

FORTHCOMING FUNCTIONS AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

- SPEAKER** : NOEL BEDDOE (Principal, Warrawong High School & Chairman/Aboriginal Education Reference Group) & LINDA BURNEY (Chair, NSW State Reconciliation Committee)
TOPIC : *Aboriginal Education in New South Wales - Which Way Forward?*
DATE : Monday 1 June 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : 41 Phillip St, Sydney **LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**
- SPEAKER** : THE HON PETER COSTELLO (Federal Treasurer & Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party)
TOPIC : *To be advised*
DATE : Thursday 11 June 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : Mallesons' Conference Room, Level 60 Gov Phillip Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney
- SPEAKER** : GARETH EVANS (Shadow Treasurer & Deputy Leader of the Opposition)
TOPIC : *To be advised*
DATE : Tuesday 16 June 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- SPEAKER** : SIR LEON BRITAN (V. Pres, European Commission & Former Minister in Thatcher Gov't)
TOPIC : *To be advised*
DATE : Monday 22 June 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- SPEAKER** : FRANCES CAIRNCROSS (Senior Editor, *The Economist* & Author, *The Death of Distance: How the Communications Revolution will change our lives.* [Orion Business Books, 1997])
TOPIC : *The Communications Revolution*
DATE : Tuesday 30 June 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- SPEAKER** : SENATOR THE HON JOCELYN NEWMAN (Minister for Social Security)
TOPIC : *To be advised*
DATE : Monday 6 July 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- SPEAKER** : CASSANDRA PYBUS (Author, *Till Apples Grow on an Orange Tree*)
TOPIC : *Growing up in Australia*
DATE : Tuesday 14 July 1998 **TIME** : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : 41 Phillip Street, Sydney **LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**

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THE

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JOHN PILGER
ON TOUR

DAVID SALTER
on the ABC's
Media Watch

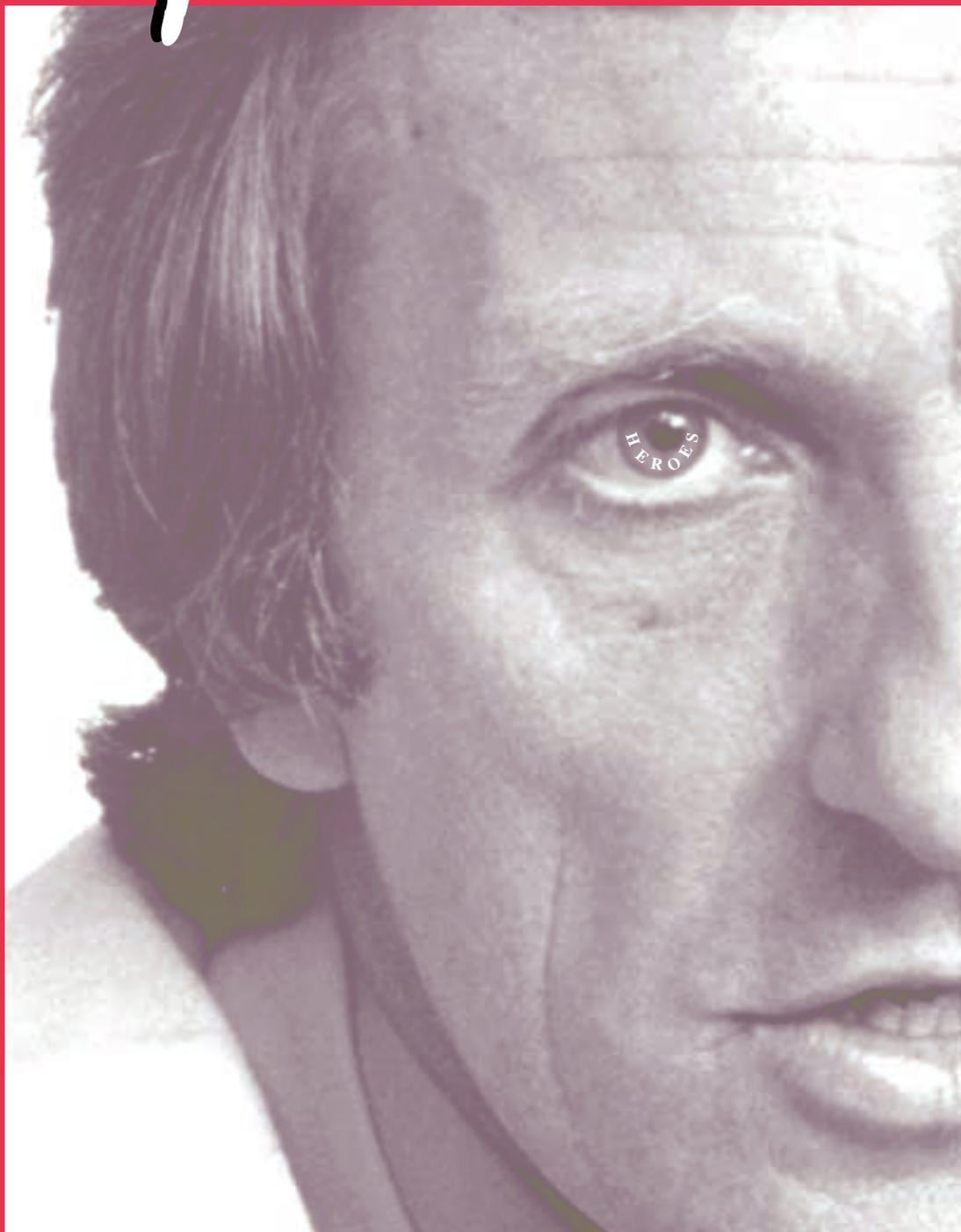
ONE NATION
AT THE POLLS

THE
CLASSROOM
CRISIS

STEPHEN
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tackles
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with Gerard Henderson's

MEDIA WATCH

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JOHN PILGER AND THE MEDIA

*I*t's a bit like the Royal tours to Down Under of old. In flies a super star. Adoring crowds assemble and speeches are made, usually of the generalised genre. There is scant analysis and limited criticism. Then our hero flies out again. Until next time.

In April 1998 the New York based Australian Robert Hughes did his gig in Sydney. There were some serious comments on Sydney architecture and considerable hyperbole about Australian history. Much adoration. Little criticism. Thank you Mr Hughes.

Then in May 1998 it was London based John Pilger's turn to coincide with the Sydney Writers Festival and the launch of his latest (long-winded and humourless) tome *Hidden Agendas* (Vintage, 1998). There were also addresses to adoring and uncritical audiences in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

The Pilger sermon in the Antipodes was based on the text as set out in the introduction to *Hidden Agendas*: "In one sense, the media have never held such sway. We have government by the media, for the media." In Sydney, Pilger told his audience that "the Queen of England hasn't a fraction of the power of Murdoch or Packer". He claimed that the Queen could only act on the advice of ministers while multinationals could "pretty well do what they like."

Anyone with even the slightest understanding of the debate over media ownership in Australia would regard this as absolute sludge. It is hardly a secret that both Kerry Packer and Rupert Murdoch want to gain a controlling interest in John Fairfax Limited (the publisher of *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Age* and *Australian Financial Review*) on their own terms.

So far neither Mr Packer nor Mr Murdoch has been successful - due to indecision by the Australian government and opposition by the Labor Party. If, as Pilger claims, multinationals can "pretty well do what they like" then Fairfax would be controlled by either Packer or Murdoch. It isn't.

In Melbourne, John Pilger told his assembled audience that self-censorship had become the main threat to free speech in the media. He claimed that "by remaining silent and allowing censorship by omission and censorship by default, we are in danger of handing journalism over to a new and growing breed: the spin doctors, the PR men".

Interesting theory. Pity about the evidence. The problem is that there is virtually nothing in *Hidden Agendas* which has not been covered in the mainstream media. So where is the censorship? And where is the justification for the self-serving claim that journalists self censor except for our Mr Pilger? As former British Labour MP Roy Hattersley commented when he reviewed *Hidden Agendas* for the *Sunday Times*: "Pilger cannot resist giving thanks that he is not like other journalists". But those who prefer fact to moralising hyperbole sure can.

MEDIA WATCH WITH DAVID SALTER

The ABC's *Media Watch* was presented by Stuart Littlemore for nine years. At the end of 1997 Littlemore resigned after the show's executive producer, David Salter, let it be known he had other projects he wanted to pursue. Stuart Littlemore refused to work with anyone else. Earlier, Littlemore had appeared on ABC's *Lateline*, where in response to a question from fellow panellist Steve Brill, in New York, Littlemore claimed that he was not paid for presenting *Media Watch* when in fact he was. This also was believed to have influenced Littlemore's decision to quit. *Media Watch* is now presented by Richard Ackland and is in its tenth year. In March, David Salter addressed The Sydney Institute to speak about his experiences as executive producer of *Media Watch*. What follows is some of the discussion after his address.

Q: Was there a rift between you and Stuart Littlemore?

DS: There was no rift between Stuart and I. We have been for years and still are good mates. We had a jolly long talk yesterday about how delightful it is to have Sunday mornings to ourselves rather than to do the show. No, there is no rift there. Let me very briefly explain what happened. In August last year, I went to the 10 or 15 managers I have in the ABC to clear with them the idea that I had done my shift. Five years and 200 shows, is a lot of shows. I was a television producer in various others forms and with various other issues. I wanted some time to develop them. And they agreed one by one. Then I told Stuart my decision. The ABC, in its own fumbling way, tried to build the bridge. It's going through a re-organisation at the moment, at least trying to reach one. So no one knew what was going on.

Stuart got more and more impatient with the fact that the process wasn't yielding a replacement for me. He took his family to France for Christmas. He came back and it still hadn't been sorted out to his satisfaction. Management came back to me and asked would I reconsider. I said, given there had been these delays and problems I was happy to go back for three months to get the new season rolling as long as Stuart understood it was a handover period. Someone else would replace me.

By that time Stuart had tired of the whole process. And he just told them no. There is absolutely no rift between Stuart and I.

"I think Stuart partly misunderstood the question. He also missed a gear going into that corner. I could see it. I know him so well."

Q: If there was no rift why would Stuart not go on?

DS: It's pretty hard to answer that without sounding like a bigot. We had a terrific relationship. We had been journalists together when we both had hair and we thought on similar lines. We knew areas that we should not go into. It was a terrific relationship. And I think it just struck him. He said, well I won't have this relationship so I won't do it. Nothing is forever.

What people don't understand is what Stuart had to give up to do the show. For a start, as a lawyer, he had to give up all media work. No one would brief him. What newspaper or television station would brief Stuart Littlemore, presenter of *Media Watch*? And media law was a special area of his. And we worked Sunday and we needed him on Monday to do the recording, it was virtually impossible for him to take a brief out of Sydney. That limited his work enormously. It cost him hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years.

Q: There's another element here too isn't there? There was Littlemore's *Lateline* appearance where for reasons no one knows, Stuart Littlemore said to Steve Brill that he wasn't paid when people knew that he was paid. Why do you think he said he wasn't paid when he was? How does that relate to the principles you've enunciated in your own speech tonight about accountability?

DS: I think Stuart partly misunderstood the question. He also missed a gear going into that corner. I could see it. I know him so well. I was watching his eyes. But get it in the proper context first of all. For Stuart, it was eight in the morning. He was hooked up to the show in a hotel room somewhere. He had said he didn't want to do it but *Lateline* pressured him and he said okay. They wouldn't do it in his chambers. They wanted to do it at eight in the morning because of the American time. He was pissed off.

Stuart had the feeling he was set up. When he said he wasn't paid, I think he meant that it cost him money

to do the program. But he didn't phrase it properly. I rang him straightaway and said, "Stuart what was that?" And he said, "What I meant was what you know. It costs me thousands and thousands of dollars in foregone legal work to do the show". And I said, "Well it didn't come across that way." And he said, "I know".

Q: But it was never the excuse on *Media Watch* when dealing with Alan Jones, for example. You wouldn't say we won't mention that today because Alan missed third gear going into the corner.

DS: No. No. But I'm saying that was the context. I didn't say it was an excuse.

Q: How do you think it was that the *Illawarra Mercury* was for so long able to command the attention of *Media Watch*? Did they enjoy it so much they assisted you with material?

DS: Peter Cullen is the wonderful editor-in-chief of the *Illawarra Mercury*. What a title. Almost as funny as attorney general of Tasmania. Peter and I get on fine. He is quite happy to plead guilty to the charge of being one of the great rat-bag journalists left in the country. It is a rat-bag paper if you've ever read it. It's a splendidly ratbag paper. Yes we've exchanged Christmas cards every year. And he enjoys what we did to some extent. However there were some pretty serious things that we did. There were times when I think he did abuse his position as a newspaper editor in chief, and that the newspaper abused the position of trust it had in that community,

In Port Kembla and the Illawarra region people genuinely trust that newspaper. It's really important to them. They all read it backwards. They all read the sports first but... So we had serious points to make but in amongst that there was some fun.

Q: My recollection is a bit hazy but wasn't there an interview a couple of years ago where *Media Watch* refused to accept the determination of the independent complaints tribunal and there had to be a voice over to make the correction?

DS: You're referring to the ABC's Independent Complaints Review Panel - ICRAP for short. *Media Watch* was never required or directed to read out the panel's findings. They are done separately, at the end of the program. There has never been any debate about that. The first one that related to us was in the days of Paddy Conroy when television still had a director. When there was an actual boss that told us what to do. The panel is independent of the ABC, let alone of the program, so it's pronouncement had to

be read separately from the program. And that was the policy. Of course we didn't like it.

"The best stuff is pick and shovel work. You get the corner of a story and your natural suspicion is, oh there's more to it than this."

Q: Was any thought ever given to approaching journalists, such as the journalist who gave us the Skase chase, and asking them whether *Media Watch* was fair and accurate in its criticism of their reports, to go a journalist if you were criticising him or her and say what's your side of the story?

DS: That's a good question. We only approached journalists or editors when there was a piece in the puzzle that we couldn't get any other way. We were not particularly interested in whether the journalist thought what we were going to say was fair. It's not that kind of program. It's not current affairs. We were not pretending to be balanced. But if there was a bit of the puzzle that was missing we'd ring them. We'd usually get them on the phone about an hour ahead. Some editors, particularly the broadsheets, would give you the time of day. They mightn't tell you the truth but they would listen.

Q: One strength of *Media Watch* is that often you'd report the mindless things. Reflecting on the observation you've made of journalists, do you feel there is a herd mentality amongst journalists, particularly the print media? If so is that a dangerous thing? Is it changing?

DS: I think that's a multi barrel question. The herd mentality is not peculiar to Australia. There isn't a more closed shop than, for instance, the House of Commons press gallery. There is a narrowing around press galleries about how to do stories, how far do you go, what things you have to include in the story, which partly feeds from prejudice and common myths and partly a reflection of the lack of diversity of media ownership in this country.

I can remember working for the BBC and one of my jobs in the morning was to read all the newspapers. There were 14 newspapers at my desk at eight every morning. One of them was the Communist Party newspaper. At the other end I could read the *Daily Telegraph*. I don't have that particular pleasure in Australia.

The last thing *Media Watch* did, which was an effective critique of that sort, was the stake out in

Queensland for the family of Labor senator Mal Colston, who is no longer a Labor senator. That was classic herd style. Hunting as a pack, each trying to out do each other. And how gratuitously offensive the pack could be to the son of this man.

In Canberra there is not what I've often characterised as conscious self-censorship. There are so many accepted paradigms of the way a political story runs. Everyone does stories the same way. You also get the agenda setting. If Michelle Grattan and Laurie Oakes don't think it is a story, it's not a story. That happens over and over again.

Q: Give us some dirty secrets. How does *Media Watch* get its stories? Are they tips or dob-ins? The Skase chase for example.

DS: *Media Watch* has changed a lot during the last five years. I always explain it this way - about 20 per cent of the screening time was directly contributed by viewers who would tip us off. In fact 40 per cent of the items were but they were very short. They might have been plain disagreements or a slight oversight or an easy conflict of interest to spot. The big substantial items were usually generated from within the team. But tips were important. The relationship with the viewers was important. It took 30 hours a week replying to the letters, the faxes and phone calls and so on. It was like having an unpaid staff of 200 researchers. There was no way I can keep reading the *Toowoomba Chronicle* but up there there were one or two people reading it for us. So tips were very important.

The best stuff is pick and shovel work. You get the corner of a story and your natural suspicion is, oh there's more to it than this. In the case of the chase for Skase, which was fabricated by filming in Barcelona, that was a tip from a Phillip Street barrister who happened to have been in Barcelona at the time. He saw the story and said, "But I used to go up and down that street to my hotel." With his help we, frame by frame, looked at the footage. Then we collected entertainment guides of Barcelona and maps and did a search on the uniforms of the police in Barcelona. There are three different police uniforms in Barcelona which was pretty confusing.

I mean it's pick and shovel research. That's the stuff of journalism. That's how it is done.

Q: But you claimed when you wrote your *Sydney Morning Herald* piece that you didn't use a tip.



DS: The barrister who was our tip swore that whatever we did we must not say who he was or what he was.

Q: So how does one assess the *Sydney Morning Herald* piece?

DS: I thought the *Sydney Morning Herald* piece was a get square.

Q: I wonder if you can comment on the overall standard of journalism and the way journalists have been trained by coming out of university rather than going through the old cadetship experience.

DS: I had to write a piece in a terrible hurry once for the *Australian's* Higher Education Supplement on this very topic. Generally I think the baseline standard of journalism in Australia is fine.

We're lucky to live in a very affluent, liberal democracy and we can afford reasonable journalism. Try digesting the press in Istanbul. When its translated you realise they make every story up. It's cheaper than actually going out and reporting it. So I open the newspapers in the morning with a light heart. I don't open them with tragic music in the background.

“Richard Ackland’s approach is different. He wants it to be more of a review of the media.”

That said there's a constant pressure to write colour and comic rather than to write traditional who, what, why, when and where. It's coming from various sides. Television is partly to blame because television and radio are so much quicker with hard news. And the other end of the paper is all this lifestyle stuff. We did an item late last year where we counted up something like 86 lifestyle supplements - the stuff that pulls down your paper when you pick it up - in metropolitan dailies alone. That's a lot of journalists.

Someone told us that on the full time journalist roster page more than half the journalists are writing for lifestyle sections at one time or another. That's extraordinary.

Now I agree with you that traditional training has value but let me confess that I went to university virtually directly into journalism. In those days you could start at C grade I think it was if you had an Arts degree. Then I quickly went into television. I believe in this. There is a lot of ideological nonsense taught at journalism schools because they sit so closely with cultural studies. It's sometimes hard to get the Karl Marx flavour out of some of the students. But they've got a role. What they do is take the obligation off newspapers and television stations to run effective cadetship assistants.

Q: Would you agree that some of the criticism of *Media Watch* related to the tone of *Media Watch*, the Littlemore bite?

DS: If it hasn't got bite it's not worth saying and Stuart's brand of bite was a particularly corrosive writing style. That sort of reptilian delivery was an extraordinary skill. To a producer it's a delight because it's got substance. You feel that there's a human being actually saying these words. And they were his words which is one of the terribly important things. We did all research, we drafted an enormous amount of material, but in the end it was Littlemore's words.

Yes, I think that the tone upset quite a few people but the show was extraordinarily well supported by the audience. And there was something of the-man-you-love-to-hate about it too. I know that even journalists love to hate Littlemore. We did an interview with Col Allan, the editor of *The Daily Telegraph* and it went very well. After, when we were packing up, I said to Allan that I would let him know when it was coming on. He said not to bother, that on Mondays the whole place stopped at 9.15pm for *Media Watch*. Whenever I've spoken to newspapers that's what they say. Everybody stopped to watch Littlemore.

Q: Would you care to comment on the style of the new *Media Watch*?

DS: I'd rather not but I know you won't let me go unless I say something. I've always stuck to one rule since the first program I ever produced which was I think in 1972. You should never judge a new show until you're at least six to ten episodes in. We have only seen three programs under the new *Media Watch* format.

However, let me say this. The research team is essentially the same. There's a new executive producer and one new researcher. They are sending up pretty good material. Richard Ackland's approach is different. He wants it to be more of a review of the media which is why some of the shows I've seen felt like they were been trundling through the week. They haven't actually had a piece that they could get stuck into. But it's early days. And the show is too valuable to be damaged by any immediate glib assessment of how it's going.

RETHINKING HUMAN RIGHTS

Elizabeth Henderson

Human rights are currently at the forefront of Australian political and social discussion. This discussion is not just taking place in parliaments, courts and boardrooms. It has also assumed a central place in everyday life - in pubs, milk bars and at family gatherings. The expression "human rights" may not be uttered very often. But it is at the heart of expressions such as "native title", "unionism", "capital C conservative", "reconciliation", "freedom of speech" and "battlers". And so we now have *Rethinking Human Rights* (Federation Press 1998).

In December 1995 the National Institute for Law, Ethics and Public Affairs brought together a number of academics and human rights practitioners for a workshop on human rights. One half of the group prepared draft papers in advance. The other half assumed the role of commentator - each reviewed a draft paper, prepared and circulated written comments on it and then led the workshop discussion. In general, a practitioner reviewed the work of an academic and vice versa. *Rethinking Human Rights* is the embodiment of those papers and subsequent deliberations.

This process appears to have been a good idea. The bringing together of both academics and practitioners has resulted in a book which is not a typical law text book. It is theoretical, containing a depth of analysis. But it is also readable and relevant. For this reason it stands out among legal texts on human rights.

Rethinking Human Rights is a significant book, not least because of the contributions by Michael Kirby,

Justice of the High Court of Australia, and Alice Erh-Soon Tay, recently appointed President of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).

The High Court has a central role in contemporary human rights discourse in Australia, particularly in recent years. The so called "judicial activism" of the court has, in part, triggered many of the current debates over human rights. Justice Michael Kirby has long been an active proponent of human rights and law reform, both in his private capacity as theorist and commentator and also in his public capacity, formerly on the Supreme Court of New South Wales and now on the High Court.

In his chapter "Human Rights: an Agenda for the Future", Michael Kirby reviews the development of human rights theory and practice in the international context. He introduces the reader to the concept of generations of rights - which is an important theme of the book as a whole.

"The appointment of Alice Erh-Soon Tay as President of HREOC was seen, by some, as an essentially conservative appointment."

First-generation human rights consist of basic civil and political rights - they are negative rights focussing on the protection of the citizen *from* the state. Second-generation human rights consist of economic, social and cultural rights - they are positive rights, centring in the protection of the citizen *by* the state. Third-generation human rights consist of systematic or group rights. This generation of rights is a relatively recent concept in human rights theory, which traditionally has been dominated by the liberal notion of individualism. The concept of systematic group rights is at the heart of the indigenous rights movement around the world and in Australia. Michael Kirby stresses the importance of these newer rights, emphasising that they are not merely an afterthought in rights discussion, but an essential component of international human rights as a whole.

Michael Kirby also takes up the theme of human rights being not always consistent with the rule of law. He states:

The rule of law is a high ideal. But it must not be a cloak for enforcing unjust laws or tolerating plain injustice. ... The rule of law

TEACHING ABORIGINAL CULTURE

What should school students in New South Wales learn about Aboriginal culture and the issues confronting Australia relating to Aboriginality? Linda Burney is a Wiradjuri woman, President of the NSW Aboriginal Educator Consultative Group. Noel Beddoe is Chairperson of the Aboriginal Education Reference Group of the NSW Secondary Principals' Council.

Hear about what is being taught and why, at The Sydney Institute.

SPEAKER : NOEL BEDDOE (Principal, Warrawong High School & Chairman/Aboriginal Education Reference Group) & LINDA BURNEY (Chair, NSW State Reconciliation Committee)

TOPIC : *Aboriginal Education in New South Wales - Which Way Forward?*

DATE : Monday 1 June 1998

TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

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is only as morally just as the law which then rules. In the decades ahead, it will be vital, both in the domestic and international context, to extend our notion of what the rule of law may be. Supporters of basic rights should support a rule of just law, reformed laws. So that the rules now conceived is a rule of just law.

This theme is echoed in the chapter entitled "Human Rights Problems: Moral, Political, Philosophical" by Professor Alice Erh-Soon Tay. She argues that there is an essential distinction between a right in the sense of a moral right and a right in the sense of a legal right:

Legal rights are laws of a state while moral rights are claims of people. Legal rights by definition are enforceable, while moral rights may not be. Some moral rights are enforceable becoming legal rights, while others are not.

She stresses that moral rights are formed within human consciousness, ideology and philosophy. It is only through political processes and activity that they are transformed into legal rights.

Alice Tay maintains that human rights are first and foremost moral rights:

Neither natural nor human rights are, as some would believe, ultimate, inalienable, imprescriptive, grounded in holy law, taken as unquestionable or resting on the logical requirements of a social contract. In this sense there is no ultimate source or justification, rule or required behaviour of which we cannot ask, "Why should I obey this?". The shift in modern life from a concept of natural rights to a concept of human rights is an implicit recognition of the fact that such rights are not deduced from the nature or governance of the universe or of society but rather from a developing concept of what it is to be human, to lead a human life, to become a person. Far from being the foundation of morality in a historical sense, rights follow from our experience with moralities.

The appointment of Alice Erh-Soon Tay as President of HREOC was seen, by some, as an essentially conservative appointment. Whatever the political motivations for this decision, Professor Tay will no doubt make a highly important contribution to HREOC - a result of her understanding of human

rights theory and from her depth of analysis of the concept of human rights.

Another significant theme of *Rethinking Human Rights* is the method of protecting human rights, particularly the introduction of a Bill of Rights in Australia.

The debate over constitutional reform and the introduction of a Bill of Rights is ongoing. But it has become prevalent in recent times as a result of the republic debate. Inevitably, the subject of an Australian Bill of Rights tends to centre around first-generation rights, perhaps because of the model of the Constitution of the United States, which is perhaps the epitome of the liberal tradition. If we can learn anything from the US experience, it is that the concept of human rights is not time-independent nor absolute. The US preoccupation with the rights of the individual - or first-generation rights - is in part a result of its Bill of Rights which was entrenched in the 18th Century. This, in turn, leads to an entrenched 18th Century concept of "human rights". Accordingly, it may not be an appropriate model for Australians today let alone in a few hundred years.

The issue of an Australian Bill of Rights is an important, but not overpowering, aspect of *Rethinking Human Rights* and the discussion takes place in the wider context of rights theory, history and contemporary issues. This is refreshing.

Rethinking Human Rights is a well balanced book. The issue of human rights is dealt with on a number of levels. There is a broad discussion of rights theory and a focus on both Australia and the international human rights movement - including the UN. Australia's human rights role in the Asia Pacific, which, as Alice Tay points out, is the only regional bloc in the world without a human rights regime, is particularly interesting. There are also a number of chapters devoted to more specific areas such as women's rights, the "right" of self-ownership, globalism and the intersection of race and gender rights.

What surprised me about this book is that it is actually quite a good read. Legal practitioners and academics frequently read detailed and laborious texts on complex legal and philosophical issues. Although they may do this out of choice, most other people don't. *Rethinking Human Rights* is detailed but not laborious. It will be of interest both to those who approach this topic from an academic perspective but also to those who are interested for interest's sake.

(Elizabeth Henderson is a solicitor at Freehill, Hollingdale and Page)

THE FUTURE OF ONE NATION

Michael Kapel & David Greason

Having assisted in the building-up of Pauline Hanson into a figure of national prominence, it appears that some sections of the media are doing their best to pretend she doesn't even exist. At the beginning of the year, we were told by the Melbourne *Age* that the "Hanson bubble" had "lost its fizz".

To a certain extent their job is made easier by Pauline Hanson and her advisers. With the exception of a couple of muted comments on the MAI and a recent policy launch on the far-right favourite cure-all, Citizens' Initiated Referenda, not much has been heard from the usually voluble Member for Oxley.

It is also true that Pauline Hanson herself might be in trouble in her new seat of Blair, thanks to both the difficulties of establishing oneself in a new seat and also the perception that she has not performed particularly well as a local member in Oxley (much of which is included in Blair)

Even so, opinion polls (whatever their faults) are still showing a substantial bloc of votes for One Nation in Queensland, yet with the exception of the Brisbane *Courier Mail* the national papers have had little to say about this, featuring Pauline Hanson only when there is a substantial drop in her support, but not when it creeps back up to outpoll the benighted Democrats.

Hanson and her team know that if John Howard calls a double dissolution, One Nation's chances of picking up one, possibly two Senate seats, rise exponentially. With the Senate quotas half the usual level of a normal half Senate election, small parties like One Nation need only half the votes to gain a Senate spot.

It will be instructive to see who One Nation preselects for first and second position on its Queensland Senate ticket. Forget the party's Senate candidates for the rest of the country, except possibly the West. Even at its peak last year the party would be lucky to get its deposit back in most federal House and Senate spots. But Queensland is another story.

THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION

Frances Cairncross is author of *The Death of Distance - How the Communications Revolution will Change our Lives* (Orion Business Books). She is also Senior Editor with *The Economist*.

Cairncross sees a world where time zones will matter more than miles; where culture, language and interests bind communities more closely than geography - in short the death of distance.

Hear Frances Cairncross at The Sydney Institute.

SPEAKER : FRANCES CAIRNCROSS
(Senior Editor, *The Economist*)
TOPIC : *The Communications Revolution*
DATE : Tuesday 30 June 1998
TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room
(Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley
Square, Sydney

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AN ADDRESS BY THE HON PETER COSTELLO TREASURER

PETER COSTELLO, THE BRIGHTEST RISING STAR OF THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT, WILL GIVE A KEY NOTE ADDRESS TO THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE IN JUNE. DON'T MISS IT!

SPEAKER : THE HON PETER COSTELLO
(Federal Treasurer & Deputy
Leader of the Liberal Party)

TOPIC : *To be advised*

DATE : Thursday 11 June 1998

TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

VENUE : Mallesons' Conference Room,
Level 60 Gov Phillip Tower,
1 Farrer Place, Sydney

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Why? Because while the nation has been preoccupied since January with Wik, Native title, and the waterfront dispute, Hanson's people have been working Queensland - hard. That's bad news for Rob Borbidge with a state election looming and polling figures for One Nation in some state seats outstripping the major parties.

AC-Nielsen polling for the Brisbane *Courier Mail* suggests that the Queensland Nationals could lose two seats and possibly more to One Nation at the forthcoming state election. Bad judgement by Borbidge one could see One Nation holding the balance of power in the next Queensland parliament.

“But for all that, Hanson is not necessarily a shoo-in in Queensland or elsewhere.”

One Nation is doing well throughout Queensland's conservative heartland from Gympie down to Toowoomba and Kingaroy. That was once Joh Bjelke-Petersen territory and now it might be Pauline Hanson's. It also means that no amount of hard-line posturing by Rob Borbidge on Wik or the waterfront is likely to wrest the disaffected vote from her. And it looks like seats such as Barambah, Gympie, Hervey Bay, Western Downs, Callide and Caloundra could all be in jeopardy from One Nation candidates or preferences.

On the information to hand, Hanson's people have chosen their election candidates relatively wisely: in other words, most appear to be disaffected mainstream conservatives rather than barking mad League of Rights activists. This isn't to say, however, that the Lunar Right isn't well and truly on Hanson's bandwagon. One of her top advisers, and secretary of the Hervey Bay branch, is Tony Pitt, gun lobbyist, conspiracy theorist and former candidate for the lunar right Confederate Action Party.

And while it might have been safe to assume that the involvement of far-rightists in Ms Hanson's campaign should have been tactical suicide, it should not be forgotten that the Confederate Action Party almost forced the National Party into coalition talks some years ago when a swag of its candidates polled thousands of votes and double-digit percentages in the 1992 Queensland state election. One of the more popular candidates was none other than Tony Pitt, who polled 15.9 per cent in Maryborough.

“It was later discovered that Hanson had been hiding out

in a Hungry Jack's fast-food restaurant around the corner from the meeting."

The Borbidge Government remembers this well, and is doing its level best to pander to One Nation voters with its own hardline rhetoric, allowing One Nation to already claim more than a few policy victories. Now the ALP claims that the Queensland Nationals and One Nation have entered into a secret deal over preferences. Given that Queensland's two National Party senators – Ron Boswell and Bill O'Chee – have been outstanding in their attacks on Hanson and what she represents, there is more than a touch of irony in this.

But for all that, Hanson is not necessarily a shoo-in in Queensland or elsewhere. Her greatest liabilities remain both herself and her own party organisation.

The party's organisational base is still worse than a chook raffle at the local country fair. It's one thing to have popular support, it's another to have an organised infrastructure of people and branches on the ground. Hanson doesn't have that, just an endless sea of expelled, disillusioned and banished former zealots. From former adviser John Pasquarelli through to expelled Newcastle organiser Peter Archer, who went off to found the rival One Nation Australia Party, the media will never be shorthanded if they need to find a disaffected critic. Those members who are left may very well be keen, but are also generally organisationally weak. This is perhaps why the party leadership, especially the two Davids – Oldfield and Ettridge – appear terrified of their candidates.

Most One Nation endorsed candidates have a view – about everything actually. Whether it corresponds with One Nation policy is another matter, although things aren't helped if your party hasn't actually devised its policies yet. This has become known as the Reg Bishop syndrome.

Reg Bishop was the One Nation branch president in Oxley. Bishop, whom locals describe as "typical One Nation fodder ... very right-wing and a bit of an idiot" was last year interviewed by the local *Queensland Times*, where he called for the abolition of the Mabo and Wik rulings and warned that the establishment of an Australian Republic would inevitably lead to civil war. David Ettridge told the *Queensland Times* that he "personally agreed" with Bishop's comments. But he added: "Anyone elected to branch leadership should keep their mouth under control."

PUBLISHING AS THE PUBLISHER SEES IT

What's happening to publishing and publishing houses in the 1990s? Are readers still reading? Are publishers tackling the right issues? Is the book dead? If so, can it make a comeback like Lazarus?

With the publishing industry fighting off some slick modern competitors, like the Internet, hear publisher Sophie Cunningham on what to do, what's happening, and what the future holds.

SPEAKER : SOPHIE CUNNINGHAM (Publisher, Allen & Unwin)

TOPIC : *The Future of Australian Publishing*

DATE : Monday 25 May 1998

TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

VENUE : 41 Phillip St, Sydney LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

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Which is perhaps why within days he was on the phone to Oxley branch members, urging them to dump Bishop and organise another election. Former branch secretary Judy Thorne told the *Queensland Times* that Mr Ettridge told her: "I don't care what you do, so long as Reg Bishop does not get re-elected the president of the branch."

According to Thorne, Ettridge - who once accused Aborigines of cannibalism - believed that Bishop's comments were an embarrassment to the party. "Anyone who says anything publicly is under suspicion," Thorne said. "It doesn't matter what they say; they're just told that they can only repeat the lines written for them, and nothing more."

"One Nation candidates aren't as bad as Bill Kardamitsis - they're worse."

After she and others had virtually begged David Oldfield to call a meeting in Ipswich so that local party members and electors could discuss concerns with their MP, Oldfield organised a gathering, to which he, but not Hanson, turned up. Judy Thorne said that it was later discovered that Hanson had been hiding out in a Hungry Jack's fast-food restaurant around the corner from the meeting. Every so often, she said, one of Hanson's supporters would leave the meeting to inform the MP of the mood of the gathering.

The problem with One Nation is that it's full of Reg Bishops. Imagine what might happen during the rough and tumble of a state or federal election campaign. Not that the minders are too smart either.

Thanks to David Ettridge, former disciples of Lyndon LaRouche nearly found their way into Hanson's policy circle. Former Citizens' Electoral Councils head honcho Don Veitch, now of the tiny David Syme College of National Economics, persuaded David Ettridge and other One Nation branch secretaries to buy and distribute copies of Veitch's *Hansonism: Trick or Treat*, a bizarre conspiracy theory text that appears to suggest that Hanson was a creation of the *Australia/Israel Review*.

Veitch, a former Liberal staffer and inveterate conspiracy theorist, later turned on David Ettridge and issued a two page "factsheet" to other disaffected Hansonites outlining his supposed infractions. One Nation, for its part, issued an edict banning Veitch's book - a little late as \$4000 worth of copies had already been bought and distributed, according to John Pasquarelli. Such antics give the lie to David Ettridge's bold claim last year that far-right elements would be kept at bay.

Remember Bill Kardamitsis? In 1992 he was the ALP candidate in the Wills by-election. Early on in the campaign he was cornered by a gaggle of TV hacks in the street, even though he didn't want to talk to them. With the cameras rolling, and not a thought to be had, Bill was seen on that night's TV news legging it up Sydney Road, Coburg.

One Nation candidates aren't as bad as Bill Kardamitsis - they're worse. About a hundred times worse. They're little time bombs all waiting to go off and come the federal election campaign they will. During a federal election they will do to the One Nation campaign what Pauline Hanson did to the Liberals' 1996 campaign - except this time there isn't one Pauline Hanson; there's 128 or so running all over the country.

When Don Chipp left the Liberal Party in February 1977, to organise the Australian Democrats, he spent almost every waking hour until the Federal Election in December that year addressing meetings in cities and odd country towns, milking the contacts provided to him by the Australia Party, taking advantage of his positive national profile.

Pauline Hanson has been to Victoria once, other states never, and you can't drag her to a branch meeting in her own electorate. She may be polling 25-30 per cent in some parts of Queensland but when she's in Ipswich, you'll find her in Hungry Jacks.

"With Messrs Howard and Borbidge nervous they may give Hanson and Co their first and only real chance at power."

One Nation may very well be able to take advantage of the old Confederate Action Party networks, as well as tapping into the League of Rights and sundry bigots to help man the polling booths. Even then the League has shown a distinct preference for Graeme Campbell's Australia First Party, which is badly miffed by One Nation choosing to run a candidate against theirs in the state seat of Kingaroy. (Heaven knows what Graeme would say if he heard the rumours that David Ettridge and Tony Pitt recently travelled to his own seat of Kalgoorlie to meet potential One Nation candidates there.)

Rob Borbidge might believe that his stand on Wik will win him back the votes lost to Hanson. It's not Wik he should be worried about, however, but the shooters' vote, and he's probably lost that. As Rob Borbidge goes to the polls before Howard, he's the one who'll cop the collateral damage. For policies and

issues aside, Hanson's support rests heavily on the politics of discontent. And if John Howard is looking for any comfort in all of this, he might ring up the British High Commission to get the National Front's voting figures in England throughout the 1970s.

The Front shared many policies with the Hansonites, particularly on race, economics and law and order. Throughout the early 1970s, its vote had not been entirely spectacular, but in the 1976 Greater London Council elections, Londoners turned out in droves to vote for the Front. The Front didn't win a seat, but it registered its highest electoral vote ever. Yet it was unable to build on that vote in the subsequent General Election of 1979 for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, newly elected Tory leader Margaret Thatcher managed to steal the Front's thunder with her own handwringing speech about Britain being "swamped" by immigrants. In Britain's first-past-the-post voting system, many saw the Conservatives as a far more likely bet than the NF. Secondly, people were attracted to the NF's vitalist politics in the same way that many sing the praises of Hanson as someone "above" politics, "who'll clean up the whole mess". The sad fact is, however, that if vitalist politicians don't get the immediate breakthrough needed to "clean up the mess", their fickle and ill-informed voters often go back to the old parties, and what follows is an almighty bust-up in the party they've abandoned. It happened to the National Front in 1980-81, and, more ominously for Hanson, it happened to the Confederate Action Party in 1991-1992.

If this happens, then One Nation with its transparently populist policies, and chaotic internally bitter branch structure will invariably dissipate into the political wilderness as similar movements in Australian history have done throughout the century. The bad news is that with Messrs Howard and Borbidge nervous about recent polling figures in rural Queensland, in the preference deal game they may give Hanson and Co their first and only real chance at power.

Last month we asked the Prime Minister whether the Government would direct preferences away from One Nation. "We will make a judgement on that state by state and perhaps even electorate by electorate," he said. "You have to pay some regard to the character of the other candidates." Meanwhile the Queensland Liberal Party has announced it will put Hanson ahead of Labor in its preference divide in some seats.

THE SOCIAL FABRIC

Anne Henderson

FROM WELFARE TO WORK

It's no secret that political leaders are trying to wean us off welfare. Tony Blair, Bill Clinton and John Howard talk of no more dependency. But welfare reform means less money in the system. Either someone else pays or services go.

US President Bill Clinton sails into welfare-to-work partnership events across the USA, charms his audiences of business and local governors, then hard sells government moves to wind back welfare dependency with the help of the private sector. He does this all over the country.

In January, Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair launched a national debate on welfare saying, "we have become two nations - one nation trapped on benefits, the other paying for them." This following two decades of Thatcherism. Blair's alarming facts included a welfare bill costing every family 80 pounds a week, more money going to disability and incapacity benefits than the entire school system and benefit fraud enough to build 100 new hospitals.

The Howard Government has wound back benefits to migrants, working mothers and the unemployed. Pru Goward, head of the Office for the Status of Women, defends child care cuts saying working women will have to cope. Reality certainly bites.

Australian statistics illustrate a generic problem. In 1966 under nine per cent of Australians were welfare recipients; thirty years later the number had more than trebled. Full time workers have dropped from 90 to 75 per cent of the workforce, part time workers more than doubled, female participation rates risen by 50 per cent, and unemployment rates soared.

The phrase "have nots" has a new meaning. "Have nots" have tidy homes, children in cared for, often private, schools, work hard to pay mortgages, taxes and holiday bills but feel let down by government sponsorship of welfare recipients. "Haves" appear to

GARETH EVANS SHADOW TREASURER TO ADDRESS THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

IN JUNE, SHADOW TREASURER GARETH EVANS WILL ADDRESS THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE. WELL KNOWN AS AUSTRALIA'S FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER, GARETH EVANS WILL BE TACKLING THE WASH UP OF THE THIRD HOWARD GOVERNMENT BUDGET.

HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY IN JUNE - FOLLOWING PETER COSTELLO'S ADDRESS TO THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE.

SPEAKER : GARETH EVANS (Shadow Treasurer & Deputy Leader of the Opposition)

TOPIC : To be advised

DATE : Tuesday 16 June 1998

TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney

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get money for jam by way of tax funded allowances. Taxpayers (read voters) want value for money. In this climate the allegations are made that the taxes of hard working Australians on middle to low incomes (Howard's battlers) are funding the comfortable lifestyles of welfare recipients.

Enter the Howard Government's Common Youth Allowance from 1 July 1998, replacing the Youth Training, Newstart Allowance and Sickness Allowance for 16-20 year olds and most 15 year olds, and AUSTUDY for students aged 16-24 and older students if tertiary studies begin before 25.

Kim Beazley says the Howard Government's Common Youth Allowance will cost families on \$35,000 an extra \$55 a week to support their young unemployed adults. In question time, the Prime Minister did not deny all this and spoke only of benefits to country families. The Australian Democrats claim 33,250 young people may receive less money, 12,800 no payment at all and 13,400 be forced to return to school next year. Jocelyn Newman, Minister for Social Security, says the benefits are fair; some will get more and the system is flexible.

The emphasis of the Common Youth Allowance is family, the "dependant" category being assessed by a parental means test starting at \$23,400. The Howard Government hopes to compensate families for lost youth entitlements in extra tax relief. This assumes families will pass cash on to their young adult members rather than use it for pressing concerns like mortgages, divorce payments, younger children or nest eggs for retirement. The carve up is in the parents' court. Young people, staying longer at school and university, will be dependant on their families well into adulthood. Then there are HECS debts and, for many, AUSTUDY loan repayments. Dependancy followed by debt under government policy.

No one can argue against benefits being modified to suit changing times. And blow out budgets have to be pruned. But slugging off the welfare state is one thing; finding out you're part of it quite another.

A report released in April by the University of New South Wales Social Policy Research Centre, has found that social welfare payments, however much a burden on taxpayers, do not keep pace with the basest living standards. Payments do not provide even modest lifestyles. While the Minister for Social Security, Jocelyn Newman, says parts of it are subjective, at over 650 pages long it is not to be ignored.

In Britain, Tony Blair's Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, is having a tough time helping single mothers into work through improved child care allowances. There's a mindset against single mothers after Tory propaganda during the Major years. Blair also overruled Harman for attempting to introduce an affluence test to cut state benefits for the middle classes. Modernising welfare, as Blair calls it, is tricky.

Similarly, voter pressure spurred the Howard Government's work for the dole scheme. Yet, despite rhetoric describing the benefits, more than a third in the first pilot projects were coerced into taking part.

Likewise the shakeup of the Commonwealth Employment Scheme could turn sour when voters on retrenchment packages or partners who are not on benefits don't qualify for job placement assistance.

In the US, Bill Clinton woos audiences to his government sector/private sector "Pathways to Independence" program getting welfare recipients back to work. Clinton calls it a scheme "designed to make welfare a second chance, not a way of life" where government assistance to employers turns welfare into workfare. Now, gangs of conscripted welfare workers clean cities like New York for as little as \$68 a fortnight, cheap labour reminiscent of a century earlier.

There's no doubt we're getting tough on welfare with public consent. The question for the future is, whose welfare?

CLASSROOM CRISIS

Spare a thought for teachers - and the next generation. There is a monumental crisis in education and it's not literacy. Just released, the Senate Inquiry into the status of the teaching profession maintains the crisis is in teacher morale and lack of support for a vital professional group - teachers.

A Class Act, the Inquiry's report, regards such negativity as an indictment of how Australians value children.

We don't value our kids enough, or we'd be boosting teacher morale, whether work conditions, remuneration, opportunities for professional development, or good old fashioned belief in a dedicated profession.

Teachers are the single most important resource in the development and education of our young. *A Class Act* wants a concerted national effort to restore confidence and morale.

The Senate Committee consisted of government Senators John Tierney, Jeannie Ferris and Karen Synon - Senator Ferris backed by Nick Minchin; Senator Synon allied with Peter Costello - Labor Senators Rosemary Crowley (chair), Kim Carr, Kay Denman and George Campbell and Democrat Senators Natasha Stott Despoja and Lyn Allison.

There were over 300 submissions and sittings in all states as well as Darwin and Canberra. Government senators submitted a dissenting report, chiefly in relation to leaving responsibility with the States and Territories. It does not detract from the committee's conclusion overall that teaching is in crisis mode.

The submissions were surprisingly unanimous, supporting claims at every level that teachers do more with less, their efforts are frequently undermined by ill-informed and gratuitous criticism, career progression is largely non-existent and professional development severely eroded.

Teaching, it would seem, is the only profession where the client (usually a parent) will openly distrust the specialist skills of the profession. Everyone has been to school so the attitude persists that we all know what teaching is about. And "vocation", in teaching, encourages terms like self-sacrifice, loyalty, and devotion so interpersonal aspects of the profession are emphasised rather than the pedagogical.

The committee wants teachers articulating their professional skills more clearly and the emphasis, and weight, placed on the individual teacher put more into group status. Reading *A Class Act* you feel teachers, like mother, have surrendered too much to their charges. The committee wants to redeem teaching's image.

Morale is very low. Student submissions were positive about teachers but none wanted to join their ranks after witnessing their stressful lifestyles. Teachers told of not saying they were teachers at public functions, of violence, pointed to no remuneration for experience and the problem of promotion.

In relative terms, teachers' salaries have fallen 25 per cent in the last 20 years. A teaching career is more unattractive the longer it lasts. Teachers reach top salary after nine years. Promotion after that is by taking on administrative tasks until the teacher becomes a full-time administrator. Salary structures deter experienced teachers from remaining in the job.

But it's not just remuneration. Schools have been used to hide unemployment levels by forcing

students to spend longer in overly academic courses. Many teachers see themselves supervising bored youngsters who need more vital occupations. The Howard Government's Common Youth Allowance will see as many as 25,000 such students return to the classrooms.

Teachers resent government schools being spoken of as liabilities. Comments like those of Premier Jeff Kennett that teachers had never done a day's work in their lives illustrate high levels of community ignorance.

Teacher duties have expanded unreasonably, curricula exploding with every interest group demanding tack-on subjects (eg fly fishing in Tasmania). Governments expect more too. Under the Howard Government, teachers are asked, in addition to regular teaching areas, to increase emphasis on literacy, offer vocational education and promote the Keating Government's initiative on civics.

In Britain and the US scapegoating the teaching profession has given way to recognition that schooling is fundamental to a resourceful, modern and competitive global economy. Leaders like Tony Blair and Bill Clinton pitched their election bids at winning support for improving the status of educators.

In Australia, *A Class Act* is a tentative start, acknowledging the problem of community attitudes. The Inquiry has recommended sweeping efforts to improve teacher morale and working conditions - a national body to lift the status of teaching, a national recruitment campaign, more effective funding, lowering HECS for science students, improved post graduate teacher development, and recognition of teachers' experience in remuneration.

And for those who deride education for low entry scores to education faculties, a few statistics. The average age of teachers is 46, meaning a majority of current teachers took degrees when many of the brightest opted to teach. If cut off points have dropped in recent years, blame low morale and professional status, not teachers.

But those high calibre graduates are about to retire. Unless the status of teaching is mightily improved, teaching will not attract replacement quality graduates. Scapegoating teachers may have reaped a bitter reward.

(Anne Henderson is Deputy Director of The Sydney Institute)

THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

Therese Catanzariti

"We'll all be rooned" said Hanrahan

On Tuesdays, the Australian has a computer section lift-out. Thursday's *Sydney Morning Herald* has an IT section lift-out, and Saturday's paper has Icon magazine. These are conveniently folded so that you can discard them as soon as you buy your newspapers from the newsagent. You can live a blissful Luddite life in Sydney, and never have a computer problem that the Help Desk cannot solve.

However, lately, a few IT type stories have popped up in the Business section. Some have even made it on to the front page such as Y2K, the Year 2000 problem.

What is the problem? Computers store information on "bits". In the early days of computers and computer programming, every computer bit was sacred. As such, instead of entering the whole date, for example 02/12/1968, computer programmers abbreviated the date to 02/12/68. This saved bits and memory space, and was standard practice. This practice continued, even though computers developed huge storage capacities. So banks calculated interest based on the last two digits. The Tax Office calculated tax payable based on the last two digits. Superannuation funds worked out your age and your entitlements according to the last two digits. This was all well and good in 1968. But there was a problem in 1998. Say for example you are taking a loan this year payable in four years. If the bank's computer has not been made "Y2K compliant", it may treat this as 1902, and wonder why you are trying to pay interest on a loan that you paid back 98 years ago.

IT managers have stopped talking about "the solution". Even if your system is perfect, your system and your business interacts and depends on so many businesses and their systems. And who knows what their system is like. This is not a new problem. Your business has always relied on other businesses. Your system has always interacted with other systems. And you never knew what their system was like. It's just that the consequences are more dramatic.

So instead of talking about finding "the solution", many people are now talking about "risk

management". Trying to highlight where the weaknesses are in your system and your business, trying to fix up problems in your system and your business and asking questions about other people's systems and other people's businesses. Working with people to see how to manage the situation.

In an ideal world, everyone will talk to everyone else, and highlight their technical and commercial weaknesses.

So we'll all work together and lick it? As if. This is not a commercially realistic picture. Do you really think businesses are going to pour out their hearts to the financial press?

Commercially, there is a temptation to tell the market and your shareholders that it's all fine. We're working on it. Teams of people. Day and night. We'll be ready.

However, this would be a legally dangerous strategy. The Australian Corporations Law and the Australian Stock Exchange Listing rules require companies to disclose matters which may have a material effect on price. Y2K is a technical problem, but it will have commercial consequences. And these must be disclosed to the market, to shareholders.

In addition, directors have the responsibility to their companies to act with reasonable care and diligence. But what is reasonable care? It does not mean that directors have to come up with the solution. But it means that they must take steps to put risk management systems in place. For example, authorise an appropriate allocation of resources to the problem, engage IT consultants and risk management teams. Directors will not be able to bury their hands in the sand and pretend that they do not know about the problem.

Finally, the Trade Practices Act provides that corporations cannot engage in misleading and deceptive conduct in the course of trade. You cannot say you are "Y2K compliant", if you are not.

Only one thing is certain. If the sky does not, in fact, fall in, there's going to be lots of disgruntled people looking for a big pocket. Make sure it's not yours.

Therese Catanzariti is a film and television lawyer at Mallesons, who lectures in Intellectual Property Law at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Correction (Vol 2 No1). In the February 1998 issue of *The Sydney Institute Quarterly*, a typographical error occurred in the last sentence of the penultimate paragraph of Therese Catanzariti's letter in reply to Ian David on moral rights. The sentence should have read: "Investors and distributors will not wait for the court to make its decision."

BOOK REVIEWS

John McConnell

DIANA THE HUNTED: AUSTRALIA'S LOVE-HATE AFFAIR WITH THE ROYALS

By Diana Simmonds
Pluto Press, pb, 1998, rrp \$19.95
ISBN 1 8640 30437

While examining the Royal Family-Princess Diana relationship, this breezy book provides an Australian perspective on the House of Windsor. Diana Simmonds, the author of *Diana the Hunted* is *The Bulletin's* arts editor. Much of the discussion is based on Simmonds' previous books - *Princess Di - the National Dish - the making of a media star* (1983); and *Squidgie Dearest - the making of a media goddess* (1995).

Raised in Kenya, Diana Simmonds lived for a time in Britain before migrating to Australia. She has an irreverent eye. At least, this is a prominent feature of *Diana the Hunted*. Add insight and lively writing and you have some 200 pages of interesting and provocative material. *Diana the Hunted* is critical social comment unfolding within a very easy writing style. Wit and a "no-holds barred" approach accompany each other throughout the book's pages. At times, the words rip the facade away from public personas.

Diana Simmonds' observations are not confined to Diana Spencer and Charles, their respective families, the British class system and the media. The author makes known her attitude to other issues along the way. Try Thatcherism, political parties, economic rationalism, feminist implications, as well as the Australian prime minister, John Howard (a "shameful excuse for a prime minister"). There's a neat observation about the Australian Liberals studying the British Labour Party, while Tony Blair and colleagues were checking out the ALP. The critique one would expect of the media is there. But *Diana the Hunted* does not dwell particularly on the role of the paparazzi or that fateful moment in Paris. Diana Simmonds regrets the superficiality the media appear content to bring to their reporting.

What else should we expect, she asks, when the

media is ruled by the sound byte, and an Oprah Winfrey level of analysis? The book's 32 chapters are organised in three parts. Part three begins on page 115 in a chapter entitled "And this is where the story really starts". This is because the author judges there is not much to say about the embryonic fairy princess. Although, there is some limited discussion of Diana and family within part two.

Essentially, the first two parts of the book range across past and present members of the Royal Family and their role, and relationships with Australia. *Diana the Hunted* does not reflect favourably on the monarchy. Royalty, according to the author, produces something akin to an atavistic response in many subjects. The Queen is the equivalent of a bright night light for those afraid of the dark. The author admits to an admiration for the person of Princess Diana - "one of those special lights that twirl and make pretty shapes and maybe even twinkle out a lullaby - no matter that she occasionally popped a bulb or blew a fuse".

As for Charles, that is something else. He was "born with a middle-aged mind". He is a "practiced and practising hypocrite".

There is more. Along predictable lines. The British upper class cops quite a serve too. The system produces emotional cripples. A "collective unconscious" governs the heart of the British establishment.

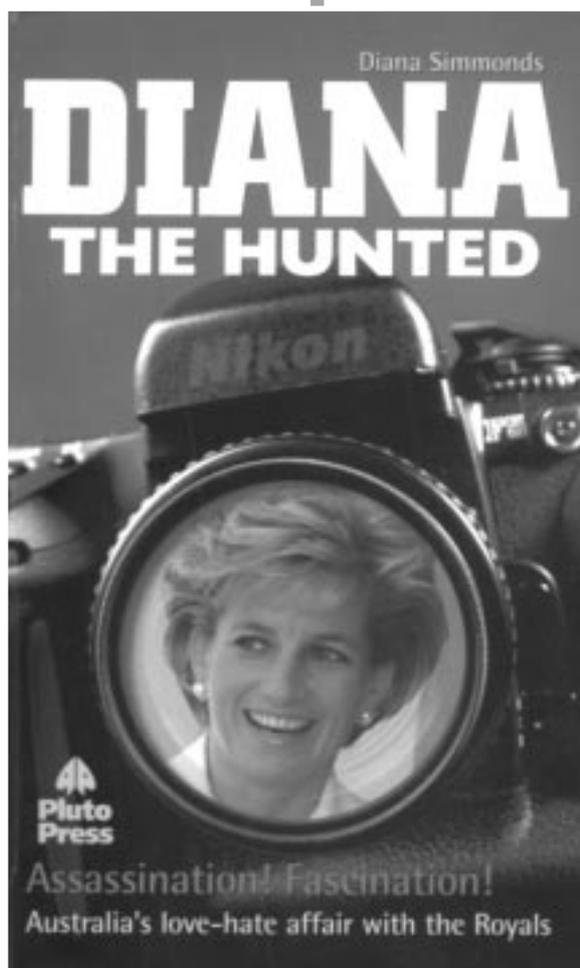
Princess Diana is spared such harsh judgements. Sure, Diana had flaws, the author says. But she "became an extraordinary human being who transcended the boundaries that had been imposed upon her - by royalty and by the media". The girl had charisma. Despite the (breeding) odds. Diana Spencer was a person transformed. Formerly shy and withdrawn, she became radiant and communicated compassion to masses of people.

Diana Spencer used the media, of course. But she

was a creation of the media too. There was a time when members of the House of Windsor and their minders controlled royal image-making. Not any more, states Diana Simmonds. And the Royal Family, she argues, are an enigmatic lot. We know so much about them. And yet we know so little. Profound changes in societal norms have passed this family by.

Meanwhile, the family admits certain individuals only to the fold. Roman Catholics need not apply, unless they are prepared to put the position of a future king or queen at risk. Diana passed a number of tests (including the virginity requirement).

No doubt, Camilla Parker-Bowles, Lady Dale (Kanga) Tryon, as well as members of the Royal Family failed to anticipate the potential for personal growth within the shy young Diana Spencer. But as time went on, Princess Diana "was being got at", the author argues. She was not paranoid. Her death means that the royal version of who and what they are is changed. This is a matter about which there is some disagreement. Only the other day, a British academic labelled the late Princess Diana a self-centred sentimentalist who brought a child-like naivety to her royal role.



From Australia's perspective, Simmonds is perplexed by our snail-like progress in the direction of a republic. Australia's relationship with the Royals, states Diana Simmonds, has been "cataclysmic", and the monarchy has ceased to make sense as an Australian institution. Our respective paths point in different directions. Diana Spencer's conclusion: the Royal Family is irrelevant to Australians.

**ONE DESTINY! THE STORY OF
FEDERATION**
By Roslyn Russell & Philip Chubb
Penguin, pb, 1998, rrp \$24.95
ISBN 0 14 026032 3

The primary focus of Roslyn Russell and Philip Chubb falls on the 1890s, and the steps within the

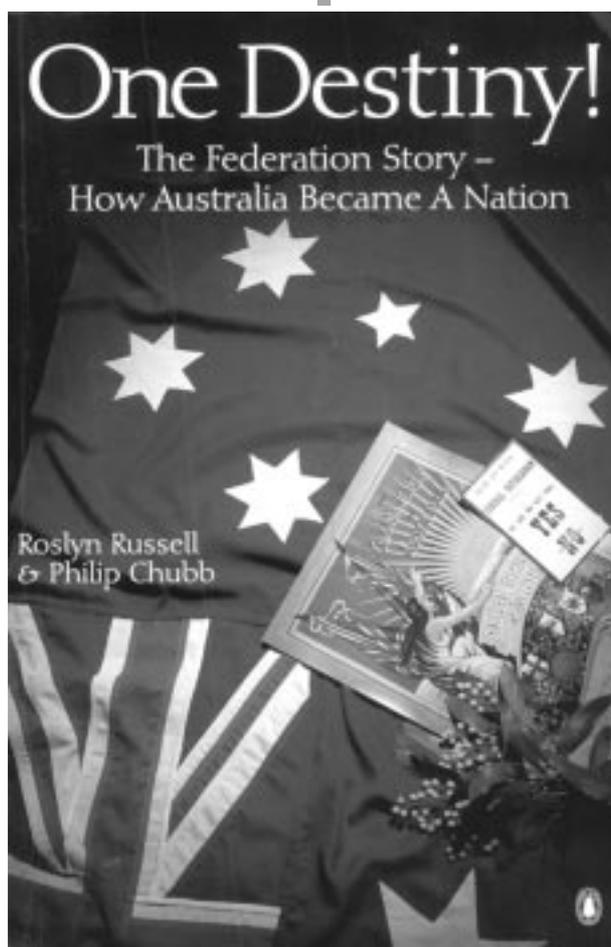
then Australian colonies that culminated in federation. *One Destiny!* presents ten stories leading to the formation of the Australian nation. Roslyn Russell is a historian and writer. Philip Chubb, now managing director of a multimedia production company, is a journalist and former producer of the ABC's *7.30 Report*. Both Chubb and Russell worked on the CD ROM entitled *One Destiny! The Federation Story*

distributed to secondary schools throughout Australia, as part of a federal government Centenary of Federation project. The book, apparently, was written to complement the CD ROM. It is easy to read, even if there is an occasional encounter with a very long sentence. Thirty two pages of historical photographs, cartoons, and other art works are included in the publication. As well, many extracts from contemporary sources are spread through-out the pages of the book.

The opening chapter recounts celebrations accompanying federation. Attention is directed primarily to the procession that paraded through the streets of Sydney. This chapter also discusses the opening of the first federal parliament in Melbourne in May 1901. Tom Roberts' well-known painting of the parliamentary inauguration gains a mention. This was the painting in which Tom Roberts exercised a degree of artistic licence. While reproducing prominent figures who were at Melbourne's Exhibition Building that day, the artist saw fit to include some friends who were not in attendance.

Russell and Chubb employ a number of perspectives or themes to pen their picture of federation. One chapter entitled "At the border" reports the customs transition experienced as the colonies moved to nationhood. From guarding often artificial lines drawn on the map by administrators back in England, customs officials became the gatekeepers of the new Commonwealth.

Some interesting reminders are positioned within this chapter. One is that time was not standardised in Sydney and Melbourne until 1895. Another, is just how long it took to achieve the single gauge railway line linking Sydney and Melbourne. Elsewhere, the authors recall how the growing sense of national identity incorporated commitment to the military defence of the then British Empire.



There is a chapter devoted too to the defence of the colonies, and Australian pressure exerted on Britain to annex New Guinea. White Australia is there, along with the marginalisation of Australia's indigenous people. The makers of the Australian constitution saw no need to incorporate references to Aboriginals. "The new Commonwealth" the authors proclaim with justification, "did not provide any occasion for celebration for the original inhabitants of Australia". A potent thought as we approach the Centenary of Federation, and issues such as a republic and possible amendments to the Australian constitution.

Other chapters address the labour movement, empire or republic, and making the constitution. On the role of women, Russell and Chubb argue that women were not simply passive spectators, even though they did not enjoy an official or initiating role in the federation process. Their voices were heard in the convention deliberations, while the goal of a uniform franchise was realised. It was a franchise, of course, that did not extend to Aboriginal people.

Russell and Chubb refer to Tom Roberts' "Big Picture" in the concluding chapter. They conclude with an invitation to Australians to consider how much the "Big Picture" has changed since 1901 as we approach the centenary of federation.

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

THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE'S NEW CHAIR

Meredith Hellicar is the new chair of The Sydney Institute. Rob Ferguson is now the Institute's deputy chair. Hellicar and Ferguson make something of a dynamic duo, at the head of the prominent forum The Sydney Institute has become.

A successful graduate in Law and Arts, Meredith Hellicar is also an accomplished musician. She began her career in the Foreign Affairs Department but changed to the private sector at Esso Australia, Chase Corporation, Bond Brewing and the New South Wales Coal Association where she was director from 1989 to 1994.

In 1997 Meredith Hellicar resigned from her position as managing director TNT Logistics Asia prior to the birth of her first child. In 1998 she has re-emerged into the business world with her appointment as chief executive of Corrs Chambers Westgarth - the first female chief executive officer of a major Australian legal firm.



Meredith Hellicar has been a Board member of The Sydney Institute since October 1993. She recently chaired The Sydney Institute's Tax Reform initiative and chaired meetings in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne with representatives from government, business and interest groups to thrash out the key issues with Geoff Carmody of Access Economics. Geoff Carmody's paper on tax *Australia's Taxation "System": From Political Football to Fiscal Foundation* is the result of this initiative.

In the tradition of all Sydney Institute chairs, Meredith Hellicar has a lively interest in ideas and making a contribution to the ongoing debate and discussion within all sections of the community.

At the Larry Adler Lecture in 1997, introducing the writer Shirley Hazzard, Meredith Hellicar expressed her own personal delight in the breadth and challenge offered by the creative thinker, urging her audience to hear Ms Hazzard with their minds and hearts, to "sit back, empty your minds of construction and welcome and listen to Shirley Hazzard".

The Sydney Institute is delighted to have Meredith Hellicar as its new chair.

Alongside Rob Ferguson as the deputy chair, it should be exciting times ahead for debate, discussion of the issues as they fall - and lots more - at The Sydney Institute.

The Institute is most grateful to Rob Ferguson for his leadership as chairman over the past five years.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

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REVIEW OF THE REVIEWERS

Stephen Matchett

The shade of Whitlamism stalks the land in the guise of Mark Latham, heir to E G Whitlam's seat and intellectual mantle.

It is not that the political context of Latham's book, *Civilising Global Capital* (Allen and Unwin) is in any way similar to the early 1970s when Whitlam strode the social democrat landscape like a colossus. Certainly some similarities abide. The un-reconstructed left complains that Latham follows Whitlam in wanting to demolish Australian industry in pursuit of free trade.

The Tories still divide between advocates of the market and the rent seekers who believe in competition as long as it does not affect their privileges.

But apart from those on both sides of the party divide who yearn for a mythical Australia where the Tariff Board did the bidding of the great shaman McEwen to place chickens in pots and Holdens in garages, nobody much could draw comparisons between the world Whitlam set out to change and the one that exercises Latham.

To his credit Latham understands this and his argument that it is time for a re-fit of the social democratic conceptual engine room has much to commend it. The problem is that he appears so determined to justify the need for change that he ignores the manifest fact that Keating Labor recognised much of what he warns against.

Australians who watched Labor's deregulation of the economy, its struggle against the remorseless rise in unemployment, the re-engineering of the university system and the creation of a bewildering raft of income support programs for the ever growing underclass do not need Mark Latham to warn them that the verities of the closed economy and welfare state no longer apply. They have heard it all before.

And while Labor's hard men have distanced themselves from Latham's pronouncements there is

much in the book to comfort the party, desperately seeking ways to win back the blue and fraying white collar families in the suburbs who deserted in 1996.

With its talk of taxing luxury consumption not income, the villainies of transnationals, targeted welfare, jobs for all and the need for government to earn community trust, elements of the Latham package will variously appeal to everybody from bleeding hearted Democrat to black hearted Hansonite.

Yet for all its talk of new paradigms and erudition, in so far as summaries of the policy-speak essays which appear in liberal middle-brow American journals constitute erudition, there is little new in either Latham's ideas or their political application.

Latham proposes a third way for social democrats, distinct from the failed Tory nostrums of government by class interest on the one hand and nanny state paternalism on the other and points to the achievements of Blair and Clinton in creating this model.

One wonders what a raft of Keating cabinet members will think of this praise of a prime minister who is yet to make any of the hard yards Australian Labor did in the 1980s or a president who cannot establish a coherent health policy and commands an economy where job growth is based on ever increasing numbers working for a unliveable minimum wage.

In essence Latham offers little that is new. His key ideas are variations on themes long with us, decked out in a quasi calvinist dress of salvation through works (the deserving poor should contribute to their own welfare) and Algerist self help (individuals must secure their future through re-education and training).

Certainly Latham provides a bewildering confection of political notions and policy nostrums. But while the circumstances are radically different from the early 1970s, the two members for Werriwa remain united by one core belief, one which ties Latham firmly to the vanished world of Whitlamism; the assumption that government can save us all by a judicious application of brain (tertiary educated of course) power deployed in The Programme .

The book's most important point is that the existing tax base cannot support the level of social, community and education services the community expects. In essence, big government can no longer support itself without a new funding base and a raft of other economic reforms, not to mention the

re-establishment of a sense of community, which presumably existed in some golden age of Australian history now lost to historians.

The Programme, a draft of which Latham conveniently provides in his book, can achieve all this.

Latham, like Whitlam, believes in government's capacity to orchestrate change. As such he is the direct heir of Roosevelt, Bevan and any number of Australian social engineers who believed that the wise and the good could best govern for the community interest through selective and enlightened social and economic intervention.

Of course Latham is too literate a policy thinker to argue this in explicit terms. Indeed most of the book calls for a new political paradigm which protects the poor and encourages economic growth as the single possible means of improving the economic condition of ordinary Australians. For hundreds of pages he hammers away at his central theme that both government and marketplace have failed to provide the balance of economic health and social justice that a balanced democratic polity needs if it people are to prosper.

But the new paradigm is in fact not all that new. Latham criticises "industry welfare" but argues for governments to intervene in the economy to create knowledge based national and regional growth. He denounces welfareism but proposes new methods to regulate the poor. He argues for tax reform but calls for a new administratively cumbersome and politically unsaleable system

At the end of the day the real sin of Whitlamism in Latham's book is his belief that all will be well when the economically literate, social democrats get to run things. Latham demonstrates a touching faith in the power of education to create policy elites which will judiciously pull the policy leavers to make all well.

For all his social and economic mechanical plans of Schlieffen-esq complexity Latham presents a stew of ideas which deserve to be debated, and quite probably would be if the book was an easier read.

Civilising Global Capital's most egregious fault is that it reads less like a policy monograph or polemic than an undergraduate essay, hugely burdened with detail. Latham loads the policy shottie with intellectual rock salt and lets us have it with both barrels.

The problem is compounded by the sad fact that

Latham's style is burdened by the policy-speak. The prose is dense at best, with ideas disappearing in thickets of bureaucratese. To pull out examples is unfair but five minutes of random reading will demonstrate what a chore the book is. Latham was not well served by his editor at Allen and Unwin who should have gently sent him off to re-write. Even in these straightened publishing times what reads like a very rough first draft does not a finished book make.

None of this of course bothered most of the commentators who were positively glowing. The response to *Civilising Global Capital* demonstrates the collapse of Australia's policy culture when a politician has only to write anything longer than a press release to get a dream media run, a point made by Michael Millett (*Sydney Morning Herald* 3 April 1998):

The attention afforded *Civilising Global Capital* says a lot about the relative paucity of free-range, detailed policy thinking in Canberra these days.

Which is probably why most hacks (at least those not so obsessed with the tactical battle of day to day politics) praised Latham's cumbersome collection of ideas as a coherent policy blueprint for Labor.

Among the few outright critics Peter Botsman (*The Australian* 14 April) represented the Bourbon left with outraged accusations of apostasy and horror that a Labor member could produce such heretical deviation from the true faith of socialisation of the means of production.

Botsman made the right noises about the importance of new ideas but then proceeded to demonstrate that he was opposed to many of Latham's. He criticised the book's emphasis on social capital and Latham's refusal to recognise that Australia has gone to hell in a hand basket since Whitlam cut tariffs.

Botsman also argued that Latham's rejection of "industry policy", which some readers might interpret as code for government direction, was "a failure to recognise the successful active and evolving role of industry policy in East Asia." Like in those policy power houses Japan and Korea?

Botsman's mischievous sense of fun was at odds with most of the commentators who diligently summarised Latham's key ideas and forgave him the faults they detected in the book on the grounds that at least he was interested in policy.

Lincoln Wright (*Canberra Times*, 14 April 1998)

uncritically praised the book for its attack on both “the old nostrums of state intervention or free market dogmas” and distinguished it from, “Labor’s fundamental world view on the role of the state as the captain of the economy”.

Laura Tingle, (*Sydney Morning Herald* 4 April 1998) was interested in the book's impact on the parliamentary tactics of an election year but otherwise confined herself to a favourable summary of Latham’s themes. Her only substantive criticism was less of Latham than partisan politics in general:

...the one thing that Latham’s survey of ideas does not encompass: leadership and courage. In an environment where the prime minister of the day blames a change in Labor policy on car tariffs for his own back down to the car makers, the time should be ripe for Labor to be setting a much broader agenda for Australian politics.

Richard Salmons (*Sunday Age*, 5 April 1998) made much the same point, praising the book for its intellectual scope, particularly in its timing:

The extraordinary thing is that so many intelligent contributions have been made so close to the intellectual vacuum of an election campaign.

Peter Charlton (*Courier Mail*, 4 April 1998) stopped short of hailing Latham as a prophet whose ideas can take Labor from the slough of ideological despond to the broad sunny uplands of policy purity but only just:

The thrust of Latham’s book, and his understanding of the issues confronting governments and policymakers around the world, are much more important than some minor short-term embarrassment for Kim Beazley.

Brian Toohey (*Financial Review* 31 March 1998) was also generous in a favourable piece most interesting for its acute judgement of the political dilemma

Latham poses for Labor. Toohey was not convinced by Latham’s tax reform plans but argued that the idea of a HECS principle for welfare benefits was both good politics and policy. The problem is that Labor was not in the market for policies:

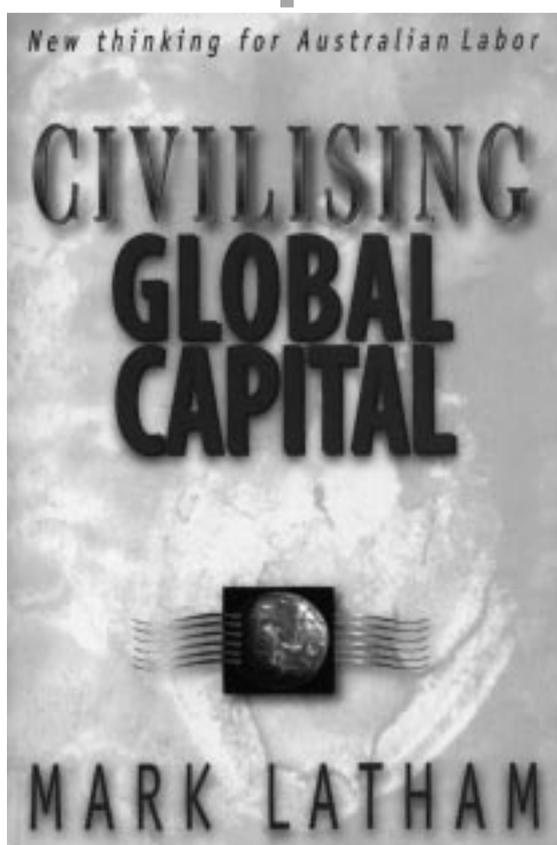
The pressure on Beazley to instantly back away from ideas floated by “young turks” like Latham on his front bench reflects the success enjoyed by John Howard while in Opposition of saying as little as possible that might frighten the voters before an election. However with Howard nowhere near as on-the-nose electorally as former prime minister Paul Keating, Labor will be struggling to win unless it comes up with policies aimed at helping its traditional constituency adapt to the stresses of global change.

There was more of the same in Michael Millett’s supportive discussion in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (3 April 1998) which argued that there is little comfort for either side of the partisan divide in Latham's argument. For Labor, the book highlights; “how painfully threadbare its own policy cupboard is and how it is simply postponing difficult policy decisions in pursuit of short-term political gains”. For the Coalition it shows how a world where income division is becoming stratified will not help them:

The top 30 per cent have done well under the Howard administration. You wouldn’t bet on the remaining 70 per cent backing the Coalition into the new millennium.

Paul Kelly (*The Australian* 1 April 1998) was ambivalent about the book. “The strength of Latham’s book is his analysis not his prescriptions - many of which are contradictory and unrealistic”, seeing its importance as proving a new and necessary policy direction for Labor:

Labor must rely upon universal values not sectional interests. Collective action



should be reinforced by individual responsibility. The Keating government's mistake was to fall back upon sectional interests. Today's ALP can't rely upon pitching to protectionists, feminists and multiculturalists but needs, instead, an over-arching set of universal ideas.

Gary Johns, in the *Courier Mail*, (11 April 1998) was not over-awed by Latham's stew of ideas and was one of the few commentators to point to contradictions in the book. In particular he suggested that Latham's rejection of the traditional universalist welfare-state may maintain the very problem he seeks to solve:

The question is whether this means a designer label welfare state, where everyone's tastes can be catered for. I can see more categories of provision and more public servants to service them. What about black, Muslim, disabled, vegetarian, young women's legal centres?

A cheap shot making a valid point.

John's most telling criticism was to bell the cat of style and suggest that Latham's book may not attract and hold the audience it deserves:

Its greatest strength is that it has been published, its greatest weakness is that much of it will remain unread. The electorate is the better for knowing that there are real thinkers in parliament but Latham's thoughts will need to be distilled if they are to generate the renewal he seeks on the left of the political divide.

Terry McCrann made the same point in the only comprehensive bucketing of *Civilising Global Capital*, (*Herald Sun* 8 April 1998).

Not to put too fine a point on it, to me the book is literally unreadable. And I would venture to say that it will remain unread by the vast majority of Australians. ...The book is as impenetrable as a primeval forest.

If McCrann was dismissive of Latham's prose he was contemptuous of the book's premise:

It ultimately fails, precisely because, as its title indicates, it is based on that appealing but false assumption of "bad but efficient" capitalism and "good but unworkable socialism" ... He is hostage to the 19th

century belief, totally valid back then, that political Labor had to defend the workers from the wicked "money power" .

And he added that Latham's positive reception has less to do with its content than its promise that the left can still deliver solutions and the Canberra press gallery's obsession with the politics of personality:

The enthusiasm for the book is a fusing of the personality blood lust in our (the world's) media that crosses party and ideological lines, and a desperate longing for a new socialism that works.

In the marketplace of ideas McCrann was not buying, but it made a change from all the over-generous praise.

SENATOR THE HON JOCELYN NEWMAN

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SENATOR NEWMAN
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GERARD HENDERSON'S MEDIA WATCH

HIDDEN AGENDAS - OR HIDDEN AGENDA?

Sydney-born journalist John Pilger returned Down Under in May for Sydney Writers' Week and for media appearances following the launch of his book *Hidden Agendas* (Vintage, 1998). The page before the introduction contains a quote from George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past."

Good point. Even if it is somewhat disturbing to see a barracker for the communist totalitarian regime in Vietnam quoting an author who opposed totalitarianism without qualification.

The introduction to *Hidden Agendas* is replete with familiar pilgerisms. John Pilger, a professional journalist widely quoted in the media, complains that "we have government by the media, for the media". There is more of such tosh - including the (unsourced) allegation that the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is "an organisation...deeply involved in the drugs trade". This is the familiar refrain of the Lunar Right and what remains of the extreme left.

The (communist) government in Vietnam is praised for resisting American values. No mention is made of repression in Vietnam. *Hidden Agendas* quotes Bertolt Brecht's poem *The Solution* with approval. No mention is made of the fact that Brecht supported communist regimes in the Soviet Union and East Germany and that he stole much of his literary output from female friends. All this is documented in John Fuegi's *The Life and Lies of Bertolt Brecht* (HarperCollins, 1994).

And, of course, there is more Pilger generated conspiracy. This time the allegation is that "the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other 'international' institutions are invested with the privileges of conquest on behalf of the new papacy in Washington". According to this particular pilgerism, all this means that Bill Clinton and (North American) friends are in the process of establishing a "de facto world government".

Heard that one before? Almost certainly, yes. The

central core of the Lunar Right conspiracy - stated in Australia by the likes of Pauline Hanson and Brian Wilshire among others - turns on the allegation that the World Bank, IMF and so on are in the process of establishing a world government. John Pilger provides the leftist allegation. Same conspiracy theory, different authors.

While on the topic of conspiracy theories, hidden agendas and the like, it should be recorded that John Pilger's most recent tome does not throw any light on some unanswered questions emanating from his 1986 book *Heroes*. Pity, really.

Before reading *Heroes*, Pilger followers were entitled to believe that their hero was an unequivocal leftist who would have no truck with US imperialism. He himself had stated time and time again that he had opposed the US military industrial complex along with the CIA and all its works. And he was on record as describing the communist revolution in Vietnam as an act of liberation.

Then *Heroes* appeared at the book shops. It told a fascinating tale. Pilger recounted that he was in Saigon (now called Ho Chi Minh City) in April 1975 - just before it fell to Hanoi's Soviet-equipped forces. He had a choice. Stay and report the liberation. Or do a bunk.

It is a matter of record that Mr Pilger voted with his feet. He junked the communist liberators and fled into the arms of Uncle Sam. He vacated Vietnam via a US Navy helicopter from the roof of the US Embassy in Saigon and was landed on the *Blue Ridge*, the command ship of the US Seventh Fleet (which was incorrectly described by Pilger as an aircraft carrier).

It's funny when you think about it. There was Australia's leading leftist of his generation fleeing Vietnam per courtesy of the US military industrial complex with Tom Polgar, the CIA station chief in Saigon, as a fellow passenger.

John Pilger's inelegant exit from Saigon in April 1975 raises fundamental issues. Did the US military at the time reserve seats in US Navy helicopters for leftists doing the bunk from communist liberators. More

seriously, did Uncle Sam have a, er, hidden agenda concerning Mr Pilger? If so, what? Alas, *Hidden Agendas* does not say.

PIERS AKERMAN, ONCE A LEFTIE

It's not only leftists like John Pilger who have re-ignited interest in Vietnam. The same is true of (latter-day) conservative columnists Piers Akerman and Christopher Pearson.

Writing in *The Australian* and the *Courier Mail*, Michael Duffy drew attention to the appalling behaviour of the Waterside Workers Federation and the Seamen's Union during World War II. This was particularly so around the time of the Nazi Soviet Pact of 1939-41 where, at the behest of the Communist Party of Australia, both unions took every possible opportunity to sabotage the Allied war effort.

It was not long before Piers Akerman decided to partake of some of the anti-wharfie action. In a pre Anzac Day column Akerman thundered:

According to *Wharfies*, Margo Beasley's history of the WWF, the unionists abused their privilege of exemption and used the opportunity provided by the war years to further their industrial muscle. Little has changed in 55 years.

As for the Opposition Leader Kim Beazley and others in the ALP and their ABC publicists who have been talking about "unAustralian" activities by those determined to make the waterfront competitive, let them explain the genuinely "unAustralian" stance taken against men and women serving not only in the WWII, but also in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

Historian Hal Colebatch has furnished plenty of detail in his work *A Twisted*

***Mirror* and so too has former servicemen Joe Gullet in his memoir *Not as a Duty Only*. (*Daily Telegraph*, 23 April 1998)**

Mr Akerman's criticism of the stance taken by Australian wharfies "against men and women serving not only in WWII but also in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts" was deeply moving. Especially in view of the source.



John Pilger

For, on 27 November 1971, the leftist *Nation Review* carried a full page advertisement addressed to the (then) Coalition prime minister William McMahon. The petition was based on the (false) assumption that the McMahon government was about to send military advisers to train Cambodian forces. At the time the Cambodian government, headed by Lon Nol, was doing battle against the North Vietnamese Army and Hanoi's (then) ally the Khmer Rouge.

Piers Akerman decided to take a stance. He co-signed the *Nation Review* advertisement which, interalia:

- claimed that, due to the decision of Robert Menzies's government to send forces to Vietnam, Australia had become "an accomplice in one of the most obscene crimes of the 20th century".
- alleged that Australia's Vietnam commitment had "made mercenaries of our Armed Forces" and was "the most shameful chapter in our nation's history".
- and maintained that the Coalition was "once again to throw our national integrity and the rights of the Indo-Chinese people to the winds and go careering into another cesspool of American imperial politics".

The Akerman-endorsed petition criticised the "reactionary regimes" in Saigon and Phnom Penh. But there was no criticism whatsoever of communist movements in Indo China - the North Vietnamese

Army, the Viet Cong or Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge. Why would there be? After all Mr Akerman co-signatories included well-known communists (Laurie Aarons, Jack Munday) and leftists (Alex Carey, Hall Greenland, Helen Palmer, Jim Cairns, Lionel Murphy, Pat Clancy) alike. Oh, by the way, Jennie George (who these days is a regular Akerman target) signed the advertisement.

There was also a "Trade Unions" section. Here those comrades lining up alongside Piers Akerman included Waterside Workers Federation national secretary Charlie Fitzgibbon and Elliott .V. Elliott of the Seamen's Union.

Hang on, just a minute. At the time the Waterside Workers Federation and the Seamen's Union were acting against Australians serving in Vietnam. Little wonder, in a sense. If Akerman was right in November 1971 in arguing that members of the Australian Defence Force were "mercenaries" taking part "in one of the most obscene crimes of the 20th Century" while participating in a "cesspool of American imperial politics" then, perhaps, the wharfies were acting honourably. But not, of course, if the Akerman et al thesis was false.

The stance of Piers Akerman and his (then) leftist mates has been mentioned twice - some years ago by Malcolm McGregor on the Channel 10 program *The Last Shout* and, independently, by Gerard Henderson in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* on 5 May 1998. An indignant Akerman sought and received a right of reply. He claimed that it was "absurd...to draw any philosophical joy" from his "opposition to Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War". (Piers Akerman's letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 May 1998 and *The Age* 8 May 1998).

But that's not the point. Many patriotic Australians opposed Australia's involvement in Vietnam. Including Akerman's contemporary nemesis Kim Beazley. But Kim Beazley never described Australian soldiers as "mercenaries" or publicly accused their

own country of being "an accomplice of one of the most obscene crimes of the 20th Century".

At least the vast majority of Akerman's one-time comrades-in-arms circa 1971 have held a consistent position. Few have jumped the fence to moralise at length about the faults of wharfies who acted against Australia's Vietnam commitment without stating that they once co-signed a petition with the then

leaders of the Waterside Workers Federation and the Seamen's Union. Shame, Piers, Shame.

AND NOW FOR NUMBER 7

While on the matter of indignation, consider the case of once-upon-a-time Khmer Rouge supporter and contemporary political conservative Christopher Pearson.

Mr Pearson wrote recently to the *Sydney Morning Herald* (9 May 1998) and *The Age* (11 May 1998) to warn of "the perils of writing an autobiographical essay". The reference is to the essay "The ambiguous business of coming out" in Peter Coleman's edited collection *Double Take* (Mandarin, 1996).



Piers Akerman

There Mr Pearson revealed that in 1975, when doing "a third year politics course at Adelaide University" he and his fellow students learnt that "the Khmer Rouge had taken Phnom Penh". Whereupon Christopher and friends "adjourned to the Staff Club and toasted them [Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge] in Great Western Champagne".

In *Double Take* Pearson wrote that this became "an occasion of continuing shame". But, apparently, he no longer wants others to share his shame. In his *SMH/Age* letter, Christopher Pearson attributed his one-time support for the Khmer Rouge to "youthful folly" which occurred when "he was attending a Politics 2 seminar". Christopher Pearson was born in August 1951. In April 1975, when Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, Mr Pearson was close to 24. Not all that youthful, really. But folly knows no age limits for students of Politics 2 - or was it Politics 3?

Oh yes, Mr Pearson has claimed that Gerard Henderson has mentioned his pro-Khmer Rouge Great Western Champagne toast six times "in print". If so, this is the seventh. Let's drink to that.

ROBERT MANNE ON SANTA

Now let's hear from a one-time anti Vietnam commitment marcher and one-time Gough Whitlam supporter. Yes, we're talking about former *Quadrant* editor and current *Sydney Morning Herald/Age* columnist Robert Manne.

The late B.A. Santamaria (1915-98) used to front the self-funded *Point of View* program on Channel 9 each Sunday. When he commenced writing a weekly column for *The Australian* in 1976, Santamaria usually used this spot to re-work his *Point of View* material.

Originally an avowed opponent of Santamaria and his National Civic Council, Associate Professor Manne became something of a Santamaria fan in the 1980s and 1990s. In this capacity, he was one of the key speakers at the NCC's (read Movement's) fiftieth anniversary aberration which was held in Melbourne in August 1991. Manne shared the platform with Archbishop Eric D'Arcy, Bishop George Pell and B.A. Santamaria. Three bishops and a *Quadrant* editor.

These days Robert Manne has a fortnightly spot on the ABC Radio National *Life Matters* program. It's called "Point of View". On Friday 27 February 1998 Robert Manne gave his point of view on "Point of View" about the man who came out as a public figure on his very own *Point of View* program over three decades ago. Confused? Well, so was Robert Manne. And, presumably, his listeners.

Let's go to the audio tape.

Norman Swan: How do you think he's [Santamaria's] been treated by the media since he died?

Robert Manne: Well, I mean, it's been mixed. I think - I thought at times on the ABC that it wasn't properly being remembered yesterday that he'd just died and there seemed to me as if there wasn't - at certain moments I thought.

NS: There was a bit of edginess still.

RM: ...for someone who's died it wasn't fully there.

NS: Mm

RM: I was thinking of, say the Gerard Henderson/ Peter Thompson discussion. But in general I think there's been a lot of extremely interesting material that's come forward. I was a bit disturbed this morning by something else actually, which was Jim McClelland giving a view of what Santamaria thought of John Howard. Which I thought again was pretty inappropriate at this time, but anyhow. So my view is that it's been mixed.

Confused? Well, there's more (confusion) to come.

NS: What sort of person was he [Santamaria] in terms of how you related to him?

RM: Well I found him extremely - one of the most interesting and most admirable public figures and public men that I've ever encountered. I wouldn't call him a public - an intellectual in the deeper sense because I think that there was something more kind of fixed or rigid in his point of view than is my version of the intellectual which less questing. But what I really admired most in him was the - his sense of character which is one of the most remarkable characters. And also, I mean, a few people have said this and it's completely true, that he was in private meeting much less formidable or dour or whatever than - or zealous than people thought. In fact he was charming, modest, interested in other people, very witty and so on.

And this part - I'm glad that this part is coming out because there was really quite a dichotomy between the public perception and the public role he played and the language of his public voice. And his private demeanour which was very, very charming. And that certainly didn't come across yesterday in one or two discussions.

Hello. Are you still there? Good show. Then try the following confusion.

NS: What's the value of those sorts of characteristics [Manne had cited Santamaria's virtues of analytical intelligence, courage, persistence and informing vision] in an individual which you're saying is almost like a de-ontological approach. It's a - there's a very rigid set of values and beliefs which set his career and set the course of his life intellectually, versus, as you say, your definition of the

intellectual which is somebody who is a bit more curious and a bit more wider ranging and a bit more adaptable? What's the value of somebody like that in the system?

RM: Well, I suppose - I don't know in the system. I mean in life the value of someone who has a vision is often that their vision either is true in some parts and throws light on the fashions of the time which are shallow. And sometimes the value of that is just that we admire people who are not sort of pushed and pulled by, you know, what is fashionable, what is easy to get on with, who stick to what they believe. I think one of the interesting things about the public commentary has been how many people say: "I may not have agreed with this or that or even the whole vision or, you know, I disagreed with it entirely. But I knew that I - in Bob Santamaria, there was someone who had a strong vision and, you know, which animated his life." And that I think is an inspiring thing for many people and it means that, you know, unlike most political figures, he does - he didn't forget, you know, today what he'd said two days ago or two years ago or twenty years ago and he tried for a consistency, a purpose in all that.

And so it went on And on. And on. But Robert Manne's inarticulate point of view on the late Bob Santamaria was not without humour, of the unintended variety. In his concluding comments Professor Manne told Dr Swan that the late B.A. Santamaria was a "very forgiving person" except with respect to former ALP leader Bert Evatt. Let's hope there's laughter in heaven - especially among those fellow Catholic anti-communists with whom Santamaria frequently clashed and whom he never forgave.

YES - THEY SAID IT

While on the subject of humour, let's hear it for:

- **David D. Hale** - the global chief economist at the Zurich Group in Chicago who appears frequently in the Australian media commenting on economics and related issues.

On 9 March 1998 D. D. Hale contributed an article to the *Asian Wall Street Journal* in which he proposed an "imaginative compromise" to the debate over whether Australia should have an Australian head of state. Hale argued that "instead of being a minimal monarchy or minimal republic, Australia should

become a maximum monarchy - a kingdom with the monarch living in Canberra". He proposed that Australia could (i) offer the (Canberra) throne to Queen Elizabeth II, or (ii) recruit "from the world's 40 other underemployed royal families to create" a Kingdom of Oz.

The article continued in this superficial way. Question: Why on earth did the *Asian Wall Street Journal* print such absolute crap?

- **Germaine Greer** - who opined in *The Guardian* that the "perceived wisdom" of "pop psychology" was that "rapid acceleration feeds the fantasy of automatic erection, as if a man inside his car were to become his penis, boring into external reality at high speed". Oh yeah. But how does this explain the speeding sheila phenomenon?

- **Sandra Lee** - the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* columnist who felt the need to moralise at length about why the private lives of politicians should be a matter of public interest. The issue arose when it was revealed at the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in New South Wales that a female politician had had an affair with a male colleague some five years previously.

To many this was an undue invasion of privacy, especially since there was no suggestion that the woman concerned had been involved in corrupt activities. Ms Lee, however, chose to take the moral highground. In the *Daily Telegraph* (9 April 1998) she asked: "Should the private lives of public people be matters for public consumption?" Her answer was a resounding affirmative:

The real issue...is one of integrity and honesty. Adulterers are cheats. No matter what spin you put on it, they have lied. And they deliberately, knowingly hurt other people. It goes straight to character.Yes it matters and yes, really, we should care.

Maybe it does matter and maybe we should care. But if this is true for politicians, the same judgment should surely apply to journalists. Does Sandra Lee support the public naming of journalistic adulterers? Will the *Daily Telegraph* have enough pages to print the full list? Stay tuned.

PETER BLAZEY'S LEGACY

Since naming names is at issue, consider the case of a name unnamed. In his September 1997 column in *The Adelaide Review*, Peter Coleman referred to

Peter Blazey (1939-97) and his posthumously published autobiography *Screw Loose : Uncalled-For Memoirs* (Picador, 1997). Commented Coleman:

What mars an otherwise sunny memoir is his [Blazey's] second "outing" of a priest who had dared to publish a criticism of the gay Mardi Gras. (No prizes for identifying him). Whether you call it "gay fascism" or "fag stalinism", it was vindictive five years ago and to repeat it now is even more abhorrent.

Coleman was concerned about the chapter titled "Scotch College II: First Sex". There Peter Blazey referred to a certain "Brother Jasper", whom he alleged had seduced him while he was a 15 years old student at Scotch College in Melbourne.

Peter Blazey described Brother Jasper as a 1950s queen who "disliked young females, believing that they were flawed, accursed temptresses trying to ensnare wholesome young men".

In *Screw Loose* Blazey revealed that "much later" he "outed" the by now "Father Jasper in *Out-Rage* magazine because he attacked the Mardi Gras in two *Australian* newspaper articles...".

The author maintained that what "infuriated" him most was that "Father Jasper" had "pulled the paedophilia slander" against male gays. To Blazey, this was "too hypocritical...to ignore".

Detailed researches have not unearthed a "Father Jasper" having written on the Mardi Gras in *The Australian*. In the acknowledgment section of *Screw Loose*, Peter Blazey wrote that "the names of some figures in this book have been changed".

ROBERT SPRINGBORG (FALSE) PROPHET

So all's quiet on the Gulf front. At the time of going to press, at least. This comes as no great surprise. The odds were always that Iraq dictator Saddam Hussein would back off when faced with the real prospect of an air attack by the United States (supported by Britain).

It's not surprising, then, that Iraq eventually decided to give the United Nations access to sites in Iraq which had previously been off-limits to Richard Butler and his UN inspection teams. Ambassador Butler has yet to give a final report on the extent of the access. Nevertheless, the signs indicate that tension in the Gulf is decreasing rather than increasing.

But where does this leave Australian Gulf "expert" Robert Springborg? Interviewed by ABC TV's *Late News* on 10 February 1998, Professor Springborg was asked about "the likelihood of a military strike" and the possible "time frame" for such an event. He replied with certainly aforethought:

I think there is a strong likelihood of a military strike, simply because the Americans are extremely tired of Hussein setting the agenda on the inspections issue. He has, to use their term, rattled the chains several times now.

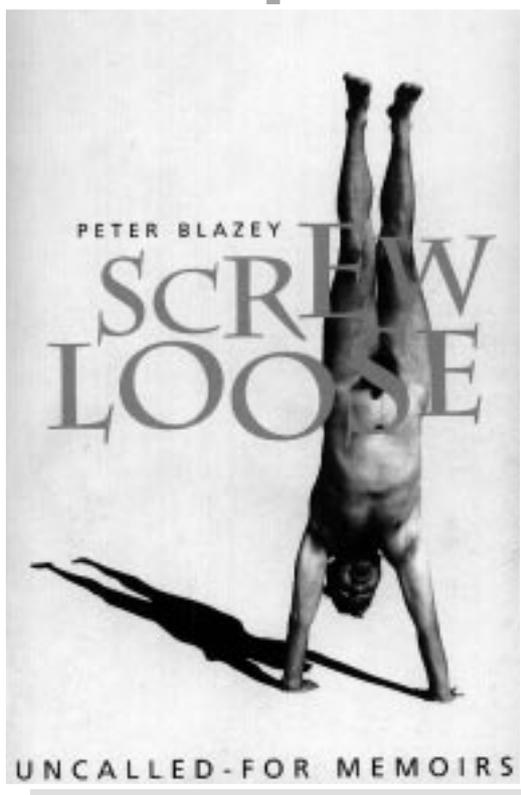
So I think they believe that he will continue to do so, even if this current impasse is negotiated. So I think in Washington there is a strong commitment to military action, unless Saddam completely backs down and a complete backdown I think is almost out of the question.

So I think we're on the road to a military strike and given climatological conditions as well as political conditions, I think we can expect it within the next two weeks.

A week later, your expert Springborg was not quite so sure. When asked by *The Sydney Weekly* and *The Melbourne Weekly* (17 February 1998) as to whether "America will attack Iraq", he replied:

I think the odds are 50-50 on that. I think the chances of a military strike are increasing faster than the chances of a diplomatic solution. So if I were a betting person and I got even money on a strike within two weeks, I'd take it.

It's not clear whether Professor Springborg got on and lost. Or did not get on - and avoided losing.



But one thing is for sure. Springborg's political assessments are no more considered these days than in 1990 when he opined that Australia under Bob Hawke was "every bit as much a one-man show as is the country we may be fighting" (i.e Saddam's Iraq). (*Melbourne Herald*, 13 August 1990).

According to the Thought of Springborg circa 1990, Bob Hawke and Saddam Hussein were fellow dictators. These days Professor Springborg still has trouble distinguishing between dictatorships and democracies. Interviewed by Richard Glover on ABC Radio 2BL on 3 November 1997, Robert Springborg commented:

Saddam seems from our perspective to miscalculate time and time again and yet he's outlasted Margaret Thatcher and George Bush and Bob Hawke and all the rest of them. So he gets something right.

Talk about a non-sequitur. There is no secret why, in a political sense, Saddam has outlasted Margaret Thatcher, Bob Hawke and George Bush. He's a totalitarian dictator, that's why. It seems that Professor Springborg still has trouble distinguishing between elected leaders (who rely on voter support) and dictators (who kill or imprison their political opponents).

Yet this was the "expert" who became the ABC's in-house specialist commentator on matters Iraq during the Gulf War of 1990-91. At least the ABC is now more transparent about its political commentators.

The problem with Springborg's (many) ABC appearances during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis is that he was presented as an independent expert. He had expertise - sure. But Springborg then, as now, was deeply opposed to Allied involvement in the Gulf. It's just that, this time around, the ABC is willing to say so. Let's go to the videotape of the ABC TV *Late News* interview of 10 February 1998:

NEWSREADER: Just on a personal point. You yourself were opposed to Australia's involvement in the Gulf War. Where do you stand on Australia's latest commitment?

SPRINGBORG: I think it's going towards a very serious matter and I think one would only go to war wisely if one's national interests were truly under threat. There are no national interests of Australia under threat by Iraq and so I think it's an unwise decision.

Oh well. At least we all know where Professor Springborg stands. Let's hope that his prophecy won't be fulfilled.

SIR LEON BRITTAN

FROM THATCHER TO BRUSSELS



Sir Leon Brittan - writer, Conservative MP for Cleveland and Whitby and later for Richmond, North Yorkshire until 1989 and now Vice President of the Commission of the European Communities - will visit Australia as a guest of the Australian Government in June. Sir Leon served as Chief Secretary to the Treasury in the Thatcher Government and in 1983 became Home Secretary. He was Secretary of State for Trade and Industry from 1985-86.

Don't miss a chance to hear this outstanding and popular statesman.

SPEAKER : SIR LEON BRITTAN (V. Pres, European Commission & Former Minister in Thatcher Gov't)

TOPIC : To be advised

DATE : Monday 22 June 1998

TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney

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