

FORTHCOMING FUNCTIONS AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

- SPEAKER:** JACINTA COLLINS (ALP Senator for Victoria) & TONY SMITH MP (Liberal Member for Casey)
TOPIC: *Equality and Inequality – Two Views*
DATE: Tuesday 22 July 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: BT Training Room (Room 401) Level 4, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- SPEAKER:** MARGARET SIMONS (Author & Journalist) & DR RON BRUNTON (Social Researcher)
TOPIC: *The Hindmarsh Island Affair: And Australian Anthropology*
DATE: Wednesday 30 July 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: 41 Phillip Street (between Bent & Bridge Streets)
- SPEAKER:** RUTH WISSE (Professor of Yiddish Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard University)
TOPIC: *The Neo-Left, the Neo-Conservatives and America*
DATE: Monday 4 August 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: to be advised
- SPEAKER:** DAVID PRYCE JONES (Author & Senior Editor National Review)
TOPIC: *The Political Consequences for the Arab World of the Iraqi Campaign*
DATE: Wednesday 6 August 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: BT Training Room (Room 401) Level 4, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- SPEAKER:** BABETTE SMITH (Legal Advocate, author *Coming Up for Air* [Rosenberg])
TOPIC: *Women's Enterprise in Medical Research – A Case Study*
DATE: Tuesday 12 August 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: 41 Phillip Street, Sydney
- SPEAKER:** MICHAEL CARMODY (Commissioner of Taxation, Australian Taxation Office)
DATE: Monday 18 August 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: Clayton Utz Seminar Room, Level 25, 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney
- SPEAKER:** GORAN SVILANOVIC (Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia & Montenegro)
TOPIC: *Serbia & Montenegro After Milosevic*
DATE: Wednesday 20 August 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: to be advised
- SPEAKER:** LINDSAY TANNER M.P. (Shadow Minister for Communications)
TOPIC: *Whatever Happened to the IT Revolution?*
DATE: Tuesday 26 August 2003 **(NOTE CHANGE OF DATE)** **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: Mallesons Conference Room (Level 60), Governor Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney
- SPEAKER:** DR KERRY SCHOTT (Chair, Environment Protection Authority)
TOPIC: The Environmental Big Picture: Realism about the roles of Government and Business
DATE: Tuesday 2 September 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: Clayton Utz Seminar Room, Level 25, 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney
- SPEAKER:** SENATOR JOHN FAULKNER (Leader of the Opposition in the Senate)
DATE: Tuesday 30 September 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm
VENUE: Clayton Utz Seminar Room, Level 25, 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney
- SPEAKER:** SENATOR BOB BROWN (Leader of the Australian Greens)
DATE: Tuesday 21 October 2003 **TIME:** 5.30 for 6.00 pm

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THE

Sydney Institute

QUARTERLY



OH, WHAT
A LUVVIES'
WAR.

*ISSUE 20, VOL. 7
NO. 2, JULY 2003*

Four Corners'
JONATHAN HOLMES
in missive mode with
**GERARD
HENDERSON**

STEPHEN MATCHETT
reflects on heroes
Down Under

ANNE HENDERSON
tackles Australia's
latest bout of leftist
alienation

Is the Costello Budget
a big tax take? –
IAN HENDERSON

JOHN KUNKEL
on the great contest
in giving Aid

MEDIA WATCH goes
to war over Iraq

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with Gerard Henderson's

MEDIA WATCH

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THE ABC AND THE GULF WAR

The *New York Times* once used to boast that it published "all the news that's fit to print". Maybe it did; maybe it didn't; but at least its intention was clear. And what about our very own publicly funded Australian Broadcasting Commission? On the available evidence, its bimonthly newsletter *Inside the ABC* contains no real news whatsoever. The current issue is dated June 30. In other words, it purports to cover what has been going on "inside the ABC" during the months of May and June. It so happens that, during the past two months, there has been at least one big story concerning the ABC. But it just does not score a mention in *Inside the ABC*.

On May 28 Senator Richard Alston the Minister for Communications, issued a media release advising that he had written to ABC managing director Russell Balding "seeking an urgent investigation into the *AM* program's coverage of the recent Iraq conflict". Now, it is not unusual for a senior government minister to criticise the ABC - especially at a time when the Australian Defence Force is engaged in military conflict. Bob Hawke and some of his ministers were critical of ABC TV during the First Gulf War (1990-91). And it is far from surprising that senior figures in the Howard government would express disquiet at the coverage of the Second Gulf War within sections of the ABC. What was unusual about Senator Alston's critique turned on the fact that the Minister did not dwell on one or two instances - but rather developed a case study, containing over 60 examples, of the ABC Radio *AM* program's coverage of the war. Whether or not you agree with Richard Alston's conclusions, the Minister certainly established a substantial case.

The Coalition of the Willing (United States, Britain, Australia and Poland) took under four weeks to topple Saddam Hussein's regime. The ABC has been examining the Minister's document for over five weeks but - at the time of going to print - still has not found time to reply to his case. In other words, it has taken the ABC longer to respond to Senator Alston than it took the Coalition to crush Saddam Hussein's regime. It seems an unnecessary delay. In any event, there is no evidence that the taxpayer funded public broadcaster has taken on board Senator Alston's criticism of its coverage of the Second Gulf War. On June 18, Sydney hosted a welcome home parade for ADF members who had fought in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and/or in Iraq. The function was attended by, among others, Prime Minister John Howard, Opposition leader Simon Crean, New South Wales Premier Bob Carr, Sydney Lord Mayor Lucy Turnbull and General Peter Cosgrove. It was quite an occasion.

So how did the ABC report this national news item involving ADF men and women from all Australian States? Well, it sent along journalist Geoff Sims. And he proceeded to file not a report but, rather, an editorial comment. Geoff Sims put the following leading question to young ADF personnel: "Does it bother you that the reason given for going to war may have been spurious?". It was as unprofessional as that. The powers-that-be at the ABC should have anticipated Geoff Sims's approach. After all, he filed an equally irreverent report when the ADF was committed to the First Gulf War (ABC TV *7.30 Report*, August 16, 1990). Then Sims sought to equate the dictator Saddam Hussein with the democratically elected Bob Hawke and, in what was an editorial comment, drew comparisons with Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

The ABC's coverage of both Iraqi conflicts should be a matter of genuine concern inside the ABC. But, don't expect to read all about it *Inside the ABC* anytime soon.

FOUR CORNERS AND THE NEO- CONS: AN EXCHANGE

On 10 March 2003, the ABC TV *Four Corners* program aired a report by journalist Jonathan Holmes on the eve of the invasion of Iraq by the Coalition of the Willing. Titled *American Dreamers*, the program set out to “profile a tight knit group of Washington hawks” – namely the neo-conservatives in the United States.

On 18 March 2003 Gerard Henderson published a critique of *American Dreamers* in his weekly column in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. Jonathan Holmes’s *Four Corners* script can be found at www.abc.net.au/4corners. For Gerard Henderson’s article see www.smh.com.au/opinion

The email correspondence which took place between Jonathan Holmes and Gerard Henderson is published below (in complete form) in the interest of open debate and discussion.

J. HOLMES TO G. HENDERSON, 1 APRIL 2003

Dear Gerard

I sent this to the *SMH* a couple of days after your column about my *American Dreamers* piece. Regrettably the *Herald* couldn’t find room for it (the war had just broken out).

I send it to you now not because I want to get into further argument but simply lest you think I was too cowed by your ridicule to reply.

Although of course you have every right to your view that the Bush administration (and the Howard government) are doing the right thing in Iraq, I do think you were back to some of your bad old ways in the piece, viz your implied allegation of anti-Semitism, your taking completely out of context the sentence about the Jewish origins of many neo-cons, and your bizarre conclusion, on the basis of one incidental sentence of “natsot” from de Villepin, that I and *4 Corners* endorse the French position, when endless grabs from Bush, Cheney and Wolfowitz implied (to you) no such thing.

The intermeshing of the Israel/Palestine issue and the Iraq issue is surely undeniable - and the Bush administration is taking a very different line to every previous US administration, Reagan included, on Israel. Have a look some time at the appointment of Elliott Abrams last December to the post of senior National Security Council staffer in charge of Near East, S-W Asian and North African affairs - actually, in charge of Israel-Palestinian policy. Abrams has no qualifications for the post (he has no experience of Arab or North African countries at all) other than a passionate espousal of an anti-Oslo, pro-Sharon position on Israel. See his contribution to the Kristol/Kagan book “Present Dangers”.

Here’s a piece in the *Washington Times* (hardly a lefty publication) on that: <http://washingtontimes.com/upi-breaking/20030225-083116-7747r.htm>

Not that I think, or implied in my piece, that its effect on Israel was THE reason for the neo-cons advocating the invasion of Iraq. But an important and under-reported element - yes.

Mind you, although it’s much too early to be sure yet, it seems to me there’s a chance the hawks (Cheney, Rumsfeld and the neo-cons) will come out of this war a lot less influential than they were going in. Unfortunately, if that turns out to be the case, it will be because the war has turned into a mess, for the Americans and for us. Let’s all hope that doesn’t happen. Since we’re in the war now, I like you sincerely hope for a quick victory and a successful transition to more decent governance for the long-suffering Iraqis.

Regards

Jonathan Holmes

J. HOLMES’S (UNPUBLISHED) LETTER TO THE SMH, DATED 18 MARCH 2003

I trust you will allow me a few paragraphs of riposte to Gerard Henderson’s sustained attack on my *Four Corners* program.

Henderson has long used the technique of taking one sentence from a long report and placing it out of context to distort the meaning of the piece he’s criticising.

The Jewish background of many neo-cons was mentioned in my report in connection with their tendency to view most foreign policy crises in terms of Munich and the Holocaust. It was clearly intended to make their motives more comprehensible.

There is, however, the separate issue of the neo-cons support for Likud. Most American Jews have historically supported the Democrats in the USA, the Labor Party in Israel, and the Oslo Peace Process.

The neo-cons, almost to a man or woman and regardless of ethnicity, support the hard right of Israeli politics - Likud or more extreme parties - and are passionate opponents of Oslo. The similarity of the goals some of the neo-cons recommended for Israel in 1996 and those they claim for the American attack on Iraq is a legitimate subject of enquiry - one I put to both Perle and Feith.

The inclusion in my report of a one-sentence platitude by Dominique de Villepin does not imply that I or *Four Corners* endorses the French view. The rights or wrongs of the French position were simply not the subject of my report. The neo-cons were, and they were given ample space to explain their position, which they did with their usual coherence and passion. ("This may be about oil for Jacques Chirac", said Richard Perle, "but it's not for us")

Lastly, of course September 11 has radically changed America, and George W. Bush. Of course Bush thinks he is at war on terrorism - he says so in the first minute of my report. What millions of people around the world are wondering is why, when there is still no evidence of any connection between those attacks and Saddam Hussein, and no evidence that Hussein has ever or will ever give WMD to terrorists, is America so determined to make war on Iraq? That's the question I was attempting to answer. Gerard Henderson doesn't even think it's worth asking.

Regards

Jonathan Holmes

J. HOLMES'S (PUBLISHED) LETTER IN THE SMH, 11 APRIL 2003

- On 11 April 2003 the *SMH* published a new letter by Jonathan Holmes where he criticised Gerard Henderson's critique of *American Dreamers* along with that of another columnist.

G. HENDERSON TO J. HOLMES, 11 APRIL 2003

Dear Jonathan

I refer to your email of 1 April 2003. I have been quite busy of late – and overlooked replying to same. Then I saw your letter in today's *Herald*.

As you may or may not know, I don't mind taking criticism – provided it is based on fact. Moreover, I do not attempt to interfere with decisions made by the letters editors of the *Sydney Morning Herald* or *The Age*. In other words, those whom I criticise in the *SMH* or *The Age* can reply in the *SMH* or *The Age*. I note, for the record, that there is no similar right-of-reply with respect to *Four Corners*.

In my view, you exhibit a considerable sensitivity. When I write critique, I stand by what I say – except, of course, if I have made an error. You, on the other hand, write critique – and, when criticised, go out of your way to make out that you did not really say what you, in fact, said.

The fact is that, in your "American Dreamers" program which aired on Monday 10 March 2003:

- you *did* refer to to a group of neo-conservatives who are "almost all Jews whose parents had emigrated from Eastern Europe". Your focus was on Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle and Douglas Feith.
- you *did* refer to Douglas Feith (the US Undersecretary of Defense) as a "lifelong Zionist".
- and you *did* imply that these Jews/Zionists are engaged in "a sort of hidden agenda".

In my *SMH/Age* column of 18 March 2003 I accurately quoted you. If you did not want to associate US policy in the Middle East with a Jewish agenda by the likes of Messrs Wolfowitz, Perle and Feith – then you should not have mentioned their Jewishness. In short, if you did not want to make this association, then you should not have said what in fact you *did* say.

Since your *American Dreamers* piece went to air, you have been busy writing to letters editors, *Crikey* etc attempting to put a different gloss on your stated position. You have even gone so far as to accuse me in today's *Herald* of "implicitly" accusing you of "anti-Semitism". I do not know how an accusation can be implicit. The fact is that I have never accused you of anti-Semitism.

You maintain that "half a sentence" in your *American Dreamers* program has been "removed...from its context". The question is – in what context would reference to the fact that Wolfowitz/Perle/Feith are "Jews", and the allegation that Feith is a "Zionist", be appropriate? Especially in view of the fact that the most senior figures in the Bush administration who have driven United States policy toward Iraq are not Jewish or Zionist. Namely Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice.

In conclusion, I should make a few points in relation to your email to me of 1 April, your letter to the *Herald* dated 18 March 2003 (which was not published) and your letter published in the *Herald* on 11 April 2003.

- There was nothing in my comment on *American Dreamers* that even resembled "ridicule" with respect to you. Once again, this indicates your super-sensitivity to criticism.
- I did not say in my column of 18 March 2003 that in *American Dreamers* you endorsed the French position on Iraq as expressed by Dominique de

Villepin. What I actually wrote was, like the French Foreign Minister, you have “totally misread the US after September 11”. This is a significantly different point.

- I have never claimed that you are a pacifist, of any variety.
- Then there is your assertion that I resorted to some of my alleged “bad old ways” in criticising *American Dreamers*. Presumably, this is a reference to my critique of ABC TV’s reporting of the First Gulf War. The fact is that my criticisms were documented – and accepted by quite a few influential figures within the ABC. I note that, at the time, you defended the ABC’s coverage of the First Gulf War in the book *43 Days: The Gulf War* (1991) and that, apparently, you have not changed your position. This simply reinforces my view that you are super sensitive to criticism. So it comes as no surprise to witness you – once again – defending the ABC and, in particular, yourself from criticism. Even to the extent of maintaining that you did not say what you were widely believed to have said. It’s called denial.

Yours sincerely

Gerard Henderson

**J. HOLMES TO G. HENDERSON,
15 APRIL 2003**

Dear Gerard

I suppose I should not be surprised any more by your sheer gall. But I am.

You write a column caricaturing my arguments, declaring that they are “junk”, imputing to me views that I do not hold and arguments that I did not put, and - yes - implying anti-Semitism on my part (why otherwise would it be so shocking to refer to the Jewish ethnicity of most neo-cons?)

Then you accuse me of being “supersensitive” when I have the temerity to defend myself.

I do not resilie in the least from any element of my report. What I object to is that it should be so caricatured by you.

The Jewish ethnicity of most neo-conservatives, as I said in my letter to the *Herald*, was not mentioned in relation Israel or Iraq. It was mentioned in a section of the report which examined the origins of their views about US foreign policy, and in particular their determination that the US should not repeat the mistakes of Munich when confronting totalitarian regimes. The point is not just that they are Jewish, but that their origins are Eastern European - consequently, many (Wolfowitz especially) had

family members who perished in the Holocaust. I did in fact ask Richard Perle about the significance of this and his reply is included in the program.

As for Douglas Feith’s “lifelong Zionism”, this is a statement about his political associations, not his ethnicity. Both Feith and his father are lifelong members of the Zionist Organisation of America, a right-wing group with close links to the far right of Israeli politics. Feith, for example, is on the record as opposing any Palestinian state within the borders of “Greater Israel” - i.e. West of the river Jordan. The political connections between the neo-cons and Likud, and the specific advice given to Netanyahu in 96 by a group which included Perle, Feith and David Wurmser (now deputy to John Bolton at the State Department), which coincided so closely with the policies we now see being put into effect by the United States in the Middle East, are a legitimate subject of journalistic enquiry.

Which is not to say, and I did not argue, that its putative advantage for the security of Israel is THE explanation for the neo-cons’ support of war in Iraq, let alone for the Bush Administration’s embrace of it. Although one would not have guessed it from your colourful column, the issue took up less than 5 minutes of a 45 minute report. But it is a factor which the public should be aware of - especially with pressure now being openly applied by the Bush Administration against Syria.

You quibble about my “endorsing” de Villepin. Your column assumed that I hold similar views. I do not. It is absurd to pretend, as you do in your column, that my report did not make clear the absolute importance of September 11 2001 in persuading President Bush that regime change in Iraq was necessary. It was the very first point made in the report, and the very last too, and it was made in the middle as well.

As for your belief that the WMD/terrorism argument is all that is needed to explain the war, no doubt you will argue that, if no WMD are discovered in Iraq, the war will have been shown in retrospect to have been utterly unjustified. My program pointed out that there were other reasons, including, most important of all, the desire to change the overall political climate in the Arab world. The delivery of Iraq from despotism is almost the only justification we now hear about from the supporters of the war.

Funny that.

In my view it will be some years before it becomes clear whether the consequences of this war are, on balance, good for the world or bad. What was clear on March 10 was that it was a huge gamble. Militarily it has already paid off. But that’s just the first stage.

Lastly, the “bad old ways” I was referring to were not your views about the ABC’s coverage of Gulf War I (how shocking that I should still defend that!) but your habit of taking sentences or half sentences out of context and condemning whole documentaries on the strength of them. I recall you did that to Geraldine Doogue’s documentary about the Australian Communist Party. It is an intellectually dishonest trait which I mistakenly thought you had ceased to display.

Regards

Jonathan Holmes

G. HENDERSON TO J. HOLMES, 1 MAY 2003

Dear Jonathan

I refer to your email of 15 April 2003. I had intended responding earlier, but life has been somewhat busy of late.

Like quite a few journalists, your attitude to criticism is one-sided. You revel in dishing it out – then you get grossly offended if someone criticises you. Indeed you do not appear to understand precisely what criticism is - when it is applied to you. For example, in your email of 1 April you maintained that (in my *Sydney Morning Herald/Age* column of 1 April 2003) I had used “ridicule” against you. There was no ridicule of any kind in my article. I just happened to disagree with your thesis. To describe an argument as “junk” is not to engage in personal ridicule or abuse – it is just tough-minded criticism. More recently, you have accused me of “sheer gall”, whatever that might mean. I do not intend to engage in a continuing correspondence. However, it is appropriate to make a few points – for the record.

- The fact is that in your *American Dreamers* program (which aired on *Four Corners* on 1 April 2003) you *did* depict the “neo-conservatives” advising George W. Bush as “almost all Jews whose parents had emigrated from Eastern Europe”. You were referring, in particular, to Paul Wolfowitz, Dough Feith and Richard Perle. Consequently, it is manifestly disingenuous for you to claim (in your email of 15 April 2003) that the “Jewish ethnicity of most neo-conservatives...was not mentioned in relation to Israel or Iraq” but, rather, “in a section of the report which examined the origins of their views about US foreign policy”. The fact is that you *do* believe that the Jewishness of Messrs Wolfowitz, Feith and Perle is relevant to their attitudes to Israel and Iraq. So why try and deny this now?

You have still not dealt with the core of my critique of *American Dreamers*. Namely that the likes of Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice are more senior in the Bush administration than the

Wolfowitz/Feith/Perle trio. But neither Vice President Cheney, nor Defense Secretary Rumsfeld nor National Security Adviser Rice are Jewish. Nor is it accurate to maintain that “most” of the influential members of the group known as the neo-conservatives are of “Jewish ethnicity”. What about Michael Novak, a conservative Catholic? What about Newt Gingrich, a mainstream Protestant? Neither was mentioned in your *Four Corners* program. Both were prominent advocates of a United States led military action against Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq.

- In your email of 15 April 2003 you saw fit to mention that the “Zionist” Doug Feith “is on record as opposing any Palestinian state within the borders of ‘Greater Israel’”. Well, maybe he is. So what? The fact is that George W. Bush is the first US president to publicly advocate the desirability of a Palestinian state. You also make much of the “political connections between the neo-cons and Likud”, the dominant party in Israel’s coalition government. As you will be aware, official Likud policy is to oppose the creation of a Palestinian state. Which suggests that the Likud (working via American Jewish neo-conservatives) is not as influential on US foreign policy as you maintained in *American Dreamers*.

- Since you asked for, or rather anticipated, my opinion on weapons of mass destruction – I should briefly respond. As you will be aware, Iraq was required by a mandatory United Nations Security Council resolution to get rid of its WMD – or to provide evidence that it had already done so. As Hans Blix, Kofi Annan and Richard Butler have acknowledged, Saddam Hussein’s regime did not comply with this resolution. Military action, aimed at regime change, commenced after Iraq had demonstrated an unwillingness to comply with UN Resolution 1441.

- And now for some history. You refer to my (alleged) “bad old ways” with reference to my critique of what you term the “Geraldine Doogue’s documentary about the Australian Communist Party”. The reference is to my *Sydney Morning Herald* column, published on 31 July 1990, on *The Party’s Over* (which was part of the ABC TV *Hindsight* series). You correctly point out that Ms Doogue was the presenter of this documentary. You neglect to mention, however, that *The Party’s Over* was both produced and directed by Jonathan Holmes. Fancy that.

This is a matter of judgement, I suppose. I have re-read my *Sydney Morning Herald* column and re-viewed *The Party’s Over* – and I stand by my initial critique. Sure it was tough – both with reference to *The Party’s Over* and some comments made on ABC Radio re the CPA by the late Andrew Olle.

Contrary to your assertion, I did not take “sentences or half sentences out of context” and use them to condemn a whole documentary on the basis of such (alleged) out-of-context quotations. I note that your allegation was not accompanied by any evidence of any kind.

The fact is that I spelt out my critique of *The Party's Over* in my *Sydney Morning Herald* column at the time. Namely that Geraldine Doogue was “remarkably kind” in her treatment of the CPA operatives who were interviewed on the program. She described them as part of an “extraordinary tribe” and commented that they comprised “some of the most impressive people” she had ever met. I acknowledged that the presenter had welcomed the fact that the men and women of the CPA did not achieve positions of power in Australia. The problem was that she attributed their support for Stalinism as due to “ignorance”.

In his book *What's Left? Memoirs of an Australian Communist* (1993), Eric Aarons wrote that he reminded the Communist Party's central committee in 1956 that, if the CPA had come to power in Australia, it “could have executed people we considered to be...helping our enemies”. In other words, Mr Aarons acknowledged that he and his fellow comrades could have been involved in political killings if the CPA had obtained office. Yet *The Party's Over* deferred to these same CPA members. Certainly the program disapproved of the CPA policies and practices. Yet it implied – falsely, in my view – that CPA members were “impressive” while their political agenda was not. This is a tenuous argument, to say the least.

My point was a simple one. Namely, how would ABC TV at the time have treated former members of an Australian Nazi Party who had barracked for Adolf Hitler? Would such totalitarians have been praised for being “impressive people” who were part of an “extraordinary tribe” - and then excused for their “ignorance”. Not likely.

As the producer and director of *The Party's Over* you were involved in the documentary's decision to describe supporters of, inter alia, (i) Soviet land collectivisation and forced famines, (ii) on-going purges and show trials, (iii) the deportation of nationalities, (iv) the Nazi Soviet Pact of 1939-1941, (v) Soviet anti-semitism, eg the Doctors' Plot and (vi) the Soviet invasion of Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) as “impressive” types whose essential flaw was mere “ignorance”.

As producer and director you should also bear some responsibility for the fact that the only explanation provided in *The Party's Over* for the Nazi Soviet Pact was that proffered by Imirah Inglis. She mentioned the Communist “line” at the time, proclaimed by her late father – i.e. that the Soviet leaders tried to get the Allies to take on Nazi Germany and, only when that

failed, entered into a pact with Adolf Hitler as part of a defensive strategy. As Ms Inglis spells out in her memoirs *The Hammer, the Sickle and the Washing Up: Memories of an Australian Woman Communist* (1995), her father (Itzhak Gust) was an unremitting Stalinist who went to his death praising Stalin and communist totalitarianism. Mr Gust even supported the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

In fact, the Nazi-Soviet arrangement was a pact of aggression aimed at dividing Eastern Europe between the two dictatorships. In my view, *The Party's Over* should have made this clear – especially since it was the kind of program which could have been used as an educational tool. The fact that it failed to do so, meant that the documentary was seriously flawed. This was part of my critique in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

In conclusion, I should state that I was invited to Geraldine Doogue's home in April on the occasion of the Sydney send-off for Morag Fraser (who is stepping down as *Eureka Street* editor). I am not aware that Geraldine Doogue holds any grudges due to the fact that I criticised her over a decade ago for her role as presenter of *The Party's Over*. You, on the other hand, are super sensitive to criticism. This takes many forms – including your continuing defence of ABC TV's coverage of the First Gulf War, in spite of the fact that a number of people within the ABC have acknowledged that serious errors were made at the time.

Apparently, you still believe that it was appropriate for ABC TV to engage Robert Springborg as its in-house commentator on the First Gulf War – in spite of the fact that in the Melbourne *Herald* of 13 August 1990 he had claimed that Australia, under Bob Hawke's leadership, was “every bit as much a one-man show as the country [i.e. Iraq] we may be fighting”. In other words, Dr Springborg was suggesting that Bob Hawke and Saddam Hussein were both dictators. Yet, even a decade after the event, you still defend the ABC TV decision to engage Robert Springborg as its principal commentator on Iraq and the First Gulf War. It seems that you are unwilling to accept any criticism whatsoever.

My (gratuitous) advice is that, if you do not want to be criticised, do not make claims which you cannot substantiate. Like maintaining in *American Dreamers* that a Jewish “hidden agenda” is influencing US policy in the Middle East. If you do make such an assertion, expect genuine criticism - which you should not link with ridicule. Or even gall.

That's all.

Yours sincerely

Gerard Henderson



WOMEN'S ENTERPRISE IN MEDICAL RESEARCH

The story of the Asthma Foundation in legal advocate Babette Smith's latest book *Coming Up For Air* is also a template for the organisational politics that can threaten the success of such ventures. This is a no-holds-barred account of a clash between ideas and egos, of the conflict, which ensued when dedicated amateurs outraged a conservative profession. In particular, it details a titanic battle between the two eminent, male dominated professions of law and medicine. Babette is the author of the critically acclaimed *A Cargo of Women* and the groundbreaking insights in *Mothers & Sons*.

SPEAKER: BABETTE SMITH (Legal Advocate, author *Coming Up for Air* [Rosenberg])

TOPIC: *Women's Enterprise in Medical Research – A Case Study*

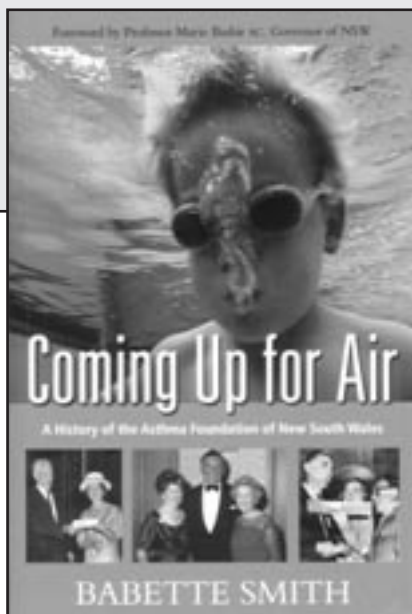
DATE: Tuesday 12 August 2003

TIME: 5.30 for 6.00 pm

VENUE: 41 Phillip Street, Sydney

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THAT OTHER WAR: CONTESTED DEVELOPMENT

John Kunkel

Despite deep transatlantic divisions over the Iraq war, the latest outbreak of rivalry between the United States and Europe has nothing to do with military power. Show me a European government diverting money from pensions to precision weapons and I'll show you political oblivion.

At least for the moment, things are confined to a game of "soft power", including a duel for the moral high ground on poverty and development. The Europeans more than match the Americans in this contest of "enlightened self-interest", though scoring the balance between adjective and noun can be very murky indeed.

The economic superpowers are making promises and trading accusations about trade, aid and different strategies for fighting disease and suffering in the developing world. President George W. Bush is eager to show that American power in the twenty-first century offers carrots as well as military sticks. After promising a hike in America's aid budget last year, he is now talking about free trade deals with southern Africa and the Middle East. And on the eve of the G8 meeting in June, he signed a bill tripling AIDS spending in Africa to US\$15 billion over the next five years.

Europe came forward with its own promises of new AIDS money at the G8 meeting. While quietly reminding poor countries that the United States has a lot of ground to make up, the European Union (EU) has unveiled a new "tiered pricing" system for delivering cheap medicines to developing countries. And in a selective departure from Gallic form, French President Jacques Chirac has pushed for a moratorium on farm export subsidies to Africa.

How convincing rich countries are in their efforts to help poor countries will largely determine the fate of trade talks in the World Trade Organization (WTO) – the so-called Doha Development Agenda. According to the World Bank, rich country trade barriers cost poor countries over US\$100 billion a year, roughly twice the flow of aid money. And while Australia is not centre-stage in this battle of virtue, our credentials as

Table 1. Commitment to Development Index (max. = 10)

	Aid	Trade	Environment	Investment	Migration	Peacekeeping	Average
Netherlands	6.9	7.0	5.7	6.1	4.5	3.5	5.6
Denmark	9.0	6.8	5.0	1.0	4.4	7.1	5.5
Portugal	2.2	6.9	5.1	9.0	1.0	6.8	5.2
New Zealand	1.7	7.2	3.4	2.3	9.0	6.9	5.1
Switzerland	3.3	4.0	7.2	6.3	9.0	0.1	5.0
Germany	2.1	6.8	6.0	1.4	8.1	3.8	4.7
Spain	2.4	6.8	6.0	8.2	1.8	2.9	4.7
Sweden	7.0	6.9	6.1	1.8	3.9	1.3	4.5
Austria	2.8	6.8	5.4	2.6	6.5	2.6	4.4
Norway	6.6	1.0	2.8	3.5	4.6	7.4	4.3
Britain	3.0	6.9	5.0	3.4	3.1	3.6	4.2
Belgium	3.5	6.7	4.5	1.4	4.5	3.5	4.0
Greece	1.5	6.7	4.6	0.0	1.6	9.0	3.9
France	3.1	6.8	4.9	1.7	0.8	5.2	3.8
Ireland	2.6	6.6	1.6	2.3	4.5	3.7	3.6
Italy	1.4	7.0	5.3	1.5	1.1	5.3	3.6
Finland	3.0	6.8	5.4	1.7	1.3	2.9	3.5
Canada	1.7	6.6	1.7	2.1	6.1	2.4	3.4
Australia	1.7	7.2	1.8	1.6	3.7	2.8	3.2
USA	0.8	7.7	1.0	2.0	2.3	1.5	2.6
Japan	1.2	4.6	4.0	2.8	1.5	0.5	2.4

Source: Center for Global Development

a spruiker for agricultural liberalisation are coming under greater scrutiny.

AMERICA COMES OFF A LOW BASE

To assess this scramble for development brownie points, Washington's Center for Global Development and *Foreign Policy* magazine teamed up in May to produce a Commitment to Development Index grading 21 rich countries across six policy areas: aid, trade, environment, investment, migration, and peacekeeping. As Table 1 shows, European countries come out ahead while Canada, Australia, the United States and Japan bring up the rear. The Europeans generally score well on aid, the environment and peace-keeping. Australia and the US get high scores for openness to trade, but marks sag in other areas.

The overall rankings based on average numbers are fairly crude and only as good as the assumptions made. For example, the high marks for Spain and Portugal on investment reflect little more than the legacy of good old fashioned European colonialism.

America's ranking would go up a few notches if private philanthropy and illegal immigration were taken into account. And it's hard to tell a story about economic development in East Asia without crediting the role of the US Pacific Fleet. When Greece scores the top marks on peace-keeping, you know something wacky is going on. But despite various flaws, the index suggests why the Americans are keen to put some extra clothes on their emperor when he talks about fighting poverty and disease as well as terrorism.

America's record on aiding development is not has bad as the Bush-haters claim, but it remains well short of the president's rhetoric. While the United States is the world's largest aid donor – at around US\$11 billion per year – when measured as a share of national income it lies at the bottom of rich-country aid rankings. Aid administration is fragmented and much of it is geared towards strategic goals in places like Israel, Egypt and Colombia. In March 2002, President Bush announced what he termed a "New

Compact for Development” in which new aid money would be directed to those countries that embrace the rule of law, open markets, and investment in health and education. Criteria such as primary education completion rates, low inflation, and an environment favourable to business start-ups are among those that will determine who receives funding from the new Millennium Challenge Account.

On trade, the Bush Administration last year cut tariffs to zero for an estimated US\$20 billion in American imports from the developing world. Trade representative Robert Zoellick has proposed sweeping cuts to tariffs and farm subsidies in the WTO, but the will to reduce lavish farm aid at home has been distinctly absent. And a lot needs to happen before cynics are convinced that President Bush’s AIDS initiative can be taken at face value. As Ian Henderson outlined in *The Sydney Institute Quarterly* in March, efforts to ensure international patent laws do not stop the flow of cheap drugs to poor countries have run foul of US pharmaceutical interests, even though poor countries account for less than 2 per cent of global drug sales.

THOSE VIRTUOUS EUROPEANS

When bilateral aid is combined with programs run by the European Commission, Europe certainly scores higher on the generosity meter. Its aid budget is more than double that of the United States, and three times more generous as a share of national income. Europe is home to all five countries that meet a United Nations target of spending 0.7 per cent of income on aid – Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

But European aspirations to plant their flag on compassion’s high ground remain hobbled by resistance to open market access for developing country exports. Most attention focuses on agricultural subsidies with the by-now familiar (if still grotesque) stories about how every cow in Switzerland accrues the annual equivalent of US\$1,500 in subsidies. And the EU seems happy to let agriculture remain the focus of bitterness in the WTO talks. Along with Japan, it has rejected as too radical a proposal from the chairman of the agricultural negotiations to eliminate export subsidies and cut tariffs by as much as 60 per cent.

Developing country politicians have accused the EU of adopting “divide and conquer” tactics on agriculture. Around 50 least developed countries (LDCs) receive trade preferences under the EU’s “Everything but Arms” initiative. (Even here, markets for sensitive products like sugar and bananas are not really open.) The word has gone out to these countries from Brussels that if they side with the more ambitious proponents of agricultural trade reform their favoured access will be undermined. The EU is also using its leverage in bilateral trade

agreements with the developing world to lock in social regulations with high compliance costs. From food to chemicals to electronics, there is a rising tide of standards and technical barriers designed to reduce health and environmental risks even though scientific evidence may be absent or ambiguous.

Europe’s aversion to risk has also prompted a major fight over genetically-modified (GM) crops. In May, the Americans (backed by a coalition of the willing) launched a WTO legal action against the EU’s five-year de facto ban on these crops. While this has directly cut US exports to Europe, what really got up the Americans’ nose was the refusal of US food aid last year by a number of African governments for fear of running foul of European standards. American officials have accused some European governments of linking their aid to African rejection of GM foods, notwithstanding the lack of scientific evidence that such products are unsafe. More than a fifth of the world’s total crop area for soya beans, maize, canola oilseeds and cotton is now devoted to biotech varieties and developing countries such as India and China have also raised concerns over access to EU markets.

WHO DOES AUS AID?

Australia is pretty much in the “trade trumps aid” camp. Budgeted at \$1.9 billion in 2003-04, our aid to national income ratio has drifted down to 0.25 per cent over the last 25 years. Nonetheless, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) runs a well-targeted program focused on our immediate region (see Table 2). This makes sense for Australia, but it also reflects global imperatives as the Asia Pacific region is home to two thirds of the world’s poor (800 million people), but it receives less than one third of total aid flows.

Table 2: Australia’s Top Ten Aid Recipients (\$m, 2003-04)

1.	Papua New Guinea	333.6
2.	Indonesia	151.7
3.	Vietnam	72.1
4.	Philippines	62.4
5.	China	50.7
6.	Cambodia	44.4
7.	East Timor	42.5
8.	Solomon Islands	37.4
9.	Bangladesh	32.3
10.	Vanuatu	22.7

Source: *Treasury Budget Papers*.

Where Australia rates highly is in having one of the most open and transparent trade regimes in the world, with a few exceptions like high textile tariffs.

And on 1 July, Australia moved to tariff free and quota free access on exports from the world's 50 poorest countries, an initiative John Howard announced in October 2002 but which received zero publicity. Another fact not widely appreciated is that, according to Transparency International, Australia has the least corrupt companies when it comes to reliance on bribes in doing business overseas.

Quarantine regulation is the one area where Australia is forced to defend its free trade credentials. In March, EU trade commissioner Pascal Lamy launched a sweeping WTO case against Australia's quarantine system, saying that it was designed "to ensure Australia practices what it preaches on agricultural market access". This follows action by the Philippines last year targeting quarantine barriers for some fruit and vegetables.

PRECIOUS LITTLE TO SHOW

Amidst the promises and accusations, good intentions and political spin that surround the development debate, one thing is worth keeping in mind. We have been dreadful at understanding what actually works in helping poor countries.

In his book *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics* (MIT, 2001), William Easterly, a former World Bank adviser, surveys 50 years of attempts to fire economic growth and end poverty. He writes that "the search for a magic formula to turn poverty into prosperity failed. Neither aid nor investment nor education nor population control nor adjustment lending nor debt forgiveness proved to be the panacea for growth".

Easterly is very tough on the international economic agencies (the World Bank, the IMF etc.) and NGOs for ignoring the basic economic principle that people respond to incentives. This "cartel of good intentions", he argues, administers a bureaucratic edifice marked by low feedback from customers (ie. the world's poor), lack of competition, and limited accountability. He is equally tough on rich country governments that have used mediocre development performance to cut aid, rather than enforce service delivery to the world's poor.

The message is pretty clear: we cannot afford another 50 years of development failure.

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



THE TAX DEBATE: AFTER THE BUDGET

Ian Henderson

Confronted with the choice of either boasting that his tax policies are behind the current flood of money into the states' coffers or trying to repudiate Labor's claim that his eighth Budget is the highest taxing federal Budget ever, Treasurer Peter Costello took the only option that was politically available to him.

Under the cover of his first income tax cut in three years – and only the Coalition's second since its election seven years ago – and despite the obvious contradictions involved – he unashamedly did both. "The states," Costello told reporters on 13 May, "much earlier than predicted, have become net beneficiaries of GST revenue." That's how the Treasurer worded his boast, of which more later.

On the second option: "One of the things they do is they make that false claim and they try to get people to repeat it. Of course, that is not the case," Costello told Channel Nine's *The Today Show* on the morning after the Budget. "The Federal government is not increasing its taxes and in fact is cutting them."

At its most naïve level, the ALP's claim that the Howard-Costello Government holds the tax record rests on the undeniable fact that, at a fraction more than \$164.8 billion, federal taxation revenues forecast for 2003-04 are – once again – higher than in any previous year. But that is not the basis of Labor's claim. Indeed, the Treasurer's accurate response to such a depiction would be to point to the fact that the Budget papers suggest that tax receipts in the year ahead will account for just 20.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) – lower than at any time since the 1973-74 Budget of the Whitlam Labor Government.

In fact, the real conflict between Labor's accusation that Costello is a high taxing federal Treasurer and Costello's rejection of that accusation rests on a continuing dispute about the revenues from the GST. Labor, backed up by both the official figures published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the published view of the Auditor-General – not to mention commonsense – is that the GST is a tax

that's enacted under Commonwealth legislation and collected by a Commonwealth authority (the Australian Taxation Office). So, by any sensible measures, it's a Commonwealth tax. The Treasurer's response to that argument is that, under a formal agreement between the Howard-Costello Government and the states and territories in 1999, all the revenues collected by the GST are earmarked for the states and territories – that the Commonwealth has withdrawn from any role in determining what's done with those revenues.

If the ALP is correct, the total amount of tax revenues collected in 2003-04 by the Commonwealth is likely to be around \$196.5 billion once the \$31.7 billion of forecast GST revenues are included – or 24.7 per cent of GDP, certainly a record. More careful analysis suggests that at least some part of that GST figure should be discounted, if useful comparisons are to be made with previous years' figures. The GST was intended to replace completely the general revenue assistance grants – untied grants – given each year by the federal government to the states and territories. But that was not all, and that's why the GST collections should be discounted, when comparisons with earlier federal tax revenue figures are being made. In addition to replacing the wholesale sales tax at a federal level, when the GST was introduced in 2000-01, the states and territories (where relevant) agreed to abolish several of their indirect taxes – including the financial institutions duty, the duty on marketable securities and the “bed tax” – in exchange for the GST revenues. So to put the historical comparison on a sound basis, it's sensible to adjust the GST for the cost to government revenues of abolishing those state taxes. In 2003-04, according to the Budget papers (Budget Paper No. 3, p. 14) some \$2.3 billion will be foregone by the states and territories by the prior abolition of those taxes.

But even if the \$31.7 billion figure is discounted by that amount and the adjusted GST revenues are then added to the tax revenues listed in the Howard-Costello Budget, that still leaves Commonwealth tax receipts at something like \$194.2 billion in 2003-04 – and that would still account for around 24.4 per cent of GDP, and that's higher than in any year since 1986-87.

In other words, even after spending \$2.4 billion in 2003-04 on personal income tax cuts, it's clear the Howard-Costello Government is, on any reasonable judgement, a high taxing administration by Australian standards. Comparison with many other industrialised nations suggests that, by international standards, Australia still experiences relatively low federal taxes overall. But, of course, that's not relevant to either Labor's claim or the Treasurer's defence against it.

And it's little wonder the Treasurer is so keen to repudiate any suggestion that he holds the record as

Australia's highest taxing treasurer, given the Liberal Party's and his own declarations of support for low taxes as a matter of principle.

“Nobody is saying that it's a Tattsлото-type sum, but I think people recognise the fact that, if you can reduce tax, you should do so,” was the Treasurer's defence – voiced on the ABC's program *PM* – of the small amount of the tax cuts to taxpayers on average earnings.

On the other hand, Costello is very keen to boast about the way the GST is filling the coffers of state and territory governments. And on that score, he is absolutely right. Indeed, the GST is bringing in so much more cash than was expected just a year ago, that the states and territories will be repaying the Commonwealth an estimated \$534.8 million, because the 2002-03 Budget forecasts of GST revenues are likely to be bettered by a large amount. A year ago, Costello and his boffins forecast that, on an accruals basis, GST revenues would be: \$29.69 billion in 2002-03; \$31.31 billion in 2003-04; \$32.09 billion in 2004-05; and \$34.97 billion in 2005-06. On 13 May this year, the Treasury's best estimates were significantly higher for each of those years: \$31.23 billion, \$32.05 billion; \$33.815 billion and \$35.68 billion.

In cash terms, the money the states and territories will actually receive, provided Treasury's latest figures stand the test of time, will be \$31.7 billion in 2003-04 and \$33.45 billion, \$35.30 billion and \$37.28 billion in each of the following three years respectively. That's \$1.3 billion more in the year ahead than the government forecast – with further and even more substantial windfall gains likely in later years.

The reason for the upward revisions to the forecasts, Treasury says, is simply that the dwellings sector of the economy continued to grow faster than most analysts – including the department itself – had expected. And, of course, retail spending has also continued to expand at a faster pace than anticipated. Not all retail spending attracts the GST. But most does, and even if spending on new homes and renovations, and in shops and the hospitality industry slows, it's already built in a handy higher floor, that will help push up GST revenues in the years ahead.

Just to show how the GST has boosted tax levels in the nation, it's instructive to compare the forecasts made in the 2000-01 Budget with those in the latest Budget. Just three years ago – in the first GST Budget – revenues from the new tax were estimated at \$28.9 billion in 2002-03 and \$30.5 billion in 2003-04. Compare those numbers with the current estimates: \$30.5 billion and \$31.7 billion respectively – almost \$3 billion extra in those two years alone.

Now, regardless of Costello's assertions to the contrary, the GST is a Commonwealth tax, even if the ATO is no more than a post box for the cash before it's handed on to the states and territories.

But it's also true that the Commonwealth is not the immediate beneficiary of any unexpected gains in GST revenues. However, the Commonwealth is the indirect beneficiary, and that's where the \$534.8 million repayment comes in.

As the Budget papers say: "The government pays the states and territories Budget Balancing Assistance to cover any difference between GST revenue and states' Guaranteed Minimum Amounts. This is designed to ensure that states' budgetary positions are no worse off after the changes made to Commonwealth-State financial relations as part of the Commonwealth government's implementation of *The New Tax System* in 2000-01."

In other words, the agreement was that the Commonwealth would top up the GST amount going to any state or territory if that amount were less than the state or territory would have expected under the previous tax and revenue-splitting regime; that is before it abolished the taxes it agreed to eliminate in exchange for the GST and before it lost the previous general revenue assistance stream from the Commonwealth.

In accordance with that deal, the Budget Balancing Assistance (BBA), paid by early May 2003 to the states and territories, totalled \$1,538.0 million – but that was calculated before it became apparent to Treasury that the GST revenues for 2002-03 would be as large as now appears likely, and much larger than the department had anticipated at the start of that financial year. As a result, an overpayment of \$534.8 million will be deducted from the GST payments to the states and territories from the federal government in 2003-04. Further, the BBA payment for 2003-04 itself will be something like \$200 million less than was forecast in the first GST Budget of 2000-01.

Costello is as keen to highlight the fact that most of the states and territories are now free from relying on the BBA as a backup to their GST-derived revenues as he is to reject the "highest taxing government" tag. But both depictions are justified by his own Budget estimates. And both rely to some extent on the outstanding success of the GST as a source of revenue for governments.

Whatever the Treasurer might say or even believe, it's the case that the Howard-Costello Government is, by Australian standards, a high taxing federal administration. But whether it's spending wisely the revenues it's collecting, might well be a more appropriate question for public debate.

Ian Henderson is Economics Correspondent, ABC Radio Current Affairs



THE ARAB WORLD AND THE IRAQI CAMPAIGN

David Pryce-Jones was educated at Eton College, and then read history at Magdalen College, Oxford. He has published nine novels and nine books of non-fiction, including *The Closed Circle* and *The War that Never Was*, about the end of the Soviet empire. He is a senior editor of *National Review* in New York.

"In the Sixties I first began to travel in Arab countries. There was still a certain courtliness of manner, a social architecture, something of a settled life. This has all since vanished in what V. S. Naipaul calls 'the steady grinding down of the old world'. Arab countries are centralized and militarized secret police states inhabited by subjects of a ruler and not by citizens. Injustice is everywhere. The big cities deteriorate into slums, and the countryside into ruin. The bonus of oil wealth ebbs away in corruption and inequality. Between them, dictators like Gamal Abdul Nasser, Saddam Hussein, and so many more, have put an end to settled life. The cruelty and waste are impossibly sad."
– David Pryce Jones, *National Review* 11 September 2002

DAVID PRYCE JONES (Author & Senior Editor National Review)

TOPIC: The Political Consequences for the Arab World of the Iraqi Campaign
DATE: Wednesday 6 August 2003
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AUSTRALIA'S MUTATING MIDDLE CLASS

Anne Henderson

When the former Member for Dickson, Cheryl Kernot, warned her Labor colleagues that the party needed to speak more to the aspirational voters in swinging seats like hers, the ones she claimed wanted to think like "Liberals", she was not heard. Now, as Simon Crean begins a policy blitz following his re-election as Labor leader, it's these middle class and aspirational voters in outer metropolitan electorates that Labor is once more being told to heed.

Yet there little indication, so far, that Labor has noticed a sea change of huge proportions that's overtaken Australia's so-called middle class in the last decade. From acceptance of the new tax system to the rapid growth of private religious schools to the popularity of government rebates for private health cover – middle Australia appears to have taken to direct government assistance which facilitates choice. It's openly suspicious of the value of public institutions.

Australia's middle class has finally rejected Whitlamism and what it stood for. This is why Treasurer Peter Costello is labelling Simon Crean a "Whitlamite" as Crean calls for more government expenditure on public institutions - from health care to education. Whether or not the allegation is accurate, the Treasurer clearly believes that the label is a distinct negative for Labor, with resonance in the electorate – particularly among aspirational voters in marginal seats.

Like the Third Way, the middle is neither hot nor cold. For Goldilocks, it was just right. In increasingly affluent Australia post World War II, the middle became the hallmark of egalitarianism, as Australia transformed itself from working class paradise to the land of the middle class. It was a middle class with job security, not especially materialistic and for whom home buying mortgage repayments were minimal in monthly family outlays. And we thought this would go on forever. It didn't.

Nowadays commentators reflect so often on the growing gap between rich and poor in Australia, the term has become a truism. Even though people at the bottom are better off overall, it's the gap that matters in arguments about egalitarianism.

Meanwhile, in 2003, the traditional single income family of mum, dad and children are hardest hit, trying to keep pace with the increasingly normal two income family unit. In the past two decades, their numbers have shrunk dramatically as a group.

Tax cuts are important to the traditional single income family. So are payments to stay at home mothers – regardless of all that education we give our daughters about the importance of maintaining their careers.

The negative effects of rapid social and economic change in the past three decades are now obvious - smaller families or no children at all for couples, fewer marriages, high divorce rates, a growing gap between the affluence of big cities or regional centres and the rest of Australia, job insecurity, an aging society that is told it must work longer and retire later and what Geoff Dixon, Qantas Chief Executive, told the Future of Work conference on 12 June is "a race to the bottom" with further cost-cutting and job losses in industries hit by fluctuations in global markets.

But the up-side is obvious too. There is choice like never before. Even at work, with flexible hours and conditions. No longer are Australian consumers forced to buy inferior and over priced manufactured goods produced by industries protected by tariffs and quotas. The public sector no longer drains the public purse with its lifetime jobs, many unproductive, propped up by a majority of taxpayers working with few of the benefits enjoyed by such public servants. Young people can stay young for much longer, are more likely to be university educated, can and do travel and work abroad rather than settle down to domestic responsibilities a few years after leaving school as their parents mostly did. They have opportunities their parents never had. They are wised up on investment. As well as being less governed by material goals in their freedom to move about. They connect with networks of friends internationally and are not bound by borders in their use of IT communications.

So the debate rages – are we seeing our Australian ideals and quality of life being ripped apart by globalisation and the market economy, or are we merely undergoing much needed change to make a world where we are a lot better off than we admit? And what is happening to Australia's middle class? Is it an endangered species or a mutating one?

According to Michael Pusey, academic and opponent of what he calls "economic rationalism", it's all downhill. In his most recent book – *The Experience of Middle Australia – the Dark Side of Economic Reform* (Cambridge) he claims the economic reforms of the past two decades are the work of "thought police" or large international accounting houses and credit

rating agencies. The plot they've hatched, in cahoots with increasingly conservative governments (both Labor and Liberal) and their ideas men in the think tanks, has left middle Australia "angry and unhappy".

Clive Hamilton, Executive Director of The Australia Institute, disagrees. Australia's middle class has never been better off, he says. We are three times richer than we were in the 1950s. We just want more. The complaining coming from the dissatisfied middle class is merely "whingeing" about not being able to have everything people want.

Hamilton points to the increasing number of people who are "downshifting", what he calls the "anti-aspirational" voters – those who choose fewer hours of work per week, and thus a lesser salary, for lifestyle reasons. Over the past ten years, 23 per cent of Australians have chosen to downshift.

Taking a slightly different tack from Hamilton, but concluding something similar, *Sydney Morning Herald* columnist Adele Horin maintains that the apparent discontent among those earning \$60,000 and above is due to the fact that they have no idea how the real middle income earners and poor live on much less:

To take one telling statistic: 37 per cent of families with children have a gross income of less than \$40,000. Now that's hard-up. And that's a lot of Australians. And if you include the millions, such as pensioners and unemployed people, who have no private earnings, you find that half of all Australian households live on less than \$30,000 a year. (Sydney Morning Herald, 14-15 June 2003)

The day this Adele Horin column appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the number one story on its front page concerned new and record breaking, low fixed mortgage rates and the subsequent boom in real estate, especially in renovating houses – "\$1.6bn – and that's just the renovation" ran one heading.

Both Hamilton and Horin recognise that there is a significant number of Australians caught by poverty and economic powerlessness. For these people, all governments and oppositions must continue to work on policies that will try to alleviate such inequality.

But both Hamilton and Horin have also highlighted a growing, almost psychotic, trend among some middle class commentators insisting, somehow, that in spite of all the evidence of Australia as one of the healthiest and most prosperous economies in the world, people are worse off than they used to be – economically and socially.

Michael Pusey's *The Experience of Middle Australia* is a classic example. The book evolved from interviews with 400 "middle Australians" whom Pusey claims to

have given a voice to through his book. But, although there are brief quotes from some of these Australians, reading *The Experience of Middle Australia* it is mostly Pusey's voice that comes through, overriding any sense of the data's objectivity.

These voices, when heard, are certainly angry and disillusioned with economic reform – just as Pusey wants them to be – so much so that a reader is tempted to ask how is it that reformist prime ministers have continued to win office in the past two decades in Australia with each succession being a more conservative choice for voters than the one before - from Hawke to Keating to Howard? It can't simply be wedge politics at election time – although that's what Pusey would like to believe. There must be something economic reformers are doing right.

But Michael Pusey can only see the "dark side". Taking *The Australian* newspaper's cover story of June 2000 "Advance Australia Where? ... Death of the Fair Go" (with a sub heading of "Death of the nation's great middle class dream") as the whole picture, Pusey presents these articles to an audience of American social scientists. They are "bewildered" and some ask if it is a left wing newspaper. It isn't of course. One then observes that reform Down Under is "obviously not working". For Pusey, it's that simple. Economic reform is a failure.

Among the commentators and their trade, the Pusey take on economic reform is yet another (more recent) bout of leftist alienation. For Pusey, the economic "golden age" (his words) in Australia was 1974-5, the worst of the Whitlam years. Pusey doesn't comprehend why, at the time, a large majority of voters felt so betrayed economically they subsequently voted overwhelmingly for conservative Malcolm Fraser.

The years of Whitlam stagflation – rising unemployment, inflation at 16 per cent, interest rates negative for retirees and their investments, quarterly wage adjustments of up to 5 per cent to put small business employers out of business and thus add to the unemployment queues – are not on Michael Pusey's radar screen.

Pusey the true believer, offers rosy portrayals of left leaning social democratic governments and their economic systems – from Whitlam in 1975 to France in 2003. His ideal capitalist system is the "partnership capitalism" or "corporatist capitalism" of the Netherlands and Germany, followed closely by the "Scandinavian model". He is also impressed with Mediterranean economies like Italy.

But right now, OECD reports for Germany and the Netherlands indicate that, in 2002, the German economy came close to stagnating and in 2003 has not recovered. Unemployment has risen to 10.7 per cent and government debt is a worry.

Ignoring Michael Pusey's book, the German government has just announced measures to increase the flexibility of the labour market and is planning to increase the efficiency and viability of health care and pension systems – in other words, to take something of an economic rationalist's approach to the situation. Chancellor Gerhard Schroder introduced his reform package saying, "Either we modernise or we will be modernised by the unremitting forces of the market."

In the Netherlands, economic activity is weak, consumer confidence is at its lowest level since 1983 and business stagnation is predicted to continue. And the French economy is suffering an economic slow down with unemployment trending upward at over 9 per cent.

As for the "Scandinavian model", it would seem Michael Pusey has been too long reading the transcripts of angry middle class Australians to notice that the Swedes junked the welfare state years ago when Sweden underwent sweeping economic reform. As of 2003, Sweden's economy is market driven and doing far better than its German and Dutch counterparts.

Germany, France and Italy, all ageing societies, are now confronted with a major structural problem of pay-as-you-go state pensions in societies where the workers making the contributions are fewer while retirees, who will be paid the pensions, are a boomers' bubble. Unless pensions are funded in a more commercial way – a radical overhaul – deductions from workers' salaries must increase significantly even while pensioners receive less in real terms. In late May 2003, unions clashed violently with the French government over any reform of state pensions – a sign of what's ahead.

By comparison, sustained economic reform over the past two decades makes Australia stand out success.

The problem for Michael Pusey and many commentators who continue to look back on the Whitlam years with rose tinted glasses, is that they cannot face the fact that the markets and globalisation are not a conspiracy foisted on electorates. It's how the new generations live. Rightly or wrongly.

Traders trade world wide; economies compete globally for their goods to be bought; industrialists and employers can choose where to operate globally according to the most competitive labour costs, governments now realise there are no magic theories to increase revenue to satisfy the appetites of voters; and voters have come to realise that the public purse is finite as well as capable of being squandered on elaborate public projects which individual taxpayers may not directly benefit from.

What those aspirational voters are telling politicians is that they would rather be given direct government assistance and choose for themselves where to invest it. They'd rather by-pass the bureaucracy and public institutions. They have lost faith in the left after years of waste.

Michael Pusey talks of present day money market based economies as having winners and losers, as if this is the reason Australia's egalitarian society is changing. He ignores the fact that public servants, on permanent tenure and with superannuation schemes we all envy now, were the other winners – three decades ago. There have always been winners and losers – even in Australia.

Rather than simply call for a turning back, as Pusey for all his protestations to the contrary seems to do, it's time to for workable strategies and organisations that can manage this riskier, self help and market oriented world. To grow with the change not simply protest it.

Robert Shiller, *The New Financial Order* (Princeton & Oxford 2003) is one who offers a positive picture of how to cope. His scenario involves "fundamental new risk management institutions that could improve the lives of individuals, families, communities and societies".

This means more transparency in information, stored in vast databases, something he calls a GRID. In a sophisticated technological world, there is no reason insurance, protection of systems, protection of transactions and individuals cannot happen. He maintains, with much credibility, that the technology that has created our globalised world is just as capable of protecting it.

So the challenge is out there – both for the Labor Party and commentators generally. It's a changing, self motivated world like never before, technologically literate and fast moving.

We can seek to go back like Pusey, or try to adapt to it like many aspirational Australians at the coal face are already doing and focus positively, like Robert Shiller, in the generation of ideas.

From just a glance at the economic score cards of European social democrat governments, I'd rather put my money on the pragmatic adaptation of Down Under's middle class.

Anne Henderson is Deputy Director of The Sydney Institute



BOOK REVIEWS

John McConnell

MANHATTAN TO BAGHDAD

By Paul McGeough
Allen & Unwin, pb 2003
Rrp \$29.95
ISBN 1 74114 025 0

Manhattan to Baghdad presents Paul McGeough's perspective of the momentous events that were to seize world attention during 2001 and 2002. I refer, of course, to 11 September 2001 – 9/11 as the Americans call it – and to its aftermath, the war against terror.

Paul McGeough is a foreign correspondent and former editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He is now its Writer at Large, based in New York. He was in Manhattan on the 11 September, 2001, a mere six blocks from the World Trade Centre. He saw the horrifying collapse of the building's first tower.

In *Manhattan to Baghdad*, McGeough writes: "The day had started as though made directly by the hand of God: Manhattan at its September best with not a cloud in a blue, blue sky. By nightfall it seemed the hand of the devil had the city by the throat. It was a black day, and that blackness spread all the way to Khoja Bahauddin in faraway Afghanistan, where panicked Northern Alliance officials were trying to suppress the news that their leader Masoud was dead... This too was the work of the devil, and in both Manhattan and in Khoja Bahauddin he went under the same name – Osama bin Laden."

Immediately prior to 11 September 2001, Paul McGeough had been in Afghanistan observing conditions there under the rule of the Taliban. The

pre-11 September period in Afghanistan comprises part one of *Manhattan to Baghdad*.

Paul McGeough discusses the Taliban cruelties imposed on Afghanistan's people at that time. How a particularly vicious form of religious bigotry translated into mutilations, torture and death. How some Taliban fighters would daub the blood of their victims on themselves before turning to Mecca to pray. How the mere fact that male and female staff lunching together in a cafeteria could result in a hospital being closed; the curtain separating the two groups was of no consequence.

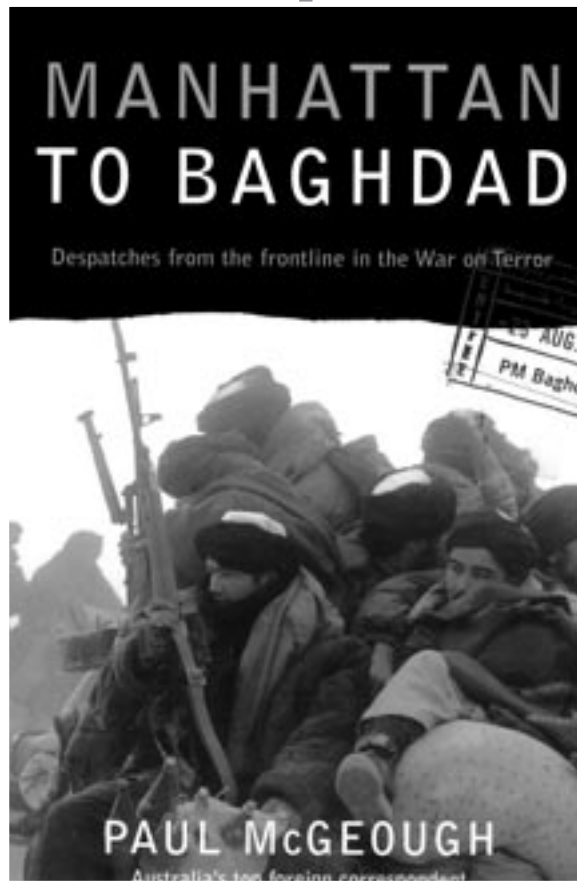
Against this background of appalling conditions in Afghanistan and the desperation it instilled in the hearts of the population, Paul McGeough writes critically of the Australian government. The Australian government's response to the plight of those on board the Norwegian freighter, the *Tampa*, he argues, demonstrated a major lack of understanding to the nature of the problem driving refugees in our direction.

Shortly after 11 September, Paul McGeough returned to Afghanistan as an eyewitness to the American-led war against terror. He records his travels in the area during October and November 2001. Paul McGeough recalls the kindness of the Afghan people in villages and small towns. However, the soldiers and their warlords, he says, were another story.

He refers to the complexities that occur inevitably in such circumstances. How, for instance, the United States undertakes a fight against terrorism but not Islam. Yet in Uzbekistan, an American ally, there is a war against Islam. If only, he says, the world had paid attention earlier to the plight of the Afghan millions fleeing from war and famine. Just possibly, action may have been taken

about Al Qaeda's use of Afghanistan as a terrorist training and planning location before it was too late. However, this was not to be.

The tragic events in Manhattan on 11 September and the horrifying destruction of thousands of lives and a building seen as a monument to capitalism signalled the seriousness of the threat confronting the world.



The force of the explosion that day in New York, writes Paul McGeough, meant that much of the towers, aircrafts, passengers and workers vapourised into a tragic mix that became part of the thick layers of dust that were to envelop Manhattan and Brooklyn.

In parts three and four of *Manhattan to Baghdad*, Paul McGeough focuses on the road leading to Baghdad and the preparation for the war in Iraq. These two final parts of the book cover the period March to September 2002. Naturally, some of Paul McGeough's observations here have been overtaken by events.

He lists weapons that no one has been able to account for satisfactorily as yet. The list includes chemical weapons, biological agents, killer nerve-poison VX and artillery shells filled with mustard gas. Nevertheless, Paul McGeough's pre-2003 viewpoint is that Iraq is "a senseless distraction", "the wrong place" and "the wrong war".

Manhattan to Baghdad is a thought-provoking book that reports on a number of important events and issues.

Paul McGeough notes that domestic journalism is a "competitive, often bitchy business". He draws a contrast with the behaviour of journalists in dangerous war zones. A camaraderie develops among foreign correspondents in such zones. Even hardened loners look out for each other in such a dangerous environment. A simple truism supports such behaviour. For foreign correspondents know that they are likely to need a favour. It is likely to be a favour on which their life depends.

WINGS OF THE KITE-HAWK

By Nicolas Rothwell

Picador, pb 2003

rrp \$30

ISBN 0 330 36402 2

Wings of the Kite-Hawk is a book about inland Australia and its inhabitants – past and present. It is an unusual book about an Australia that is not part of the daily lives of Australians living along the coastal perimeter

of the continent. The author, Nicolas Rothwell, is a journalist with *The Australian* newspaper.

The author refers to kite-hawks as "so fearless and bold ... those strangely human-seeming birds, which soar endlessly upon the thermal draughts of northern skies, or gather in their thousands to swoop and dart between the flame-fronts of bushfires." They are symbols of the desire that drives human beings into unfamiliar territory.

Nicolas Rothwell writes movingly in *Wings of the Kite-Hawk* of his journeys retracing paths once travelled by famous explorers. He selects precursors and follows their trails though inland Australia.

His guides consist of a rich mixture of past and present figures. Former explorers include Ludwig Leichhardt, Charles Sturt, Theodor Strehlow and Ernest Giles. They inform the journeys. Nicolas Rothwell examines their diaries for valuable insights. He includes extracts in *Wings of the Kite-Hawk*.

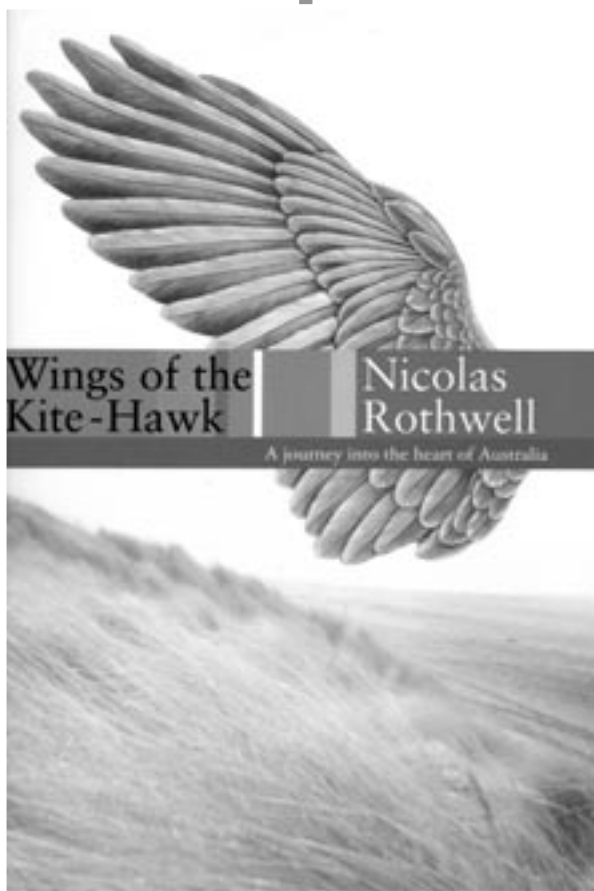
Modern day characters fill the pages of the book too.

They are drawn from a rich tapestry including anthropologists, rodeo riders and artists encountered by the author in his travels. Many delightful conversations are recorded in *Wings of the Kite-Hawk*.

Nicolas Rothwell also reveals personalities, moods and struggles associated with the human interaction with the Australian landscape. Indeed, moods and emotions are as central to *Wings of the Kite-Hawk* as much as characters.

A quest is central to the book's 327 pages. It is "that the landscape can bear the imprint, the resonance of those who have gone through it before, that one can tune in to their feelings and their thoughts... make them come alive".

From this quest, a theme emerges. It is that of European eyes engaging initially with a foreign landscape. The engagement, however, occurs to the point where a feeling of being at home develops. And the formerly European eyes arrive at the threshold of Aboriginal Australia.



The first chapter is set mainly in north and north west Queensland, Cairns, Normanton, Mt. Isa and Chillagoe. This is Ludwig Leichhardt territory. The more Nicolas Rothwell ventures along Leichhardt's path, the more he imagines the explorer's presence beside him, informing him of the explorer's perspectives.

Chapter two takes in Darwin, Carnarvon Gorge, the Far North Kimberley and the Pilbara. This chapter focuses on rock art and associated theories about the Aboriginal world.

Chapter three revolves around Captain Charles Sturt's 1845 expedition, Birdsville and Broken Hill (where Nicolas Rothwell encounters a media throng and the object of their collective attention is Pauline Hanson).

Sturt, who traced the course of the Murray River, set out in 1845 to search for an inland sea. His group hauled a boat along in case they located such a body of water. After five months however, they were forced to abandon the boat.

Charles Sturt emerges through the pages of *Wings of the Kite-Hawk* as a reflective self-questioning man. Nicolas Rothwell writes that Sturt "was a man born for loneliness, for absence from the things he loved; he had the horizon always in his eyes".

According to the author, Charles Sturt was retreating from life and intimacy in searching the desert for a body of inland water. It was as if a wall of glass was suspended between Sturt and society, the author argues.

Chapter four is set mainly in Central Australia, Sydney and Adelaide. This chapter examines the relationship between the landscape and the anthropologist Theodor Strehlow.

The final chapter – chapter five – involves the Western District, Sydney, the Kimberley, Hedland and Marble Bar and the explorer, Ernest Giles.

Nicolas Rothwell writes that, at the close of the book, he would like his readers to have a sense of a tranquil story with a distinct air: a "happy sadness", or humour-laden melancholy.

Mood forms a very important part of *Wings of the Kite-Hawk*.

John McConnell is the author of several senior textbooks

REVIEW OF THE REVIEWERS

Stephen Matchett

This is not an age for heroes. Tabloid print and television create instant celebrities but then devour them, generally within the 15-minute fame-cycle. Whatever an individual's achievements, few citizens are saintly and their failings will sooner or later, generally sooner, make it into the media.

This is both inevitable and necessary. The more information on an individual in the public gaze the better. For every Fred Hollows, devoted to the selfless service of humanity, there is an apparent philanthropist like Ray Williams being heroic with money not his to give away. Sportspeople used to provide a regular rollout of heroes, but the unerring media gaze makes it impossible for on-field courage to blot out private behaviour that is heroic only for its self-indulgence. For every Steve Waugh there is a Shane Warne. And, among community leaders, for every Sir William Deane there is a Peter Hollingworth.

Being a hero in politics is also pretty much impossible, even for people who devote themselves to proclaiming their own martyrdom, just ask Cheryl Kernot. While Australians seem to have lost the mean spirited levelling desire to dislike and drag down anybody who excels, we remain intolerant of self-regard. To be an Australian hero it helps to be humble - the very thing that keeps contemporary heroes off the public radar.

The temper of the times also makes it hard to maintain the standing of heroes from generations past. In the search for historic heroes the past is politicised, not on party lines, but between those who seek to validate their own political views by praising or condemning the conduct of previous generations. A much smaller group wedded to unfashionable ideas of the pursuit of objective truth, is generally ignored or condemned as those who have donned the black armband and their opponents exchange political pot-shots in the guise of historical debate.

Thus, the debate over the numbers of indigenous Australians killed during European occupation of the continent has become a metaphor for contemporary political disputes on the nature of our obligations to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. And the characteristics of Anglo Celt Australia before the age



of mass migration - easily illuminated by their representative heroes - are also contested.

The academic left in particular is anxious to root out praise for anybody who was racist, reactionary, sexist, homophobic or even patriotic according to the orthodoxy that condemns British-Australia for all sorts of political nastiness from 1788. Near a century on, critics still denounce CEW Bean's founding epic of Anzac. While the First AIF was far from the hard riding, sharp shooting, band of bushmen brothers of legend, it did perform the military miracles Bean described - and continuing community pride in its achievements drives opponents of a patriotic Australia, comfortable with its past, absolutely nuts.

For the self-appointed opinion leaders of what Robert Manne calls the "moral middle class" the importance of defining who was a hero in Australian history is as much about setting the contemporary agenda on national values as it is burnishing or banishing historic reputations.

The problem for people who prefer their heroes to have the correct values of the contemporary cultural left is that acceptable candidates are thin on the ground. Remarkably, people in ages past held the values and opinions of their own era rather than ours and their characters and achievements can only be judged accordingly.

What matters most in judging heroism is character and ethics rather than abstract political belief. And while it may annoy the contemporary ideological arbiters, Australia's historic heroes have generally been social conservatives. Politics has produced the genuine item twice in John Curtin and Ben Chifley. Curtin was a self-sacrificing, courageous man who battled demons of alcoholism and depression to become a great war-time leader. Chifley, his successor was as principled as is possible for a politician. Other, less partisan heroes, such as Albert Jacka, A. B. Facey and Sir Edward Dunlop are also admired for their sacrifice and sense of service as much as for their achievements. As Graeme Davison defines it "a traditional characteristic of the Australian hero (is) the willingness to put one's life at risk in defence of one's mates.' (Graeme Davison et al (eds) *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Melbourne, OUP, 1998, 311)

The problem for the contemporary culture shapers in the universities and media is that most traditional heroes are models of values that modish sentiment deplores. They were generally patriots whose achievements are now supposedly manipulated by the ideologues of the right to deny the nation's guilt over the treatment of women, indigenous Australians and migrants.

In their desperate desire to erode the legitimacy of the traditions of Australia before the 1970s that were supposedly racist, sexist and unthinkingly patriotic, writers have gone to extraordinary lengths to rebut the legends of Australian heroism. One notable example is the study of a First AIF battalion by academic Dale Blair, (discussed in *Sydney Institute Quarterly*, October, 2001).

Dr Blair worked very hard to demonstrate that rather than being the egalitarian heroes of popular legend, the unit - and presumably by extension the whole AIF and the nation it came from - was riven by class conflict, and not particularly effective. While Blair's argument was not convincing, it did demonstrate how uncomfortable orthodox opinion leaders are with Australia's history and the idea that past Australians, who may have been racist reactionaries by today's standards, could actually be admirable.

Certainly, the left have trouble-finding heroes from the traditional classes. Military men are obviously out. Apart from a few months in 1942, Australian soldiers have always been mere mercenaries fighting for our imperial masters - not to mention all the masculine aggression they displayed. Conservative political leaders are no good either. As well as being racist, sexist, homophobic and so on, they were generally lackeys of British monarchs or American presidents.

And even sportspeople - unless they died young or were the victims of racism, sexism, homophobia etc are not acceptable - generally too conservative and not supporters of correct causes. So the culturally orthodox have had to look elsewhere for heroes and while they have ample candidates who behaved heroically in the face of racism, sexism and homophobia most of them were desperately dull.

An ABC television series for primary school students demonstrates orthodox opinion on who qualifies as a hero (@ www.abc.net.au/btn.austs.htm). There are no soldiers, except for Sir Edward Dunlop who qualifies as a medical rather than fighting man. The list includes seven indigenous Australians, including the memoirist Sally Morgan. Barry Humphries is included, presumably for the heroism of his humour. So is Henry Lawson, probably for his writing than for his heroic drinking. While Dawn Fraser and Evonne Goolagong Cawley both got guernseys, Don Bradman did not.

Whatever their achievements, none of the ABC's selection of appropriate heroes for young Australians made a Lincoln-like contribution to the nation. And when the left turns to politics in search of heroes they come up with less than admirable figures who were variously mad - as in the case of H V Evatt, bad, at least in choice of friends - such as Lionel Murphy - or sad, such as the monstrously self-absorbed Jim Cairns.

Three recent and very different biographical studies of heroes demonstrate how hard it is for the enforcers of the orthodoxy to find historical heroes when most Australians prior to the election of the Whitlam Government fail the test of what heroes should believe.

Ross McMullin's *Pompey Elliott* (Carlton, Scribe Publications, 2002) is a conventional, military biography, in direct descent from CEW Bean. Brett Hutchins' *Don Bradman: Challenging the Myth* (Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2002) is not a biography at all but an analysis of how politicians and the media turned the batsman into a hero. And in an extraordinary example of how desperate some academics are for politically acceptable heroes, Tim Rowse has produced a policy biography, *Nugget Coombs: A Reforming Life* (Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2002) in the improbable genre of heroic public servants.

The three books demonstrate a great deal of difference on the characteristics of heroism. While McMullin focuses on his subject as an individual and judges him on his achievements according to the temper of his times, Rowse views Coombs through the ideological prism of the 1970s. Hutchins goes even further to examine the reasons why Bradman became a hero despite unheroic qualities that the author appears to dislike.

What Hutchins or Rowse would have done with Harold Elliott does not bear thinking about. Elliott's career offers little that righteous enemies of racist, sexist, nationalist Australia can admire. And as a straight narrative biography that states what can be documented and gives no guide to whether McMullin properly deplores the racism, sexism, etc in Australia's past, the book fails the criteria of politically engaged scholarship. The cultural studies crowd will dismiss it for its subject matter: there are no indigenous Australians or migrants, no detail on the oppression of women, nor any discussion of the sexual ambiguity in the Australian legend.

Fashionable historians will dislike McMullin's obsessive archival research. McMullin assiduously declines to judge Elliott by anything other than the standards of his age and never, ever, speculates on his character's motivations beyond what the evidence permits. But for readers interested in military history, and more broadly the society that shaped the first AIF, the book is close to a masterpiece of traditional biography, specific in scope and monumental in structure.

There cannot be anything in the written record about Elliott that McMullin has not read and assessed for this magisterial work. This is a book that journeyed where the evidence directed and paid no attention to recent writing on Australia in First World War which

dismisses the performance of the AIF as nothing special and sees the Western Front as a microcosm of the racism, sexism and class oppression which made Australia in the early twentieth century such a dreadful place. It will certainly not please historians such as Helen Irving who recently wrote that, "we are witnessing a cultural process, an echo of the 1950s, which invites us to understand Australian history primarily by reference to war." (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 May 2003).

But for lay readers of military history who read and delighted in Les Carlyon's recent book on Gallipoli, in their hundreds and thousands, McMullin's book provides a great deal - at 700 odd pages, a great, great deal - to delight in.

The bare bones of Harold "Pompey" Elliott's career do not suggest a particularly attractive subject for a biography. He was bombastic and self-absorbed, a reactionary who built a successful career in the law and politics based on his military service. But in McMullin's more than capable hands, this cloak of convention is lifted and Elliott's career and character reveal much about the Australians who fought in the First World War.

McMullin's comprehensive analysis of Elliott's command performance explains a great deal about the reasons why Australian citizen soldiers made such good infantry. For those who dislike the idea of a national character, especially one that relates to martial virtues, this is a book to avoid. McMullin does not make a triumphalist argument for the performance of the First AIF as exemplified by Elliott's 15th Brigade. But his chronicle of the performance of Australian troops on the Western Front makes it quite clear, that ANZAC is no legend and that CEW Bean's foundation writings in the official histories were essentially correct.

Australian troops on the Western Front punched above their weight and produced some of the great military achievements of the war. Their capacity to endure appalling losses and to maintain discipline when continuing combat could only mean senseless deaths was extraordinary. Their initiative and tactical mastery of trench warfare made them unmatched assault soldiers whose performance humiliated the too-often badly led British. Their success in no small part was due to a sense of equality among citizen soldiers and an understanding that men of merit should rise from the ranks.

These are achievements encapsulated in the idea of mateship, familiar to Australian patriots, but what makes McMullin's study of Elliott's command interesting is the way it extends the tradition of AIF heroism. Elliott was a brilliant brigade commander because he worked very hard and made sure that his men were properly equipped, well fed and trained in

the skills needed for every task they undertook. McMullin has painted the portrait of an Australian hero, but one completely removed from the comic-strip image of the AIF as a band of larrikin brothers, natural fighters who needed no training and accepted no discipline.

Elliott prospered as a combat leader because the vast majority of the men he led understood that to have any hope of staying alive they needed to work hard, always learn new tactics and techniques and to obey the orders of officers they trusted. And they trusted Elliott because he led from the front, had no sense of class-based superiority and most important, because he demonstrably knew what he was doing. In this sense, he was Monash writ small.

The famous Australian attacks on the Western Front in August 1918 had as much to do with brilliant staff work and deep thinking on how to win ground and save lives as AIF élan. Without overemphasising idealised mateship, McMullin demonstrates that the success of the Australians was due to discipline and planning born of a culture which respected results rather than social rank. Elliott led from the front and always saved lives by planning his operations carefully. And while a martinet by instinct, he was also an Australian and knew that he could impose his will only if he had the respect of his soldiers. For a man with an intemperate manner and overbearing demeanour, Elliott was an extraordinarily capable leader, loved long after the war by thousands of men who had seen their mates killed on his orders.

Elliott's experience of the First World War matched that of the whole AIF, the Light Horse in the Middle East excepted. He served at Gallipoli and fought on the Western Front from 1916 to the end of the war. He was never badly wounded but he saw his brigade shattered and held himself together only through self-discipline and courage. As portrayed by McMullin, Elliott was a model brigade commander and an Australian hero, egalitarian, innovative, loyal and intensely patriotic. But in the ways of real heroes, he was also an enormously complex man. And while

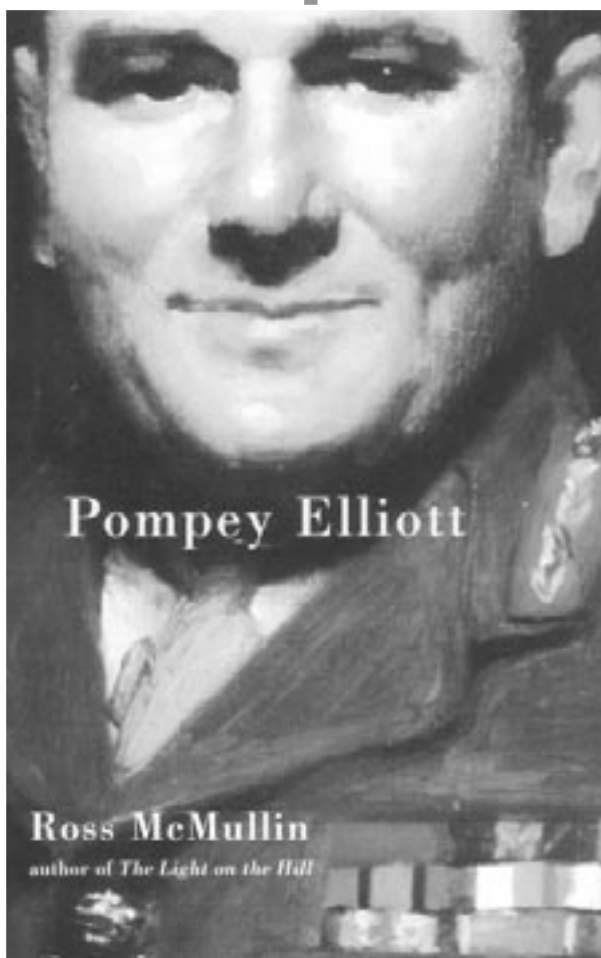
McMullin assiduously avoids judging his subject, he makes it clear that Elliott was not necessarily a very nice one.

Elliott was born to poverty, to a family that became rich when they literally struck gold. But even with an overnight transformation in his circumstances he retained a fervent belief in personal improvement through work. He studied law but wanted above all to be a soldier and served with distinction as a volunteer in the Boer War. When he came home, he built a legal career but was passionate about his work as a militia officer. The First World War gave him his chance and he led a battalion through the Gallipoli campaign where he exhibited the courage and tactical skills that made him such a success on the Western Front. He was the very model of the man that enemies of the ANZAC ideal have traduced in recent years – conservative, taciturn, overtly ambitious, driven by a rigid code of honour and intensely masculine.

And yet, Elliott was a man of enormous emotional complexity. His desperate desire to do his best for the men he commanded made him a hard man to manage and while his willingness to confront his superiors and challenge orders undoubtedly saved

hundreds, perhaps thousands, of lives during the war it also made him a spectacularly bad military politician. The result was that he was overlooked for honours and especially the promotion he believed he merited. Certainly, his habit of fighting with his superiors cost him command of an AIF division in 1918.

Elliott harboured a deep need to have his achievements acknowledged and his response to slights, real or imagined ultimately killed him. Despite a long career as a popular Nationalist senator for Victoria, he never got over missing a senior command. The hurt became an obsession that led to his otherwise causeless suicide in 1931. But Elliott was not always the saintly hero. He was ruthless in his judgement of others and spared no feelings, he played his share of political tricks in post-war public life and always assumed that his interests and



attitudes were synonymous with what was right. His war-time heroism, physical, moral and psychological, his undoubted ability to inspire respect, even love, among his men does not disguise his black hearted reaction and his obsession with protecting his reputation which made him an embarrassment to his military peers after the war.

For all his faults, Elliott was a hero, but one for his own time and not for ours and the fact that the media all but ignored McMullin's superb scholarly effort demonstrates how out of fashion are the values Pompey represented – at least among opinion leaders. This also accounts for the better reception of Brett Hutchins academic debunking of the Bradman legend. Like the academics desperate to prove that CEW Bean's reading of the Anzac achievement propped up a reactionary reading of Australian history and the national character, Hutchins purports to prove that Bradman was and continues a manufactured hero.

Don Bradman: Challenging the Myth is an unremarkable book, clumsily written, with the feel of a cultural studies masters thesis. Hutchins demonstrates so little confidence in his ability to tell the tale that he continually states what he will explain next and why it is important. Hutchins does not seek to demolish Bradman's record by analysing him as either a man or a player in any direct sense. The subject of this book is really the bunch of hacks that have written about Bradman rather than the Don himself.

Hutchins finds the usual things to complain about. Bradman played in a time when Australia was enthralled by masculine virtues and his memory still appeals to conservatives such as the Prime Minister. Hutchins avoids the standard denunciations of the racism, sexism, homophobia, etc of Australian society past and present. But he makes it pretty plain that people who admire Bradman privilege a conservative reading of Australian history and make the Don an all-Australian hero when in reality he only represents reactionary white men.

Hutchins claims that he has no wish to diminish Bradman's memory and that he is interested in the meaning of the myth rather than attacking the man. However, accomplishing the former involves a fair bit of the latter and while Hutchins makes a case for his argument that Bradman was a manufactured hero, he does it by demonstrating that he lacked the supposed characteristics that the hegemonic Anglo-Australian culture admired.

Instead of being a good bloke, fond of a drink, loyal to his mates, cynical about success and disrespectful of authority, Bradman was ambitious, abstemious and aloof. He was a great batsman but not much of a leader or even team player. The contradiction that Hutchins points to – that Bradman was admired for

epitomising characteristics that he never had – also betrays his overall thesis. Hutchins assumes that the sorts of Australians, past and present, who admire Bradman are reactionary fools tricked by a media conspiracy who see him as a bulwark against social change. They attribute to Bradman all sorts of virtues - in Hutchins' hands, they read like faults - that he did not possess.

Yet, Hutchins does not consider in any depth the obvious fact that Bradman is essentially admired as a batsman rather than a bloke and while fandom has attributed all sorts of merit to other aspects of his life, most people who care about cricket remember him just for his extraordinary 99.94 test batting average. Hutchins does not consider that ordinary Australians are capable of distinguishing between the man's cricketing skill and his life and admiring while withholding judgement on the other. But this sort of idea has no place in the reactive world of cultural studies where ordinary people are mere dupes for the manufactured ideas imposed on them by the media.

That Bradman was not a hero in the way of Elliott is clear from Hutchins' analysis. The Don's career demonstrated no willingness to make personal sacrifices for others or to risk all for a cause that offered no hope of gain. But Hutchins misses the point about why he was admired. Like Elliott who was a successful soldier, because he worked hard and was always innovating, Bradman is remembered for his self-discipline and his commitment to his craft. The careers and personalities of both men demonstrate a traditional Australian characteristic that is too often overlooked – a dislike for the conventional and an understanding that careers, and nations stagnate when innovation is abandoned.

Much academic commentary on the history, politics and culture of Australia since the Labor government began the long task of reform in the early 1980s opposed structural economic reform because it eroded the standing of the three pillars of the cultural left's world-view - the public service, the ABC and the universities. Given this, past Australians who succeeded by challenging the orthodoxy and working harder than the norm can hardly be treated as heroes.

So with innovating soldiers and sportsmen ruled out as appropriate historical heroes, it took a scholar as original as Tim Rowse, in *Nugget Coombs: A Reforming Life*, to find a new type of Australian to admire in his study of Coombs. Like Hutchins, Rowse presents his subject according to a contemporary world-view. But where Hutchins sees Bradman and all those who admire him as creatures in thrall to the morals of a barbarous time, Rowse portrays his subject as a hero for all those right-thinking Australians who share his apparent distaste

for a nation that no longer embraces the orthodoxy of big government where public service mandarins set the political agenda.

And it seems as if Rowse has tapped a fertile vein of left thinking in praise of public servants. Peter Botsman (*The Australian*, 15 May) laments that we live in a “public service dark age” that ignores the tales of “heroic civil servants building dams, national highways, welfare states or justice for all”. This is the very task that Rowse undertakes in his study of Coombs – a public servant who epitomised everything the left aspires to – a bureaucrat with a wide intellectual scope and an unswerving belief that government knows best. It is a belief that Rowse clearly shares in a book where a strong polemical element coexists with a study of Coombs’ life and evolving thought.

Throughout the book, Rowse portrays Coombs as man for the ages who believed in all the proper political ideas. Thus, Coombs was an environmentalist and a feminist who for all his economic expertise believed that the solution to social problems was for people to meet his expectations. At the end of his life, he responded to the first wave of the green movement of the 1970s by suggesting that people should live simpler lives.

But Rowse has a far broader objective for his subject. The book is designed to demonstrate that there is an alternative economic model to the deregulation of the 1980s, (Rowse goes out of his way to attack the historian of reform, Paul Kelly) and Coombs was its prophet.

Rowse sees him as pointing the direction Australia should have taken to build a just economy.

Coombs believed in the power of big government to regulate the economy, to keep profits reasonable and liked the idea of government competing against business. He accepted government deficits to fund “essential” nation-building projects, an ancient phrase now fashionable again as a euphemism for public sector spending. Certainly Coombs appears to have preferred an orderly world where bureaucrats made the policy running and is presented as a sage

who believed that full employment was the grail for government and that free trade and wages policy were mere means to achieve it. For a man who lived through the Great Depression, albeit quarantined from its effects by secure employment, this obsession with jobs is unsurprising. But Rowse appears in sympathy with Coombs’ thinking, with its emphasis on state intervention and regulation as an alternative to the market-focused road Australia has taken.

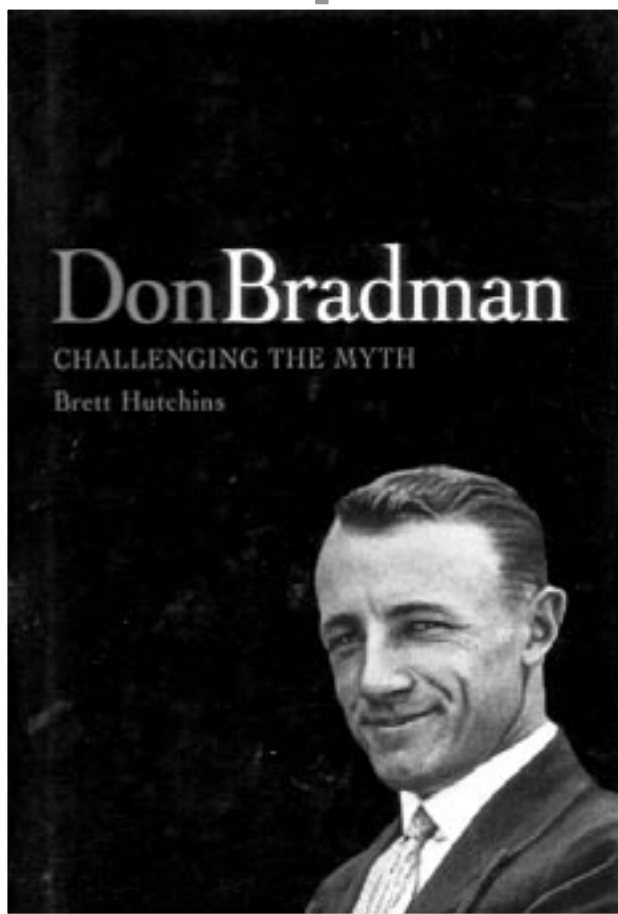
Above all, Rowse admires Coombs because he provides a heroic model of the public servant as policy maker. In a world where state intervention in the market economy is no longer a practical political option Rowse turns to Coombs to explain how things could have been so much better if only Australia had followed the lead of public servant heroes like him.

Coombs is a hero from the academics golden age where Prime Minister Whitlam strode the policy landscape like a colossus and scholar-mandarins who knew what was best for us all made policy.

The problem in painting Coombs as a hero is that Rowse has exclusively focused on his policy thinking and work as an administrator and it takes more than a career devoted to the accumulation of power, as was Coombs’ to make a hero. Rowse admittedly makes it plain from the start that this is a study of Coombs’ working life, but even in a study of the public man and his policy thinking there is a need to know what he thought and how he felt in his private life – which Rowse either does not know or declines to reveal.

The problem is demonstrated best by a line (page 182) where Rowse states how Coombs was “astonished” by his wife’s “fortitude” in enduring sex but that this “did not always bind him to fidelity”. This single veiled reference is simply not enough in a biography – even an intellectual and administrative one.

Nor does Rowse ever present the struggles for power in Coombs’ career, which is presented as an effortless ascent to the top, disturbed only by policy battles where he was always on the side of sense and decency. Rowse might consider Coombs a



bureaucratic saint but it is a fair bet that there were politicians and public servants along the way who fought him hard and to understand the man we need to know how he dealt with his opponents.

The fact that Rowse can render readable the life and thought of a bloke who faced no greater danger than a runaway tea trolley and spent his entire working life advocating variations on the command economy is something of an achievement. But the case for Coombs as a thinker whose work is in any way relevant today is not proven. If Rowse's book is read at all in a decade it will be for the insight it provides into how, 30 years on, the intelligentsia still clung to the distant memory of public service power to do good and academic authority in the golden age of Whitlamism as for its treatment of this forgotten mandarin.

Perhaps the book's daunting length put the reviewers off but pieces on war hero Elliott's biography were sparse. Despite being labelled a review, Tony Stephens (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 2002) did not bother to discuss Elliott's biography at all in a musing on military history in Australian memory. Peter Ryan (*The Australian*, 1 June 2002) got the year Elliott died wrong and paid as little attention to the book as Stephens. His judgement, that the book was too long, badly written and not sufficiently focused on its subject contradicted his conclusion that, "Australians who do not read this book are short-changing themselves". Ross McMullin deserved better – perhaps next time he will write about a more fashionable hero.

The reviews of Hutchins' book were far more frequent and respectful. Nick Richards (*Herald Sun*, 28 September 2002) called it "a valuable and intelligent contribution" to Bradman studies. John Harns (*The Sunday Age*, 26 January 2003) used the book to contrast the idealisation of Bradman with the insufficiently regarded Aboriginal fast bowler Eddie Gilbert who once took the Don's wicket for a duck and was denied the career his talent merited because of his race. The

way the two are remembered, "might help us understand who we really are", Harms wrote, endorsing Hutchins' point that the veneration of Bradman is motivated by the politics of race and reaction.

The Age (5 October 2002) made much the same point with the only criticism offered – that the book "is very much an academic exercise". This may be a polite way of stating that the book is desperately dull. Graeme Blundell (*The Australian*, 8 March 2003) went further and contrasted Hutchins' "cultural incision" with "his writer's tin ear".

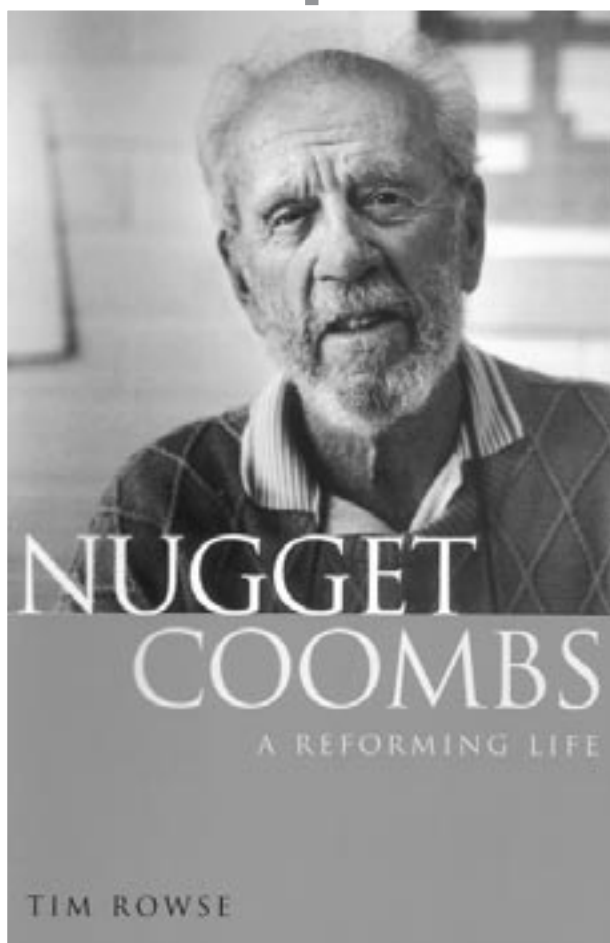
But while Blundell may not have enjoyed reading the book, he agreed with Hutchins' argument that Bradman was an icon for reactionaries and a handy symbol for a government, "seeking to manipulate

national forms of identity and solidify a forceful image of The Other (no Afghan cricketers in our team)". According to Blundell, the Don is "Howardman". It was left to Wendy Frew (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 October 2002) to note the contradiction in Hutchins' argument, that Bradman remains a hero despite never conforming to the traditional values of Australian men. But instead of the obvious conclusion that Bradman is admired as a sportsman and nothing more, she suggested that a nation of blokes forgave the Don for not being blokey.

That Rowse received far harsher treatment was a problem of his own making for the reviewers could hardly ignore the fact that this administrative biography is not riveting reading. Scott Tucker

(*Newcastle Herald*, 31 August 2002) was alone in offering unqualified praise, suggesting the book was "a fitting tribute" to a life that demonstrated "the adaptability of twentieth century liberalism".

Peter Coleman, (*The Australian*, 27 July 2002) was less impressed by either Coombs or the book. He suggested that Rowse might have gone soft on Coombs's affection for command economies and that



the book certainly did not present anywhere near enough information on its subject: "Rowse is obviously restrained by a sense of delicacy and an undertaking to respect Coombs' privacy. But one hopes that one day he may see his way to breaking some of his silences and telling more of this moving if sometimes chilly story."

Rodney Cavalier (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 August 2002) went in much harder and argued that anybody interested in Coombs' life should not bother with the book. He suggested that the structure did not suit a biography and did not address the social context of Coombs' work. "Much is touched on, much revisited, but the possible grandness of any theme is lost in the organization". Or as Rick Rutjens put it (*Journal of Australian Studies* "Review of Books", December 2002 @ www.api-network.com): "it is a dry account of Coombs' work and policies, an academic take on the history of a remarkable Australian. In creating a textbook on Coombs' life, Rowse has perhaps achieved what he set out to do, but it surely could have been so much more."

By traditional tests, the wartime Elliott was the only hero of the three - brave, self-effacing and self-sacrificing, an instinctive patriot, who served his country without question. Apart from the darkness in his soul that ultimately destroyed him, he was the very model of the British-Australian that the contemporary left despises. But, like the first AIF he served with, and the nation it sprang from, Elliott was a great deal more complex than modish scholars who dismiss Australia in the first half of the twentieth century will allow.

Elliott was not just a brave field commander; he was a military innovator whose achievements demonstrate that the great Australian achievement on the Western Front was far more than courage but based on a constant desire to reduce casualties by developing better techniques. The Australians were not so much better than the British because they were any the braver. It was because they thought more about the job of soldiering. In this sense Elliott is a precursor of the social and economic reformers of the past two decades. And just as economic reform is now out of fashion so it is unsurprising that McMullin's book was largely ignored.

In contrast, the self-interested Bradman who turned his natural ability into a business was an admirable sportsman but he was no hero intent on improving the game of cricket for all. Nor was Coombs much of a hero. Even in Rowse's sympathetic portrayal, he appears the universal bureaucrat, focused on accreting power and loyal above all else to his own career, convinced that his ideas of how things should be done - remarkably, emphasised the power of the bureaucrat - were the correct ones.

As heroics go, Coombs was not up for much but, in his values and career path, he set the path that orthodox opinion still follows. In a nation that still admires Bradman and turns out each Anzac Day to honour the achievement of Pompey Elliott's comrades, creating a national legend based on the achievements of a politically orthodox bureaucrat will be slow going.

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DESPATCHES ON THE GG

The affair of the resignation of Peter Hollingworth as Australia's twenty-third Governor-General made media outlets around the world. In Australia, the issue got blanket coverage in the media - as Stephen Matchett discovered.

If Peter Hollingworth thought he could survive as a governor-general following the Anglican inquiry into his handling of cases of child sex abuse while Archbishop of Brisbane he would have been hoping that the nation's leader writers were utterly out of touch with public opinion.

From the tabling of the report in the Queensland Parliament at the beginning of May, until his resignation at month's end, right round the country the editorials were uniformly adamant that he had to go.

The conclusion of the church inquiry, that while Archbishop Hollingworth had not acted with sufficient force against a pedophile priest, was enough to create a chorus calling for his departure. "He should add to the lustre and dignity of his office by leaving it," urged *The Advertiser* (2 May). And do it "quickly and quietly", according to *The Mercury* (3 May). Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* (3 May) agreed, "(his) actions were morally wrong and exceed the behaviour expected of a head of state".

The Sydney Morning Herald said he should have gone last year, when evidence of his being soft on errant clergy first appeared, but there was no case for him staying any longer:

Dr Hollingworth's expression of regret, no matter how often repeated, will not end the widespread criticism of his moral fitness to occupy his present position. Sometimes words are not enough. This is one of them. (3 May)

The Australian (3 May) presented the same argument: “when it comes to errors of judgement in dealing with sex abuse cases, the Governor-General has form”. It was for Hollingworth alone to decide the timing of his departure, “but go he must”. *The Australian Financial Review* (6 May) was more forgiving, suggesting that Hollingworth’s mistaken behaviour dated from 1993, when “issues of child sexual abuse were less clearly defined”. It was an unlikely argument for the *AFR* to offer; the nation’s distaste for pedophiles would have been as deep then as it is now. But the paper still thought he should go.

But Hollingworth dug in – which put the pressure on the Prime Minister. By the end of the next week the *Herald Sun* (8 May) thought it was clear that if Mr Howard did not know of the problems in Hollingworth’s past when he appointed the Governor-General there was no need to back him in office:

In any job, if something adverse about an employee’s past comes to light after an appointment, an employer has the right to decide if he or she should be sacked.

The Courier Mail (8 May) presented a similar but far more substantive argument that whether or not the Governor-General had done anything to merit dismissal while in office did not matter as much as the fact that more accusations from his days of archbishop would continue to emerge: “The longer he remains the more damage will be done to the office of Governor-General and to his reputation.”

It all got much worse very quickly. The next day news of a civil action alleging that Hollingworth had raped Rosemarie Jarmyn, now deceased, 40 odd years before, became public. But while the leader writers still wanted him to go they now thought he should delay until the charges were dealt with. *The Sydney Morning Herald* (10 May) said that Hollingworth was entitled to a presumption of innocence (even though the matter was being pursued through a civil court) on the sexual assault claim but that this had nothing to do with the “Queensland matter” - which was reason enough for him to resign.

The Australian (10 May) also believed that he deserved to benefit from a presumption of innocence but added that once that matter was dealt with his errors of judgement as archbishop meant he had to go. *The Age* (10 May) offered the toughest judgement suggesting that he should already be long gone; last year’s TV interview when he suggested that a minor had initiated a sexual relationship with a clergyman, let alone the Anglican inquiry, providing ample reason. And even with the assault claims public there was still no reason for him to stay.

But the Governor-General was not listening and he delayed the inevitable the following Sunday by

standing aside until the Jarmyn matter was dealt with. This did not sway the next day’s *Sydney Morning Herald* (12 May): “The time for departure may have been justifiably delayed but the fate of the Governor-General is already clear.” *The Australian* was more blunt – suggesting that, as it appeared Hollingworth had now finally lost the confidence of the Prime Minister, “his last buttress”, he should go as soon as the sex assault charges were resolved.

The *AFR* (13 May) suggested that the welfare of his office required him to go but was worried that to leave before the allegations were resolved would be an unwelcome precedent - “If he stands aside in the wake of the rape allegation becoming public many people will confuse the two issues, which would be dangerous for all holders of high public office.”

The Advertiser (12 May) thought Hollingworth was right to stand down until if and when he was cleared of the rape charge, but added that “in order to return and reside untroubled at Yarralumla” he also needed to be cleared of the charges in the church report. Given that the report’s judgement was based in part on Hollingworth’s response to allegations levelled against him, there was nil chance of this happening, something blindingly obvious to all but the paper’s leader writer.

The Courier Mail (13 May) was less charitable, arguing that the Governor-General’s decision to step aside until the rape charge was dealt with was, “a face saving device that has no merit”. The voice of Brisbane added that as the Prime Minister had known about the Jarmyn claims for nearly six months, if he believed they had merit he would have already asked the Governor-General to stand down. Nor was the Prime Minister blameless. The reason he had to go was his behaviour while head of Brisbane’s Anglican diocese: “Dr Hollingworth was guilty of at least one serious error of judgement when he was archbishop and arguably of many, and had Mr Howard inquired and become aware of them he would never have appointed Dr Hollingworth as Governor-General.”

The Age (13 May) extended the blame to include the Prime Minister for not removing Hollingworth late last year, when he learned of the rape allegations, nearly six months before the rest of us:

If Mr Howard had last year either urged the Governor-General to resign or advised the Queen to dismiss him, the harm that has now been done would not have occurred, and Dr Hollingworth might not have asked the court to suppress his identity. That he should have done so at all sits uneasily with democratic expectations that court proceedings should normally be open to public scrutiny; that the Prime Minister

AUSTRALIA'S TAXATION COMMISSIONER

MICHAEL CARMODY

TO ADDRESS

THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

SPEAKER: MICHAEL CARMODY
(Commissioner of Taxation,
Australian Taxation Office)

DATE: Monday 18 August 2003

TIME: 5.30 for 6.00 pm

VENUE: Clayton Utz Seminar Room,
Level 25, 1 O'Connell Street, Sydney

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chose not to inform the Opposition about the case only made matters worse.

By the time the Jarmyn allegations were withdrawn the leader writers were out of patience. *The Sydney Morning Herald* (24 May) said Hollingworth had diminished his office by remaining and he should "end the farce". *The Herald Sun* (24 May) agreed that it was time for him to go, 'there is no legitimate reason Dr Hollingworth should remain our Governor-General. And there are no more excuses'. As did *The Australian* (24 May), "he does not enjoy the confidence of the great majority of the Australian people and has no moral claim to the post he holds". *The Age* and *Courier Mail* (both 24 May) were tougher still, demanding that the Prime Minister tell him to go if he did not leave quickly.

And when Dr Hollingworth did announce his departure there was some sympathy for his plight but general relief that it was all over. *The Advertiser* (26 May) called it, "the only possible step" and *The Mercury* (26 May) said it was, "the right decision, finally". *The Australian* (26 May) stated what had always been implicit in the demands for his head. The Governor-General's problems were entirely of his own making and demonstrated a lack of sheer lack of political nous which the nation can not afford: "In rare circumstances, the Governor-General's judgement may become decisive, as all those of us who remember November 1975, can testify."

The Courier Mail (26 May) said Dr Hollingworth should have gone a year before with evidence of his handling of sex abuse allegations against church officers. Fittingly, as the paper that had tracked Dr Hollingworth's failings to rid Brisbane's Anglican Church of child abusers, *The Courier Mail* made the point that most needed to be made:

If something positive can be drawn from this episode, it is that no one can be in any doubt that most Australians feel those in authority ought to be vigilant and thorough when it comes to investigating cases of sexual abuse of children, and the perpetrators should not be allowed to get away with what they have done.

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GERARD HENDERSON'S **MEDIA WATCH**

OH, WHAT A LUVVIES' WAR

On 2 August 1990, Iraq's military forces - on the order of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein - invaded Kuwait. On 8 August 1990 Saddam announced that Iraq had annexed Kuwait. In response to this act of aggression, President George H. Bush despatched United States forces to the Gulf. The United Nations issued an ultimatum that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait by 15 January 1991. Saddam failed to abide by this mandatory UN declaration and a United Nations force - led by the United States - undertook a military action designed to force Iraq out of Kuwait. On 15 January 1991 a bombing campaign commenced - followed by a ground attack on 24 February 1991. Saddam surrendered on 28 February 1991. As a condition of the surrender, Iraq agreed to disarm its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Following a decision of the Hawke Labor government, Australia committed a naval force in support of the UN endorsed military action.

In the lead-up to, and during, the First Gulf War many a leftist Luvvie - in Australia and elsewhere - opposed the UN endorsed military action to drive Saddam's army out of Kuwait. Some commentators predicted heavy allied losses in the field, perhaps even military defeat. Others were prepared to allow Iraq to prevail over Kuwait, permanently.

A few examples illustrate the point. The late Manning Clark declared that both the US and Iraq were "fanatical" - overlooking the fact that it was Iraq, not the United States, which invaded Kuwait (7.30 Report, 16 August 1990). Later Professor Clark disputed the view that the US led force could win the war by "fire power....in seven days" (ABC Radio AM, 11 January 1991). In fact the ground war lasted just four days. Journalist Mike Carlton predicted that members of the Australian Defence Force would return from the Gulf in "body bags" and drew comparisons with "Anzac Cove and Lone Pine" (Radio 2GB, 14 August 1990). The Australian Imperial Force lost some 8,000 dead in the Dardanelles in 1915. There were no ADF casualties in the First Gulf War. Academic Andrew Vincent argued that "Iraq has a case" in invading Kuwait (Melbourne Sunday Herald 5 August 1990). This view was not shared by Kuwaitis.

An analysis of the debate in Australia over the First Gulf War is contained in "The Australian Media and the Gulf Crisis" (*Media Watch*, November-December, 1990) and "Why the ABC Needs an Independent Arbitrator" (*Media Watch*, April-May, 1991).

Soon after the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, George W. Bush commenced to put pressure on Iraq to comply with the surrender terms of the First Gulf War. The US, along with Britain, commenced a military build up in the Gulf in late 2002. In November 2002 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1441 - this was, in fact, the seventeenth mandatory UN resolution requiring Iraq to demonstrate that it had abandoned its WMD program. Saddam continued to defy the terms of Iraq's 1991 surrender agreement. The United Nations Security Council could not agree on a unified response to Saddam's defiance. On 19 March the Coalition of the Willing led by the United States - along with Britain, Australia and Poland - commenced military operations against Iraq when the US launched a capitulation strike aimed at Saddam's leadership. Saddam's dictatorship in Baghdad fell on 9 April 2003 - an event symbolised by the destruction of the massive Saddam statue in Baghdad central.

As in 1990-1991, in the lead-up to the Second Gulf War many a leftist Luvvie opposed military action against Iraq - and quite a few predicted military failure with heavy Coalition casualties. The Luvvies - in Australia and elsewhere - proclaimed a message of peace. However, an unintended consequence of the Luvvies' stance, was to give comfort to the murderous dictator in Baghdad - as members of Saddam's regime themselves acknowledged. On 18 February 2003, Iraqi vice president Taha Yassin Ramadan was reported to have said: "The demonstrations and marches that are sweeping the world are a bright picture that clearly reflects the opposition by the people of the world to America's policies of arrogance and aggression."

The strategy adopted by George W. Bush, Tony Blair, John Howard - and their advisers - contained an element of risk. Denied access to Iraq though Turkey, the Coalition of the Willing had to establish a lengthy supply trail - all the way from the Kuwait

border to Baghdad. It did so with some 200,000 troops – significantly fewer than the 500,000 strong force which drove Iraq out of Kuwait a decade previously. Moreover, it was always obvious that a difficult post-war situation would prevail after a military victory – as the Coalition attempted to create a civil society out of the wreck which was Iraq following three decades of Saddam’s dictatorship.

It is uncertain just how long Coalition forces will remain in Iraq. What is clear is that Saddam’s dictatorship is no more. What’s more, a lesson has been sent to other rogue nations which refuse to abide by their international responsibilities with respect to WMDs.

Now it’s time to look back on the Luvvies War Down Under – of recent memory – in the lead-up to the Coalition of the Willing’s dismantling of the Saddam regime. Remembering that, if the Luvvies had had their way, the Coalition of the Willing would not have invaded Iraq and, consequently, Saddam’s regime would still be murdering, torturing and incarcerating Iraqi men, women and children – as well as defying UN resolutions. This may not have been the Luvvies’ intention – but it would have been the (unintended) consequence of their advocacy.

January 2003 - in which summer holidays came to an end and, once again, the Luvvies’ voice could be heard in the land.

- **10 January.** On ABC Radio (where else?) in Sydney Keith Suter advises presenter Carol Duncan that the Second Gulf War would be “partly...a war to meet television commitments”. Dr Suter (a professional fellow at the Futures Foundation) then proceeds to go dirty dancing with moral equivalence – maintaining that Saddam is a “politician” and posing the question: “Why expect him to tell the truth?” In fact, Saddam was never a politician – they’re elected by a democratic process – but rather a murderous dictator who killed more Arabs and Muslims than any leader, elected or unelected, in recent memory. In any event, Ms Duncan seems pleased with the Suter hyperbole.

- **23 January.** Baptist preacher, the Reverend Tim Costello, prophecises that the Howard government’s decision to send troops to Iraq could backfire and turn into a “political graveyard” for the Coalition (*The Australian*, 24 January 2003). Oh, yeah.

- **24 January.** Actor Colin Friels declares that United States policy in the Gulf is all about oil and that John Howard has supported George W. Bush’s stance in the Second Gulf War because Australia is scared of the US. Spoke the thespian: “America has just said: ‘Fuck diplomacy, let’s just do what we want’

and they are supported by Australia because John Howard, a weak blind man, is terrified of the threat of America” (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 January 2003). An actor in need of a script writer, if ever there was one.

- **26 January.** Writing in *The Sunday Age*, actor Kerry Armstrong pronounces that “in war things happen – things that are worse than death”. She doesn’t say what. Ms Armstrong states her intention to “stand up and say NO”. She concludes her epistle declaring: “On the other side of the world families sleep. Their children sleep as our soldiers move towards them. I want to run ahead and warn them we’re coming. In the silence, I can hear them: ‘Save us, there is still time’.” In the event, Kerry Armstrong did not head to Iraq. Moreover, there is no evidence that she stood up and said anything when Saddam was gassing Kurdish children at Halabja in March 1988.

- **29 January.** Melbourne based Uniting Church minister, Rev. Alister Macrae, pontificates that any Australian involvement in the Coalition of the Willing would be against God’s laws: “Such nationalism is essentially idolatry and must be repudiated in the name of God”. (*The Age*, 30 January 2003). He fails to cite a biblical source for this theological condemnation.

- **30 January.** In an article in *The Age*, Labor MP Carmen Lawrence predicts that a US led attack on Iraq could amount to the “hideous total” of around 480,000 dead. This potential toll does not include the estimated “death and misery” that would come about from “an attack on Iraq” by the “use of nuclear weapons that the US is said to be planning”. Dr Lawrence does not provide any evidence that the US is planning a nuclear attack on Iraq.

- **30 January.** Leading Luvvie Michael Leunig has an illustration in *The Age*. A smug George W. Bush says to John Howard: “...So we disembowel the children, decapitate the mums and dads, dismember the old folks and then we disarm Saddam...”. A laughing John Howard responds: “George; that’s delightful”. In other words, according to Leunig, the US president and the Australian prime minister are war criminals. This is the very same Leunig who argued (*The Age*, 24 December 2001) that we should “find a place in our hearts for the humanity of Osama bin Laden”. An unpleasant double standard to be sure.

- **31 January.** In her *Herald-Sun* column, Jill Singer opines: “Not only is the US not disarming, it’s building new weapons, including the new nuclear bunker buster it’s planning to use against Iraq”. Another false prophesy.

February 2003 – a month in which Australian expatriate John Pilger set the tone. Writing in London's *Mirror* at the beginning of the month, the long-time leftist described the Bush administration as "totalitarian" and declared that "the current American elite is the Third Reich of our times". In other words, George W. Bush today equals Adolf Hitler of yesterday – according to this particular Pilgerism.

- **6 February.** In his *Age* column Kenneth Davidson bags George W. Bush as a "malevolent fool who is going to create unnecessary misery for the whole world".

- **7 February.** Luvvies rejoice as Geoff Kitney (the *Sydney Morning Herald's* man in Canberra) maintains that John Howard – by committing Australia to the Coalition of the Willing – "has plunged the Australia-US alliance into a crisis of community confidence and put his own credibility and standing with the electorate at serious risk". Within weeks of this prediction, John Howard's standing in the opinion polls had seldom been higher.

Meanwhile in *The Age* Hilary McPhee (a vice chancellor's fellow at Melbourne University) writes that "the sense of dread is palpable" as John Howard indicates his (alleged) "determination to have full-scale war". Ms McPhee concedes that Saddam Hussein is a monster but claims that he does not want to achieve "dominance over the Arab world" and has "no credible links with al-Qaeda". She continues that Saddam "should have been forced out of Iraq and tried by international jurisdiction years ago". Hilary McPhee does not state how this could have been achieved in the past (except by US led military action) - or why such a move should be opposed now. Strange that.

- **8 February.** It's a hot, sunny day in Byron Bay. Which encourages leftist female Luvvies – if encouragement was needed – to imitate their West European and North American sisters and demonstrate a "No War" message in the nude. On the grass. It's called a "Disrobe to Disarm" protest. Singer/Songwriter Grace Knight describes her top-off/pants-down motivation in the following way: "We want to let John Howard know that we are not happy and if it takes lying naked in the paddock to get a message across, so be it". Ms Knight has no similar message for Saddam Hussein who invaded Iraq in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990.

No doubt many of the Luvvies assembled in the buff at Byron Bay would have read Phillip Adams's column in that morning's *Weekend Australian Magazine* where the ABC Radio National icon had warned that US actions in Iraq might "set the politics

of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt ablaze". The Prophet Adams continued: "There's every chance we'll see a regional catastrophe far greater in scale and in hideousness than we're recently witnessed in the Balkans."

Meanwhile in the *Sydney Morning Herald* Mike Carlton expresses concern that "the Prime Minister has gotten himself, and us, into a frightful mess in his headlong rush to grovel to the hard-right Republican chicken hawks who now control the White House and the Pentagon". He continues: "If we find ourselves at war without the benefit of a new Security Council resolution I suspect all hell will break over his head." Yet another (false) prophesy. Ditto Sue Wareham's letter in *The Weekend Australian* – where she anticipated that, in an invasion of Iraq by the Coalition of the Willing, "tens or hundreds or thousands of Iraqis would die". Dr Wareham is president of the Medical Association for the Prevention of War. Alas, there is no similar association for prevention of hyperbolic prophesy.

- **11 February.** In an article in *The Age* criticising journalist Pamela Bone, Phil Cleary contends that Ms Bone is wrong in focusing on "fundamentalist Muslim" nations in so far as "barbaric acts of terror against women" are concerned. Rather, he claims "our own legal and political system" is acquiescent "in the family violence now being unearthed in Australia". According to Phil Cleary's moral equivalence: "A society doesn't have to behead prostitutes or engage in genital mutilation to be a partner in terror against women." In other words, there is no significant difference between a democracy which has laws protecting women and a theocracy which legitimises death by stoning for private acts where there are no victims. That's Clearyism, circa 2003.

- **14 February.** A large demonstration in Melbourne hears trade union organiser Michelle O'Neil state: "We are here to oppose the war against Iraq, regardless of what the UN Security Council says". In other words, Saddam can defy as many mandatory UN resolutions as he wishes. The assembled protestors listen to Democrat Senator Natasha Stott Despoja predict "the deaths of thousands, maybe millions" in Iraq and Anglican Archbishop Peter Watson assert that an invasion of Iraq "would be a war of cold-blooded aggression against the people of Iraq". On the basis of such logic, the Allied war against Nazism would be regarded as an act of cold-blooded aggression against the people of Germany, circa 1939-45

- **22 February.** *Sydney Morning Herald* columnist Alan Ramsey is so impressed by US Senator Robert

Byrd's opposition to the Coalition of the Willing that he quotes a Byrd speech – at length. So much so that some 60 per cent of Ramsey's article is devoted to quotes from Byrd. The second part of Ramsey's column is devoted to a discussion about Labor frontbencher Mark Latham. Here some 85 per cent of Ramsey's article contains quotes from Latham. There can be no greater flattery. Or did Alan R. just want some time out.

March 2003 – a month in which hostilities commenced in Iraq – when Coalition of the Willing forces crossed from Kuwait into Iraq on 20 March.

- **2 March.** Aroused by the success of her starkers-sheilas-for-peace demo in Byron Bay, Grace Knight gets her kit off at Sydney's Leichhardt Oval – along with some 300 females – all of whom are against George W. Bush but in favour, apparently, of an all-over tan. Ms Knight was reported as declaring that the protest had been “empowering” and, er, “incredibly uplifting”. Meanwhile, not to be outdone, a group of Byron Bay blokes strip off and spell out a “Peace Man” message. It is not clear as to how many found the flash-for-peace uplifting.

- **3 March.** *The Courier Mail* is the only newspaper silly enough to carry the (false) prophesy of the (False) Prophet Bob Ellis – maintaining that George W. Bush will face the “Mother of all Armageddons” at the hands of Saddam Hussein. Bob Ellis anticipates a time (any time soon) “when 50,000 US troops and 10,000 UK troops die at the gates of Baghdad.” Sounds like Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahaf the Iraqi Information Minister of recent memory. As late as 7 April, Sahaf was claiming that “the infidels are committing suicide ... on the gates of Baghdad”.

- **3 March.** Actor Judy Davis delivers the 2003 Manning Clark Lecture (an edited extract of which is published the following day in the *Canberra Times*). She alleges that the US is about to engage in “a war about redrawing the map of the Middle East, as ambitious a plan as the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916”. Wow The thespian offers no evidence to support the proposition that the US wants to totally redraw the map of the Middle East. In fact, the only nation which in recent times attempted to redraw boundaries in the Middle East was Iraq under Saddam – hence the invasions of Iran and Kuwait. And who thought Saddam should be allowed to get away with conquering Kuwait? Well none other than the late Manning Clark - no less (re which see above). Fancy that.

Meanwhile the word from Iraq is that former Big Brother star Gordon Sloan is determined to remain in Baghdad as a human shield. He referred to the

situation in Baghdad as being so relaxed it is “kinda like a Club Med war zone really” (*Age* 4 March 2003). Really.

- **4 March 2003.** *The Australian* carries news that “Australia's unofficial poet laureate Les Murray has enlisted in the anti-war movement”. It turns out that our Les has contributed his poem “At the Widening of a War” to an anthology to be edited by Melbourne based poetical Luvvie Alison Croggon. There's no surprise when ABC Radio's *The World Today* immediately asks your man Les to read his words on air. Les Murray advises *The World Today* as to the nature of his message to the Howard government viz: “What the hell are you doing? Why are you joining in this thing? It's remote from Australia; it's remote from our interests. I don't think we ought to be the deputy sheriff. I can't see the point of it. Why us?” And so on and on. Our Les should stick to poetry.

- **5 March.** And now for an Australasian touch. From across the Tasman New Zealander Mary Grierson makes a proposition to President Bush. She will offer herself for crucifixion if he withdraws US forces from the Gulf. Her only condition is that George W. would have to hammer in the nails personally. The offer is not taken up. But Ms Grierson gets her photograph in an Aussie newspaper (*Daily Telegraph* 6 March 2003) in a pre-crucifixion pose. So the gesture has not been in vain. Thank God.

- **7 March.** Self confessed Trotskyite John Passant writes to the *Canberra Times* with a word of advice for the oppressed people of Iraq. Namely that “US bombs will not liberate Iraq” and that “revolution from below is the only way Iraq can truly liberate itself from Saddam's dictatorship”. Mr Passant overlooks the possibility that Saddam might approach “revolution from below” on the streets of Baghdad in much the same way as the Bolshevik Leon Trotsky responded when confronted with a revolution from below at Kronstadt in March 1921 i.e. by mowing down the revolutionaries with rifle fire.

- **10 March.** *The Australian* reports that one-time *Big Brother* star Gordon Sloan has left Iraq bound for Jordan. Apparently Baghdad has lost its “kinda Club Med war zone” feeling. Now it seems that Saddam Hussein and his regime will have to hold out the planned invasion by the Coalition of the Willing without any help whatsoever from a star from the Down Under Reality TV series. Mr Sloan has missed on personally thwarting the Coalition's bombs but at least he has received lotsa publicity.

- **11 March.** In a letter to the editor of *The Age*, former diplomat Tony Kevin announces that he has

communicated with many an ambassador at the United Nations advising that “the US and UK, and apparently my country...are determined to launch this war on the people of Iraq...”. It is as if Messrs Bush, Blair and Howard do not intend to wage war against Saddam Hussein but only on “the people of Iraq”.

- **19 March.** On Radio 2UE, Greens Senator Bob Brown asserts that John Howard “has sent 2,000 people off to face death in the sands of Iraq”. A surprising warning, to be sure, since the men and women in the Australian Navy contingent are unlikely to get close to Iraqi soil.

- **20 March.** The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council releases a pamphlet *War on Iraq: Is it Just?* - written by Bruce Duncan. Fr Duncan pontificates that “Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait” in 1990 was not “an open-and-shut case of unjustified aggression”. Really. And Fr Duncan foretells that any invasion of Iraq to oust the Saddam regime “will” result in “millions of refugees and displaced persons” and up to 500,000 civilian casualties in the Second Gulf War. Within less than a month it became apparent that this Catholic council is not blessed with infallibility. Estimated civilian casualties were a small fraction of Bruce Duncan’s estimate and there were very few refugees and displaced persons.

- **21 March.** Pollster Rod Cameron predicts that “young people and women will not forgive the Prime Minister for this war”. His views (which are reported in the following day’s *Australian Financial Review*) are not supported by any polling evidence of any kind. Mary Bluett (state president of the Australian Education Union) also comes up with a claim unsupported by evidence. She maintains that, as a result of the Iraq hostilities, the “faith” of children “in adults has been shaken” (*The Age*, 22 March 2003). Unlike the pre-Coalition of the Willing days, apparently, where kids everywhere had faith in the olds – according to Ms Bluett, that is.

- **22 March.** *The Age* publishes reflections from Leunig’s diary – which seem to deteriorate with each jotting. Hence Michael Leunig’s final reflection: “The Prime Minister has mentioned a fiendish torture machine owned by Saddam which shreds human flesh. Prime ministers should leave such revelations to the backbenchers. And besides, the average tool shed or workshop of an Australian suburban bloke is crammed full with torture implements – if you want to think about it like that”. Which suggests, according to The Thought of Leunig, that Saddam is no more dangerous than an Aussie bloke with a shed. How about that?

Meanwhile, addressing a Peace Coalition meeting in Hobart, former communist and contemporary ABC TV personality Peter Cundall bemoans: “It’s a war that is based on greed – greed for power, greed for resources. It’s an attempt to dominate the world by one power”. There are no reports of Mr Cundall criticising Saddam Hussein or the Iraqi regime. But, then, Comrade Cundall works for the ABC.

- **24 March.** Heath Ledger is a guest on Andrew Denton’s ABC TV *Enough Rope* talk show. He repeats his allegation that John Howard is “a dick”. Clever, eh? Then the actor throws the switch to inarticulate – as the transcript demonstrates:

Andrew Denton: **And to those who’d say, “Get your hands off it, Ledger, what do you know?”**

Heath Ledger: **Yeah, look, I do - I mean, yeah. The unfortunate truth is none of us know enough um - and we will never know enough you know – um. But, screw it. Our country – we’re never. This the first time in the history of our country that we’re an aggressor and we’re not an aggressive nation or people. I’m certainly not. And I’m very proud of my country and I’m the very proud of the people here. We shouldn’t be a part of this. It’s not a fight for humanity. It’s a fight for oil. And screw it and screw them. I think we should all pull out and live a peaceful existence down here.**

Half the audience claps enthusiastically. The remainder remain silent in response to Mr Ledger’s inarticulate performance (screw them). Give the man a script next time, please.

- **26 March.** In his column in *The Australian*, Phillip Adams contends that “the war ... promises a Stalingrad-like battle in the city”. According to estimates, the German Army lost over 200,000 troops in the Battle of Stalingrad (which took place in late 1942/early 1943). The Coalition’s losses in the Battle of Baghdad were minimal.

- **27 March.** *Arena* editor Guy Rundle writes in *The Age* that “it is clear the Iraq war will not be a walkover for the United States-led coalition”. He predicts that “when the battle comes to Baghdad and the coalition faces an inevitable choice – between bearing the high coalition casualties of extended street fighting or committing a crime against humanity, the bombing of civilian areas”. In fact the Coalition of the Willing was not required to adopt either option. Guy Rundle also believes that there is “no sign that the [Saddam] regime will collapse”. Baghdad fell just over a week after his foretelling.

- **30 March.** Long-term Luvvie Ray Cassin doubts, in his *Sunday Age* "Undercurrents" column whether the war can be won within a "matter of weeks". He maintains that Iraqi forces "are fighting" in what they regard as "the cause of right". Within days of this Cassin undercurrent, it is evident that Iraqi forces en-masse are abandoning their weapons and uniforms and quitting the battlefield. The entire Second Gulf War took 25 days.

April 2003 – in which Saddam Hussein's regime is defeated, ending the rule of a tyrant who (like Stalin) murdered and purged his own people and who (like Hitler) waged war against ethnic minorities – the Kurds in the north, Shiites in the south and the Marsh Arabs alike.

- **April Fool's Day 2003.** Interviewed on ABC TV *Lateline* program, Professor Des Ball comments that "one of the big questions" facing the US is this: "If they've lost the political war – no matter what really happens at the military level – how do they extricate themselves from this and try to reverse what appears to be a looming defeat"?

A Di Cousens of South Yarra writes to *The Age* with the following proposition: "Let's imagine the unthinkable: let's imagine that the Iraqis will win." She continues: "So why should an Iraqi victory be unimaginable? The US lost in Vietnam, the Soviet Union was defeated in Afghanistan – and Iraq is no Panama. It is not a small country with one or two cities: Baghdad has a population of 5 million. If only 1 million of these decided to resist the kindly invaders there will be something worse than the siege of Sarajevo...." Ms Cousens goes on to preach that "perhaps might is not right". How original.

- **3 April 2003.** In *The Australian*, academic Alan Vincent refers to "Iraq's stubborn resistance to invasion and occupation" and to the "reality" that "the Iraqis are fighting well and bravely...they have inflicted casualties and even taken some prisoners. No significant city has fallen to the Coalition forces. And attacks continue behind the lines". Moreover, Dr Vincent maintains that Iraq, not the Coalition, is winning the "propaganda war". This at a time when Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahaf - frequently branded "Comical Ali" – is amusing the world media with his descriptions of (alleged) Iraqi battlefield victories against the Coalition of the Willing.

- **4 April.** Writing in the *Australian Financial Review*, academic Martin Stuart-Fox opines that "what is remarkable about the extent of Iraqi opposition is not that it is happening, but that this should occasion some surprise". He speculates that "now that the first flush of naïve optimism has

passed...the spectre of Vietnam begins to loom over Iraq". The US lost some 60,000 dead in Vietnam.

- **6 April.** Sunday Age columnist (and yet another ABC Radio National icon) Terry Lane fesses up his dilemma – namely: "The dilemma for the person of peace is this: I want the army of my country, which is engaged in an act of gross immorality, to be defeated – but I do not want a single soldier killed or wounded." In other words, Terry Lane is hoping that Saddam Hussein's forces prevail in a bloodless victory. Well, at least there is no fudging as to what side he is on.

- **7 April.** Eve Mahlab fires off a letter to *The Age* with a concern about the freeing of Private Lynch from Iraqi captivity: "The articles about 'pretty' Private Jessica Lynch are heartwarming. However, one of the first news photographs of captured soldiers included a glimpse of a black American woman soldier who had been taken prisoner by the Iraqis". Ms Mahlab's concern is about "what has happened to this not especially pretty black American wounded woman soldier". The implication is that the US military is not especially interested in rescuing female soldiers who are black and (allegedly) "not especially pretty". In fact, specialist Shoshana Johnson (along with a group of her fellow POWs) was freed by US forces on 13 April. The US forces seem unconcerned as to whether the freed male and female POWs are "especially pretty" – in the eyes of the beholder Eve Mahlab.

8 August. News reaches Australia that US military forces are in Baghdad and that Saddam Hussein's regime is about to fall. All up, the war has taken less than a month, Coalition deaths are in the hundreds and the most pessimistic assessments put civilian deaths at fewer than 2500. Apart from some initial skirmishes, there was no sustained resistance to the Coalition of the Willing. The Iraqi Republican Guard did not fight - and Saddam and his fellow dictators ran away. Despite some continuing opposition, the Coalition forces were either welcomed or not resisted. Moreover, there was no evident rising of an "Arab Street" in those Arab nations which effectively supported the Coalition (e.g. Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain) or in the Arab nations which demonstrated scant opposition to the Coalition (e.g. Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia).

- **9 April 2003.** The world watches as the large statue of the tyrant Saddam is pulled down in Baghdad – symbolizing the end of the Iraqi Ba'athist dictatorship. The previous day *The Australian* carried a letter from a certain Stephen Hanlon (of Brighton Victoria) who complained that a "previous image of a Coalition tank pulling over a statue of

Saddam Hussein shows our Western hypocrisy". You see, Mr Hanlon of Brighton reckons that "the world was rightly shocked with the desecration of the ancient buddhas by the Taliban" in Afghanistan. So, he asks, "what right does the Coalition have to destroy the symbol of Iraq's history?" Get it? According to Stephen Hanlon's view (from Brighton), Stalin-like statues of Saddam Hussein have a similar historical and cultural worth as the magnificent stone buddhas which were destroyed by the Taliban. What a Luvvie. And would Hanlon of Brighton have objected to Nazi symbols being destroyed by the Allies circa 1945.

UNLUCKY IN LUVVIES

It was always recognised that the Coalition would face difficulties in stabilising Iraq after the fall of Saddam's regime. The nation has been all but wrecked during Saddam's rule. Also, it does not take many guerillas, attacking personnel or infrastructure, to disrupt an occupying force or a nascent government - especially when there are so many available weapons in Iraq. That said, the Coalition of the Willing has achieved much. Saddam Hussein, who defied numerous mandatory UN Security Council resolutions that he demonstrate that Iraq was rid of its weapons of mass destruction, has been deposed. As a direct consequence, one of the world's most murderous dictatorships is no more. This has been achieved in the face of predictions of leftist Luvvies that the Coalition was acting illegally, that it would face another Vietnam in Iraq, that it would be stoutly resisted - and so on.

So, how did the Luvvies respond? Well, one opponent of the Second Gulf War did acknowledge a misdiagnosis. Step forward playwright Joanna Murray-Smith - who is currently based in Italy. In her *Sunday Age* column Ms Murray-Smith commented:

And yet, the World's Policeman did something no one else could or would do. It could have gone all horribly wrong, but it didn't. Civilians died, young men and women paid all kinds of prices and both Western and Iraqi children who lost fathers or homes have had their personal maps drastically redrawn by the hand of fate. But the fear and torture is over. America, in all its infuriating arrogance, acted. Not so long ago, I dreaded this. And now, I have to admit, I was wrong.

Joanna Murray-Smith was not the only one-time leftist to recognise the need for Iraq to be rid of the Saddam dictatorship. During the debate on the Gulf War, Albert Langer, Barry York and Douglas Kirsner

(all of whom had been active in the Vietnam Moratorium movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s) spoke out against the Saddam dictatorship - as did Christopher Hitchens in the US. However, Joanna Murray-Smith was among the few leftists who conceded, post-bellum, that they had been wrong.

Certainly there was a case to be made against military action against Iraq at the time the decision was made. In most conflicts there is usually a plausible view on both sides of the debate. But it is important to remember that if action had not been taken by the Coalition of the Willing then the Saddam regime would still be in power - and busy murdering, torturing and imprisoning Iraqi citizens.

The message seems lost on Australia's leading Luvvie - *Age* cartoonist Leunig. (For an assessment of Michael Leunig see "Media Watch" *The Sydney Institute Quarterly*, October 2000). On 7 May 2003 *The Age* ran a Leunig cartoon which depicted the following conversation:

Female Tea Drinker: **"I wonder what the butcher of Baghdad is getting up to these days"**

Male Tea Drinker: **Last I heard he was at his ranch celebrating with the suckhole from Sydney.**

In other words, according to The Thought of Leunig, George W. Bush is a "butcher" and John Howard a "suckhole".

Then, on 9 May 2003, Leunig's cartoon featured a shrine - on which was written the following words:

**Iraq Invasion
The Coalition of the Willing
Piracy. Murder. Culture Rape
Catastrophic Criminal Debauchery
Lest We Forget**

In other words, to Leunig, the Coalition of the Willing was into "murder" and "criminal debauchery". At no stage during the Second Gulf War was Saddam Hussein so depicted in a Leunig cartoon. Enough said. Will what's left of the leftist Luvvies ever learn?

