

FORTHCOMING FUNCTIONS AT THE SYDNEY INSTITUTE

- SPEAKER** : ANTONY GREEN (ABC's Election Analyst)
TOPIC : *The State of the Parties*
DATE : Tuesday 1 September 1998 **TIME**: 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- SPEAKER** : DR MARGARET SEARES (Chairperson, Australia Council) & ADRIAN COLLETTE (General Manager, Opera Australia)
TOPIC : *Why the Arts Matter*
DATE : Tuesday 15 September 1998 **TIME**: 5.00 for 5.30pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- SPEAKER** : JULIANNE SCHULTZ (Journalist & Author *Reviving the Fourth Estate* [Cambridge University Press 1998])
TOPIC : *Democracy, Accountability and the Media*
DATE : Tuesday 22 September 1998 **TIME**: 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : 41 Phillip St, Sydney
- SPEAKER** : THE HON PETER COLLINS (Leader of the State Opposition, NSW)
TOPIC : *Governing in the 21st Century*
DATE : Wednesday 7 October 1998 **TIME**: 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- SPEAKER** : JOAN KIRNER AM (Former Premier, Victoria & Convener, Emily's List Australia) & CHRIS McDIVEN (Liberal Women's Forum) & LIS KIRKBY (Former Democrat MLC, NSW)
TOPIC : *Into Parliament She Must Go - Women and Politics*
DATE : Tuesday 13 October 1998 **TIME**: 5.00 for 5.30pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney
- SPEAKER** : SUE BUTLER (Publisher, Macquarie Library)
TOPIC : *Macquarie and the Changing Order of Englishes*
DATE : Wednesday 4 November 1998 **TIME**: 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : 41 Phillip St, Sydney **LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**
- SPEAKER** : DR MARK SPENCER (Underwater Photographer in charge of the search for the AE2)
TOPIC : *Gallipoli's Naval Secret: The Search for the AE2*
DATE : Wednesday 11 November 1998 **TIME**: 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : 41 Phillip St, Sydney **LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**
- SPEAKER** : LAXANACHANTORN LAOHAPHAN (Ambassador of Thailand)
TOPIC : *To be advised*
DATE : Monday 23 November 1998 **TIME**: 5.30 for 6.00pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney

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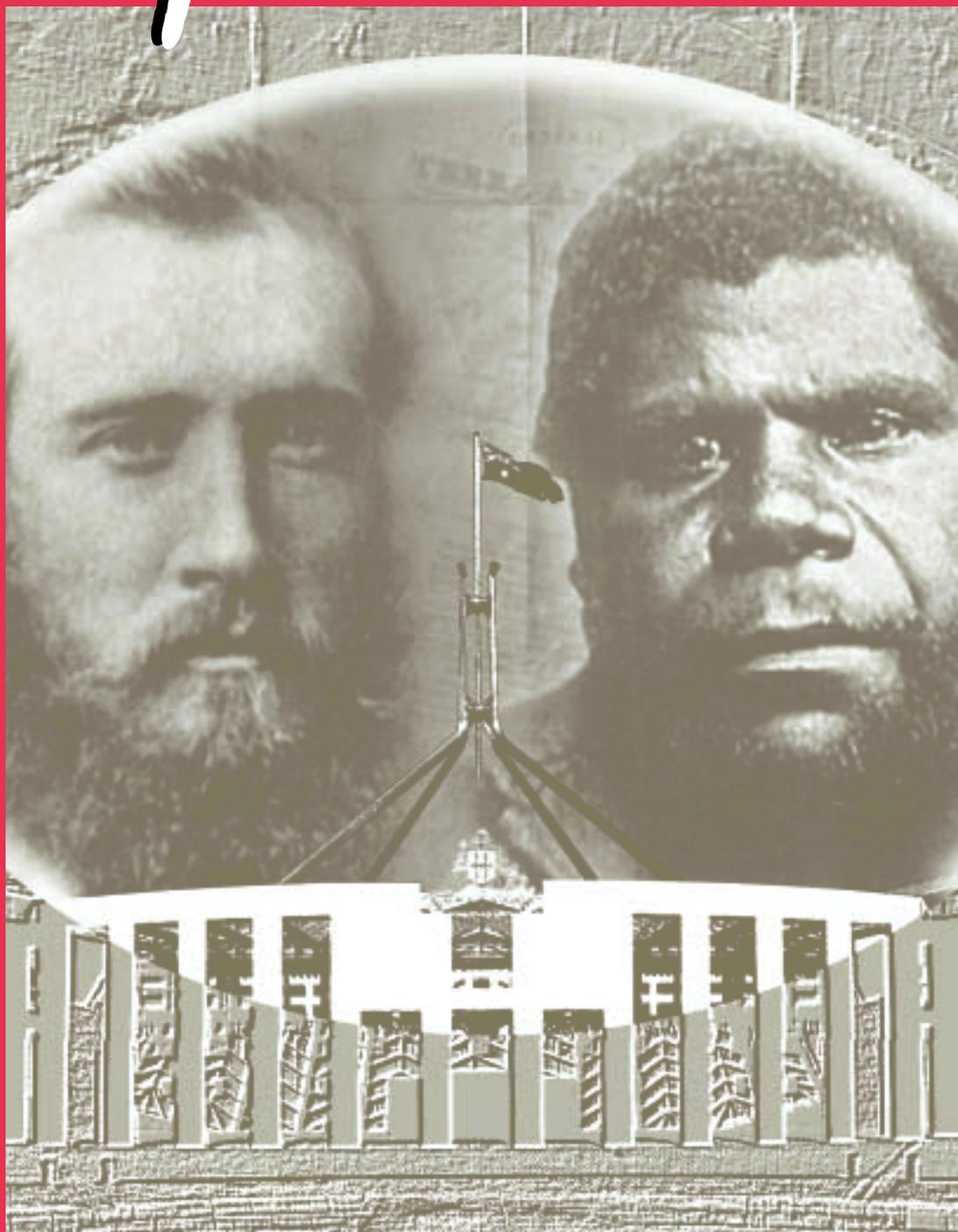
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AUGUST 1998

COLIN TATZ
on
RACE RELATIONS

WOMEN AND
POLITICS

ONE NATION'S
FUNNY MONEY

MEDIA
WATCHING
on
Paul Johnson,
Geraldine Doogue,
Caroline Jones and
Michael Duffy



with Gerard Henderson's

MEDIA WATCH

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COALITION AT RISK

If the National Party is in crisis, then so is the Coalition. And, by definition, the Liberal Party.

Robert Menzies performed well at the December 1949 election in soundly defeating Ben Chifley's Australian Labor Party. But the Liberals did not win sufficient seats to govern in their own right. So Robert Menzies and his successors Harold Holt, John Gorton and William McMahon formed coalitions with the Country Party (later to be named the National Party) under the leadership of Arthur Fadden, Jack McEwen and Doug Anthony.

Malcolm Fraser and John Howard are the only two Liberal prime ministers who could have got by without the Nationals - for a time at least. Sensibly, neither took this option. The Fraser government did not need the Nationals after its stunning victories in December 1975 and December 1977. But it did when its vote dropped in October 1980.

In March 1996 John Howard gained a huge majority of seats in the House of Representatives - similar in scale to Tony Blair's win in Britain last year. However, even the most optimistic Liberal barrackers do not expect the Prime Minister to reproduce this majority at the forthcoming Federal election. Hence the need for a Liberal-National coalition.

The defeat of Bob Borbidge's National Party-led Coalition government in Queensland has led to much focus on the Nationals in Queensland and elsewhere. Less attention has been given to the possible effect of a partial or total collapse of the National Party vote on the Federal Liberal Party. As John Howard has acknowledged, the Federal Liberals will only coalition with the Nationals. In so far as forming government is concerned, One Nation is beyond the pale. The Prime Minister has not ruled out heading a minority Coalition government which is dependent on the parliamentary support of One Nation. But such a decision would cause considerable strains within the Liberal Party.

John Howard's immediate political problem is not that the Federal Coalition will collapse. Rather the Liberal Party's potential difficulty is that, after the Federal election, the National Party may not deliver enough numbers to make a Coalition government possible.

If One Nation were to receive no preferences from the major parties, then its candidates would need to win around 40 per cent of the primary vote and rely on leakages to achieve an absolute majority. This is not impossible, for, say, Pauline Hanson in the seat of Blair. But it is a difficult task unless the National Party in effect splits or disintegrates and the overwhelming majority of its voters re-direct their support to One Nation candidates.

There is, of course, another scenario. Namely that most, or some, One Nation candidates in Queensland and Western Australia receive Coalition preferences.

There is an element of risk in an early election. The National Party needs time to re-build its base. And Robert Menzies' child will not easily govern without its coalition partner.

RACE RELATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Colin Tatz

I

A catchcry of our time is “forgive and forget”. There is a profit and loss politics in conjoining these two quite different actions and emotions, particularly in the context of race relations. The costs are borne by the victims, not the discriminators. It is they who must eschew notions of guilt and atonement and, all too often, compensation for harms done. It is they who must agree to the diminution, or even abolition, of that shared historical memory that holds victim groups together. It is they who must concur in the substitution of *their* memory with *our* memory and *their* history with *our* history. It is they who must agree to the blurring or obliteration of responsibility for who did what to whom. It is they who must cease being so hysterical about denialism, that major tributary of forgetting, which claims that there was nothing to remember in the first place, or that it was all too long ago to be worth remembering. After almost a century of their indignification, we now express indignation at their claims for dignity.

The past is always present. And if we are to make sensible speculations about Australian race relations in the next century, we need a brief look at the history of our policies and practices in this one.

II

We began with misconceptions, prejudices and some stark realities. Last century there was an almost universal belief that Aborigines were doomed to rapid extinction, a view that prevailed well into the new one. “Their doom is to be exterminated”, wrote the English novelist Anthony Trollope in 1873: “fragments of them only remain”. But doom due to natural selection was accompanied by doom due to the depredations of those who treated Aborigines as “wild animals”, “scarcely human”, “hideous scandals to humanity”, “a nuisance” and “vermin” - and sought to kill, maim, abduct and otherwise deal with them.

“There was some rough work,” wrote Trollope some

125 years ago. So rough that indignation at that scale of death led to special legislation in Queensland just short of the new century.¹ The *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* was the world’s first statute to protect a distinct people from genocide, that is, from the attempt to destroy, in whole or in part, a racial group, by physical killing, *because of who they were*.² The protective legal safety-fence proved insufficient. To provide greater protection, a geographic “fence” was added: missions and settlements were established in the most isolated of locales - places distant from the evils of urbanism, “Satanism”, and from white predators.³ Legally, Aborigines became a people who were not simply different and removed from, but *other* than, mainstream Australians: minors in law, with no civil, civic or human rights.⁴

By contrast, in the 1880s Victoria began what became the practice of forced assimilation, that is, expulsion of “half-castes”, or even anyone under 34, from reserves and missions, on severe penalty of return. With this came the infamous bureaucratic philosophies of C F Gale, W E Roth and A O Neville, in other colonies, to confiscate children “for their own good” and place them in assimilation homes so as to render them no longer Aboriginal.⁵ Here was another defining act of the international law of genocide: “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”. This policy and practice ended *yesterday* - as at the Retta Dixon Home in Darwin in 1980, Sister Kate’s Orphanage in Perth in 1987, St Francis’s Home and Colebrook in South Australia in 1957 and 1978 respectively, and Bomaderry in New South Wales in 1988 - not *yesteryear*, as the John Howard-John Herron rhetoric would have it.

For three-quarters of a century there continued the practice of effectively incarcerating Aborigines, as a separate people, on reserves, government-run settlements, Christian-operated missions, and on cattle stations, with severe limitations on their coming and going, on their access to liquor, equal wages, voting rights, and their punishment for offences only *they* could commit. For much of the century, Aborigines across Australia were wards of the state, with all the attendant disabilities of that status. Certainly there was no conception of Aborigines as a people in any national or sovereign sense, as a people worthy of consultation or consent, or as a people with a future. No one has yet bothered to examine how close much of *that* wardship practice came within the ambit of two other genocidal acts, namely, “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group” and “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”.

In the final third of the century there was the birth, or rather the quick evolution, of a land rights campaign, beginning in effect with the *Milirrpum* case in 1969⁶ and ending with the Wik legislation in 1998. What a Labor government initiated in 1973, remarkably, a Liberal government concluded in 1976, with the *Northern Territory Land Rights Act* that year. The then Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, displayed a reformist outlook, neither emulated nor respected by any federal or state Liberal governments since. This was the first statute in our history, in their history, that sought only to *give* rights, not to diminish them or restrict them, even though one can criticise the very narrow concept it espoused, namely, that land could only be granted if people demonstrated religious and spiritual attachment to it.

For a brief moment we beheld acceptance of some valued conventions, as James Tully⁷ calls them: first, a recognition that Aborigines existed and had some inherent rights; second, that there was a principle of consent about such matters as land; third, that Aboriginal continuity was no longer in doubt. We see, at century's end, a costly and calamitous campaign to enact a law to establish state and territory regimes by which native title can be permanently extinguished and the right of the indigenous people to negotiate access to traditional land seriously restricted.

The Coalition's Wik legislation of 1998 is a defining moment of the century: it sees a recently "encitized" community "uncitized" in land law - not, as the protagonists claim, because of racial discrimination, which is assuredly what it is, but in the cause of "equal citizenship" and "good property law". Earlier the High Court had ruled that where Aboriginal rights and those of pastoral *leaseholders* (not owners) conflicted, the latter's interests should prevail. Nevertheless, the Wik justices made the sensible decision that Aboriginal and pastoral rights could, and should, co-exist. The Coalition's anger, its indignation, is directed at what they perceive as wrongful: that Aboriginal rights should in any way impinge on what is believed to be a solely white domain. Accordingly, Aboriginal rights should be extinguished because they cannot even co-exist with white property interests.

Since 1979 Aborigines have discovered that their greatest hope for the recovery of rights lies in the court room rather than in the parliamentary or political process. In the past 20 years they have won at least sixteen of 22 forays before the High Court, a truly remarkable achievement.⁸ This recourse has been necessary not only to recover that which was earlier denied by law, but to defend that which the political system, following positive legislation, has

since tried - systematically - to deny or to retract. The High Court is capable of conceptualising Tully's conventions of (separate) recognition, consent and continuity: conservative politics seeks to remove any such notions by insisting on a flat Australia - One Australia for John Howard and, in cruder fashion, One Nation for Pauline Hanson.

There has been perennial treatment of the Aboriginal question as a social welfare rather than as a political issue. Aborigines have (almost) always been seen as welfare cases, requiring more money, welfare officers and institutions. Only in 1972 did the Whitlam-led Australian Labor Party place Aborigines on the political agenda, with land rights rating third or fourth on the election platform - as a positive gesture. Not long after, Western Australia's 1986 state election saw Aborigines as the principal issue: each party electioneering as to which one would give *least*, in the way of land rights, to the indigenous people! There was high dudgeon and indignation from Labor Premier Brian Burke that the federal government might enact national land rights law.

The year 1998 has been vexed by talk of a double-dissolution election, called by the Coalition Government to seek public approval for diminishing the co-existence rights accorded Aborigines and cattlemen on pastoral *leases* - to provide "certainty" for the "farmers" and to protect the doctrine, according to Prime Minister Howard, that "all Australians are equal before the law"⁹. No one group, he argues, should have advantage over any other - irrespective of their previous discrimination.

The 1970s saw the birth, albeit well beyond due date as compared with other countries, of a multicultural or pluralist ethos, of a recognition that different ethnicities, cultures, religions and races not only exist but wish to continue their existence. That pluralism is now under trenchant attack. A fortuitous and rather sordid motive led to a 1967 Referendum¹⁰, misrepresented then as a new deal for indigenous Australians and since regarded, wrongly¹¹, as the time when Australia - meaning the government of the day and the people of the day - voted 9 to 1 to concede "citizenship" to Aborigines and Islanders. However skewed the referendum blurb, this was nevertheless the first conscious expression of a pro-Aboriginal indignation: to address the indignity that hitherto Aborigines were regarded as less than other Australians, a people not even worthy of counting in the national census.

As a concomitant of pluralism, there has been an eruption and the spread, in this last decade, of populist, red-necked racism, epitomised by the

politics of Pauline Hanson, Independent member for Oxley in Queensland. She claims to be merely the vehicle articulating anti-Aboriginal indignation, namely that of the people who resent any perceived "advantages" being accorded our indigenous peoples. She claims to merely echo the feelings of so many people about land rights, land claims, wasted taxpayers' monies, financial mismanagement, and the like.¹²

Pauline Hanson's One Nation party is not, however, the sole proprietor or propagator of such views. John Howard's proclaimed liberal humanism is not much different. In 1997 he stated: "What I want, at the end of the day, is a situation where, wherever you come from, whatever your ethnic or racial background, that loyalty and commitment to Australian values, Australian traditions and Australian institutions should take precedence over everything else . . . I think there is a danger. I think the objection I have to multiculturalism is that it runs the risk of promoting separate cultural and political development."¹³ The mainstream parties have begun open disparagement, denigration and vilification of Hanson - yet we may well see their general shift, especially on racial matters, in order to capture her "constituency".

"Aborigines cannot and will not be treated with the indignity of contempt, as non - or second - class citizens."

We have seen a plethora of policy slogans that have never come to fruition in any meaningful way: protection, protection-segregation, forced assimilation, assimilation, integration, self-determination, self-management, Aboriginalisation, and now, reconciliation. This century saw two attempts at giving control over indigenous affairs to the Commonwealth, the first failing in 1944, the second passing in 1967, but since then no serious attempt by the Commonwealth to use its concurrent [and hence] overriding powers to stop state and Northern Territory malpractices.

There has been a dismal failure to fulfil any of these policy precepts by the administrative machines designed to give them effect. Aborigines have been the most over-administered minority in Western history. They have also been "served" or serviced, in the main (and until the last two decades), by the least educated, least trained, least sensitive administrative units in government. Furthermore, secular policies have been entrusted, uniquely, to theologians acting as missionaries acting as agents of official policy. Policy and administration was also entrusted, over

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long periods, involving large numbers of “subjects”, to owners of cattle stations or lessees of pastoral lands.

There have been huge shifts in Aboriginal populations, with a majority now living in urban or peri-urban environs. This change began in the early 1970s, with the break-up of the tightly-controlled missions and settlements, and with the end of any employment possibilities on the traditional segregated reserves. There has also been an enormous increase in numbers through a greater desire to define themselves, through more sensible census approaches, and through greater numbers of non-Aboriginal partners being absorbed into an Aboriginal milieu rather than the other way round.

“John Herron, is locked into a time zone of 1880 or 1890.”

In the early 1970s the late Professor Charles Rowley wrote about “the remote Aborigines” and the “outcasts in white Australia”, people at a cosmic distance, physically and mentally, from the mainstream. Outside of country towns, images of Aboriginality were based on such filmic portrayals of Aboriginal exotic and primitive mysticism as “Bitter Springs” (1950), “Jedda” (1955), and “Walkabout” (1971). There have been astonishing developments in visibility, and the quality of that visibility, this past quarter century: from nine at university in 1969 to some 8000 now in tertiary study of some kind; Aboriginal-owned and run radio and television stations; national dance groups performing here and abroad; a huge art industry; acclaimed music makers at classical and popular level; the appointments of a university chancellor and a district judge; a science inventor, David Unaipon, celebrated on our \$50 note; writers, poets, public speakers and, more obvious to the non-culturally inclined, the pre-eminence and even predominance of Aboriginal and Islander sports people; a political leadership which now demands that Aborigines cannot and will not be treated with the indignity of contempt, as non- or second-class citizens, a stance formerly totally ignored as “cheek”, which at best is taken to heart by some, or, at worst, which is listened to and countered by most. There is, for the first time, a public sense of respect for, or about, Aborigines.

In stark contradiction to the above, Aborigines end the century at the very top of the medical statistics for diseases they didn't exhibit even 30 years ago - coronary disease, cancer, diabetes¹⁴, respiratory infections; with a life expectancy, in statistical theory and in actual practice, of 50-55 years or less for males and around 55 years for females¹⁵; with an

imprisonment rate grossly out of proportion to their numbers; with crimes now prevalent that were rare as recently as the 1960s, namely, homicide, rape, child molestation, burglary, physical assaults, drug-peddling and drug-taking and, sadly, while no longer a criminal act, youth suicide at a rate among the highest on this planet.

Significantly, there has been a movement, philosophically, from an ideology of racial superiority to one proclaiming human rights. This included the need for positive discrimination for those less equal through the circumstances of politics, history and geography rather than biology. But from there we see an abysmal retreat into the contention that, because all are equal, no one group should be “advantaged” over another, irrespective of history, law, geography or other circumstances. The Aristotelian doctrine that it is as unjust to treat unequals equally as it is to treat equals unequally is totally lost on this “level playing field” government. In sum, a new leaf is turned over, the slate is wiped clean, Aboriginal history is abolished, and we all start life's race from the same starting blocks.

Finally, we can observe a signal failure by Aborigines - despite some small, concerted efforts - to internationalise their grievances and concerns, resulting in this “lucky country” being able to escape the spotlight on white colonialism and racism as has no other country, with the exception of New Zealand.

III

I'm not in the soothsaying business, but two books - with the same messages - have influenced my academic life. The first was Arthur Keppel-Jones's masterly satire, *When Smuts Goes*, published in 1947, the year before the Afrikaner Nationalist Party came to power in South Africa, and years ahead of every piece of “grand apartheid” legislation which came to pass. He taught me in 1954 and 1955. I once asked him if he was a seer: no, he replied, simply a good historian, one who could follow the tram rails to the terminus. He foresaw apocalyptic violence, of the American Civil War kind, as the only way race hatred and supremacy notions could be totally destroyed. (He may yet be right.) The other was Lord Vansittart's *Lessons of My Life*, published in 1943. Writing in 1940 and 1941, he foresaw the doom of European Jewry, and the reasons for it, when most others didn't, at least not in *that* specific shape, form and dimension. The former British diplomat said that, as a long-time student of German history, he too could follow the railway lines to their unique terminuses at Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor.

Do *we* have visible tram or train lines? Rather, do we

have any vision of the destinations here? Perhaps one should first ask whether we have any Keppel-Joneses or Vansittarts in this country? I have no great claim to be either, but I'm prepared to venture some thoughts as I read the eloquent and elegant histories of Henry Reynolds, Lyndall Ryan, Richard Broome, Heather Goodall, together with a growing number of (Aboriginal) Aboriginal historians - Faith Bandler, Deborah Bird Rose, Eileen Morgan, Bill Rosser, Phillip Pepper among others. All are intent on capturing past detail, past premises and motives.

Reynolds apart, on land rights and on pastoral leases in particular, I see no contemporary social historians writing in the round, so to speak. I see virtually no sociologists, writing in the round or the chi square. Anthropologists, for the most part, are still enmeshed either in what I have always called reconstruction anthropology (sometimes positively, often negatively) or in assistance to specific communities on mapping towards land claims. I see several handfuls of lawyers committed to land claims, and a few geographers at work on important matters like outstations, political economy and conservation. A plethora of medicos peddle yet another set of data in the *Med.J.Aust.*, still busy, busy counting, presenting yet another litany of arterial, atherosclerotic, respiratory, malnutritional, diabetic and dermatological prevalences. A parade of psychiatrists, with some notable exceptions, explaining all and everything as depression, mental ill-health, people in need of therapy, counselling, Zoloft and, above all, Prozac. I do see a small coterie of newspaper men and women - notably Debra Jopson of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and Jack Waterford of the *Canberra Times* - struggling to present a rounder, fuller picture. If journalism is indeed the first draft of history, we should thank these people.

“The Territory, for all its protestations, remains the most avowedly anti-Aboriginal political unit in Australia.”

Who has an overview? Who sees the whole picture? There are legions who see the entire Aboriginal future as resting on land rights, land restoration, a return to spirit and place and meaning. But is land the answer to all things? Certainly land - in central Australia, adjoining Western Australia and northern South Australia - has resulted in genuine re-establishment of traditional associations, genuine learning about cultural and religious aspects of such lands by younger people, in the ability to make decisions about those lands and developments

thereon. But nearly 30 years after restoration of a major kind - parts of Kakadu for the Oenpelli people, large tracts in central and northern South Australia for the Pitjantjatjara - where is the cessation of all that social discord which landlessness is said to have caused? After nearly 25 years of land councils and ownership of small to smallish parcels in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, where is *that* impact on the populations who are exhibiting just about every aspect of life that is embraced by the words “dysfunctional”, or “non-functional”?

We have a national government which endorses the perceptions of a Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, John Herron, who is locked into a time zone of 1880 or 1890. He preaches against land, Wik, Mabo and ATSIC and repeats, *ad nauseam*, the simplicities of health, housing, education and employment (HHEE) as mantra and cure-all, even as he admits to reducing expenditure on his favourite cures of housing and education. In a sense, he is right to point to these areas of neglect, but his vision is that of *paterfamilias* dispensing more (or less) social welfare largesse. He and his political colleagues ignore and deplore the politics of these issues. They become indignant when so many concentrate on regret and recompense.

There are, regrettably, generations of literate parents whose children overtly, almost deliberately, remain illiterate, kids who don't or won't go to school, for good and bad reasons. Ill-health - as in obesity, diabetes, respiratory, renal, oncological and cardiac disease - is rampant, yet many won't go to local doctors, and fear or despise or resent hospitals. Housing is scarce and rentals well-nigh impossible in many racist towns. Employment is virtually non-existent, apart from the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), pegged at 30,000 people nationally. Under this scheme, Aborigines work for as many hours per week as will amount to the cash value of their social service or welfare benefits (unemployment, invalid pensions, widows' pensions, and the like).

As much as we can admire CDEP and the uplift it has given to so many communities, it is still little more than doing a great deal of shit work to the value of one's social service benefit entitlement. It provides little training for real work; it has no system of escalation, promotion, reward for greater effort. Pouring money into HHEE - without assessment of its reception, usage, impact and outcome - is not the answer. The federal Labor Party's vision, its generosity of spirit, and its enactments in the field were generally greater. Yet its means of solving these problems were similar: throw money at the problem areas and hope they go away.

IV

If we follow the history, and some of the indicators that add up to history, we can expect to see a number of clear-cut directions.

Most immediately, there is, and will be, a flurry of activity, a heavy promotion of Aboriginal culture, a gross but superficial appropriation of all things Aboriginal as part of our proud culture at the time of the Olympics. Here, indeed, is both cynical and sincere proclamation that we have an Australian culture distinct from Disney. Then comes a period of *post partum* Olympics, followed by the inevitable scramble for housing in the Village and other "goodies", none of which will fall to Aborigines.

There will be a slow but inevitable removal of Aborigines from Redfern in Sydney, Fitzroy in Melbourne and South Brisbane, all favoured areas as extensions of central business districts. There will develop a slow and unwilling recognition by town and shire councils that Aborigines won't go away, are part of the permanent population and need to be accommodated in hitherto unaccustomed ways. To this end, many shires in southern Australia have made public apology for the forcible removal of children. Some, like recalcitrant Kempsey, make a virtue out of refusal. One can readily see a rapid increase in tension as the racial ratios come closer to 1 to 1, or 1 to 2 or even 1 to 4 in favour of Aborigines in some towns.

We have to recognise, reluctantly perhaps, that white-devised schemes to combat racism - positive discrimination, affirmative action, race relations education and anti-discrimination tribunals - do little to alter day-to-day Aboriginal lives. Resentment will grow at the credibility gap between our national proclamations on human rights (in Asia and Africa) and the apparent antithesis of such values within Australia. Indignation will sharpen as those who work for Aboriginal enhancement become angrier, more pessimistic, more belligerent at hard-earned rights being rolled back, ironically, in the name of human rights.

The loss of many in the present generation of Aboriginal youth because of their involvement in "appealing violence" will continue. When youths are at the end of their tether, unable to achieve a single social objective unaided by others, they "cry for help" - and often do so by causing physical harm to others or to self. There is lack of purpose, hopelessness, despair, alcohol, drugs, crime, suicide. But, I guess, there may be some return to grand-parental, or great-grandparental values in their descendants, a cycle that seems to recur among many ethnic minorities

enduring repression or alienation.

Disaffected Aborigines may well learn how to use coercive violence, that is, the use of violence in a premeditated and controlled manner, as extreme but often effective means of achieving social objectives. The reaction of governments, and most of our citizens, is predictable: even the very limited episodic violence of this century is immediately blazoned as "riot". Most other minorities have turned to violence, not as abnormal behaviour, but as the norm. Aborigines, I believe, will (sooner rather than later) surrender the politeness that has been the hallmark of their past and present politics.

It is not difficult to foresee an experimentation with political, social or religious movements as a way of creating an inner, and outer, coherence in their internal and external affairs. Land rights, often seen as the fulcrum on which all advances must rest, will run out its course¹⁶. Deplorable as he is, Louis Farrakhan will be heard, if not now, a little later. He didn't preach hate here this year, but messages about reclaiming their souls from alcohol and drugs, reclaiming women from rape (by white and black). Marxism is *passé*, but Islam is not. The Cape Coloured population of South Africa - *God's Stepchildren*, as novelist Sarah Gertrude Millin called them - have many things and themes in common with our indigenous people. They have turned to a militant Islamic polity, with success - for them. For the observer, it isn't pretty.

Such a polity - Islamic or not - is likely to be accompanied by a greater sense of coherence about what constitutes Aboriginality. Recent decades have been beset (and bedevilled) by notions of "pure", "traditional", "full-blood", "northern", "southern", "urban", "coconut" and "so-called" Aborigines. "Real Aborigines dance around in face paints and unreal Aborigines live in Redfern" has been as much an Aboriginal stereotype as a white one. Leaders, intellectuals and activists may well come to see that the "all or nothing" approach is corrosive, and that, in the end, white society perceives them as "them", people other than "us".

There will be a greater professionalism about internationalising their problems, especially as the younger generation see lack of gain through the politics of politeness. Until the Stolen Generations report¹⁷, Australians generally were typical bystanders on Aboriginal issues. The vast numbers of planted hands on lawns and beaches, the hundreds of thousands of sorry signatures, the thousands overflowing in upper middle class town halls to hear the Aboriginal reconciliation messages are indeed

encouraging: these expressions of indignation are physical - planting, attending, listening - and are more effort than a tick in a referendum box. Standing by is on the way out, and will disappear as issues of this kind emerge. But there is still a great deal of indifference about, and all too often, in country towns and in huge areas like the Northern Territory, it is a hostile indifference.

I foresee a huge battle over the Territory's statehood, where the locals still see boom or bust as the way to go, not the better handling of a quarter of its population. The Territory, for all its protestations, remains the most avowedly anti-Aboriginal political unit in Australia. It has the most anti-Aboriginal statutes - such as the "three-strikes-and-out" law which mandates imprisonment after a third offence, however trivial. There can be no doubt that these draconian measures are aimed at Aborigines.

Whether there be more recourse to the courts, to violence or to quasi-religious or political movements, Aborigines will seek independent sources of money. Aborigines, apart from a handful of royalty-receiving groups, are totally dependent on government funding - for the operation of agencies and institutions and for individual income through social service benefits, still their dominant resource. When Tasmanian Aboriginal lawyer Michael Mansell visited Libya in 1987, Australians generally went into paroxysms of indignation at this act of "terror". Misunderstood (as always), Mansell was making a personal statement calculated to cause an intake of breath: that the world's most tearfully humane [then] Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, cared little or not at all, but that the world's most deplored leader, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, "cared much". There will be many more such appeals for outside care, succour and sustenance¹⁸.

Another battlefield will be the nature of our civility, of our constitutional machinery in the new republic. Philosopher Charles Taylor expresses elegant concern about the American republic, about the way in which not all citizens are given or granted dignity. Dignity should be easier to accord than rights, yet we make it infinitely more difficult. Like the Americans, we now worship procedure more than content: we worry more about the mechanics of objectives than the objectives. Procedure is *all*, especially financial procedure: good sense, quick, sympathetic human action is avoided, often with dreadful consequences.

The battle in the classrooms and in the history books will escalate. The present Prime Minister and at least two former State Premiers, Wayne Goss in Queensland and Ray Groom in Tasmania, have

PETER COLLINS QC MP on LEADING GOVERNMENT INTO THE 21st CENTURY

Peter Collins is one of NSW's most experienced politicians. He is leader of the State Opposition Liberal-National Coalition, a position he has held since 1995.

The NSW Opposition is preparing for a tightly fought election due in March 1999. Peter Collins has promoted a vision of improved public services, lower taxes for business to generate jobs, sustained regional development and stronger community values.

SPEAKER : THE HON PETER COLLINS
(Leader of the State Opposition, NSW)

TOPI : *Governing in the 21st Century*

DATE : Wednesday 7 October 1998

TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room
(Rm 102), Level 1, 2 Chifley Square,
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sought historical revisions that eliminate any discussion of genocide, any concentration on what Professor Geoffrey Blainey so glibly and foolishly disparages as the “black armband” view of history. We need to combat what the great student of antisemitism, Leon Poliakov, calls “this vanishing trick [that] represents a collective repression of troubling memories and awkward truths”. The struggle for forgiveness is probably over, especially as the reconciliation “thing” goes on¹⁹. The fight for forgetting is another matter altogether. The battle will hinge on our ability to face history, and ourselves: the media, especially the ABC and SBS, and the major broadsheet dailies, do it better than anyone else right now.

They need allies: Aboriginal historians, writers, poets; school and university teachers in all disciplines, not just the humanities and social sciences. This kind of history, unpleasant, mostly gruesome, is part of the social cement that enables a people to survive. We need to fight for what the late Diane Barwick called her “unfashionable concern with the past”. We need to encourage it, even if it means suffering a cultural militancy - perhaps even a kind of cultural fascism - from those who insist that this history is theirs, and theirs only, to remember and to revere. For the past decade, there has been a reluctance about research in, or about, Aboriginal matters, a sense of too tough, too sensitive, too rebuffing. This will increase, as will Aboriginal insistence that these are their exclusive domains. It will pass, in time. Later, writing about the Aboriginal experience will become a collaborative rather than a combative activity.

Finally, I am reminded of something I said in an inaugural professorial lecture at the University of New England a quarter of a century ago²⁰. There appears, I argued, to be a direct (but unprovable?) correlation between the extent of indigenous rights and the degree to which they fought (are fighting?) against the dominant society. I call this “the respect factor”. Respect does not have to mean liking for: it can have the negative attribute of fear, or even hatred. If respect means anything, it means that the people concerned are “people of account” (*Menschen*), to be taken into account, and not relegated or consigned to the status of non-persons (*Nicht-Menschen*).

Africans have always been very much people of account by virtue of numbers, of military, political and social organisation and prowess. Maoris as tribal warriors, as modern soldiers, as successful farmers, and as mighty players of religious rugby, command respect. Less so the Indians of Canada, and ever so

much less so the Aborigines, probably the most totally conquered minority in Western history.

Looking backward, and forward, one can say that Aborigines have come a long way towards being *Menschen*, people dignified by being perceived as opponents, enemies, people who can no longer be dismissed or consigned. Their High Court victories attest to all that. There has to be a politics of recognition: that Aborigines are very much here to stay, that they have a right to be heard, and they have a right to belong - to have an identity rooted and located in particular places and particular cultures. The right to a separate cultural development is a prerequisite of real constitutionalism, not a danger to it, as the Prime Minister asserts. From here on, we can only hope that, even though the battles for recognition remain grossly uneven in terms of power and resources, the contests will be in the age-old form of mediation, arbitration, conciliation, negotiation - and not by an Aboriginal use of what they come to see, in despair, as legitimate violence.

Colin Tatz is Professor of Politics and Director, Centre for Comparative Genocide Studies, Macquarie University.

This is an expanded version of a public lecture, University of New England, Armidale Town Hall, 6 April 1998. My thanks to Dick Kimber and Winton Higgins for their valued comments and suggestions.

- 1 In 1896 Archibald Meston, appointed Royal Commissioner, produced his *Report on the Aborigines of Queensland*. The treatment of the Cape York people, he wrote, was “a shame to our common humanity”; their “manifest joy at assurances of safety and protection is pathetic beyond expression”; “God knows they were in need of it”. Within six months of his Report, the safeguarding statute was passed.
- 2 The only definition of genocide in international (and national) law is Article II of the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, United Nations, 9 December 1948. Physical killing is only one of five acts that constitute the crime: another is “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” - hence the ascribing of the stolen generations as an act of genocide. Australia ratified this *Convention* in 1949. Intent is the key: the attempt to destroy any national, ethnic, religious or racial group must be because they are members of that group.
- 3 Most tribes and clans were removed to places of great geographic isolation, away from the perceived evils of urban society, away from the prying eyes of the inquisitive. “All the mission can really achieve for them is a kind of Christian burial service” was a typical view: and so these “children of darkness” needed remote places like Yarrabah (near Cairns, in north Queensland), described by the missionary choosing the site as “splendidly secluded”.
- 4 South Australia enacted Aboriginal legislation, for the Northern Territory and for the State in 1911; Aborigines Protection Acts were passed in Victoria in 1869, in Western Australia in 1886 and again in 1905, in New South Wales in 1909. In the name of protection, Aborigines were cocooned by legal restrictions which effectively became the opposite of protection, removing any civil rights they had.
- 5 C F Gale, Chief Protector in Western Australia, in 1909: “I would not hesitate for a moment to separate any half-caste from its Aboriginal mother, no matter how frantic her momentary grief might be at the time. They soon forget their offspring.” Roth, the Queensland Protector, insisted that “all such children taken from the camps should be brought up as white children” and Neville (again in the West) affirmed that “the native must be helped in spite of himself ...the end in view will justify the means employed”. In essence, these views were Australia-wide.
- 6 *Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd and the Commonwealth of Australia* arose when the Yirrkala clans sought to end bauxite mining on their reserve, and compensation for land occupied and despoiled. The decision went against them but this loss was the spur to the appointment of the Land Rights [Woodward] Commission - and the subsequent 1976 legislation.
- 7 James Tully, *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity*, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

- 8 See J McCorquodale, "Aborigines in the High Court", *Australian Quarterly*, vol 55, no 1, 1983 for an analysis of the earlier cases. The list following is not complete. It involves most constitutional cases, several of the most important land rights cases and some matters of administrative law. The cases are given their shorthand (and popular) names. Starting in 1979, Aborigines have lost [Paul] *Coe v Commonwealth* (1979), *Wacando v the Commonwealth and Queensland* (1981), *Isobel Coe* (1993), the *Kruger Case* (1997), *Thorpe* (1997), the *Hindmarsh Bridge Case* (1998). They have won *Ross* (1979), *Toohy* (1981), *Onus and Frankland* (1981), *Koowarta* (1982), *Meneling Station* (1983), *Stanton* (1983), *Mabo I* (1985), *Gerhardy* (1985), *Walden* (1987), *Davis* (1988), *Bropho* (1990), *Mabo II* (1992), *WA v Commonwealth* (1993), *North Ganalanga* (1996), *Wilson* (1996), and *Wik* (1997). *Northern Land Council v Commonwealth* in 1987 may be considered a "draw". Noteworthy was the radio comment by the Northern Territory's then Chief Minister, Paul Everingham, on 3 February 1986: "land rights is a blight on this country", he said, and "with the best QCs that money can buy, 12 times in the High Court I've challenged land rights and 12 times the High Court kicked my head in."
- 9 *Sydney Morning Herald*, radio and television newscasts, week of 6-10 April 1998.
- 10 In seeking a possible positive issue to appear alongside his [probably unpopular] attempt to increase the number of seats in the House of Representatives without the concomitant increase in the Senate numbers, Prime Minister Harold Holt paired that Referendum topic with an Aboriginal question, marketed as a "new deal" and as "citizenship rights".
- 11 The reality is that the Aboriginal question was a two-part procedural one: (a) to allow the counting of "full blood" Aborigines in the national census, from which they had been excluded since Federation in 1901; and (b) to give the Commonwealth government *concurrent* power to legislate for Aborigines in the States, the Constitution having confined their jurisdiction to Aborigines in the Territories. The referendum had nothing to do with "citizenship", "civil rights" or voting rights - still a myth deeply ingrained in journalism, politics and the historical literature.
- 12 Following her party's gain of seats at the June 1998 Queensland election, Michael Leung's *Sydney Morning Herald* cartoon (of 15 June) was pointed and poignant. His little man says: "Alright you media types. Lay off our Pauline! Stop picking on her! She's a good person. The poor woman! All she's trying to do is speak for ORDINARY, DECENT, DOWN-TO-EARTH, FAIR DINKUM...SALT OF THE EARTH, AUSTRALIAN BATTLEERS: THE REAL PEOPLE. NO NONSENSE, HARD WORKING, SIMPLE, UNPRETENTIOUS people who just want to have a fair go ...at Aborigines without being persecuted...."
- 13 Alan Ramsey, quoting Howard to Channel Nine's Ray Martin, in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 June 1998.
- 14 According to the endocrinologist I consult, there was either no routine testing or there was inadequate testing procedure for this disease 30, or even 20, years ago. He believes that the disease may well have been prevalent much earlier. Nevertheless, its prevalence, incidence and consequences have been dramatic since the 1970s.
- 15 Vital statistics of this kind often don't tell the full or the whole story. In 1997-98 I visited 47 rural communities in New South Wales as part of ongoing research into Aboriginal youth suicide. Visiting cemeteries, talking to hundreds of bereaved, and reading coroners' files, one finds a plethora of early deaths - from violence, alcoholism, respiratory disease, renal failure, cardiac illness, cancer. When visiting Ceduna in South Australia in 1989, I found that 17 of 18 boys in the Rovers Football Club, which won the 1958 premiership in the Far West League, had not made it to the age of 50! The admission age into the aged-care facility at the Booroongen Djugun Aboriginal Centre in Kempsey, NSW, is now set at 42.
- 16 This view is likely to cause some disquiet, or upset. This is not meant as a slur on all that has occurred and is occurring in the land rights struggle. But, like Black Power in the United States, it is a rallying point through which people of different experiences and with different agendas can cohere in a political movement and focus their grievances in a collective against an authority system. Land rights, once granted, do not provide the magic cure for all the ills that landlessness is said to have caused.
- 17 *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, April 1997.
- 18 To the consternation of President Bill Clinton and the American Congress, President Nelson Mandela insists not only on ties with Libya, but on gratitude for Libyan support during the grim years of the apartheid struggle.
- 19 In the special edition of the *Melbourne Journal of Politics*, vol 25, 1998, I have written a trenchant criticism of "reconciliation". A small part thereof has this to say: "As opposed to those of ill will but with long memories, the 'good' people preach reconciliation. They argue for a sharing of the future at the price of closing the chapters on the past. The victim must forgive the perpetrator, clearing the record and the perpetrator's conscience. 'Let's turn over a new leaf and begin again' is a commonplace in reconciliation rhetoric. Its proponents never acknowledge what the old leaf was or what it is that is to begin again. Nor do they ever spell out what it is that Aborigines should cease doing by way of injury to the mainstream. This must be the best imaginable bargain for the reconciliationists."
- 20 *Four Kinds of Dominion: Comparative Race Politics in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa*, University of New England, 1972.

WOMEN AND POLITICS

Anne Henderson

In today and out after the next election. Is that to be the fate of Coalition female MPs who flooded into parliament after the 1996 election? Thanks to One Nation.

Women in Australian parliamentary forums are very much a minority although steadily making up ground. Still, women only get around 20 per cent of seats when they are doing well. In South Australia, Labor is the exception where nearly 50 per cent of its representatives in the state lower house are women.

Both Labor and Liberal parties recognise the importance of preselecting women in winnable seats. Following the Queensland state election results, some National Party voices are calling for women candidates to counter Pauline Hanson.

After the 1996 federal election, the Liberal National Coalition celebrated the arrival of an unprecedented number of female MPs into the national parliament.

Over 17 per cent of Coalition House of Representatives members are women. Across the chamber, the ALP has just four women or less than one per cent. Labor fares better in the Senate where 30 per cent of Senators are women; eight Liberals, nine ALP, four Democrats and one Green.

Until the Queensland election, preselections for Labor and John Howard's large winning margin seemed to assure women a reasonable chance of retaining ground they had won, even increasing it. One Nation may have changed all that.

Strategies to get women elected to parliament differ among the major parties. For Labor, there is a policy of targets and affirmative action to preselect women in winnable and safe seats. Labor's policy is to have women preselected in 35 per cent of winnable seats by 2002.

Liberals reject this approach saying affirmative action is insulting to women who need to know they have achieved seats on merit. Liberal tactics are to encourage women into the preselection process. Both major parties have succeeded in preselecting more women.

But with women still only successful in a minority of seats, they are all too vulnerable when the swing is on. Especially when men represent the vast majority of safe party electorates.

At a time when One Nation has thrown election predictions into turmoil, methods for preselecting women are under scrutiny. Women, as Labor's Mary Easson found in Lowe, cannot hope to build careers in politics without the chance of preselection into safe seats. Two terms and, more than likely, a marginal candidate is out.

So it may be for many of the Coalition women who won seats at the 1996 election, or who are holding on to marginal seats at a time when polls show there is extreme volatility in the electorate. The loss of Liberal seats held by Elizabeth Grace (Lilley), Fran Bailey (McEwen), Kay Elson (Forde) or Susan Jeanes (Kingston) to the ALP would see those seats revert to male representatives.

Some of the successful women candidates in 1996 now have One Nation candidates standing against them. More often than not One Nation candidates are men. Joanna Gash in Gilmore and Danna Vale in Hughes both face male One Nation candidates. And should Labor win in these seats, at least one will go to a male, David Hill in Hughes.

Media focus on One Nation gives the impression it is a party where women have the numbers. Pauline Hanson, Heather Hill, Dorothy Pratt and even One Nation's endorsed Victorian Senate candidate Robyn Spencer. But Heather Hill did not win her Queensland seat. And of the 11 successful One Nation Party candidates, only one is a woman - Dorothy Pratt. Although Dorothy Pratt was the most successful of the One nation candidates, the parliamentary leader is Bill Feldman. Dorothy Pratt is deputy.

All of this suggests that Labor's affirmative action tactics for women are not to be derided. There are now a total of eight women preselected for safe Labor seats in Victoria and New South Wales. Only Jenny Macklin and Janice Crosio, already are in parliament. Whatever the outcome of the next election, Labor will substantially increase its numbers of women in the House of Representatives. And these women will be assured of holding their seats.

Similarly in Queensland, 11 of the 44 ALP seats have gone to women MPs and there are four women in the Beattie ministry. While women Coalition MPs lost seats (numbers down from six to three), Labor has increased its number of female MPs although the

number of Labor seats has not increased.

But, for some women in unwinnable seats, times are strange. Tim Fischer in Farrar and John Anderson in Gwydir have been targeted by One Nation. Should the seats, by a quirk of fate, fall to the ALP, they will be represented by women.

One thing is for sure, the Queensland election has unsettled electoral outcomes. At least until the Coalition decides which threatens it most. One Nation or the ALP.

There is no guarantee that One Nation MPs will increase conservative women's representation in parliament. Possibly lessen it. As such, the Liberal Party might have to reassess its approach to women MPs, officially or unofficially.

That is if women are not only to win seats in parliament, but also stay there.

Anne Henderson is Deputy Director of The Sydney Institute.

ONE NATION AND SOCIAL CREDIT

David Greason

When One Nation director David Ettridge engineered some memorable publicity for his party by claiming that it would "print money" to finance policies, the Treasurer, Peter Costello, produced documents from the extremist League of Rights indicating the intellectual origins of this claim. Combined with the official One Nation policy offering two per cent bank loans to farmers and small businesses, allegations of "funny money" economic policies flew thick and fast.

Furious and red-faced denials of association between the League and One Nation are largely (although not entirely) correct, yet the intellectual debt owed by One Nation to the League is clear and unambiguous. The little-known economic theory that links Eric Butler and Pauline Hanson is Social Credit, a most seductive policy in its day. In 1935, the Queensland Social Credit state election candidates came close to

unseating many MPs. In the Canadian province of Alberta the very same year, Social Credit went from no seats into government.

Social Credit argues that capitalism is doomed to ever-recurring crises caused by a cost-accounting flaw that drains credit out of the financial system in inverse proportion to industrial production. This situation is exacerbated by bankers (especially Jewish bankers, according to the League's baleful world view) who engineer financial crises to consolidate power. The answer, say the Social Creditors, is to take credit creation out of the hands of private banks and place it in the hands of the people through a state bank - such as One Nation's proposed "Queensland Trust". It is generally accepted that Social Credit's calculations were horribly confused, and that were it ever implemented, Weimar-style inflation would rapidly follow. Naturally, the League argues that this claim is yet more evidence of the conspiracy against it; a style of argument increasingly favoured by Pauline Hanson and her team.

The importance of using a state bank to bypass the demands of orthodox finance was explained in the October 1981 issue of *Enterprise*, a League of Rights journal:

Under the Australian Constitution, the States have the lawful right to operate their own state banking system - separate from Commonwealth control - within the bounds of their state. They could, if they wanted, offset Canberra's disastrous financial policies by operating state banks in a different way - by creating limited amounts of debt and interest-free credit for the specific purposes of reducing local government rates, reducing debt-charges on state-operated utilities such as railways, hospitals and power stations, and providing low interest loans to home-buyers, farmers and small businesses.

In the 1960s, the League infiltrated the then Country Party to force Social Credit on the CP's platform. The party's reaction was swift and unambiguous. Federal leader Doug Anthony denounced Social Credit as "dangerous and the worst way to stimulate the economy", while Queensland's Joh Bjelke-Petersen described the proposals as "loose talk which many country people have fallen for".

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the League was touting a state bank. Queensland National Party president Sir Robert Sparkes exposed the proposal

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SPEAKER : SUE BUTLER (Publisher, Macquarie Library)

TOPIC : *Macquarie and the Changing Order of Englishes*

DATE : Wednesday 4 November 1998

TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

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as Social Credit-inspired, describing two per cent interest loans as “specious reasoning” based on “fairy-tale type money”, and argued that “a state bank is patently and undisputedly a socialist concept and exercise”.

Most tellingly, however, Sir Robert warned his colleagues that the establishment of such a bank would have “disastrous political consequences for the government, the premier and the National Party...The aggregate demand for this extraordinarily cheap loan money would quickly amount to hundreds, even thousands of millions of dollars, far beyond the capacity of the state bank to provide, unless of course it printed money to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars.”

In a 1988 paper “How the League of Rights gets it wrong”, published by the Centre for Independent Studies, John Logan concurred with Sparkes’ characteristic of Social Credit as socialist. “If the crux of the League of Rights’ Social Credit policy entails the conversion of banks into non-income-earning social welfare agencies engaged in continuous creation of ‘debt-free credit’, then banks could not possibly continue as private enterprise institutions,” he wrote.

In this the League of Rights contradicts itself by going on to propose that “the administration of the banking system should be left as it is now”. Thus, not only is the League of Rights’ policy one of continuous inflationary expansion of the money supply, but the banks need to become socialised, government-run agencies responsible for implementation of the policy. Perhaps farmers and other producers who are attracted to these kinds of fringe propositions should pause to reflect upon the consequences of having to deal closely with yet another large government bureaucracy.

For some years now, the Nationals’ coalition with the Liberals has locked it in an embrace of economic rationalism that many in its constituency neither understand nor accept. One proposition before the party is to end the coalition and shift rightward with its voter base. Yet this need not see the Nationals relegated to the fringe with One Nation.

The example of Canada’s hard-right Reform Party, which came from nowhere to official opposition in two elections, decimating the Progressive Conservative Party in the process, is one that has

excited more than a few Nationals (and fills a few Liberals with dread). If, however, Queensland’s conservatives now think that the road to success is through an extremist party touting crank financial theories and protectionism, they would be well advised to have a word with Reform’s parliamentary leader, Preston Manning.

Manning, a vigorous free trade advocate who has no place for “funny money” theorists, has nevertheless brought into his fold Canada’s Hansonites and Howard Battlers. He learnt much from his father Ernest, the second Social Credit premier of Alberta, who upon realising that his party’s policies were unworkable and economically illiterate, dumped them in 1948, and remained premier for the next 20 years. That’s something all nervous Australian conservatives - backbenchers especially - might like to consider.

David Greason is a Melbourne based author

BOOK REVIEWS

John McConnell

COMING OF AGE: CHARTER FOR A NEW AUSTRALIA

By David Solomon
University of Queensland Press, pb,
1998, rrp \$29.95
ISBN 0 7022 3031 6

David Solomon sees a pro-republic mood among Australians coinciding with public unease about the practice of politics. In *Coming of Age: Charter for a New Australia*, he argues that it is therefore a mistake for politicians to restrict the republic debate to minimalist options. Paul Keating failed to distract public attention from his failings by promoting nationalism and the republic. Similarly, he says, the Howard Government will not satisfy people disaffected with politicians and the political system simply by conceding them a vote on the republic. The author believes that it is time for Australians to ask fundamental questions about how to improve our political system.

Polls lead Solomon to conclude that Australians are likely to support even radical changes to our system

of government. Such is the extent of scepticism with politics and politicians, David Solomon believes, that Australians are ready to consider reform that reaches beyond the agenda of politicians. Becoming a republic is important symbolically, he suggests. The monarchy represents British interests. It symbolises that privilege and patronage belong to inheritance rather than ability.

To David Solomon, becoming a republic is but the first step in a process of political reform. Rewriting the constitution so that it describes accurately the way the system works is a very important step in any reform process, possibly even more important than the republic issue. Accordingly, there needs to be a diminution in the power of the major political parties. This is necessary if Australians are to exercise a genuine say in reform proceedings.

Solomon refers to “destructive, restrictive trade practices” in Australian politics. These practices deprive Australian political life of many talented people. This is the end product, David Solomon asserts, when there is an insistence on “careerism” and parliamentary membership for ministers. The author sees this as strong evidence of the need to reform Australia's political system.

Because of pressures associated with globalisation, many Australians have had to improve their efficiency in their workplaces. Why should institutions of government be any different? Why should politicians and politics be immunised from such changes?

Indeed. *Coming of Age* was released just prior to the Constitutional Convention earlier this year. It is a vehicle for David Solomon to discuss possible ways in which we might better govern ourselves. He has written a number of books over the years, including *The Political Impact of the High Court*, *The People's Palace - Parliament in Modern Australia*, *The Making of an Australian Prime Minister* (with Laurie Oakes), and *Elect the Governor-General!*. The latter publication is the source from which *Coming of Age*

springs. There is discussion in *Coming of Age* about an elected head of state and government. David Solomon favours direct election of Australia's head of government:

A change to (direct election of the head of government) would change our current system of government in a fundamental way. The government would be chosen by the people, not by the parliament. That would allow Australia to adopt a system of government something like that in the United States, where the president and the cabinet are separated from the Congress. One benefit of this change would be to free the parliament from the control of cabinet.

Concerns with powerful politicians could be addressed, David Solomon argues, by seeking to separate power more along American lines. There are other important issues that should form part of the republic discourse. How should we elect the parliament? Should parliament remain a bicameral legislature? What should be done about the states, and the present federal-state division of powers?

As David Solomon notes, predictions of problems

associated with the marriage of federation and responsible government have turned out to be correct.

Then there is the question as to whether we should incorporate a bill of rights in the constitution. And whether citizens should be able to initiate referendum proposals? David Solomon canvasses such issues within the book's ten chapters.

There are less than two hundred pages in *Coming of Age*. The writing is clear and concise. Key arguments for and against propositions are outlined in a straightforward tone. The author reveals his preferences along the way. There are some interesting comments contrasting aspects of the



American and Australian political systems. In addition to having general appeal, this book will suit many teachers of Year 11 and 12 politics in the way that another book by the same author did some years back.

THIS WHISPERING IN OUR HEARTS

By Henry Reynolds

Allen & Unwin, pb, 1998, rrp \$17.95

ISBN 1 86448 581 7

Some historical narratives of Australia's post-1788 path have been influenced by the writer's personal alienation from society. Such narratives have tended to discount the achievements of those that journeyed along a demanding path in earlier times. However, this tendency should not close our eyes to deplorable actions and attitudes that characterised the past.

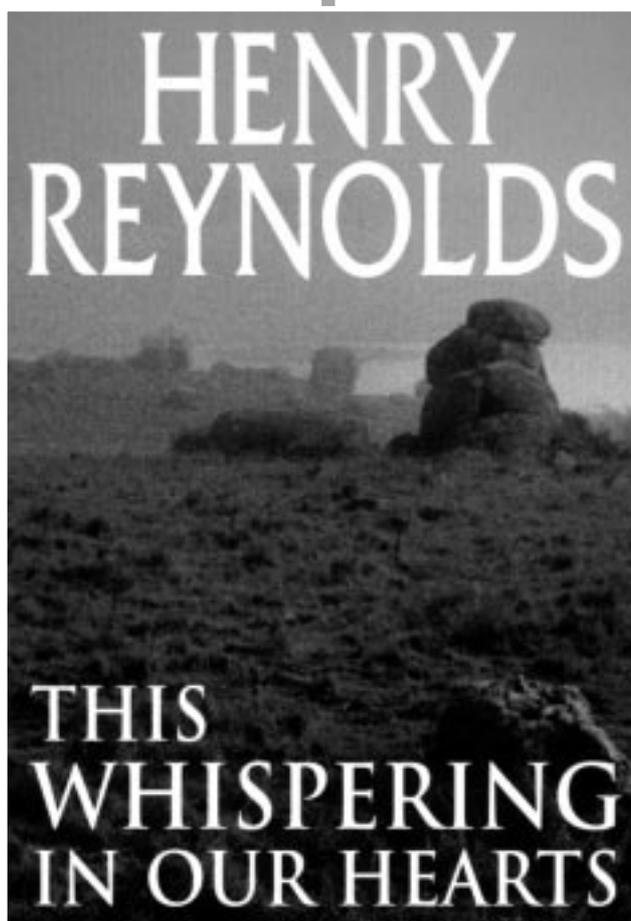
The treatment of indigenous people by European settlers including former convicts is such an episode. Innocent people suffer when two very different cultures collide. This is especially so when one group possesses superior technology, and dispossesses the other group of land, especially when that is central to their beliefs and very being.

So it was that expanding European settlement of this continent stripped meaning away from a way of life. Regrettably, this dispossession was accompanied by brutal force on occasions.

The authorities, here and in London, sometimes turned a blind eye to brutal treatment of Aboriginal peoples as European settlement pushed further and further inland. It is a scar that winds its way into contemporary debate. That there is an awareness of the effects of colonisation on indigenous people and concern for Aboriginal access to land is for the good. However, misunderstandings persist.

Complications and technicalities associated with Mabo and Wik don't help, of course. Nor do simple slogans. Assertions that all Australians should be treated equally may act to imprison equity. Action appropriate to special circumstances may be constrained as a result.

In *This Whispering in Our Hearts*, Henry Reynolds has set out to provide some historical material on black and white relations. The book's title owes its origins to a lecture in 1842 by Sydney barrister, Richard Windeyer. Windeyer delivered a defence of Aboriginal dispossession. Yet he concluded on a curiously uneasy note.



"How is it," he inquired, that "our minds are not satisfied?...What means this whispering in the bottom of our hearts?" Henry Reynolds poses four "major moral questions" at the beginning of *This Whispering in Our Hearts*. Were Aborigines the true owners of this continent? Were the British right to take possession of it? Was the use of force justified in the face of Aboriginal resistance? Should Aborigines have been compensated for the dispossession?

The author sees the book as:

An account of the men and women who were unable to satisfy their consciences and who worried about the relationship between the Aborigines and the Europeans, who said so publicly and who took political action of one sort or another in the hope that they could change the way things were.

It is an arbitrary account. The author recognises that this is so. The time periods are restricted to the 1830s and 1840s, the 1880s, and the decade following the mid-1920s. The focus is confined to eight individuals. Lancelot Threlkeld, George Augustus Robinson,

Louis Giustiniani and Robert Lyon in the first period; John Gribble and David Carley in the second; and Ernest Gribble and Mary Bennett in the third.

Henry Reynolds summarises their concerns and viewpoints, and the responses they received from fellow settlers, and the authorities. The accounts of brutality and carnage experienced by indigenous people at the hands of settlers are moving. They included "punitive expeditions", whereby indiscriminate and disproportionate violence were visited upon black men, women and children, many of whom were guilty only of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Because of the specialised nature of the information, the reader is very much in the hands of the author and his researchers. The construction is very sympathetic to the humanitarians, as Reynolds refers to them. The author identifies with their concerns. To an extent, the short portraits lift these individuals out of their social milieu. And their opponents are unable to reply effectively.

However, the author does not allow his admiration for these humanitarians to blind him to their eccentricities and frailties. In their own ways, they contributed to the price that they paid for challenging conventional practices and attitudes. They too experienced a form of dispossession and displacement, along with those they sought to defend.

To Henry Reynolds, the fate of the Aborigines casts shadows over our sunny narratives whereby colonists and their descendants triumphed over adversity in a land enshrining the idea of a fair go for all. He passes harsh judgment on the colonists:

What the humanitarian story shows is that an alternative agenda was aired, a more humane course projected, was listened to, understood and then comprehensively rejected, often with derision. The colonists were offered a choice and chose to continue in accustomed ways, preferring violent dispossession to purchase, treaty and negotiation.

This Whispering in Our Hearts provides moving material for reflecting on dimensions of contemporary debate.

John McConnell is the co-author of several senior economics text books.

INTO PARLIAMENT SHE MUST GO

Women are making advances on the various houses of parliament around Australia. But there are many hard yards to go. Three women, two who made it there and one who has helped many other women get there, are Joan Kirner, Lis Kirkby and Chris McDiven. What's going on? What works; what doesn't? And when will the images of dark and grey suits colour and diversify in our chambers of government? Don't miss this timely discussion as election day approaches.

SPEAKERS : JOAN KIRNER AM (Former Premier, Victoria & Convener, Emily's List Australia)
CHRIS McDIVEN (Liberal Women's Forum) &
LIS KIRKBY (Former Democrat MLC, NSW)

TOPIC : Into Parliament She Must Go - Women and Politics
DATE : Tuesday 13 October 1998
TIME : 5.00 for 5.30pm
VENUE : The Chifley Conference Room (Rm 102), Level 1,
2 Chifley Square, Sydney

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REVIEW OF THE REVIEWERS

Stephen Matchett

Paul Sheehan's self described collection of reportage *Among the Barbarians: The Dividing of Australia* (Random House 319 pp) tells us more about one man's yearning for a world at best long gone and which probably never existed, than it does about its proclaimed subject, the parlous state of the Australian polity.

Sheehan's themes are certainly contemporary but his treatment of the issues and the reasons they concern him tell us rather more about the author than about the state of the nation.

Yet this is a book for the age. Most policy polemics excite the op ed writers for a month or so and then disappear from view. In Sheehan's case future scholars will turn to this slight collection of obliquely connected grievance to show how some Australians in the 1990s responded to the most concentrated period of social and economic change for a century.

And just as scholars now read the rants of the 1890s against the Catholic Irish, the yellow peril and enemies of the Empire, scholars will quote Sheehan to demonstrate how privileged but angry older men responded to changes to Australia they neither controlled nor endorsed.

At the heart of this book is Sheehan's contempt for those he believes undermine those national characteristics and virtues which make Australia a moral exemplar to the world.

Sheehan's tract is a populist manifesto for an emerging green-right political stance. The book has much to offer the unreconstructed economic reactionaries who yearn for a national sovereignty sheltered by tariff walls. It will also strike a chord with those deep greens who argue that population growth driven by high migration is threat to the environment.

Sheehan laments the passing of an Australia characterised by tolerance, patriotism and stoic courage in the face of adversity. These are the virtues Sheehan finds best expressed in nation building,

specifically among bushmen. Indeed Sheehan celebrates the same physical toughness, and intelligent rather than intellectual love of country that the *Bulletin* of the 1890s defined as the apex of Australian identity. Thus his description of novelist and bushman David Foster:

Foster is a wiry, weathered, piratical figure who once bemused an academic conference by delivering a large part of his address in Latin. He can be a mesmerising performer. When giving readings he usually wears the bush working uniform of boots, moleskins and blue singlet, and while he recites he rolls a cigarette with one hand. (p249)

And, surprise, surprise, the people of the bush, the keepers of the one true flame of Australianness are doing it tough:

The people of the bush, those closest to the ethos on which Australian culture and mythology was built, feel so marginalised by the new dominance of urban politics that many believe they are being thrown on the historical scrap heap. (p147)

Inevitably in this sort of popular patriotism there is the almost obligatory statement of the great achievements of the First AIF in 1918 and of their sons in the war against Japan. Most importantly there is the celebration of unity in adversity which Sheehan believes define the best Australian character. Thus he describes how Australian POWS survived the Japanese camps:

Australians discarded their differences (the biggest was the suspicion between Catholics and Masons which even showed up in the camps until crushed by the conditions) and became a tribe, a tribe which was always the most successful group. The core of this success was an ethos of mateship and egalitarianism which not only survived the ultimate dehumanising duress of the death camps, but shone through as the dominant Australian characteristic. (p30)

This variety of ethnic triumphalism is at the heart of Sheehan's book. For hundreds of pages he rages against the erosion of the culture of solidarity which bonds real Australians and argues that much of that erosion is caused by the wrong sort of migration. Not that Sheehan dislikes migration, far from it,

migration brings us many valuable things like - restaurants and clever professionals. He even acknowledges that migration from Asia is inevitable:

The growing blends of Asian influences in Australian culture and cuisine, and the growing number of young interracial couples are happy by-products of this evolution. A pro-Asian immigration policy for Australia is not merely the best policy for Australia, it is the only viable immigration policy. (p201)

The problem is that we have too many of the wrong sort of migrants:

Australia's immigrant flow in the 1980s and 1990s has brought extremes of social behaviour. At the high end, the great majority of immigrants are contributing to their new country, especially the thousands putting in the long slogging hours of small businesses. At the low end, groups within this diverse immigrant stream are over represented in welfare abuse, extortion, drug importation, gang crime, marriage rackets, visa abuse, insurance fraud and tax avoidance.

Readers may wonder why Sheehan's paean of praise to the migrant stakhanovites of small business is far outweighed by page after page detailing the social problems accompanying migration. Bad migration has perverted the political process, particularly by bringing a new phenomenon called "branch stacking" to the ALP and unions, something undoubtedly unknown to previous generations.

Bad migration rots the public purse, establishes new class power bases based on ethnicity, holds real Australia in contempt and brings its trivial tribal feuds to our tolerant land. Sheehan, rages against those who will not commit to the values of his one true Australia, at least his version of it:

The central fantasy of the multicultural industry is that Australia should be a cultural federation. But Australia has a distinct, dominant, cohesive, assimilative, blended culture that has been painstakingly built through trial and error. There is an enormous difference between the self-evident diversity of Australia's multicultural society and the big protective tent under which this diversity is thriving. Take away that big tent -

Australian culture - and this diversity curdles into state-sponsored tribal animosities. (p 138)

The unsurprising fact that first generation migrants stick together and that Australia's history chronicles an ever growing cultural expansion to accommodate waves of immigrants are not issues which are pronounced in Sheehan's book. At times it reads as if Sheehan believes that Australian society is fixed and while migrants can join it they should not presume to change it.

The condition of indigenous Australians gets the same treatment. Sheehan points out that for all the efforts of the Labor years, health care and life expectancy "went nowhere" and makes the obvious point that the problems of indigenous Australians are painfully complicated. But having got that out of the way he proceeds to explain how it is not really mainstream Australia's fault at all:

Many of the problems in Aboriginal Australia are the direct result of past mistakes by the dominant white culture. But many of the ongoing problems, notably the stark disparities in life expectancy and general health, reflect a chasm in value systems, a primal disparity between a hunter-gatherer civilisation and a mercantile-pastoral-industrial culture. ...The complexity of this uneasy coexistence and the need for indigenous solutions to indigenous problems is largely ignored by those who portray all these problems as the result of white subjugation.(pp301-302)

In fact indigenous communities are architects of their own crises:

The state of life in country towns such as Moree, Bourke, Walgett, Brewarrina and Wilcannia is a state of permanent bubbling tension marked by stone-throwing, pub brawls, break-ins, bag-snatching, rapes, assaults, racist insults and intermittent riots. ...And so it goes, a problem getting worse not better, as Aboriginal rights grow stronger. (pp292-293)

There is much more of the same but Sheehan reserves his animus for the "thought police", villains intent on destroying Australian pride who cloak their evil work in the language of tolerance and equity:

Of all the political problems facing Australia, the growing power to suppress and constrain freedom of expression is the most sinister. Given the tremendous achievements of Australia, it should be a time of national confidence, but it is not. Thirty years of poisoning of the nation's history has taken its toll. Many histories now parrot a hatred of Australia. The politically-motivated accusations of racism, made hollow by overuse, have been pumped up to include "genocide" and "holocaust". The mud has stuck. The nation's sense of certainty at the end of the century has been eroded by the politics of stealth and division. Australians are still caught in a moment of collective hesitation, still exuberant, hedonistic, open-minded, successful yet their everyday freedoms are being eroded behind the rhetoric of equity. (p317)

Throughout the book Sheehan hammers away at this theme - the power elite will attack and emasculate anybody who dares question the party line enunciated by the migration, multicultural, Aboriginal lobbies:

From the day it lost office, Labor and its surrogates inside and outside the bureaucracy, notably multicultural and indigenous activists on the public sector payroll, kept up an incessant din about "division" that became self-fulfilling. The most disturbing aspect of this industry is that its most zealous adherents in the bureaucracy and the Aboriginal community give their ultimate allegiance to the sovereignty of international bureaucracies, not Australia. (p 117)

How fortunate for us all that relief from this sinister plot is at hand via the balanced media comments of radio talk show hosts such as the scholarly Alan Jones of Radio 2UE in Sydney who remind us all of what Australia once was and again should be.

Readers familiar with Paul Sheehan's celebrated journalistic reserve, his tolerant wit, his gentle irony, his delight in the elegant understatement, will be staggered to discover that there are times when his own strongly held views colour this loosely connected collection of warnings and exhortations.

Certainly Sheehan has opinions on an extraordinarily diverse number of subjects. Most of the book

consists of warnings against baddies of varying descriptions who are universally motivated by greed, malice and hatred for Australia - often all three. Even when our enemies are not actively plotting against us we have much to fear from them. For example, Sheehan devotes a great number of words to demonstrating that Asia is economically inept and ecologically incompetent and that Australia better watch out or we will suffer from their cupidity and ignorance.

As for Pauline Hanson, Sheehan makes it plain he has no truck for the woman and predicts that she will lose all supporters but the zealots (which makes the Queensland election result all the more alarming). However, Sheehan unsurprisingly argues she speaks for many people:

Thrashing Hanson as a racist and a fool is no substitute for actually doing some work. Moral outrage does not explain what caused the widespread unease that found expression in the 1996 federal election and the huge swing Hanson received in that election. The collective attitude of the press pack was that this complex issue was actually simple: white racism was still common in Australia. The possibility of community anger at political duplicity never seemed to enter the equation. (p165)

Perhaps what the country needs is a smarter, nicer version of Pauline.

Sheehan is a man with a mission to raise important issues and no-one can doubt that he deals with subjects of great importance to Australia. Which is why some might feel sad that his book has failed so badly. This is a combative text which argues a passionate case but it will not encourage debate as much as confirm people in their passions.

Sheehan is a man preaching to the converted. What is left of the old Keating coalition, advocates of economic reform, an equitable social welfare system, engagement with Asia and an acknowledgment of the rights of indigenous and migrant Australians, will find little of merit in the way Sheehan constructs his argument. But older, less well educated Australians, people who fear change, are nervous about ethnic difference in their community and are frightened for Australia's safety in a hostile world, will find affirmation of their concerns. The tragedy for Sheehan is that, in his enthusiasm to present contentious issues, his book will be taken up by frightened bigots who believe that any change they

neither like nor understand is an assault on Australia's very existence.

The media treatment of *Among the Barbarians* will not have surprised Paul Sheehan. While the real people's media, the tribunes of talk back and populist commentators, embraced the book, elements of the policy press got stuck in. But only elements - perhaps some of his opponents chose not to dignify Sheehan's arguments with a response. Perhaps some decided he was simply too combative to take on. Whatever the reason, Sheehan did not draw much fire in the broadsheet press.

Anne Summers at least had a go in a column (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 July) which blunted its impact with a curiously tangential attack focusing on gender. Summers certainly got one of Sheehan's peripheral points quite right, his and novelists Murray Bail and David Foster's expropriation of environmental concern, to their own bushman's patriotism. But she used it to make an entirely unlikely claim: "It seems to me that these three men are trying to make the eucalypt emblematic of a world that is both masculine and monocultural." This desperate attempt to paint a green tinged red neck populism as a uniquely male phenomena is less than convincing given the popularity of Pauline.

Summers also had trouble understanding that Sheehan's grab bag of ideas from across the policy spectrum might actually be more significant than the names of his supporters:

It does not conform neatly to any ideological template (he's a greenie and seems to support Mabo and Wik, for instance) but media opinion makers such as Alan Jones, Piers Ackerman, Frank Devine and Christopher Pearson, all doyens of the Right, have not hesitated to claim him into the fold.

Anne Henderson (*Australian's Review of Books*, July) produced a far superior review which carefully took the book apart, as much for the poor quality of research as for the lines it runs:

A confusing mix of overstatement and understatement, a tract rather than a considered thesis; too much preaching and too little research.

Henderson worked through Sheehan's chosen topics, the bane of multiculturalism, the new class plot to suppress debate, the villainies of China, the

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE MEDIA?

Julianne Schultz is a journalist, academic, writer and librettist and for a time was Associate Professor of Journalism at UTC. She has now written a new book on how to revive the media - today a major global industry far from its roots as the handful of reporters documenting debates in the House of Commons. How does the industry called "the media" retain its journalistic independence and political autonomy while also being accountable and responsible to audiences and ethical in its dealings?

SPEAKER : JULIANNE SCHULTZ (Journalist & Author *Reviving the Fourth Estate* [Cambridge University Press 1998])

TOPIC : *Democracy, Accountability and the Media*

DATE : Tuesday 22 September 1998

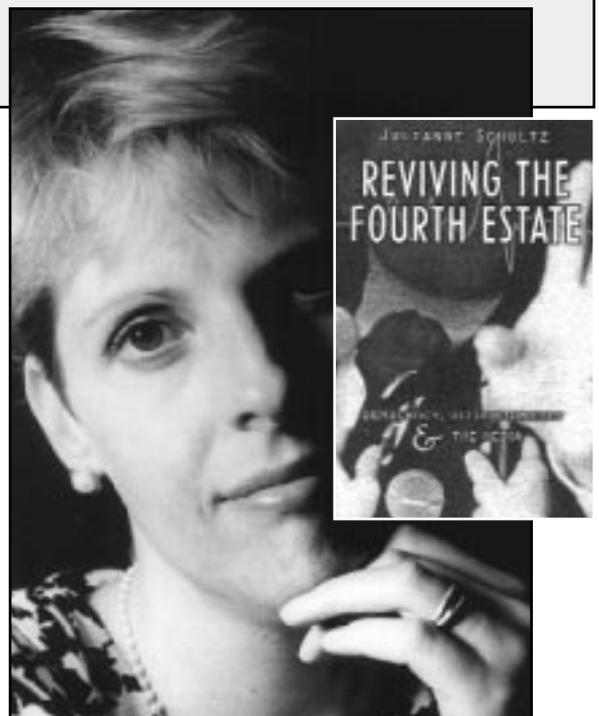
TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

VENUE : 41 Phillip St, Sydney

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hideous consequences of the wrong sorts of migration and so on and so on and pointed to flaws in all his arguments. However, it is her overview of the book's failings which was particularly damning:

Among the Barbarians is a skewed Australian canvas, self-justified as setting the record straight: just one side of the debate on the grounds that it's never been heard. Sheehan picks at topics rather than digests them, often relying on a handful of opinions to support his.

James Jupp (*Courier Mail*, 11 July) also demolished Sheehan both for the quality of his ideas and their presentation:

He writes good feature articles which are provocative and sometimes very annoying. Unfortunately, stringing these together does not make a book...This is not an academic work, nor is it dispassionate. It is selective, often overstated and sometimes downright wrong.

But most importantly Jupp attacked Sheehan not on ideological grounds but for the quality of the book's writing and research:

Quoting undefined statistics and referring favourably to authorities with whom you agree make for a clear picture but are not likely to produce balance or insight. All your friends become courageous and your enemies venal agents of the multicultural industry. Old Australian or Aboriginal traditional cultures become legitimate while "imported" cultures are not. History disappears down a memory hole.

Jupp did not declare his own position on issues and focussed on the qualities of Sheehan's book, a focus which made the hostile judgement of this careful crafted review all the more damning.

Shelley Gare (*Australian*, 13 June) was exercised by the book's extraordinary popularity. Sheehan claimed 60,000 "in print" in an interview with Angela Catterns on 2BL (15 July). In particular she looked at the role of Alan Jones on Sydney's Radio 2UE in making the book a success, arguing that Sheehan's "notions are right up the right-wing Jones' Street". She then proceeded to provide Sheehan with evidence to support his belief that the liberal-opinion

elite want to marginalise opinions that run counter to the new class orthodoxy. Thus she described Alan Jones' audience:

Eighty per cent of them are over 40 and many would identify with Jones' phrase, strugglestreet. Many are also people whose hearts are lifted by our newly dubbed outback princess, Pauline Hanson.

But instead of reaching out to this audience, instead of presenting a case to people who do not read the broadsheet media, by taking the likes of Jones on, Gare simply dismissed him:

In my liberal media elitist way, I had thought every reasonable person, Sheehan included, knew how to deal with Jones. ...Stay away from (the) diatribes against Asian crime, wharfies, bureaucracy and so on.

Ignoring the populists, and by implication the people they appeal to, is no way to refute their arguments.

Robert Manne (*Sydney Morning Herald* 8 June) was uncharacteristically reserved in a piece which some may consider to praise Sheehan with faint damns, but in fact carefully suggested that the book's absence of balance harmed its standing.

Time and again in *Among the Barbarians*, Sheehan's argument is overbalanced by a real recklessness of purpose or by the personal anger of a wounded cultural combatant intent on revenge.

The problem is, according to Manne that the time is not yet ripe for a national debate on many of the issues Sheehan raised:

Sheehan seems not to understand the potential explosiveness, in all societies, of political questions turning on ethnicity or race. In discussions such as these, plainspeaking ought, in my opinion, to be balanced by restraint and sobriety. Yet it is precisely this kind of moderation which *Among the Barbarians* lacks.

To deny Sheehan the right to express his arguments only plays into his hands. A lamentable argument, all the more so coming from the normally acute pen of Robert Manne.

Les Carylton (*Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 June) addressed the same issue as Gare and Manne but from a rather different perspective, praising Sheehan for speaking up despite the howls from:

The usual suspects: SBS Radio, Al Grassby, chairpersons of ethnic councils and people on public payrolls who had vested interests in racism, disharmony and tribalism.

Carylton seized the high ground and portrayed Sheehan's book as the voice of independent journalism, "not so much a polemic as a classic piece of reporting" and argued that as the "thought police" want to stifle debate, "we need more journalists like Sheehan and fewer stooges". P P McGuinness (*Sydney Morning Herald* 28 May) argued that if only people like Sheehan had received a better hearing earlier we would not face the prospect of the Hansonites holding the balance of power in the House of Representatives after the next election:

Unhappily, there is truth in every one of Sheehan's charges. In a better state of public debate than that which has prevailed in Australia in the guise of political correctness all the special problems of migrants and Aboriginal communities could have been faced and appropriate policy measures formulated to respond to them. But they were not.

So, as usual, it's the new class coalition of multiculturalists and so on who are to blame. And the cost of their folly in trying to suppress voices like Sheehan's is the Hansonite genie:

They will rue the day - we all will - that one first-rate journalist has been so angered by all this to write the manual for the next five elections.

Regular readers of the *Sydney Morning Herald* will wonder how much more exposure for voices of strident conservatism is necessary before the McGuinnesses and Sheehans of the fourth estate decide that not everybody who disagrees with them is either a new-class zealot or a brain washed victim of some ALP multicultural conspiracy.

Michael Duffy (*Australian* 6 June) focused on the core of the book and found much to praise in Sheehan's patriotic reply to the new class haters of all that is Australian:

It does remind us that there is an intellectually respectable view of the country that began around the time of the publication of Donald Horne's *The Lucky Country* in 1964 and swelled to a taxpayer-funded torrent under the last ALP government.

What is worse, the Howard Government has not killed the beast:

The New Class remains with all its delusions in place. As things now stand, the next ALP government will be able to take up where it left off in 1996, ideologically, with the benefits of a renovated economy.

For Duffy this is a battle for the nation's soul. Sheehan's "bold, brave and brilliant book" is important in presenting the truth and "its reception will tell us something about our country's future." Whatever their readers thought of their views, at least McGuinness and Duffy presented arguments, which was more than most of the conservative ministry of all the talents bothered do in their rush to praise Sheehan and all his works.

Christopher Pearson (*Financial Review* 25 May) compared Sheehan's book to Cheryl Kernot's biography and delighted that the former was selling while the latter languished. This was because Sheehan "deals very straightforwardly with a lot of contentious questions and unpalatable facts, opening up long-overdue debates." For Pearson most of the important debates are about, in one way or another, migration and multiculturalism. It was less of a review than a benign summary, criticising Sheehan only for his ideal of Australia as an "eco-superpower".

Miranda Devine (*Daily Telegraph* 26 May) brilliantly strung quotes together to present a summary that not even Sheehan could take offence to:

He writes in great detail, for instance, about the manipulation of immigration policies by Labor to ensure a constant stream of unskilled non-English speaking welfare-dependent migrants to gratefully stock its urban electorates.

There was more, much more, of the same but at least Devine stopped short of exhorting her readers to enlist in a class war against Sheehan's opponents: "the political, bureaucratic and media elite that ruled during Labor's 13 years". Piers Ackerman, also

writing in the *Daily Telegraph* (21 May), that journal of common-sense which struggles to be heard above the all powerful babel of the multicultural conspiracy, praised Sheehan for speaking up:

He challenges many of the too convenient myths peddled by the predictable voices of the ABC and the Fairfax press, which in itself is a bold move, because he writes for the *Sydney Morning Herald* where he is something of a stand-out among that newspaper's claue of black armband scribblers.

Andrew Field (*Courier Mail*, 1 July) agreed with Sheehan that pretty much everything was the fault of the media and that the press treatment of Pauline Hanson was not on:

Sheehan, is, of course, right and quite brave to point out the total unacceptability of such liberal condescension and double standards. That's not what democracy is supposed to be about. It's very convenient, however, for the lazy segment of the press which doesn't know how to do the hard work of analysis and solid judgement. Worse, doesn't even want to.

What's more, according to Field, people here sneered at Hanson in the same way that people in the United States sneered at Paula Jones. Now there's the hard work of analysis for you. In fact Field appeared less concerned with discussing Sheehan than pushing his own high toned sense of grievance against, "the divisive culture of particularity":

It's a culture where everyone (if your group is strong enough) has privileges and where justice can never prevail. This is the culture in which both our major parties have cynically separated wedges of society and set them against one another for a place at the trough.

It was probably all to be expected. Sheehan's aggressive, argumentative and partisan style brought out the same characteristics in his supporters. But then again this judgement is probably just part of the media multicultural conspiracy to suppress Sheehan's voice, a voice so dispossessed that he only has access to the pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald* whenever he wants to make a case.



ELECTIONS, ELECTIONS, AND WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE TWO PARTY SYSTEM.

Antony Green has been covering elections at the ABC and across Australia for a decade. His face is now a regular feature in election commentary before, during and after the electoral event. Tasmanians go to the polls on Saturday 29 August and a federal election is not far off. The One Nation Party has upset all earlier election indicators and now threatens the old balances of a two-party system.

Hear Antony Green's assessment at The Sydney Institute.

SPEAKER : ANTONY GREEN (ABC's Election Analyst)

TOPIC : *The State of the Parties*

DATE : Tuesday 1 September 1998

TIME : 5.30 for 6.00pm

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

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GERARD HENDERSON'S **MEDIA WATCH**

THE TIMES ARE CHANGING

Change has a lot going for it. According to some commentators, it is the phenomenon which best explains the national psyche circa 1998. We live in uncertain times. Hence the unpredictability in employment outlooks, personal relationships, medical developments and so on. Thank God social researcher Hugh Mackay is around to explain what change means to you. And me. Without our Hugh, the pace of life would be even more confusing than at present.

Even some of Australia's better known media commentators have become caught up in the metamorphosis of life - as seen through their particular contributions.

Geraldine Doogue's "No TV" Week

- Geraldine Doogue, for example. Now you would think that Ms Doogue, with a considerable background in the electronic media, would be an enthusiastic barracker for television, radio and the like. If so, a surprise is in store.

Geraldine Doogue's column appears weekly in Brisbane (*Courier Mail*), Melbourne (*The Melbourne Weekly*) and Sydney (*The Sydney Weekly*). Circa 14 July 1998 she referred to "something marvellous and rare" which had "turned up" on her desk. Believe it or not, the item in question was a proposal by the Young Christian Workers Movement (YCW) that the nation at large participate in "No TV Week". The presenter of ABC TV's *Compass* program was all for the idea in theory - but was somewhat shocked to find out that she, too, had to "commit" herself to be involved. As Ms Doogue reflected: "This means agreeing to give up television for the week!" She continued:

I was particularly intrigued by their [i.e. the YCW] belief that TV had contributed to a fractured community. Before it, people regularly hung out with their next-door neighbours, had barbies or played cards and went to church functions. It didn't even require imagination. Whereas today there seem to be few opportunities where

young adults can meet new people after they've left school because much of this effortless shoulder-rubbing has evaporated.

What's going on here? Here is a woman whose professional career has been built on her successful stints as a television journalist and presenter. And now she is suggesting, with a little help from the YCW, that TV has contributed to a fractured community. Oh for the days (they seemed like months, even years) when people socialised with their next door neighbours and went to church. What bliss.

And what did Geraldine Doogue have in mind for those who had taken up the YCW advice and gone cold (television) turkey for a whole seven days and seven nights? Ms Doogue advised that the YCW had:

...provided lots of ideas about using the spare time created when *Melrose Place* is forfeited by choice during "No TV Week". Have a cards night, they say, or a dag fashion parade, where everyone has to model the worst clothes in their wardrobe; get your neighbour to put on a BBQ or have a coffee-and-chocolate, port-and-cheese or even a fondue night! Organise a social pool competition at your local or get each of your friends to bring a friend for a night of drinking games.

What fun. By the way, if you are attending a "No TV" fondue night with Geraldine Doogue, BYO exclamation mark!!! Gerard Henderson's *Media Watch* was going to provide information about the time of Geraldine Doogue's *Compass* television program. But what's the point? You're all in your most daggy clothes about to head out for that neighbourhood BBQ having denounced television and all its presenters. For a week at least.

Piers Akerman's Hansonism Back-Flip

- Sydney *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph* columnist Piers Akerman also appears to have demonstrated the reality of change in recent times.

On Saturday 6 June 1998 the *Adelaide Advertiser* reported that its one-time editor had addressed the South Australian Press Club on the previous day.

According to Nick Papps' report, Mr Akerman told his audience: "I don't believe Ms Hanson deserves a vote". He also called on the media to "educate their readers, listeners and viewers on why this person [Pauline Hanson] has been accorded such a high profile on the Australian political stage and why a vote shouldn't be wasted on this [One Nation] party in the Queensland and the Federal elections".

How times change. Can this be the very same Piers Akerman who, just after the March 1996 Federal election, declared that "admiration is growing for the fledgling Federal MP Pauline Hanson" (*Sunday Telegraph*, 31 March 1996). And is this the one-and-only Mr Akerman who, in October 1996, obtained an "exclusive interview" with the Independent Member for Oxley which led to a friendly profile under the heading "A dinkum stirrer - and proud of it" (*Sunday Telegraph*, 13 October 1996)? And the very same Sydney columnist who, in the two months following Pauline Hanson's controversial inaugural speech of 10 September 1996, wrote no fewer than six columns reporting on - or praising - Ms Hanson's views? You bet - re which see The Sydney Institute's *Media Watch* No 40. Which brings us to

Bob Ellis - Wobbly on Protection

- Bob Ellis. It seems that the leftist Bob Ellis, like the rightist Piers Akerman, has been knocked off (ideological) balance by the arrival on the political scene of the Independent MP for Oxley. Writing in the *Courier Mail* on 11 July 1998 Ellis gave his readers a lecture about how to handle Pauline Hanson's - and David Oldfield's - One Nation. Spoke the Prophet Ellis:

...What we have to do is engage with, and refute, their ideas. Ideas such as tariffs that protect the jobs of country communities, and the "privilege" enjoyed by a group of people whose men are dead at 52, and whose despairing adolescents hang themselves in jail. One is a good idea, I suspect, and one a wrong and evil idea.

Er, what was that again? Is Bob Ellis seriously suggesting that "we" have to engage in and refute the idea that high tariffs actually protect jobs in the long term? Is this the very same Bob Ellis who has been preaching for eons about the need to re-regulate the Australian economy and praising protectionism? Apparently so.

Paul Johnson - 8 out of 10

- English columnist Paul Johnson is another whose line has changed somewhat in recent times - albeit for personal reasons.

On 29 May 1998 the British satirical magazine *Private Eye* published a full page of selected extracts from the sermons over the last decade of your man Paul Johnson. Headed "Scenes from the life of St Paul", *Private Eye* reminded its readers of Mr Johnson's moral stance on many a moral issue of our (and his) time. Highlights included:

- PJ's declaration, as told to Lynda Lee-Potter that, basically, he was a "Ten Commandments Christian" (1987).

- PJ's book *Intellectuals* - where he made the point that intellectuals should be judged in accordance with how they ran their own lives with particular reference to their "sexual and financial dealings". In this tome the author expressed disapproval that Jacques Rousseau "enjoyed being spanked on his bare bottom" (1988).

- PJ's view that the West's tradition of "monogamous marriage" explains, in part at least, why the West had prevailed over the Muslim world (1992).

- PJ's condemnation of "sexual licence, the availability of easy divorce, the decline of monogamous marriage" as among "the great evils of the modern world" (1993).

- PJ's edict that the "apparently irresistible rise of sexual promiscuity" is a sin "crying out to heaven for vengeance" (1994).

There is much, much more of Johnson-the-moraliser. Including in his 1996 book *The Quest for God: A Personal Pilgrimage*. So why did *Private Eye* bother to dredge up all the saintly utterances on marriage/fidelity by the 1990s very own Saint Paul?

The trigger was a double page spread in the *Daily Express* by a certain Gloria Stewart, aged 50. Ms Stewart told *Daily Express* readers in May 1998 that she had been Paul Johnson's mistress for the past 11 years: "We made love mainly at his London home, but we once had a wonderful weekend at his home in Somerset". The implication in Gloria Stewart's article was that Paul Johnson shares at least some of the tastes of the late and unlamented Jacques Rousseau. According to Ms Stewart: "Sex has always been a

very important part of his life. Paul loved to be spanked and it was a big feature of our relationship. I had to tell him that he was a very naughty boy." It is not clear whether Mr Johnson was trousered or not during these exchanges.

Well Paul Johnson still seems to believe that he is naughty - thanks to The Fall, apparently. Asked to account for his double standards on matters monogamy, Paul Johnson told the *Daily Express* "We are all sinners. Well, I am. That's why I go to church every day." But has sinner Johnson really changed? Gloria Stewart told the *Daily Express* that the reason for her resignation as Paul Johnson's mistress was due to, er, competition: "He told me he was seeing a lady who was a philosophy don and he was very fond of her." Which suggests that sinners have more fun.

To be fair to Paul Johnson he may be a "Ten Commandments Christian" who belongs to the Malcolm Muggeridge church. Muggeridge once wrote that the Ten Commandments are best viewed as an examination paper - with only eight to be attempted.

Christopher Pearson's Queensland Somersault

• Christopher Pearson has also been into intellectual somersaults of late. Writing in his *Australian Financial Review* column before the Queensland State election, Pearson predicted a Coalition victory:

The imminent Queensland poll offers a foretaste of what we could be in for with a double dissolution. Although the Borbidge [Coalition] Government should be returned and Labor's stance on Wik will be the decisive element in its defeat, the campaign will be unedifying spectacle. (18 May 1998).

A couple of weeks later Pearson supported John Howard's decision not to attempt to have the Queensland Liberal Party put One Nation behind the Labor Party in the distribution of Liberal preferences:

Howard's stance on One Nation's preferences in the Queensland election is very much like Kim Beazley's response to the Australians Against Further Immigration candidate in his own seat at the last federal poll, whom he preferred well ahead of Liberal National opponents. It mirrors Peter Beattie's decision to prefer candidates from Graeme Campbell's Australia First Party ahead of Coalition

contenders in Queensland. In each case a major party in a tight contest accepts the preferences of an objectionable minor party to defeat its real rival in the battle for government... Howard is probably right in predicting that One Nation candidates won't win any seats in the State house. (1 June 1998).

After the Queensland election, however, Christopher Pearson changed his stance. Writing in the *Australian Financial Review* on 22 June 1998 in the wake of the Coalition's electoral disappointment, Pearson blamed Bob Carroll (the Liberal Party State President) for the Coalition's defeat. He criticised the Liberal Party decision not to put One Nation last:

As the man responsible for the Liberals' decision on the allocation of preferences, Carroll must share the blame. Few local observers doubt that, had he combined pragmatism and principle when - as it so rarely does - the opportunity arose and put One Nation last, the Liberals would have retained three extra seats. One great advantage of coalition is the autonomy of the parties. If the prospect of putting One Nation last seemed too ostentatious an exercise in product differentiation from the Nationals, the Liberals could always have decided not to allocate preferences in some seats, printed the various options on how-to-vote cards and left it up to the voters. Either course of action would have been far better received by the majority both of candidates and Liberal supporters.

So how can Christopher Pearson argue (on 1 June 1998) that it made sense for the Liberal Party to put One Nation ahead of Labor on its how-to-vote cards and yet maintain (on 22 June 1998) that the Queensland Liberal Party's decision not to put One Nation last contributed to the Coalition's defeat?

THE UNCHANGING ALAN JONES

Some, however, never change. Sydney Radio 2UE's top rating talk back "shock jock" Alan Jones, for example. Let's go to the audio tape to recall four breakfasts of recent memory with Mr Jones:

• Friday 22 May 1998. At 8.20 am Alan Jones does the unusual. He launches Paul Sheehan's book *Among the Barbarians : The Dividing of Australia* (Random House, 1998) live on air. Has there ever been a more fulsome launch? Probably not. According to Alan Jones *Among the Barbarians* is

(variously) (i) “an absolutely magnificent book” (ii) “brilliantly written” (iii) “fearless”, (iv) “brilliantly researched” and (v) a “magnificent contribution to the proper and beneficial intellectual understanding of Australia”.

And what about the author himself? Alan Jones advised his listeners that Paul Sheehan is “highly educated with a brilliant mind” who writes “brilliant prose”. Not surprisingly, the author got on very well with the book’s launcher. Highlights of the on-air discussion included:

- Paul Sheehan’s naming of Malcolm Long, Angela Chan, Al Grassby, Stephan Kerkyasharian as “thought police”. Later he again referred to the thought police before declaring: “This is a book about all the things you can’t say in Australia any more”. He does not explain how, in view of the thought police, his book was published under the prestigious Random House label.
- Paul Sheehan’s reference to the Australian Labor Party. Sheehan told Jones: “I’m not quite sure if it’s [Labor] a political party any more; I’m not sure that it’s not just a criminal enterprise....”

Then, following some criticisms of “this multicultural and ethnic industry”, Alan Jones concluded proceedings: “We’ve got to go to the news. If I’m to launch it, consider it launched.”

- Monday 25 May 1998. In Alan Jones’s view, anything worth doing, is worth doing twice. So Paul Sheehan got another run on Australia’s top rating breakfast show - apparently to say, once again, all the things you can’t say in Australia anymore. This happened to be much the same as he had said the previous Friday. Strange.

It was very much a repeat performance. Alan Jones referred to *Among the Barbarians* as “brilliantly written”, “provocatively articulate”, “excellently researched” and a “phenomenal read”. And Paul Sheehan had another go at the “thought police”.

Discussion then turned on the runaway success of *Among the Barbarians* since it was launched on Radio 2UE the previous Friday. Paul Sheehan declared that “it was all due to you...completely and utterly to do with the Alan Jones show”. How nice.

- Tuesday 26 May 1998. 26 May was designated as National Sorry Day - commemorating the first anniversary of the release of *Bringing Them Home: National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children From their Families*

report on the separated generation of Aboriginal children.

That morning in the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* columnist Piers Akerman had sounded off against National Sorry Day. He was soon on the Alan Jones program. Jones introduced the discussion by quoting at length from Paul Sheehan’s *Among the Barbarians*. Again. Then it was over to our Piers. Akerman wasted no time in:

- alleging that “this whole debate about the separated children has been totally achieved by the propaganda writers from the Human Rights Commission aided and abetted by the fellow travellers in the Labor Party”.
- providing his (personal) interpretation as to why, West Australian Aboriginal activist Rob Riley “took his own life last year”. Said Akerman: “I tend to believe that the pressure which drove Rob to take his life was the fact that he was not in fact a member of the so-called stolen children or a separated child; he was given up by his mother.”
- maintaining that “now we’re seeing other Aboriginal leaders deliberately lie - very prominent ones - we’ll be naming them in the next few weeks as we get some more documentation - these people are now lying about their background trying to jump aboard the nauseating bandwagon”. No names were named in the “next few weeks”.
- claiming that “the great AFL player Polly Farmer...firmly believes that the decision [made to place him in children’s custody] was the right one at the time”.

And so it went on. And on. Alan Jones did not ask how Piers Akerman came to know the (alleged) explanation for Rob Riley’s suicide. Nor did he point out that Polly Farmer had indicated his support for the 1998 National Sorry Day. What’s a few facts between mates?

- Wednesday 27 May 1998. Yes, you’ve guessed it. Alan Jones asked Piers Akerman back again - for yet another free-kick. According to Jones : “Too many people are angry about all of it not to have it discussed again”. This time our Piers:
 - declared that “the Federal Government has never had any policies regarding the separation of children from their families, of course; it’s always been a State issue”. Akerman simply ignored the fact that the Northern Territory, where many of the separations took place, was a Federal territory administered by

the Commonwealth Government (the Northern Territory did not attain self-government until 1978).

- bagged “this Sorry Day nonsense”.
- maintained that Australia was “seeing apartheid by stealth...the abhorrent South African system... being brought into Australia”. According to Akerman, “when we start setting up separate authorities to deal with Aborigines - whether it be housing, health, education or any other area - we’re saying that this country has two governments”. Apparently “two governments” exist when the Commonwealth Government has special policies for the health and housing of Aborigines. But not, it seems, when special programs re health and housing are put in place for, say, returned servicemen and women.

Alan Jones concluded by asking Piers Akerman to “keep in touch”. So shall *Media Watch*. It is worth keeping in touch with Alan Jones - if only because he speaks truth. As defined by Alan Jones, of course. At the height of the wharves dispute, Jones interviewed New South Wales Labor premier Bob Carr on his Radio 2UE breakfast program. The date was Wednesday 3 June 1998. An excited and hyped-up Jones constantly interrupted Bob Carr.

Half way through the discussion, the NSW Premier managed to talk briefly about the 2000 Olympics and the NSW Government’s debt reduction activities. A condescending Alan Jones commented: “Well, you’ve done quite well there”. The discussion continued:

Bob Carr: “You gave me a break for a moment. You stopped interrupting Alan.

Alan Jones: “Well, because I have to interrupt you if I feel you’re not actually saying the truth as it is. That’s my - I am entitled to my version of the truth as well as you.”

So there you have it. There’s Truthful Jones, who believes that he should interrupt his guests to remind them of the truth - as interpreted by Alan Jones. And then there’s the rest of us.

HISTORY CORNER

Among Paul Sheehan’s Factual Errors

Paul Sheehan’s *Among the Barbarians* has no footnotes. So it is difficult, if not impossible, to check his sources for accuracy and/or context. In the “sources” section at the end of *Among the*

Barbarians, Sheehan writes that “this is a book of reportage”. Most books contain errors of fact and/or interpretation. The following corrections to *Among the Barbarians* are offered in the interest of accurate reportage.

- On Page 27 it is claimed that women in Australia “won the vote” as a “sequence” of Federation. In fact women in the colonies of South Australia and Western Australian had the vote before Federation.
- On Page 27 establishment of the “Australian Football League” was “a response to the popularity of soccer among British migrants” circa 1901. The AFL was not formed until 1990. Before that the Australian Rules football code developed on a colony, then state, basis.
- At Page 54 Paul Sheehan asserted that in 1997 “bankruptcies were at their lowest level in a generation”. This is simply false. Figures provided by the Insolvency and Trustee Service Australia (ITSA) indicate that some 25,000 Australians went into bankruptcy in 1997-98. According to ITSA’s statistics, this was a 13 per cent increase on the previous record high which was recorded in 1996-97.
- Page 73. Wang Gung Wu was described as an “Australia-based China scholar”. Professor Wu, an Australian of Chinese background, has not been based in Australia for several decades.
- Page 94. Paul Sheehan claims that Paul Keating once said: “I will do Howard and do him slowly”. In fact the reference was to former Liberal leader John Hewson.
- Page 107 The author quotes John Howard as saying:

I can remember early in 1992 when unemployment went to a very high level and the...former Opposition leader, John Hewson, and I both called for a reduction in the overall level of immigration because of its link with the level of unemployment. For our pains, we were bucketed by the former Prime Minister as racist. He actually used that expression. He actually used that expression. That is the kind of behaviour that I regard as absolutely unacceptable.

It is true that John Howard alleged that Paul Keating called him a racist in early 1992. But there is no

evidence that Paul Keating ever used this expression vis a vis John Howard either inside or outside Parliament. Paul Sheehan cites no evidence and the Prime Minister's office has declined to respond to requests for information about the source of Mr Howard's 1992 claim.

- Page 137. Barry Unsworth should read Barrie Unsworth.
- Page 153. Paul Sheehan writes that: "Pauline Lee Seccombe [now Pauline Hanson] was born on 27 May 1954 near Brisbane. Three of her grandparents had migrated to Australia prior to World War I. The fourth, her maternal grandmother, Alice McKee, was Queensland-born and the one who gave Pauline her red hair...". Early photographs of Ms Hanson show her hair was distinctly dark, black in fact.
- Page 192. Stephen FitzGerald is mis-spelt as Stephen Fitzgerald.
- Page 240. According to Sheehan, 1994 was "the year of the most sustained ethnic violence in Australia as Greek and Macedonian nationalists waged a campaign of demonstrations, threats and bombings against each other...". This simply ignores the serious violence involving Australians of Serbian and Croatian background in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This occurred, of course, before the term multiculturalism was used in Australia - and before the election of the Whitlam Labor government in December 1972. Yet another instance where the facts do not fit Paul Sheehan's theories.
- Page 299. The Jesuit priest and political commentator Frank Brennan is described as the "brother of Justice Brennan of the High Court". Frank Brennan was born in 1954. Gerard Brennan, the former Chief Justice of Australia, was born in 1928. Frank is Sir Gerard's son.

MICHAEL DUFFY ON WORLD WAR II

During the height of the recent wharf dispute, Michael Duffy looked into the history of the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF) and Seamen's Union (SU) - and did not like what he saw. Duffy made the important point that members of the communist-influenced WWF and SU were less than accommodating during the Second World War. This was particularly so during the Nazi Soviet Pact (1939-41) when Australian communists and fellow travellers effectively supported Adolf Hitler and Nazi militarism. After Nazi Germany's invasion of the

Soviet Union, the left began to support the war effort. Nevertheless considerable rorting remained on the wharves and, at times, this harmed the allied war effort.

So there were not many surprises when Michael Duffy - relying on Hal P G Colebatch's unpublished manuscript *A Twisted Mirror* - cited numerous misdemeanours of the WWF and SU during the Second World War. Except, that is, for the following claim:

In one incident, a radar station in the Solomons was off the air because crucial valves had been stolen on the docks at Townsville. During an electrical storm 16 planes, lacking guidance from the station, became lost and disappeared.

Now, if true, this is a big story. Even today. According to Messrs Duffy and Colebatch, 16 Allied planes disappeared during the Pacific War due the theft of equipment by wharfies on the Townsville docks. But is it true? Apparently not - according to Group Captain E. R. Hall. His chapter "The RAAF Radio Story" is contained in E.R. Hall, *A Saga of Achievement: The RAAF Radio Story*, Bonall Publishing, 1978.

Group Captain Hall reported an event, which occurred in New Guinea, not the Solomon Islands during the Pacific War:

Despite the many difficulties encountered at many radar stations, the radar organisation successfully performed a very important air warning function. In addition to the effective warnings of the approach of enemy aircraft, many stations were able to contribute to the safety of Allied aircraft. Typical of this type of help was the service given by No. 334 Radar Station at Gusap in April 1944. A group of 70 Boston and Lightning aircraft returning from a mission over Wewak had become lost in a storm between Wewak and Gusap. The radar station received emergency IFF signals from the Lightning aircraft at a range of 80 miles and the plot on the aircraft was sufficiently accurate to allow the Fighter Sector to give the aircraft a bearing on which to fly back to base. Some of these aircraft reached Gusap with only three minutes supply of petrol to spare.

The bulk of the mission was comprised of

Boston aircraft and these aircraft, although carrying slightly greater reserves of fuel, were also lost because they were not carrying navigators. The bearings given to aircraft by the Fighter Sector acting on information from radar IFF plots, enabled most of the aircraft to return safely to base. Unfortunately, fifteen aircraft were lost, but without the radar information the losses would have been much heavier.

So there you have it. According to Michael Duffy and Hal Colebatch, some 16 Allied planes disappeared in a storm because crucial valves (used for guidance) had been stolen from Townsville wharves. According to Group Captain Hall, 15 (not 16) aircraft were lost during the incident - and the losses were primarily due to the fact that the planes in question were not carrying navigators. To say the least, it is highly unlikely that the war-time loss of 15 or 16 aircraft - due to inadequate radar equipment resulting from thefts on the docks by WWF and SU members - could have remained hidden from public criticism for so long. It seems that there was no outrage because the event, as described by Michael Duffy, never took place. Certainly it is not referred to in the official war histories. Thanks to Richard Hall for this historical research.

LISTENING CORNER

Let's conclude with something wholesome. Caroline Jones, for example. To coincide with the launch of her book *An Authentic Life: Finding Meaning and Spirituality in Everyday Life*, Ms Jones wrote an article entitled "The Search for Meaning" in the May/June 1998 edition of the Catholic publication *Madonna*. Caroline Jones gave a big plus for that most fashionable of contemporary fads - namely the ability to listen:

To be listened to without censure is a liberating experience - and a rare one. When a person listens to me with benevolent interest and questions me only for clarification, I relax my guard and speak easily. As I do so, I discover more of who I am; I become clearer about my sense of values; I attend to my spiritual life, and I perform a little care for my soul.

In case you're wondering, the "I" refers to Caroline Jones. As in id. Miss Jones's search for meaning continued:

The listener's lack of judgement, advice or argument disarms the defences which I spend so much energy protecting. I am

able to retrieve deep feelings; I can even confess my shame and sadness, and in doing so, relieve them; I can reveal my dreams and so increase the possibility of their realisation. To speak them out and have them heard is a powerful step towards achieving them. The listener has created a safe enclosure in which that may happen. For this reason I am inclined to think of listening as the creation of sacred time.

Well, Miss Jones, we are all listening. In silence. And without judgment. And all we are seeking are some details of Caroline Jones's real authentic life. Not the air-brushed version which appears in *An Authentic Life*. Let's hear it for MORE SACRED TIME, Caroline Jones style. We're all listening.



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