



LETTERS

Biking with Beethoven

Thank you for your letter telling me I had won a bike in your new subscriber's competition. When I got your letter I hadn't opened the June ALR so it was a pleasant surprise to hear I had won. I went to Sydney this last weekend and picked out a bike and rode it around Centennial Park.

I haven't owned a bike for 25 years. The last one I had was in Bolivia - I rode around rural communities on the Altiplano at an altitude of 12-13,000 ft with the tranny on the handlebars playing Beethoven.

This new bike I have left in Sydney for my daughters to use, but will reclaim it in a few years and ride off into the superannuation sunset with Beethoven & co.

Many thanks,

Mary E. Wilkie,
Armida, NSW.

An apology

In his article *Decline and Fall?* (ALR 120) Stuart Macintyre twice referred to statistics drawn from the research of Andrew Scott. (See Andrew Scott's article in this issue, P32-33 above).

His acknowledgement for those statistics was accidentally deleted in proof reading.

Our apologies to Stuart Macintyre, Andrew Scott and our readers.

Don Cochrane,
Penguin, Tas.

Back to Basics

I have been intrigued by the commercial ignorance of some of your academic contributors on the subject of where to now for socialism.

Marx could be forgiven for equating ownership with control in his ownership of the means of production scenario, but there is no excuse under the present-day conditions of over-riding economic power. A recent example is the exercise of that power by the United States over countries like Australia, Britain and Canada when told to comply with the American response to the Middle East crisis.

Australian company law still lives in the past in allocating control on the basis of ownership, but British company law now deals in terms of control, although still not taking into account the many forms of contractual control perfected by the multinationals.

The same principle applies to politics - for the state to control things does not mean that it needs ownership. It is no longer relevant who owns what - the issue is who is in control, and the Socialist Left ought to be debating in terms of social control.

This would have enabled the Left to attack the Keating deregulation policy on the ground that it involved the deliberate abrogation of social responsibility.

The mess resulting from financial deregulation ought to provide plenty of ammunition, while the privatisation debate ought to raise such questions as: how can we contemplate a deregulated internal airline system when we know that social control, i.e. regulation, will be essential to ensure service to outlying areas?

If reality had triumphed over tradition, socialism would long ago have been redefined in terms of control rather than ownership.

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