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Faction Friction

Being Victorian Premier in 1992 doesn't just mean having to deflect the blows of your opponents on the other side of the Speaker. Equally important is knowing how to bluff, cajole and otherwise bamboozle the more vociferous opposition within your own ranks. In the first week of May Joan Kirner had threatened to take her government over the cliff to an early election to quell the discontent within the Victorian Labor movement over her plans to corporatise the electricity, water and gas utilities.

When you think about it, that is some card to play for a Government that has, on the balance of probabilities, only seven months to run. But that is the way of the Victorian ALP as it slowly blunders its way out of ten years of office. Labor in Victoria is rent by a series of schisms that, it seems, only a period in the wilderness will expunge. The schisms are the result of personal and ideological differences, the detritus of lost hopes and thwarted ambitions.

The fighting, the acrimony is around the movement in Victoria all the time; occasionally it settles on a policy vehicle and manages to become a full-blown political event.

This was the case with the Kirner government's corporatisation plan. Although the decision by cabinet and the subsequent caucus deliberations specifically ruled out privatisation, many Right and hard Left union and party officials refused to believe that the policy was anything but 'privatisation by stealth'. Essentially it came down to a matter of trust, or, more correctly, mistrust.

How has this come about? There are probably several causes. First, there are the power relationships dependent upon the full public ownership of utilities. Under benevolent state Liberal governments and the Cain Labor government, unions in the public sector grew powerful and fat. Their officials developed what might be called 'understandings' with the administrators of the authorities, leading to satisfactory wages, staffing and work practice arrangements. Any attempt to place the utilities on a more competitive, private sector-like footing threatens those power relationships.

That is perhaps obvious. What is less obvious is that factional discipline in Victorian Labor has virtually collapsed in the past two years. Since the troubles of 1985, when four Right unions excommunicated at the time of the Split returned to the fold, the once-dominant Labor Unity faction has been in decline. Its union base, which provided the bedrock for Bob Hawke's rise to national political prominence, has fallen as unions such as the Transport Workers, the AWU and the Clerks have gone over to what must be termed 'non-Right' leaders.

This third force, nominally Left but not part of the mainstream Socialist Left, emerged at the turn of the decade. On the Right, most eyes throughout the 1980s were directed at Canberra. A big Labor Unity player, Robert Ray, gradually channelled his energies into federal power plays. This has left a vacuum that various players have attempted to fill—most notably minister David White.

White has been a key player in trying to loosen up government restrictions on public utilities. He has fallen out with considerable sections of his own faction for his performance in past corporatisation negotiations, as well as for the fact that he was one of the first members of Labor Unity to desert Bob Hawke and agitate for Paul Keating.

Meanwhile, the Victorian Left has, upon attaining its greatest degree of power in decades, succumbed to infighting and division. Personalities have played a big role. Kim Carr, the Socialist Left secretary since the early 1980s, has been a powerful force in building up the Left's influence within the State Government. In the 1982 Cain Cabinet the Left had only two junior ministers. Now it has the Premier and the Treasurer, while the Deputy Premier relies on Left numbers.

But Carr, who will enter the Senate next year, has an assertive personal style which has not endeared him to some leftwingers whose ambitions he and the ruling group have not fostered. Despite her apparent distance from her faction, Joan Kirner has regularly had to rely on her Socialist Left base to keep her government together. This was true of the corporatisation imbroglio. The Trades Hall Council and the party's administrative committee opposed the plan, and the Right and the hard Left threatened to call a special conference to discuss the issue.

Everybody in the party knew that the bitterness would splatter itself all over such a public forum. Thus, Kirner upped the ante and threatened to call a June election. You can take the blame for the Government's destruction, she told her surly comrades. It worked. They backed off, and the Government delayed the reforms for a few months. But it was really only a bit of time-buying, some papering over the cracks.

SHAUN CARNEY is a columnist for the Age.
When the dance music remix of Yothu Yindi's *Treaty* finally burst into the Australian Top 20 last year, the sound of consciences being salved was almost audible. For years there had been veiled accusations of racism aimed at the Australian music industry, particularly commercial radio, concerning the lack of recognition and opportunity given to Aboriginal musicians.

Suddenly those accusations seemed to have less substance; a round of communal back-slapping ensued and the band's commercial success was followed by a plethora of awards for the single, its accompanying video clip and the album from which it was taken, *Tribal Voice*.

For Yothu Yindi's leader and spokesperson, Mandawuy Yunupingu, this recognition is just reward for years of hard work and determination. Essentially optimistic, you get the impression he always felt commercial success was just around the next corner, despite the lack of precedent. Yet Mandawuy's outlook hasn't always been so positive. "In my time I've been without hope," he says. "I was angry, I got into fights. I've turned to drinking, I've been locked up...But I've changed now because I know my family is really strong and powerful. Instead of being angry and turning away, I'd rather challenge and find a positive solution."

The family Mandawuy refers to is indeed strong, both spiritually and politically. In 1963, in one of the earliest expressions of the Aboriginal land rights movement, Mandawuy's father presented the Yirrkala Petition—an attempt to control bauxite mining in Arnhem Land—before the House of Representatives. And his brother Galarrwuy, who also provides vocals on a track on *Tribal Voice*, is chair of the Northern lands Council. For his part, Mandawuy decided the future of his people lay in education. He became the first Aboriginal university graduate from his region (the area around Gove, in east Arnhem Land) and is now the principal of the Yirrkala school, where he's pioneering a curriculum that emphasises both Yolngu (Aboriginal) and Bandala (European) learning.

This marriage of cultures is typical of the approach taken by Mandawuy and his Gumatj clan. Mandawuy is neither militant nor separatist; rather, he's a realist who believes that retaining Aboriginality does not mean rejecting the best of what other cultures have to offer. This is reflected not only in Mandawuy's approach to education and politics but also to music and technology.

"These days we're doing more compromising in terms of cultural situations, and you've got to do it because you're dealing with the commercial aspects of the music industry. As long as our values, beliefs and principles remain intact—and I reckon we've got the strength to do that—then I think that's the way to go. We may have made some compromises but we've retained the essence, our Yolngu integrity is not being threatened. In fact we're enriching our culture."

The success of Treaty, which deals with the Australian government's failure to draw up the treaty between black and white Australia promised by Bob Hawke in 1988, has seen trendy nightclubs the world over dancing to a song that's not only political but combines the traditional music of a 60,000-year-old culture with state of the art technology and is sung largely in an Aboriginal language. While the song's message clearly goes over the head of many dancers, Mandawuy's pleased if just a few get the point. And as seriously as he takes his responsibilities (he's currently taking two years' leave without pay to concentrate on musical activities), he also takes an almost capricious delight in being such an unlikely pop star. Sure, he wants to educate, but equally he also wants to entertain.

While other musicians might already be putting down the deposit on the country house in Bowral and the fleet of vintage cars, Mandawuy has other plans. At present he's putting together a proposal to have a cultural centre, complete with recording studio, built in his community—the idea being that it will act as a forum for interaction with other indigenous peoples from around the world. He sees Yothu Yindi's growing profile (and his own) as the perfect opportunity to agitate and build bridges, to be both the fly in the ointment and the oil on stormy waters.

"This may be the best platform we've had yet for getting our message across and telling people overseas about the plight of Aboriginals in Australia—and also our strengths," says Mandawuy. "Now, you can talk all you want, but I reckon nothing communicates like music."

STUART HITCHINGS is a freelance music journalist.
Most Germans looked on stunned as results from two state elections in April flashed across their television screens. In northern Schleswig-Holstein, the extreme-right Deutsche Volksunion (DVU) captured more than 6% of the vote, while in south-western Baden-Wurttemberg, the like-minded Republikaner Partei (REP) pulled down almost 11%—both dramatic increases over their showings of 1% and less in those states four years ago.

Germans' expression of shock, however, was that of having feared the worst, and then of having it happen. On the heels of the National Front's success in France in March and the triumphs of similar xenophobic rightwing parties in Belgium, Austria and Sweden, the ultra-right's gains in the two former West German states were hardly surprising. The mainstream parties' incessant wrangling over the country's political asylum statute, implicitly 'the foreigner problem', had conveniently paved the way for the ultra-right. With demagogic slogans such as "A German Platform for German Citizens", the ultra-right simply takes the logic of the Bonn establishment one step further.

The only real element of surprise was that little had been seen or heard of the extremists since the REP's dramatic rise on the West German political scene in 1989. With unification, history overtook the ultra-right parties momentarily, delivering them pounding defeats in most of the 1990 and 1991 elections. The theme that the Right alone had occupied for years—German unification—had overnight become official state policy, leaving the extreme Right temporarily disarmed.

In the late 1989 and 1990 West German elections for state legislatures, the REP's support sank beneath the 5% hurdle necessary for parliamentary representation. In the East, "The Unification Chancellor" Helmut Kohl and his ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU) rode the wave of nationalist euphoria against the backdrop of billowing red, black and gold flags. In the first all-German federal elections in December 1990, the REP managed only around 2% of the total vote.

Until the 1980s, the majority of nationalist conservative and ultra-right elements in West Germany made their homes in the right wings of the conservative mainstream parties, the CDU and its Bavarian sister-party, the Christian Social Union (CSU). But the CDU/CSU's early 1980s Ostpolitik with the GDR proved more than the conservatives' right wing could stomach. The time was finally ripe, they decided, to strike out on their own.

The stated goal of West Germany's early radical Right thinkers was to bring the German Right "out from the shadow of Auschwitz", to distance the movement from the damning stigma of its Nazi past. The far-right intellectuals sought influence postwar political culture in a way that would destigmatise their fascist ideas. They argued that an ultra-right political movement could be possible only when its language and assumptions had first become an accepted part of the FRG's political discourse. US President Ronald Reagan's 1985 visit to West Germany's Bitburg military cemetery and the subsequent Historians' Debate were exactly what the radical Right thinkers had in mind.

The far Right's second front was the construction of a modern image for the movement. They replaced the brown shirts and swastikas of the past with a professional, youthful veneer. They dropped terminology such as "Aryan supremacy" and "Blut und Boden" society for their own no less reactionary versions of "European unity" and "environmental protection".

The clear aim of their guarded critique of National Socialism was to excuse German fascism from the Nazi regime's two most ignominious crimes: the Holocaust and the World War. In exchange for the overtly racial theories, the New Rightists embraced cosmetic theories of "national identity" and "ethnic specificity", which distinguished a similar hierarchy of peoples. The product was slogans such as "Germans be proud to be Germans, Turks be proud to be Turks—United against Communism and Racial Mixing".

The far Right offers the ethnic community, the Volksgemeinschaft, as an alternative to the sense of meaning that eludes people in post-industrial society. Not without justification, they argue that modernity has "uprooted" humankind, casting it as atomised individuals into an alienating, high-tech world. Yet, rather than confront the dilemma of modernisation with bonding forms of civil society and social community, the New Right retreats into the realm of tradition, family and nation.

The REP's meteoric rise in the late 1980s formally announced the far Right's arrival in the FRG. Founded in 1983, the new party rallied behind 60-year-old radio journalist and former Waffen SS man Franz Schönhuber. Schönhuber manoeuvred around the category of the 'old Nazi', while making plain that
not only was he proud to have been in the Waffen SS, but that there was indeed something worthwhile that Germans could salvage from the Nazi era. His two favourite slogans: “I’m proud to be a German” and “We want to stay German”.

At first, to receptive crowds in Bavarian beer halls, and then across the federal Republic, Schönhuber peddled his message that the German petty bourgeoisie were the real losers of post-industrial society. The traditional German family’s sense of security and closeness had been lost, he argued. In virulent tirades against the Federal Republic’s ‘liberal’ immigration and political asylum statutes, the Republicans tapped a potent combination of nationalism, racism and social frustration. Only drastic curbs on foreigners in Germany would “prevent the misuse and injury of German citizens, their safety and their Gemeinwesen (communal essence)”.

The REP’s initial rise and fall occurred within the space of one year in January 1989, the party captured a startling 7.5% of votes in West Berlin municipal elections. Some working class districts delivered the extremists’ 20% of their support, and similar successes followed. In June, two million West Germans voted for the REP in the European Parliament elections, sending Schönhuber and five colleagues to the Strasbourg parliament.

Analyses of voting patterns revealed that racist demagoguery directed against foreign nationals living in west Germany was the main basis for the party’s victories. Yet, although the REP crassly linked the country’s economic and social problems with the presence of foreigners in Germany, those districts that voted heavily for the REP had only minimal numbers of foreign residents. In other words, REP voters were not anti-foreigner because their neighbours were Arabs. In fact, in city districts where high concentrations of foreigners resided, the REP turn-out sank below average.

Nor did the party rally large ranks of the unemployed or underprivileged. The average REP vote boasted a middle-income or higher standard of living. The small business people, bureaucrats and wage earners who backed the REP did so much more out of their fear of unemployment than because of their own actual unemployment. A disproportionately high percentage of REP voters were male (three times more than women), young (many between 18 and 23 years old) and with lower levels of education than other voters. The REP also scored exceptionally well among people living in the urban “social housing projects”.

The far Right’s success in charting a course between the old-school neo-fascists and the CDU/CSU failed to eliminate the array of openly radical factions from the rightwing scene. Unlike the National front in France, the republicans were unable to unite the spectrum of ultra-right forces around their campaign. Revamped neo-fascist parties such as the DVU also rely upon primarily electoral strategies, although not to the exclusion of courting skinheads or expediting violence.

With the arrival of the REP, the DVU dropped to second place among Germany’s ultra-right parties. The DVU sees itself as a “supra-party movement”, encompassing such groups as ‘The Popular Movement for a General Amnesty’ (for Nazi war criminals) and the ‘Initiative to Restrict Foreigners’. Behind the neo-fascists’ standard democratic lip service, the DVU promotes an aggressive xenophobia and caustic anti-Semitism, demanding strong-arm ‘law and order’ policies to halt ‘foreigner-inspired’ crime.

With the exception of the size of their recent triumphs, the ultra-right’s victories offered few new surprises. During the campaigns, the parties maintained next to no profile in the states, running with sketchy or non-existent programs. The DVU ran its multi-million Mark ‘cellar campaign’ with 20 to 30 people. Most of its propaganda was distributed through the mail from its Munich headquarters.

The vast majority of ultra-right voters were neither neo-Nazis (many came from the Social Democrats), nor were they largely the underprivileged. Most of the upstanding burghers who voted far Right did so to express their uncertainty and fear about the looming costs of the unification. Their vote constituted a clear protest against the major parties, whom they feel have left the ‘little people’ out on their own. Amid the raging debate around the asylum law, which the CDU, above all, has manipulated to account for Germany’s every plight, voters also pinned the source of their frustrations and fears on the presence of ‘too many’ foreigners in Germany.

But the major political parties have yet to get the real message, namely that the people know full well that someone, somehow is going to have to pay for German unification. The CDU and the Social Democrats have rushed to establish a ‘round-table’ to join forces in tackling the country’s problems. First on the agenda: the asylum policy.

PAUL HOCKENOS is a Berlin-based freelance journalist.

Coming up in ALR:

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Old Lang's Sign

Paul Keating's oblique reference to a republican future for Australia during the recent royal tour outraged John Howard and like-minded royalists. It was ill-timed, provocative and, worst of all, it was bad manners. When our Prime Minister laid a guiding hand on the Queen of Australia's back, all hell broke loose. Television news bulletins around the world ran it as their 'amazing scenes'-segment. The British tabloids, ever the guardians of royal dignity, were near to apoplexy. This was more than just the gauche familiarity of a colonial Prime Minister, even a Labor one. It was lèse majesté. Ian Botham, here to smite the colonials at cricket, blustered threats against those who would insult his sovereign. It was all good knockabout stuff for the silly season.

Then came ANZAC Day. Instead of crossing the lake from The Lodge to the War Memorial, Keating went to Kokoda, where he paid a carefully-staged tribute to the Australians and Papua New Guineans who stopped the Japanese army for the first time in 1942. This was not simply the repayment of an overdue debt to the locals who helped Australian troops. It was a move calculated to shift the focus of ANZAC Day away from Churchill's Dardanelles folly in 1915 to a campaign for the defence of Australia. It was an attempt to wrest the symbolism of Australia's military heritage from an imperialist to a nationalist cause.

This was accompanied by a minor historical squabble over Churchill's alleged indifference to Australia's fate during the Second World War. Again, the empire loyalists were livid. Finally, in May, Keating used the fortieth anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea to emphasise his point about Australia's interests being in its own region, not in a sentimental attachment to a defunct empire which, both in war and trade, had deserted us.

It was time to recognise all this in the quintessential symbol of the nation. The Union Jack would have to go. After all, as the Flags Act 1953-73 stipulates, "The Australian National Flag is the British Blue Ensign" with a few stars added. We were ready for a new design symbolising our national maturity and independence. Overnight, the benches of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition sprouted little Australian flags, like a thin blue line of royalist defence, and battle commenced.

According to Michelle Grattan in The Age of 29 April, Hewson accused Keating of being a "wrecker" in the Jack Lang tradition. "He is prepared to tear down a fundamentally important institution and symbol like the Australian flag to satisfy his own short-term political ends". Rising to the defence of his patron, Keating reached for his sledgehammer. "He (Lang) knew what they (the conservatives) were—snivellers to forces abroad, crawlers to forces abroad, lickspittles to forces abroad—and they have never changed. They do not understand Australia, and they do not understand Australian nationalism."

There was none of speech writer Don Watson's elegant wit here. This was vintage Keating, the street brawler sticking up for his old mate, 'the Big Fella'. There was, nevertheless, some truth in Hewson's reply that "The attack on the flag is to be seen as nothing more than a deliberate distraction from the main game". (That's the game for the neo-classical cup, awarded to the team that can level the industrial playing field fastest, not the one that kicks the most goals.) But Keating's nationalism was not just a distraction from the economic debate. It was a good deal more than that, as the reference to Jack Lang signifies.

Lang certainly knew about snivellers, crawlers and lickspittles, and how to kick their heads. He was, after all, a master of the art of populist nationalism, an art he learned from his brother-in-law, Henry Lawson. Between them they spanned the two moments in Labor's history when that particular variety of nationalism occupied centre stage. In April 1888 Lawson wrote an editorial for the Republican bemoaning the neglect of Australian history in schools. He hoped that, contrary to the wishes of "Australian Groveldom", children might "learn to love the blue flag with the white cross, that bonny Flag of the Southern Cross". They might also "acquire a preference for some national and patriotic song of their own homes and their own appointed rulers, rather than to stand in a row and squeal, in obedience to custom and command, God Save Our Gracious Queen".

Within five years a severe depression, strikes and the collapse of the banking system had given a sharp class edge to these nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiments. In a series of bitter strikes, the unions were ruthlessly defeated by the combined power of employers, police, troops, the courts and the colonial parliaments. In an effort to capture control of the instruments of the state which were so successfully mobilised against them, they established their own political party in 1891. As Lawson wrote at the time, "We'll make the tyrants feel the sting of those that they would throttle, They needn't say the fault is ours if blood should stain the wattle".

From its beginnings, the Labor Party's ideology was compounded from a populist amalgam of class, nation and race. Its rhetorical account of Australian society went something like this. Colonial capitalists, in a desperate defence of their own interests, cared nothing for the welfare of common working people. Indeed, they would crush any attempt to build
a more egalitarian society, free from the class-ridden corruption of the Old World. They were not true Australians. Their hearts and heads were in the Mother Country. Having made their fortune and persuaded a colonial governor to award them a knighthood, they might return 'home' in triumph. In pursuit of that dream, they would go to any lengths, including the importation of coloured workers to break down the hard-won living standards of Australian labour. Only the unions and the Labor Party, the true guardians of national aspirations, stood in their way. In its stout resistance to capitalist greed and imperialist arrogance, as well as the protection of racial purity, the labour movement represented the Australian people, not just a class.

Between 1930 and 1932 Jack Lang revived this tradition in his revolt against the deflationary economic policy forced on Australian governments by Sir Otto Neimeyer, the emissary sent from the Bank of England to protect the interests of British bondholders and Australian conservatives in business and politics. The great "battle of the plans" for economic recovery came down to a contest between "men versus money". Orthodox economic solutions demanded that interest owed to British capitalists be paid before anything could be done to help pensioners and the unemployed. In Lang's view, Australia should have renegotiated its debt, reduced payments to bondholders and changed the basis of the currency so that workers and the widows and children of men who had died defending the Empire in 1914-18 could be saved from utter destitution. It was another example of how capitalists and imperialists cared nothing for the welfare of the common people. Indeed, their utter hostility to those who resisted was confirmed when the British Governor sacked Lang as Premier of New South Wales in May 1932.

The young Keating imbibed all of this traditional account when he sat at the feet of Lang in the latter's declining years. It was central to the history of the Labor Party and consistent with the folk memory of Irish Australians who had their own reasons to detest the British Empire. But Keating is far too astute a politician to allow himself the indulgence of a cathartic wallow in Labor mythology. There is a logic in his revival of the old populist tradition—a revival mercifully shorn of the tradition's old racist cast.

On his own side, it's good for the morale of the faithful, at least those who have long memories of Labor's traditional rhetoric. There is even an attempt to present himself as a pale imitation of Lang, the defender of the common people, the bearer of the true nationalist tradition. It is also intended to depict Hewson and the Opposition as the enemies of the people in the terms of the populist tradition. The story is a familiar one. The Opposition are fawning royalists, loyal to the tattered glory of a collapsed empire symbolised by the Union Jack. They want to break down the centralised industrial relations system which Labor established at the turn of the century to put a floor under wages and conditions. Indeed, they will attack the institutional structure which provides the foundations of the union movement. It is the Opposition which proposes to abolish all protection for jobs in Australian manufacturing and levy a regressive goods and services tax on the necessities of life so that the rich can have tax cuts. This, surely, is sufficient to indict them as un-Australian.

Lately, however, Keating has backed off a little from this line of argument. The polls have shown him that popular support for a new flag is not so strong as he had hoped. But that is largely a symbolic issue, easily turned aside. Perhaps also his minders have pointed out that it might be a little difficult to go all the way down the populist road.

After all, it was Keating who deregulated the monetary system and had a hand in privatising the people's bank—hardly the credentials of an old-style Labor Nationalist. It might have been pointed out to him that Labor has often resorted to populist nationalism in periods when it faced electoral disaster. He may even find that a million unemployed might rally to a familiar flag as they did in New South Wales in 1932.

PETER LOVE teaches in Australian Studies at Swinburne Institute of Technology. He is the author of Labor and the Money Power.
Global Villages

Modern telecommunications arguably has a lot to answer for. The excessive 1980s could hardly have occurred without the global finance markets—and their capacity to bet down the dollar on the slightest pretext. And would yuppies exist without the mobile phone?

Like it or not, however, there's much more to come in the world of telecommunications. The 'deregulation' of the Australian market (in fact, a reregulation from a monopoly into a duopoly) was the local episode of a worldwide phenomenon. We are witnessing the twilight of the old PTT (post, telegraph and telecommunications) monopolies and the opening of the global era in telecommunications.

Much could be said about how well Australia and virtually any other country in the developed world have been served by the old monopolies over the past hundred years. The billions Telecom took in revenues in the 80s, for example, did not go 'up against the wall' but rather to develop a network that is in the front rank by world standards. But the argument about competition is over and the focus now in telecommunications must be on the world scene.

Free marketeering has peaked in its influence, but the trend to globalisation will continue under its own steam over this decade. Two factors are at work which make further liberalisation inevitable. The first is technology. "The information revolution has been hijacked by the telephone" is how the Economist put it. The global village is now being wired with optical fibre, one of the great technical leaps forward of the 20th century. The just-opened Tasman 2 link to New Zealand and 16,000 kilometres of cable across the Pacific will be completed by the end of 1994.

At the same time, telecommunications networks and equipment are becoming increasingly sophisticated. At a simple level, software in the standard phone enables redial and storage of frequently called numbers, while software added to modern switches and billing systems is creating 'intelligent networks'. The high-capacity broadband networks of the mid to late 90s will be capable of carrying dozens of television channels and interactive services along a fibre optic circuit. In the next 15 years it is likely most Australian homes will be wired to the optical fibre system; hence the substantial battle now for a piece of the pay TV action.

More significant are the changing demands of global corporations and governments. Already some 1,200 companies around the world spend more than US$500,000 on their international telecommunications. The market is estimated to be worth some $20 billion at present. A century ago commerce looked for safe harbours, railway, roads and navigable rivers. Today corporations seek tax incentives, cheap and skilled labour, political stability—and first-class communications.

Harvard political economist Robert Reich speaks of the global factory floor. He points out that of the US$10,000 the buyer pays General Motors for a Pontiac, about US$3,000 goes to South Korea for assembly; US$2,000 to Japan for engines and electronics; another US$1,000 to Germany for styling and design; US$500 to Taiwan, Singapore and Japan for assorted parts; US$250 to Britain for advertising and marketing and US$50 to Barbados and Ireland for data processing. The remaining US$3,200 presumably goes to GM and its dealer.

On the global factory floor, a fashion house in LA can call a videoconference with its Hong Kong manufacturer to inspect the new season's range. Vehicle manufacturer Hyundai can lease a link between Seoul and its Quebec regional headquarters, to which its 500 North American dealers are joined, enabling them to order components and transmit sales information instantaneously.

The 'borderless world' (to use that other management guru buzz phrase) is one where credit card agencies and airlines operate giant global networks, where export/import houses, retailers and insurance companies use paperless trading to save red tape. Even the Vatican has its own electronic mail system which keeps the holy see in touch with its dispersed press offices.

Telecommunications services, already a US$400 billion global industry, are estimated by the Telecommunications Research Centre to be worth almost US$1,200 billion by 2005. In the 80s, transnationals established their own private networks, managed by in-house communications departments. Today, it is often more cost-effective to 'outsource' these requirements to a specialist telecommunications company (or telco, in the infectious industry jargon). Now, transnationals are demanding, and carriers are scrambling to provide, so-called global solutions. Instead of dealing with carriers in a dozen different countries with different services, prices and billing systems, they want a 'one-stop shop' to manage their needs.

The opportunities are immense, the jostling between carriers is under way and, by the end of the decade, the estimates go, no more than six to 12 main telecommunications companies will be left. British Telecom, for example, offers a global network called Synchronia, which aims at offering the 'one-stop shop'. The trouble is, BT is not a global carrier itself, and to make Synchronia work, it will need the cooperation of carriers against whom it competes.

But the word on everyone's lips is 'alliance'. Given the national-based structure of telecommunications, it makes more sense for carriers to pool their market reach and expertise. For example, AOTC has joined with eleven other international carriers to form a network to service the global
The hottest alliance or merger is that proposed between two of the world's oldest telcos, AT&T and Cable & Wireless. Between them they would have access to domestic markets of more than 460 million in OECD countries, global reach, high quality R&D networks and enormous political clout—not to mention annual revenues of $55 billion. This was put on hold in March pending the UK election, suggesting the political sensitivities involved. Should this go ahead, sources agree, the industry will be galvanised.

Indeed, the struggle for telecommunications markets has been likened to the vicious contests for control of US railroads in the late 19th century. Just as railways were the arteries of the industrial age, these 'electronic highways' will carry us into the information age. For AOTC, the challenge will be to find a place in the sun against the behemoths of international capitalism. AT&T and the Japanese NTT are among the ten largest companies in the world. BellSouth, which has a monopoly in the south-east of the United States (and like Cable and Wireless is a partner in Optus, AOTC's new rival) is more than half as large again as the combined Telecom-OTC.

There are some unarguable benefits from global communications: most memorably, Boris Yeltsin's use of phone and fax lines to solicit the support of western leaders during the Moscow coup last year. And just as the roads that capitalists built also serve the rest of the population, so the electronic highways will make the rest of the world more accessible to all of us.

Or nearly all of us. There's not much in the new world information order that directly benefits those countries without the cash to pay for premium networks, as the East Europeans are learning. Information wealth/poverty issues were conspicuous by their absence from the economic purist-driven debate in Australia in 1990. With the main forms of media changing under the pressure of broadband narrowcasting, these will only become more contentious.

As national networks, quite probably including Australia's, come up for sale, issues of national economic and cultural sovereignty of at least as great a significance as ownership of Fairfax will emerge. Other concerns involving new forms of information and communications will doubtless follow.

That there will be a worldwide telecommunications shakeout is inevitable, but there's much to play for in how this takes place and in answering the political questions of who wins and who loses.

ROBERT CLARK is a Sydney journalist specialising in communications issues.
Unfinished Business

For many Britons, June promises to be a month of reflection on a distant war over a tiny cluster of islands in the south Atlantic. No doubt the merchandisers of public consciousness will be reaping lucrative financial rewards as the public commemorates the 10th anniversary of the Argentine garrison's surrender. But as Britain focuses on mythical glories and neatly packaged television dramatisations of the war, few appear to realise that the real conflict is far from over.

Diplomats from both sides of the Atlantic will be hammering out deals over the future of the Falklands/Malvinas. Despite some 1,000 deaths in 1982, there are still many outstanding issues.

Perhaps coincidentally, June also marks the next round of Anglo-Argentine talks on economic co-operation over the islands, with particular reference to oil exploration and exploitation. Although earlier discussions faltered in February, both sides will be back at the negotiating table because there is already too much at stake to allow the new rapprochement to collapse.

No one knows exactly how much oil exists in the vicinity of the islands, as seismic surveys in the area are only just beginning. However, some estimates, including one by the US government, suggest that reserves around the Falklands/Malvinas could be as significant as those in the North Sea. Ironically, Britain may need Argentine labour, equipment, and infrastructure to exploit any such reserves. In exchange, Argentina will almost certainly push for an agreement that would allow Argentine companies to operate in island waters from which they are presently excluded.

Co-operation with Argentina is also driven by the need for joint regulation to protect fisheries around the Falklands/Malvinas. The islands' economy has become far more dependent on fishing since the war, especially as a result of the Shackleton Report.

Building on a report he wrote in 1976, Lord Shackleton concluded that the economy of the islands was extremely fragile, mainly due to its over-dependence on wool farming. He recommended the creation of the Falklands Islands Development Corporation (FIDC), which was given an initial five-year budget of about £31 million, to encourage diversification into enterprises such as fishing.

However, due to mismanagement by the FIDC, and the 1987 collapse of the FIDC-sponsored Stanley Fisheries, very little fishing is now conducted by the islanders themselves. Instead, the islands' administration prefers to make uncomplicated profits from the granting of squid and other fishing licences. Nonetheless, the fact that the fish stocks cross existing territorial limits has propelled the need for an understanding with Buenos Aires on the prevention of overfishing.

But the new rapprochement between London and Buenos Aires is still fragile, especially on the taboo topic of sovereignty. Although Argentina and Britain agreed not to formally discuss sovereignty in 1989 in order to get on with economic talks, sovereignty will continue to intrude on any negotiations. In part, this is because any discussion over oil or other marine resources will tend to impinge upon notions of sovereignty and its relation to claims on territorial waters.

While the dispute over who legitimately owns the islands seems unlikely to be resolved in the near future, it is nonetheless central to the posturing of both governments. Both are gambling that future developments will tip the situation in their favour.

Britain is content to discuss economic co-operation, not only for the obvious financial benefits to be obtained from any future agreements, but also because it expects that Argentina's need for foreign capital makes it particularly vulnerable to economic influence. It believes that Argentina can be stalled indefinitely on the question of sovereignty, especially once it is tied into a series of co-operative enterprises.

Argentina is prepared to play a cool, waiting game. It is gambling that co-operation will soften the attitudes of both the London and Port Stanley administrations towards their former enemy, and that eventually sovereignty will be returned to Argentina. But Britain and Argentina cannot both be right.

By agreeing to pursue economic agreements with Britain without securing any concession that sovereignty will even be discussed, Argentine president, Carlos Menem, may have unwittingly ensured the conditions that will keep the islanders where they are. As Hugh O'Shaughnessy of the London Observer recently pointed out, the 'kelpers', as they refer to themselves, may become the richest community in the western hemisphere if oil is found around the islands.

Nevertheless, Argentina seems content not to push too hard on sovereignty: President Menem is clearly more interested in cash than real estate, at least for the time being. For him, the overriding imperative is the success of his economic reforms, and the survival of his government, both of which are dependent on large capital investments, especially from abroad. An important part of this has been securing buyers for major state enterprises such as the national telephone company and Aerolíneas Argentinas. Future sales of state-owned utilities, such as electricity and gas companies, are on the cards.

Here the connection with Britain is an interesting one, as illustrated by Argentine Foreign Minister Guido di Tella's visit to the UK in April 1991. Ostensibly, Mr di Tella went to seek 'advice' on appropriate regulatory mechanisms as Argentina moves towards a more liberal economy.
Britain may have lost an Empire - but at least it found the Falkland Islands.

However, Mr di Tella’s discussions with British giants ICI and Baring Brothers suggest that he may also have been looking for buyers for further rounds of public company sell-offs.

Without wishing to oversimplify the complex issue of sovereignty, a couple of simple observations on the impasse can be made. Firstly, Argentina claims that the Falklands/Malvinas rightfully belong to it, based on inheritance of the islands from Spain. Argentina’s possession was interrupted when its outpost on the islands was forcibly removed in 1833. It has protested against Britain’s occupation ever since.

Secondly, Britain, which in the late 1960s and 1970s contemplated giving the islands back, now insists that it will not discuss sovereignty. It maintains that the wishes of the islanders, who are of British stock, must be paramount in any negotiation over the future of the islands. Given the express and unsurprising preference of the islanders to remain British, this is merely another way of saying that sovereignty is not negotiable.

Despite a cosy commitment to dialogue, there are compelling reasons why neither side can budge on sovereignty. For Argentina, the islands’ significance as a political symbol of first world arrogance and impunity, and their corresponding importance in Argentine political culture, would make it political suicide for any government to give them away.

For Britain, the islands and those who currently inhabit them have also been an important icon. Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s commitment to preserve the islanders’ way of life has been taken up by her successor, John Major. This is backed by a bi-partisan consensus which is almost unparalleled in any other area of British political life. As in Argentina, public passions over the islands run high.

The existence of a £276 million military base on the islands, and a garrison of over 2,000 British personnel, stands as testimony that the war is not over. With nearly one soldier for every islander, the ‘kelpers’ are probably the most heavily defended community anywhere in the world.

As an editorial in the British paper, the Guardian, suggested in January, the anniversary “is not dry history dead on the page. It is also a reminder of wholly unfinished business; for the Falklands crisis is not dead, but merely slumbering”. This is not to say that Argentina will ever invade the islands again. The Watergate-like crisis of Argentine national institutions sparked by defeat in 1982 means that any future government will find it very difficult to mobilise support for another militarist venture. However, future Argentine governments may not be as sympathetic to negotiation, or quite so keen to cultivate close ties with the Western alliance, as that of Mr Menem.

Potential Argentine aggression is probably less of a threat to the ‘kelper’ way of life than a stagnant economy and the vagaries of world commodity prices. The islands’ economy still relies heavily on wool, despite attempts at diversification. In fact, most of the wool farmers on the island are afloat only due to the influx of cash in the form of direct assistance and subsidies.

While the selling of fishing licences, mainly for squid, has generated new income, this may not be sustainable given current rates of overfishing. Due to the squid’s one-year life cycle, squid stocks are incredibly fragile: overfishing one year can create disaster the next. In the meantime, negotiations to create a common regulatory framework to protect such maritime resources in the south Atlantic are stalled by the impasse on sovereignty.

Unless the question of sovereignty can be resolved in a way which satisfies political and economic interests on both sides, the situation will continue to be a volatile one.

The discovery of oil might be enough to raise tensions once again in the south Atlantic. Argentina is presently committed to dialogue because it sees some opportunity for gain from economic co-operation. But if the discovery of oil turns the islands into a mini-Kuwait, unless some compensation is offered Argentina might feel compelled once again to pursue its sovereignty claim with more vigour.

HERNAN PINTOS-LOPEZ is a writer and lobbyist based in Canberra.
The March referendum vote for change was widely interpreted as the dawning of a new South Africa. Paul Nursey-Bray is more sceptical. Blacks may win formal equality within the constitution soon. But some measure of a democratic civil society is a lot further off.

The removal of the Group Areas Act and the Land Acts last year eliminated the remaining significant pieces of apartheid legislation from the statute book of South Africa. And when a significant majority of the white minority endorsed reform in the much-publicised referendum of March this year, it was widely interpreted as confirming the demise of the apartheid system, as a prelude to the creation of a democratic and multi-racial South Africa. Indeed, the euphoric reception that greeted the referendum result in the media served to give the impression that such a goal had already arrived. Yet, while recent events in South Africa have indeed been momentous, the task has, in many respects, just begun. The path towards a democratic future is strewn with obstacles that reflect the contradictions and dilemmas of post-apartheid South Africa.

In his critique of liberal market society in On the Jewish Question, Marx drew attention to the contradictions that could exist between the state or political community and civil society. He noted that the American constitution had eliminated property as a qualification for voting. Within the emancipated United States the American citizens were free and equal members of a political community that united their interests. Yet, as private citizens within the civil society they were divided from each other into social classes that competed for property and gain. While private property, he argued, had been removed as an influence on state, it was still the dominant fact of civil society. In like manner, while the existence of apartheid has been removed from the South African state—apartheid legislation has gone and the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) is negotiating a new political order—the presup-
positions of apartheid, white supremacy and division on racial lines, have not been removed from the civil society of South Africa. For democracy to have a chance it is essential that these matters be addressed and that the conditions for the existence of a democratic civil society be created.

(i) Education
Most theorists of democracy would argue that an essential part of a democratic civil society is a general and high level of education. Ideally, education should foster both an understanding of political issues, and thus a rational approach to political matters, and the spirit of tolerance that sustains a democratic consensus. South Africa certainly possesses a more educated and skilled population than other African countries. This education and skill is a condition and a result of the country's level of urban and industrial development. Yet an educational imbalance undeniable exists. The educational patterns and past practices of apartheid have robbed the country of a full realisation of its educational potential.

It was Prime Minister Henrik Verwoerd who set the guidelines for a separate and completely different Bantu education system. Verwoerd declared in parliament in 1954 that, "The natives will be taught to realise that equality with the Europeans is not for them". There was, he went on, "no place for the African in the European community above certain forms of labour". The current reflection of this policy is the fact that one in every five black children has no access to school, while a second is expected to drop out during the first two years. At the present moment, 50% of South Africa's 30 million black population is functionally illiterate. Clearly this is a priority issue for the creation of a democratic civil society. In February Mandela and de Klerk discussed education issues. Subsequently the government agreed to create a single, unitary education system for all races. The ANC has called for new school buildings in black areas, a program to train black teachers and the provision of books and other supplies. Of urgent need is more financial support.

(ii) Economic Strategies
Most theorists of modern democracy also agree that another precondition for the successful operation of democracy is the presence of a certain measure of social and economic homogeneity. This is not to argue for absolute equality. It is, however, to argue that the division of wealth and social class, of race or ethnic identity, must not be so severe as to undermine the consensus that underpins
the democratic order. As Latin America shows, the existence of wide disparities of wealth and access to social power and amenities can render democracy unworkable as a mechanism for securing accord — thus inviting other, authoritarian solutions.

White supremacy in South Africa means that the distribution of wealth, economic control, access to housing, welfare and land are hopelessly biased in favour of the white population. Although the emergence of an African business class and the energetic activities of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) have worked to redress the balance, the great majority of wealth is still owned by whites. All of the major industrial, extractive and commercial undertakings are in white hands. Despite the end of job reservation and of statutory differentials in wage levels, average white wages are still far higher than black wages; in 1987 the average non-primary sector white wage was 1,959 Rand compared to an average black wage of 593 Rand.

Disparities in welfare provision and housing also emphasise the wealth gap between black and white. Most African township housing is a 'matchbox' of cement block construction, with four rooms, and an outside lavatory. For the most part electricity is not provided. Figures from the mid-1980s show that welfare spending on whites was more than double that on an urban black population that was four times their number. In the same period one doctor was available for every 330 whites compared to one for every 12,000 Africans. Moreover, all of this leaves out of account the approximately nine million Africans who live in the homelands, whose levels of wealth and welfare compare poorly to the relatively privileged urban African population.

It is these Africans in the homelands, plus those in other rural areas, who have been most affected by the distribution of land. It is clear that both for the creation of a basis for viable democracy, and to secure social justice, some means of increasing the wealth of the African majority has to be found. Two alternative strategies present themselves: a redistribution of wealth that would transfer economic control from the whites to the blacks, and a concentration on economic growth to produce a surplus for use in addressing the various social ills.

The Freedom Charter of the ANC of 1955, while cautious about a wholehearted commitment to a socialist future, proclaimed the need to nationalise key industries in order to give an African majority government control of the economy and as a way of giving all the people a share in the country's wealth. There are still members of the ANC, both in the leadership and rank and file, who remain committed to such a project. The close alliance between the ANC and the South African Communist Party also helps to give an African majority government control of the economy and as a way of giving all the people a share in the country's wealth. However, growth in itself will not be enough, since it is growth within economic structures and parameters that still reflect white supremacy. Some restructuring of the economy will be crucial to address the issues of redistribution. It is apparent that only by because of the conclusions to be drawn from the end of communism in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union. But Mandela has also been led to this position by pragmatic considerations regarding the strength of the South African economy and the effect upon it of a flight of capital and white skills that would follow any radical nationalisation proposals.

Mandela and his advisers have clearly calculated that a redistribution strategy could not work on its own. First, the size of the South African economy (which is roughly equivalent to that of Indonesia or Argentina, with a per capita GDP equivalent to Mexico) presents absolute limits to what can be done. But it is also an economy which, like that of Australia, is in severe recession. This recession is, of course, intimately connected with the international rejection of apartheid, manifest in the sanctions campaign (which has now, despite the protests of the ANC, all but ended). But the recession is also fuelled by the same factors that have led to economic decline in a number of similar economies throughout the OECD. In the years 1981-90 South African GDP grew by only 1%. In 1991 there was a fall in GDP of 0.5%. Over the last three years the rate of inflation has hovered around 15%; in 1991 it was 16.2%. Gross Domestic Fixed Investment fell by 5% in 1990 and 2% in 1991. Unemployment is estimated to be over 30%. It is obvious that Mandela's policy options are enormously constrained. A crisis of investor confidence that might be generated by perceived radical measures could precipitate economic collapse.

It is not surprising, then, that Nelson Mandela has been increasingly cautious in his approach to the business and investment community. In February, Mr Mandela, in supporting the appeals of the South African government for investment at the World Economic Forum in Davos, played down the ANC's approach to nationalisation. The ANC, he asserted, envisaged a mixed economy in which "the private sector would play a central and critical role to ensure the creation of wealth and jobs". The extent of the public sector would be "perhaps no different from such countries as Germany, France and Italy". On another occasion, Mandela observed that "a future democratic South Africa had an obligation to service the debts... incurred by the present regime..." In late April this year the ANC issued a draft document that dealt with proposed economic policies. The document asserted that an ANC-dominated government would be guided by the balance of evidence rather than by rigid ideologies. "We envisage a dynamic private sector," the document declared, "employing the skills and acumen of all South Africans, making a major contribution to the provision of good-quality, attractive and competitively priced goods and services for all." The document stressed that everyone should be safeguarded against an invasion of property rights, and asserted that the strategy to overcome the economic problems bequeathed by apartheid was a restructuring of the economy on the basis of growth.

It is certainly true that the South African economy is both poised for, and capable of growth. However, growth in itself will not be enough, since it is growth within economic structures and parameters that still reflect white supremacy. Some restructuring of the economy will be crucial to address the issues of redistribution. It is apparent
that a future ANC administration will have to walk a fine line between threats to business confidence that will undermine growth, and a failure to meet the expectations of its own constituency that will both cause dissension within the party and menace the operation of a democratic system.

**The government is subsidising the continued white occupation of land.**

(iii) Land

Meanwhile the land issue will continue to pose problems for the articulation and development of economic strategies. The legislation that confined black ownership to 13% or so of the land has been removed—but that, of course, does nothing to remove the status quo of land distribution established during the apartheid years. The De Klerk government has promised to release for purchase 400,000 hectares of state-controlled land that was originally intended for incorporation into the homelands. But this is a drop in the ocean compared to the demands of the many millions of Africans previously denied access under the Land Acts. Thus far, there has been no indication of any intention to restore land to individuals or communities who were forced to give up land by apartheid legislation. It is estimated that only 2% of the people from whom land was taken in the last 30 years will have land provided under the present scheme.

Last year, the ANC's Land Commission called for a radical program of land reform, involving state intervention to secure redistribution, warning that, without it, there would be "an outburst of uncontrollable political anger". The issue remains unresolved, but it will have to be tackled as part of the construction of a consensus within a democratic South Africa. The difficulties of the situation have been highlighted by the severe drought that is currently gripping Southern Africa. In the Eastern Transvaal, white maize farmers have already lost 80-100% of their crops. Millions of African subsistence farmers are also threatened, as are the 1.3 million African farm workers working on white-owned farms. It is an ironic comment on the complexity of the land issue that Pretoria is understood to be contemplating drought aid in the order of many hundreds of millions of Rand to help 2,000 to 3,000 white maize farmers stay on farms which, the Maize Board estimates, they would otherwise be forced to abandon. In the process the government is, of course, subsidising the continued white occupation of land, an issue the ANC considers a matter of dispute.

(iv) A Society Divided

In the creation of a democratic constitution, the political division between a white minority and black majority is generally seen as the prime issue. This is true, but it should be remembered that the black/white division is not the only one that will pose problems for a democratic order. White supremacy deliberately divided in order to rule, and the divided character of South African society owes much to the policies and laws of apartheid. Certainly it would be ingenuous to argue that apartheid was the sole author of these divisions. Racial, ethnic and tribal divisions are not problems unique to South Africa and would exist independently of apartheid. In South Africa, however, they were positively encouraged by policies like retribalisation and, as the forces of white supremacy continued to orchestrate and use them to advantage, they became increasingly entrenched.

Three other key sources of division are the ethnic division characterised by the Inkatha/ANC split, the position of the ex-homelands, and the existence of large Asian and Coloured communities.

The Inkatha movement was founded by King Solomon ka Dinizulu in 1922 to preserve Zulu culture. By the 1970s, however, it was moribund. It was the initiative of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi in 1975 that revived the movement in its modern form. This revival represented a strategy by which Buthelezi sought to secure his political base framed within the apartheid policies of retribalisation and ethnic division. Recruiting almost exclusively from the Zulu people, Inkatha rapidly became a powerful organisation, one million strong, based in Natal Province. Centred on KwaZulu (the intended Zulu homeland under apartheid legislation) it became Buthelezi's regional and ethnic power base. Decrying apartheid and its structures, and refusing to accept apartheid-style 'independence' for KwaZulu, he sought to appear as a representative of black aspirations. At the same time he wooed the whites by denouncing the violence of the ANC's guerrilla activities. Successive white administrations proved as eager to flirt with Buthelezi as he with them.

In the late 1980s the relations between Inkatha and the ANC, never good, degenerated into violent hostility. The unbanning of the ANC, the release of Mandela, and the movement of the ANC and Nationalist government towards an accommodation, threatened to deny Buthelezi a place in any future discussions about the shape of constitutional arrangements. He reacted in two ways. Inkatha supporters conducted increasingly violent campaigns within the townships by which they sought to demonstrate the political sway of their movement. Then in July 1990 Inkatha was relaunched as a "non-racial", "centrist" political party to lay claim to a political role on the same basis as the ANC.

It is clear that Buthelezi's support has never been as large as he has claimed. Moreover, as the ANC has long claimed, and recent revelations have demonstrated, Inkatha has been in constant receipt of clandestine financial and other support from South African military intelligence. But the divisive factor he represents cannot be overlooked. Buthelezi may be a political opportunist, but the fears relating to cultural identity and domination that he mobilises among the Zulu people, whether justified or not, are certainly real.
While homelands are often dismissed as relics of apartheid, they nonetheless represent areas of poverty and need that will require special attention. They also continue to house political elites whose compliance with, and benefit from, apartheid make them potential troublemakers. Lucas Mangope, the leader of Bophuthatswana, is opposed to the incorporation of the territory into a new South Africa and is seeking a regional deal that will enable him and his supporters to hold on to their lucrative positions within the ex-homeland. General Oupa Gqozo of the Ciskei (who seized power in a coup in 1990 backed by the South African Defence Force) is also negotiating for regional autonomy and has recently banned the ANC in his territory.

The separatist threat posed by all of these movements could undermine the creation of a unitary democratic state in South Africa. The desire of the homeland leaders for regional autonomy is matched by Buthelezi's talk of self-determination for the Zulu nation which, in turn, harmonises with the expressed desire of the white Right for a separate, all-white, Boer state. Recent reports suggest that contacts exist between the forces of white conservatism, Buthelezi and the homeland leaders, the aim being some form of what the Conservative Party's Andries Teurnicht has called a "commonwealth of nations" within South Africa. Although any extreme separatist political options are unlikely to triumph against the combined forces of the ANC and the Nationalist government, the divisive forces that the various parties represent will continue to be a problem for a future democratic consensus. They are already being used by De Klerk in negotiations with the ANC to secure entrenched local or regional rights for white communities.

One other potential source of social division which should not be overlooked is the existence of the large Asian and Coloured communities, numbering 950,000 and 3.2 million respectively. This combined total is only a little short of that of the white population. Yet so far they have not figured largely in the discussions. Partly this is the result of their recent history. In the 1984 constitution each group was given its own house of representatives in the tri-cameral legislature. In fact, the effort to incorporate the two groups within the white power structure largely failed, and was opposed by many members of both communities. Nevertheless, as a divisive tactic it did create some fear of domination by the black majority, and this will have to be faced within the context of a democratic civil society. Recent reports suggest that township violence is channelling Asian and Coloured support to the Nationalist Party.

(v) The Constitution
The task of designing a democratic constitution for South Africa is, to say the least, daunting. While a transition to majority rule has been accepted in broad outline, negotiations continue about safeguards to protect minority rights (and, specifically, the rights of the white minority) after a transfer of power. It is clear that the subtext to these negotiations is the maintenance of white supremacy. A paper released by the Nationalist Party in March, in advance of the referendum, promised whites a number of safeguards, including constraints on the power of future presidents; the supremacy of the constitution rather than parliament; impartial and professional control over the security forces; devolution of real power to regional and local governments; entrenchment of the principles of a market economy in the constitution; a Charter of Fundamental Rights that would, inter alia, protect property rights to cars, houses, pensions and businesses.

The ANC's constitutional blueprint, issued in the same period, made a number of concessions on this score. There was a commitment in principle to strong regional government, to an interim government being based on a consensus requiring a two-thirds majority for parliamentary legislation, and to the idea of built-in consensus, with white powers of veto for five years in the first one-person one-vote government. Current negotiations focus on the composition and decision-making power of the proposed Constituent Assembly to formulate the new constitution, and of the elected Transitional Government. Other areas of dispute include the transfer of presidential power and the so-called 'sunset clauses' which will ensure the agreed consensus (that is, white veto power) in the first years of an African majority government. Tough negotiations are ahead.

The new democratic constitution of South Africa will seek to preserve minority rights while assuring majority rule, as all good liberal-democratic constitutions should. The peculiar conditions of South Africa make this a particularly difficult exercise. A focus on the rights of the minorities carries special implications in South Africa, where special rights for the white minority hint at continuing white supremacy. There is a temptation for the majority to become, in return, more assertive. It will require a sense of balance to achieve a harmony between minority rights and majority rule without conceding undue power to white supremacist demands.

In any case, whatever the nature of the constitution that emerges from the current negotiations, the success of democracy in South Africa will depend not on constitutional niceties but on the success with which a stable and democratic civil society can be created—one that enshrines consensus and secures the rights of minorities, not by constitutional safeguards, but by civil agreements and mutual tolerance. On this score the struggle has only just begun.

PAUL NURSEY-BRAY teaches in politics at the University of Adelaide.
The centrepiece of George Bush's new world order was to have been a rejuvenated United Nations. Now that dream seems to have turned sour. Bob Howard thinks collective security may be too ambitious a hope. Peacekeeping may be as much as can be hoped for from the UN.

The new world order envisaged by George Bush and others relies heavily on the concept of collective security: the idea that military aggression anywhere in the world can be deterred by a coalition of the great powers. The United Nations was regarded as the centrepiece of this structure and, with the end of the Cold War, it was anticipated that the five permanent members of the Security Council (the US, China, France, Britain and the Soviet Union) would be willing to act in unison to counter threats to world peace. The UN, it was imagined, would now be able to function in the manner it was always meant to.

The Gulf War was regarded as the first test of this new order. If the UN could successfully counter Iraq's aggression against Kuwait, the foundation of an enduring collective security mechanism would be established and the world could look forward to an unprecedented era of peace. But how has the experience of 'Desert Storm', the UN-sponsored war against Iraq waged in February last year, affected these hopes and aspirations?

There is a sense in which 'Desert Storm' was successful. The Iraqi army was expelled from Kuwait, and in a fashion that might induce would-be aggressors worldwide to exercise more restraint in the future. Iraq's defeat also involved the destruction of the country's chemical weapons arsenal and put paid to Baghdad's efforts to develop a nuclear force. The latter was some small comfort to those who had been reluctant to support the war but did so because they could not countenance the prospect of an Iraq armed with even a few primitive nuclear weapons.

But despite these achievements, and in contrast to the hopes and aspirations accompanying the UN's response to the Gulf crisis, there remains a widespread belief that the action against Iraq did not establish a precedent for effective and
There can be little doubt that the end of the Cold War feature of future international crises. In the face of everything we know about world politics to UK and the USSR to follow the American lead. But it flies against Iraq, special circumstances produced the necessary prevent the UN from taking enforcement or other action to great powers, and this remains, as it always has been, problematic. The great power veto in the Security Council still remains and, just as in the past, it can still be used to counter aggression. On the occasion of the UN action in the Gulf which had to be seen in how hard it was for the UN to arrive at an agreed definition of aggression.

Much of the effortless quality of this destruction has been attributed to the 'high-tech' character of the allied offensive, something which lent a sinister air to 'Desert Storm' and which has reinforced anxiety about the nature of warfare in the future. Finally, this war, like most others, had unintended consequences—not the least of which was the appalling plight of the Kurds and Shiites at the end of the conflict. And intended or not, Saddam Hussein's survival and continued repression of the Iraqi people must rank as one of the supreme ironies of the whole crisis.

Second, a way must be found to activate the Military Staff Committee of the Security Council. It was the intention of the UN Charter that enforcement actions authorised by the Security Council should be under the control and direction of the Staff Committee, the latter to be composed of representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council. But the Military Staff Committee has never functioned as intended; the Korean and 'Desert Storm' enforcement actions were effectively under the control of the United States. That the Staff Committee played no role in the UN response to Iraq's aggression helped reinforce criticism that the Security Council had been usurped by Washington. Activating the Staff Committee and working out agreements with member states of the UN for the provision of forces under article 43 would go a long way towards mobilising acceptance of the Security Council's enforcement function.

But more fundamentally 'Desert Storm' has in no way dispelled long-standing doubts about the concept of collective security in general and about the enforcement function of the Security Council in particular. In the final analysis, collective security depends on cooperation among the great powers, and this remains, as it always has been, problematic. The great power veto in the Security Council still remains and, just as in the past, it can still be used to prevent the UN from taking enforcement or other action to counter aggression. On the occasion of the UN action against Iraq, special circumstances produced the necessary and unprecedented unanimity among the great powers; it simply happened to be in the interests of China, France, the UK and the USSR to follow the American lead. But it flies in the face of everything we know about world politics to imagine that this level of agreement will be a regular feature of future international crises.

There can be little doubt that the end of the Cold War helped resurrect the UN's collective security function and paved the way for operation 'Desert Storm'. But to imagine that the demise of the great ideological schism ensures co-operation among the great powers in the future is to attribute too much significance to the Cold War as a factor in international politics. It was certainly a principal factor in determining events in the postwar world, but it was not the only one. And in the future there will be other problems—especially those relating to ethnicity, nationalism, the environment, drug trafficking, refugees, terrorism and economic development and management—for which the resolution of the Cold War offers no necessary solution, and which will severely test the new-found harmony among the great powers. Given the current state of flux in what was the Soviet Union, who could confidently predict the future state of relations between Washington and Moscow (not to mention the other capitals of the shaky Commonwealth of Independent States)?

The experience of 'Desert Storm' suggests that reforms are needed in the way the Security Council exercises its enforcement function. First, there should be greater consideration of the use of sanctions; how they can be applied more effectively and what their impact might be in different situations. That sanctions had not been given sufficient time to work was a principal reason for opposition to 'Desert Storm' in Australia and elsewhere. Greater recourse to sanctions would help to meet some of the concerns about reliance on ever more destructive military panaceas and would go a long way towards mobilising acceptance of the Security Council's enforcement function.

The continuing difficulties surrounding the successful exercise of enforcement action is just one reason why more effort must be made to develop other aspects of the UN's security function. Principal among these is peace-keeping. In 1988 the Nobel Peace prize was awarded to the peace-keeping forces of the UN, and between 1988 and 1990 peace-keeping forces of one sort or another were active in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Angola, Namibia and Nicaragua. More recently, the UN has sent peace-keeping forces to Cambodia—the largest and most ambitious un-
dertaking of its sort ever—and to trouble-torn Croatia. The ethnic and nationalist tensions released by the end of the Cold War should be a sufficient reminder that the need for UN peace-keeping forces is not likely to diminish in the future. But more needs to be done to strengthen the financing, the methods and the logistical support for peace-keeping and more countries should be encouraged to earmark units of their armed forces for international service. The Security Council should also develop its capacity for pacific settlement or peace-making—including mediation, concerted diplomatic activity, conciliation and good offices—and should equip itself to anticipate rather than just respond to crises. As Brian Urquhart, former Under-secretary General of the UN, recently put it in the New York Review (7 March, 1991):

If the word 'security' is to acquire real significance, the UN must find a way to keep a continuing, systematic watch on destabilising developments all over the world, socioeconomic as well as political and military. Special attention must be given to dangerous build-ups of armaments...and to potential threats, especially to weaker nations.

The fundamental difficulties attaching to collective security were not resolved by 'Desert Storm'. As in the past, the UN's future security role will be predominantly that of peace-making and peace-keeping; the dream of a new era of international enforcement has turned sour.

BOB HOWARD is the editor of Current Affairs Bulletin.
Citizens and Peoples

The thoughtful Left has put increasing stress on the rights of people as citizens rather than workers. Yet citizenship is difficult to reconcile with the claims of a multicultural society. Barry Hindess argues that our ideas on citizenship need a rethink.

The public discourse of liberal democracy combines elements that stress homogeneity with others that stress diversity. The idea of a dominant national culture, to which immigrants should be assimilated, coexists with a celebration of cultural diversity. In the United States, for example, a dominant image is that of the 'melting pot'—suggesting that diverse cultural elements will be melted down into a common American substance. But there is also the potent image of the Statue of Liberty—described in the verse attached to its base as "Mother of Exiles", that is, offering a home for those whose roots are in numerous other communities.

In many respects the relationship between ideas of citizenship and of multiculturalism could be seen as falling into this pattern, with the latter representing an acknowledgment of cultural diversity that goes somewhat beyond the stricter understandings of the former. However, multiculturalism has also been understood in a stronger sense. Canada is often taken as providing a model for the development of multiculturalism, and one of the most revealing definitions appears in the glossary to the 1987 report of the Standing Committee on Multiculturalism of the Canadian Parliament. Multiculturalism is described as: "Recognition of the diverse culture of a plural society based on three principles: we all have an ethnic origin (equality); all our cultures deserve respect (dignity); and cultural pluralism needs official support." The three principles taken together strongly suggest that the cultures deserving of respect and of public support can be identified in terms of their ethnic origin. This is certainly how multiculturalism has normally been understood. But it is far from clear why cultural diversity should be identified with ethnic diversity in this way.

A second issue raised by this definition is that of public support for minority cultures. Within limits, recognition of
the presence of diverse cultures poses no great problem for the relaxed understandings of citizenship characteristic of liberal-democratic discourse. The active promotion of cultural pluralism by public authorities is, or is often thought to be, another matter entirely. It is a comparatively recent development, dating in most western societies from the 1960s or later. It is also highly contentious—in part because public support for minority cultures has sometimes been thought to conflict with the view that citizens should be treated as equals.

To see why there is a problem here, and why it is a political problem now, it is necessary to consider the relationship between multiculturalism and contemporary western views of citizenship. Multiculturalism is indeed difficult to reconcile with many of the ways in which citizenship is commonly understood. I will argue that our understanding of citizenship should be modified to take account of the incapable cultural pluralism of most societies in the world today. I will conclude by offering a qualified defence of multiculturalism in terms of a pluralist account of citizenship.

In the tradition of western political thought citizens have normally been regarded as independent—meaning that they are not dependent on others for their legal standing as members of the community. They are not, for example, chattels, indentured servants or minors.

Following the Enlightenment, the rights and obligations associated with citizenship have required certain qualities of the citizen. Those qualities have frequently been understood in universalistic terms: that is, they have been regarded as qualities that are possessed or may be acquired by any normal human individual. However, since communities of citizens invariably inhabit a world of numerous autonomous political units, to be a citizen is always to be a member of one community among others. The community to which a citizen belongs will be a community of citizens (and others), but it will also be identified as a community in other ways. In classical Athenian democracy, for example, Athenian citizens had to be sons of Athenian citizens (and of Athenian mothers from the middle of the 5th cen-

"It is far from clear why cultural diversity should be identified with ethnic diversity."
tury BC)—although this requirement was relaxed in the closing stages of the Peloponnesian War.

Notions of descent (and the apparently more respectable surrogate notion of a distinctive national culture that cannot readily be acquired by persons who are not born into it) have always played an important part in the way citizenship has been understood within particular communities. In the modern period, such notions have generally coexisted in uneasy relationship with other principles of inclusion and exclusion. Germany, Israel and Japan are examples of 'western' democracies in which citizenship is restricted primarily in terms of descent. Elsewhere the legal requirements of citizenship are usually less restrictive, although the implicit or explicit identification of the national community in terms of descent remains a common feature of public discussion of the issue.

However, what most distinguishes the conceptions of citizenship of the modern west from those of classical antiquity and the early modern period is the radical egalitarianism of the modern sort. Citizenship in ancient Athens and Rome was a matter of a limited set of statuses within a larger and highly differentiated network of statuses. First, citizens were divided into legally defined classes with distinct rights and obligations. Secondly, most adult members of the community could not be citizens, if only because women and slaves were not legally regarded as independent persons. Thirdly, even if we leave to one side inhabitants of subject territories, there were numerous independent persons subject to the laws of the community but not possessing the political rights of citizens. Metics in Athens, for example, were personally free non-citizens who were nevertheless subject to taxation and liable for military service.

With some qualifications, the most influential of contemporary western understandings of citizenship have been egalitarian in all three of these respects. First, citizens are not divided into legally defined classes or estates. Indeed, since the Enlightenment it has been difficult to mount an intellectually respectable case for any such division between citizens—although sterling efforts were once made to defend property qualifications for the franchise. Secondly, almost all members of the community are regarded as legally independent persons, and therefore as citizens—children now being the only significant exceptions. The third issue is more problematic. Although there are significant alien minorities in all societies, the predominant western view seems to be that all permanent residents should normally have the status of citizen. Even those who would restrict citizenship on grounds of descent tend to be egalitarian in this respect. The assumption is that non-citizens may be present in the community but only on a temporary basis. They would normally be expected to move on, or else, if they were eligible, to become citizens.

This egalitarian understanding of citizenship, together with the view that all citizens should share to some degree in a common culture, suggest that citizenship is now considered in the West against the background of a conception of community in which a unified polity is expected to go hand-in-hand with a unified national culture. Exceptions such as Belgium, Canada and the United Kingdom are regarded as anomalous. They are also, for precisely the same reason, regarded as potentially unstable.

I stress this aspect of contemporary western understanding of citizenship partly in order to make explicit what is often taken for granted. But my more serious concern is to bring out how peculiar is this assumption of cultural homogeneity. In fact, the experience of cultural diversity has been the normal human condition throughout recorded history. Wherever there have been states (and this includes all societies in which there have been citizens) they have coexisted with other states or with non-state societies beyond their borders. Political boundaries have always been disputed and subject to change, and those boundaries have always been permeable to a greater or lesser degree. States have always had to live with culturally diverse populations, including significant groups of foreign descent.

The perception of cultural difference is often, of course, a matter of perspective. Much of the diversity that Americans or Australians regard as an important feature of their own societies might also be subsumed within a broader notion of a common culture. However that may be, the modern experience of cultural diversity poses a problem for all western (and non-western) societies. First, the discourse of citizenship normally presupposes a common culture which functions both to sustain citizens' lives together and to distinguish them from citizens of other communities. Secondly, however that common culture might be identified, the community will invariably contain a significant minority who do not share it. The idea that the political community consists, or should normally consist, of those who share a common culture is an illusion. To the extent that that illusion seriously informs political discussion, it can also be a dangerous one.

It is important to be clear about the nature of the difficulty here. First, the disjunction between the presumed cultural unity of its citizens and the multicultural reality of a society is a problem largely in consequence of the peculiarly egalitarian character of the contemporary western view of citizenship—with its sources in Enlightenment ideas of natural human equality on the one hand, and the variously idealised Enlightenment and Romantic accounts of the political communities of Athens and Rome on the other.

Secondly, the cultural and ethnic pluralism of national populations in the west is a consequence of the incorporation of distinct societies in a relatively open regime of trade and communication. The pluralism of populations in contemporary societies cannot be explained simply as a legacy of the mingling of populations resulting from wars and empires. It should not be expected to disappear even if the age of empires and of wars were to recede into the past. And this pluralism of populations has shown no signs of withering away during the long postwar peace (even in those societies that do not regard themselves as nations of immigrants). It is this which has been largely responsible for the gradual development of multiculturalism in western Europe, both as a set of governmental practices and as a pressing political issue. Cultural pluralism cannot
be eradicated through education, stricter control of borders or removal of unwanted persons. For the foreseeable future, then, all western communities will continue to be composed of both citizens and persons of several other statuses. While the greater part of the population in most Western societies will continue to be citizens (in contrast, say, to the situation in the Gulf Emirates), there will be significant minorities who are not—and many of the latter will be present illegally. In any liberal society even members of this last group will have rights. Some of them will also fall ill, or suffer from accidents or unemployment, and some will have children—all of which generate demands on the public services provided by the host community.

Now consider the question of multiculturalism. I began by noting that what is contentious is not the recognition of cultural diversity, but rather the question of whether and in what respects it is legitimate to provide public support for minority cultures. Why should this be an issue? One reason involves a hostility to the minority groups thought likely to benefit from multiculturalism—or rather, a hostility to their effective presence within the host community. What is at stake according to this rejection of multiculturalism is the defence of the community of citizens against what are regarded as alien intrusions. Such claims rest on a conception of community, and of citizenship as the normal form of membership of that community, that has a powerful support in all western societies.

A very different kind of reason why support for minority cultures might be opposed is that it appears to involve the unequal treatment of citizens. It is one thing, the argument might go, to provide members of minority groups with, say, language classes, wheelchair access to public places, and other kinds of assistance in order that they may participate on something like equal terms in the majority community. It is another thing entirely to provide members of particular minorities with additional support to pursue their culturally distinctive version of the good life.

In fact, multiculturalism would seem to conflict first with the contemporary, egalitarian understanding of citizenship according to which there should be no legally privileged estates, and secondly with the liberal view that all individuals equally should be free, within limits, to pursue their various understandings of the good life. The objection in both cases turns on the understanding of minority. If it is understood in an exclusive sense, such that public support of the relevant kind would be provided to members of particular minorities only and not to others, then multiculturalism does indeed conflict with an egalitarian view of the proper relation between government and citizen.

There is, however, another possibility. That is to treat the field of eligible minorities as potentially open-ended so that any citizen could be a member of one or more of them. In fact, the idea that citizenship should be understood in this way is implicit in the associational pluralism advocated by Figgis, Cole and Laski—and more recently by Paul Hirst and John Mathews, in this journal and elsewhere. This form of pluralism shares the liberal view that, as far as reasonably possible, individuals should be free to pursue their various understandings of the good life. However, it disputes the atomistic conception of relations between citizen and state that liberals derive from the view.

Briefly, the argument is that most individual purposes can be pursued effectively only in association with other individuals—and that within any reasonably large community there will be a plurality of purposes that individuals might reasonably wish to pursue. A desirable polity, on this view, would be one that actively promoted the development of associations—precisely so that individuals would be free to pursue their version of the good life. The state would, of course, regulate the behaviour of associations, but it would also recognise their autonomy and right to develop in accordance with their own internal decision-making procedures.

Associational pluralism is not without its problems, but it does seem to offer an egalitarian account of citizenship that would not rule out the provision of public support for minority cultures. It is not, however, entirely consistent with multiculturalism as it is understood, for example, in the Canadian report quoted at the beginning of this paper. The cultures treated in multiculturalist discourse as deserving of respect and public support are restricted to those that can be identified in terms of their ethnic origin. In that respect, multiculturalism is essentially backward-looking; it aims to preserve a heritage of cultural differences that have been given by a certain kind of history.

It is this aspect of multiculturalism that appears most problematic from the standpoint of associational pluralism. The primary concern of the latter is to enhance the capacities of individuals—and therefore of the associations to which they might choose to belong—to pursue their common purposes. It is not to preserve cultural relics from the past. In these terms, while it might be legitimate in some cases to provide public support for cultures identified primarily in terms of ethnic origin, there can be no justification for restricting the range of eligible cultures in that way. Associations of Buddhists or gays should be regarded, at least in principle, as no less deserving of support than associations of Italians or Vietnamese. If there is a case to be made for multiculturalism in the societies of the modern west, it is a case that would submerge it within a broader program of support for cultural diversity.

BARRY HINDESS is professor of political science at the Australian National University.
Peter Beilharz began writing a book searching for a ‘third way’ between the traditions of revolutionism and social democracy. He concluded that no ‘third way’ existed. This is his story...

What right has the world got to change so much? Ten years ago my marxist friends and I had just launched a journal of socialist renaissance called Thesis Eleven. We had some crank mail from old trotskyists wanting to know if this referred to the eleventh thesis of the second meeting of the Communist International when it was, in fact, simply a reference to Marx’s idea that interpretation was one thing, social change another. Then we got poison pen letters demanding to know what we were going to do about it. Ten years on, the change has certainly occurred, though most of it is in diametrically the opposite direction to what radicals may then have hoped.

Radicals spoke of ending commodity relations, splitting the Labor Party, ending patriarchy, ending poverty. And yet the dominant radical tradition—that of marxism—was also complicit in the Soviet experience, where somehow the negative dimensions of capitalism or industrialism had been established without the achievements of bourgeois politics. Few of the ills of the Soviet bloc were blamed on socialism, which was our idea anyway.

An important book out of that period was entitled The World Moves Slowly; the message was widely overlooked. Reformism was widely ridiculed as too little, too late. The radical Left had been largely abstinent during the Whitlam years, which led to a profound sense of guilt and disengagement and paved the way for the dissolution of the Communist Party as some activists moved into policy making and into the ALP or the unions.

In this context, I’d been working on a thesis on trotskyism which was eventually published in 1987 as Trotsky, Trotskyism and the Transition to Socialism. Taking trotskyism...
as the exemplary experience of the revolutionary tradition in marxism, it identified that tradition as at best irrelevant, at worst outright dangerous. Social democracy, by comparison, seemed positively lethargic.

The new, the old motif became that vain hope which radicals have long had for a third way, a way not only between communism and capitalism, but also between bolshevism and reformism—a society which could be prefiguratively glimpsed in the lives of social movements, where transparent community relations could replace violence and conflict. Ecology and feminism thus influenced the arguments, but so did psychoanalysis and romanticism.

Now the revolutionary tradition has largely gone. Or has it? Our better historical and cultural sensibilities ought to warn us against the idea that bolshevism could simply disappear off the face of the earth. Bolshevism was, after all, with fascism, one of the two major revolutionary forces of the 20th century. Socialists before bolshevism had some similar dreams—the end of class, the end of conflict; for example, all those dreams you can find in Tressell’s Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, or in numerous other socialist tracts. Other points of reference, such as the idea of changing the world in the interests of other people even if they don’t recognise it, go back to the French Revolution and the Jacobin tradition. Various other bits of the bolshevik tradition mirror earlier arguments of romanticism; the idea that evil society corrupts innocent individuals who need only to snap their consciousness—or have it expertly snapped before them—so that the rotten edifice of bourgeois civilisation simply collapses, as it deserves to.

Yet, while the bolsheviks were inheritors of romanticism, they were also the most frenzied of modernisers. Trotsky, in particular, saw modernity itself as dizzying with success, took delight in the idea that all things apparently solid might melt into air, waxed as lyrical as Marinetti for the futurist dreams and prospects of the mechanical age. So all these themes, too, echo back through debates about postmodernity and speed. Bolshevism was bohemian, and bohemianism still is.

Bolshevism also became a major influence upon other, reforming traditions such as fabianism and social democracy. The Webbs belatedly became devotees of stalinism, if not Stalin—though at the same time they adhered to the legacy of Montesquieu, in which primitive peoples got the dictatorships which they deserved while the advanced British deserved democracy, or Westminster at least. But it will not do to syncretise these different traditions simply because they come to show certain affinities. What is striking, in fact, about the different socialist traditions viewed in retrospect is just how different they are.

Turning to the reformist traditions, then—in the first instance todisprove them and throw further light upon the desirability of third ways—I came to realise that there were no third ways, except in the sense that there was a plurality of cases for reform or for revolution. The arrival of the Hawke Labor government upon the whirring turbine of what John Mathews then called the new socialist engine—the ALP-ACTU Accord—served to reinforce the feeling that it was a good time to take reformism more seriously. But this would necessarily mean to analyse it comparative­ly, in terms of difference and in terms of national traditions. My initial purpose was to analyse the specificity of Australian labourism against this backdrop. The backdrop proved to be irresistibly attractive, as the differences between and within Soviet bolshevism, fabianism and German social democracy multiplied.

My book on labourism turned into a study of other people’s reformisms. Labourism, like socialism itself, would have to wait. Within bolshevism there were the futurists against the peasant-roaders, the scientists like Bogdanov and the Enlighteners like Lunacharsky; in fabianism there were the cranks like Shaw, the futurists (again) such as Wells, the romantics, the guild socialists like Cole, and those spiderlike Webbs, themselves far more complex and nuanced than the cliched stereotypes suggested. The Webbs emerged as especially interesting because they developed, in sociology if not in politics, a truly pluralistic way of thinking. Their Socialist Constitution for the Commonwealth of Great Britain of 1920 showed a still remarkable attempt to balance forms of property and forms of power. In the German tradition there stood the
These different senses of the possible and desirable, different Marxism in Australia into the 1970s and 1980s tended very
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ing existing like mean problems could only have particular, historically contin­
In short, the understanding emerged here that general conflict—indeed, thought the very idea to be preposterous.

More than this, Bernstein understood that revolutions don’t work, at least not in the constructive sense. Lenin and Trotsky, of course, also knew this, but took the punt of seizing state power anyway. The carnival of revolution passed into the awesome aftermath of consolidation, the NEP beckoning Gorbachev. Bernstein and Kautsky knew that politics was the art of muddling through. They knew that reforms always go wrong, just in the same way that the toaster won’t work when you’re in a hurry. Bernstein, in particular, harboured no fantasies about worlds without conflict—indeed, thought the very idea to be preposterous.

In short, the understanding emerged here that general problems could only have particular, historically contingent solutions. There were no third ways in organising housing or health either, if there were two alternative paths, both would generate unpredictable and unintended consequences. Humans were not perfectible, nor were they essentially good or innocent beings who had merely been malformed by pernicious institutions such as schools or families. Ours was a different ballgame.

This so-to-speak Freudian insight can be found in the pivotal work of Gramsci as well. For even if marxists of this sort did not thoroughly digest Freud, they began to countenance the possibility that the sources of human action are multiple and contradictory. We are all walking contradictions, combinations of prejudice and judgment, common sense and good sense. Or as the anti-psychiatrists put it in the 60s, we are all more or less crazy, depending on what day it is. Now if all this is true, then the idea of galvanising alliances of popular support for rational programs of social change is even more complicated and fraught with difficulties than it seemed in the first place.

The world, in short, is a mess; but this is not a message of despair. What it recommends, rather, is a sense of detachment as well as of passion. Neither interpreting nor changing the world is easy. Simple, absolutist gestures which blame poverty on the bourgeoisie or on the higher officials of the Department of Social security miss the point. Ideas of ruptural change are impossible, as Kautsky and Gramsci understood, because the old traditions reassert themselves the day after the revolution. The grand narratives about progress, about socialism lurking ready incipient within the heart of capitalism, simply aren’t helpful. Progress, indeed, has become a major mythology for denizens of modernity, but now it is stapled together with its sustaining mythology of nostalgia, as Christopher Lasch argues in The True and Only Heaven. Socialism needs now to return to the smaller narratives of everyday life; the great narratives of state- and program-building have become lectures to empty halls. Problems of the distribution of social goods and resources remain central, but so too do issues of participation and citizenship.

G D H Cole’s commonsense view was that the real issue was less poverty than slavery. Even if we accept that domination and asymmetrical relations of power are social facts, the challenge is still there. But here it’s back to Bernstein, who like Robert Dahl more recently—and like Oscar Wilde, for that matter—rightly anticipated that democracy’s biggest risks are mediocrity and indifference. The difference today is that we have to accept these. It’s no good us demanding of people that they act even as reformists. They can legitimately choose passivity, or other forms of activity. For part of this whole process of thinking and rethinking also involves accepting that intellectuals do not know better; that intellectuals are not and should not be legislators any more than any other social type should be. Intellectuals have for a very long time been too self-righteous; but in politics, the intellectual has only the same right to speak as any other citizen. Recent travelling troupes like Ideas for Australia seem to suggest that the critique of ‘economic rationalism’ has become something of a Trojan horse for today’s social democratic intelligentsia to reassert their claims to power, or at least to influence. This suggests a logic which runs against another aspect of taking democracy seriously—accepting, finally, that Lenin’s idea of ten wise persons being superior to a hundred fools has had it.

The world moves slowly then, except when it changes in ways we don’t want. It’s lethargic, and unpredictable, and it is us. Toast’s ready. The proof is in its eating.

PETER BEILHARZ’s Labour’s Utopias: Bolshevism, Fabianism, Social Democracy is published by Routledge.
Is the Left BRAINDEAD?

A combination of the loss of old political certainties and the fragmentation of its political priorities has left the political Left marginalised and demoralised. Does it have a future? At a recent Sydney seminar sponsored by ALR, Peter Baldwin, Sue McCreadie and Michael Easson outlined their prognoses.

What’s to Celebrate?

Sue McCreadie argues for a new kind of social democracy.

Recently I noticed a poster advertising a May Day march which also invited us to ‘celebrate socialism.’ The first thing that came to my mind was the slogan from the bicentennial year: ‘what is there to celebrate?’ Because it’s really not clear to me what’s left of socialism, nor what the Left project is.

There are several reasons for this, but the first and most obvious is the events in eastern Europe. Whatever one
thought of the socialist credentials of those countries, I think the events there can't help but inform our thinking, not least because the cynicism in the wider community about anything called socialism has probably reached a terminal stage by now. In response to the triumphalism of the Right about the death of Communism, people on the Left often respond by saying: look at the capitalist world, at the people living in the cardboard boxes in New York and London, at the lengthening dole queues and at the state of the environment; our own system is not conducive to environmental sustainability or to social equity. All of that is true, but the problem is that that in itself doesn't give us any kind of map for social action.

Second, the perceived move to the Right by social democratic and labour governments around the world, the adoption of seemingly conservative policies of privatisation and deregulation, have led to a loss of morale on the Left, and the perception that traditional Labor and social democratic values have been abandoned. And third, the crisis in our political organisations seems important. There's clearly been a decline of the traditional parties, and particularly of Left parties. The ALP has seen declining membership and activism over a period of years, and the consolidation of single-issue campaigns and social movements, which are a lot more attractive to many young activists. For all these reasons, there's a need to rethink not only policies, but also political practice.

The reaction from the Left to the changed strategies of social democratic and labour governments has been interesting, because clearly the Left, and people who call themselves socialists, never thought that the post-war, Keynesian, social democratic model was anything like a socialist paradise. It was seen as a first step towards something more substantial—although it's a long time since we've heard anyone advocating rationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy among the western Left. Nevertheless, the whole privatisation debate was really quite consuming, and in particular the focus on Telecom and Australian Airlines. At that time, it was seen as a rejection of traditional Labor values, and there were calls for the government to get back to those values.

I wouldn't in any way denigrate traditional Labor values, or denigrate the achievements of the past, which are quite substantial, including under the Hawke government. You can't simply adopt a Tweedledum and Tweedledee thesis of what's going on. But nor is it enough simply to defend the status quo. We have somehow to find a terrain between the kneejerk application of traditional Labor values on the one hand, or on the other saying there's no alternative path that the government can traverse, in view of developments in the global economy and the fiscal constraints that we face.

One example would be that there's not just one alternative to old-style protectionism. There's not just economic rationalism on the one hand and old-style protectionism on the other. Rather there's a broad and complex debate about industry policy, and the various approaches governments can and have taken around the world. It's necessary to be aware of the range of points of view. Again, as Peter argued, in order to defend the public sector, you have to rethink its role, and not simply defend it for its own sake.

Another debate the Left has to come to grips with is that around 'post-Fordism'—the assertion that changes in production and consumption suggest we're moving away from the Fordist era of mass production and mass consumption, towards a new type of industrial organisation. I think this is an important debate, not only because of what it suggests about industrial winners and losers around the world, but also because of the potential it suggests for the democratisation of the workplace, and of other areas of life. It also gives us the potential to look at how we might renovate social democratic theory. I say this with some trepidation, because I know that for many people on the Left social democracy is a dirty word. However, if we don't want to describe ourselves as social democrats, then the question arises: is there really a 'third way' between the old-style stalinist model and the social democratic model, and if so what's it called? We used to talk about democratic socialism. But those on the Left who use the term nowadays, if they're pushed, say it really means that we're about participation and democracy. We believe that people should have more control over their own lives and their own environment. Well, I think that's commendable. But the question for me is whether that constitutes something separate, or whether we're actually looking at extending and reforming the existing institutions of liberal and social democracy, rather than counterposing that to them.

Again, some of the most interesting recent debates in the Left have been about redefining citizenship in a modern democracy. But again, the politics of citizenship doesn't require a specific category called democratic socialism. As a result, the boundaries between the Left and the Right are increasingly becoming blurred. Often the divisions within the factions of the Labor Party are as large as the divisions between them. There are certainly troglodytes in both factions, and there are people who are bordering on braindead in both factions. And hopefully there are thinking people in both factions as well. The factional system makes it very hard for people to say: well, I agree with you on one thing, but I disagree on another. It's a system that's very much focused on number-crunching; people want to know who's reliable, who's in our camp, and so people are frightened to say: I disagree with my faction on that. It seems to me that the basic political culture of the party is a problem.

This brings me to my final point. There is a clear crisis in the old form of political party; for many people, especially younger activists, social movements and single-issue campaigns are much more attractive. They are not much enthralled at the prospect of sitting around passing resolutions or the prospect of trying to get the numbers. Both the Left of the Labor Party and the Left outside the Labor Party have a problem with social movements. They find them very difficult to deal with, for a number of reasons. One is the traditional Left view that there's somehow a hierarchy of relevant categories, and at the top there's class, then there's party, and then there are other things like gender, the environment, peace, gay and lesbian politics. In this scheme of things all these latter categories are very nice, but they're basically secondary. But the growth of those move-
ments and their tenacity is testimony to the fact that class is becoming a less significant binding force than it once was, and that people don’t simply define themselves by their class any more.

The attitude of the Left has often been to try to colonise the social movements, and they’ve managed to wreck a few in the process. The other approach, of course, the more ‘enlightened’ one, is to say that we should form some sort of alliance with them. We’ll add their concerns on to ours in a shopping-list, and out of that we’ll come up with a new manifesto. That’s a more commendable approach, but it’s still problematic, because most of the people in those movements and campaigns don’t see themselves in that way, and refuse to so neatly be put into the Left-Right spectrum. Indeed, many of them would tell you that the Left, the labour movement and social democrats are really part of the problem, and can’t be part of the solution.

So, in conclusion, I think we need a renovation of our theory and our sense of identity. But I think it’s unlikely that out of this or any other process we’ll get a blueprint for change. On the Left we’ve always been looking for blueprints for change, we’ve always been coming up with new manifestos because the old one didn’t work. I don’t think it’s possible to proceed in that manner any more; the problems have become far too complex. Instead, we’ll probably have a very messy process of reconstruction. New issues will arise, and it won’t be quite clear how traditional Left categories can respond to them. If the Left is to be effective in this kind of environment, if it’s to be vibrant and a leader in trying to respond to new challenges, then it’s very important that we create structures and practices which enable more free-thinking and interaction. And that’s a far cry from our structures and practices at the moment.

SUE MCCREADIE is economic research officer for the Textile, Clothing and Footwear unions.

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30 FEATURES

A Sterile Debate

Michael Easson contends that the fundamental task remains to ‘civilise capitalism’.

One can define the Left as the non-conservative forces in society; one can also define it more narrowly as the Left traditions within the labour movement. It is apparent that there are various traditions that make up the Left of the labour movement in this country. Various of those traditions are alive, and some, I think, are dead. Yet on the various problems and challenges facing the labour movement today, it seems to me disturbingly evident, as someone active both in the Labor Party and the trade union movement, that there is hardly any debate going on.

Indeed, a lot of the debate that does take place seems to me to be fairly sterile and mindless. For example, the debate about whether or not Australian Airlines should be privatised largely turned on one’s attitude to the traditional goal of public ownership. The shibboleth of public ownership for its own sake became a key issue among many of us, rather than asking the important questions, such as; what should be the role of government, what are the principles that we should be seeking to have achieved through the labour movement, and does Australian Airlines play a role in that?

What kind of forum is there to debate issues within the labour movement? Most Labor Party branches are mindless events. There is very little debate about policy, and no-one seems to be greatly interested in changing that.

The trade union movement has similar problems. Here we have to confront the prospect of a change of government. One of the facts facing the trade union movement this decade is that Dr Hewson or another conservative leader will become prime minister. If it isn’t the next election, or the election after that, one day the conservatives will win. And when they do, they will be more vicious and determined in their approach to the trade union movement than ever before.

Of course, we are attempting to answer that problem by award restructuring, by the amalgamations strategy and the like. Yet it seems to me we ought to have a number of reservations about that strategy. I worry, for instance, that we are creating a more bureaucratic trade union organisa-
tion, one which won't be responsive to many of the wishes of rank and file activists. That applies whether the amalgamated union is supposedly rightwing or leftwing. It will apply when ADSTE merges with the metalworkers union and 40% of the ADSTE members no longer choose to join the union. It will apply when the Australasian Society of Engineers joins with the ironworkers to form FINE, and 30-35% of the ASE's members just disappear. And I worry that we do not debate many of these issues in a serious way within the trade union movement.

Finally, there's often a tendency for those of us involved in labour politics and the trade union movement to demonise one's opponents, and to eulogise the kind of traditions which you see yourself as belonging to.

Yet a labour movement worth its salt is a labour movement that is tolerant of various traditions, and tolerant of the various ideas which are part of that tradition. A person I've often regarded as a central figure within the labour movement is Dr Lloyd Ross, after whom the Lloyd Ross Forum was named. Lloyd Ross was a communist; he wrote the book on William Lane and Lane's trip to Paraguay. Later he became active in the Workers Educational Association; later again he became the secretary of the Railwayworkers Union, in which he worked with Ben Chifley and John Curtin. He came back to the union after leaving the Communist Party during World War II, and later became a Grouper. At the end of his career he argued that the best person to succeed him as secretary of the Railways Union was a man who happened to be a member of the Communist Party. Ross was a person who no-one in the labour movement could quite understand. He's someone with whom I have a lot of sympathy.

It seems to me that what Ross represented was the belief that the labour movement has a multitude of traditions, and many individuals with strengths and weaknesses, and that the important thing within the labour movement is to try to nurture that, and to try to encourage debate and understanding of the many issues with which we have to grapple. There are no definitive answers to the problems we face. If I were to sum up what I believe in, I would find it very hard to put it in terms which would label me a leftwinger or a rightwinger. In different respects I am a social democrat, a liberal, a conservative, in the various issues I confront. I think in that I'm part of the tradition of the labour movement and its principles. To me our historic role, whether as part of the Left of the labour movement, however that might be defined, or as part of the movement's Centre or Right, is to civilise capitalism. I think that is an important task; it's sometimes been an heroic task for many of our forebears. It's a never-ending task, and one which I think we have a duty to share.

MICHAEL EASSON is the secretary of the NSW Labor Council.

A Culture of Honesty

Peter Baldwin argues that, in order to reconstruct itself, the Left needs to develop a new culture of debate.

I recently returned from eastern Europe; I was struck by the extent of the transformation that's occurring there. I represented the Treasurer at a conference of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a financial institution set up in order to finance the reconstruction of the economies of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. It's interesting to see the extent to which any notion of a 'third way' has collapsed in those countries.

At present just about every major political force is thinking about how to bring about the most rapid transition to capitalism. This was epitomised for me by the Czech finance minister, Dr Klaus. Even our own Treasury officials were somewhat taken aback by his views.
I remember that at the time of the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia, the economic debate among the dissidents was characterised as a split between followers of Milton Friedman and followers of Friedrich von Hayek. Well, it seems that the von Hayek supporters have won out decisively. Dr Klaus's speech condemned any hesitation or delay in the process of privatisation of the economies of those countries, and argued that they shouldn’t be worried about the distributional impacts of different approaches to privatisation, whether you have a kind of mass privatisation, or whether you seek partners in the international financial system. The important thing was wholesale privatisation and a change to a market economy. He was quite contemptuous of proposals even to provide soft loans to eastern Europe, on the grounds that this was a violation of market principles.

There is very little political constituency in those countries for any alternative to a rapid move to laissez-faire capitalism. That change in eastern Europe has had a pretty pervasive effect on the debate about policy and the viability of socialism and various alternatives to the current political and economic order. Whether we like it or not, what’s happened in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union does form part of the history of that political, economic and philosophical movement which we call socialism. We can’t simply disregard that, we have to come to grips with it, and wrestle with the consequences of that reality.

We now face a situation where the Left lacks a clear conception on a range of issues which in the past it would have seen itself as having: issues such as the boundary between public and private ownership, and between the market and non-market components of an economy. I don’t think anybody could argue nowadays that the market mechanism has no role to play in the operation of a modern economy. On the other hand, I would certainly argue that the market mechanism in many areas fails, and there is a very strong case for the introduction of non-market mechanisms to deal with that. But we really don’t have a clear conception of where we think the boundary ought to be.

We also don’t have a clear conception of the criteria for public intervention in the economy: where is it justified, warranted, appropriate? I’ve seen that change in the overall political culture in the federal caucus. It’s increasingly difficult to draw conclusions about a given member’s position on an issue by referring to their notional factional position. There’s an extraordinary degree of overlap, whether you’re talking about attitudes towards macroeconomic policy, industry policy or whatever. There’s a lack of broad underlying principles to determine whether you’re of the Left or not.

Probably the nearest thing to a unifying position that the Left has swung behind would be the so-called social justice strategy which emerged over the last few years. Here the emphasis is on access and equity, and creating opportunities for mobility for disadvantaged groups. That certainly is significant and worthwhile, but it doesn’t accord very closely with the kind of positions people on the Left have traditionally associated themselves with in terms of the attitude to public ownership and the market.

In the last few years I think one would have to say that the Left’s political activities within the Labor Party and elsewhere have been marked by an increasingly desperate rearguard actions to try to protect what we have, so to speak, by way of public ownership and other social goods. And the Left faces the prospect of continuing political marginalisation, unless we think about some fundamental changes in the way we address issues.

All of this is fairly gloomy. Are there any grounds for optimism? I think there are a few. And I think there are a number of areas the Left ought to focus on in terms of formulating a Left position which has some sort of relevance for the coming period. That will require a degree of preparedness to engage in some creative self-destruction.
of elements of the Left's traditional ideology and of its stances. And that will require in turn a transformation in the internal culture of the Left, a willingness to debate internally in a way which has not occurred before.

In doing that we shouldn't simply engage in an exercise of navel-gazing. We need to involve people outside the Left in that debate. What are the grounds for optimism then, as we look into the 1990s? One important point is that the central planning model is not the only political model which has undergone some pretty severe stresses in the last decade or so. Laissez-faire capitalism as practised in the anglo-saxon countries has also shown itself to be severely deficient in a variety of respects. There's an interesting convergence in those economies. They've each been unable to bring about the structural changes necessary to enable them to preserve their competitive viability against their potential rivals in the coming period. Australia in particular, is not achieving the kinds of structural economic changes that are going to be necessary. And the overall pattern of world trade is such that economies that rely on exports with a minimal degree of value-adding are likely to suffer a progressive decline.

A common characteristic of the anglo-saxon economies is their endemic short-termism: the fact that the major economic actors, because of the pressures that are brought to bear by the financial system, find it very difficult to develop long-term strategies, product and process innovation, and to develop market share throughout the world. That is a particularly marked feature of the Australian economy. The Australian Chamber of Manufacturers a couple of years ago did a survey of the chief executives of major manufacturing concerns, and they were asked what their time horizons were. 53% of them gave their time horizon as the next 6-12 months; that is of course absolutely inconsistent with bringing about any major structural change or the development of industries that in many cases will require considerable gestation periods to be successful. That is a clear case of market failure, and one in which solutions which transcend the market mechanisms may well be appropriate. There's a sharp contrast in that respect with the economies that have been stunningly successful, such as Japan, the newly industrialising countries, and certain countries in western Europe.

There's also been a change in the nature of modern productive processes. Increasingly they require creative input from people close to the shop-floor. The Japanese have been able to achieve it through highly paternalistic firms. There ought to be scope for us to think about ways in which what the orthodoxy of the 1980s is also coming under increasing challenge for its obsession with small government. Reducing the share of public spending to GDP has been regarded as a key indicator of success. That sort of mentality has led to a range of false economies. There is increasing evidence, for instance, that the productivity of the US economy has suffered significantly as a result of failure to spend on major public infrastructure, particularly in the area of transport. That also includes the broad issue of spending on human capital, that is the education and training system. There's no doubt that the capacity of an economy to change and to innovate and for the workforce to absorb that change is closely related to the level of expenditure and the adequacy of provision of education and training.

We ought to be thinking about how we can formulate an approach to economic involvement which is compatible both with ecological stability and also with social equity and social justice. There are good grounds for supposing that a market economy left to its own devices won't produce the results, but we need to do more than simply rely on small government. We can't simply affrm public ownership, for example, as a good in itself. The case has to be made. We have to consciously acknowledge that a modern economy can't operate without a substantial degree of market determination. We need to have a debate that doesn't simply seek to make presumptions.

More generally, we need to go back to first principles, and this current crisis on the Left provides an opportunity to do that—to ask just what features we think go to make up a 'good' society, as distinct from one where the market mechanism operates in a fairly untrammelled way. This debate needs to be intellectually honest. It's terribly important that we not allow ourselves to get locked into the situation which has been so common on the Left, where internal debates become increasingly characterised by position-taking by various groups, where people are criticised for adopting ideologically unsound positions, and where there's a reluctance, and even a fear, of taking an intellectually honest approach.

The perpetuation of that kind of approach represents the potential death of the Left. We have to resist it, and to foster a very different type of political culture. If we can do that, then there are real prospects for a regeneration.

PETER BALDWIN is the federal minister for Higher Education and the minister assisting the Treasurer.
Intimateship

Political activists are out to change the world—and often to avoid themselves. Clare Curran talked to author Stephanie Dowrick.

Stephanie Dowrick was co-founder and Managing Director of the Women's Press, London, from 1977 to 1982 and is now its chair. Her novel Running Backwards Over Sand has been translated into Swedish and Dutch. She currently works part time as fiction publisher for Allen and Unwin.

Stephanie Dowrick's Intimacy and Solitude will touch everyone who picks it up. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the book is its uncan­ny ability to make sense of conflicts in our personal relationships.

According to Dowrick, the book is a pursuit of meaning in the events which are closest and most significant in our lives. What is it about intimacy that rewards or eludes me? Why am I alone when I want to be with someone else? Is solitude an easy escape for me from the dilemmas which intimacy poses? Why don't I know what I want? Out of this pursuit of meaning, says Dowrick, comes a changed sense of power and of choice. "Allowing people to make sense of things is empowering," she says. "I think a particular strength of the book is that it actually unravels things in a fairly detailed way—you're not just told that things are as they are, but why things are as they are."

What does she want people to do with this knowledge?

"When people are feeling most distressed, they are also feeling stuck. This book suggests there are always other ways of looking at conflicts. Often conflict comes from wanting two things at the same time. You might want a close family situation, but also be desperate to be alone. But if you were to have only the other, you wouldn't get what you need from being alone."

Dowrick describes intimacy as not only a willingness to engage with the inner life of another person, but more importantly, as a willingness to be changed by that. She embarked on the book in the late 70s and early 80s. "It was informed by that congruence of sexual politics, psychoanalysis and literature which was so much part of my politics at that time." Yet, while many people at the time were rethinking sexual politics, they still often felt powerless in relationships. "They had huge amounts of rhetoric available to them about international affairs or local politics. But when it actually came closest to heart and home, people neither had language nor solutions. And that this was particularly painful for people who, through their political beliefs, had begun to feel that they could analyse almost any situation."

Dowrick thinks that people nowadays don't want all-embracing solutions. Rather, they want to discover other ways of looking at things, and to establish that what happens in their lives doesn't happen without a reason. Things can be changed. She also feels that many who might most benefit from this book will shy away from it.

"A lot of people would immediately discard such a book because the subject causes them pain and distress and they prefer not to know. And that can be particularly true of political people who are often engaged with one issue after another, one struggle after another, and who often immensely enjoy confrontation of whatever kind because it saves them from looking inside themselves."

She rejects the criticism that this quest for meaning is an obsessive absorp­tion with the self. "I'm suggesting that until you've understood what's going on inside yourself you will be projecting lots of distress outside yourself. I'm not arguing for a life of introspection. I'm a politically-minded person myself, but I've also seen people who have no inner nourishment become burned out. When people divide the world so strenuously into us and them, as happens in political groups, it can create real problems. People refuse to take on a common humanity with other people. For example, people might speak very boldly about what they are doing for others and at the same time be trampling on people in their own life or political group. Part of the reasons such eruptions become so common within these groups is because people are afraid of the contempt of their comrades or to look at personal issues in a useful or compassionate way."

"In Intimacy and Solitude I am saying that through knowing yourself and through knowing your insufficiencies, your inadequacies, your weaknesses and your conflicts, you can actually feel much closer to other people. I'm not arguing a case for self-absorption, on the contrary I'm saying people are self-absorbed or absorbed in their own issues, only when they prefer not to know. And that can include less of other people and can get more from other people."

In the chapter on Women and Men Dowrick examines why so many people are so afraid of that inner exploration. She cites heterosexual relationships where the man will so often require the woman to experience his feelings for him.

"If she has to live out his feelings for him as well as for herself, she's taking on a huge amount of emotional labour, which of course can never be spoken about openly, because neither of them really knows what's going on. But it is very stressful for the woman. If she leaves him and this collusion has been going on, he is of course distraught and either immensely angry with her, or he will feel so lost and pathetic that he has immediately to
get into another relationship so that another woman can carry his feelings for him and allow him to be what he regards as a comparative rational, unfeeling person."

Dowrick suggests that women and men almost inevitably understand intimacy differently. There are several things that they can do about this, she says:

"One is to try to articulate what it is that they understand and want; the other is to learn to listen to what the other person is saying. Perhaps most important of all is to back off. A man and a woman are very unlikely to fully meet each other's needs. And the extent to which they can take care of themselves will have a converse paradoxical effect. The more each can take care of him or herself, the more likely they are to be able to meet in intimacy and not just out of some kind of woeful neediness.

"And yet," she adds, "so many people spend their lives searching for the Ultimate Rescuer—somewhere there is a relationship that will save you, save you from yourself. A relationship should not be asked to fulfil all a person's needs. It's important to spend time with yourself which isn't focused on the absence of another person.

"So I tried to move away from this ideal of the one-to-one connection.

This is not to say that satisfying one-to-one connections should be denigrated; they can be an enormous blessing. But it's not what people should necessarily be hanging out for, because in hanging out for it they are missing more modest goals that they're more likely to achieve through friendship."

When Intimacy and Solitude was first released in New Zealand in October last year it became an instant seller. "It was greeted with relief that someone living in the Australian Pacific region had actually written a substantial book around these very complex and common questions.

"And I think the warmth of the response was accentuated by the realisation that this was not just another self-help book from America. It's very different from many American books on the subject. It is not a heterosexist book. It takes into account that people's self-esteem is affected by their class. But I also make it clear that people who are privileged economically can feel devastating emptiness inside. But at the same time, if you are economically without privilege, it's also incredibly hard to feel good about yourself. And then there's the story-telling quality. I am also a writer of fiction and I think those skills help the reader immerse themselves in the text."

How much of her own experience is reflected in the book? "I don't want to be regarded as someone who's got their life in order and wants to be promoted to guru status. The book came about as a result of my own feelings of insufficiency and lack of knowledge. And that has stayed with me. There is always more to know. You are always up against your own human failings. But you can have somewhat different attitudes to them, instead of endlessly blaming yourself. Learn to be a little easier on yourself and then you will begin to be a little easier on other people."

Stephanie Dowrick's Intimacy and Solitude ($19.95) is published by William Heinemann. It is currently in its fourth Australian reprint, and was released in Britain on 4 June.

CLARE CURRAN is a member of ALR's editorial collective.

A forum entitled 'Unlocking the Academies' opened to much fanfare in Melbourne earlier this year, as part of Donald Horne's latest pet project, the Ideas for Australia summits. To the credit of the organisers, the 'unlocking' was conceptualised as a two-way process. Not only does academia need to open itself up more to general consumption by rethinking the problem of specialisation and arcane jargon, but popular culture and its most potent agent of consumption, the media, need also to realign themselves in relation to the knowledge-making machines of academia.

As the forum investigated how best to promote two-way traffic between the technical and the journalistic, the focus fell on the position of the 'public intellectual' in contemporary society. It's in this context that the work of Robert Hughes becomes particularly important, beyond the intrinsic interest of his subject matter.

When Hughes' history of the Australian convict system, The Fatal Shore, appeared in 1987, there were a number of red faces among the serried ranks of mainstream Australian historians. Hughes had written an admirably accessible work and a runaway bestseller; that much, at least, was predictable, given Hughes' background as a prolific journalist-critic for Time magazine and his connections with the New York publishing world.

But The Fatal Shore is also full of wit, acuity and vision. It is well-written (winning prizes such as the Age 1987 Non-fiction Book of the Year Award) and it is very good history. What got up some historians' noses was that Hughes had achieved a commercial and critical success while unearthing new and hitherto ignored material: letters, journals and other primary sources relating to the convict experience in Australia between the arrival of the First Fleet and the end of transportation in 1868. The expatriate art critic had not only popularised the preexisting work of musty professors (the only function begrudgingly allowed the 'non-specialist' or 'journalistic' writer); Hughes had actually beaten them at their own game.

With his latest book, Barcelona, Hughes has once again stolen a march on the unsuspecting. This time, however, he hasn't just outsmarted the slow-moving manatees of academe, he's also one-upped the sleek sharks of the travel and tourism publishing world.

1992 has already been dubbed 'The Year of Miracles'; the quincentenary of Columbus' encounter with the New World is competing for attention with the imminent unification of the EC. However, the Spanish have snatched the Triple Crown: Culture (Madrid is hosting World Expo '92 and Sport (the Barcelona Olympics). The last of these events will attract the most intense and extensive media attention; it is estimated that over 10,000 journalists from all over the world will be in Spain for the Olympic Games. And you can bet your bottom peseta that a good number of them are already reading Hughes' book as background.

Hughes' commercial timing is impeccable, but Barcelona is by no means a trivial, fly-by-night affair. Hughes conceived the idea for the book in 1983 but by the time he began writing in 1987, his original idea (for a thin tome concentrating on architecture) had changed. Hughes realised that understanding Barcelona's architecture from 1875-1910 meant exploring the city's social and political history as well as its art history. As he puts it, to do otherwise would have been like "examining the foliage of the tree without considering its trunk and roots".

But that meant looking at Catalan history, too, and its relationship to the broader history of Spain, Provence, Languedoc and the western Mediterranean all the way back to the founding of the small Roman fortress of Barcino in about 15 BC. And then there are the economic links with the New World (especially in the 18th and 19th centuries), the Catholic connections, the artistic and philosophical interactions with Paris Impressionists and Russian Anarchists, the web of popular myths and legends, and so on.

The result is breathtaking. Barcelona is 573 pages long and ranges across more than 2000 years of cultural and political history, from the Bronze Age oysters that once inhabited Barcelona Bay to the still unfinished saga of Gaudi's spectacular toffee cathedral, La Sagrada Familia. Along the way Hughes introduces us to the Hispanic-Roman writers Seneca and Martial, to the Vandals, Visigoths, Moors and Franks—and to Wilfrid the Hairy, the legendary unifier of Catalunya.

There are chapters on Barcelona's medieval empire (stretching across the Balearic Islands to Sardinia, Sicily and Naples) and tantalising digressions on figures like Arnau de Vilanova (the chief Spanish exponent of the most powerful ideology to arise between Jesus Christ and Karl Marx—the teachings of the Italian mystic Joachim de Fiore), Ramon Llull, the 13th century neo-Aristotelian who, according to Hughes, "created Catalan as a literary language", and the 19th century poet-priest, Jacint Verdaguer.

The last two chapters of the book—on late 19th century Catalan modernisme and on Antoni Gaudi—are the best, and probably contain the germ of the original book. They display an outstanding ease of reference and breadth of knowledge, but are still full of humour, humanity and even sadness; Hughes' descriptions, for instance, of the deaths of Verdaguer and Gaudi are quite touching.

To say that Hughes is ambitious with Barcelona is a gross understatement. Social history, literary, economic,
political, intellectual, cultural, religious and art history—Hughes covers them all. He indulges in jocular asides about the centrality of images of shit in Catalan humour, or of hair as a sign of virility. Hughes weaves all these threads together entertainingly, with a sharp eye for the dramatic and for the emblematic figure who can embody a movement, a revolution, a disaster.

There are parts of the book where I wished Hughes had had time to slow down and give us more. With so much detail and so many overlapping plots, it seemed at times that characters would barely be raised above the ruck before they suddenly had to be killed off.

It is clear from Hughes’ book that Barcelona’s history inverts what the West accepts as the ‘natural’ direction of history. Thus, Barcelona’s Golden Age was the Middle Ages, not the 16th and 17th centuries as it was for Spain in general. The periods which elsewhere saw the Renaissance and the Enlightenment were singularly boring in Barcelona—Catalan historians dubbed this period La Decadencia. And the Catalan Renaixença arrived finally in Barcelona only with the last years of the 19th century and the beginning first of the 20th.

Hughes draws the parallel between Barcelona and Australia as secondary centres, as provinces forever relating to an imperial centre. And ultimately, it was Hughes’ sympathetic yet firm disregard for the self-delusions of the Catalans that I found most appealing about this book. Perhaps because he is Australian, he understands why Catalans have had to fight to construct a national identity in opposition to the centralist octopus of Madrid. Hughes concedes that there that there are substantive differences between Catalans and other Spaniards—but in the end he doesn’t swallow the self-serving nationalist guff beyond it being somehow important for the natives to espouse it.

As a guidebook to Barcelona, this book has some drawbacks. The lack of any useful maps of the city or of Catalunya is particularly annoying, and could have been easily fixed. But as an example of public intellectuals doing what they do best—producing a useful cultural artefact—it is hard to beat.

JOSÉ BORGHINO is a freelance writer and editor.
As a Pom, resident here for more than a decade, and before that in the ultimate trading-post of nationalities, Hong Kong, I reckon I have a stake in the great patriotism debate. While I'm delighted by the current flag because it's so unspecific that no one in their right mind would go to war under or over it, I suppose I want countries, regions, even suburbs to be aware of and stand tall for their own cultures (whatever meaning they want to give that word). So, to discover that both Sydney and Melbourne Film Festivals this month have as a substantial subtext the visit of a delegation of European film bureaucrats and attendant (though not so numerous) filmmakers, all reportedly dedicated to the concept of something called "European cultural relevance", gave me pause for thought.

Now I'm all for not fighting wars over ancient grudges, and I'm all for redistributing German car profits to Sicilian olive farmers. But the idea that there is a cultural mindset linking the Dusseldorf car designer to the Prizzi peasant is one I not only have grave doubts about, but find positively dangerous. Who are the Empire builders in Brussels who want to weld together a European identity, after centuries when Yorkshire and Lancashire could hardly manage a civil conversation — and in which is accused of being Euro-pud-dings by Melbourne Film Festival director, Tait Brady. The Melbourne festival was having nothing to do with "films shot in Hungary, with the Italian actors dubbed into French, representing the Italian investment so badly that you can't tell what language the film's really in, and with Terence Stamp walking on briefly", he assured me. But with 23 different European film funds identified in a recent issue of Moving Pictures International, many of them requiring investment from two or three different countries before their funds are available, the temptation to milk the bureaucrats by tailoring your film to their purposes must be great.

And yet, the recent Belgian film Toto le Heros found room between the bureaucrats to create a delightful product and still satisfy the requirements of four of the funds. La Belle Noiseuse, La Vie de Bohème (a Finnish film in a year when so much is either set in Finland or taxis!) and Zentropa are also beneficiaries of the Euro-ecu at both festivals. Zentropa was the only one previewed for critics — and, unpromisingly, threatened Danish/Swedish/French/German co-production in black and white. But expressionist young Danish director, Lars von Trier has mastered the system, and even with money and actors from all those diverse origins he manages to concentrate on a bleakly Danish view of immediately postwar Germany. Rebuilding with America, shutters pulled down on the past while neo-Nazism survived, railway lines hypnotically leading forwards and backwards, and a Kafkaesque bureaucracy are all aboard this German train.

Whether the train is of the German or the gravy variety, it's intriguing that neither director has seen fit to open his festival with the 1991 European Film of the Year, Ken Loach's Riff-Raff — but rather with two different American films. Indeed, clearly lacking patriotism, they've also ignored the Cannes-heated local film, Strictly Ballroom, in favour of Robert Altman's The Player (Sydney) and Arne Glimcher's Mambo Kings (Melbourne). What does this say about an Australian industry which is, as ever, under pressure from Yankee culture? Both directors would argue the cultural specificity of their choices — an accent look at Hollywood (with about 50 of its stars walking on in Altman's return to his best), and a whimsical glance at the Cuban exile community in the States, gently eased out of Oscar Hijuelos' family memoir.

This difference of opinion over opening night between the two festival directors extends further this year than in most recent festivals. Tait Brady in Melbourne admitted that he felt 1992's Festival was the first of the five he's run which required real direction — meaning he's had to leave good films out. In, though, are Derek Jarman's Edward II, Wim Wenders' Until the End of the World, Errol Morris' doco A Brief History of Time and Aussie Ben Lewin's overseas venture, The Favour, The Watch and the Very Big Fish — none of which appear in Sydney.

Further researches reassured me somewhat. The European Commission's MEDIA programme — Measures to Encourage the Development of an Independent Audiovisual Industry — it all sounded reasonable enough. Dieter Kosslick, the head of the European Film Distribution Office (EFDO) delegation, maintains a well-balanced range of jobs from this European eminence down to managing the film funding for the City of Hamburg. And one of EFDO's functions is to help very culturally specific Welsh (or even Icelandic) films to find sympathetic markets in those parts of Europe that aren't familiar with The Mabinogian or Gnrar's Saga — and indeed outside Europe at events like Australia's premier film festivals. Look out for Endaf Emlyn's One Full Moon at both festivals, and Fridrik Fridrikssson's Children of Nature in Sydney.

But don't expect to see the latest Taviani Brothers film, or that by one of the new Spanish directors — both of which are accused of being Euro-puddings by Melbourne Film Festival director, Tait Brady. The Melbourne festival was having nothing to do with "films shot in Hungary, with the Italian actors dubbed into French, representing the Italian investment so badly that you can't tell what language the film's really in, and with Terence Stamp walking on briefly", he assured me. But with 23 different European film funds identified in a recent issue of Moving Pictures International, many of them requiring investment from two or three different countries before their funds are available, the temptation to milk the bureaucrats by tailoring your film to their purposes must be great.

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Donald Richie, has produced a fascinating series of immediately postwar films produced when the country was reforming under American aegis.

Where both directors most conspicuously agree is in a continuing admiration for the Canadian cinema. “I see many comparisons between the Australian and Canadian film industries”, explains Paul Byrnes. “There’s a similarity in geography and history — both of which are dominated by the American industry. I’ve picked on the Winnipeg Film Group, while Tait has gone for Halifax, Nova Scotia. Where, one wonders, is the Alice Springs Film Group? The Winnipeg mob are weird...very culturally specific to Manitoba, mainly Balkan migrants stuck on the dead flat prairies, and dominated in their childhoods by US television. Now they’re sending up the dominant culture — accurate, knowing, and very funny. They’re real genre busters”. Tait Brady sees in Halifax film-maker, Bill MacGillivray, a touch of Tasmania (where, again, no-one’s making films). “He’s isolated from the centre of power, and his films reflect strong, original roots”.

So what is Australia offering to compare with the world’s best? Should it — particularly at a time of low ebb — get special treatment? Do the festivals have a responsibility to educate local filmmakers — as well as to showcase a film like Proof, which surely reached wider audiences in Australia as a result of its enthusiastic festival debut last year than it might otherwise have done? Shouldn’t reasonable local films get preferential distribution in this country anyway?

Again, the directors differ. For Brady in Melbourne, five features and two major documentaries was less than he would have liked. For Byrnes in Sydney, three of the features and the same number of docs is pretty much what Australia deserves. Both are agreed, though, on Baz Luhrmann’s Strictly Ballroom (a heroic tale of artistic persistence, which began life as a student play in 1985), David Perry’s idiosyncratic The Refracting Glasses, and Eight Ball, Ray Argall’s follow-up to the extraordinarily gentle Return Home — plus the PNG documentary, Black Harvest, and Graham Chase’s Port Pirie childhood recaptured in Modern Times.

Of these films, only Eight Ball’s story of two men and a giant Murray cod, and Chase’s childhood, can be described as approaching an examination of national identity. That seems to be something Australia specialised in over the Breaker Morant/My Brilliant Career era — did it, perhaps to excess, but did it rather well. Cultural specificity would seem to be an important factor in many of the best films of the moment — whether they’re from Halifax, Nova Scotia or Mexico. Nor is cultural specificity restricted to national boundaries; the gay community continues to get a good showing in Sydney,
where Paul Byrnes sees its "strong surge of activity as being a response to the threat of AIDS".

Perhaps those Eurocrats are on to something in their search for a "European cultural relevance"? Perhaps Paul Keating is merely trying to get the film industry back up Hanging Rock by running up the flag? Perhaps the Finns have got there already? It's only by spending the first two weeks of June in darkened rooms in Sydney or Melbourne that you may come close to any answers. Personally, I'm most optimistic of finding enlightenment in the witty monologue in American Spalding Gray - whose Monster in a Box at both festivals finds him reporting from Bondi Beach.

JEREMY ECCLES is a Sydney freelance writer on film. Both Sydney and Melbourne Film Festivals open on Thursday June 4.

Get Real

'Authentic' music is all the rage. The homegrown David Nichols wonders why.

(i) Things Used to be Realer Then

The Real Thing took quite a beating in 1990-91. Not Coke, the real Real Thing: Russell Morris' bizarre and esoteric late-60s epic—a monument to overproduction, written by Johnny Young Talent Time Young and produced by Morris' then-manager, Ian 'Molly' Meldrum. Not only did three different Australian acts attempt to recreate the magic of the original Thing, Morris himself did a cover version as part of an ill-fated attempt to get back 'up there' with Daryl Braithwaite, John Farnham and his other one-time contemporaries. (So, where's Brian Cadd these days?)

By the way, none of those Real Things were hits—but then it is still a source of amazement to anyone who ever sits down and listens to the tormented original that it made the charts in the first place. Nevertheless, this and hundreds of other retreads are hitting the record stores and TV screens regularly. It does suggest the obvious question: why do artists of the 1990s so often go for the easy option: the old cover, the rerun?

There are a few obvious answers. An oldie is recognisable; it places a new artist's first release in a context; a cover is a good 'bridge' between the familiar and the unknown. But then there are people like Westside Productions' Teen Queens, three 18-year-old girls who were flung together at the beginning of this year to make an impressive chart debut with Phil Spector's Be My Baby, The Teen Queens' market, a few gawking middle-aged men aside, is too young to have heard Be My Baby. In this case, the song rather fits the 'innocent, fun sixties' image which music video is promoting so heavily this year.

But it's not just a matter of recycled songs. Most 'serious' modern music today seems to be taking its cue from the presumed classics, eschewing innovation. Bob Dylan may have disappointed everyone but the most ardent fans on his Australian tour this year, but the Dylan of the 1960s—just try and better that!—is the feeling in music now. John Mellencamp railed against the pop industry before launching into his pop song Pop Song on Australian stages last month. Mellencamp's earthiness and 'back-to-basics' approach, his insistence on the music 'counting', appeals to consumers and critics alike. No production tricks, no hype: just rock 'n' roll.

We still need to remind ourselves that people like Mellencamp are taking a self-conscious stance themselves. But he (and his supporters, like Rolling Stone magazine and MTV) have got 'no bullshit' down to a very fine art. The idea that musicians ought to play, that singers ought to be able to sing, and listeners ought to be hearing what they think they're hearing, is nothing new. It's just that now, it seems, we need to have our terms redefined for us.

(ii) Why Can't They be Real Again?

When Molly Meldrum mixed The Real Thing in 1969, he was taking his cue from heroes like The Beatles (or, more specifically, their producer George Martin) and perhaps the Rolling Stones' Their Satanic Majesties Request. He was creating a deliberately overblown epic—and, in fairness, the rather slender song wouldn't have made half the record it did without the tapes of military music and people saying deep things backwards. At the time, Molly's work was applauded: it was state-of-the-art and very 'deep' for an Australian. 23 years later, Molly was being threatened with legal action by INXS' management for indigantly suggesting that the 'live' INXS album entitled Live Baby Live wasn't.

Of course, the terms on which you'd take the original Real Thing and Live Baby Live are completely different: no one was claiming that The Real Thing was a genuine real-time recording. But when Russell Morris hit number one with his single, conspicuous production was a fledgling art: the art hit its peak in the mid-70s with hits like 10CC's I'm Not In Love and Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody. The publicity for both songs stressed the enormous amount of time and craft devoted to their recording. In the case of 10CC, thousands of backing vocal overdubs have been mentioned.

Now, however, things have changed. Production has become a dirty word. Rather than aiming to make more of an original idea, production on a rock record nowadays means clarity and consistency, getting to the heart of the matter. When you go to see John Mellencamp you expect to see all his 'original' musicians on stage; when you buy his records you expect to hear...
'real' instruments—something that, theoretically, could be recreated in real life. No synthisers, in other words; no gimmickry that sounds like something it's not. No manipulations.

Sometimes, we simply deny what we're hearing because it doesn't fit with what we're seeing. Take, for instance, the video for John Farnham and Jimmy Barnes' When Something is Wrong With My Baby. Oz rock's two most famous vocalists are sitting at a pub table—accompanied only by younger statesman Diesel on guitar—and they're wrapping their vocal cords around a classic soul singalong.

The interesting aspect of this chart-topper is the extremely prominent rhythm machine in the mix: a simple, unabashed piece of drum programming. It certainly doesn't detract from the song; however, it might have detracted from the video if, before settling down into the classic anthem either Barnesy or Farnsey had to crouch down and figure out how to turn the machine on. The rhythm track is denied.

So, too with Yothu Yindi's Treaty (Filthy Lucre Remix)—a huge hit for the group based on a free-working of their song Treaty. While the single was, in essence, a dance workout made in the studio, the video was full of shots of the band playing live, singing the original version of the tune. The remix could never be recreated on a stage.

Neither of the above are bad records: in fact, they're excellent. But they are being sold—in part—on notions of heartfelt rock honesty, as though being in love or in pain made making a record that much easier. When Something is Wrong With My Baby should be much more a product of Barnesy's angst than it is a product of the studio budget Michael Gudinski allotted him.

In 1956, we assume, people really did make 'records': records in the same sense as 'archive'. But by 1992, the word 'record' means something quite different. A hit song is more likely to take three months to record than the three minutes it takes to listen to it.

The recording process is such, after all, that a rock record which appears to feature musicians jamming and gelling in inspirational unison is probably a perfectly synchronised collection of recordings made at different dates over an extended period. This is not to say that the record is artificial. The point is that it is no more 'real' music, it is as calculated and crafted as any dance or rap track.

And of course diehard real music fans would be appalled by the amount of studio trickery involved in the production of their heroes' records. Whether the original signal comes from a state-of-the-art synthesiser or a 200-year-old mandolin is ultimately irrelevant: the sound signal is altered and translated in the studio until it meets the producer's requirements. If anything, the mandolin will probably need more technical attention, via audio wizardry, to put it in tune. Programmable drums, for instance, are nowadays used in preference to real drums—they sound more 'authentic'.

This, then, is the state of play with rock. The deception is not overt: but when the selling of the product revolves around the notion that the product is too pure for 'selling', we're moving into strange territory indeed.

DAVID NICHOLS is a real musician.

For two decades now, in most of the industrialised world, a debate over the welfare state has been at the heart of the broader attack on the role of the state. Those countries, including Australia, in which that attack has been conducted most vigorously have tended to be those with less expansive welfare provision. They are also countries where concepts of citizenship, solidarity and equality—each of which challenge the assumptions and consequences of market competition—have tended not to be embraced with enthusiasm, nor received broad community endorsement.

These features are not, of course, independent. The causal links between them are central to comprehending what has been happening since the mid-1970s, and why, and developing a cohesive and consistent response. That the ‘welfare state debate’ in Australia has, so far, been won by the Right can hardly be denied. Supporters of welfare state intervention—indeed of any form of state intervention—have become increasingly isolated in a world of harsh economic realities, in which economic liberals have been able to instil into the political and national psyche the idea that because some proponents of state intervention base their claims on narrow self-interest, all such claims can be similarly dismissed.

Their task has been made all the more easy by the poor quality of some of the argument with which they have had to contend. Thus, for example, it is not uncommon to encounter the argument that because not all issues can be reduced to purely economic terms, it follows that the economic dimension is irrelevant in assessing the worth and effects of particular social policies. This kind of reasoning is as suspect as that which led people like Charles Murray to claim (and, incidentally, to convince many) that, because poverty and welfare spending in the US had both risen since the 1960s, therefore the latter was an important factor in causing the former. These views saw welfare debate coming full circle; earlier scepticism that welfare programs were not as effective as originally thought were replaced with the view that what was required was not more but less welfare spending. Welfare programs came to be seen as part of the problem not part of the solution to issues of social alienation, inequality and deprivation. The middle classes could line their pockets with the fruits of income tax cuts, secure in the knowledge that the associated spending cuts were in the best interests of the poor and disadvantaged.

Against this background, I greeted this book by Beilharz, Considine and Watts with anticipation. Here we have three scholars of some repute promising—as the title implies—to reassess some of this recent debate in an Australian context. My sense of anticipation was further enhanced by the three main themes of the work: arguments, institutions and administration—each of which contains the elements necessary to expose economic liberalism as a set of theories and arguments more appropriate to (undergraduate) lecture halls than to a real world welfare capitalist society (albeit one with an unwavering liberal bent) like Australia.

Unfortunately, my anticipation turned to confusion, frustration and, finally, to disappointment the further I progressed into the book. The back cover’s claim that the book is “a short, clear and intelligent introduction to the welfare state in Australia” is misleading on at least two counts. First, the book is at times extremely heavy going and its messages are by no means clear. Second, it is not for those looking for an introduction to the subject.

The book’s central theme is the evolving conflict between economic liberalism and social liberalism in Australian public debate and how these concepts have shaped policy development, specifically as between charity and rights approaches to welfare provision. In Part I it is argued that citizenship debates have a long and fluctuating history in Australia, even if the concept has tended to have a decidedly masculine bias. Yet it is not brought out why the idea of citizenship itself (defined as a situation where “each person can participate in civic life and, potentially, in decision making”) is important in the context of welfare debates.

The main thrust of Part II is also primarily historical. Here its prime author (Watts) distinguishes between the national welfare state and what is somewhat mysteriously referred to as the “other state”, that “partnership of a network of voluntary organisations and colonial governments that emerged in the nineteenth century”. The “other state” is distinguished by a number of characteristics—specifically its heavy reliance on voluntary, community-based service delivery organisations and its close funding and administrative links with local and state governments. The analysis—much of which reiterates the argument of Watts’ recent Foundations of the National Welfare State—makes no mention of a critical distinction between the national welfare state and the “other state”. This is that the former encompasses Commonwealth income support programs while the latter largely covers the provision of welfare services, generally by state and/or local governments, aided by a great range of professional service providers and community agencies with complex funding and administrative structures.

Part III on administration (by Considine) is more clearly articulated than its predecessors. Here, the nature of the topic forces the author to take a
more practical approach, to the benefit of those whose main focus is on the here and now. Yet even here, while one can sympathise with the main conclusion that "administrative complexity (is) a major persistent obstacle to service improvement", the example used to illustrate the point, the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program, is not used as fairly or accurately nor, it has to be said, as convincingly as it might have been.

In their final summation, the authors agree that neither economic liberalism (nor neo-marxism—which enters on the penultimate page, having not featured earlier) has the ability to provide solutions to the problems of the welfare state in late 20th century Australia. All three approaches are criticised because they allow "people (to) reproduce their own political positions against those of others; they do not tell us a great deal about what the state actually does, where or with whom, or even where the state is". In contrast, the authors prefer a framework which acknowledges that the welfare state is both more complex and less predictable than either of these approaches allow.

That is hardly news to any serious student of the subject. If we apply the authors' criteria for criticising the three main existing approaches to their own work, it too seems to be seriously lacking. This is a pity given the importance of the subject matter that they have addressed. A coherent and comprehensive account of the development of the Australian welfare state and defence of its performance on both social and economic grounds remains to be written.

PETER SAUNDERS is the head of the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales.

Called to Account

Accounting for the Humanities by Ian Hunter, Denise Meredyth, Bruce Smith and Geoff Stokes. (Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Griffith University, 1991.) Reviewed by Simon Marginson.

Last October, after four years of brawling about the government's higher education policies, federal Minister for Higher Education Peter Baldwin said that the micro-economic reforms of the Dawkins era had resulted in "a significant loosening of central controls over higher education institutions".

But the government's main critics in the humanities and the humanistic social sciences remained stony-faced. Deregulation of overseas student fees and funding in the form of block grants might have met the needs of university managers, but the humanities continued to be "the one site of implacable refusal and resistance". As Ian Hunter puts it:

To the Government's proposal to gear higher education to social and economic needs and purposes the humanities academy replies that it is the custodian of a goal whose completeness and universality identifies it with the absolute end of humanity as such—the culture of the 'whole' person and the disinterested pursuit of knowledge.

While the government pictures universities as "legitimate objects of government intervention", humanities academics are at pains to argue that liberal education cannot be reduced to vocational training or government calculation. By its nature it must remain autonomous and "ultimately accountable".

Accounting for the Humanities is concerned with the collision between these two incompatible discourses of the government and the humanities—a collision in which their "mutual incomprehension is matched only by their internal coherence". Both views, the authors argue, are seriously deficient and the opposition between them is misleading in itself.

This is by far the best Australian publication on this debate. It demonstrates that the traditional defences of the humanities are built on shifting sands—but so are the government's objectives. Ian Hunter argues that the attempt to align education with the needs of the economy faces serious technical difficulties, and the connection between "technological and production-oriented education in the universities" and national economic performance, is by no means clear.

Further, the attempt to monitor, calculate and develop the efficiency and productivity of higher education runs into a number of obstacles: "the dispersed and highly ramified character of the higher education network", with its myriad activities, programs, professions, interest groups, institutions; the statutory autonomy of universities; the internal goals of humanities disciplines (critical intellect, aesthetic sensibility, and so on) which are difficult to translate into government objectives; and the "sheer contingency" of the new administrative systems—the problems of designing successful managerial mechanisms and securing sufficient consent.

However, the main fire is directed against the traditional defences of the humanities. The authors are sceptical of all grand claims about the cultivated individual or the disinterested pursuit of truth, and locate the humanities firmly in a practical and historical context.
We find that even the forms of what is now defended as liberal education, far from being a timeless truth inherited from the ancient Greeks and the 12th century University of Bologna, are comparatively recent. The ‘rounded’ or the ‘cultivated’ individual—supposedly the object of the humanities—is “a highly specialised cultural artefact” whose purpose is itself vocational.

At different times the humanities have been implicated in a wide range of social activities: the development of social leaders, the formation of the professions, the civilisation of the masses. Following Foucault, the authors see the humanities as central to the extension of techniques of government during the last two centuries—for example, in constituting a teacher service and in shaping much of the core public service.

The polarity between government and academy conceals this complex interaction between the humanities and the objectives of government. Rounded personalities are useful personnel, and instrumental thought can be socially critical. Thus we find that even these opposing discourses can accommodate each other.

The stress on the government/academy polarity has its problems. It is often said that the most useful form of graduate is the broadly educated, well rounded individual supposedly produced by the humanities departments. Hunter mentions this claim, but does not deal with it, because his fluent article has been ordered on the basis of the polarity he condemns. But this is a very common defence of the humanities and should have been given more attention.

The chapters by Bruce Smith, Denise Meredyth and Ian Hunter which contain extensive historical material are very good indeed; there is much which cannot be adequately discussed here—for example, Smith on the foundation of the colonial universities and Meredyth on the 30-year history of the university tutorial. (Ironically, the tutorial emerged at the end of the 1950s in order to cope with teaching a broader range of students in the newly-expanding universities. Another wave of expansion, and the resulting resource strains, now appear likely to destroy it, just when it is needed the most.)

Meredyth also addresses two common and opposing characterisations of humanities faculties: that they serve to reproduce social privilege, and that they are points of democratic access to education (for example for mature age women). Not surprisingly, she finds that neither generalisation holds water and identifies “more diverse and contingent patterns of participation and calculations of equity”.

The authors are interested in “exchanges” between government and university rather than markets and university. I would have liked to see more discussion of the effects of market economic systems in the “porous shell” of the university, alluded to only briefly at the end of Hunter’s chapter. The debate between government and humanities is an old one but the market influences are new and dynamic. For example, in the period of Dawkins’ Education Ministry the number of fee-paying overseas students in higher education increased from 622 to 20,219.

What is the usefulness of the analysis in the development of political strategies? This was not the authors’ project, but it is always a question worth asking. The book implies that ‘economic rationalism’ is impossible as well as undesirable; that is, it is impossible to subordinate the universities to the dictates of a single abstraction. It also makes it clear that it is not enough to rely on the ‘immanent logic’ (the Internal rationale) of academic disciplines in order to defend them outside the universities. (Hunter makes the telling point that the orthodox defence of the humanities sounds unconvincing precisely because it is “divorced from the knowledge formed inside the disciplines that compose the humanities”, yet depends for its rationale on their unconditional acceptance.)

The authors appear to have adopted Weber’s view that the social sciences cannot judge between competing social ends, but they can clarify the dependence of these social ends on two elements; the means or social technologies by which these ends are pursued, and the ultimate ethical commitments on which they rest. The distinction between ethics and technologies (while recognising their inter-dependence) has advantages. What is not so clear in this work is the place of ethics within the authors’ own schema, and the identity of their values, their own standpoint.

Following Foucault, Hunter defines politics as the science of governance—technologies of supervision and regulation, forms of calculation, and so on—plus electoral politics. Hunter argues there is a two-way street here: sciences are themselves based in ethical presuppositions, while value positions are a product of the exercise of science (and in some sense, a post hoc justification of the technologies concerned). This notion of a reciprocal relationship between technologies and ethics is plausible. My concern is that the analysis in the book tends to be lop-sided: too much weight falls on the methods of governance and too little on the question of values. Why do governments govern? Sometimes one gets the impression that the technologies simply drive the values.

Further, in this framework it is not clear where we can fit a discussion of conflicting interests. And if politics is limited to the realm of methods of

Subscribers Draw

The winners of our 1991/2 subscription flyer competition were drawn in May. Congratulations, and $300 worth of goods from the Community Aid Abroad mail order catalogue, go to Ms MD Bannerman of Allawah, NSW. More congratulations, and $300 worth of books from Melbourne’s International Bookshop, go to Graham Goosey of Hilton, SA.

The situationists were an odd lot; in revolt against both art and politics, they refused to compromise with either. Guy Debord ruthlessly expelled anyone who showed signs of compromise, and in the end expelled himself as well. Yet for all that he will be remembered for some time to come for his incendiary tract The Society of the Spectacle, a crystal clear hegelian-marxist analysis of the spectacular form of capitalist society. Everyone from Baudrillard to the Sex Pistols have dipped into it, yet few have fathomed this strange and hermetic book. It is the last great classic of western marxism.

What always made Debord’s writings so powerful was that, like classical marxist tracts, they came right out of left field. Debord was not an academic, not an artist, not a political functionary. None of the compromises each of these careers entails mar his writing. His errors, so to speak, are all his.

Debord imagines Panegyric as the first volume of his autobiography. It is a strange book, owing more to De Quincey’s Confessions than to anything else. It is at once learned and arrogant, revealing and obscure. Like De Quincey, Debord writes with absolute self-assurance. In a discussion of the various statements under oath he has made in various police stations, he concludes “So then I here declare that my answers to the police should not be included later in my collected works, because of scruples about the form and even though I signed the veracious content without embarrassment”.

Without the solidity of an institution like a party or a university to lean on, Debord has only himself. “There is nothing more natural than to consider everything as starting from oneself, chosen as the centre of the world; one finds oneself thus capable of condemning the world without even wanting to hear its deceitful chatter.” Which is exactly what Debord in life, as much as in his writing, does: “I am the only one who’s (sic) life is true to his works.”

Debord is the last of the great French decadents. The spirit of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Lautremont, Cravan is still alive in him. Baudelaire and De Quincey make the city the great theme, Rimbaud gives writing its desire to change life, while Lautremont gives it its extremism of style. Cravan is the spirit of pure provocation, and this Debord gives a political twist. He picked up and played with the rhetoric of revolution like a child playing with fire. He and the situationists discovered what becomes of the language of revolution in a spectacular or, as we would say today postmodern, society. Debord knew, long before it was fashionable, what betrayals of revolutionary language were being carried out under its banner. His was always a revolt against the betrayal of the formerly powerful rhetoric of revolution as much as anything else.

Debord was ahead of his time in grasping the spectacular or, as one might say today simulated, nature of public discourse. Yet he is also a relic of the past, a great poet of the streets from a time when the streets were still the place of insurrection. “One cannot go into exile in a unified world,” he mourns. The Paris of the 1960s has been ‘Hausmannised’ again, its spaces rearranged to preserve it from revolution, and this time by a socialist government. Yet as Debord mutters darkly to himself, “All revolutions go down in history, yet history does not fill up; the rivers of revolution return from whence they came, to flow again.”

McKENZIE WARK writes for The Australian’s Higher Education Supplement.
CHINA
SHOP

Payoff

What is it about Pay TV that drives some people into a frenzy?

Reading a recent selection of exhortations to Canberra bureaucrats and politicians to get moving and start cabling, you could be forgiven for getting the impression that the country will be returned to some kind of pre-industrial state unless we take on Pay.

Opponents of Pay are given the sort of kindly smile reserved for the aged, the terminally bewildered or a sickly pet dog. Yes, sir, the bold spirits who will take us into the 21st century with a hand-held golf game in one hand and a Pay TV channel selector in the other are large-screen types with a Pay TV channel selector in the other large-screen types with a clear eye on the future and they don't need narky negative thinkers with the vision of a slug. No sir.

As my old headmaster used to say at the end of year speech night, "Boys, if you aim for the stars you might hit the treetops, if you wish to aim for the tree tops you'll probably hit the ground". He said it every year, mind you, and I always wondered what effect it had on the scrubbed faces below him. Now I know. They went off and became Pay TV promoters.

The federal government is currently considering how Pay TV is to be introduced into this country and, more importantly, who should run it. Whether we should have it at all is a question that is no longer asked except by the abovementioned, terminally bewildered etc.

Apart from the general concerns as to who runs Pay TV my reservations are much more basic. For a start there will be nothing to watch. How do I know this? By looking at the current offerings of the TV networks. Program making is expensive and the networks' budgets already seem to be stretched as tight as a programmer's post-lunch paunch. If there is money around for additional production then I bet I'm not the first to ask where it is. After all, audiences actually like Australian shows if they are done well. They rate well and we would have more if there was the money and talent to produce them.

Television is a competitive industry, fiercely competitive if we are to believe the hype of the ratings wars. So if one of the networks did have some quality product, there is more than a good chance we'd be seeing it. How else can we explain the decision of one network, in despair at being constantly thrashed by the Channel Nine news, to bring back that creaky comedy series M.A.S.H. in the early evening? Now, hey, M.A.S.H. was a fine series and maybe it still is, but does this mean that no one has had another good comedy idea for 20 years?

In fact, M.A.S.H. is probably a good example of the things we will get on Pay TV. Along with Gilligan's Island, Leave it to Beaver, Bonanza, and whatever else is in the box holding the door open at TV headquarters. We are also told that sport will be a big winner. But hold on a minute. You mean there are sporting events out there of wide general interest that the current networks aren't showing? Never.

My guess is that the Gulargambone Cup and the Kangaroo Valley Harriers will get their big chance at TV on Pay but it's hard to see what else could be put on that's not already being shown. As the curling events at the last Winter Olympics showed, there are some sports that just don't seem to suit a TV audience. Nor, judging from the empty stands, a live audience either.

So what else can we look forward to after we've toasted the success of Southern Belle in the last on the card from the Bateman's Bay Paceway? Perhaps an old movie. Yes, but we can get plenty of those from the video stores as it is. Okay, politics then. What about a few hours of live broadcasts from the NSW Upper House, with a prize to anyone who can stay awake long enough to understand what's going on? You see the problem.

I suppose I should stop this negative carping, tie up my shoelaces, straighten my tie and accept the fact that pay TV is one of those things that we just have to have if we are to be taken seriously in the brave new world of narrowcasting that is about to descend.

No longer will we have to content ourselves with a mere four channels. We can receive 20 or 30 or, good heavens, 50 if we choose. What will be on these channels if my guess is right are some very golden days of film and TV, as well as some rather obscure sporting contests. Mind you, that still leaves quite a few channels to fill up. Which leaves the way open for a host of financial, weather, fashion and even shopping channels to crowd into the lounge room.

Sadly, this probably yokes us ever more firmly to the tyranny of choice. It's like trying to order a simple cup of tea in the United States. It's difficult. First you have to decide on a range of tedious options such as white/black/herbal/caffeine/imported/perfumed/etc.

Already I fear we are going slowly potty under an avalanche of rainfall figures, gold prices, TV ratings and royal dress designs, not to mention cricket statistics. What can we do? Read a book? Yes, but what about the large pile of magazines I've got to get through? Sigh. I feel thoroughly narrowcasted.

PHILIP CLARK presents The Radio Quiz on Sydney ABC Radio 2BL.
WOMEN AND RELIGION

The Women's Studies Centre at Sydney University is presenting a one-day seminar entitled 'Women and Religion' at the Menzies Common Room, Women's College, on Sunday 28th June from 9am to 5pm. This conference will cover a number of religions: Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. Issues being dealt with include: Is it possible for a Feminist to be a Christian?, Women and Islam - the Rise of Fundamentalism and its Effects on Muslim Women, Women in the Ministry and Religion and Sexuality. Speakers include: Dawn Cohen, Imrana Jalal, The Rev. Dorothy McMahon, Gisela Meister-Rommer, Dr Barbara Thiering & Dr Erin White. Contact The Women's Studies Centre on (02) 692 3638.

XY: men, sex, politics. XY is a national magazine for and about men. XY affirms a healthy, life-loving, non-oppressive masculinity and explores issues of gender and sexuality. Subscriptions are $15 (full-time), $12 (part-time), $10 (unwaged). Institutional subscriptions ($36), group subscriptions ($25). Sample copies are $5. XY, PO Box 26, Ainslie ACT 2602.

HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN FEMINISMS

The Women's Studies Centre and the History Department of the University of Sydney will present a Conference on the History of Australian Feminisms from 9 to 11 July 1992 at Women's College, University of Sydney. Topics to be covered during the conference include the Origins of Australian Feminisms, Sex and Suffrage, Feminisms Between the Wars, Literary Feminists, the Media and Feminisms and Feminist Positions 1970 - 1990. For further information and registration details contact Penny Russell on (02) 692 2362 or Mary Spongberg on (02) 692 3638.

WOMEN'S LIVES, MEN'S LAWS, FEMINISTS FUTURES?

This series of discussion forums is for women to talk about recent developments in law and economic policies. Sunday 26th July: Whatever happened to a womb of our own?

Reproductive rights and wrongs.

Speakers: Heather Dietrich and others to be confirmed Sunday 20th September: Challenging the Fightback package: Understanding the proposed goods and services tax.

Speakers: Claire Young, Sue Outhwaite and others to be confirmed.

Harold Park Hotel Bistro, 115 Wigram Road, Glebe, NSW. Childcare available if booked in advance - phone Elaine Fishwick (02) 519 4360 bh. For general information phone Marilyn McHugh (02) 697 3863 bh.

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Horacek

So the gallant knight packed his mobile phone, his portable fax & his laptop & set off in search of the fierce dragon
CORRECT LINE COOKING

Berried Treasure

I came across a beautiful word in the dictionary the other day: framboesia. I assumed this would be something particularly lovely. A cross between a crepe and a soft place perhaps, or a raspberry-flavoured slice of heaven. Maybe a particularly beautiful souffle, or the colour one blushes after climaxing. In fact, framboesia refers to yaws—"a contagious bacterial skin-disease of tropical countries, with raspberry-like excrescences". Nothing ambrosial about that.

But brushing this unpleasant experience aside, I opened a book with the unambiguous name of Strawberries by Pamela Allardice (Hill of Content, about $22.50). The cover of this text boasts naked cherubs playing with ribbons and strawberries against a background of clouds, and the author's description reveals that "Pamela is a true romantic. She is married to Greg and they live in a house named 'Follow Your Heart' with their baby Edward". I think I preferred the tropical diseases. Nevertheless, the book contains a wealth of interesting information and recipes between the rather kitsch illustrations by Simone Bennett.

The strawberry seems to have represented all things to various peoples around the world, apart from the notions of cuteness which this book favours on its cover. Allardice points out that they have been regarded as aphrodisiacs and as symbolising "perfection and righteousness in allegorical art works", such as in mediaeval representations of Mary. The book has a small section on the history of strawberry cultivation and belief, mostly in Europe ("Strawberry Lore"), and tips on their cultivation. The greater part of Strawberries is devoted to ways of consuming the blessed fruit, as both food and an ingredient in beauty and health preparations. One of the older beauty tips makes recent worries about animal ingredients seem a bit effete:

To Cure Excessive Ruddiness of the Face
It is good overnight to anoint the face with hare's blood and in the morning to wash it with strawberry and cowslip water, the juice of distil'd lemon, juice of cowcumbers or to use the seeds of melon or kernels of peaches beaten small.

I can't actually say that I have tried this 17th century facial, and being blessed with a non-ruddy complexion, I don't feel called upon to rush out with the shotty. I suppose after looking at your face caked in hare's blood overnight, it would seem less ruddy when one finally washed the stuff off. But strawberries are slightly astringent, and their fruit and leaves have been used for everything from teeth whiten to skin toner.

Many of the recipes for skin preparations are less harrowing than the one given above, and would certainly be more fun to try. Mashed strawberries, raw honey and natural yoghurt mixed together are supposed to remove wrinkles, if left on damp skin for 10-15 minutes—although the "delicate eye area" (where wrinkles tend to hang out) is to be avoided. The health preparations include mouth ulcer and cystitis tonics, but I haven't actually been organised or afflicted enough to attempt this yet.

The rest of Strawberries is devoted to matters culinary. My major problem with recipes involving berries is that, at their very best, they don't need anything at all done to them. Their texture and flavour are quite perfect. And some of the uses given here, such as "Strawberry Bortsch" seem almost desperate. I'd need to have several tonnes of excess berries before I tried that. However, here's one of the recipes which is well worth attempting.

Yagody

This is a traditional Russian dish. To be truly authentic, the strawberries should be the small, wild variety and freshly picked.

1 punnet strawberries, washed and hulled
250ml sour cream
30g sugar
1/4 tsp almond essence
1/2 tsp vanilla essence
Cinnamon
Beat cream, sugar and essences with electric mixer for 15 minutes or until mixture has doubled in size. Fold berries through mixture and sprinkle with cinammon. Chill well.

Strawberries is a must for an addict and a fun book for those who like the heavenly fruit. Still, I can't help feeling that the book was designed as a present for a maiden aunt (if such a creature still exists) rather than as something one would buy to read or use. Perhaps that's because strawberries seem a lot sexier to me than something they apparently do to Pamela Allardice, not to mention the annoyingly chaste pastel drawings of near Victorian respectability. The underbelly of the berry is not revealed in this text, and it's all a bit fluffy. But still, after my experience with framboesia, perhaps I should be grateful that the only skin condition discussed here—outside wrinkles and ruddiness—is Anne Boleyn's strawberry-shaped birthmark. There's a lot to be said for the safety of scones and jam.

Penelope Cottier.
PICK THE QUOTE

If you want to make sure you get your ALR every month, on the month, there's only one sure way: subscribe. But we'll also add a further inducement. Below are four quotes from ALR readers (or non-readers), along with four faces. All you have to do is match each of the quotes to a face, and add their names. If you're one of the first five correct entries you'll win a free subscription for yourself or a friend.

A. 'One might imagine why it was that ALR decided to carry Senator Walsh's article. It is basically an issue about the Accord. The communists have never liked the Accord, the Liberals have never liked the Accord, and Walshie has never liked the Accord. So there is this trifecta of the communists, Walshie and the Liberals.'

B. 'ALR is refreshingly free of dogma, choleric abuse and patronising certainties. It also contains that rarest ingredient of the leftist press—humour.'

C. 'It gives you another side to the story; it tells you more about the main players than they would tell their bosom buddies.'

D. 'I thought ALR had gone out of business—no offence to my colleagues on the Left, no offence at all. I thought it had actually faded away quietly, that it had quietly gone out of business.'

1  2  3  4

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