawke was reported as calling on the Coalition government to make it clear that the asylum seekers had no right to land in Australia. Fortunately Prime

Minister Malcolm Fraser rejected his advice. He said that Australia needed to make sure that the Vietnamese boat people were refugees - but felt that the situation was under control. (See the broadsheet press of 29 November 1977 and after).

It is true that Bob Hawke was not alone in calling for a tough line on asylum seekers a quarter of a century ago. According to a contemporaneous report in *The National Times* (12 December 1977), Hawke's position was shared by senior Fraser government minister Peter Nixon. The Coalition Transport Minister was reported to have told a media conference in Darwin that refugees arriving illegally by boat in Australia would be turned around and sent back. Peter Nixon was quickly hauled into line and the Immigration Minister (Michael Mackellar) issued a statement declaring that "Australia will continue to accept Indo-Chinese refugees". The Fraser Government went to the December 1977 Federal election with this policy.

There is no evidence that, as Labor leader in 1977, you repudiated Bob Hawke's statement. Moreover, while acknowledging that "any genuine refugees should be accepted", you maintained that "the Government has a responsibility to ensure they are genuine refugees" and that "it should also see that they don't get ahead in the queue over people who have been sponsored and who are already coming here" (*The Age*, 29 November 1977). *The National Times* reported that, speaking in Darwin, you blamed Lee Kuan Yew for the boat people reaching Australia's shores. You were quoted as alleging that Singapore supplied the Indo-Chinese boat people with the "plans and petrol and the maps to get here" (*The National Times*, 12 December 1977).

The evidence indicates that in 1977 you were running a line about so-called "queue jumpers" being sent to Australia with the connivance of foreign governments - which happened to be similar to the stance adopted by John Howard and some of his senior ministers in 2001.

In September 1978 you addressed a seminar at the Australian National University. Your speech - titled "Vietnam - Refugees, Border War, Rehabilitation" - was published in Malcolm Salmon (ed) *The Vietnam-Kampuchea-China Conflicts: Motivations, Background, Significance* (March 1979). In this speech you actually queried where the term "refugees" should properly be applied to the situation in Vietnam viz:

First, the refugees. I looked into this matter in Geneva with the International Committee of the Red Cross and with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. I also discussed it in Bangkok, in Ho Chi

Minh City and Hanoi, and in Nanning, the capital of Guangxi province, next to Vietnam, and also in Guangzhou. In the European context refugees used to mean at the beginning of the century those who were leaving the Tsarist Empire. Forty years ago they used to mean those who were leaving the German Empire, largely Jews. Thirty years ago they used to mean those who were leaving the new Russian Empire. Nowadays those whom we call refugees may not be so classified in the technical sense under the relevant international conventions. The Jews were free to leave Germany before the outbreak of the Second World War. The people who are leaving Vietnam now in general are free to leave Vietnam. It is arguable whether they are refugees.

In the same speech you:

- alleged that "refugees", as "they call themselves" were paying people smugglers to leave Vietnam.
- described the proposal by the (Labor) Shadow Minister for Immigration that holding camps should be set up in Australia "until the United Nations or some other international body can find another home for them" as "futile" and
- declared that you doubted "all the stories that appear in the newspapers about the treatment of people in Cambodia".

In other words, you not only queried whether there were genuine Vietnamese refugees in the late 1970s - you also disputed the claim that there were victims of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge communist regime in Cambodia who would be entitled to claim a genuine fear of persecution.

Conclusion

In your letter of 30 December 2002 you predict that neither *The Sydney Morning Herald* nor *The Sydney Papers* "would be likely to publish" your response to my criticisms concerning your attitude to Indochinese refugees in the final year of your government. As you are aware, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* has now published your case. *The Sydney Papers* only publishes speeches delivered at The Sydney Institute. However, your letter will be published in *The Sydney Institute Quarterly*.

In the past I have defended you against what I regard as unfair criticism of your government's policy with respect to Indonesia - including East Timor. But I believe it appropriate to draw attention to your government's actual record on refugees - especially

in view of the harsh criticism you made of Kim Beazley's position in late 2001.

Best wishes. Let's keep in touch.

Yours sincerely
Gerard Henderson

GERARD HENDERSON TO GOUGH WHITLAM, 30 JANUARY 2003

Dear Gough

I refer to my letter of 9 January 2003 – in response to your letter of 30 December 2002.

As you will recall, I pointed out that, in her book *The Long Journey*, Nancy Viviani wrote that – sometime in 1975 – you were reported to have said about Vietnamese refugees: "These Vietnamese sob stories don't wring my withers." I indicated that I was attempting to locate the source for this quotation – which, as I recall, has never been denied.

I have now checked the source. It is contained in Volume 1 of the Official Hansard Report of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence – at Page 246. The quote appears in a written submission by the respected Australian journalist Denis Warner (which was incorporated in *Hansard*). The relevant section of Mr Warner's submission reads as follows:

THE POLITICS OF WAR

Brinkmanship, appeasement, bigotry, defeat and victory – what goes into the politics of war?

Hear **DAVID DAY**
Academic and author

At The Sydney Institute
Tuesday 1 April 2003

5.30 for 6pm

41 Phillip Street, Sydney
RSVP: (02) 9252 3366

I have been told repeatedly by officials that Mr Whitlam accepted personal responsibilities for the admission, or otherwise, of all Vietnamese refugees wanting to come to Australia. I was told by one official that Mr Whitlam was quite unsympathetic. "These Vietnamese sob stories don't wring my withers," he is reported to have said. Mr Whitlam is also on record that there would be no reprisals in Vietnam and is privately said to hold the view that it would be better if the refugees returned there.

I am also informed by officials whose word I have no reason to doubt that the strict guidelines laid down for the acceptance of Vietnamese refugees were largely drawn up by the government of North Vietnam. Hanoi indicated that it did not want Australia to accept refugees "who had been forcibly evacuated by the Americans". In this category are all those refugees who went to Guam and Wake Island. Some exceptions were made to this and for a very brief period Australian Immigration officials were active on Guam, although, as the submission by Mr Nguyen Ngoc Phach indicates quite clearly, very little attempt was made to communicate with the many who wanted to go to Australia and had close relatives here. On the other hand, at least a token effort was made to bring in Vietnamese refugees from Hong Kong, though they had no close relations here.

The context of the submission makes it clear that the "officials" to whom Denis Werner referred were members of the Australian Public Service.

Best wishes. I was disappointed that, due to a conflicting commitment, I was not able to witness your performance (with Margaret) at the State Library of New South Wales last week.

Yours sincerely
Gerard Henderson

POSTSCRIPT, 30 JANUARY 2003

Gough Whitlam did not respond to the letter of 9 January 2003. However, he did acknowledge the 30 January 2003 correspondence. Mr Whitlam phoned Gerard Henderson on 30 January 2003 – after receiving the letter by fax. The conversation went for some time. In passing, Gough Whitlam said he could not recall the statement attributed to him by Denis Warner – but did not dispute the comment attributed to him by Clyde Cameron.

BOOK REVIEWS

John McConnell

INSIDE AL QAEDA : GLOBAL NETWORK OF TERROR

By Rohan Gunaratna

Scribe Publications, pb 2002

rrp \$29.95

ISBN 0 908011 95 4

Just over a decade ago, there was a prevailing sense of relief internationally following the disintegration of the Soviet communist empire. The Berlin Wall had fallen. After four decades, the Cold War had ended. The celebratory mood around the western world did not focus too sharply on the role of the Mujhadeen in making a decisive contribution to the expulsion of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan.

What mattered was the collapse of the Soviet Union. The United States became the sole global superpower. However, the United States government and Western intelligence agencies generally failed to maintain direct interest in the events that were to unfold in Afghanistan in the years following the Soviet defeat.

Francis Fukuyama, in optimistic mode, announced an end to history. By this, he meant it was the end of ideology – or rather to ideological conflict

The last couple of years have revealed the existence of a major new ideological conflict. We have experienced 11 September 2001 and closer to home 12 October 2002. The dates say it all. We hardly need to add the names of New York and Bali – so

horrifying are the events that occurred in these places on those dates.

Rohan Gunaratna's book *Inside Al Qaeda : Global Network of Terror* reveals how Osama bin Laden's organisation has received a head start of some ten years. For the foreseeable future, Gunaratna notes, we will be confronted with what he calls "Islamism" as an ideology and the pioneering "Islamist" vanguard, Al Qaeda, as the source of a global network of terror. These terms are not to be confused, of course, with members of the Islamic religion, the overwhelming majority of whom are moderate and tolerant.

Inside Al Qaeda is compelling, albeit disturbing, reading. Rohan Gunaratna is the author of six books on armed conflict. He is research fellow at the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, St. Andrews University in Scotland. He has served as

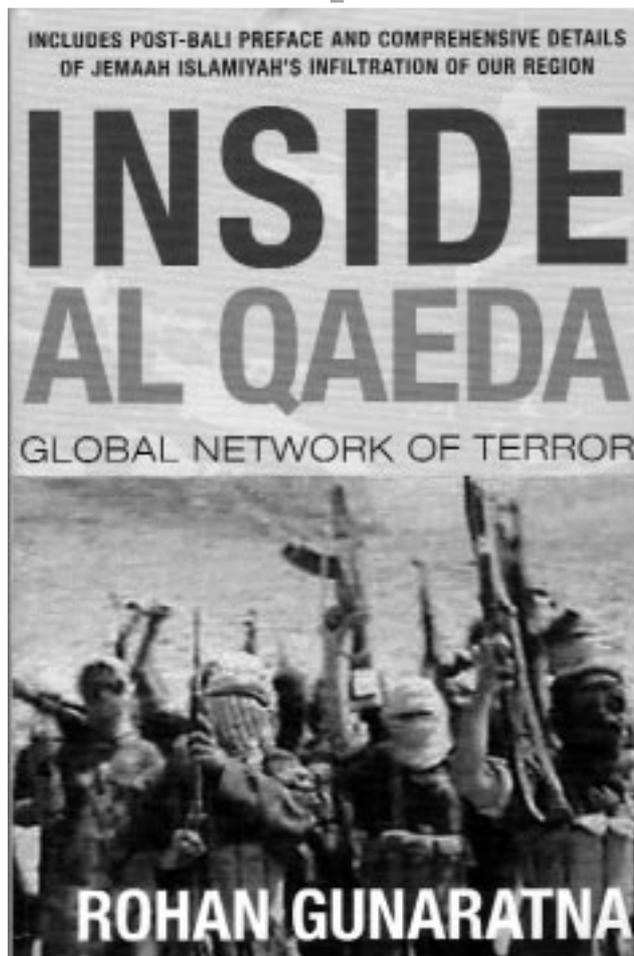
principal investigator of the United Nations' Terrorism Prevention Branch, and as a consultant on terrorism to a number of government and corporations.

Inside Al Qaeda is based on five years of research including many interviews. The book includes a post-Bali preface, an introduction and five chapters. The first chapter is entitled "Who is Osama bin Laden?" Chapter two addresses Al Qaeda's organisation, ideology and strategy. Chapter three surveys Al Qaeda's global network while Chapter four focuses on developments in Asia.

Chapter five assesses the Al Qaeda threat and sets out the author's recommendations as to the desirable international response.

Rohan Gunaratna examines why Al Qaeda remains a serious threat to its

enemies, despite the US-led military response in Afghanistan involving the removal of the Taliban government. Al Qaeda's intentions to strike, he writes, remain undiminished. Its global network provides it with the on-going capacity to plan and execute operations directly and through a myriad of associate groups.



The author notes that Al Qaeda's focus is being directed towards so-called soft targets such as population centres and economic assets. Although the primary target is inside continental United States and American assets overseas, the South East Asian area, Rohan Gunaratna notes, provides the biggest regional challenge.

Al Qaeda is now a multinational terrorist group, operating in the shadows, penetrating a significant minority of Islamic organisations and extending its influence among Islamic migrant communities around the world.

It is clandestine and international in structure. It is organised around cell structures of cadres. These cells are compartmentalised from each other. Personal couriers maintain communication links, making it difficult for intelligence services to monitor activities.

“By working among ordinary European, North American and Australian Muslims” Rohan Gunaratna states, “Al Qaeda has gained strategic depth at the very heart of Western communities.”

Graduates from Al Qaeda training camps total in the tens of thousands. According to the author, Al Qaeda recruits only three per cent of these graduates, screening out all but the most committed, the most trustworthy, the most capable operatives.

Belief in the guiding influence of Allah who will reward sacrifice means that Al Qaeda's fighters possess a relentless energy. They readily embrace a culture of martyrdom. This makes them fearless.

Rohan Gunaratna sees no possibility of compromise between Al Qaeda and its enemies – liberal democratic societies. For Al Qaeda's intent is to establish societies founded on the strictest Islamist principles. The organisation uses modern technology and has access to very large sums of finance.

Al Qaeda has no compunction, Rohan Gunaratna says, about using chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons against population centres. This conflict is likely to survive decades into the future.

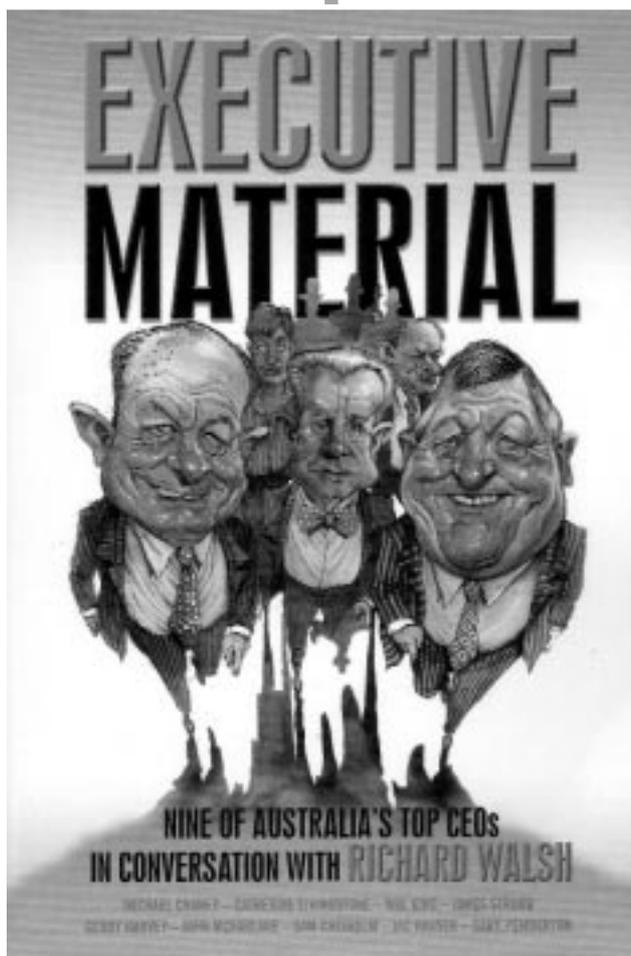
Al Qaeda is a very committed and flexible organisation. It has a novel structure, diverse membership and a robust capacity for regeneration. It places great store on meticulous planning. Surveillance, reconnaissance and rehearsal prior to execution are all taken very seriously.

Rohan Gunaratna reminds readers that one and a half-years planning was invested in the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre.

Australian readers will experience a growing sense of unease as Rohan Gunaratna discusses reasons why there is an increased terrorist threat to this country. He refers to the presence of Al Qaeda money-raising support cells in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, to a significant Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) presence, stating that “Al Qaeda could mount an operation in Australia with relative ease ...” Our authorities, he believes, have been slow to respond to the threat.

Meanwhile, “several terrorists, and their supporters and sympathisers” he claims, “have infiltrated Australian society, including its universities and even media organisations.” Our malaise, he says, is one of being insufficiently educated about the Asia-Pacific region. He accuses Australians of lacking a good understanding of the culture, politics and economics of our neighbours.

In the concluding chapter, Rohan Gunaratna sets out the nature of the Al Qaeda threat and his recommendations for an international response – separated into short-term, mid-term and long-term actions. He concludes on a sombre note. “The global fight against Al Qaeda,” he argues “will be the defining conflict of the early twenty-first century.”



**EXECUTIVE MATERIAL:
NINE OF AUSTRALIA'S TOP CEOs IN
CONVERSATION WITH RICHARD WALSH**

by Richard Walsh

Allen & Unwin, pb 2002

rrp \$29.95

ISBN 1 86508 757 2

Executive Material consists of nine of Australia's top CEOs in conversation with Richard Walsh. A former managing director of Angus and Robertson Publishers and head of Australian Consolidated Press, Richard Walsh is also former editor of the satirical magazine *OZ*, and of the left wing political weekly, *Nation Review*.

The CEOs, or former CEOs are Michael Chaney (Wesfarmers), Catherine Livingstone (Cochlear), Wal King (Leighton Holdings), James Strong (Qantas), Gerry Harvey (Harvey Norman), John McFarlane (ANZ), Sam Chisholm (British Sky Broadcasting), Jac Nasser (Ford Motor Company) and Gary Pemberton (Brambles).

The style of *Executive Material* is more conversational than formal interview format.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE LEFT

Two Views

War has revived the Left in Australia's political landscape. Hear the for and against as to the value of the Left's contribution to debate.

IMRE SALUSINSKY (Staff writer *The Australian*) versus **MARGO KINGSTON** (Political editor, *smh.com.au*)

Wednesday 16 April 2003

5.30 for 6pm

Claytong Utz Seminar Room,

Level 25, 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney

RSVP: (02) 9252 3366

On occasions, Richard Walsh anticipates where a comment is heading and injects an idea or two into the discussion. *Executive Material* is very easy to read. The book reveals the thinking of the CEOs on a range of issues. Differing viewpoints emerge on some issues, as to be expected.

Such issues include whether to advertise externally when top positions need to be filled or on how to deal with employees who rank lowest on key performance indicators. In some instances, bluntness to non-performers is the preferred approach.

Noting that the ANZ Bank identifies the bottom 10 per cent of employees and that on balance 5 per cent of them end up going, John McFarlane says the proposition is put in plain terms: "Look, frankly we have lost confidence in you and we think that you should go."

And when push comes to shove for Harvey Norman's franchisees, well, Gerry Harvey just tells it like it is "Look, please go. Please. Because this is too hard. You know you're never going to improve ... There's just no point..."

Then there are moments when really tough decisions must be made.

Sam Chisholm recounts the time that the team given the job of sacking 3,500 employees reported to him after ten days. They had completed the job, they told him. Sam Chisholm notes, "I said, 'Well that's fantastic. Thank you for what you've done...now I've got some bad news for you. Because I'm now going to fire all of you guys.'"

Interesting points emerge in *Executive Material* about the role that the culture of organisations play, how Australia's distinctive environment may impact on company culture, how formal structures may constrict creativity, performance management dilemmas and the appropriate goals with which to guide company performance.

Catherine Livingstone responds with insight to a question on whether there is a peculiarly female contribution that women CEOs can make. She observes that : "The male brain is very focused and the female brain is very networked. And of course you can progress quickly from 'networked' to 'scatterbrained' and from 'focused' to 'tunnel vision'."

Now, there's a useful poster for boardroom walls ...

John McConnell is the author of several senior textbooks



REVIEW OF THE REVIEWERS

Stephen Matchett

It takes a real talent for hatred to loathe the United States. An empire that mostly governs by the rule of law, is remarkably respectful of the sensibilities of its client states and tries diplomacy before deploying its unmatched military might is hard to hate. Yet paid up members of Robert Manne's "moral middle class", loathe the United States. The "moral middle class" a revealing phrase coined by Professor Manne, is the self-appointed national conscience. It is made up of the people with sufficient education to know what is right for the country and who cannot understand, why the class of 1972 is not setting the political agenda anymore.

The moral middle class holds the United States accountable for the world's ills. They argue that cultural and economic imperialism, and/or the application of military might, give the Americans the means to run the world to suit themselves. For evidence, they point to the United States' triumph over communism as evidence that they must be up to no good and when that looks even too implausible, they turn to conspiracy theories to make their case. It only took a day before one particularly insightful member of the self-appointed savants was explaining on Sydney ABC Radio 2BL Richard Glover's "Drive" that it was perfectly obvious that the people behind the Bali bombings were from the CIA.

If the United States did not exist Australians who blame it for the world's woes would need to invent it. Certainly, the United States is a convenient villain to blame for heresies committed against the four articles of faith of the moral middle class (*SIQ* Feb, 2002). In essence, the statement of faith on the four articles and the way the Americans are to blame for everything are quite sensible once a manichean version of the way that electorates decide and international relations occur is adopted.

Firstly, the structural economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s were bad in that they eroded the traditional ways Australians worked. As the purveyor of global capitalism, the Americans are obviously to blame for economic change that plugged Australia into the global economy. Secondly, ordinary people are alienated from politics because we have adopted an

American-style political culture. Thirdly, the Australian people have been duped into moral panic over the dispossessed of the world (the doctrinal position on terrorists is not as clear) and the way the electorate has responded to asylum seekers is just an update of traditional Australian racism. This is obviously the fault of the United States because it is the rapacities of global capitalism that have created the disruptions behind global migration.

And then there is the great unifying truth that pulls it altogether. Ordinary Australians deny theological instruction from their moral middle class superiors because they are enthralled by the Prime Minister – who is of course a lackey of the Americans.

The question is, what impels intelligent people to believe such nonsense? It is all very well for conservative commentators to poke fun at Phillip Adams, Robert Manne, Anne Summers and sundry lesser exponents of the four articles of faith without explaining their arguments.

Perhaps it is the outcome of mass education, the legacy of a couple of arts courses in politics, that has convinced so many people that they have the knowledge and skills to interpret what evil Americans are up to. Perhaps it is the result of the entirely reasonable idea that no argument should be accepted at face value and the policies of every politician must be critically scrutinised. It may be because Australians are congenitally inclined to dispute the accepted wisdom, always anxious to give the other bloke a go and absolutely loathe anybody they think is too big for their boots.

There are probably many other reasons but, whatever the cause, anti-Americanism is the height of fashion. It began with the catastrophe of 11 September 2001 which was variously viewed as the excessive, but understandable, revenge of the third world against the first. And nothing as compared to the crimes inflicted by the United States on sundry third world regimes over the last century. The US response in Afghanistan and the prospect of an attack on Iraq only confirmed the moral middle class belief that when it comes to understanding imperialism the United States is the place to look.

The way the Left has been able to demonise the United States is to impose artificial standards which it can never meet. Racism and poverty exist everywhere but only the US is attacked over them. Given its immense wealth and diversity, it is unsurprising that the United States is characterised by monstrous inequalities between rich and poor – they are partly the reason for its success. And, as the only thing which stood between much of the world and communist tyranny for the 40 odd years from 1945, it is hardly surprising that the United States sat

down with evil regimes – it's hard to avoid working in the real world when Mother Teresa is not Secretary of State.

While this sort of anti-Americanism may be nonsense it is very necessary nonsense for the Australian left that has been bereft of any credibility these ten years past.

Until the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviets and their satellites faced the failure of their command economies, you could still get an argument in the leafier suburbs of Sydney that socialism offered a morally viable imperative to the corruption and misery of American-style capitalism. Certainly it got progressively harder over the years to make the case, as the misery of Soviet tyranny and corruption imposed on its victims became clearer and clearer. However, sophistry will always find a way and as late as the Reagan years there were still intelligent people happy to trot out moral equivalence arguments that held that if the Soviets were villains so was the United States. And there was always the dictator de jure in Africa or Asia who was hailed as the next new thing in socialism, offering a new path to freedom that would avoid the mistakes made by the Stalin's successors.

Once the old Soviet Union collapsed and the Chinese rejected the old doctrinal purity, the Left's anti-Americanism became harder to sell. By the early 1990s it was the policy equivalent of opposition to fluoridising water supplies or to immunising children against polio – the fringe contrarianism adopted by people desperate to demonstrate their intellectual credentials by showing that they alone understand what is really going on.

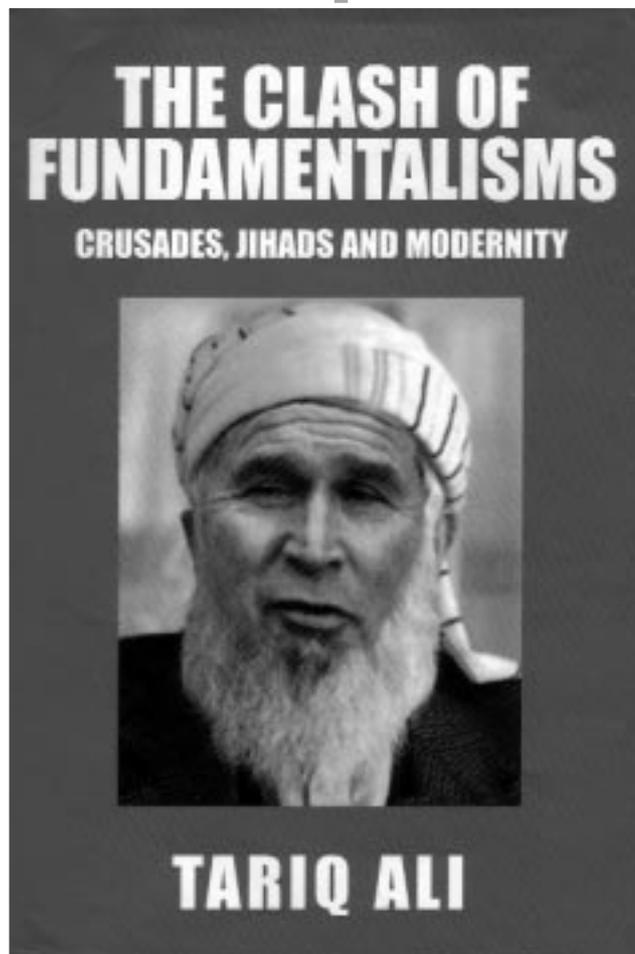
Salvation arrived on 11 September 2001 when the Left found that the old arguments could be dusted off and the United States denounced not just for economic and social imperialism but for militarism as it sought revenge for the World Trade Centre bombing and confronted dictators in Iraq and North Korea.

Sadly, while the Left may be back in business it is peddling the same old ideas. It's a bit steep to suggest that 11 September was a direct response to any US action so the response is to trot out those old rhetorical standbys - conspiracy theories and universal blame. Which is how four darlings of the pop-left have discovered that whatever is wrong in the world the Americans or their lackeys are to blame. They tried to prove it in these four books, Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (Verso), Naomi Klein, *Fences and Windows: Despatches from the Front Lines of the Globalisation Debate* (Flamingo), Richard Neville,

Amerika Psycho: Behind Uncle Sam's Mask of Sanity (Ocean Press) and John Pilger, *The New Rulers of the World* (Verso). Nor is evidence much of a problem in these extraordinary books. What their authors cannot prove – and that is almost everything - they infer by either breathlessly recounting conspiracies or explaining that all the wrongs in this wicked world are caused by the flawed capitalist model that the Americans impose on us all. These are all exercises of faith by people who need something to hate more than somebody to believe in. For the three men, all far older than Ms Klein, they are exercises in anger that the caravan of debate has moved on and the rhetoric that stood them in good stead for 30 years is no longer relevant

to public affairs.

The shortest and most simply presented of the four is Richard Neville's collection of anecdotes and aphorisms. This remarkably rambling exercise demonstrates the tragic impact of relevance deprivation on the once near-famous and the sad truth that not only do old hippies fail to simply fade away, they don't update their rhetoric. Thus Neville begins by reminding us of the riots at the 1968 Democrat convention in Chicago and despairing that 25 years later nobody is in the streets protesting "the ongoing scale of carnage" (4), whatever that may mean.



It sets the tone for this collection of slight essays by a refugee from the 1960s who can seemingly never forgive the proles for not following his lead.

The moral middle class distaste for ordinary people is at the heart of this book. Neville's contempt for ordinary Australians is clear in his description of Melbourne's Crown Casino and his bemused contempt for a world where people focus on business demonstrates why the Australian economy was in a mess when his views were in vogue. And for a villain to blame for the unhappy state where we all work too hard is easy to find – it's the United States and the way it has imposed its values on the world. The only culture Neville acknowledges as American is a consumerism that gulls people into buying things that they do not need, or rather what he has decided they don't need. Naturally there is a ritual obeisance to the good things in American culture, things that an oldster but groover such as Neville likes - jazz, the Macintosh and "Jewish" (sic) humour. But these pale into insignificance compared to the way the United States runs the world to support its consumerism and the worst thing to be is in business: "The question to ask ourselves as we journey into the twentieth century is this: is each of us at heart a businessperson or is each of us at heart a human bezbrand fetishism and propaganda so clever and tantalizing that most of us feel the sooner we're indoctrinated into the American Dream, the better." (53-54)

There is the moral middle class argument in all its glory, unchanged since the 1960s when the evil multinationals began to oppress us all and of course the only reason people go along with it is because they are tricked. Which is much the argument Naomi Klein offers up in a book that is equally light on argument and heavy on self-righteousness.

Her collection does not directly blame the US for everything as much as the IMF, the WTO and the World Bank – but, as the forge of capitalism, the Americans are obviously responsible. Klein's basic

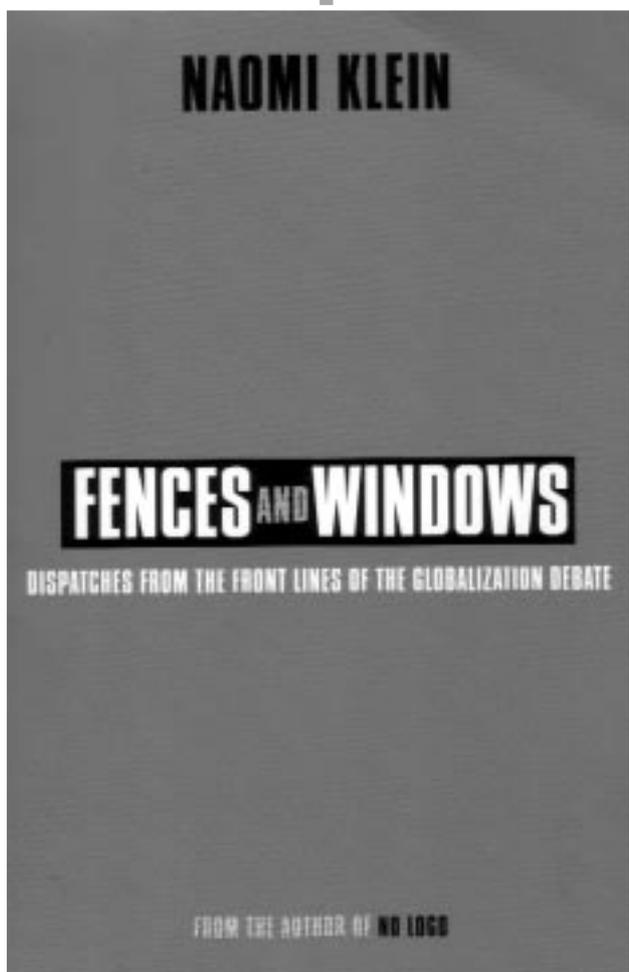
idea is that nobody is responsible for their own setbacks, be they an individual or a nation – their problems are all the fault of the globalising capitalists. This is less a collection of arguments as an anthology of rants all on the same theme – that ordinary people have no fun and that if they were left alone heaven would be on earth. Thus everything Western governments do is about protecting the interests of the ruling class and harming the people – there is a very old fashioned sense of class in this book which just does not play in a world where working class people can hope with confidence to see their children prosper.

Klein is around half Richard Neville's age and it must do his heart good to see that at least one woman has taken up his cause. Like Neville, her argument is

based on anecdote and aphorism which leap from the particular to the general. Klein communicates, via generalization and the more sweeping the better, "What is on trial in Seattle is not trade or globalisation but the global attack on the right of citizens to set rules that protect people and the planet." (5)

If you accept generalisations like this on their own terms – that the world is a perpetual struggle between the business baddies and their pals in Washington and the goodies, crusading young journalists like, well like Naomi, and that slogans can sum up political problems of the most astonishing complexity, then Klein makes sense. The problem is that many of the generalisations are just adolescent ravings. For example, people are working to reclaim the

commons: "... as the travelling activist caravan Reclaim the Streets does, throwing wild parties in the middle of busy intersections just to remind people that streets were once civic spaces as well as commercial ones. This reclaiming is already happening on many fronts. The commons is being reclaimed around the world: by media activists, by landless peasants occupying unused land, by farmers rejecting the patenting of plants and life forms." (33)



There are times when the fresh breeze of nonsense so rattles the ramshackle rhetoric that it is easy to suspect that Klein is a conservative parodist who lacks subtlety but enjoys imagination in abundance. That at least would account for the piece that compares the slaughter of farm animals during the European foot and mouth epidemic with the destruction of statues of the Buddha by the Taliban. (95) With arguments like this, a case for anything is possible – and Klein makes a case for just about every leftwing cliché possible with such vigour that there is no doubt that she actually believes everything she writes.

Which is alarming in one so young; for all her talk about the empowering capacity of the www and e-mail for young people to fight capitalism, Klein shares the middle class moralists suspicion of change and hatred of the private sector, so popular with the bright young things of the 1960s. Thus the free market never provides ordinary people with the power of choice, genetically modified food may feed greater numbers but it's just part of the capitalist takeover and the complex world of real politics is never allowed to get in the way of blaming her cardboard cutout cads for everything. For example, she makes the entirely reasonable point that class has replaced race as the basis of apartheid in South Africa but the new villains are not the new governing elite but the World Bank and the IMF. (108)

The trouble is that in her adolescent responsibility-free take on the world all that is good is free (Napster was excellent) and anybody who tries to recover the cost of product or service is just another oppressor. Thus democracy is not about the rule of law and the right of all citizens to participate in the electoral process – its about “citizens making democratic decisions that are right for them” on issues like “nationalising the phone company!” (45) And when nations fail its never anything to do with their inhabitants it's the wicked capitalist conspiracy. The collapse of Argentina had nothing to do with the failure of the community to build a democratic culture and military rule it was all the doing of the International Monetary Fund, “the IMF has had its chance to run Argentina. Now it's the people's turn.” (55)

And of course what we all need is more public servants. In fact the lack of public servants is the thing that makes the US vulnerable to terrorism. For example, there are doctors in the public system who are not trained to identify plague! (116) If John Pilger ever wonders who will succeed him in the struggle to blame the United States for everything he must take heart at Naomi Klein. She shares his great capacity to generalise and knows that all information is a weapon in the struggle against the beast. But Klein has a long way to go before she could ever hope to

match Pilger's achievement in turning the United States and its lackeys into the cause of all the world's ills. Not even Klein would have the insight to grasp, as Pilger has done, that the United States is “the Third Reich of our times” (*The Australian*, 4 February 2003).

Pilger is still trapped in the 1960s model where the American debacle in Vietnam defined it as the villain of the whole world. The problem is that with no alternative to praise – Pilger is too clever to celebrate most of the miserable dictatorships and kleptocracies which have succeeded communism as the strongest opponents of the United States – all there is to do is criticise, and this he does with gusto. Name a problem in the world and the Americans are to blame for it. Nevertheless, while he criticises at length he does not analyse nor bother much with evidence beyond the tabloid anecdotes that burden his slim volume.

Thus, the sufferings of the Iraqi people, for which comprehensive data is not provided – just masses of individual sob-stories - are blamed not on Saddam Hussein but on the West. The US is similarly responsible for all the miseries of Indonesia from the Soharito coup in 1965 and all the villainies that followed but funnily enough there is no explanation why the evil capitalists did not prop up his regime in 1998. Pilger points to John Foster Dulles' tactics on Vietnam in 1954 to damn US policy in Afghanistan in 2000. He claims that Dulles would not accept the democratic wishes of the Vietnamese people – and implies that the US did the same in Afghanistan. And at the heart of his argument is a very simple idea - anybody is better than the Yanks. Thus the Soviet backed commissars in Afghanistan, bad chaps and their regime (“although Stalinist in its central committee structure”) were trying to improve the people's lives.

It is all one long whinge from a perpetual whiner. When Pilger is called to heaven, he will offer millennia weaving conspiracy theories about the unjust treatment of the anti-Christ. Pilger is also a compulsive borrower from history's store – he seizes upon facts, any facts will do, and uses them to make whatever claim suits. He writes like a man arguing in a pub – the baddies are irredeemably bad and everything points to one source of all human misery – the villains in Washington.

Certainly Pilger can point to lots of cases where America dealt with bad people. But in a naughty world the forces of goodness are not always easy to recognise and generally do not have the power. Which makes it necessary to deal with those who do. Pilger forgets that the US led a coalition against communism for most of the last 60 years and, to defeat that tyranny, difficult decisions had to be made

and unpleasant people accommodated. He rails against reality and cloaks his complaint in the rhetoric of moral standards so that the West is expected to behave in a way that would make it impossible to govern - or indeed to help anybody.

Thus (142-145) he attacks NATO for helping the Kosovos in 1999 and harming the Serbs – and if NATO had done the reverse of what Pilger criticises them for doing he would have criticized them just the same. It's all a juvenile exercise in opposing whatever the United States and its allies are doing for no other reason other than because it is the west that is doing it. And, giving the lead to Naomi Klein, at the heart of Western wickedness is the “business state” and the media and their plot to globalise the world and of course the arch villains are the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank and the US Treasury. They are all intent on taking advantage of disorganisation in the third world - which itself was caused by colonialism in the first place – not just to seize control of all the strategic resources but to enforce western ideas of “civilisation” – colonialism just never went away. (111-113)

Pilger made his name in journalism and television so perhaps it is unfair to criticise him for a book that is little more than a collection of anecdotes he may find the length a struggle. Yet even reading the book as a collection of scripts for a partisan television documentary, where anecdotes are used to gloss over very complex issues, demonstrates that, once the innate villainy of the United States is accepted, Pilger may have nothing much to say but many ways to say it.

This is what separates Tariq Ali from the trio of wacky funsters who simply blame the United States for everything. Ali has a far more sophisticated analysis and one that will really appeal to the intellectuals of the moral middle class. He does not denounce the United States as inherently bad as much as build a half baked theory of global politics at the heart of which is the deepest mystery of the moral middle

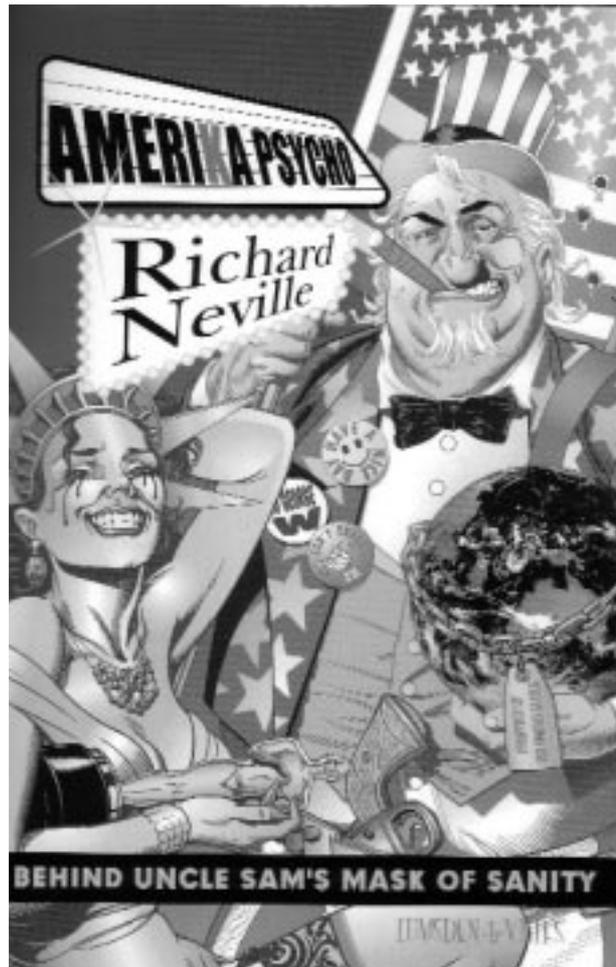
class articles of faith - that ordinary people do not know what is best for them and that all would be well if they were to obey their left-wing betters.

What makes his argument poignant is that Ali, one of the heroes of the 1960s left, seems much smarter than his contemporaries Pilger and Neville and he knows that the revolution is never going to arrive and that the left is utterly irrelevant. It is as unsurprising as it is sad that Ali is unable to gracefully withdraw

into the obscurity to which his cause has already gone. Instead, he offers this argument which explains that the tragedy of 11 September was born of a wrong historical turning. Instead of the left winning, fundamentalism - of the capitalist and Muslim faiths - triumphed and these two corrupt ideologies are now slugging it out for world domination.

It was the triumph of Muslim fundamentalists, whom the evil Western colonialists nurtured for their own terrible purposes, that stopped the creation of a modernising Islam that would have had room for socialists and feminists alike (67,68, 78). It is an argument of sorts but its credibility is eroded with Ali's pose as a resigned voice of reason by his invocation of the standard hatreds of the modern left. The Israelis are to blame for everything

and understandably upset all Muslims all the time. For example in 1967 when they resisted against Arab attacks (115). In fact, there is a direct link between the Balfour Declaration on the need for a Jewish homeland and 11 September (11). There is also the usual argument that whatever anybody else does, the United States is to blame. Thus, Saddam Hussein's only fault in attacking Kuwait was “he did not realise that sovereignty may only be breached by the imperial power. Mimicry in this field is not encouraged” (143). In fact, as a former ally and helper against Iran, the West really has no case against Iraq. Kuwait was often run from Baghdad in pre-colonial times and the West did not do anything for 20 years when Indonesia occupied Timor (147). First rate Pilgerisms like this would not only make



the great man proud but demonstrate that, whatever happens in the world, a way can be found to blame Israel and the West. For example, consider Ali's explanation that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan because it was tricked by the CIA (208). Remarkably the evidence for the cunning trick is not provided.

It might not seem so with remarks like this, but Ali is smarter than his colleagues. While he holds the United States to blame for absolutely everything that is wrong in the world, America is not uniquely evil, sharing the distinction for brutal ideological triumphalism with Islam, or at least the fundamentalist versions which did not take Ali's directions in the late 1960s to progress down the communist road. Where the United States makes its mistake is to assume that the Muslim extremists hate them alone (although there is ample reason to) when in fact they hate everybody who does not share their desire to return politics and religion to the seventh century. The problem is that with the defeat of the left there is no rational voice to defy the capitalists, "with the triumph of one ideology and the total collapse of the other, the space for debate and dissent has narrowed dramatically" (255).

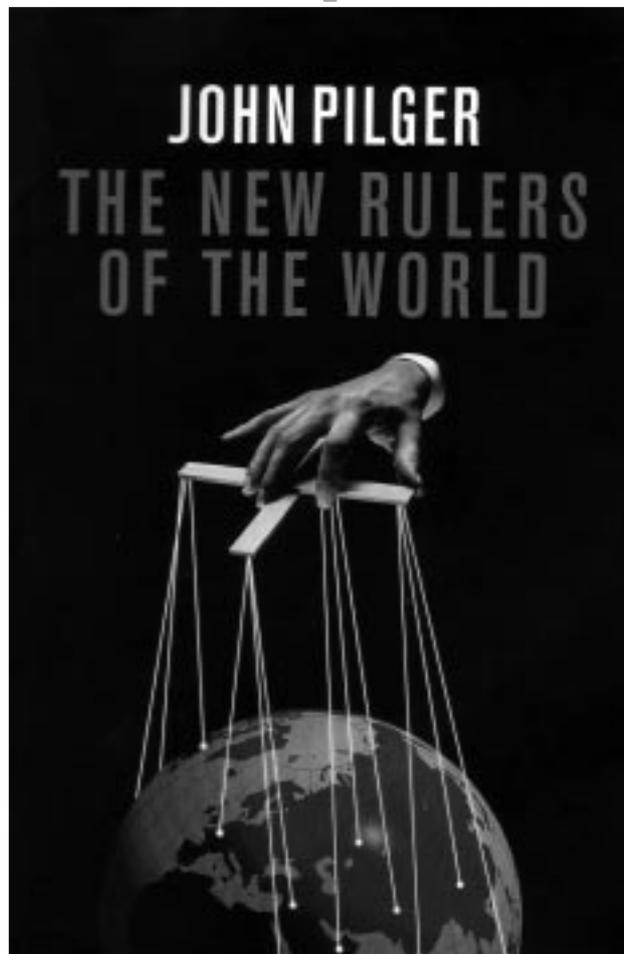
The answer is an Islamic revolution to defeat both fundamentalist religiosity and capitalism, but of course it must be a secular one, for "thinking people search for truth in matter because they are aware that there is nowhere else for them to search" (99). Ali's is exactly the sort of argument that the moral middle class adores. It provides a sweeping theory of global politics, it offers solutions that are attractive because there is no danger that they can ever be implemented, it blames the Americans for everything and it sneers at people so stupid that they are gulled by religiosity. Where Neville rants, Klein bleats and Pilger harrumphs, Ali plays the intellectual, and the moral middle class love writers who can turn their prejudice into half coherent narrative. But, at the end of the day, Ali's book does little more than present a superior version

of the other three - capitalism is bad, globalism is an affront to the workers and peasants of the world and we are all in thrall to the great Satan whose temple is upon the Potomac: "... in the rest of the world, a billion people are undernourished and seven million children die as a result of the debt owed by the countries in which they live. It is this that accounts for the desperation and hatred that surfaces in large parts of the world against the United States and its allies." (288-289) There are no sources for the claims or explanation of why the Americans are to blame, but when you know you are right why let a lack of facts get in the way?

Perhaps it demonstrates that the nation's literary editors take their orders direct from the CIA but the main media coverage of all four books was not extensive. Richard Neville's essay, which included the substance of this book and first appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* colour magazine, generated many moral middle class endorsements and the usual reflex criticisms by conservatives who use similar generalising styles to make equally foolish points. Like Janet Albrechtsen in *The Australian* who seemed to think that tolerating criticism by people like Neville brought 11 September on itself: "... so busy were we being inclusive, denigrating our own culture and plugging our ears to warnings the cult of diversity trumped our own culture." (*The Australian*, 4 September 2002). In contrast, Tim Blair (*The Australian*, 18 April 2002) and Gerard

Henderson (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 October 2002) confined themselves to pointing to some of Neville's errors.

The response to Klein was similar, with conservatives such as Miranda Devine (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 November 2001) calling her and her "anti-globalisationist" supporters names and suggesting they "should ensure they are not 'useful fools' for a more sinister cause". Michael Duffy put it



best, if bluntly, when he pointed to the real impact of Klein's rants against free trade – "she writes that free trade in Asia has been a disaster. ... Yet people in Taiwan and South Korea are nine times more wealthy than they were 35 years ago, and other Asian countries are catching up fast as they free up their economies. I am sure Klein is not in the business of telling massive lies to sell books, but you have to wonder just how much she really cares." (*Courier Mail*, 16 November 2002).

Pilger was less reviewed than indulged. Tim Blue (*The Australian*, 16 August 2001), reviewing the documentary which preceded the book, suggested that while Pilger "hypes it up ... the facts he reports are uncomfortably hard to deny or ignore". Ian Syson (*The Age*, 8 June 2002) admitted that Pilger made mistakes but added they did not matter because even when he was wrong he was right. Thus he suggested that Pilger was wrong to state that no Australians knew that Aborigines made up our first cricket team to tour the United Kingdom but added, "What is the point of this error-spotting? Australia is a racist society whether or not Pilger's specific assertion is correct". And when it comes to higher truths, Syson found one in spades in the book – the universal responsibility of the United States for everything he considers bad:

Pilger's claim that America is the greatest state terrorist and sponsor of compliant terrorists, murderers and criminals ... is only offensive to those who live in the cloud-cuckoo land of beneficent American imperialism. It is still an unimpeachable fact that America is responsible for the two greatest single acts of terror on a civilian population. America remains the only state to have used nuclear weapons in anger.

Certainly the United States destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but how bombing an aggressor's target to end a war – and only using the second bomb after the Japanese government refused to surrender – constitutes terrorism is only apparent to those who want to blame the Americans for everything.

As Christopher Kremmer, (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 2002) put it:

... the catch is that by always demonising one side in any war, he falls into the trap of whitewashing the other ... Political problems are rarely black and white, and the solutions almost never are.

As a better writer with a more complex argument, Tariq Ali attracted a better class of reviewer altogether. Kremmer, in his joint review of Ali and Pilger suggested that the former had a more

sophisticated explanation of why everything is the American's fault – US imperialism has strangled all ideological alternatives. While Kremmer found Ali's a superior form of blaming the Americans he concluded that it came from the same school as Pilger. Ali's book, "dutifully marshals facts like logs on a bonfire which never seems to catch alight". Or as William Maley (*The Age*, 3 August 2002) put it:

Ali's writings are unfortunately at points contaminated with a stale leftism that distorts his attempts to come to terms with contemporary politics. This is allied to a painfully reductionist approach to an irredeemably complex world ... In Ali's approach there is far too little room for the random and the contingent.

For the moral middle class readership of these four books this is exactly as it should be. They know the truth is out there and the primacy of theory over fact in these books only makes them the more attractive.

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FRONTIER VIOLENCE

A new war of words has broken out among Australia's academics over the true extent of violence between Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians in the early decades of settlement. Stephen Matchett takes a peek.

Back in 2000, *SIQ* reported on a brawl between controversialist Keith Windschuttle and academic historians, Henry Reynolds prominent among them. They were arguing over Windschuttle's claims that Reynold's estimate of the number of Aborigines killed in frontier violence was not supported by archival evidence. Of course the brawl was about far more than this. Windschuttle was challenging the orthodoxy, that the history of European settlement of Australia was a chronicle of unremitting violence. But worse, he had intruded on the preserve of academic historians – which annoyed the thin-skinned among them as much or more than his arguments.

They are even more annoyed now that Windschuttle has published the first full volume that sets out his case, on the history of Tasmanian settlement. Windschuttle claims to bell many scholarly cats for sloppy research, in particular he delivered on his earlier criticism that some of Reynold's evidence just did not stand up. He also slammed a prominent historian of Tasmania, Lyndall Ryan.

In a discipline less mutually supporting than Australian history these would have been career-ruining claims. Professor Reynolds has acknowledged error. Professor Ryan has taken cover behind a lawyer's letter (*The Australian*, 4 January 2003) and a reply that stopped just short of sophistry. Yet neither has suffered any apparent detriment to their professional standing. When Ryan did gingerly venture into the debate it was with a weasel word explanation:

... the view of the past that I and many other Australians hold enables Aborigines to claim the return of land and an apology for the removal of their children. Two truths are told. Is only one "truth" correct? (*The Australian*, 17 December, 2002)

Which presumably means that arguments that can be proved to be wrong are right - if admitting they are wrong will upset the right people.

With arguments like this it is not surprising that Windschuttle drives the academic establishment nuts. Firstly, he has dared to criticise academic historians from outside the academy. Secondly, by suggesting that there was less frontier violence than is often argued he supposedly provides aid and comfort to bigots denying the past and present oppression of indigenous Australians.

It was a brawl with a great deal to do with contemporary politics and while it was never quite explicit (academic historians rarely are) there was a lot more than the number of Aborigines who died during the European occupation of nineteenth century Tasmania riding on the outcome. Which makes the behaviour of both sides so regrettable. Whether less or more Aborigines died in frontier violence than the written records show is not particularly important and does not change the fact that their continent was occupied. Nor does the casualty list place Australia's governments and people today under any obligation to assist them beyond what they are owed as monstrously disadvantaged citizens.

For Windschuttle's supporters to argue that his work permits all Australians to stop feeling guilt over Aboriginal dispossession is manifest nonsense. For his opponents to deny Windschuttle's right to comment because he is not a professional historian smacks of a closed shop. Any suggestion that he writes to minimise indigenous suffering in any century requires better evidence than yet presented.

It was an unedifying debate in which most of the participants should have known better, including former governor general Sir William Deane, (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 November 2002).

Sir William responded to Windschuttle's criticism that he relied on oral traditions rather than police records of an alleged massacre of Aborigines in the Kimberleys. Sir William presented his case well but it was his conclusion that was most significant where he suggested that reconciliation was helped by an acknowledgement of and mourning for indigenous Australians murdered by settlers. This may well be so but it has nothing to do with a debate over historical methodology and the question of who killed how many Aborigines.

Windschuttle's must luxurious scoop followed soon after when Professor Reynolds conceded that he had misquoted George Arthur, governor of Tasmania in the 1830s, stating that he feared for the future of the colony at the hands of Aborigines when in fact he had written the reverse. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 November, 200). For the predictable Piers Akerman it was enough to dismiss all Windschuttle's critics (*Sunday Telegraph*, 1 December 2002):

Windschuttle will be attacked by other academics, and those with a vested interest in the Aboriginal industry, for presenting the facts. The truth, however, remains a better place to begin the reconciliation process than a morass of self-serving half-truth and lies.

It was an excellent statement of what many of the participants in the debate are interested in but contributed precisely nothing to the debate over Windschuttle's claims. Nor did Klynton Wanganeen (*The Advertiser*, 6 December 2002), who argued that because Windschuttle relied on written records and did not consider Aboriginal oral history he was only presenting victors' history.

Senior historian Geoffrey Bolton injected a note of reason in his review of Windschuttle's book (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December 2002). He deliberately referred to Windschuttle as an historian, which some of his academic opponents deny. (For example academics Stephen Muecke, Marcia Langton and Heather Goodall who sneered at him as "having no reputation as an historian, having contributed nothing to the field except polemic", *The Australian*, 9 December 2002). Bolton went on to suggest that there were grounds to his argument that the Aboriginal death toll on the frontier was exaggerated, "largely for ideological reasons". In a careful and comprehensive piece Bolton measured Windschuttle's evidence and argument but it was his conclusion that made the most important point:

Because the stakes are high, the risk of distorted scholarship is great, both among those who seek redress for wrongs

IAN MACFARLANE

GOVERNOR
OF THE

RESERVE BANK
OF AUSTRALIA

to address
The Sydney Institute

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committed against Aborigines and those who would deny them.

A point demonstrated by Michael Duffy (*Daily Telegraph*, 14 December, 2002) who admitted that he did not know whether Windschuttle was right but if he was, “white Australians will be given back their history as something to be proud of once again”.

The point that escaped Mr Duffy, as it did all the partisan commentators, is that history has nothing to do with moral issues in contemporary politics. It certainly missed Robert Manne (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 December 2002) who suggested that Windschuttle’s thinking was sloppy and his methodology doubtful before making an unconvincing case that he was also a plagiarist. Manne’s case was weakened by his dismissal of Windschuttle for his supposed politics rather than just on his argument:

... once a radical Marxist, blind to the murderous nature of communist regimes, he has reinvented himself as a neo-Tory apologist for British imperialism, displaying new forms of ideological blindness of a diametrically opposed kind.

While the plagiarism argument quickly petered out, Windschuttle’s friends did the debate no service by accepting battle on the conservatives’ terms and suggesting that an academic historical orthodoxy had imposed a partisan position on the historical record. Like Miranda Devine (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 December, 2002) who presented Windschuttle’s work as evidence in the contemporary dispute over the debt Australia owes to its indigenous citizens:

It refutes the “black armband” view of Australian history and seeks to overcome the concept of white guilt and black victimhood which have become embedded in the national psyche.

If this was Windschuttle’s motive then his enemies have a case. It would be outrageous to build an argument that the existing condition of Aboriginal dispossession was less significant because the number killed in frontier violence is lower than often argued. Yet Roger Sandall (*The Australian*, 23 December 2002) argued that Windschuttle’s opponents were doing exactly the opposite: “Manne is in the rival business of ‘corpse maximisation’, having made a career out of insinuating the holocaust concept wherever it gives him a moral advantage.”

Padraic P McGuinness (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 December 2002) best put the argument that history is being used by the academic establishment as a weapon in a contemporary political debate. He began by suggesting that Windschuttle had refuted the

establishment line that the European occupation of Tasmania was less violent than historians allege. More important, why they had made such claims was a question for which McGuinness had an easy answer:

... perhaps they thought they were righting past wrongs perpetrated against Aborigines; perhaps they were seeking personal advancement and the applause of their contemporaries; perhaps they hoped to change present policy by rewriting past history. They certainly have changed policy.

The conservative academics made a great contribution to the argument advanced by Windschuttle and his supporters with two rebuttals. The first demonstrated desperation; Windschuttle was not a “proper” historian and should not be taken seriously and his attempt to reduce the suffering of Aborigines past was an affront to the deprivation of Aborigines present.

Dirk Moses (*The Australian*, 13 January 2003) was happy to accept battle exactly on McGuinness’ terms. If Windschuttle is right, “there is no reason to wear a black armband. We can all feel relaxed and comfortable about the past. The subtext of Windschuttle’s book is, then, highly political.” Yet while Moses took Windschuttle on, both for the evidence he used and the way he dealt with the work of other historians, he rendered his case suspect by sneering:

A freelance writer with no postgraduate training in the discipline, Windschuttle is a self-conscious outsider taking on university historians. By publishing his book with the family press rather than an academic house, he has avoided the quality control process that guarantees originality and intellectual seriousness.

If there is a party line in the history wars, this is it. Only academics possess the secret skills to write about the past. Honest men and women who spend time in the field and archives and who understand the basics of cause and effect and have, God forbid, a journalists’ grasp of fact checking, have no role in the writing of history.

The fact that academic history speaks only to itself while the general market for popular works of history booms is nothing to bother Moses, comfortable in the rectitude of his expertise.

There was more of the same from Mark McKenna (*The Age*, 25 January 2003) who used italics to dispute that Windschuttle had written a work of history. He argued that the book was written to bolster the authority of the conservatives in Australian politics by denying the dispossession and profound cultural

trauma endured by Aborigines. It was mean and defensive and not worthy of record because “(it) will not be remembered for its contribution to academic scholarship”.

Bain Atwood was much more astute in making the second case, that Windschuttle was a beat-up merchant. He did not claim any rare skills for professional historians, an improvement on his previous attack on Windschuttle (*The Australian*, 20 September 2000). This time he challenged Windschuttle on the detail of his claims and while it made for one-sided reading, to which Windschuttle undoubtedly can offer a reply, Atwood did make a case that Windschuttle’s book demolishes a man of straw and that there is no academic orthodoxy on frontier violence: “Driven by his political agenda Windschuttle fabricates a form of political correctness among Australian historians that simply does not exist.” (*The Australian*, 6 January 2003)

There was more, much more of the same from both sides and few neutral voices which was unfortunate as it was left to Katherine Biber (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 December 2002) to speak up. Biber produced a piece of dazzling erudition which conveyed the subtle and often over-looked message that there are generally two sides to every story and the agreed facts alone often do not explain what really happened.

Sadly, readers not overwhelmed by the depth of her argument discovered that it was Windschuttle’s evidence and motives of the two sides she wished to demolish. In fact, she suggested that his implicit claim that “there is some truth out there that can be verified, if only he can prove it” was suspect. Which gets us precisely nowhere, or at best to Professor Ryan’s position where what the right people think is true is true. It also made a mockery of Biber’s own conclusion:

The point is not to face the other with eyes closed and arms folded. The point is to speak with each other, endlessly. We must remain vigilant against those who seek to have the final word. Because the final word is followed by silence.

The trouble is when nothing can be definitively proved it is less a conversation than an endless shouting match which can never conclude – which is probably why academic historians like things the way they are.

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ISLAM

-IN AUSTRALIA AND THE US

Hind Kourouche migrated to Australia with her family from Lebanon at the age of seven. The youngest of fourteen children and the daughter of a Lebanese politician who had died before she left Lebanon, Hind Kourouche graduated with a Bachelor of Economics from Macquarie University in 1987. Her family and their progress is one of Australia's many successful stories of immigration and settlement.

In her career in finance, Hind Kourouche moved into the IT industry for financial systems. She was made President of the Arabic Welfare Council in 1993 and served on the Ethnic Communities Council as Assistant Treasurer and on the Management Committee for three years. She has been an executive member of the Lebanese Chamber of Commerce and a popular speaker for Islamic cultural and religious matters in a range of diverse forums. Hind Kourouche is now working to set up an Islamic Women's professional group. Just back from a US sponsored trip to the United States under the US Visitors' Program, Hind Kourouche will speak on the place of Islam today in both the US and Australia, and the way ahead for both Muslims and non Muslims.

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GENERAL PETER COSGROVE

CHIEF of the **DEFENCE FORCE**

(CDF)

to address

The Sydney Institute

DATE: Tuesday 10 June 2003
TIME: 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: BT Training Room (Room401) Level 4,
2 Chifley Square, Sydney

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GERARD HENDERSON'S **MEDIA WATCH**

MEMORIES, MEMORIES...

The text for this quarterly epistle turns on the ethics of memory. When to remember; when to forget; when to ask that the question be repeated; when to pretend that you didn't really say what you apparently said. And so on.

PHILLIP ADAMS - IN THE LAND OF THE BLIND

Remember *The Weekend Australian's* shock/horror "Phillip Adams Shock: Howard Is Best" headline of 16 November 2002? Well, Mr Adams certainly does. Sort of.

Until recently Phillip Adams wrote a regular "John-Howard-Is-A-Bastard" column on the back page of *The Weekend Australian's* "Review" section. Or so it seemed. Sure, not every column was devoted to dumping on the Prime Minister. But many were. Hence the surprise of many *Weekend Australian* readers when opening the national daily on 16 November 2002 to be greeted with the famous "Phillip Adams Shock: Howard Is Best" puff.

Turn to the rump end of the "Review" section and all was explained - more or less. Your man Adams revealed that he had received a "phone call from a Labor luminary...whose personal wattage has done much to keep Chifley's light on the hill from fading to black". Sounds like Barry Jones but maybe there is another "labor luminary" around who pines for former ALP leader Ben Chifley. Anyrate, this Labor luminary (as in LL) proposed that PA should reappraise the view that John Howard is "a disaster, a moral vacuum, almost a disease...". Reluctantly, PA accepted LL's challenge. The Prime Minister, it was conceded, had done well on gun control, East Timor and in the aftermath of the Bali murders.

Certainly PA recorded some of John Howard's "many immense failures" - on South Africa, refugees, Asian immigration, One Nation, native title, reconciliation and so on - as examples of "the countless times his leadership has led us towards division and xenophobia". But PA concluded:

Nonetheless my Labor luminary is right. There is, sadly, no one to challenge him [John Howard]. Not Simon Crean. Not Peter Costello. 'Tis truly said that in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.

Little wonder, then, that PA's column was given the heading "The best of a bad lot". From here there was not much of a jump to the Page One "Howard Is Best" puffery. But PA was not happy. He returned to the topic in *The Weekend Australian* on 4-5 January 2003. Under the heading "That's not what I said", PA wrote that he had never maintained that John Howard was the best. Rather, PA believes that John Howard is "far and away the worst prime minister in living memory; in fact, since Federation". There followed PA's standard "John-Howard-Is-a-Bastard" litany.

Soon after PA's apology, his column moved away from the back page of "Review" to inside *The Australian Magazine*. The first Phillip Adams column in the new format (on 8-9 February 2003) was headed: "Don't be a coward, Howard". The more things stay the same, the more things stay the same.

JOHN CARROLL - FOSSILISED PHILOSOPHER

Shortly before his "Howard is best" - read "Howard is worst" - scoop, Phillip Adams launched John Carroll's most recent tome in Sydney. The occasion was 11 September 2002 - the anniversary of what the Americans term "9/11". John Carroll marked the event by writing *Terror: A Mediation on the Meaning of September 11* (Scribe Publications). The book commences with Carroll at his wacky best - or worst:

The hijacked planes were flown through the bright, early-morning, American east-coast sky. This is the hour of Apollo, the sun god, who presided over ancient Delphi. His oracle dwelt high on the side of the sacred mountain, with two mottos carved over its portal. Two sayings watched over the foundation of our civilization, in exhortation and warning: "Know Thyself!" and "Nothing Too Much!". Ignorantly and flagrantly, the modern West has violated both....

And *Terror* ends with Dr Carroll at his wacky worst - or best:

Little is as it was before September 11. Apollo joins "Nothing in excess!" to "Know thyself!" Here are the twin towers of our culture. We have denied the ancestral god. We imagined we could do it on our own,

without help or guidance, our backs turned on our own wisdoms. So we built a civilization symbolised by the skyscraper: a soaring steel-and-concrete infinitude, yesterday 110 storeys high; tomorrow, 220. That order is past... In our recently departed self, cast as Joseph Conrad's Marlow, we steamed up the wrong river. This time, September 11, 2001 is our appointed guide. This time, things are so grave as to be beyond the domain of good and evil.

So there you have it, or not. Anyrate, The Thought of John Carroll has attracted media attention in recent times. So much so that he has become an occasional contributor to the *Australian Financial Review's* opinion page. Recent highlights include:

- **11 September 2002.** JC focuses on what he terms the “psychic impact” of 9/11. Reference is made to the fact (for want of a better word) that “America standardised the spelling” of Osama bin Laden’s “name after September 11” since it was “spooked by the opening three letters” of the “accurate transliteration” of the al Qaeda leader’s name “into English”. According to JC, the proper transliteration is “Usama” - as in “USA”, apparently. Wow. But, beware since Usama “mocked that his god had created the heavens without pillars”. Get it? Well, okay. Let’s move on, then.
- **18 October 2002.** JC supports the view proffered – without evidence, of course – by Samuel P. Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996) that (in JC’s words) “Paul Keating’s foreign policy initiative [was] to turn Australia into an Asian nation”. He continued that Australians “might be interested in Hungtinton’s final judgement, that in 100 years historians may look back at the Keating policy as ‘a major maker in the decline of the West’”. Well, some might. And others might consider that the Keating-is-responsible-for-the-decline-and-fall-of-the-West theory as a, well, a load of old crock.
- **9 January 2003.** JC is still quoting Samuel P. Huntington – reckoning that after the “present ‘clash’ with Islam” the “next ‘clash’ is likely to be with China”. He advocates that Australia build its population to 50 million by 2050. JC then suggests that, to achieve this, “Darwin would have to be developed into the nation’s third metropolis, a new Singapore or Hong Kong”. He does not say why or how, except to suggest that this would have to be driven by “a huge national development steered from Canberra”. JC concludes by declaring that “since the last Federal election the Howard government has hardly put a foot wrong”. Well, now.

So, what is your man Carroll up to when he is not bagging Paul Keating – or praising John Howard – on the *AFR's* opinion page? Answer – he teaches in the Sociology Department of La Trobe University,

focusing on “disintegration and dread in modern society”. Really. And he has recently been appointed by Arts Minister Rod Kemp as chairman of a panel which has been commissioned to review the National Museum of Australia (NMA) in Canberra. Good show, old chap. Here’s hoping that the review will lead to a John Carroll exhibit recording JC’s very own contribution to fossilised debate Down Under. Here’s a modest proposal as to what samples of JC’s work should go into any John Carroll exhibit.

- **August 1981.** Addressing a seminar in Canberra to commemorate the 25th anniversary of *Quadrant* magazine, JC accuses the “quality press” (he specially mentions *The Age*, and *The Australian*) of lacking “moral sense”. When asked, at question time, to support his claim with evidence, JC declares that the quality press is so poor that he does not read it. It’s a case of – look mum, no research. In his address (which was subsequently published in the March 1983 issue of *Quadrant*) JC describes tourism as an example of the “real pathology in our own society” and condemns tourists who send postcards home. An elitist sentiment worth bottling, to be sure.

- **August 1982.** In an essay in his edited collection *Intruders in the Bush: The Australian Quest for Identity* (OUP), JC reflects on the former Australian prime minister Harold Holt – who drowned in December 1967. According to JC “we can presume that he [Harold Holt] felt a need for the cleansing power of the surf, for being alone in the vast cavern of the ocean deep, at the mercy of, in harmony with, the eternal swell of nature”. Maybe. But perhaps he just felt hot. JC saw “a certain celebration of this act, the greatest of all tributes”. To others this was a mundane, tragic drowning – and, as such, nothing to celebrate. JC recounts that the last sight of Harold Holt was of “his silver hair in the broken water” and maintained that Harold Holt’s demise deserves an honoured place “in the martyrology of our country”. Enough. Sensibly, JC’s chapter was withdrawn when a second edition of *Intruders in the Bush* was published in 1992.

- **May 1983.** JC evokes Homer, Shakespeare and Milton’s eulogy of Oliver Cromwell in praise of recently defeated Liberal prime minister Malcolm Fraser (See *Quadrant*, May 1983).

- **January 1988.** JC maintains that B.A. Santamaria brought “the systematic analytical force of Euclidean geometry...to bear on social and moral issues” (*IPA Review*, November 1987). He doesn’t say precisely how – or when.

- **Late 1990.** JC describes Australia’s (high level) of inflation in the 1980s as “tolerable” (*The Australian*, 1 October 1990). He also calls for a return to “the old economic policy of the ‘50s and ‘60s” including a

“protective shield of a mixture of tariff, quota and currency control” (*The Australian*, 8 November 1990).

• **August 1992.** JC argues the case for “state interventionism in economic life” and declares that “the most important contemporary example of economic success is Japan”. (*The Age*, 29 August 1992). Since circa 1992, Japan has been in almost continuous recession. Good timing, eh? JC also maintains that “the import of virtually all consumption goods [into Australia] will have to be banned in the short-term” (*The Age*, 31 August 1992). Including, presumably, the works of Homer, Shakespeare and indented copies of Milton’s eulogy of Oliver Cromwell.

• **November 1992.** JC writes “In Praise of the Middle Class” (*Quadrant*, November 1992). He looks back in fondness at the “moral idea” of lower middle class life as depicted by the 17th Century Dutch painter Pieter de Hooch: “The milieu is that of domesticity, centring on women carrying out the mundane tasks of the home – the beds are made, the rooms are tidy, the apples are peeled. There is pleasure in ordinary things. A mood of serenity prevails.” Wow.

• **February 1997.** JC discusses – yet again – the lower middle class (*The Australian Review of Books*, 12 February 1997). He also alleges that Labor “wanted us to change into Asians” – without explaining how someone/anyone can “change” into an Asian. And JC has some kind words to say about Pauline Hanson – whom he depicts as an “ordinary girl innocently stating her creed”. He continues: “Most of her [i.e. Ms Hanson’s] causes, moreover, were not only popular but cogent. Hers was the case against the political elites for not putting Australian industry, ownership and jobs first, for lacking practical national pride, for not appearing to reward the old-fashioned virtues of hard work and independence”. He depicts Pauline Hanson as representing the lower middle class. Her support Australia wide – even at the height of One Nation’s popularity – never exceeded 10 per cent. Yet, according to JC, middle Australia consists of about 70 per cent of the population.

Work that out if you can. Or perhaps not. Maybe just put The Thought of John Carroll on display at the National Museum of Australia. In the antiquities section.

CLIVE (DON’T CALL ME ANAL-RETENTIVE) HAMILTON

John Carroll is not the only Australian commentator who once rejoiced in Australia’s high inflation. Consider the case of Clive Hamilton, who has been executive director of the Australian based Australia Institute since 1994. These days Hamilton is on record as rejecting the “assumption that more

economic growth will make us better off” (*Business Review Weekly* 12 September 2002). Even so, it seems a better outcome than less economic growth – outside the Australia Institute, at least. It’s just a decade since Hamilton rejected the assumption that there was anything wrong with an inflation level of seven to eight per cent. He spelt out his view in a letter which was published in the *Australian Financial Review* on 9 September 1991:

Why are we so obsessed with inflation? All growing economies have inflation; a moderate level of inflation is healthy. There is no equity or efficiency reason why we cannot have a 7 or 8 per cent rate of inflation, particularly if it would allow the economy to expand, soaking up some of the appalling effects of unemployment. The anti-inflationary, fiscal tightening thrust of economic policy over the last few years is more a product of anal-retentive psychology – a fear of losing control – than careful economic reasoning.

So there you have it. Clive Hamilton once thought that 7 to 8 per cent inflation (with resultant double digit interest rates) was a good thing. And he dismissed advocates of low inflation (with resultant low inflation rates) as anal-retentive types who were motivated by “a fear of losing control”. At the time Hamilton believed – against the evidence – that low inflation meant high unemployment. By May 2002, however, he had come to reassess his position. Addressing the ALP national left conference in Canberra, Clive of Australia told fellow leftists that “the left must now admit its failure” (*The Age*, 14 May 2002) and acknowledge the success of “consumer capitalism”. Right on.

MUNGO M. – BORING FOR/FROM BYRON BAY

While on the topic of fossilised types, consider the case of the Ocean Shores (near Byron Bay) serial leftist Mungo MacCallum. In his book *Mungo: The Man Who Laughs* (2001), MM presents himself as “one who has remained committed to the ideals of the left”. He also recalls how politics made little sense for him after the defeat of the Whitlam Labor government in late 1975. So, in the late 1970s, he moved to the north coast of New South Wales – from where he makes occasional comments on the nature of Australian politics. Most recently in a long opinion piece in the 4-5 January 2003 issue of the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

In an end-of-year reflection, MM looked back at 2002 and found it boring. In fact, he finds most contemporary politics boring. So much so that he asked his readers: “Why...as we enter the third year

of the new millennium, has politics become so bloody boring?" He went on – asking "why have things become predictable, so timid, so plain bloody boring, and what can we do about it?"

Well, MM came up with his own proposals.

First "no one to be allowed to stand for election without at least 10 years in a proper job first, living independently and outside the parental home". MM maintains that if such a rule were followed "we might get a few pollies who realise that power is a means to an end rather than an end in itself". He does not provide any reasons – or evidence – for this proposition.

Second, "no staff members to discuss policy at any time during working hours; they are there to run the office and that's it".

Third, "abandon the new building [i.e. the permanent Parliament House opened in 1988] and find somewhere specifically designed to force the whole lot of them to mingle again". MM claims that the new Parliament House is "so sterile and inhumane that the non-members bar had to close for lack of patronage". He wants to set-up, just like the OLD days in OLD Parliament House where MPs "were forced to mingle, whether they liked it or not". Moreover, he hankers for the days-of-old where "ministers and backbenchers, senators and MHRs, staffers and journalists were all thrown into a daily melting pot where ideas, viewpoints and, most importantly, matters outside politics could be discussed and dissected".

In a sidebar to his main opinion piece, MM also lamented the (alleged) "debasement of the language used by politicians". He referred to the decline of parliamentary language from days-of-old and looked back in disappointment that "we can no longer enjoy the erudite wit of Gough Whitlam [1916-____], the rambunctious humour of Jim Killen [1925-____], the boisterous vaudeville of Fred Daly [1912-1995] or even the coruscating malice of Paul Keating [1944-____]".

Sure, Paul Keating has a wit (of the vicious kind) and Gough Whitlam can be funny (even if his jokes have a common theme centring on his own self-proclaimed genius). But can anyone provide one, even one, example of Jim ("call me Sir James") Killen's "rambunctious humour" – or cite an occasion where Fred Daly's "boisterous vaudeville" was anything other than embarrassing to those observing his performance?

The problem with MM is that he is still in love with Whitlamism – and the glory days between December 1972 and November 1975 when Gough Whitlam was prime minister. But were they really the glory days? In the late 1960s and early 1970s some politicians treated Federal Parliament as a prize which coincided with the onset of the mid-life crisis. Quite

a few politicians were drunk on the job, invariably in the presence of equally intoxicated staffers and journalists. Some politicians did little work. The fact that the non-members bar was one of the focal points of Old Parliament House speaks volumes for the past which MM romances.

Which suggests that when Mungo MacCallum looks south from Byron Bay and finds life "plain bloody boring" he is really suffering from the psychological condition of projection. To paraphrase George Orwell, these days Mungo bores for Byron Bay.

PP MCGUINNESS ACCEPTS THE RIDICULOUS

While on the subject of one-time Whitlamists, consider the case of former Whitlam government staffer and now *Sydney Morning Herald* columnist Padraic P. McGuinness. These days PP presents himself as a professional "contrarian" who is into – yes, you've guessed it – "contrarianism". A convenient title for an inconsistent thinker, to be sure – as in: "You change your mind/But I just take contrary positions".

Well, your man Paddy has been right out front in the Contrarian Stakes since accepting an honour – an AO in fact – in the 2003 Australia Day honours list. Sir PP and all that. But, how did it come to this? For PP has been a constant critic of the honours system. Writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 21 January 1995, PP described the Australian honours system as "ridiculous" and continued:

However, there are many people who revel in official accolades, and indeed devote a great deal of energy to their acquisition. Provided they are not taken too seriously – and it is remembered that awards of all kinds are really not much more than the results of fashionable popularity contests – they do little harm.

Yet, in the same column, PP saw fit to warn that the system might be manipulated:

...the very nature of an awards system is that it rewards the establishment. To have an awards system which rewards troublemakers, dissidents, the unorthodox and the unpopular is a contradiction in terms. When a "sacred monster" is given a gong, he is thereby absorbed into the establishment.

This seemed to be a warning that contrarians should not accept awards. PP returned to the topic in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 24 January 1996 where he thundered:

Any official honours system is a bit of a joke, as the police say, and simply represents a kind of beauty contest no more significant in principle than cattle judging at an

agricultural show, or the dispensation of official certificates of respectability or gratitude for financial and other services rendered to the establishment.

Then on Australia Day 2003, PP himself accepted an AO. He rationalised this decision in an article devoted to himself (what's new?) in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 28 January 2003:

As a long-standing critic of the honours system it seems anomalous that I should have decided to accept the position of officer of the Order of Australia awarded to me on Australia Day...

So why did I accept? Partly out of contrarianism, since I knew that many of the chattering classes who object to my refusal to accept their smelly little orthodoxies would be infuriated by it. Partly to please those many people who have generously accepted that it is worthwhile to have a dissident voice continually raised against the mindless mob of political correctness. Partly to bring attention to the defects of the honours system there have been plenty of crooks, political fixers and intellectual frauds already included, and to attack my appointment is to bring attention to the imperfections of past abuses of the system.

So there you have it. PP (AO) accepted the very gong he once described as "ridiculous" because he is a CONTRARIAN. How convenient. For the record, "Media Watch" is not infuriated by PP McGuinness. Just amused – especially as it came at the end of the official "silly season" for Summer 2002/2003.

CHRISTINE JACKMAN'S LAST WORDS

According to the official citation, PP McGuinness's AO was awarded for "encouraging and stimulating wider ongoing debate and the exchange of ideas". This, presumably, is what columnists are paid to do. "Media Watch" is truly delighted with Paddy's gong. But why, oh why, has columnist Christine Jackman not been similarly honoured? After all, she writes about SELF as much as your man McGuinness - and her column is just as opinionated. As the following recent highlights - from her column in the *Courier Mail* titled "The Last Word" demonstrate:

• **4 May 2002** – CJ reflects yet again (a constant theme since her column commenced in 1995) about the end of an affair – any affair – and the resultant resort to "my Kleenex box" She opines: "Let's face it, one of the worst parts about breaking up – after the bit where the person you trusted completely throws you back on the reject pile – is being hit by the wave of panic that there's nobody left". So much so that CJ

wonders – out aloud, of course - whether she is "ready to get back in the dating saddle again".

• **11 May 2002.** CJ asks the question of the day/week/month/year: "How do you celebrate a birthday when there's a big black bruise where your heart used to be?" She records how, for her, "the day starts as every day does with the ghost of Him hovering beside me". And so on. But the column ends with some positive advice: "Don't stop being friends with men just because one breaks your heart". After all, a columnist has to have something to write about. So don't be surprised if CJ ends up back in the "dating saddle" sooner than expected.

• **8 June 2002.** This time the personal reflection is on rebounds. CJ now has a "real date" again – but since there has been a recent "breakup" (read all about it above) maybe this new man is a "rebound". Reflects CJ: "Perhaps the only way you can shake off the ghost of relationships past and to proceed to relationships future is to accept that, for the present, you must endure the discomfort of doomed dates and at least one fledgling rebound relationship that "isn't quite right". Well, she should know. CJ concludes by wondering whether her "latest date will last long enough to be [her] rebound relationship". Stay tuned. In any event, he obviously lasted long enough to get a mention in CJ's weekly column.

• **3 August 2002.** It occurs to CJ that "maybe the key to being successfully single in the 21st century is not to deny either [the Hollywood character] Samantha Jones or Lily Bart [a put-upon character in an Edith Wharton novel] but simply to keep them in balance." Some thought, that.

• **24 August 2002.** CJ discovers Bermuda Triangle Bloke (as in BTB). You know the type. A woman meets a man, he invites her over for dinner "so the two of them could share 'some time on their own'". She falls for him. But he advises that he wants "to take things slowly". Alas, in the last three weeks he "hasn't called once". That's BTB for you: "One minute they're cruising along with you at high altitude, with not a care in the world and only sunny skies ahead; the next they plummet off the radar and are never seen again." Declares CJ: "It seems there's something very foul indeed about this sort of play."

• **7 September 2002.** The topic is, again, Bermuda Triangle Bloke. CJ commences her column with the declaration: "I love blokes". Phew. Apparently, quite a few blokes have written to explain the BTB phenomenon – including John and Peter and Gary and Marc and Clint and Rod. From such pearls of wisdom, CJ concludes: "Got it girls? Maybe we'd all save ourselves a lot of angst if we accepted neither sex gets it right 100 per cent of the time and just tried to treat each other with little more sensitivity as fellow fallible human beings". Well, thanks for that.

Humanitarianism ACTION

HOW TO MANAGE IN TIMES OF CONFLICT

Dr Fiona Terry is Director of Research for Medecins Sans Frontiers, and lives and works in Paris. She is also the author of *Condemned to Repeat – The Paradox of Humanitarianism*. The problem of refugee populations across the globe is increasing year by year. Medecins Sans Frontiers (borderless doctors) has worked to alleviate and bring attention to the plight of refugees for decades. What can be done? What should be done? Are these questions all black and white?

SPEAKER: DR FIONA TERRY

TOPIC: *The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*

DATE: Wednesday 30 April 2003

TIME: 5.30 for 6.00 pm

**VENUE: BT Training Room, (Room401)
Level 4, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney**

RSVP: (02) 9252 3366

OR mail@thesydneyinstitute.com.au
WEBSITE: www.thesydneyinstitute.com.au



• **14 September 2002.** CJ reminds readers that she “dated two younger men in a row a few years ago”. But this was balanced on her “dating CV” by the fact that she “was convinced to move to Canberra by a man 11 years my senior”. All this information was supplied, on a need-to-know basis, in the *Courier Mail*.

• **28 September 2002.** CJ advises on the etiquette which should prevail “if you run into an old flame unexpectedly tomorrow” who “broke your heart”. It turns out that CJ recently ran into Jonesy – whose heart she broke some years before. It’s just that the said Jonesy is now “happily coupled” and commercially successful. CJ declares that “it never would have worked” - but wonders, sort of.

• **12 October 2002.** CJ commences a series of columns on whether men should wear “Y-front” underpants. Or not. Clearly she’s moved into philosophical mode.

• **19 October 2002.** CJ records that she “jumped” out of “a car on Elizabeth St” during an argument with a boyfriend. Apparently she was driving at the time – but not speeding. Pity when you think about it – a few weeks in hospital might have provided some valuable time-out for *Courier Mail* readers.

• **26 October 2002.** More on “Y-fronts” and (male) “undies”. More philosophy.

• **9 November 2002.** More, still, on undies. CJ concludes, after 700 words, with the reflection: “I think enough has been said about undies.” Sure.

• **8 February 2003.** Finally the *Courier Mail*’s Agony Auntie ends the agony. In a confusing column, CJ announces in the first paragraph that she has decided to drop the column because she has met the “Perfect Man”. It seems that Perfect Man does not want CJ to write about him – and CJ has decided that “when you write a column about your personal life, and you agree not to write about a significant person in that life, there’s not much left to write about”. In other words, in CJ’s case it’s a case of no bloke/no column or, rather, no ex-bloke/no column. Or something like that.

CJ considers, for a while, that she might write about Canberra. On reflection, however, she decides that this is not a good idea. Why? Well, here CJ gets philosophical again, declaring: “Canberra, as I discovered within about five minutes of arriving here, is not New York.” Good point, that. Obviously CJ has geographical skills in addition to an ability to write about SELF.

Then, lo and behold, in the third last paragraph CJ declares that “the Perfect Man, by the way, has moved on”. In fewer than 700 words, it seems – sometime after his arrival was announced at the top of the column. Sounds like the return of Bermuda Triangle

Bloke. But CJ is dumping the column in any event – a last word for “The Last Word”. Worth an AO at least.

DAVID FLINT’S TRINITY

While on the question of memory – or memories – can anyone remember precisely who David Flint is? Now, according to *Who’s Who in Australia 2003*, David Flint AM [surely the man’s worth at least Paddy McGuinness’s rating of AO – Ed.] is Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Authority. The ABA’s very own website advises that Professor Flint (he’s an emeritus professor of law at the University of Technology, Sydney) was appointed as ABA chairman by the Howard government in October 1997 and had his term renewed, for four years, in October 2000. In other words, your man Flint is a senior Commonwealth public servant on an employment contract.

Every now and then a David Flint appears on the opinion pages of Australia’s newspapers. He is described as Professor (quite proper, too) David Flint, “chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Authority”. So who is the David Flint who appears on the same pages who is variously described as “an emeritus professor of law who has lectured in international law at the universities of Sydney, London and Paris”, the “national convenor, Australians for Constitutional Monarchy” and so on? Same chap, actually. It’s just that David Flint chooses to write on different issues under different designations. There is ABA Flint (who comments on media issues), Prof. Flint (who writes on what he pleases) and Monarchist Flint (who sings the praises of the Royal Family, sometimes literally).

Here’s a taste of the Flint Trinity – over the past three years or so – in its various manifestations.

- **14 August 2000** (*AFR*) Monarchist Flint condemns “the fashionable obsession to get rid of the Queen at any price” – presumably including armed insurrection. Monarchist Flint runs a good line in hyperbole.
- **7 November 2001** (*AFR*) Prof. Flint supports the Howard government’s policy on border protection and condemns “elites”. The Prof. thunders: “It is, of course, in the nature of any elite that they believe themselves endowed with greater wisdom. This is not always so, as the infatuation of many with Marx proved. In France in the 1960s, there was an extraordinary adulation of Mao’s *Little Red Book*”. The Prof. does not admit to a Marxist infatuation in his youth. Nor does he explain how it is that someone with all those degrees and connections – as set out in Prof. Flint’s *Who’s Who* entry – can escape being a member of the very elite he castigates.
- **9 November 2001** (*Age*). Prof. Flint writes in (much) praise of John Howard. He opines: “Had the *Tampa* not been Norwegian owned, Howard could

well have received a Nobel prize for this”. The “this” is East Timor; the *Tampa* incident turns on border protection and all that. The Nobel Peace Prize is judged in Oslo.

- **20 December 2001** (*Age*). Prof. Flint defends Governor-General Peter (“call me Doctor”) Hollingworth. He declares, inter alia, that the G-G’s “doctorate is not an honorary one, as is sometimes claimed”. Nah. Just a handout from the Archbishop of Canterbury – without examination, of course.
- **26 December 2001** (*The Age*) Prof. Flint and Monarchist Flint (in a combined effort) trace Argentina’s discontents to the fact that, unlike Australia, it is not a constitutional monarchy. He repeats this nonsense in *The Australian* on 9 January 2002).
- **2 April 2002** (*AFR*) Monarchist Flint praises the (recently departed) Queen Mother. He claims that “nobody” is “interested” in Australia becoming a republic – despite the fact that the 40 per cent of Australians voted “Yes” in the 1999 referendum on whether Australia should become a republic. Monarchist Flint is not a mathematician.
- **16 May 2002** (*The Australian*) This time David Flint dons both his ABA and Prof. hats to support the Howard government on border protection. He declares that “the proof of the pudding...is in the eating”. How profound.
- **4 December 2002 and 23 January 2003** (*AFR*). Prof. Flint supports John Howard and George W. Bush on foreign policy issues. Fair enough. But what’s this got to do with the ABA? The fact is that readers know that Prof. Flint and Monarchist Flint are one and the same as ABA Flint – and that senior public servants do not usually comment outside their area of responsibility.

Media Watch’s favourite reference to ABA/Monarchist/Prof. Flint can be found in the September 2002 issue of *The Watchman* – the official organ of the Royal Orange Institution of NSW. Here it is reported that Prof. Flint was part of the “New South Wales contingent” which visited Melbourne (for matters Orange) on 6 July 2002 – along with a Grand Master, a Worshipful Sister and a Most Worshipful Brother. Wow. The same issues restates “the significance of the Battle of the Boyne” and reports a “Toast to King William” (of Orange, naturally).

Media Watch’s favourite Flint Oration was delivered by Flint The Monarchist – for Australians for Constitutional Monarchy – on 6 February 2002. Here Monarchist Flint referred to Queen Elizabeth II as “still reigning over us” and concluded his speech by reciting the words of the (British) national anthem. A delightful performance. One to make Prof. Flint and ABA Flint envious, to be sure.