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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

INTO ASIA?: The need for Australia to ‘get into’ Asia is the Big Idea of the moment. But what does it actually mean? Our authors take a sceptical look at the debate.

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The unemployment rate for 15-19 year olds is 35%, compared with the labour force generally of around 11%. It is this, more than anything else, which has sparked the public anguish about young unemployed people. Yet the emphasis on youth unemployment at present preoccupying both government and opposition is, to a very large extent, misplaced. The biggest problem in the Australian labour market is long-term unemployment—and it is a problem likely to get worse.

Policy perspectives driven by an obsession with unemployment rates are unfortunate—particularly when the information relates to young people. This is because the size of the youth labour force has been shrinking rapidly since the early 1980s. The major reason is that educational participation rates have grown rapidly, meaning that today there are far fewer people aged 15-19 in employment or actively seeking work than there were a decade ago. In 1980 only 44% of young people were in full-time education; in 1991 the figure was about 71%. Consequently, while the unemployment rate of the young is very high, as a proportion of this age cohort unemployment is less than 10%, compared with over 12% in the 1982-83 recession.

The unemployment problem for young people is important but, in fact, long-term unemployment is an issue of far greater concern.

For any given pool of unemployed people there are substantial disparities in the experience between individuals. One of the most important dimensions here is the length of time people have been jobless. The term long-term unemployment relates to those who have been out of work for 12 continuous months or more, of which there are currently over 300,000.

There are two basic facts about long-term unemployment. One is its numbers increase extremely rapidly about a year after a recession begins. In the last downturn, for example, long-term unemployment increased from about 70,000 in 1982 to around 190,000 in 1983. Similarly, in this recession it has increased by about two and a half times since 1990. The other is that once it takes hold, long-term unemployment decreases very slowly. Even though employment grew very rapidly from 1984 to 1989, in 1990 there were still around 40,000 more long-term unemployed than before the 1982-83 depression. These facts may be explained as follows. The long-term unemployed are the most disadvantaged participants in the labour force. They tend to have low levels of education and, as their unemployment duration rises, they increasingly have relatively low levels of on-the-job experience.

Two further things happen to prevent individuals escaping long-term unemployment. One is that the value of the skills they have depreciates through lack of use. The other is that the experience is a numbing and depressing one which naturally engenders negative attitudes and a lack of confidence. An obvious result is that employers are likely to prefer other applicants for jobs. This is particularly true today, when there are many alternative applicants for jobs.

In short, the long-term unemployed are pushed to the back of the hiring queue, then find themselves in a vicious circle. Yet the number of long-term unemployed is unlikely to fall in the next few years and could even increase rapidly. The Centre for Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University recently produced a number of econometric simulations based on past experience to illustrate what might happen to long-term unemployment between 1992-96 under three scenarios concerning the unemployment rate. The ‘low’ scenario assumes that the unemployment rate falls to 9% by the end of 1993. The ‘medium’ and ‘high’ scenarios respectively assume that the unemployment rate stands at 10.5% and 12% at the end of 1993. Under the most optimistic of these scenarios, assuming that the economy grows relatively quickly, there will still be at least 300,000 long-term unemployed for several years at least. Under the medium scenario at least 400,000 people will be long-term unemployed, and the figure will still be growing slowly. And under the most pessimistic scenario, the total will reach almost half a million by the beginning of 1994.

Major policy conclusions follow from this analysis. The clearest is that when an economy moves into recession considerable and long-lasting problems of large-scale long-term unemployment will be created. And even if the economy grows relatively quickly after the recession ends, the number of long-term unemployed will remain very much above where it was before the downturn. The other important point is that a comparatively modest growth in employment can have an impact on the long-term unemployed. If the economy recovers to reach 9% unemployment by the end of 1993, the long-term unemployed will still be at least 200,000 people, which is already too late this year to address. It is too late to prevent large-scale long-term unemployment. And if the economy fails to grow, the long-term unemployment will remain very much above where it was before.

The bottom line is that, while youth unemployment is an issue of legitimate concern, the actual and prospective magnitude of long-term unemployment is such as to demand greater policy attention. For many in the group it is already too late this time around, but the lesson for future policy is obvious.

BRUCE CHAPMAN is a research economist at the Centre for Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University.
ed against Michael. He felt the weight of the Jackson 5's survival on his shoulders. But even after he left the Jacksons to further his own career, the need to do better than anyone else on earth stayed with him.

You can't say he hasn't done it. Look at the competition: Prince, whose outlandish, inspired creativity rather than his record sales keep him in the biggest of the big league; Madonna, whose major recording career is kept in perspective by her insistence on pursuing a dreary film star dream; Beyond these there's only Elvis and a few other dead guys. Michael Jackson is the biggest and best, to everyone but himself.

But for every declaration of admiration in the media for Michael, there must be at least ten denunciations of Whacko Jacko. The man who wants plastic surgery to look more like Princess Diana. The man who is being blackmailed by someone who took a photograph of him dancing with the Elephant Man's skeleton. The man who sleeps in an oxygen tank in the hope of staying alive for a century and a half...

The most interesting thing about Michael Jackson's celebrity is, let's face it, not his music but his outright strangeness—even if you ignore the rumours, his non-conformist dress, visage and crotch-grabbing antics are hard to deny. Yet Middle America tolerates Michael presumably because nothing succeeds, or in this case, neutralises like success—that is, money. White America, on the other hand, might not be too sure what effect Michael has on black America. On the Entertainment Tonight report the day after the video for Black or White was first aired only black parents were interviewed about the effect they thought Michael's window-smashing pseudo-masturbatory actions would have on their children.

It could be assumed that one reason Michael can 'get away with it' is that he never formally acknowledges that he is at all odd: his shy and reserved nature (he never gives interviews) pushes him back from fuelling the fire of his own notoriety. Yet in fact Michael does fuel the fire, constantly, by playing on his own public persona in song titles. Speculation on his relationship with 'mother, lover' Diana Ross led to Dirty Diana. The accusations that Michael, not content with a caucasian nose, was bleaching his skin to appear less of a negro surfaced in Black or White. In the Closet, Man in the Mirror and even his current album's title, Dangerous, can hardly be seen as anything other than self-referential.

It's possible that Michael Jackson is laughing at all of us even as he desperately tries to curry our favour. Perhaps the man-boy—also a very shrewd businessman, don't forget—is less of an innocent than he appears. Maybe all that stuff about believing that ET is a real person and that we can fly if we learn the right way to control our minds is just a hoax. Maybe Michael, like his hero, the imagineering Walt Disney, has us all sussed out.

Either way, I desperately hope that rumours Michael will be toning down his act for the sake of sales aren't true. I want to believe he really does dance with the Elephant Man's skeleton. Because as long as he remains so unbelievably whacko, there's hope for dedicated nonconformists, freeform freakouts who refuse to come to the party and shy retiring types everywhere.

DAVID NICHOLS recently put the finishing touches to the Hit Songwords Special Edition.
second ballot tipped the scales just enough to give the nationalists a slim majority. The PRNU, the political arm of the far-right ‘cultural’ organisation Vatra Romaneasca (Romanian Hearth), appealed to Romanians to vote strictly along ethnic lines. Its chauvinistic propaganda portrayed the opposition Democratic Convention as the mouthpiece of the Hungarian minority whose one ambition was to return Transylvania to Hungary.

Petru Litiu, the Democratic Convention’s defeated candidate, sees the source of the PRNU’s victory in its crude, anti-Hungarian propaganda, a campaign fuelled by the powers-that-be in Bucharest. “The apparatus of the communist regime is still very much alive,” says the retired Romanian Air Force colonel. “The ultra-nationalists and the NSF preside over a very professional system of disinformation. We have nothing comparable to combat the manipulation and distortion of historical anxieties.”

The Romanian ultra-nationalists rely upon support from two major constituencies. Itself a cosmetic remodelling of the old nomenklatura and security forces, the PRNU enjoys the loyalty of the middle- and high-level representatives of the transformed system—from doctors and lawyers to army generals. Among the rank-and-file population, the nationalists depend largely upon first generation Romanians in Transylvania, those resettled here from eastern Romania under Nicolae Ceausescu’s policies of forced assimilation.

The ultra-nationalists have stopped at nothing to undermine whatever tenuous solidarity may exist between the region’s co-inhabitants. During his short tenure of office, Mayor Gheorge Funar, a former small-time communist party leader, has banned international conferences, limited the jurisdiction of Hungarian schools and torpedoed ethnic Hungarian-run joint ventures.

Vice-Mayor Liviu Madrea sits at his desk in city Hall, the Romanian tricolor billowing from the balcony outside his window which looks on to December 22 Street. In theory, he says, the PRNU has no objections to ethnic Hungarian demands for schools and bilingual street signs. But first, he insists, the “separatist, revanchist Hungarians must prove their loyalty to the unitary Romanian state”. This, essentially, means abandoning claims to minority rights.

The Hungarian minority party, the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (HDUR), has struggled to rise above the Romanian nationalists’ blatant provocations. As the second largest party in the Bucharest parliament, the HDUR’s co-operation with Romanian democrats in the Democratic Convention will be the key to mounting a challenge against the NSF and PRNU in the Autumn election.

The question of minority rights is implicitly tied to the fate of democracy in Romania. Ethnic tension provides just the excuse that the Bucharest regime needs to maintain its stronghold, centralised control over the state and the political process. The upper echelons of the army, the refashioned security apparatus and the nomenklatura see a safe future for themselves only in a country wracked by ethnic conflict.

The war in former Yugoslavia has demonstrated how pitifully ill-prepared the international community is to guarantee the inviolability both of borders and minority rights. For both governments and minorities in eastern Europe, the sad lesson is that they must fend for themselves, abandoning any notions of regional self-determination or democratic concepts of federal and confederal states. In Cluj, every young Hungarian able to get his or her hands on a job or scholarship in Hungary has packed his bags. One way or another, Ceausescu’s dream of a homogenous Romanian national state may yet become a reality.

PAUL HOCKENOS is a Berlin-based freelance journalist.
The ultimate test of whether you weren't given to unfashionable intellectualism, you'd be reading Kitchens Digest or something else normal, with pen in hand, a small frown decorating the brow. I suspect that most readers of ALR, let alone its writers or editor(s), were unadulterated dags at school. Let's face it, if you weren't given to unfashionable intellectualism, you'd be reading Cleaning Kitchens Digest or Big Tits Monthly or something else normal, with bright photos and shorter words.

The ultimate test of whether you were a bogan at school is your attitude towards dictionaries. Those who enjoy looking through dictionaries were the real prize-winning teachers' pets, and I speak as one who has the word 'perspicacious' on her year 10 report card, so I should know. I even like Scrabble—probably because it's the one competitive game I invariably win. I didn't get called 'Butterfingers' or, less politely, 'Fuckwit' while playing Scrabble at Templestowe High, which will be my abiding memory of all officially sanctioned ball-sports. That's before I discovered the trick of avowed near-permanent menstruation as a means of opting out of Sports Days forever.

I purchased a dictionary the other day: A Dictionary of Eponyms by Cyril Leslie Beeching (Oxford $14.95). This is the ideal present for the pedant in your family. It contains all sorts of words which I didn't even suspect were the names of actual people. For example, did you know that the word boycott, as in secondary, refers to Charles Cunningham Boycott (1832-97), a British officer targeted by the Irish Land League "who attempted to shut him off from all social and commercial activities"? I bet you didn't. Or that Jean Nicot introduced tobacco into France, hence nicotine and, I suppose, Gauloise. I have been totally unbearable since I found this useful font of trivia.

How do eponyms relate to the more recent phenomenon of famous people relying on their image in one area to sell goods in another? Elizabeth Taylor's image of worldly glamour sells White Diamonds perfume, for example. Paul Newman's venture into food products is less easy to explain. Perhaps fame in one field is now enough to carry over into any other, as there is nothing about Paul Newman that immediately brings salad dressing to mind. Who knows, perhaps the sentence 'Pass the Paul Newman' may remain current long after the actor has passed away, and an eponym will be born.

I received a rather strange example of the Famous Person's book for review the other day: Linda McCartney's Main Courses and Linda McCartney's Light Lunches (both by Linda McCartney and Peter Cox, Bloomsbury, $11.95). Both these small cookbooks are bowdlerised (Thomas Bowdler, 1754-1825) from her UK-bestselling Home Cooking. Linda McCartney has always been portrayed as a bit of a homebody in the media, not at all glamorous. Did the idea of Ms McCartney as not quite a real celebrity in her own right contribute to the success of her cookbook? After all, Home Cooking hardly reaches out and grabs you with a fatal attraction from shelves overwhelmed with excitingly named books of ethnic cuisine, does it?

Perhaps it was the exact conjunction of wifely, secondary fame with the rubber gloves-clad title Home Cooking which spelt success. After all, a well-dressed 'tart' image wouldn't fit in with the sweet domesticity conjured up by the title. One can't imagine Elizabeth Taylor producing a cookbook called Home Cooking, any more than a perfume called Chastity. But Linda McCartney, the person who could never quite move in time to the music, whose hair is so overwhelmingly straight...Somehow this makes sense.

The books themselves contain practical and easy vegetarian recipes. Occasionally they are so straightforward as to be almost silly, as in the case of Vegetarian Sausage Rolls: "Place a sausage across the centre of each strip of pastry and wrap the pastry around the sausage..." There is actually an illustration of the said sausage rolls in case you didn't understand the concept. These books would be useful for a person who is something of a virgin in culinary terms. They are respectable and non-threatening, decorated by images of Ms McCartney looking suitably modest...

Penelope Cottier.
Central to the public face of Nick Greiner from the time he took over the leadership of the conservative parties in NSW in 1983 was the conviction that he was going to be in government and remain in government only for as long as he could do things. Good government was about good management, fulfilling the party's program. The occupation of the Treasury benches for its own sake was an anathema for the apostles of a new era Liberalism.

The reactionary forces which have gained undisputed control of the various parliamentary Liberal parties across Australia like to pillory the record of Malcolm Fraser, a man and a government they have reduced to a chasm of Lost Opportunity. Too enamoured of the parliamentary institution, the argument runs, Fraser and Co. failed to implement the party platform—notwithstanding a record majority and control of both Houses. Just as the government of Gough Whitlam provided by negative example a cautionary tale for the wary treads of every Labor government that has followed, the perceived failures of Fraserism have motivated the waking fantasies of Liberals contemplating the purposes of government. Only in NSW have the conservatives enjoyed the opportunity to follow through their promise. By mid-1988—and it is difficult now to recall—Greiner was the future for Conservative Australia.

It has not turned out that way. Greiner lost his absolute majority in the NSW parliament in May 1991. This was a most remarkable achievement. In 1991, at the end of the Greiner government's first term, it had a favourable electoral distribution, the electoral laws had many clever rorts that invalidated obvious Labor votes, and all the media was on-side and presenting the outcome as inevitable. Not for 60 years had the NSW electorate denied a government a second term.

In fact, premiers seeking a mandate of renewal after returning their parties to government had won with landslides—Stevens in 1935, McKell in 1944, Askin in 1968, Wran in 1978. Yet the electorate had rejected Greinerism. The dimensions of the task facing Labor, combined with the electoral system, denied either side a majority. From that rejection Greiner did not ever recover. The agenda of the first three years gave way to a patchwork of deals with independents in the state lower house and Christian 'morals' crusaders in the upper house.

This desperation to cling onto office was the wellspring of the inducement to Liberal defector Terry Metherell to resign his parliamentary seat in order to take up a highly paid government job. As an independent, Metherell occupied a particularly strategic place in a parliament in which neither of the two main parties held a majority of seats. In one stroke all the Greiner government's humbug about appointments on merit and a government committed to a new and higher standard of public administration were forfeit. What none of Greiner's advisers had calculated was the obloquy which the public held former education minister Metherell. It was a longstanding miscalculation that went back to the beginnings of the Coalition government in 1988. By inducing Metherell to resign his seat, most of the obloquy transferred to the government itself.

Greiner's involvement in the inducement was intimate. Every aspect of its execution was within Greiner's ken. To initial inquiries Greiner displayed characteristic flippancy. His limited vocabulary has always been a problem—his adjectival range extends from 'monumental' through 'sham' and 'absolute' (perhaps 'bloody' when he wanted to express inordinate annoyance). His only strong noun is 'nonsense'. Under pressure he has tended to flail these words as a substitute for a thoughtful response. His diction was his entrapment.

Given the government's preoccupation with regaining control of the floor of the lower house, the Legislative Assembly, the inducement set off the forces that could destroy a minority government. If the government had held control of the lower house, the demands for a further explanation would have died after an indicative vote on the floor. Without that control, the Assembly could take the matter just as far as a majority wanted. The government was not going to be in charge of what happened. The purpose of the inducement was to reverse the numbers; in the short term, until and unless a by-election returned a Liberal MP, the resignation of Metherell placed the government in further peril.

With talk in the air of a reference to the Independent Commission Against Corruption—Greiner's own creation—and faced with a probable defeat on the floor of the House, the government seemed to believe that it was addressing the problem by making its own reference to the Commission. The question of no confidence had to wait until the Commission returned its finding. Or so the government argued. Their arguments handed the fate of their own Premier to the form of words that the Commissioner chose to employ. Given the predilection of Ian Temby for evocative phrases—Temby is no slouch in the vocabulary department—it was certain that the ultimate finding was going to be unequivocal.
At that stage, the government was entitled to expect the loyalty of Terry Metherell. How wrong they were. Through 1988 and 1989 when Metherell was by far the government's most unpopular minister, Greiner had offered Metherell unqualified support and loyalty when a smarter man might have cut him adrift. Greiner owed Metherell nothing; offering anything was going to cost Greiner plenty in terms of his personal regard; it was unlikely to solve any long-term problem on the floor of the House. Yet, having endangered his Premiership to give Metherell an exit from parliament that was both lucrative and honourable, Greiner might have felt entitled to expect that Metherell might have exhausted his capacity for vengeance.

In fact, Metherell had another twist in him. On the afternoon that parliament adjourned to await the commission's finding, Metherell proclaimed that he had nothing to fear; the offer of an appointment was lawful and proper. A few weeks later, giving his evidence before the commission, Metherell came armed with detailed diary notes which traced the course of the induce- ment. The Metherell account of a telephone conversation with Greiner made clear that Metherell considered that Greiner expected improper con- sequences to flow from the acceptance of the proposed appointment.

Metherell's testimony was fatal to Greiner. The inquiry had begun with the considerable brief of resolving the facts of the inducement, in tandem with deciding whether the induce- ment was corrupt according to the law. Within three days, once it was clear that none of the other protagonists was contesting the core of the Metherell evidence, the Com- mission could regard the facts as having been established. The question of law was relatively straightforward. Only one question remained: would Ian Temby provide an escape clause for the architects of the inducement? How much personal responsibility was he going to ascribe to Nick Greiner?

The report answered both questions in unmistakable language. The con- duct of Greiner, Temby found, was “corrupt” in terms of the Act which he administered. The escape clause was a homily about pre-existing “stand- ards of honesty and integrity”—the line, incidentally, that Spiro Agnew adopted when he was forced to resign as Vice-President of the United States. Greiner clutched onto those words, relying on a tortured exegesis of double-negatives by Temby to claim vindication.

Greiner's attempt to argue at the ensuing press conference that, rather than condemning him, Ian Temby had actually vindicated him, outraged the reporters present. It sounded awful and looked awful for the audience looking on that night. Temby had, very correctly, stopped short of recom- mending dismissal: he recognised that was a matter for the lower house and the state governor—even though parliament had vested the commis- sion with powers that seriously un- dermined Westminster notions of executive government and represen- tative democracy.

Given all that the Independents had ever said about standards of conduct, the words of the Commission dictated only one response. The three remaining genuine Independents promptly stated that they would vote for a motion of no confidence if Greiner did not resign. Once it became clear that the majority of his colleagues took this threat seriously, Greiner accepted that he would have to resign—even though it is difficult to believe that at least one of the Independents, Clover Moore, would have cast a vote that would have either brought on an elec- tion or led to the commissioning of a Labor government.

Since his fall, many commentators, even the executors, have felt the need to pay tribute to Greiner's personal honesty. They have criticised the powers of the commission and the dis- position of Ian Temby himself. No one will go to gaol over the Metherell Af- fair. No one should. Those who sub- scribe to the fantasy that New South Wales is a peculiarly corrupt place have yet to provide a shred of evidence about the victims of their defamation, evidence that might go before a jury and lead to a conviction. The penalty for Nick Greiner was a political one; that is how a parliamen- tary democracy should work. Greiner had done as much as anyone to inspire the myth of the peculiar prevalence of corruption in high places in NSW; he had profited from the accusation many times over. Without his as- siduous propagation of the myth he would never have become premier. A resignation forced by the prose of Ian Temby was a most poetic justice.

RODNEY CAVALIER was a senior minister in the 1976-88 NSW Labor govern- ments.
The tragic irony of Nick Greiner’s recent downfall as premier of NSW is that he was found to be corrupt by the same statutory authority he established to scrutinise the behaviour of public officials—from the lowest up to himself. Greiner took office after crusading fiercely on the corruption issue, he led one of the cleanest governments in the state’s history, and no reasonable person would regard him as corrupt in the usual sense reserved for crooks and other shonky characters. There were no brown paper bags full of funny money passed across the desktop to poor old Nick, no bribes, no kickbacks. He was essentially an honest, respectable bloke.

It’s easy to understand, therefore, the spontaneous anger among Greiner’s supporters when his conduct was found to be corrupt in terms of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Act of Parliament, and that it could involve reasonable grounds for his dismissal. The most vicious criticism of the findings of ICAC head Ian Temby came from the Deputy Premier and leader of the NSW National Party, Wal Murray. Murray said that Temby’s reading of the law was “wrong”. At his most outrageous, he used parliamentary privilege to attack Temby personally, repeatedly branding him a “liar”. To Murray, the premier was guilty of no more than “speeding at 70 in a 60 zone”.

The corrupt label may have nasty connotations and seem unfair to Nick Greiner. Yet comparing his behaviour with a minor traffic offence trivialised the high standards which Greiner himself set for his government, and then asked the public to accept as a measure of the conduct of public officials in the 1990s.

Greiner campaigned strongly against the Wran Labor Government over the issue of “jobs for the boys” before he took office. Under his government, he promised, there would be no more plum jobs for the party faithful or other blatantly political appointments. This informal rule was soon broken. His wife Kathryn was appointed to a $24,000-a-year part-time position on the state’s Electricity Commission board. Then Neil Pickard, a minister who stood to lose his seat in a redistribution, was given an $87,000-a-year job as NSW Agent-General in London.

Neither of these incidents was a hanging offence because—Greiner’s verbal promise aside—no strict rules applied to how such appointments were to be made. Although embarrassing for Greiner, he explained them away with a technique he called “the politics of candour”: admit publicly that you have changed your mind and decided to break a commitment, and then hope the public will cop it.

It was a different matter altogether when it came to the appointment of officials to the State Public Service, and in particular the way in which a job was secured for Liberal Party defector Terry Metherell. Greiner had created great expectations of public accountability by introducing a special Public Sector Management Act. This Act set high standards for public administration by detailing specific statutory requirements on how vacant public sector positions were to be advertised, applicants assessed and appointments made.

But when Metherell hinted that he wanted to leave politics in exchange for a top public service job, Greiner knew he had an opportunity to win back a safe Liberal seat at a by-election and thus consolidate his shaky grip on power in the lower house. He agreed that a new job should be created for Metherell in the Environment Protection Authority. The job would not be advertised and Metherell would not be interviewed, meaning that the normal rules of the Public Sector Management Act were to be bypassed.

Instead, according to the advice Greiner accepted, Metherell would be appointed to the Premier’s Department after his name was tacked on as a late entry to some previously advertised senior jobs for which applications had already closed. Once appointed, he was to be seconded to his new environment job. Greiner again resorted to the politics of candour to explain it all to the public. Yes, he said, Metherell’s appointment was obviously political.

Temby’s key findings were that Greiner’s conduct was corrupt within the meaning of the ICAC Act because (under Section 8) it involved a partial exercise of his official functions and a breach of public trust. Furthermore (under Section 9), his conduct could involve grounds for dismissing him as premier.

A big part of Greiner’s predicament, and one which blunted the criticism of Temby by Wal Murray and others, was the very wide definition of what constituted corruption under the law. The legal sweep of corruption under the ICAC Act is as breathtaking as the list is long: it ranges from the findings which nobbled Greiner to very serious offences such as bribery, fraud, theft, drug dealing, treason and homicide.

The obvious point here is that the ICAC Act does not distinguish between criminal and non-criminal behaviour. Certainly, no findings of criminal or unlawful conduct were made against Greiner. So the meaning of the law in Greiner’s case implies a wider definition of corruption, such as an abuse of power. The public percep-
tion of corruption is generally understood to relate to criminal behaviour, particularly in the transfer of money as a bribe. This might mean that the law is out of step with the public's understanding — yet obviously Greiner's lawmakers did not think so when they framed the legislation.

It has been clear since the ICAC's inception that corruption is defined as something more than just unlawful activity. In Greiner's case, Temby had no choice but to apply the Act as it stood. Under his interpretation, Greiner used his position to achieve a "desired result" which was not properly open to him. Where Temby used such wide discretion in interpreting the law was the crucial point of his report: he found Greiner's conduct was corrupt because it involved "serious matters, and such as could provide reasonable grounds for his dismissal".

The complaint has been made by some NSW ministers in Greiner's defence that they would breach the ICAC Act almost every week in carrying out their normal ministerial functions. They argue that it would be easy to see favouritism in many of their decisions. Ministers are human, after all. They deal with a business circle or know the qualities of a pool of possible appointees, and personal considerations cannot be divorced completely from anyone's decision-making.

However, while voters might tolerate some lapses of judgement by their political leaders, they are surely entitled to some expectations. They don't elect leaders to exercise favouritism for their own political advantage, and to breach public trust in the process.

Greiner's problem was that he could not live up to his own standards when they were put under the microscope. When the Metherell affair blew up, he referred it to the ICAC in the hope that he would be cleared, but also on the understanding that its findings would be accepted in good faith. The fact that he could not accept the findings when they went against him only compounded his inconsistency.

In a recent Court of Appeal hearing to try to overturn Temby's findings, Greiner's legal counsel argued that Temby had used no rational basis for his findings, but had simply based them on Temby's personal opinion that he did not like what Greiner did. He also argued that Greiner should have been excluded from the section of the ICAC Act which relates to dismissal because he was not a public official.

This attack on Temby's interpretation was an amazing turnabout when contrasted with Greiner's speech on the second reading of the ICAC legislation to parliament. Greiner said then that the legislation should "apply to the highest and to the lowest officials, from the Governor to the Public Service clerk, members of parliament, ministers of the Crown and judicial officers, without exemption and without exception". The truth is that Greiner's demise was self-inflicted. However tough the rules might have been, it was he who wrote them. He also gave the public a right to expect more of its political leaders.

BRAD NORTINGTON is a senior journalist at the Sydney Morning Herald.
Half a Loaf

Too little, too late. That is how the Anglican women's movement viewed the half-hearted approval given to women's ordination at the Anglican Church's General Synod meeting in July.

The synod passed a provisional canon (church law) to authorise women priests. But it failed, by just a handful of votes, to make the law effective immediately. Instead, the canon must now go the rounds of all the 24 Australian dioceses before coming back to a special recalled meeting of the synod in November. The general expectation is that the legislation will then once more receive two-thirds support in each of the three 'houses' of synod—bishops, clergy, laity—and come into force.

Just a few years ago, last week's limited success would have been warmly welcomed. The Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW) would have erupted into cheering in the public gallery of the synod hall, with much waving of festive banners. The many members of synod who wholeheartedly support women priests would have partied well into the evening. Not this time, though victory is at last within reach. There was just one half-hearted banner in the gallery, and no champagne in sight. In fact, even the usual MOW demonstration was missing from outside Sydney's St Andrew's Cathedral during the main synod service, a few days before the crucial vote.

Each time General Synod has met since the early 1970s, when the women's ordination issue first erupted, the procession of bishops, grand in their Elizabethan 'convocation' robes, has had to run a considerable gauntlet to reach the main cathedral entrance. This time, ironically, while the bishops entered the cathedral discreetly, from side doors, there was not a demonstrator in sight. The women's movement was so low key as to be almost invisible.

After the ordination of the Perth women earlier this year, and the ruling from the NSW Court of Appeal that such ordinations were not illegal, this synod was likely to produce the goods at long last. Why such despondency so close to the longed-for goal? Perhaps because the movement is simply exhausted. The struggle has continued for 15 years now, with a neverending series of wearying battles over the issue in local and national synods. These have resulted in women being admitted to the diaconate (the first step to priesthood) and visiting women priests from overseas allowed to function in many parts of Australia.

re refractory girl

Refractory girl started in 1972, a year when social change seemed possible. It was a year of optimism about possibilities for women's power. Forty-three issues on, the journal has unravelled, reflected on, and reviewed many of the events, theories and practices of feminism. The last ten issues alone have written on the environment, ageing, violence, technology, the arts and the media.

Collectives have come and gone with over one hundred and ten women taking part in production. Some current members have been with us since the beginning while others have contributed to a few issues. We are politically eclectic. We accept diverse contributions and publish reviews, graphics, current issue updates, articles, short stories and poems.

We welcome new subscribers and collective members. Subscription $20.- for individuals and $30.- for organisations per year. For more subscription details or information write to PO Box 648 Glebe NSW 2037.

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of this country. But the gains have come inch by gruelling inch, at a snail's pace. "Like a mighty tortoise moves the church of God." Support has ebbed and flowed, as church leaders from time to time succumbed to propaganda from opponents, and applied the brakes every so often. Keeping up the momentum has been sheer hard work. Particularly over the last couple of years, many in the women's movement have sensed their enthusiasm (though not their determination) for the struggle draining away under the relentless onslaught of the powerful male conservatives opposed to them.

The gracelessness of the slow and grudging approval has eaten away at our joy. And, despite the overwhelming support for our cause both within the church and in the wider community, we have often felt alone. The secular women's movement and those who claim to be its champions, have scarcely bothered with us. Even while arch-conservative males, with financial backing from the arch-conservative Diocese of Sydney, took the matter to the civil courts, we heard scarcely a whimper from those who claim to defend Equal Opportunity legislation.

Should we have expected anything more? If we had known our feminist history better, perhaps we would have been prepared for the heartache, the disappointment, the loneliness and the cost of such a struggle. The first feminists were themselves Christian women. The remarkable Grimke sisters, who discovered the disadvantages of their sex as they fought against slavery in America in the 1830s, were devout Quakers. The first women's convention, held in Seneca Falls in 1848, was more interested in women's full equality in the church than in the vote, and succeeding generations of women activists believed likewise. So from the beginning we should perhaps have realised how long and difficult a journey we were facing.

Where to now, if there is not to be a mammoth celebration? Women will be ordained, bit by bit, across most of Australia in the coming months and years. Look to Brisbane and Adelaide, Canberra and Tasmania for the first moves. Ironically, Melbourne, the historical leader of the women's movement, may take longer because of its own restrictive constitution.

At about the turn of the century, or perhaps a bit earlier, look for women priests in the Diocese of Sydney. But when women's ordination finally comes in that bastion of opposition, don't expect trumpet fanfares or breast-beating. They will most likely pretend that they always expected to see such a day dawn. At about the same time, expect to see a new controversy over women bishops. It will not be quite so bitter or prolonged a struggle, because the ministry of women will have made such a move seem more natural. There will not be the same fear of the unknown—and of women—that has bedevilled the current debate.

Perhaps, too, expect to see a renewed and revitalised church, as that same women's influence begins to bear substantial fruit. The Anglican Churches in New Zealand, Canada and the United States—all of which have had women priests for as long as the argument has been raging in this country—are vibrant, prophetic churches. There, stuffy Anglican respectability and inertia have long since disappeared.

Though we are tired and despondent now as we take the last weary steps to the rescue tent, we should take heart. One day our daughters and granddaughters may experience a far better church, one that accepts women's gifts naturally, easily, without demur, a church that is at last the compassionate, gracious, and generous place we had hoped to find ourselves. That hope should make it all worthwhile.

MURIEL PORTER was a Melbourne representative at the recent General Synod. Her book Women in the Church: the Great Ordination Debate in Australia is published by Penguin.
John Howard, the opposition industrial relations spokesperson, would be a key figure in a Hewson government. David Burchell spoke to him about unions, liberalism and the New Zealand model.

Let me first ask you about your own portfolio responsibility, industrial relations. The Coalition’s industrial relations policy since 1986 has been based around the ideas of voluntary enterprise agreements and ‘opting out’. However, more recently there has been talk about moving closer to the full-blown deregulated New Zealand industrial relations model. There was a suggestion that this idea might have come from John Hewson himself when he was in New Zealand a while back. What do you think of the New Zealand industrial relations model?

There are a lot of things in the New Zealand legislation that I agree with, but I don’t see that legislation as a model for us. New Zealand is a different country. Unlike them, we won’t be abolishing the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC). We will be providing people with an alternative to the IRC—I would describe it as a preferred alternative. I’m not a slave to the New Zealand model, in fact I’ve gone out of my way to make the point that we shouldn’t tie ourselves to what is happening in any other country. I haven’t been to New Zealand recently, but I’m studying what’s happening there, and the most recent evidence suggests that there are many examples of big productivity gains from their new policy.

The crucial difference between the New Zealand government’s policy and the Coalition’s policy here at present seems to be that you would be giving employees the option to stay within the industrial relations system, even if the preferred option is for them to get out of it.

We are proposing a situation where both sides can stay in if they want to or go out if they want to. We are considering a mechanism to deal with cases where there’s a disagree-
ment between the players as to whether they want to go in or not, although we haven’t actually announced that mechanism yet. There is quite a difference between our approach and the New Zealand approach—not that I’m critical of their approach, it’s just that what is necessary for Australia is different to what is necessary and acceptable in New Zealand.

So what is it about Australia that makes the New Zealand model in some respects inappropriate?

We just have a different cultural background. We are a federation; New Zealand is a unitary state. The hybrid nature of industrial relations in Australia has always been one of its more compelling idiosyncrasies.

One thing that people often cite as a reason why the New Zealand policy might not work here is that the union movement here is more powerful.

It might be more powerful. The point is that I haven’t set out to model our policy on the New Zealand one—in fact we adopted deregulated industrial relations as a policy before the New Zealand National Party did, so I suppose in a sense they’ve followed us and not the other way around.

You mentioned earlier that the Opposition was going to introduce a mechanism to deal with a situation where employees and employers in a particular enterprise couldn’t agree on which way to go. The recent dispute in Burnie would seem to suggest that that would be a big problem under your policy.

But Burnie wasn’t an argument about whether or not they were going to go in or out of the system, because at the moment there isn’t that option; you can’t go out of the system, except to a limited degree in NSW. You certainly can’t in Tasmania.

Yes, but how would the Coalition policy deal with a situation like that if it arose under a Coalition government?
Well, of course, that dispute would never have arisen...

The present Coalition policy is supposed to be voluntary and non-coercive. But isn't it actually premised on the assumption that unions are going to be weakened, in order to make the policy work?

Unions will lose some of the legal privileges that they now have. I've never disguised that fact. The present system is characterised by the fact that the unions have a bargaining monopoly—and we don't believe that's right. But we won't be seeking to take away from unions their capacity to organise and proselytise and get a big market share, and to play a very legitimate and vigorous role in industrial relations. We won't be preventing people from joining unions; they'll still be able to deduct their union dues from tax. People will be able to use unions as bargaining agents when they are negotiating voluntary agreements.

The one thing that will disappear under our policy is the legal monopoly over bargaining which is currently given to the unions. Under the present system it is not possible to enter directly into a contractual arrangement with your employer as to how you are employed and the terms and conditions under which you are employed. We think you should have the right to do that if you wish, so we're going to take away that bargaining monopoly. But in other respects we're going to acknowledge the role of unions. The policy is not primarily a union-bashing or anti-union policy. If it were it would fail in its objective.

In a recent article in the Current Affairs Bulletin you said that "the abolition of compulsory unionism could also be expected to weaken the existing award system and promote voluntary agreements between employers and employees, by reducing trade union membership and by putting an end to closed-shop arrangements and union preferences". You do seem to be implying in those words that a reduction in the unionisation of the workforce is the necessary prerequisite for the successful exercise of the Coalition's industrial relations policies.

I thought that was really just a statement of fact. If you abolish compulsory unionism, while you may well see an extraordinary renaissance of the proselytising capacity of unions, you will see some reduction in levels of union membership. But it's not a primary objective. I have always acknowledged that there will be a reduction of union power. The major thing that will disappear is the bargaining monopoly they now have. The fact that you have to go through a union, whether you like it or not, in order to have your terms and conditions fixed, is the most compelling feature of our present system. It's unique. There's no system in the world quite as tender towards the position of unions as that.

Australia is also more or less unique in having a peculiar form of arbitration.

Yes, but the peculiar form manifests itself in that particular thing, the bargaining monopoly. What is basically being said is that individual workers cannot be trusted to make judgements about their own well-being, that they have to have it done for them. I regard that as insufferably paternalistic.

On the one hand, Australia is to some extent peculiar in having this industrial relations and arbitration system. But on the other hand, within Australian law there is less legal protection for unions and unionists involved in industrial disputes than in most other countries.

I wouldn't agree with that. The bargaining monopoly that unions have gives them an enormous power.

But it's not a legally-based power, is it?

Yes it is, because it is not legally possible, except to the limited degree it's occurred in NSW, to just go out and make a deal with your employer.

If you remove the compulsory nature of the industrial relations system, what then is left to protect the legal rights of unions and unionists?

Within our policy there will be a number of legal minima. There will be a legal minimum hourly rate of pay. There will be a minimum relating to annual leave and sick leave. The sort of things that we envisage ought to be negotiated are the length of the working week, penalty rates, redundancy, holiday loading — those are the sort of things that we believe, if you're outside the system, ought to be matters for negotiation. But there will be certain prescribed minima, below which nobody can fall.

Yet surely it's difficult for the union movement to ignore one fact. Once what you describe as the monopoly power of the unions is withdrawn, and once the overall power of unions is reduced, and also given that following your model you would positively encourage the increase in enterprise unions, it's very difficult to imagine how voluntary enterprise agreements within this environment aren't going to be heavily biased in favour of the employer and against the employees.

I don't agree with that. It will depend a lot on the general state of the economy, and on the state of the particular industry. Many employers will probably elect to continue being covered by an award, rather than to go into a contract, because they will have a fully-functioning arrangement with their workforce, and they will deem it better business and industrial sense to remain that way.

But on the other hand you would imagine that voluntary employment agreements would be more likely to happen in workplaces where the workforce is actually strong and confident of what it could get outside the system, rather than in other workplaces.

Well, I think in some cases strong unions will see voluntary agreements as a good thing. You're saying that you can have a disparate balance of power, irrespective of the formal legal structure — well, that's right, you can. Industrial power doesn't flow solely from legal positions...
under legislation, but they can nevertheless have quite an influence. They’re not irrelevant.

Surely, though, it’s hard to imagine how you could implement this policy without it involving pretty high levels of industrial disputes, assuming that the economy becomes relatively buoyant again in the foreseeable future.

Oh, I’m more optimistic than that...

Let me ask you about the agenda after the next election. A Hewson government is pledged to make what some people have claimed are more dramatic changes to Australian politics and society than any other government in recent memory. Traditionally the Australian electorate has been quite suspicious of radicalism, which has more often been depicted as coming from the Left than from the Right. How do you think it will respond to your kind of radicalism?

In that sense Australia is just mirroring the rest of the world, in which the radicalism of the Right has been the dominant theme in other countries, certainly in the UK and the US, and a number of other European societies. There’s nothing new in the democratic world in our lifetime about radicalism from the centre-Right. Of course in New Zealand, you’ve had economic radicalism both from the Left and the centre-Right.

Some people would say in Australia as well.

Of course they would. We’ve been talking about a clutch of very big economic reforms for a long time now—the most important of which are the industrial relations reforms. We’ve been talking about that now for seven or eight years. The first time it was seriously articulated by people on our side of politics was when I made a speech to the National Press Club after the Budget in 1983. I said we had to turn Mr Justice Higgins on his head, and that really started the debate on people being able to opt out, at a political level.

There wasn’t much support for that then; there was a lot of opposition to it from within the Liberal Party at that time, and in the business community, as well as the union movement. But over the years, opinion has shifted enormously. As for our ideas on indirect taxation, there’s nothing new about a GST—what is new is that one party is uncompromisingly committed to it. I tried to get the Fraser government to introduce a GST, and he knocked me back. So we’re not talking about things that have never been thought about or tried.

Many people would say that the radical Right tide was at its greatest in the 1980s, and that now in fact it’s ebbing. That certainly seems to be the case in Britain, where John Major has distanced himself increasingly from the legacy he inherited from Thatcher. Also I would have thought that in America George Bush has distanced himself from the Reagan legacy.

They’re still marching to the same drumbeat, though. The differences are in personality and style, rather than commitment. Major has continued the shift towards meritocracy in the Tory party, as distinct from the noblesse oblige which characterised Tory paternalism, and in that way he’s very similar to Thatcher. Certainly Bush is a man who has changed his views on political issues over the years, rather more, probably, than either Major or Thatcher, but they’re still essentially moving in the same direction.

The centre of gravity in politics in liberal democracies shifted dramatically to the Right in the 80s. And while there may have been a little bit of stepping back and a little bit of fluffing at the edges, that centre of gravity has not gone back in a big way. Nobody’s talking about reversing Thatcher’s privatisation proposals. Nobody’s talking about reversing her union changes. Nobody’s talking about reversing her fundamental tax changes. Nobody’s talking about reversing the sale of public housing. The big changes Thatcher brought in remain there.

"There’s nothing new about radicalism from the centre-Right"

But given all that, and given as you say that there’s hardly been a big swing to the Left around the world, nevertheless there has been a discernible change of rhetoric and of tone.

Yes, I think there has been some change of rhetoric, and that’s not really surprising to me; politics works that way. You never want to become too great a slave to international comparisons, and Australia is not the same society as America or Britain—it’s somewhere in between.

There’s only really been one sustained example of a Coalition government in Australia attempting to put in place policies which resemble the federal Coalition’s—and that’s NSW. In the last few weeks John Fahey, the new premier of NSW, has been making noises that sound like a similar sort of move away from Greinerism that Major has been taking away from Thatcherism.

It’s too early to know whether there’s any significance in that. He has certainly encouraged the Liberal Party to talk in less clinical language, but party figures on both sides would periodically do that. I remember that doyen of the Left, Senator Richardson, saying some years ago that nobody understood what Hawke and Keating were saying, because they were talking in economic jargon. But we’ll have to wait and see about Fahey, it’s too early to know. So far, all that he’s said could simply be interpreted as meaning nothing other than that he’s asking that we dress up presentation of policies in more user-friendly language. I’d be surprised if it meant anything more than that. It’s true that he doesn’t have the same economic,
business background that Greiner had. That’s not meant pejoratively, he is just different.

One of the words Fahey said should be avoided as jargon, if I recall rightly, was in fact ‘privatisation’. And one thing the NSW tried to do was to sell privatisation not just as an accounting measure, but actually as a popular measure—in a similar manner to the Thatcher government in Britain.

For years we’ve been saying we’ve got to find an alternative expression for privatisation. I can remember getting Peter Bowers to offer a lottery ticket in his column to anyone who could think up an expression that was more attractive, to describe the process of privatisation. It’s a pretty ugly word.

“I’ve always argued that we shouldn’t present economic rationalism as an end in itself”

But is it just the word that’s the problem?

I’d be surprised if it were anything more than the word, because the movement towards privatisation has grown strongly. And of all of the so-called radical Right policies privatisation is seen as less threatening, even by some of our opponents, than many of the others.

Clearly privatisation in the federal sphere often suggests different things to people than it does in the state sphere. In NSW, I think a lot of people have felt particularly worried about the idea because they’ve begun to associate privatisation with hospitals, but in the federal sphere privatisation so far has dealt with nothing more than the airlines and the Commonwealth Bank.

That’s true. It’s a result of the federal nature of our system that the great utilities, as Menzies would have said, are owned by state governments.

The point I’m getting to, I suppose, is that in the federal sphere so far, under Labor, privatisation has gone no further than to transform public monopolies into private monopolies, insofar as it’s happened at all. Where privatisation does things that are seen to have more effect on people’s lives...

I accept that. I think as far as Fahey’s concerned, it’s just that he’s encouraged people to use different language. It’s too early yet to make a judgement as to whether encouraging people to use different language will be enough.

Nick Greiner was associated quite strongly with what’s known as economic rationalism, and one of the things I interpreted John Fahey as saying was that economic rationalism was not something that could be sold to the electorate, in the terms in which it normally talks. You have to find other ways to explain what you’re on about. Other people right across the spectrum have been making similar noises about economic rationalism—both opponents of it and people who aren’t necessarily opposed, but who are becoming more nervous about how to sell the language of economic rationalism to the electorate. To what extent does that impact on the federal Coalition’s agenda?

I’ve always argued myself that we shouldn’t present economic rationalism as an end in itself, but as a means to an end, a tool. It’s not some kind of desired goal, I’ve never seen it as that. I’ve always regarded the social equation as being ultimately more important than the economic one. My own view of Australian liberalism has always been influenced by that. I would have thought that what Fahey was encouraging people to do was to see economic rationalism as a means to end and not an end in itself. And whether he was reflecting on the approach that was taken by his predecessor or by anybody else, only he would know.

Over the last decade the Liberal Party itself has been transformed fairly dramatically from a traditional conservative party into a pretty hard-nosed economic liberal party. Over that time, I would have thought there’d been quite a leakage of the traditional small ‘l’ liberal element from the party. But more recently there have been more voices of dissent from the more traditionally conservative parts of the party, as opposed to the hard-nosed ‘economic liberal’ side of the party. So while on the one hand you have Michael Pusey arguing from a social democratic perspective about the evils of economic rationalism and its conception of society, on the other hand Robert Manne, arguing from the conservative perspective, is saying things that sound quite similar. The problem as Manne sees it is that economic liberalism has taken over the Liberal Party, and that it no longer has any conception of society or, in Pusey’s terms, any nation-building goals.

I’ve always seen Australian liberalism as being a mixture of classical liberalism and conservativism. It’s never been—and this is a point I made in some of the more vigorous debates within the Liberal Party—a totally liberal or a totally conservative party in the classical sense of those two words. We’ve always been strong on individual liberty and the role of the individual and the inherent importance of individual rights which is involved in that. In some areas, the Liberal Party historically has been a long way ahead of the Labor Party in propounding certain forms of individual rights and opposing certain forms of discrimination—on the White Australia Policy, for instance.

But mixed with that individual commitment has always been a strong respect for traditional values. I regard myself as being an economic liberal and a social conservative. I guess in the Liberal Party there are economic liberals and social liberals. Then there would be the Manne group of economic conservatives and social conservatives. You can overdo these labels, and to a certain extent the distinctions are a bit artificial, but there’s certainly some debate on the
Right, as distinct from within the Liberal Party, about the amount of government intervention that’s needed in the economy, normally centring around the debate about tariffs. There’s really not much more to it than tariffs. There’s no real argument on the Right, as I understand it, on industrial relations reform. I suppose some of the people who would regard themselves as part of Robert Manne’s group are perhaps not totally enamoured of the benefits of financial deregulation, but it’s the tariff thing more than anything else.

**Possibly industrial policy more widely?**

I’m using tariffs as a short-hand term for industry policy. There’s a debate there, and I can understand why that debate has occurred. I don’t share their views, but given the heavy deindustrialisation that’s occurring at the present time, particularly in Victoria, the enormous structural change that’s going on in manufacturing industry, it’s perfectly understandable that we’re having that kind of debate. One of the interesting phenomena in the Liberal Party is that some of the people who were economic conservatives—in other words they opposed too much deregulation—were simultaneously perhaps more libertarian on social issues. The Liberal Party’s changed in composition and in its attitudes. In 1984 the party was very divided about industrial relations policy. By 1986 there was a significant majority in favour of the policy we now have, and now I don’t know of any dissent to that policy at all. So there’s certainly been a shift in a very significant way.

You describe yourself as an economic liberal but a social conservative. From an outsider’s point of view, this position might seem somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, the economic liberalism of a possible future Hewson government seems to suggest some fairly dramatic changes to Australian society, the outcomes of which are not entirely clear to a great many people.

I’m very positive about the outcomes, but I certainly agree that they would mean significant change. I would argue change for the better of course.

**But wouldn’t a lot of that potential change seem to be at odds with social conservatism? Might it not, for instance, accelerate changes that are happening in the family composition of society?**

No, I wouldn’t think so. To the extent that these policies reverse the process of economic decline, then they will help families.

**But traditionally, support for families and family values was tied up with some conception of at least a minimal welfare state.**

There’s no inconsistency between our policy of economic rationalism and support through the tax system and other measures to families that need it. I’m an unashamed supporter of Family Allowance, I think the tax system should have a certain flexibility in it to help people organise their lives in terms of single- and double-income households.

The social conservative side of you obviously comes out in public debate from time to time—the flag debate for example, where you appeared to be quite impassioned. Aside from that debate, economic liberalism has been far more obvious in the Liberal Party’s rhetoric, to the exclusion of that conservative aspect, since John Hewson became leader.

Because John is so heavily credentialed in the economic area, and because the economic debate’s been so central in the 1980s it’s certainly had more publicity. The attempt to come to terms with some of the social dimensions of unemployment at the party’s recent convention was a manifestation that everyone’s not just into economic solutions, important though they may be.

**So you don’t see your liberalism, or indeed that of the Liberal Party, being dominated by economic liberalism to the exclusion of a social vision?**

Menzies had a strong social vision. People deride it now; everything seems quaint 30 or 40 years later. If you read even some of Whitlam’s stuff today it seems quaint. But at that particular time Menzies projected a social vision of stability and reassurance, predictability and confidence, and it was an atmosphere that did permeate the period.

I want to push you on this question of social values. We know in great detail what a Hewson government would do in industrial relations and a number of other areas, tax being one of them. But the wider social values which, as you say, made the Menzies aura so powerful, don’t seem so clear. What would you see as the social values which a Hewson government would be propagating?

I can only speak for myself at this stage, but obviously we’d put the stress on individual fulfilment, self-reliance and the family, those three things will always be the core of Australian liberalism. We’ve always regarded them as more important than social benchmarks. The Liberal Party’s rhetoric has always been much stronger on the role of the individual and the role of the family in our society, whereas the Labor Party’s rhetoric has been about social justice and achieving certain social benchmarks. I’m not saying the Labor Party’s disinterested in some of those things, or that we’re disinterested in social justice, it’s just a question of what your instinctive perception of society’s priorities would be.

**After a term or two terms of Hewson government, how would you expect Australia to be better off—not just in terms of economic indicators, but as a society?**

I think we do need a dose of self-reliance for those people who are able to be self-reliant. I’ve always recognised that there are people who can’t look after themselves, and we do have a responsibility to look after them. I think we’ll be a more individually resilient community, I think there will have been a shift towards people taking greater pride in their self-worth, self-reliance and self-fulfilment. That’s always been a very important strand of social liberalism.
The Social WHIRL

The 80s was the decade of the market. Now, subtly, the mood has changed. **Hugh Emy** argues that in the wake of the old socialist project the Left needs to embrace the social market as a ‘middle way’ between state and market for the new era.

There can be little doubt that when the federal Labor government was elected in 1983 the Australian economy required a fundamental overhaul: the existing economic engine was no longer capable of protecting Australian living standards in the twenty-first century. The latter required creating a new production structure — and this in turn meant coming to terms with the qualitative changes transforming the global economy generally and world manufacturing in particular. There seems little doubt either that, given the number and variety of structural rigidities which had built up over the years under protectionism, restructuring to create a more productive and competitive economy was the best option available. Australia’s structural economic problems were sufficiently serious to require radical treatment. With hindsight, one may query both the way in which some reforms were implemented, and the results of others. Overall, however, opting for economic liberalisation was probably the best overall strategy for reform.

But, what was appropriate in the 1980s as the first stage of reform may be less appropriate in the 1990s for the next and more difficult stages: actually building a more durable market economy and establishing or consolidating a greater range of industries which can compete globally. It is one thing to create the preconditions for a more competitive economy. It is quite another to actually bring about the kind of production structure required — one that will indeed guarantee the country’s longer-term economic security. Clearly, there is an important debate in industry policy circles between those who favour continuing with
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free market policies, and others who favour rather more government intervention, and a rather slower rate of tariff reform than most market economists would prefer. The government seems to be in two minds on the matter. There have also been several calls for 'a middle way' between pure free market approaches on the one hand and old-style protectionism on the other.

This article is not concerned directly with the industry policy debate. That debate simply provides a highly relevant backdrop to the major policy issue facing both the government and the ALP: how far is it sensible to base restructuring generally on the program of economic liberalisation which, at least until very recently, the government has been pursuing with increasing vigour since 1987? I want to argue that it is time to take a more discriminating (or pragmatic) approach to the market, time to put the market in perspective, to find a middle way not only in industry policy, but also in terms of the deeper and more problematic relationship between state and market. The concept of a social market economy is a way of doing this. It combines respect for the virtues of open and competitive markets with a legitimate role for government as a guardian of social and political order, and as the body uniquely responsible for the long term, strategic development of both economy and society.

The term 'social market' originated with the West German Christian Democrats who, in the course of postwar reconstruction, wished to develop a competitive market economy without losing sight of the concept of social justice. While they valued the market as a source of political and economic freedoms, they did not believe that by itself it provided a sufficient basis on which to build a just society. The term has resurfaced, primarily in Europe, in the last few years. In Britain, for example, Tories like John Major who wish to humanise the unacceptable face of Thatcherism have used the term as a convenient rhetorical device.

Following the eclipse of socialism, socialists have also found the term useful as a means of accommodating market freedoms with a continuing commitment to the principle of collective social responsibility, upheld by the state. That appears to be closer to the meaning of the original term in Germany, and it is the sense I adopt here. In this sense it is likely to be of more use to those who think the market a necessary but not sufficient condition for a free or civilised society; who believe that income distribution should not be left wholly to the market; and that communitarian values are ultimately more important than a simple individualism.

The concept of the social market may be attractive to anyone who has qualms about a full-bore commitment to free market policies. Currently, it may be of more use to members of the political Left who face an awkward problem in reconciling the Labor government's faith in the market and the social value of individualism with the values traditionally held by social democrats and social reformers. Although Labor deserves credit for tackling the long overdue problems of structural reform, the government has more recently lost its way. One Nation was an opportunity lost. While the package was astutely designed to counter Fightback! at the level of policy initiatives, and to reassure the financial markets, it neither addressed nor described the kind of society Labor wished to create in the longer term. It mentioned a 'stronger Australia' and 'a more civilised society' but left a central question unanswered: by what values or principles — or by what social vision — can Labor clearly differentiate itself from its free market opponents?

Allowing for the factors which constrain what ministers feel able to say in public, it is not clear what values are now uppermost in the minds of Labor's more visible leaders. Especially following the eclipse of socialism as a major intellectual resource for the Left, it is not easy to say just what the Labor Party really stands for at the present time. This makes the commitment to free market policies more problematic. In embracing economic liberalisation, albeit for good reasons, has the government unwittingly become a prisoner of the market? Has it implicitly legitimated its opponents' more radical goal of a fully deregulated market society?

There is little doubt that market strategies, the creation of a more competitive economic environment — or a production culture — are integral to restructuring. However, the government has evidently reached a point where it needs to rethink its position on the market. It needs to clarify the role of government and, in view of the doubts and fears among its supporters, explain the difference between creating a system of open and competitive markets and going all the way towards a fully deregulated market society. Until it does so, it is doubtful if it will be able to enunciate a clearer position on industry policy, or know how to accommodate the growing demands for policy changes emanating from both the labour movement and business leaders, as well as several state governments.

The government's increasing difficulties at the policy level are only partly the result of rising unemployment and electoral stress. They also reflect a certain incoherence at the theoretical level: how far to embrace market solutions? What is the proper role of the state? And, if one begins to retreat from the route recommended by (most) neoclassical economists, how does one justify the change of course? The problem is also that there is, as yet, no alternative theory or set of directions available with a status (or simplicity) equivalent to free market theory.

Conceivably, the social market model provides a fruitful way of reconciling economic and social values that are now in dispute. The synthesis also provides a way of bringing the government back in as a legitimate player in the process of structural change. The model embodies, first, a firm commitment to the principle of the competitive market. This means accepting that, on the whole, a system of open and competitive markets is the most effective method of handling the myriad problems of resource allocation in complex societies; that relying on the price mechanism ahead of government or bureaucrats is more likely to produce an optimum supply of goods at reasonable prices. Markets are also likely to maximise freedom of choice for buyers and sellers, while an effective market society is
conducive to the growth of civil and political liberties and so likely to provide an independent check on the possible growth of state power.

The first choice of supporters of the social market model, then, is in favour of working with rather than against the market. This means recognising that competition and self-interest have positive as well as negative features: that there is some substance to the notion of an invisible hand by which competition between a number of buyers or sellers is supposed to limit the power of each and produce collective outcomes which are in the public interest. It means that governments should work to maintain a fully competitive economic environment. This is, therefore, rather different from the more familiar notion of a mixed economy—a notion which was always an uneasy half-way house between the ideologies of capitalism and socialism, and embodied a basic ambivalence about the merits of capitalism, if not private enterprise. The social market signals a recognition that markets (and capitalism) are here to stay—and that in large, complex, industrial societies, markets have positive virtues. It is less a question of trying to get beyond or transcend market capitalism. It is more one of trying to organise and direct this kind of production structure in line with other, chosen values. The point is, again, that maintaining economic viability and political liberty in complex societies requires a particular (and varying) combination of state and market controls.

Second, this model implicitly accepts that 'the market economy' is not a gift from God. It is a human construct which emerged under particular social and historical conditions and which takes different forms in different cultures. There is no one correct form of 'market'. There are different types. Although the impersonal and seemingly automatic functioning of the price mechanism has a certain fascination, it is a mistake to invest 'the market' with some kind of overriding or superior form of rationality. The market is, in all senses, part of society. It should be viewed as society's instrument for achieving or pursuing other social values. Or more simply, the wealth potentially available through markets is a means to other, equally important ends. Saying this has two broad implications.

To begin with, the social market model acknowledges the importance of open and competitive markets and the economic benefits they bring but it also recognises that the market economy has a downside. For example, the driving force behind it remains the profit motive, plus self-interest and the possibilities for individual aggrandisement. Such values have to be contained otherwise the lure of wealth or the excessive pursuit of self-interest may have anti-social consequences, legitimising greed or allowing the accumulation of wealth as an end in itself. One has to recognise that the materialist values privileged by market capitalism are not wholly compatible with other value systems one finds in a self-proclaimed pluralist democracy. One must remember also, as numerous theorists from both the Left and Right from Marx onwards have pointed out, that market capitalism gives rise to a far-reaching process of ceaseless change which stresses all aspects of its environment. The reaction against economic liberalism in the nineteenth century arose precisely because it created social conditions which societies then found unacceptable.

So this model does not presume, as do more extreme economic libertarians, that the market economy is a self-sufficient, self-equilibrating entity. It will not necessarily generate the kind of behaviour or, indeed, the kind of economic outcomes, which are compatible with society's long-term integrity. Advocates of the social market recognise explicitly that the state has played a crucial role at all stages in the growth of market economies. A durable market order is not free standing; it depends on certain elements of statesmanship, strategic thinking and design.

'The social market signals a recognition that markets (and capitalism) are here to stay.'

Next, although the market is valued for its productive potential, it requires a deeper justification than its capacity to generate more goods and services. It too requires a moral justification. Or, the way in which it works, and the results it produces, have to be consistent with society's other values. Especially in a liberal or pluralist democracy, the market economy has to work in a manner consistent with the value placed on the dignity of the human person, and with the in-principle commitment to the right of every person to live a fully human existence. This again implies that advocates of the social market are far from indifferent to the results the market produces: the state may intervene either to guarantee equality of opportunity, or to redress emerging divisions between rich and poor which threaten to undermine the integrity of the market order itself.

The basic point is, as British social-marketeer Robert Skidelsky notes, that 'those who value the market as an institution must be concerned to keep its support system in good repair'. This was very much the view of the Christian Democrats who created the social market model during the post-war reconstruction of West Germany. The German economy was built 'on market principles: the pursuit of economic growth and a commitment to international competition, especially in manufactures, backed by a stable currency. It also embodied systematic co-operation, often through Industry Councils, between representatives of government (federal and state) business, labour, and the industrial banks, to chart the overall direction of national development. However, it was also built on a matching commitment to certain moral principles, notably respect for human dignity—a point which had a particular resonance in postwar Germany, and which was enshrined in the constitution.

Next, the principle of solidarity: this meant encouraging among people at all levels of society—family, neighbourhood and workplace—a sense of being members of a common partnership or enterprise. This was particularly
important for developing co-operative attitudes in industrial relations. By law, every company and every state agency has a freely elected council to represent the interests of the employees in all employment matters. Wages and working conditions are usually negotiated at the enterprise level. A further offshoot of solidarity is co-determination, whereby representatives of the workforce were included in decision-making at both factory and national levels 'in order to achieve the essential trust of all strata' during national reconstruction.

Finally, the principle of subsidiarity meant promoting the citizen's own sense of personal responsibility for, and self-determination in, the organisation of his or her own life. It taught that each level of society should be left to carry out the functions of which it is capable. Where individuals genuinely could not cope with the presumption of self-determination, perhaps through lack of resources, and where voluntary organisations were not enough either, the state would act. As one exponent put it, 'the question is not whether or not the state should act in economic life. The question is when, where and under which conditions the state should act. If the state acts in the spirit of subsidiarity, its priority is to give freedom to the individual and society to act according to their means, interests and responsibilities'. The German model included, therefore, comprehensive provision for social insurance and assistance which was seen as perfectly compatible with a market economy.

The German approach to both reconstruction and nation-building contains certain lessons for Australia in the 1990s. It shows that one can have a strong commitment to market principles and a sizeable state, including both a significant welfare sector and a substantial measure of industry assistance. (For the record, the public sector in Germany spent just over 48% of GNP in 1990. State and federal subsidies to industry in the mid-1980s comprised roughly 13% of GNP—still the lowest level in the EC—according to a 1988 study by the Bureau of Industry Economics.)

It also implies that values, or the moral dimension of society, have an independent significance for economic rebuilding which, in the longer run, may be rather more important than a single-minded adherence to the precepts of 'economic rationalism'. Certainly the Germans thought that individual and social responsibility, economic freedom and social justice, state and market were complementary pairings, not polar opposites. Both their experience and that of several Asian nations suggests that market economies work best in communitarian value-systems and cultures rather than highly individualistic ones.

The German experience recognises four primary functions for the state:

(i) To establish a secure juridical framework for market exchange: to specify and protect property rights; to enforce voluntary contracts; to guarantee free choice of occupation, and to prevent or punish physical harm and fraud; to establish the conditions required for the fair and efficient operation of capital, employment or insurance markets.

(ii) To limit or supplement the market where necessary. This means, broadly, dealing with the effects of market failure: for instance, dealing with monopolies and legislating to promote competitiveness; providing a range of public goods, defence, law and order, a sound currency; looking after consumers' rights and interests; coping with externalities, the adverse and unpriced effects of some economic activity, particularly on the environment.

(iii) To ensure that the market is politically acceptable. A social market economy is meant to be based on social arrangements that are broadly regarded as 'fair'. A government may find it necessary to intervene in the market to prevent or redress outcomes that are widely seen as unjust. It may seek to compensate underprivileged or under-resourced groups, or take action to lessen significant disparities in resources and power on the general — but politically significant — ground that the emergence of 'two nations' is a potential threat to order and stability. More specifically, a government may step in to provide social insurance where private insurance markets are regarded as too costly or inadequate. The two main examples are health and old age. Most of all, perhaps, the social market model regards unemployment — especially mass and/or structural unemployment — as a severe indictment of a market economy, a denial of its social promise and a significant delegitimising factor. Mass unemployment is not regarded simply as a transitional problem, an unavoidable aspect of structural change. It is seen as fundamentally unjust: the pursuit of full(er) employment is regarded as a primary social objective.

(iv) To ensure that the development of the market economy is compatible with the long-run viability of democratic institutions and democratic social values. This recognises that a market economy works best in an open society where general social conditions of freedom and creativity, trust and co-operation, and basic respect for human personality, obtain. However, these conditions have themselves to be reproduced through judicious political means. They do not flow necessarily from 'free markets' alone. A smoothly-functioning system of free markets may help to strengthen or protect them. But markets may work against them too by encouraging and legitimating anti-social forms of behaviour.

The latter point means that a balance must be struck between what is required for efficient markets and what is required for a fair and viable society. According to Robert Skidelsky, 'Certain market outcomes may be efficient and yet be socially unacceptable, and thus weaken the system which produces them. The only safe rule is to discount arguments for both intervention and non-intervention which do not show an awareness of the full range of social costs and benefits involved'.
tunity (and access) rather than equality of outcomes. It is more genuinely concerned with trying to equalise the resources which people have at the point of entering the market.

Where free market liberals require a formal equality of opportunity, social marketeers (and social democrats) add 'equalising social conditions'. This might well include policies to minimise inequalities arising through inheritance of personal wealth (such as death duties). It would certainly include a progressive income tax structure and a moderate capital gains tax. It would include substantial spending on education and training and a minimum income policy—in short, it would not leave income distribution solely or even largely to the market. It would try to compensate those who were unable to hold their own in the market.

The antecedents of the social market economy lie more with social liberalism and Catholic social thought than with socialism per se—although the dividing line between social liberals and social democrats is a fine one. This may be a stumbling block for some. However, one must surely recognise today that (a) there is a considerable intellectual vacuum on the Left following the apparent eclipse of socialism; and (b) both economic and electoral realities dictate that any attempt to fill this vacuum, to reconstitute social democracy, must take full account of the centrality of the market. One should maintain a critical perspective towards the market (and the global economy). Yet there seems little point in talking or theorising at present as if there were a qualitatively different kind of society in sight which might serve as a practical alternative to the present one. And there are powerful reasons for wishing to create a stronger and more competitive Australian economy which can hold its own in the global economy.

Both the Right and the Left have to come to terms with the market. The (liberal) Right has to overcome its animus against the state, understand that its idealised view of the free market is a product of Anglo-Saxon liberalism which is not shared in most other market-based economies, and learn to speak the language of social responsibility as well as individual incentives. The Left also has to develop a new theory of the relationship between state and market, one that at least acknowledges the problems with the former and the potential of the latter. If the Left generally favours a more interventionist industry policy, or a larger welfare sector, then the social market model offers a more credible way of approaching the issues than falling back on the now stereotyped language of either socialism or labourism.

HUGH EMY is professor of politics at Monash University.
Paul Keating has staked much on his attempt to redefine Australia's relationship with Asia. Whatever his motives for doing so, his statements on Australia's need to 'come to terms with', or to 'become part of' Asia, have opened up the debate on how Australia should reconcile its history with its geography. In this special Into Asia? supplement, we analyse some of the questions raised by the arrival of 'Asia' on the mainstream domestic political agenda.

Firstly, what exactly do we mean by 'Asia'? Countries like India and Pakistan are certainly in Asia, but they are equally clearly not what most Australians mean when they use the term. At Asia's other extreme, Australia has the potential to play an influential role in the development of the Pacific islands, but again they do not match Mr Keating's idea of the dynamic, populous and booming 'Asia' with which we should be associated.

Even within a more restricted focus on East and South-East Asia, there are enormous discrepancies between individual countries. Japan, the 'Asian Tigers' (South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan) and to a lesser extent Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand are flourishing, and presumably it is these countries and not, say, the Philippines, Burma or Vietnam which Keating has in mind when he locates Australia's future in Asia.

But economic success surely cannot be the only indicator of the desirability or otherwise of 'getting closer to' Asia. Many of the countries in the region, whether successful or not, are very far from embodying liberal democratic values in their political systems. Does sharing in the development of the region also mean compromising those values? Or are we working on the assumption that democracy and liberalism flow naturally from economic growth, so that co-operation with Asian countries will help to make them more like us politically? Such an approach would seem to sit oddly with the view that it is us who should be learning from 'Asia' about how to run our economy.

Clearly, our economic, political and cultural interests in pursuing closer ties with our neighbours do not always coincide (indeed are sometimes in sharp conflict). Nowhere has this tension been more apparent than in Australia's often stormy relationship with Indonesia. Here, 'becoming Asian' has often been equated with soft-peddling on human rights issues. Whether such preoccupations as democracy and human rights are the greatest contribution that Australia can make to Asia, or whether they are cultural baggage which we need to shed before we can play our full role in the region, is a question which Paul Keating's rhetoric has so far failed to address adequately.

While we debate our relationship with Asia, the Asian countries themselves are undergoing rapid and substantial change. One thing that is certain is that if Australia really does want to change its relationship with the region in a significant way, we need to keep much more closely in touch with the economic, political and cultural currents which are shaping its future.

Mike Ticher

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Beyond the Cringe

Alison Broinowski wonders what, if anything, lies behind Paul Keating’s rhetoric about ‘coming to terms with Asia’.

For a few weeks after his election as prime minister in December 1991, Paul Keating was almost silent, apart from urging his ministers to get out into the ‘real’ world of electoral Australia. When he returned to the fray it was to stress, and link, two themes—Australia’s national identity and its relationship with Asia. In February he declared himself in favour of an Australian Republic. Then followed a series of statements about Australia’s future in Asia, culminating in his first visit abroad to Indonesia in April where he told his hosts that Australia needed a new flag. In June, he asserted that Asia would not be Australia’s security blanket substitute for the British Empire.

At the beginning of April a Saulwick poll asked 1,000 voters whether they thought of Australia basically as separate from Asia or as part of Asia, and what they imagined Asians thought about the same issue. The result showed close to 70% opting for ‘separate from Asia’ for both questions. What is surprising, in view of the repeated exhortations we hear about Australia’s need to ‘come to terms’ (whatever that means) with ‘Asia’ (whatever that is), is that over a quarter of the respondents thought that we are already part of Asia, and just under a quarter that we are already seen as such by Asians.

Nevertheless, the poll was widely interpreted by the media as proving that Australians rejected the prime minister’s Asia initiatives. If a survey of 1,000 respondents proves anything, that was not what the poll proved. The prime minister had talked about Australia’s growing engagement with Asia in trade and investment, defence, and peacekeeping—what we are doing. The Saulwick poll talked about national identity—who we are.

The two are by no means identical, yet they run together in Australia like tram tracks. Mr Keating crossed from one to the other in his speech to the Australia-Asia Institute in Sydney in April, when he said that Menzies-style Anglophilia was holding Australia back from realising its destiny as an Asia-Pacific nation. In his remarks about the flag in Jakarta, he implied that republicanism was a means of gaining acceptance in Asia. In a speech to the Hong Kong Australia Business Association, he said that Australia could not ride on Asia’s back as once, by means of preferential access for Australian primary commodities to British markets, it had ridden on the sheep’s back.

At this, the chattering of the classes who follow the national identity debate rose to a crescendo and logic and clarity were largely lost. The loudest to urge ‘coming to terms’ with Asia are those who have not done so and don’t intend to do so themselves. Our lack of Asia-facility is often bemoaned by those who have never learned an Asian language and won’t employ those who have. Our ineptitude in Asia is harped upon by people with a renewed cultural cringe.

On the other hand, those with professional and cultural umbilical cords tied to Europe strongly resist transferring them to Asia. They rationalise their distaste and disguise their ignorance, as Professor John Passmore of ANU did in June, by stating that Australians are the heirs of a superior civilisation. A more sophisticated rationalisation came from Professor Claudio Veliz at a Shell seminar in Melbourne in July when he argued that we should be offering to
Australianise Asia, not vice versa, since Australia was an inspiration for many Asians, a society which they would admire more the less it sought to be like their own.

For all Keating's new rhetoric much of this debate is familiar. Australia has had pro-Asianists in every generation since 1788, people who wanted to merge with the region through trade, colonisation, missionary efforts, migration or study. Some did so. While the Australian colonies were part of the British empire in the far east, interchange of this sort was freer than after 1901, when determination to keep the protective tariff and White Australia meant excluding as many Asian goods and people as possible. Those who urged trade with newly industrialising Japan were called traitors by the Bulletin. Gradually, the Japanese exploratory missions which had visited Australia in the late 19th century seeking complementary trade got the message and desisted.

Even so, James Murdoch and A. L. Sadler, who established Oriental Studies at Sydney University, spoke often of the need for Australians to know more about China and Japan. One of their lecturers was Miyata Mineichi, who also tutored the young Hermann Black in Japanese and who later advocated renewed efforts on Australia's part to take its place as a southern Asian country.

When Australia found itself critically short of Japanese speakers during the Pacific War, Black, because of his German ancestry, was not used. W. McMahon Ball, the Australian representative on the Allied Council in occupied Japan had no knowledge of Japanese history or language. Nevertheless, in his later radio talks he became a lone voice calling for politicians to stop 'relying on a Western military presence to keep Asia away from us'.

A few politicians, like Sir George Pearce as early as 1922, were prepared to admit that 'whilst racially we are Europeans, geographically we are Asiatic', adding that events in Japan and China were of more importance to Australians than those in Belgium and Holland. Australia's first foreign service posts were chosen on that realistic assumption, even though until well after World War Two there were more votes in defence and in restricting Asian immigration than in 'coming to terms' with Asia. Nevertheless, once it became clear that the era of European colonial domination was over, talk about helping Asians less fortunate than ourselves, about defending those who valued freedom (anti-communists), and about being neighbours of Asians 'whether we liked it or not' became common in parliament.

Mr Keating's assertions about Menzies and Britain notwithstanding, it was Menzies who, as early as 1939, declared:

We will never realise our destiny as a nation until we realise that we are one of the Pacific Powers...we are not subordinate; we have no secondary interest in the Pacific; we have a primary interest in it.

Nevertheless, talk about the Western Alliance persisted into the post-1983 Labor years, and Australia's position became increasingly bifurcated, with one foot, that of defence and foreign policy, in the North Atlantic and the other, of trade and investment, increasingly planted in the Western Pacific. When the Asia-Pacific Economic Council (APEC) was born in 1989, by self-interest out of economics, a brief scramble took place among the godparents about whose baby this was. The North Atlantic won the day, and the United States and Canada joined the christening party. Although Whitlam had insisted on Australia joining the Asian group in UNESCO, at the United Nations our delegation still belongs with WEOG—Western Europeans and others—and Australia is a member of no purely Asian regional organisation.

As Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden was the first to foresee a time when Australia would become a Euro-Asian country, and the Hawke government was the first to have the breadth of vision to endorse the concept of 'Asia-literacy', even though none of the Cabinet spoke an Asian language.

Each generation of Australians has had to redefine itself, and to rediscover Asia. The horns of our dilemma are always history versus geography, Western tradition versus Asia-Pacific location. We are not helped by the fact that 'Asia' cannot be defined and is infinitely various. But we have not helped ourselves by indulging in insincere rhetoric about Asia, nor by holding endless conferences inside Australia, when our time and money would have been better spent actually living in the region. Worse, we have failed to ingest the knowledge of Asia and the respect for its cultures built up by Australians throughout our history, and have failed to teach that to our children.

If Asia is as economically and strategically important as our leaders say, and if its history and culture are as rich as some Australians have found, then our progress towards 'coming to terms with Asia' has been tragically slow. So slow, indeed, that you have to wonder whether we mean it. And if we don't, how can we expect to be taken seriously, even if the Far Eastern Economic Review in its Asia 1992 Yearbook has at last listed Australia as a nation of the Asia Pacific region. Do we deserve it?

ALISON BROINOWSKI's most recent book, The Yellow Lady - Australia's Impressions of Asia, was published in March by Oxford University Press.
Asia's all the rage. But when it comes to the South Pacific, we just want to wash that region right out of our hair. Rowan Callick suggests this regional monomania is a mite foolish.

It was no coincidence that it was one of the most public proponents of the 'Asianisation' of Australia, Greg Sheridan—the foreign editor of the Australian—who recently urged the government to start to disengage from the South Pacific region. The islands were important, he argued, when the Japanese started seizing them in World War Two, and again when the Soviets started to flirt with them after the war. But now the Cold War's over, it's time for Canberra's last hula. "We seem mostly to get ourselves into strife with our neighbours at the annual South Pacific Forum meetings but to achieve nothing in return for all the trouble."

Mr Sheridan's view of the significance of the Pacific is clear. "As Keating himself might put it himself: it is elevating a tenth order issue to the first order." And who are the "first order", the "countries with which we share crucial interests'? He cites Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. It is helpful of Mr Sheridan to have brought this thesis into the open, for it has lurked unstated behind much of the 'Asia thrust' of recent years. The thesis goes that Asia is not just the Main Game, to use another Keatingism, but the only game in town. And certainly the only one the Big Boys play.

The RSL blimps and the Toowoomba matrons might still carry a torch for the old country; more recent migrants who can't bear to cut the ties with their past might champion links with greater Europe; Rotarians and the odd colonel or passé businessman might stake a claim for the American Big Brother of the post-war decade. But as for us, the guys at the cutting edge (the thesis goes) we know where we stand—because we've looked at a map. And that means we're Asian. Thank God, too: 'Asia' is a success. It has the face of the future.

How Australia needs its Jonathan Swift. For the new Main Game is simply the old Yellow Peril inverted. For inscrutable, untrustworthy, inferior, read today hard-working, cohesive, superior—especially in economic affairs. It is no coincidence that this formula comes from the Canberra team that brought us 'economic rationalism'—when it was a badge worn with intellectual pride—as the only game. But, of course, we're all interventionists now—and holding up as models the interventionist approaches of our fellow Asians.

This leads on inevitably to a special pleading—to the argument that Asia 'needs to be examined in its own terms'. We might feel squeamish about the odd massacre, execution or expropriation—but if our 'neighbours' (and claiming Thailand and the Philippines as such is perhaps stretching a point) find it necessary, so be it. We are merely demonstrating our cultural insensitivity, so the thesis goes, if we speak publicly on such matters. That the vaunted private diplomacy claimed as an alternative can amount to mere collusion between oppressive elites, is another matter. Yet, in truth, it is Australia as a confident liberal democracy that appeals to Asians and, indeed, to Pacific islanders. This is an essential element of the country's attractiveness, its selling point—except if a sleazy section of Australia's business community would have it otherwise, and would prefer the argument that it is the public expression of concern for human rights that will drag the country down.

Australia only damages itself when it trades its virtues for this kind of narrow opportunism. Its longer-term cause in Asia, whatever that term may represent (the once-vogue, eternally-ugly-and-ungrammatical phrase the Asia-Pacific appears to be falling out of favour—perhaps because the 'Pacific' appendage is becoming an embarrassment) is not really advanced by such mealy-mouthedness. And this viewpoint overlooks two other things of significance: our dependence on trade, which today means truly world trade, and our relationship with the region which constitutes our only sphere of influence: the South Pacific.

When Sitiveni Rabuka became prime
minister of Fiji in June, he could not have been more wrong to warn Australia against attempting to be the region’s Big Brother. The danger is, rather, that it will overlook the South Pacific altogether. Our prime ministers should not go to South Africa, says Mr Sheridan, “to grandstand on apartheid, nor should they waste their time sitting in long houses on tiny Pacific atolls talking about tuna fish”. The conduct of Mr Keating at the July meeting of the Forum indicated a lack of attention to detail, if not interest, on the part of his team which Sheridan would presumably find gratifying.

Should all of this matter? Of course. It would be tragic to see Australia’s influence in its immediate neighbourhood suddenly cut back because an influential Canberra coterie has a one-track mind. When Senator Evans became foreign minister four years ago he said Australia had defined its relationships with the island countries as best served by a strategy of ‘constructive commitment’ involving partnership rather than dominance, mutual respect for sovereignty and national individuality and the development of shared perceptions of strategic and security interests.

Australia’s commitment to the South Pacific region is modest enough—with the exception of the $300 million a year aid to Papua New Guinea, with which trade reached $1.7 billion, and investment about $5 billion in 1991 (a considerably greater sum than that provided to most of ASEAN). But personal contact, only made meaningful over a length of time, and established through a number of informal meetings such as the one Mr Keating failed to attend before the Forum, are the glue that keeps Australia’s influence in place.

In security terms, thanks to painstaking diplomatic work there is now a network of Australian-built patrol boats in place throughout the Pacific islands, providing intelligence which is made widely available about adverse influences—drift-net fishing boats, drug-runners, pirates. Insofar as the American relationship is deemed by the Australians to count, it assumes—as Defence Secretary Mr Dick Cheney pointed out on his recent visit for the Coral Sea anniversary—that Australia takes the lead, and is responsible for managing the region peacefully. The South Pacific is an ideal ‘nursery’ for exporters, a source of access markets which are mainly English-speaking and familiar with Australia. If products can’t sell in the islands, it may well be hard to sell them anywhere.

Oceania (which includes New Zealand) is the biggest single destination for Australians working overseas for more than a year. (Also overlooked by the Asianisers, of course, is that other South Pacific power, New Zealand, for long the butt of Hill humour, is today taking on a massive significance as a model of what Australia might soon become—according to your ideological perspective, either a disaster zone or a surprise success.) The truth is that if Australia cannot maintain its influence—which requires its presence and attention, for only thus will trust be gained—in the South Pacific, it cannot do so anywhere. Indeed, it may be least of all able to do so in an Asia which is gaining a global perspective just as Australia appears at risk of determining to narrow its own focus.

And part of the price of maintaining that influence is participating in regional events—such as the Forum. If Australia takes Mr Sheridan’s advice and opts out, this may, as he notes, lead Fiji (for instance) to forgo closer ties with the Malaysians. Should we really be worried about this, he asks? The answer is yes. The Fiji government has already signed a deal guaranteeing exclusive purchase of all its oil from the Malaysian government. This has cut out the Australian-based companies which previously supplied oil to Fiji, and it has raised the price of oil, not only to Fijian consumers but to other islanders who have no choice but to buy from the storage centre near Nadi in Fiji. The Malaysian connection has encouraged Fiji to reallocate resources and priorities, Malay-style, towards ethnic Fijians—creating the conditions for a climate of tokenism, inefficiency and corruption within which Australian companies are unlikely to prosper.

Like Australians in Asia, Asian business people in the South Pacific—usually less than blue chip—have often found mutual cultural barriers an irritant. But unlike those Australians, they have, on the whole, increasingly sought to solve the problem by moulding the islands’ embryonic commercial practice to their own. Sweeteners such as ‘familiarisation visits’ to east Asian capitals, all comforts provided, are now common. Australians who fail to make similar offers are seen as tight-fisted. In politics and armed services alike, island leaders are too often being suborned, seduced by Asian contacts into considering themselves a species apart from, and no longer accountable to, their own people. This is a recipe for long-term instability and friction which will do neither the islands nor Australia much good.

Mr Sheridan and his fellow-travellers appear remarkably assured that the region’s parameters will now forever stay the same—that post-Pacific War, post-Cold War, the South Pacific will never again be disturbed by the outside world. In this frozen landscape Australians can comfortably withdraw and make, instead, for the ‘real world’. This is similar to the viewpoint which, struck by the beauty and isolation of the region, leads too many observers to write it off patronisingly as a ‘paradise’, as if it were not populated by real people beyond the resort staff.

Yet who knows what train of events—an ecological scandal; another coup somewhere, this time threatening Australian tourists; the incursion of militant Islam—might palpably require again close attention by Australia, for our own good. Yet such relationships as would then be required cannot be developed instantly. That is the lesson of the relationship with Asia, too, of course. It cannot be built as a fad. Mercantile self-interest, regional security including assuring our shipping routes, international reputation and sheer altruism—Australia’s huge resources should surely be capable of ameliorating the insular poverty of the region—combine to require a continued Australian commitment to the ‘tenth order’ peoples of the South Pacific.

ROWAN CALLICK is a columnist for the Australian Financial Review.
The Japanese industry policy model has been a beacon for the Australian union movement in its struggle to situate itself in the region. But Kanishka Jayasuriya argues that the importance of the Japanese model has been dramatically overestimated.

WITH the end of the cold war, the division between the communist and the capitalist world is being replaced by new sets of international cleavages. One that is becoming more salient is that between liberal market economies in the English-speaking world and the Japanese or East Asian type of market economy. American observers like Francis Fukuyama appear to suggest that this cleavage will be the frontier where the next international battle of ideas will be fought. Another influential group, comprised mainly of academics and media analysts, contends that Japanese industry policy and, in particular, the relationship between the state and the market in Japan is an impediment to free trade between the US and Japan. Advocates of this point of view have gained an influential foothold in some parts of the United States political structure.

In a similar way, a significant debate has emerged in both the developed and developing countries about the relative roles of the market vis a vis the state in economic development. Many argue for using industry policy to provide incentives to nurture certain high-tech industries, despite the lack of any clear comparative advantage for these types of industry. In other words, policy can be used to pick out industries which are potential ‘winners’ in the international market place. This argument has a good deal of support in the Australian labour movement and on the Left.

These policy stances appear to reflect, either implicitly or explicitly, the influence of the Japanese model of industry policy. However, I want to argue here that this view is based on a misleading interpretation of the Japanese model, chiefly because it ascribes to policy a strong capacity to shape industry structure and organisation. A closer reading of the Japanese experience would suggest that in reality the effect of industry policy in these areas is highly limited. Whatever effect it has lies in its capacity to shape, support and encourage pre-existing strengths in various industrial sectors, organisational patterns and activities. The emerging industry policy model is simplistic in that it assumes that industry policy is merely a matter of picking ‘winners and losers’. It also makes the dubious assumption that these winners are primarily to be found in the lucrative high-tech areas where, with a combination of the right policies, golden economic eggs can be hatched.

Given the influence of Japanese policy on such ideas, it is critically important to examine more closely the real lessons that could be drawn from the Japanese model and determine more accurately how it functions. Much of the rationale for the current forms of industry policy pursued in a number of countries arises from a misreading of the Japanese model. A little bit of history might be relevant here. At one time, the conventional wisdom was that the high level of Japanese economic performance was due to the pursuit of industry conforming policies. In other words, policy makers served to create the ‘level playing field’ beloved of neoclassical economists. However, this conception soon had to confront the evidence of extensive public intervention in the market to support certain industries. For example, a persistent feature of Japanese industry policy was the closure of the local market to foreign producers during the period in which local industry was made export competitive. Likewise, many analysts have noted
the widespread use by Japanese industry of strategic industry and trade policy to encourage important capacities, such as learning by doing, that market structures failed to deliver.

Not surprisingly, therefore, an alternative view of Japanese economic performance to the discredited 'level playing field' hypothesis has emphasised the importance of the state in promoting economic development. Both the proponents of the market and of statist perspectives underline the importance of economic and political aspects of Japanese economic growth. Indeed, initially these two perspectives coincided with the disciplinary boundaries of economics and political science, though the increasing dominance of the statist point of view in recent years has blurred some of these disciplinary divisions.

The 'statist' conventional wisdom of the recent past focused heavily on one key agency—Japan’s Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI)—and its part in developing a range of industrial markets. These interventions range from the provision of subsidies to the organisation of research and development (R and D). The lesson of the Japanese model, according to this thesis, is the need to comprehend the active role played by MITI in fostering industrial development. In fact, MITI is imitated right across the globe in the hope of replicating Japan’s economic success. Central to this argument is the notion that MITI has a high degree of autonomy from business interests, which enhances its capacity to intervene in industrial markets. These interventions range from the provision of subsidies to the organisation of research and development (R and D). The lesson of the Japanese model, according to this thesis, is the need to comprehend the active role played by MITI in fostering industrial development. In fact, MITI is imitated right across the globe in the hope of replicating Japan’s economic success. Central to this argument is the notion that MITI has a high degree of autonomy from business interests, which enhances its capacity to intervene in industrial markets. These interventions range from the provision of subsidies to the organisation of research and development (R and D).

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Japanese success in sectors such as electronics has been made possible by the fact that these have been well suited to a flexible production process. For instance, the Japanese electronics industry has been geared towards producing for market niches and adapting rapidly to changing consumer needs. In a similar manner, Japanese dominance in the area of auto-production points to the superior nature of such innovations as 'just in time' production.

By contrast, the Japanese have been lagging in areas such as aerospace and biotechnology where these types of production processes are not as important in securing an advantage, and which require different structures for harnessing R and D (such as state-sponsored research centres and university-based innovation). It is in these research areas that Japan is relatively weak in comparison with the US. Therefore, even in areas such as R and D which seem to be highly amenable to public intervention, it is the way in which an industrial or any other market is structured which counts.

What, then, are the lessons of the Japanese experience for countries like Australia? Firstly, it suggests that current ideas about industrial targeting are based on a far too simplistic notion about the role and significance of MITI in Japan's industrial development. One clear lesson is that policy by itself is unlikely to have much impact on the pattern of industrial development. Effective and successful policies operate in conjunction with other structural forms such as the way market institutions are organised. Secondly, an emphasis on either the state or the market as the critical element in Japanese industrial development is misplaced. What is important is the way industrial markets are organised. Therefore, policies directed at industrial targeting, rather than picking the golden industrial goose, may more likely end up creating a lame duck. Rather, policies should be aimed at enhancing existing organisational strengths.

Finally, the Japanese experience suggests that the idea that all countries tend to move towards the same type of industrial structures needs to be abandoned. If there is one overriding lesson, it is that the type of industrial structure that a nation has is a product of a variety of factors, which cannot necessarily be replicated elsewhere. In fact, the most paradoxical lesson of the Japanese experience may be that a nation’s industrial structure is heavily dependent on past patterns of development. From a policy perspective, the current fascination in many developed and rapidly developing countries with the expansion of high-tech industries is likely to end in failure. The current debate between proponents and opponents of industry intervention is likely to remain unproductive as long as it continues to be based on such misleading notions about states and markets.

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History
Reborn

Francis Fukuyama declared we’re all liberal democrats now. James Cotton disagrees. He argues the economies and societies of Asia show few signs of adapting to the western model.

According to Francis Fukuyama, capitalism and liberal democracy are triumphant. Yet the difficulties with this view are many—not least the question of whether or to what extent the former socialist and multi-ethnic states will adopt political and economic systems which are both capitalist and democratic. If we can set aside the travails of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia as the inevitable consequences of transition, an even greater challenge to Fukuyama’s argument is the course taken by the industrialised non-socialist states of Asia.

I want to argue here that, despite decades of rapid economic growth and conscious efforts to adapt a variety of western institutions and practices, the Asian Newly Industrialising Countries (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong) while capitalist, are far from liberal democratic. As their economies mature they have adopted democratic political forms, but usually without liberal content. Nor is this situation likely to change. Indeed, with greater economic strength providing the basis for increased social and cultural self-confidence, they may be even less inclined in the future to borrow western liberal democratic practices or conform to what are perceived as western standards.

With the exception of Hong Kong, changes of government in the Asian NICs are now determined by formally democratic mechanisms. Singapore has been governed along Westminster lines since 1959, South Korea adopted representative institutions in 1987, and Taiwan embarked upon a thorough refurbishment of its political institutions starting in 1986. Even Hong Kong, though still run as a colony, now accords some role to electoral and representative principles.

However, democratic forms and institutions by themselves are insufficient to produce liberal democracy. Precisely what else is required is a matter of some debate among political scientists. However, they would tend to look to the existence of relatively independent and influential interest groups and interests, or of attitudes and beliefs conducing to individual and group autonomy, or of limitations upon the activities and aspirations of the state itself. Whichever of these factors contributes the most to liberalisation, it is significant that they are still largely absent from the Asian NIC states in the 1990s.

The first possibility to be considered is the possible emergence of autonomous interest groups and those other features of civil society which made possible the democratic revolution of 1989-90 in Central Europe. Here there are some positive signs, most notably the upsurge in South Korea since mid-1987 of labour and of some professionals (including teachers and lawyers) against corporatist state controls. However, these developments do not necessarily constitute a movement towards social and political pluralism. To take a Korean example, a union of teachers (the formation of which has become a cause celebre) devoted to advancing the class struggle and destroying the government cannot be taken as advancing the mechanisms of social consensus. It must be recalled, however, that until 1987 ruthless (and often technically illegal) methods were customarily employed against such organisations, and that their formation under the new dispensation is still in its learning phase.

In any event, more common has been the single issue mobilisation of inter-
ests in Taiwan and South Korea (against American agricultural imports, environmental problems, and the like), though in the former there are attempts to form a labour-oriented political movement—attempts, as yet ineffective at a time when the organised opposition to the Kuomintang is becoming increasingly fragmented. Here the example of Japan illustrates the possibility that separately organised interests might even constitute their own political party and occupy influential positions in local government and elsewhere without gaining regular access to the policymaking machinery of the central state.

In Singapore, independent trade union or professional bodies are no more likely to appear in the 1990s than in the past. It was enough for the Law Society of Singapore in 1987 to dispute (as was its right and even its duty) the coherence of a draft bill giving the state powers to control publications which sought to interfere in or influence Singapore’s internal politics to move the state to reorganise the legal profession. If anything, the Singaporean state is becoming more ambitious in its desire to control private interests. On the other hand, the unprecedented mobilisation of the population of Hong Kong in 1989—first to support the democracy movement in China, then to advance claims for the democratisation of the territory in advance of 1997—indicates that the quiescence of the past cannot be projected into the future. Unfortunately for liberal democracy, the mechanisms of the post-1997 state will be even more unfavourable to expressions of autonomous social interest than is the colonial state at present.

What of the development in the Asian NICs of popular attitudes and beliefs conducive to liberalisation? It is sometimes argued that with the transformation of society through industrialisation—and particularly as a result of urbanisation and the expansion of the educated sectors of the population—forces and expectations are generated which are favourable to a more participatory political style. There is some general evidence to support that view from Korea and Taiwan—though in the case of Korea regional sentiment is still the single most powerful determinant of voting behaviour (and much else), while in Taiwan the differences in outlook between voters of Taiwanese as against those of mainland origin often obscure the operation of other variables.

In Singapore the extensive degree of voter support for the divided and hamstrung opposition (almost four voters in every 10 in recent elections) could be taken to imply a similar phenomenon. In Hong Kong changes in attitude toward the government and the legal system, particularly among the young and better educated of the population, have been evident. Over time, such developments might permit the emergence of a more participatory view of politics. However, such factors as the conduct of elites, the organisation of political parties, and the relationship between government and bureaucracy suggest that such hopes may well be too optimistic.

Although the instruments of control wielded by regimes and ruling parties in the Asian NICs have become more sophisticated, the purposes for which they are wielded have remained the same for the past two decades. Institutionalised political parties have
yet to emerge in South Korea; rather, political movements are still dominated by regional (and in the case of the ruling party, military) interest groups held together by ties of personal loyalty. The realignment of South Korean political parties in 1990 is eloquent testimony to the continued prevalence of this situation: one of the key coup-makers of 1979 and the founder of the Korean CIA have combined forces with the leading opposition figure of the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the third figure (Kim Young-sam) now the next presidential candidate.

By contrast, the Kuomintang in Taiwan seems to have taken on the character of a 'hegemonic' party on the model of the Japanese Liberal Democratic or Italian Christian Democrats, its leadership sponsoring reforms which would have been anathema only a few years before. Within the Kuomintang, on the other hand, comparable democratic reforms have yet to be fully implemented. A combination of 'connections' (guanxi) and money still seems to be at the core of the party power structure. The special conditions of Hong Kong make direct comparison difficult, but contending for power with vocal radical groups are business-led factions dedicated to defusing mass politics in order to deliver an orderly, subservient and profitable Hong Kong to Beijing. The hereditary succession in Singapore speaks for itself. Again, the case of Japan illustrates that it is possible to sustain the politics of personal factions and privilege access to the bureaucracy in an advanced industrial state.

A further obstacle to the development of liberalisation may be seen in the continued influence in the Asian NICs of Confucianism. Central to Confucianism is an ethical view of government (which renders compromise morally repugnant), a belief in the superiority and duty to lead of the educated person (which undercuts notions of the legitimacy of popular interests), and a generally collectivist and organic conception of the state (which is less favourable to the action of individual citizens). While some commentators have demonstrated the existence of an individualist and perhaps even a liberal tradition in East Asian thought, the lack of such notions as individual and human rights cannot be disputed.

These trends are not without some contradictory developments. The achievement of economic goals of nation-building has been the rationale for the strong state in East Asia. With the growing maturity of the Asian economies (requiring the expansion of domestic demand, lower barriers to trade, and the internationalisation of domestic firms) there would appear to be less need for such a state. However, the Japanese state—often taken as the prototype of such a state—indicates that the capacity for a Ministry of International Trade and Industry to impose 'administrative guidance' on the private sector remains considerable.

In the 1980s there has been some liberalisation and internationalisation of the Taiwanese and South Korean economies—and in Korea the industrial conglomerates have become so large and far-flung that many of their activities are beyond easy government supervision. Against this, in Korea campaigns orchestrated by the government and ostensibly directed against the consumption of 'luxuries' have amounted to a continuance by other means of the policy of managed trade.

There is still a long way to go before the interventionist inclinations of the Seoul authorities are relinquished. And in the political realm the formation of the Democratic Liberal Party suggests an attempt to form a Korean version of that symbiosis of political and bureaucratic personnel and business money which has ruled Japan since 1955. Such a creation would certainly transform the Korean state; after all, it is often claimed that Japan has no policymaking core but, rather, a number of contending bureaucratic centres held together by shared values and practices, whereas the Korean state has a unitary identity. However, even if this project is successful there will be a continuation of the assertion of the state against society. A similar development is much further advanced in Taiwan, where neither the representative organs of the state nor the bureaucracy can function independently without the party. Abandoning its formal monopoly of power will probably ensure that in practical terms the Kuomintang (including members of its military arm) retains its predominance.

In South Korea and, to a lesser extent, in Taiwan, long-maintained corporatist controls have begun to unravel—though in Singapore they are, if anything, growing stronger. Again, in Hong Kong Beijing can be expected to employ its full panoply of corporatist mechanisms after 1997. Discord between the centre and the provinces may, however, temper these somewhat.

From this analysis it can be seen that, while the limits to liberalisation in the Asian NICs are obvious, all of these political and social systems are experiencing considerable change, in some cases including the further incorporation of western social and political practices. But it is equally clear that these systems will not simply replicate the conventions of western liberal representative government. Political evolution should not be directly equated with increasing liberalisation. In the present world trend of democratisation such an outcome might be expected (given favourable conditions) in the former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and perhaps Poland and the Baltic states. If Romania and the fragments of Yugoslavia (not to mention Turkey) are to escape this trend it is not altogether surprising that the same might be the case with the Asian NICs. Fukuyama should look beyond Europe to Asia.

JAMES COTTON teaches in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University. A more detailed version of this argument can be found in the author's "The Limits to Liberalization in Industrializing Asia: Three Views of the State", Pacific Affairs 64 (1991).
Paul Keating’s recent visit to Indonesia and his pronouncements on Australia’s future role in Asia are the most concrete moves any Australian prime minister has made towards strengthening relations with our northern neighbour. The government’s new emphasis is clearly based on economic, political and cultural ties. But one rather large stumbling block remains—the contentious and delicate issue of human rights. The current stress on pragmatism disposes of such issues rather too conveniently.

While in Indonesia, Keating focused on commercial, social, governmental and defence ties, all of which seem set to improve under his approach. His move towards acknowledging Australia’s place in the region has been long-awaited, and is certainly necessary. However, Australia is yet to fully address the problem of how to accommodate the policies of the governments of South-East Asia. Clearly, in “becoming part of Asia”, Australia cannot expect dealings to be on the same level as they are with other western countries. Major differences in culture, religion and political and economic systems between Australia and the rest of Asia need to be handled by all countries concerned with understanding and flexibility.

Tension between Indonesia and Australia in the past has stemmed not from these differences, but from misunderstanding. However, journalists at least are learning to deal with contentious issues such as human rights, the presidential family and the army with more maturity and sensitivity. Jakarta is also becoming less sensitive to criticism as Indonesia itself gradually begins to tolerate greater press freedom.

But Keating’s push for Australia to align itself with Asia does not mean that Australia has to adopt ‘Asian’ values in order to deal with those countries. Australia cannot deny its own liberal democratic history, but equally it does not have the right to impose those values on Indonesia or any other South-East Asian country. Indonesia has been quicker than Australia to recognise that both countries are valuable to one another only if they maintain their own identity.

As a result, there are bound to be certain conflicts, and the question of human rights is particularly sensitive, as the Dili massacre again highlighted. The National Investigation Committee (KPN) into the killings quelled the initial outrage expressed by most Western governments, including Australia. Its findings put the death toll at over 50, and the officers responsible were subsequently tried and sentenced. The commanders in charge of the region, Brigadier-General Warouw and Major General Sintong Panjaitan, have been replaced.

But this did little to resolve Australia’s dilemma of balancing human rights and economic interests. The signing of an agreement under the Timor Gap Treaty less than a month after the Dili incident made it clear that those interests took precedence over human rights concerns. Foreign Minister Gareth Evans went so far as to pass special legislation which allowed police to remove crosses erected outside the Indonesian Embassy to mark the deaths of East Timorese on November 12. As far as he was concerned, it was simply a matter of governments having to get along with each other in international discourse.

Leading Indonesian dissident, Bratanata Slamat, says that one of the main problems with Australia’s relationship with Indonesia is that Australia can be too accommodating: “When you decide to have relations...
with a country, let it be good relations. But not in the sense that Australia should bend itself backwards and pretend not to know what is going on here.” Slamat points out that by compromising its own values and opinions, Australia risks losing respect in the eyes of Indonesia. “I will not mention names,” he says, “but one of your ambassadors has made himself ridiculous here in Indonesia by trying to be more Javanese than the average Indonesian. He thinks he is helping the situation. But looking at it from, let us say, an oriental point of view, we feel he should not humiliate himself like that.”

Clearly, neither this approach, nor taking a soft stand on human rights is what “being part of Asia” should mean. A more subtle attitude is required. Indonesia poet and playwright, W S Rendra, when in Australia on his recent tour, expressed well the fine line between criticism and interference: “We don’t like political pressure. It’s wrong and useless. But there is no need to give political encouragement to our wrongdoings either.” For Australia, political pressure such as the threat of stopping aid or imposing economic sanctions over Dili would have achieved nothing, nor would it in the future if a similar incident occurred. This is not simply because Indonesia clearly takes a pride in its refusal to be dictated to by other countries, but also because neither Japan (which supplies Indonesia with almost two-thirds of its aid) nor the US will pull out their economic support and investment in Indonesia.

What Australia can do is to try to encourage the Indonesian government to adopt a policy which acknowledges cultural differences and local values, not only in East Timor, but also in Irian Jaya and Aceh. Most importantly of all, Australia needs to look at human rights in the context of Indonesia’s political and economic development. Rendra stresses the need for gradual change to achieve true democracy and human rights in Indonesia: “In the process of gradual change you must still reach consensus with the elite. Because those who fight for human rights and democracy are still a minority.”

Rather than only addressing human rights issues that hit the front pages, Australia could play a more significant role in areas such as education and the improvement of Indonesia’s overworked infrastructure. Democracy and human rights are not solely dependent on political or economic change—cultural change is also fundamental, and that requires patience and assistance from countries such as Australia. Keating has made the first move at a political level. Now this needs to be followed up by a multitude of interchanges at a personal level.

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Australia’s relationship with Indonesia is predicated on the ‘stability’ achieved in the Soeharto era. As this period draws to a close, the role of Islam is one of the biggest imponderables in an uncertain future, says Steven Drakeley.

During his recent prime ministerial visit to Indonesia, Paul Keating was at pains to emphasise positive aspects of the Australia-Indonesia relationship. Accordingly, he reiterated the long-established government view that the stable and pragmatic New Order government of President Soeharto was of immense strategic benefit to Australia. But this sanguine view of the Soeharto government’s stability may shortly require reassessment because Indonesia seems to be standing at, or at least approaching, a significant crossroads.

Although the 71-year old Soeharto is almost certain to be elected unop-
posed to another five-year term when the People’s Consultative Council (MPR) meets next year, his rule must be approaching its end, if only because of his age. Barely muted speculation already abounds in Indonesia as to what changes will take place when the presidency does change hands (for only the second time since independence) and whether the transition to a post-Soeharto era will be smooth or turbulent.

A large number of factors will interact to determine the direction of political developments. One of these is the pivotal role that Islamic forces could play, as they have in previous political transitions. For centuries, Islam has had an influential role in Indonesian political affairs. It would be surprising if this were not the case, given that the overwhelming majority of the Indonesian population have long professed the Islamic faith (approximately 87% according to figures released a decade ago).

Yet Indonesia is not an Islamic state. Indeed, Islam has been characterised as a political ‘outsider’ throughout its history in Indonesia, and Indonesian Muslims have been described as a ‘majority with a minority mentality’. Certainly, Islam appears to have continued to occupy a political ‘outsider’ position throughout the New Order period, despite being a crucial political midwife at its birth. But is this now about to change?

There is no doubt that in the social and religious spheres, Islam has made spectacular strides in the last 20 years, and the pace seems to be accelerating, particularly among young people. Vivid testimony is provided to the casual observer by the preponderance of young women now choosing to wear a variant of Islamic female attire, the jilbab (a headscarf which covers the hair, neck and shoulders, leaving only the face exposed). As a recent issue of the influential weekly Indonesian magazine, Tempo, acknowledged in a major article, the process of ‘santrisation’ is making great strides. (Santri is a term used to refer to those who practice a more orthodox variant of Islam, their counterparts, the ‘nominal Muslims’ are often referred to as abangan.) This process, more commonly called islamisation, can only result in Islam gaining considerable social weight. Can this increased social weight be prevented from manifesting itself politically?

Perhaps the clearest indication that it cannot, is revealed by the new stance that Soeharto seems to have adopted towards Islam. He and members of his family have taken considerable pains to display more orthodox Islamic behaviour in the last couple of years, culminating in their much publicised performance of the Haj (pilgrimage to Mecca) last year. This is especially significant since hitherto Soeharto was reputed to incline strongly towards Kejawen (a blend of mystical Islam and pre-Islamic Javanese traditional beliefs).

Other more tangible pro-Islam initiatives have also been taken recently. Substantial funds have been allocated to Islamic projects such as the building of mosques and other facilities, the authority of religious courts has been boosted, greater emphasis has been given to Islamic teachings in the national curriculum, Muslim girls (after years of agitation) are now allowed to wear jilbabs in school, and a government-sponsored Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) has been established, as has the country’s first Islamic-style bank.

The government was also quick to side with those Muslims who demanded action be taken against the hapless editor of the Monitor, a popular newspaper which recently ran foul of Islamic sensibilities. The editor was sentenced to five years in jail for blasphemy and the Monitor’s publishing licence withdrawn. Now, in response to these overtures, most Islamic organisations have vociferously called for Soeharto’s election to a sixth five-year term, going so far as to hold a mass prayer in the capital with that objective. Does this mean that Islam has finally crossed the threshold and become a political ‘insider’? An answer can only be attempted from a historical perspective.

Islam in Indonesia is far from being uniform. As Islam spread throughout the islands that became Indonesia, it was adopted in an interactive process with the prevailing local customs, traditions and beliefs. To a large extent, these local differences, which can be found throughout the Islamic world, are inconsequential. But for reasons which are not entirely clear there developed a cleavage within the Indonesia Islamic community based on quite different levels of commitment to orthodoxy.

This helps explain the apparent paradox of a religion which is adhered to by an overwhelming proportion of the population, yet which is described as a political outsider, and is regarded, and at times has seemed even to regard itself, as a minority religion. This is so because it is really ‘orthodox’ Islam which occupies this ‘outsider’ position. Islamic orthodoxy is not (or at least was not) accepted by the majority of Indonesian Muslims. Moreover, the santri variant of Islam was for the most part rejected by the traditional ruling elite of Java, who preferred a sophisticated version of abangan beliefs.

But other factors too have played an important part in the development and maintenance of this paradox, notably the policies of Indonesia’s colonial rulers. Although the Dutch resisted any temptations to attempt the full-scale Christian conversion of Indonesia, they preferred to work and rule through traditional rulers who were either non-Islamic or less committed to Islamic orthodoxy. Dutch policy and practice contributed to the creation of Indonesian Islam’s character as an ‘outsider’, and helped to ensure that this character would continue into the post-colonial era. It did so in two main ways. Firstly, Dutch policy heightened the existent animosity between the traditional ruling groups, supported by Dutch power, and Islamic religious leaders who were suspected and constrained by that same power.

Secondly, belated Dutch attempts to produce a western-educated elite to staff the colonial bureaucracy helped to ensure the development of a secular-minded independence movement. Overwhelmingly, the tiny few who received a western education were drawn from the traditional ruling elites and were thus on the whole predisposed against Islamic orthodoxy, an inclination which their western education would have done little to dispel. It was from the ranks of this western-educated elite that most of Indonesia’s nationalist political
leaders stepped to lead Indonesia to independence.

Although many of the ‘secular nationalists’ were Muslims, some even quite devout, they accepted a ‘church-state’ division, seeing it as indispensable to the creation of a modern nation state. This attitude placed them in a position of fundamental opposition with the ‘Islamic nationalists’ for whom the establishment of an Islamic state was the ultimate objective. The independent state which was established in 1945 was effectively secular, although face was saved for the Islamic nationalists by the inclusion of ‘Belief in God’ as the first principle in the five principle state ideology known as Pancasila.

The post-independence military-political leadership around Soeharto was unsympathetic towards Islamic political ambitions—not without some justification. Islam was now the only intact civilian political force capable of posing any challenge to New Order authority, precisely because Islam remains ultimately beyond the ability of the state to control. But if the New Order regime has been about anything during its 25 years in power, it has been about establishing, in the name of development and stability, an unprecedented degree of social control. Accordingly, Islam bore the brunt of state efforts to construct a top-down political system with severely limited scope both for civilian input into the political process.

Since the Pancasila is held to include all that is legitimately Indonesian, it follows that anything deemed to be outside of its embrace is illegitimate in the Indonesian context, and hence deserving of repression or expulsion. Furthermore, since the Pancasila is wholly inclusive, then in a system of ‘Pancasila democracy’, legitimate political debate can proceed only from the basis of an absolute shared acceptance of the Pancasila. This acceptance also implies a rejection of ‘oppositionist’ behaviour (a concept which includes the practice of western democracy) because Pancasila democracy is based on the principle of a consensus which embraces everybody. Therefore, those who raise the banner of Islam as a political ideology are seen to have automatically placed themselves outside the legitimate political process and beyond the philosophical pale which inspires it.

Furthermore, the government does not regard its policy as aimed at excluding Islam from the political process. On the contrary, it is aimed at the complete incorporation of Islam into the legitimate political process. Since Islam is an integral part of Indonesian society, then it must become a reconciled member of the Indonesian family and take its allotted place in the political process of Pancasila democracy. This, ipso facto, means Islam jettisoning its identity as a separate political entity and with it its traditional penchant (as a political outsider) for providing a pole of attraction for oppositionist tendencies.

By the late 1980s, it appeared that the New Order had succeeded in ‘taming’ Islam politically. Its political representation had shrunk to a shadow of its former self. All Islamic organisations now accepted the primacy of the Pancasila and Islamic energies seemed primarily directed into the ‘safe’ areas of religious and social activities. It is against this background that the recent government behaviour with regard to Islam must be understood.

In terms of gestures, Soeharto has certainly made a dramatic shift. Nor should gestures be underestimated, especially in the Indonesian context where a great deal of politics is played out at the symbolic level. But nothing has substantially altered in the New Order’s attitude towards the political place of Islam. Independent political activity by Islamic forces, particularly that which mobilises Muslims as Muslims, is as frowned upon as ever.

However, it may be that the government has misjudged the situation by giving the mass-based, religious/social Islamic organisations greater freedom to intervene in specific political questions, albeit cautiously and from within the parameters of the sanctioned discourse. The prime example of this is the major Islamic contribution to the general debate over democratisation and political openness. There is now a huge potential for further Islamic involvement in questions which concern growing numbers of Indonesians, such as land rights, wages and labour conditions, and human rights in general. Should Islamic forces become involved on a larger scale in these issues, then certainly the government would be hard pressed to contain the situation without making substantial concessions or resorting to large-scale repression.

Australians’ knowledge about Indonesia, and especially Indonesian Islam, is limited. Irrational fears about populous Asian nations on the one hand, and Islam on the other, are difficult to counter, and episodes such as the closure of the Monitor only tend to encourage them. The Monitor’s crime was to print the results of a reader survey in which readers nominated the person they most admired. In this ranking the prophet Mohammed appeared in eleventh place behind various political figures and popular personalities such as the pop star Iwan Fals. This was regarded as blasphemous since it seemed to be comparing the prophet with ordinary human beings. Some Indonesian Muslims called for the death penalty.

It is one side of Indonesian Islam, but that there is another side is evident from the fact that many devout Muslims vociferously opposed the Monitor closure. Indeed, the Monitor affair was the catalyst which led to the founding of the barely tolerated Democracy Forum, a loose association of prominent and courageous intellectuals, chaired by Abdurrahman Wahid, which aims at the promotion of democracy.

Although it is impossible to predict the future direction that Indonesia will take, significant changes are quite likely before the end of this century and Islam will undoubtedly play a major role in them. It is not impossible that Indonesia will become more democratic and politically open, and Indonesian Islam could certainly be a major contributor to this process. Such a development could only be of good for Australia, since it is the difference between our respective political cultures which is the underlying cause of much of the recent friction in the Australia-Indonesia relationship.

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The rise of the French far right in the 80s sparked anxiety across Europe. Elizabeth Rechniewski contends that the Left's postmodern turn may have been partly to blame. She argues that the western Left needs to return to its older belief in universal human values.
which can be modified or qualified later but which suggest to Le Pen's audience that their views are not overlooked.

It is a common mistake to believe that the Front National is a single issue party obsessed with the alien Arab minority, a response to the increasing immigrant presence. This is to overlook the fact that the FN has an all-encompassing political philosophy with deep roots in French history. It reflects a current of thought that comes to the surface at a time not merely of social and economic crisis, but when the very identity of the French nation seems to be in question, as is now the case with the extension of the European Community. (The Front National is a fervent opponent of the Maastricht Treaty.) It is an ideology that has been carried by different groups over the years, the most recent incarnation being the Poujade movement of the 1950s—a movement of small shopkeepers opposed to the rapid modernisation of France's commerce and industry. Le Pen first entered the French parliament as a Poujade deputy.

However, there have also been certain changes in the ideological forms used by the FN which distinguished it from previous Right movements and which have made the debate between Left and Right more confusing and more complex. Pierre-André Taguieff, perhaps the most widely respected writer on racism in France, has described the move during the 1980s from one type of racism to another as part of a wider move by the Right to transform the parameters of political debate, by appropriating values adopted in the past by the Left and outdoing the Left in advocating them.

Racism in its major forms in the 19th and first half of the 20th century relied on a pseudo-scientific demonstration of the inequality of races, founded on supposed genetic, biological and therefore immutable differences. It established a hierarchy of human races, a ranking of inferior and superior which justified racist practices of exclusion and dominance. The opponents of this kind of racism had recourse to universalistic values: we are all equal, we have more in common than divides us. The battle lines were clear and the scientific consensus worked against the proponents of racism.

But in the 80s, according to Taguieff, developments have taken place on each side of the ideological barricade which have blurred the arguments and undercut somewhat the anti-racist stance. The far Right has found a way of reformulating racist ideology to avoid the discredit cast on the earlier bases for discriminating, by moving away from claims of genetic/biological difference towards theories of cultural difference.

Like its early 20th century predecessors, the FN is strongly nationalistic; highly critical of a 'corrupt' democracy, it aims for an authoritarian regime and a hierarchical society structured to combat 'decadence'. But in a number of important ways the 'Fifty concrete measures concerning immigration' proposed last November by the FN go further, and recall measures taken by the Vichy government during the occupation of France in World War Two. The FN's policy of limiting jobs to French workers and dismissing immigrants before French workers, for example, finds a parallel in the Vichy laws limiting to 2% the number of Jews allowed to practise in certain professions (and banning them from others altogether).Travail, Famille, Patrie (Work, Family, Nation) has also been taken up unchanged by the FN. This slogan deliberately counters the republican motto: Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, discarding the universal values that the revolutionary motto represents. The FN makes no bones about its opposition to the universalistic ideologies encapsulated in documents such as the Declaration of the Rights of Man which—despite their apparently impeccable French origins—are dismissed as 'cosmopolitan' and anti-French.
The irony of this new turn, Taguieff suggests, is that the ground has been prepared in part by the Left and the anti-racists themselves. In the 80s they questioned the ideal of the nation 'united and indivisible', so long an essential aspect of their ideological tradition, and have put increasing emphasis on the right to difference and respect for other cultures.

The Right have seized on this development and have turned it to their own ends. Yes, they agree, cultures are different and must be respected but, for this very reason, it is dangerous to bring them together, for this leads inevitably to a dilution of each culture and therefore to the loss of what is precious and unique. The old horror of the mixing of races reappears under a new guise. It is opposed because it will lead to irreparable loss of cultural difference resulting in an undifferentiated, characterless mass. When the FN argues against the presence of immigrants it claims, therefore, to be seeking to protect a unique culture—French civilisation—against a kind of genocide resulting from the presence of other cultures.

Moreover, the Right argues that it speaks, not only in the interests of its own culture, but also in the immigrants' own interest, because the immigrants' culture will also be adversely affected by contact with another alien and inassimilable culture. Some cultures are considered close to one another of course, so Europeans can intermingle safely. But others are simply too different to be able to be brought together without risk.

In another ironic twist, the FN has clambered on board the ecology bandwagon, using arguments concerning the preservation of endangered species to support their argument for the preservation of endangered cultures! They call themselves not 'écologistes' (for whom they express a great deal of contempt—they are to some extent rivals, since both compete for the votes of those who are disillusioned with the major parties) but 'écologistes'. They are found of quoting Konrad Lorenz's view that nature consists of a struggle between species. For species they substitute culture and add that just as many species are endangered in the world today so, even more importantly, are many cultures which must be protected by any right-thinking 'écologiste'.

The anti-racists, Taguieff argues, have not found a satisfactory response to these ideological moves, for a number of reasons. First, the right to cultural difference is increasingly being claimed by minority groups in fundamentalist and separatist movements among immigrant groups themselves and among Jews. There is a demand among some for exclusively Muslim schools in France, while certain rabbis have attempted to re-emphasise the uniqueness of the Jews and the impossibility of separating religion and politics. In such situations the most unexpected and dangerous alliances can take place.

Secondly, the ideological position of the Left has been weakened by its questioning of the universalist values embodied in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, a questioning characteristic of French post-structuralist theory. If what Jean-Francis Lyotard describes in La Condition Postmoderne as the great universalising myths have died, if we cannot agree on common values which transcend each culture, enshrined in the equal rights and capacities of the individual, or if we cannot appeal to a reason common to all, then the grounds for a meeting of cultures are thin indeed.

Further problems are created by the Left's abandonment of the jacobin tradition of the strong central state imposing universalist principles and a national culture on an often unwilling population. The French school system—less highly centralised than in the past—now plays a less important unifying role. The state is increasingly reduced to being a mere facilitator of economic progress as a result of the acceptance by the Socialist government in France of the need to open up the economy to market forces. The decline of the state has opened the way to the ideology of the nation.

Racism is not, of course, merely a result of ideological adroitness, the ability to cobble together a convincing argument and spread it effectively. The principal reason that the Front has met with some success are the underlying social, economic, political and psychological crises that beset the French today. Moreover, the FN has shown an ability (which has not been typical of other European far-right parties) to unify under the same banner different groups including Catholic fundamentalists, revisionist historians and dissatisfied police unions. Their increasingly populist stand on economic issues which directly contradicts their earlier Reaganite position against state intervention in the labour market, makes them even more attractive to former communist voters. To combat the ideology of the Front is first and foremost to combat the conditions that make it possible; among them the effective ghettoisation of immigrant groups in the 'cités' and extremely high unemployment, particularly among young people.

However, Taguieff contends that to counter the Right's manoeuvrings it might also be necessary to return to some kind of universalist stance. This might require arguing that the preservation of cultural difference is not the only value to be promoted in the meeting of groups. And this would, in turn, involve questioning the acceptance of the cultural relativism that has become an axiom of much recent leftist thought. How far can respect for cultural difference go?

In the name of cultural difference do we respect the rights of families to practise cliterodectomy, to take two wives, or to marry their daughters against their will? Hampered by a bad attack of historical bad conscience, terrified of appearing superior and therefore racist in the old definition of the term, not wanting to repeat the mistakes of past centuries of missionary intervention, the Left seems to have lost the will to judge and to fight for the rights of individuals when they conflict with those of 'culture'.

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TRIBES AND Tribulations

The West expected that the fall of the Najibullah regime would bring peace to Afghanistan. It did nothing of the sort: the country is still in turmoil. Mihail Konarovsky examines the complex ethnic roots of the continuing conflict.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in late 1991, the unresolved problems and ambitions of its constituent republics have posed ever more complicated challenges to the emerging multipolar world order.

The newly independent Central Asian states, which have close ethnic, cultural, and religious ties with neighbouring Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan (as well as, to some extent, with Pakistan), have embarked on active foreign policy aimed at establishing comprehensive contacts with the region, against the background of growing Turkish and Islamic sentiment. Clearly, the decline of the USSR has exerted a crucial influence on developments in Afghanistan in particular.

The withdrawal of Soviet troops by March 1989, and the 1991 understanding with Washington to stop supplying arms to rival parties, marked the end of Soviet support for the Najibullah regime—and this, in turn, determined the fate of his government. In late April 1992 it fell, and the country was proclaimed an Islamic republic. But the question of whether the long period of instability and intolerance has really come to an end remains open. Indeed, the ambiguous and controversial developments there since the mujahideen seized power could be seen as indicating merely that the country has entered a new power struggle, this time among the mujahideen themselves.

The first step taken by the new regime was the comprehensive Islamicisation of the country’s political, social, and cultural life. Such a policy seems to be logical since the ‘holy war’ against the ‘infidel’ marxist regime and the Soviet occupation was the main political and ideological core of the mujahideen struggle which kept the otherwise separate and unco-ordinated groups together.

Today’s leaders in Kabul are likely to continue regarding comprehensive Islamicisation as the basis of political con-
The pillars of mujahideen unity over the last 14 years crumbled swiftly after the 1988 Geneva accords which laid down the schedule for withdrawal of the Soviet troops. After the last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan in February 1989, the rebels’ mutual suspicion and distrust turned into open hostility. Bloody clashes broke out among various factions, principally between supporters of Ahmad Shah Masoud (who was identified with the minorities’ movement) and G Hekmatyar (the most powerful and irrecconcilable leader of the militant Pushtun majority) despite the enormous efforts of Pakistan and Iran to unify them. That fact largely secured the survival of the Najibullah government over the last three years despite the gradual decrease in Soviet support. With the downfall of the regime, however, the last strand of mujahideen unity disappeared.

solidation while they attempt to solve the urgent economic and social problems which might prevent the country becoming involved in regional integration. Ties with neighbouring Pakistan, as well as Iran and rich Arab nations (especially Saudi Arabia)—the countries which had supported the mujahideen movement over more than a decade—are considered to be the most important factor in overcoming the bitter consequences of civil war.

At the same time, the country’s history indicates that Islam, while an important element, may not be the crucial one in determining further developments there. Rather, the interrelationship of the various ethnic groups in the country is likely to be the main factor influencing the future alignment of the various political forces.
Although submerged by the war against the Soviets, confrontation between the Pushtun (Afghan) majority (about 6.5 million strong, with traditional roots in the south and south-west), and the Tajik (3.5 million) and Uzbek (about one million) minorities of the North, as well as Hazara (about one million) Shiite Muslims in the western and central parts have, over decades, been at the core of the country’s domestic problems. The political map of Afghanistan has been shaped by the territorial expansion of the Pushtuns from the south and south-east to the north. It was their tribes which laid the cornerstone of the first centralised Afghan state in the mid-18th century, and which (in 1919) proclaimed the restoration of the country’s independence from British rule. That fact traditionally ensured the Pushtun’s key positions in the country’s political and military hierarchy. Migration to the northern and central areas was aimed at enhancing their political and economic influence.

But, against that background, the Tajiks, Uzbeks and, to some extent, Hazaras remained ascendant in economic and cultural spheres bolstered by massive flows of ethnically kindred refugees from Russian Turkestan and the Bokhara Emirate in the 1920s and 1930s. The Tajiks are heirs to centuries-old Iranian material culture, such as settled farming, trade and handicrafts as well as classic literature and fine arts. Experience has urged the Pushtuns towards assimilation with them, resulting in the gradual emergence of the Pushtun-Tajik ‘marriage of convenience’. The Pushtuns saw this as a way of obtaining a more advanced economic position, while the Tajiks sought to bring into reality long-standing ambitions to increase the extent of their role in the country’s politics. However, the process failed to lead to the emergence of any kind of unified national state.

Ethnic suspicions have also consistently hampered the development of any nationwide political movements. The official 1960s doctrine of Afghaniyat (a united and indivisible Afghan nation) was the basic model for President Daud’s Party of National Revolution. But its slogans failed to unite the country, not so much because of anxiety about the growth of strong political associations, but more as the result of strong opposition from minorities. The inability of the leftwing Watan party (which split into two main Pushtun and Tajik factions) to overcome nationalistic prejudices, bedevilled it from the moment of its formation in the mid-1960s. None of the factions could overcome ethnic differences even after they overthrew Daud in April 1978.

The growing role of ethnic minorities in Afghanistan’s politics after 1978 paralleled the revival of Islam as a reaction to the pro-communist coup. The new constitution drawn up after 1978 proclaimed for the first time the equality of all nationalities, ethnic groups and tribes. But the scope to turn these slogans into reality remained extremely limited in the face of a society divided fundamentally along ethnic lines. Marxism and the comprehensive Soviet efforts to unite the country failed. But the same was also true of the opposition since all the principal mujahideen groups were largely based on ethnic identity. The Tajik-dominated movement under Ahmad Shah Masjoud in the north, politically bolstered by the Jamatiat-e-Islami party in Peshawar, has never identified with the Pakistan-based Pushtun resistance of the south and south-west, nor with the Iran-oriented groups of Shiite mujahideen in the central and western provinces.

The rise of minority consciousness was also inevitably influenced by the dramatic changes in the world and in the region after the end of the Cold War—including, of course, the unprecedented eruption of nationalist movements. The emergence of independent nation states from the former Soviet republics on the other side of Afghanistan’s northern borders, and the revival of their historical, religious and ethnic identity had a direct impact on developments in Afghanistan. At the same time, mujahideen from the country’s northern provinces have attempted to exert their own influence on the unfolding events in Central Asia. Openly inciting the revival of radical Islam there, Afghanistan’s mujahideen have established direct ties with new Islamic movements in neighbouring Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

If ethnic confrontation worsens in post-Najibullah Afghanistan, the country is unlikely not only to be able to restore peace, but even to maintain its unified nationhood in the long run. But it is quite obvious that the Tajiks, Uzbeks and other minorities will not abandon their aim of maintaining strong positions in the north and west in order to bargain with Kabul for a new status for their region, more independent of any central power than in the past.

The objectives of the Pushtuns’ shaky alliances are more complicated. While they hope to regain their traditional predominance both in the Afghan state and, as far as possible, over the whole country, such goals are unattainable at present. Sooner or later they will be forced to accept a new alignment of forces in the country and will have to make concessions. Whatever those concessions are, they have to be reciprocated. Today’s rivals must meet each other halfway in order to prevent a territorial split which would inevitably have a serious impact on regional stability.

For the foreseeable future, Afghanistan is unlikely to have a nationwide leader who could consolidate all ethnic groups and resolve differences between them. Instead, the situation seems to be moving to the brink of a crisis. The most probable future scenario for the country will be the coexistence of a reasonably weak central power with the broad influence of local leaders in their respective provinces. The main task of the central government in this situation would be the prevention of the physical disintegration of the country, an event which would be extremely unwelcome for Afghanistan’s immediate neighbours, but which cannot be ruled out. The wisest course of action for the mujahideen would be to form a compromise central government, which might control finance, defence and foreign relations, but to devolve broad economic and cultural powers to provinces or national enclaves. Following the Lebanese experiment, power-sharing might allow for a Pushtun president and a Tajik prime minister, with proportional ethnic representation in the legislature.
Foreign influences will clearly have a major say in whether such a desirable situation comes about. During the war, the main outside players were, on the one hand, the USSR and, on the other, Pakistan, the USA, Iran and Saudi Arabia. But in the new regional and global circumstances, neither Washington nor Moscow is likely to play a critical role in Afghanistan. The United States lost interest after the Soviet withdrawal, and returned to its traditional view on Afghanistan as a nation of little political and economic significance, and certainly not one of vital interest. Instead, Washington 'discovered' Central Asia for the first time.

At the same time, Russia, which has inherited the bulk of what remains of the former USSR's foreign policy, is now preoccupied with its own enormous economic and social problems, and with clearing up its relations with its new neighbours, including those in Central Asia. The long-term policy toward Kabul will most probably be determined by Russia's relations with the Central Asian nations, as well as with Iran and Pakistan. Moscow is now politically as well as both geographically distant from Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's immediate neighbours such as Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan will play more significant roles. None of them is likely to be interested in exacerbating ethnic friction in the country. An increase in separatist sentiments in the north will inevitably result in a turbulent upsurge of Pushtun nationalism all over Afghanistan and demands for revenge. Against that background, old demands to create a 'united Pushtunistan' on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border might appear on the agenda again. This traditional source of conflict between the two countries, despite having been significantly decreased over years of war in Afghanistan, nevertheless remains a latent cause of tension between Kabul and Islamabad.

If such sentiments deepen, the situation in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province would be seriously aggravated, causing general instability throughout the country. Islamabad does not need to be reminded of its own bitter experience in dealing with Peshawar-based Pushtun mujahideen and three million refugees from Afghanistan. With Pakistan increasingly preoccupied with its own policy towards Central Asia—aimed, among other things, at strengthening its political credibility in regional competition with India—any new imbalances on the western flanks would be regarded as unacceptable in Islamabad. On the other hand, to forestall events Pakistan might reanimate the four-decade old doctrine of confederation with Afghanistan, but now attempting to embrace only that country's Pushtun areas. But in the long run such an attempt seems certain to put a new time-bomb under Pakistani domestic stability.

Neither is Iran likely to be interested in becoming embroiled in impending ethnic quarrels in Afghanistan either. Nevertheless, to ensure its political presence there, Tehran will strongly insist that the Hazara Shia minority of the central and western regions be incorporated into governmental structures. If ethnic intolerance gains momentum, Tehran, which traditionally considers these parts of Afghanistan to be within its sphere of influence, might not be able to avoid the temptation of strengthening its ties with Shiite muslim parties which have been fostered and fed by Iran over more than a decade. The predominance of Tajiks who are culturally close to Iran in the north, and Hazaras (who are close to Tehran religiously) in the central and western parts, might in the long run fuse together Iranian political ambitions both in Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Uzbekistan (the largest and potentially the most powerful of Afghanistan's neighbours to the north) as well as Tajikistan and Turkmenistan—all with populations kindred to those in the north of Afghanistan—are preoccupied in dealing with economic crises, maintaining their own domestic harmony, and deepening newly established relations with Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Their governments' grave concern over the possible disintegration of Afghanistan is evident. But if a split did seem to be on the cards, Central Asia would necessarily be involved in the process as well, however reluctantly. Nationalistic and religious factions in the republics may voice support for such movements so as to strengthen their own positions at home.

Uncertainties in Afghanistan might simultaneously aggravate interregional relations in Central Asia as a whole. Tajiks in Afghanistan will inevitably continue to keep an eye on Tajikistan as a potential ally both for enhancing their traditional ambitions in Afghanistan, and in case of worsening relations with the country's Turkic Uzbek and Turkmen populations. For its part, Uzbekistan, with a larger population (17 million) than Afghanistan's (15 million) is unlikely to refrain from backing its ethnic brothers in an emergency. Pan-Turkic ideals, which have deep roots in Afghanistan as well, will only exacerbate this process. Hence, the new challenges in Afghanistan will become the first test for Central Asian republics in dealing with regional affairs.

To prevent such bitter scenarios being played out in post-Najibullah Afghanistan and its neighbours, all the regional players need to demonstrate maximum discretion and cooperation in their actions. Economic and financial assistance might be the main leverage for them in Afghanistan's affairs. That country's future admission to regional economic associations would certainly help. But the country is unlikely to be restored without massive international aid. Any such assistance should be administered only by the central government, so that it may be effectively monitored by the UN. Neither the USA nor Russia, despite the heavy burden of its transition towards a market economy, can afford to stand aside from such a process.

These two policy streams—domestic and regional—might together promote a peaceful outcome of the impending crises in Afghanistan. If they are not successfully implemented, however, the future Afghanistan could easily become the detonator in a deteriorating situation in post-Cold War Asia.

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On the Game

The prostitution debate seems entrenched, with ‘Left’ libertarians facing off social conservatives. But Belinda Carpenter is uneasy. She contends that both sides in the long-running debate share the same dubious assumptions about what prostitution is. The answer may be a more complex approach to the question.

The prostitution debate in recent years has taken on a very familiar guise. In the Right corner we have the conservative, religious, anti-sex anti-prostitution lobby; in the Left corner the libertarian, pro-sex, pro-prostitution contingent. The conservative Right argues for the retention of criminal law as it currently stands, while the libertarian Left promotes the decriminalisation, and often legalisation, of prostitution and related activities. But is this debate really as clear-cut and divisive as it appears in policy documents and in the media? And is this dichotomy the only way in which the prostitution debate can be understood?

I want to argue here that despite the apparently opposed stances, both sides of the debate define their respective positions through access to the same assumptions about and understandings of pornography. Moreover, these ways of understanding prostitutes and clients have only become available since the nineteenth century. This puts paid to many prevailing assumptions about the longevity of the institution (including those by Queensland’s Criminal Justice Commission), including the depiction of prostitution as ‘the oldest profession’. This historical grounding for the debate also suggests that the current way of understanding the issue as an either/or scenario is not somehow etched into the foundation-stones of modern society. This helps make space for new understandings of prostitution, prostitutes and clients than the current divisive (and clearly unproductive) debate. As a means of focussing this analysis I want to look in particular at the prostitution debate in Queensland arising out of the Fitzgerald Inquiry (1987-88).

The Fitzgerald Inquiry uncovered a thriving prostitution industry. The inquiry discovered that not only was ‘vice’ largely unpolicied, but politicians and police also had a
vested monetary interest in keeping 'the oldest profession' alive. The Fitzgerald Report alleged that in mid-1981 "the first steps were taken to organise payments in relation to prostitution" and "by the end of 1984, police protection of prostitution was well established".

A central recommendation of the Fitzgerald Inquiry was the establishment of the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC), an integral aspect of whose review program was to be the examination of the criminal laws "relating to voluntary sexual or sex-related activities". Specifically, this meant the "type, availability and costs of law enforcement resources which would be necessary effectively to police criminal laws against such activities" and "the extent (if at all) to which any presently criminal activities should be legalised or decriminalised". In March 1991 the CJC released a Review of Prostitution-Related Laws in Queensland. According to the CJC, "the purpose of the paper was to inform members of the community of the various issues and then to seek input from the public and organised groups". A total of 117 separate submissions was received; their general tenor was summarised by the CJC in its report on prostitution, Regulating Morality? An Inquiry into Prostitution in Queensland, tabled in September 1991. Their general summary maintains that "(t)here were almost equal numbers of submissions in favour of legalisation or decriminalisation of some kind as there were those totally opposed to any relaxation of criminal sanctions". Interestingly, the CJC's recommendations centred on a strategy of
decriminalisation with regulation. Fundamental to this strategy was the form that the regulation should take, which appeared as a board of appointees, responsible to the Minister for Health, but having the overall role of regulating and monitoring the prostitution industry. However, the CJC's own seven-member parliamentary committee voted four to three against accepting these recommendations—a decision which has since been upheld in state parliament.

Currently the prostitution debate in Queensland is at an impasse. This appears to be the result of trying to understand prostitution outside of its historical context. I want to argue here that, rather than understanding prostitutes and clients as well-worn players in the 'oldest profession', it may be more productive to recognise that our current way of 'arguing the prostitution debate' is an outcome of new ways of looking at prostitution introduced in the 19th century. Specifically, it was the rise of medical, criminological, psychological and scientific discourses, accompanied by changes in established religious knowledge (specifically the relationship between morality and sexual behaviour), which situated the behaviour of prostitute and client alike chiefly in terms of their sexuality. In several important respects, then, both of the main opposing positions in the current debate share common underlying assumptions derived from that 19th century experience.

In the policy documents released by the CJC during 1991, both sides of the debate appear able to identify and discuss prostitutes and clients as well-worn players in the 'oldest profession', it may be more productive to recognise that our current way of arguing the prostitution debate is an outcome of new ways of looking at prostitution introduced in the 19th century. Specifically, it was the rise of medical, criminological, psychological and scientific discourses, accompanied by changes in established religious knowledge (specifically the relationship between morality and sexual behaviour), which situated the behaviour of prostitute and client alike chiefly in terms of their sexuality. In several important respects, then, both of the main opposing positions in the current debate share common underlying assumptions derived from that 19th century experience.

In the submission received by the CJC most concern centred on the use of the term 'sex worker'. The Australian Family Association, the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, the Joint Church Social Justice Group, a Professor B and a Reverend Father M were among many who objected to the use of the term 'sex worker'. "In their opinion," the report explains, "the term gives a veneer of respectability to an occupation which is based on promiscuity and which they believe should remain socially unacceptable." Those in support of the CJC recommendations were also concerned with the terminology, not the definition. Thus it was claimed that "social disapproval should not be reflected in the name of a person's occupation". This taken-for-granted understanding of what it means to be a prostitute (by the women involved, the community and the government) is a relatively recent phenomenon, not stable until the late 19th century.

It was during British parliamentary inquiries of the 1830s and 1840s (investigating working conditions in factories and mines), that Anglophone governments became involved with the sexuality of their citizens. Concern was increasingly directed towards those women who worked outside the family home in factories where the lack of sex segregation and late hours was believed to guide both their moral and spiritual degradation. While these women were increasingly understood by the authorities as immoral and/or promiscuous, according to Jeffrey Weeks "there is plentiful evidence that in fact (these working class women)...had a very clear set of ethics of their own which survived for a considerable time". 'Bundling' (intimate but fully clothed and ritualistic forms of petting, cuddling and courtship in bed), the tradition that sexual relationships could begin at betrothal, and the continuance of common-law partnerships testify to this different relationship between sexuality and morality for the new working class in the early 19th century.

However, while this may have been the case, as both Linda Mahood and Judith Walkowitz demonstrate, many women who did not see themselves as prostitutes were nevertheless identified as such by police or doctors in the 1860s and 1870s, during the time of the Contagious Diseases Acts (CD Acts) in Britain. Moreover, they were ashamed to be labelled as such and feared reprisals from husbands, parents and neighbours if such 'knowledge' of themselves was made public. This is an excellent example of the way in which social definitions can subtly mould and transform the personal meaning given to sexual activity. For Walkowitz and Mahood, this represents increasing state control of working class women's sexuality. Whether or not this is the case, it certainly demonstrates a mismatch between the official definitions of prostitution and popular conceptions of 'being a prostitute'.

Not surprisingly, discussion of the client materialised when the figure of the prostitute was first being identified in 19th century public policy. However, while the same bodies of knowledge provided definitions of the behaviours of both prostitute and client, the rising notion of the sanctity of the family and the chastity of the wife meant that the double standard excused the client and admonished the prostitute for an activity that came to have very different significance for men and women. This double standard is evident both in arguments that oppose and that support the CJC recommendation of decriminalisation with regulation. Indeed, it could be argued that such a double standard is central to any discussion of the relationship between prostitution, prostitutes and the spread of disease.

Health issues were central to many of the submissions, with opinion divided over the validity of compulsory health checks, but not health checks per se, as part of the regulation strategy and the relation between legalisation of prostitution and the control of sexually transmissible diseases. Some felt that a policy which drives sex workers away from public view (criminalisation) may indirectly encourage the spread of AIDS and STDs.

Health also figured strongly in the arguments of those who opposed decriminalisation. They feared that the legalisa-
tion of prostitution would result "in severe medical and police control of prostitutes; but not in better control of sexually transmitted diseases". A Mr R claimed that the "costs of enforcing the law are relatively small compared to the overall social costs associated with the gradual spread of depravity (including) HIV, AIDS and STDs". Both positions are informed by the medical conception of a relationship between sexual activity (in this case prostitution) and the transmission of disease—a way of thinking about prostitution which has been in currency only since the 19th century.

While at various times since the 14th century prostitutes had been associated with the spread of syphilis, more often than not the association was purely arbitrary. As Linda Mahood demonstrates, in the 15th century in Scotland for example, 'whores' and 'light women' were banished from the town or confined to their homes and/or banned from entering the vicinity of butchers, bakers, brewers and laundries—punishments based on the belief that syphilis was communicated by air. But while next century saw the discovery of an association between sexual activity and the spread of syphilis, in many parts of Scotland at this time it was still believed that "syphilis spread via contact with clothes, personal possessions, baths, kissing and especially breath". Thus, to punish women known to be 'light' through public rebuke and carting, branding, banishment or torture and death cannot be understood as a specifically medical effort to stop the spread of syphilis. And, as Linda Mahood maintains "it is evident that the link between women and dangerous diseases was established long before it was proved that the disease was communicated through sexual intercourse".

The medical understanding of the relationship between syphilis and sexual activity culminated in the passing of the Contagious Diseases Acts in Britain in the 1860s. These were directed toward the sanitary supervision of 'common prostitutes', and allowed women believed by the police to be prostitutes to be arrested and forcibly inspected by doctors for venereal disease if they refused to submit voluntarily. An 'unclean' diagnosis led to internment in a lock hospital for up to nine months.

It is clear that a double standard was in evidence and that this focus on prostitutes as a way of containing the spread of syphilis was as much a product of the new and powerful association between morality and sexuality as it was the rise of new medical knowledge about syphilis. The new punishment of incarceration in the 19th century was promoted to cure not only medically, but morally; thus lock hospitals combined medical treatment of venereal disease with religious teachings and domestic chores.

The belief that government has a responsibility to protect or improve its citizens' morals underpins this 19th century attitude to criminal justice. This question of the proper role of the law was explicitly raised in the CJC's Review paper which asked "Is law an instrument to up hold morality or should it reflect prevailing community attitudes?" Many submissions in support of the CJC proclaimed that "the law should reflect reality and that a refusal to legislate for activities which were commonplace, diminishes community respect for the criminal justice system".

In contrast, a Mr M maintained "that the government should use the law to shape values, behaviour and attitudes in the community...that young people should be able to grow up in a community knowing that its moral values promoted clean living and a healthy lifestyle".

This view, of course, reflects the straightforward belief that prostitution is morally wrong. The Presbyterian church and Professor B maintain "that if there is no moral basis for decision making on public issues such as prostitution, legislators were saying the concepts of right and wrong were irrelevant to government policy and law". Similarly, the Reverend Dr Kim wrote "a community has an obligation to state its moral convictions and practices as a clear guide to its members. The function of any law is to act as a moral restraint/guide". Both sides of the debate agree that the government has a responsibility (by and through the law) towards its citizens. However, according to their preferences, they choose to interpret this responsibility either as protection for the general community from the evils of prostitution, or as protection of the rights of all its citizens as individuals.

'Is a woman a prostitute if she accepts dinner with sex expected?'

Again, this concept has only been thinkable since the 19th century when governments began to gain the apparatus necessary to monitor and regulate populations. Thus, while prostitutes had been the subject of civil and parish laws prior to the 19th century, the system of networks that began to operate to control and regulate them in the 19th century—courts, hospitals, police, prisons—made the permanent identification of 'being a prostitute' more difficult to avoid. It could be argued that previous punishments such as banishment from the town simply allowed known prostitutes to escape their reputation, but it is more probable that the identification of a prostitute as a specific type of (criminal) sexual being was neither desirable nor achievable prior to the 19th century.

It does appear that an increasingly complex government apparatus has led to an increasingly complex array of regulatory practices against prostitutes. While the Contagious Diseases Acts were removed from the statute books in 1886, they were replaced by the Criminal Law Amendment Act which placed prostitution squarely within the new institution of criminal law. However, prostitution's involvement in this rising legislation was only a small part of the state's attempt to formalise its new position in the governing of populations—a role that enabled the state to raise the standard of health and education among the work-
ing class, as well as to legislate for a higher age of consent, and give married women property rights for the first time, for example.

There is still a plethora of governmental regulation relating to prostitution, but the direction of government intervention has been increasingly influenced by notions of social justice. The conviction that, as workers, women in the sex industry have rights to better working conditions and standardisation of wages without the exploitation by pimps, madams or police was an argument used to support the CJC’s recommendations. In the opinion of one educator “(women) have a right to sell their sexual labour and sex workers have a right to safe, legal and humane working environments”. This coincided with the discourse that asserted woman’s right to the integrity of her own body and her agency and choice in the profession of prostitution. For example, Ms S “thought that the present laws discriminate against women and should be repealed”.

Those opposed to decriminalisation were motivated by similar concerns. For example, there was the fear that legalising or decriminalising prostitution would indicate a state sanction for prostitution. The National Council for Women in Queensland “was opposed to any changes in present laws on the grounds that the State would appear socially to approve of the commercialisation and exploitation of women”. Similarly, Mr M and Mr R “thought that any regulation of prostitution by the state...would give prostitution pseudo-legitimacy and protection...and would lend itself to implied community acceptability”. That prostitution exploited women, and that legalisation would do nothing to lessen this, was used by many to add a further dimension to their opposition for the removal of criminal sanctions. Moreover, when survey respondents were given a number of possible areas of concern related to prostitution, 11% in Queensland and 14% in Melbourne were concerned with the fact that prostitution exploits women. This was the third highest concern after AIDS and STDs and prostitution’s relation to crime.

In this case, both sides of the debate have been motivated by (and utilise) the discourse of equity and social justice, arguments that only became associated with the prostitution debate in the 19th century. It was at this time that a general flurry of legislative change and opposition to unjust laws began, which have their basis in the 18th century notions of égalité, and which, according to Jeffrey Weeks, rested on “the abstract rights of all reasonable creatures to self-determination”. Part of this general opposition (which included campaigns as diverse as the abolition of slavery and the acquisition of the vote), was a concern with the rights of prostitutes. This concern was motivated by the proposed extension of the CD Acts beyond the initial eighteen garrison ports and towns (and the fear that respectable working class women would be identified as common prostitutes), but quickly became concern for the prostitutes themselves and an opposition to the Acts in general. The repeal movement (as it came to be known), combined a number of different interest groups; feminist, socialist, liberal and radicals as well as religious groups and working class men and women.

While the original opposition to the CD Acts centred on a challenge to the sanitary arguments of the extensionists—from claims of exaggerated statistics on the incidence of venereal disease to the prohibitive cost and unenforceable nature of extension—the feminist protest introduced arguments concerning the injustice of the acts against women: “(T)he acts violate the legal safeguards hitherto enjoyed by women in common with men; they allow police absolute power over women; they punish the sex who are the victims of vice and leave unpunished the sex who are the main cause of the vice and its dreaded consequences”. The prostitute as the victim of male lust was augmented in the campaign by the socialist-influenced argument that the prostitute was a victim of her poor social conditions, stimulated by industrial capitalism. Both arguments also gained the support of repealers more than a little influenced by the rising evangelism.

Was such a critique of male sexual licence regulatory or emancipatory? I would argue that it was not necessarily either. Rather, it occurred in the 19th century as a result both of the new bodies of knowledge that identified and defined the client, and the new agenda of liberalism, with its notions of individualism and égalité. Both égalité and individualism appear also to have informed feminism, socialism, and evangelicalism—and this, in turn, had a marked impression on the direction of the state’s involvement with prostitution, demarcating the critical point at which women were deemed to need protection, and men prosecution.

The repeal movement’s focus on the client also meant that the latter was made visible for the first time. However, their critique of male sexual licence regulatory or emancipatory? I would argue that it was not necessarily either. Rather, it occurred in the 19th century as a result both of the new bodies of knowledge that identified and defined the client, and the new agenda of liberalism, with its notions of individualism and égalité. Both égalité and individualism appear also to have informed feminism, socialism, and evangelicalism—and this, in turn, had a marked impression on the direction of the state’s involvement with prostitution, demarcating the critical point at which women were deemed to need protection, and men prosecution.

There was also a common view that prostitution provides society with a kind of safety valve against potentially violent men who would not otherwise have their sexual needs met. A submission from AH and JH put it this way: “The Government should legalise prostitution, it has worked well overseas and would help the AIDS problem,
it would cut down on attacks on women and children.” In a similar vein, submissions to the CJC argued that prostitution was necessary for elderly men and those men who are handicapped, lonely and/or unloved; that is, those men who are not serviced adequately by normal women.

The biological model of male sexuality is not however confined to support for the CJC’s recommendations. Those who oppose decriminalisation do not question the model of male sexual drive; rather, they stress control of sexual instincts over and above sexual release, and condemn sexual release outside of marriage. Thus, Dr MMY Kim of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland “saw prostitution as an attack on the fidelity of relationships within marriage and a threat to chaste lifestyle for single persons”. Similarly, The Australian Family Association asserted “that men who use prostitutes have little regard for their wives and that this soon shows itself in the marriage relationship”.

Understanding the male sex drive as essentially active and in constant need of relief was first scientifically legitimated by Charles Darwin. In *The Origin of Species* the Victorian ideal of the active male and the passive female became located in nature. And while the necessity for prostitution to cater for man’s natural propensity for sex was well established before Darwin, his theories placed man’s behaviour outside the realm of the social and into the realm of ‘instinct’. More importantly, however, it gave authority to the current direction of legislation aimed at prostitutes, while simultaneously supporting the prevailing domestic ideology and the double standard.

Men had paid women for sex prior to the 19th century. However, without a strict relationship between sexuality and morality the client (like the prostitute) was not easily identified as committing a sexual or moral transgression. We are told that the demand for prostitution in Europe rose dramatically in the 19th century—Engels estimated that there were 40,000 prostitutes in London in 1845—yet this says more about the new craving to identify the client than about real trends. In England parliament continued to resist formal procedures to identify clients. Yet, by the end of the 1880s, legislation raising the age of consent to 16 provided an increased capacity to do so. This trend was accelerated by an increasingly visible split between society’s private and public spheres. This had specific implications for sex in the public sphere which was now considered quite different and separate from sex in the private sphere.

It is often argued that the ‘double standard’ of 19th century morality allowed men to escape identification in the relationship of morality and sexuality. However, this is clearly not the case. During the 19th century society gained an increasing capacity to regulate the types of extra-marital sexual behaviours that men could legitimately engage in. Homosexual relations and sexual relations with children and animals for example, were identified, named and understood as perverse by social theorists and conceived of as illegal by the state. Similarly, men’s involvement with prostitution was examined by criminologists, psychoanalysts and sociobiologists; it became, however (and still is), the extramarital sexual relation sanctioned by the state.

The prostitution debate as it currently stands, then, is a product of the rise of specific bodies of knowledge impinging upon the conceptions of the prostitute and the client since the 19th century. To continue to see prostitutes and clients simply as familiar players in ‘the oldest profession’ misunderstands the nature of prostitution, placing it outside history and into the timeless realm of the ‘natural’. It particularly behoves policymakers to be aware that prostitution as we know and understand it is not an integral aspect of civilisation—contrary to the spirit of the proposed Queensland legislation, which argues that “very few societies during the course of recorded history have been free from prostitution and it seems an unrealistic expectation to eradicate it from ours”.

Moreover, these ways of understanding prostitution are common to both sides of the current ‘debate’. This might suggest that the current positions available in the prostitution ‘debate’ are rather less than satisfactory. It might also suggest that a space exists to move beyond the narrow confines of those current parameters of debate. I would suggest this requires a shift from the current either/or fixation of the prostitution debate to an approach that stresses the need for historically specific answers to community concerns about prostitution—concerns that are not easily constructed in terms of the simple dichotomies of the conservative/libertarian opposition.

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Chewing the Crud

Bob Collins, defending Pay TV, recently stood up for TV 'crud'. As Terry Flew explains it, he unintentionally put his foot in it.

Bob Collins, the new Minister for Transport and Communications, makes an unlikely 20th century Marie Antoinette. Yet his recent comment on the Pay TV debate that, if people want to pay to watch "crud", then he won't tell them not to, both recalls that ill-fated 18th century monarch and points to an increasingly vexing question in cultural policy.

Recent analyses of popular culture have insisted that audiences are not dupes or stooges, brainwashed and manipulated by the corporate heavyweights but, rather, are discriminating in their uses of popular culture and derive particular pleasures from such forms; that the academic, activist or expert does not possess a 'critical distance' from these forms which enables them to exercise all-encompassing judgments upon popular culture; and that attempts at social engineering to force audiences to consume 'higher' or 'better' forms of culture are likely to be actively resisted. In short, what's wrong with crud, and who says it's wrong?

Yet in the arena of cultural policy these observations can lead to some unintended consequences. The defence of popular judgment against criticism from cultural elites can be interpreted as leading to the conclusion that only market mechanisms and commercial principles can give the people what they want, and that any attempts to set guidelines upon product are undemocratic and counter-productive. In its most extreme form, this would suggest that public broadcasters should either be privatised or should have any specific 'cultural' mandates removed from their charters, and that regulations upon commercial broadcasters, such as those for diversity, innovation and Australian content in their programming, should be lifted.

Ten years ago this was not a problem for cultural studies. Its origins in the marxist critique of mass culture enabled its theorists to say with confidence that mass culture was bad and operated as a means of keeping the otherwise militant masses in line through the instruments of 'false consciousness'. The main line of criticism of this monolithic view of popular culture came from British cultural studies, which argued that some forms of popular culture were sites of resistance of counter-hegemony. Even so, this only really meant a slight loosening of the strictures of 'correct' forms of popular culture, allowing Billy Bragg and The Young Ones to join Bertolt Brecht and 'socialist realist' cinema on the list of politically-correct forms of cultural consumption.

This 'Left' critique of popular culture was always fraught with problems. First, it fitted in all too well with the traditional conservative critique of popular culture as inherently vulgar, and which stressed the need for cultural guardians from either the churches or the middle classes to exercise some discipline over popular pleasures. Second, it was based upon a contrived defence of 'authenticity' over artificiality. (In the 1950s American blues artists such as Big Bill Broonzy were required to play acoustic guitars for their 'educated' British audiences, even though they now played electric guitar to their hometown audiences in the US.) This led to its third problem; it drew its assumptions about popular audiences from sociology textbooks rather than from an understanding of, and engagement with, the ways in which popular cultural forms are actually used in everyday life.

The analysis was inherently anti-television. As the great 'Leviathan in the loungeroom', television was the medium least likely to produce anything but 'crud culture,' with its concentrated patterns of ownership, assembly-line forms of production, dependence upon advertising and privatised patterns of consumption, not to mention the overwhelming influence of American programs. The ABC, as the bastion of British-style moral uplift and mass education, was the only hope of redemption.

The influence of postmodernism in cultural studies has dramatically transformed this discourse. Postmodern accounts of popular culture emphasise the aestheticism of everyday life, the collapse of the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture, its rediscovery of audiences, and its emphasis upon stylistic promiscuity, irony, pastiche and playfulness. Everything from afternoon soaps to rugby league, and game shows to disco music, can now be discussed and assessed openly and, indeed, celebrated rather than remaining a guilty secret. Yet it has, on occasion, led to peculiar inversions of the old orthodoxy—such as John Docker's claim that the commercial sector has been the true innovator in Australian television, despite the shackling effects of public regulation aimed at making it more like the ABC. This claim was adopted (not surprisingly) by FACTS to bolster its case for both deregulation of its own activities and to argue against the introduction of Pay TV.

Where do these new directions in cultural studies leave us in terms of assessing the pros and cons of introducing Pay TV? In a quandary. The critics are most likely correct in arguing that Pay TV will give us more 'crud culture'—reruns of MASH and Here's Lucy, 'reality television', more sports coverage, made-for-video movies and shows about sex with audience participation. In other words, something like we've already got with the free-to-air system. To many this might seem a strong cultural case against the introduction of Pay TV.
But we have to be careful not to leap to this conclusion too quickly. As Robert Clark points out in the last ALR, the internationalisation of television, arising from technological and commercial imperatives, is already afoot. The failure to develop our own Pay TV system would more likely still see such systems beamed into our loungerooms from offshore. To the extent to which there are positive spinoffs from such systems, it is obviously enhanced if they are developed locally rather than imported from overseas. Again, the technological and economic benefits from the extension of the optical fibre cable network are considerable, and Pay TV provides a major stimulus to their development. Australia has missed too many technological boats to opt to let another one go by.

More importantly for my purpose here, a blanket judgment about what is and isn't crud, and what therefore is and isn't good for Australian audiences, is very difficult to make. To place 'crud' in a subordinate position to so-called 'quality' forms in terms of innovativeness, diversity, export potential or, indeed, political subversiveness is to miss the whole point of the cultural theory whose significance I've noted above. Programs like Roseanne, Married With Children, The Simpsons, Acropolis Now!, Donohue and Sex cannot simply be written off as audiovisual chewing gum in the way in which the older paradigm of cultural studies would have done.

Perhaps the safest, if not the sexiest, conclusion to be reached about the pros and cons of the introduction of Pay TV, is that economic rather than cultural arguments should perhaps be paramount. On this view, the likelihood of deriving benefits for the local industry and the national economy from Pay TV will depend upon devising appropriate policies for the broadcasting sector overall. This requires considering the successes and the failings of the current free-to-air system and its regulatory apparatus.

Australian broadcasting content rules have been criticised as being bureaucratic and elitist, but one positive effect has been that industry output, particularly in the area of drama, has been quite out of proportion to our population and economic position by world standards. Moreover, in the areas of soaps and sport—those two most derided of genres—Australian product has proved to have considerable export capacity. This suggests a continuing need to safeguard Australian production for industry policy as well as cultural reasons. However, there would need to be changes in the forms of such regulations in order to allow for specialist programming, or narrowcasting.

One unique and successful aspect of the Australian television industry has been its mixed pattern of ownership (public and commercial) and its mixture of mass-market and minority programming. It has thus been more flexible in incorporating the demands for American programs than many of the European public monopoly or duopoly systems. At the same time it has been more successful at maintaining a commitment to diversity, innovation and quality than the wholly commercial American system. This suggests that the decision in the amended Broadcasting Services Bill to link the introduction of pay to the introduction of community television, and keep the option open for public broadcasters to enter the sector, will perhaps prove to be an adroit one.

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Foucault of Many Colours

Michel Foucault, by Didier Eribon, translated by Betsy Wing (Harvard University Press 1991), $44.95. Michel Foucault Philosopher, by Timothy J Armstrong (Harvester Wheatsheaf), $38.50. Reviewed by Peter Beilharz.

Who is Michel Foucault? Or rather, who was Foucault? They are, in fact, two very different questions, or at least questions with different answers. Foucault is, for many today, the voice of critical theory. For undergraduates in the 1990s he is the equivalent of Marcuse in the 1960s: the theorist as rebel, defiant, nay-saying. His best-known work—'the prisons book', Discipline and Punish—has many parallels to Marcuse's best-seller, One Dimensional Man (1964). Most strikingly, both are books which paint a black world with a red stripe, or adorn it with a black flag. Both are libertarian attacks on a world cast as totalitarian.

People today talk of a Foucault effect. In the work of some Anglo followers, Foucault's interests in power and in institutions become enabling. They do good work, on medicine, on welfare and psychiatry. For others, Foucault becomes a spray-on, a new hero, Bob Marley sans dreadlocks. Foucault thus becomes an excuse for thinking. But this he was not, did not intend to be.

Foucault is a pop-star, and he was a celebrity. But he also had a history, a biography, a process with a subject, a context which is typically ignored by the zealots, as though his ideas arrived by post or by immaculate conception. History, of course, demands some labour, and some thinking. Of this Foucault was certain, but not all his followers would take the advice as friendly.
Didier Eribon is an editor of Le Nouvel Observateur. He takes Foucault’s advice and that of his forebears. His is the first biography of Foucault—and amusingly, for while the Foucault industry grinds out scholarly and unscholarly guides and monographs by the ream, no one has thought before to locate Foucault, to make him human by telling his story. But this is more. Eribon’s book is brilliant, absolutely brilliant. It is a personal story and an intellectual history, a tragedy with its comic moments and a layering of different cultural registers. It is an achievement of the first order.

Eribon reconstructs the story with loving detail; the childhood, the overbearing paterfamilias, the late blossoming from the provinces to Paris, Foucault’s leading inspiration in thinkers such as Jean Hyppolite and Georges Dumézil, his friendship with the marxist Louis Althusser, the almost inevitable membership of the French Communist Party, the inescapable break with it. Then follows his partial relationship with psychiatry, work as a psychologist, his lifelong love affair with Nietzsche, teaching in Uppsala, Warsaw, Hamburg before becoming a big shot in Paris, historian of madness, come-lately militant photographed with Sartre and megaphone in the streets. Acclaimed publicly for his cranial powers, Foucault remained marginal for his politics and his sexuality, his intellectual concerns with the lower depths growing into personal commitments as well. Ensnared by the anti-psychiatrists, he distanced himself, supporting the victimised lawyer of a paterfamilias, his friend Georges Dumézil, his friendship with the marxist Louis Althusser, the almost inevitable membership of the French Communist Party, the inescapable break with it. Then follows his partial relationship with psychiatry, work as a psychologist, his lifelong love affair with Nietzsche, teaching in Uppsala, Warsaw, Hamburg before becoming a big shot in Paris, historian of madness, come-lately militant photographed with Sartre and megaphone in the streets. Acclaimed publicly for his cranial powers, Foucault remained marginal for his politics and his sexuality, his intellectual concerns with the lower depths growing into personal commitments as well. Ensnared by the anti-psychiatrists, he distanced himself, supporting the victimised lawyer of Baader-Meinhof without extending his support to the client.

Absent from Paris in 1968, Foucault’s political stocks were low, but now, in a position of power and influence, he became the public figure of the civil libertarian—writing petitions for good causes and against the outrages of the world, scuffling with the police in the demonstrations which are part of Parisian everyday life. Who then is Foucault? If he is, today, a stand-in for Marcuse then he does not deserve it, but c’est la vie. We all suffer. Who he was, Eribon begins to unravel.

Who he was, in a symbolic sense, emerges in one light as the Jean-Paul Sartre he constructed his work against. Eribon recounts a good story of misrecognition after Sartre and Foucault had been seen on television together—Foucault walks into a restaurant and someone shouts, “There’s Jean-Paul Sartre”. Foucault’s response: “I’m not sure it was a compliment.” Yet for all their differences, Foucault’s part in recent French culture was that played earlier by Sartre, and their later political association was no accident. When Sartre died, his old enemy Althusser paid tribute to him as “our Jean-Jacques” Rousseau. This accolade could just as well have been given to Michel Foucault.

But surely there’s not just one Foucault? To each their own. My first stay in Paris was above a butcher shop run by Denis Foucault—no relation I guess. So there must be more than one Foucault. The Englishman is, of course, like all things English, more sensible and comprehensible than the obscurantist French. But Foucault’s French followers today too are interested in mundane matters like life insurance, town planning and hospital administration, as well as in Nietzsche and the body.

Foucault’s premature death in 1984 saw, among other events, a major intellectual wake held in celebration in Paris in 1988. The proceedings can now be read in Michel Foucault Philosopher. Contributors include American pragmatist-postmodernist Richard Rorty, Foucault’s old friend and intellectual collaborator Gilles Deleuze, and even some old Althusserians brought out of mothballs: famous folks discussing famous ideas. For Foucauldians this is a treat like Lichtenberg’s opus. For Foucault’s part in recent French culture was that played earlier by Sartre, and their later political association was no accident. When Sartre died, his old enemy Althusser paid tribute to him as “our Jean-Jacques” Rousseau. This accolade could just as well have been given to Michel Foucault.

The story Foucault tells—modern society as the prison—is compelling, but it is only part of the story. Foucault, like Rousseau, cannot resist the romantic exaggeration of the negative; like Nietzsche, Foucault was a philosopher who claimed the privileges of the poet. But unlike Nietzsche, Foucault did not turn his back on suffering. Thus the libertarian pole repels politics back into liberalism, more explicitly into social democracy. The outsider no longer stands at the door, but enters the house of power. Read this way, Foucault looks increasingly like Max Weber—sober but compassionate, sceptical yet optimistic, viewing our fate as the
struggles of the day rather than the polar ice of night.

The problem here is not with Foucault but with us. The problem now is whether there exists a sufficient will to think Foucault in this way, against the dominant current of fin-de-siecle nihilism which too many folks take postmodernity to mean. Black's still hip, as it always has been for bohemians—but it may be better now for radicals to fade to pink, even against a background almost certainly turning a greyer shade of blue. Little wonder Rousseau wept—only he was crying for himself. Foucault's message, by comparison, is dry-eyed. There is still hope that we can do better.

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**Darwin by Adrian Desmond and James Moore (Penguin/Michael Joseph). Reviewed by Jose Borghino.**

This massive 828-page blockbuster opens with a rhetorical rollercoaster. The preface smacks more of a Hollywood adventure movie (I was reminded of the first 15 minutes of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*) than the normally staid and aesthetised prose of 'straight' science:

It is 1839. England is tumbling towards anarchy, with countrywide unrest and riots. The gutter presses are fizzing, fire-bombs flying. The shout on the streets is for revolution. Red revolutionists denounce the props of an old static society: priestly privilege, wage exploitation, and the workhouses. A million socialists are castigating marriage, capitalism, and the fat, corrupt Established Church. Radical Christians join them, hymnsinging Dissenters who condemn the 'fornicating' Church as a 'harlot', in bed with the State.

Even science must be purged: for the gutter atheists, material atoms are all that exist, and like the 'social atoms'—people—they are self-organising. ... The science of life—biology—lies ruined, prostituted, turned into a Creationist citadel by the clergy. Britain now stands teetering on the brink of collapse—or so it seems to the gentry, who close ranks to protect their privileges.

At this moment, how could an ambitious thirty-year-old gentleman open a secret notebook and with a devil-may-care sweep, suggest that headless hermaphrodite molluscs were the ancestors of mankind?

The 'gentleman' in question, of course, was Charles Robert Darwin: Cambridge-trained, once destined for the cloth, well-heeled and 'impeccably Whig' as Adrian Desmond and James Moore, the authors of this biography, describe him. The son of a Shropshire squire, Darwin can rightly be included with Marx and Freud in a troika of 19th century thinkers whose work still profoundly affects our value-systems today.

Despite some moments of boys-own bravado and rhetorical swashbuckle, the rest of the book rarely redeploy the cinematic gusto of the preface. (Just as well, I can hear Darwin say—he would have been greatly troubled by the sensationalist tone of the above excerpt, the repetition of 'gutter', and the salacious metaphors.)

**Darwin** is an entertaining and (in the best sense) journalistic work which deliberately distances itself from the previous biographies that Desmond and Moore see as "curiously bloodless". By contrast, they try to "re-locate Darwin in his age" by writing a "defiantly social portrait", and they largely succeed.

The science in the book is fairly synoptic—which is understandable for a populist work; but too often Desmond and Moore assume a detailed knowledge of 19th Century British history. At one point, for instance, we are told that Cambridge, where Darwin was studying in 1831, was "gripped by election fever". The historical importance of this particular General Election is emphasised and we are told that the two Whig candidates for Cambridge were defeated, but the narrative immediately swerves towards Darwin's preparations for his voyage on HMS Beagle. It takes more than 10 frustrating pages (and six months of narrative time) for Desmond and Moore to let slip parenthetically that the Whigs had been returned to power. This is not suspense, it's an editorial slip—especially when all that was needed was a three-word sentence, 'The Whigs won'.

Desmond and Moore have utilised the flood of primary material recently unleashed by the Darwin Industry: Darwin's secret notebooks have been transcribed and his published correspondence has reached Volume 7 of the 14,000 known letters from and to him.

This new material reveals a fascinating picture of science as an institution
in the 19th century. Science, at the beginning of that century, was the
domain of the dilettante or self-financing gentleman-scholar, and it was not
until mid-century that youngbloods like T H Huxley could begin constituting
themselves as professional 'scientists'; a respectable white-collar body providing the public with a service—instruction—and a commodity—knowledge.

Early 19th century science lay in the hands of country curates and lecturing
parsons whose excursions into biology or geology were financed by the
remnants of a feudal system of privilege, inheritance and elitism. The young Turks like Huxley wanted to sweep the academies clean of the old, amateur spider-stuffers once and for all. This was a time when 'bourgeois' meant radical or even revolutionary, when capitalism was the new threat to tradition, and when liberalism was a dirty word to the powers that be; not the term of approbation it is in our New World Order.

Darwin's relationship to this power structure was always schizophrenic. He was the grandson of a professional (Doctor Erasmus Darwin) on one side, and of the archetypal English entrepreneur of the Industrial Revolution (Josiah Wedgwood) on the other. Darwin's was not a background of titled inheritance, but it was elite nonetheless. At the same time, his family on both sides were Whigs and Dissenters—which was as freethinking as Protestants got without being socialists or atheists.

Darwin was consequently both inside and outside the establishment. He slipped easily into the Cambridge old-boy network, and the relatively easy life of a doctor or a country parson constantly beckoned in his early years. Even as he worked through the revolutionary implications of his ideas on 'transmutation' he panicked lest they be found out and his life ruined by scandal.

These cowardly moments present the least sympathetic portrait of Dar­win—moments where he abandoned old friends because they were tainted by radical or heterodox ideas, all the while knowing that his own ideas were dynamite. But there is also something admirable in Darwin's persist­ent, exhaustive accumulation of evidence from everywhere and anywhere. The way he won over con­temporaries such as Lyell, Hooker and Huxley, and then used them as the vanguard in his assault on Creationism and other theories of evolution is described in con­spiratorial terms worthy of Vlad Lenin and the lads in November 1917. (Or is the better analogy Stalin on the inside worming his way to the top?)

In 1859 Darwin finally went public with his theory after 20 years of sub­terfuge. Desmond and Moore's 'social relocation' of Darwin highlights two things at this moment. First, the ground had been prepared and the time was exactly right; second, Darwin's theory would have been im­possible to conceive without the tech­nological, communicational and financial advantages afforded a white, upper middle class male living in the most industrialised nation on earth, directly plugged into the network of political and intellectual power.

By 1859 many scientists and thinkers accepted that species were mutable. Darwin's effrontery lay in hypothesising a mechanism to explain the trans­mutation of species which relied not on 'capitalist' notions of cut­throat competition and the survival of the fittest, but also on the assumption that transmutations were randomly generated and not reliant upon any God.

Unfortunately, Desmond and Moore never go beyond pointing to some un­resolved problems with Darwin's theory of evolution. If a reader wants to explore the science itself and modern reflections on it, they would do better to read Stephen Jay Gould (any of his books, but especially Wonderful Life or Ontology and Phylogeny). And if they want to learn about the implications of Darwinian theory for human beings they should read Jared Diamond's Rise and Fall of the Third Chimpanzee. No one will pass a test on Evolution as a result of reading Darwin.

Desmond and Moore meticulously document Darwin's home life. Ironi­cally for a man who singled out in­breeding as a major danger to the health of species, Darwin married his first cousin. Three of his ten children died prematurely, and he was racked by guilt for having passed on his own sickly constitution. Far from focusing exclusively on the public results of his theorising, Desmond and Moore con­trast Darwin's reclusive, essentially boring lifestyle against his brilliant and tenacious work on (believe it or not) barnacles, pigeons and earthworms, as well as his manic rushes to local quacks for 'water therapy', and the profound grief he felt at the death of his children.

Publishers have recognised their appeal for years, but what is it that draws readers to massive biographies like this one? The Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez once said that every human has three distinct lives: the public, the private and the secret. Biographies always weave the public and the private together, but I think they work best when they also offer readers a glimpse of the secret life of another human being—the doubts, the fears, the barely expressible desires.

Desmond and Moore have made a start on unveiling the secret life of Dar­win. But their method precludes them from going much further. I began this review with an excerpt from the preface to Darwin. The question that ends that excerpt is a rhetorical one—the answer is predetermined by Des­mond and Moore's methodology. Their 'social biography' cannot help but explain Darwin's theories as the product of his times, of his upbring­ing, and of those contemporaries he read—in short, of his material cir­cumstances and ideology.

Shave away the mountains of detail and the seductive detours in Darwin and we are left with a reductionist portrait of Darwin as himself a 'social darwinist'—a product of his age who merely projected onto the natural world the market-driven, bourgeois, free-for-all ethos which he had been brought up to accept as inevitable (and even desirable) in the human world. Perhaps I am being reductionist myself in distilling 828 pages to this bare paragraph, but I think there remains a lot more to be said (psychologically, at least) about the Shropshire squire whom Ruskin once mocked as having "a deep and tender interest about the coloured hinder half of certain monkeys".

José Borghino is a freelance writer and editor.
The Lords of the Rings: Power, Money and Drugs in the Modern Olympics by Vyv Simson and Andrew Jennings (Simon and Schuster, 1992) Reviewed by Mike Ticher.

The problem with books about the Olympics is that they have to come out in Olympic year. Even Robert Hughes made sure that Barcelona was finished in plenty of time to cash in on the exposure guaranteed every Olympic city by the quadrennial bunfight. One of the many differences between Hughes’ book and this exposé of the grubbier corners of the Olympic movement seems to have been that he thought of the idea long enough in advance to be able to carry out the exhaustive research necessary. Simson and Jennings, “two of Britain’s top investigative journalists”, apparently spent six years researching their previous book, but I’d be surprised if they put more than six months into this one. That’s a shame, because it’s a great story.

The ideals of the Olympics, fair play, amateurism, the importance of taking part rather than winning, of fostering unity among nations, are a sham. According to the authors of The Lords of the Rings, they have been perverted by the leaders of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and their greedy associates in the commercial world. Prime villain of the piece is IOC president, Juan Antonio Samaranch who, the book ‘reveals’, was a loyal Francoist for forty years, and held high government office in Spain right up to the dictators death in 1975.

The charge against Samaranch is essentially that he has transferred his Francoist values directly into the Olympic movement: “The Club (Samaranch’s circle) with its secrecy, its lack of democracy, its self-perpetuating elite, its ceremonies, protocols and medals appears to be not so very different from the movimento Samaranch loved.” The key figure who cemented Samaranch’s new power-base in the Olympic movement after the inconvenient onset of democracy in Spain was Horst Dassler, the German boss of the Adidas sportswear business. It was Dassler who marshalled the marketing skills which have transformed world sport over the past fifteen years into a massive vehicle for corporate sponsorship.

Until the 1970s, the leaders of the big international sporting bodies came almost exclusively from western Europe or America. Dassler and Samaranch, together with the other vital member of The Club, world soccer chief Joao Havelange, were acute enough to recognise and then to mobilise the power of the rest of the sports world. Adidas supplied sportswear and equipment to Third World and Soviet Bloc countries. Samaranch offered their sporting leaders a seat at the table of international sports decision-making. That didn’t imply any real power, because they owed their position entirely to Samaranch, but it did carry with it the opportunity for almost limitless foreign first-class travel for the lucky few. Dassler’s reward was to gain control, through his company ISL, of the marketing rights to the soccer World Cup, world athletics and, of course, the Olympics.

The results of this closed circle of mutual advantage have been catastrophic for the Games, according to Simson and Jennings. Where once the five linked rings of the Olympics were vigorously protected from commercial exploitation, Samaranch has set up a “Commission for New Sources of Financing, which is charged with selling off the emblem for the best price the market will bear”. Twelve multinational companies, including Coca-Cola, Mars and Kodak currently hold exclusive rights in their area of business to use the Olympic symbol to sell their product.

Exposing the Olympics to rampant commercialism might have been justifiable if the money had been pumped back into sport at the grassroots. Instead, the authors allege, it has most conspicuously been spent to sustain a fabulously wealthy lifestyle for IOC members. Their overseas travel and luxury accommodation compare favourably with that of the world leaders with whom they regularly hob-nob. Since the financial success of the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, other cities have been queuing up to stage them. The ostentatious gifts they shower on the 93 IOC members to win their votes, do not shake Samaranch in his belief that their work is “bringing people together in peace for the the benefit of mankind”.

As if that weren’t enough, Samaranch and the IOC are also accused of turning a blind eye to drugs at the Olympics, and failing to implement effective measures to eliminate their use among athletes. The gist of what the authors have to say is undoubtedly true. However, there are numerous problems with the way they say it, which undermine their self-righteous zeal in displaying the Olympic ideal as the grotesque fraud it is.

Some are minor. The book is littered with grammatical and spelling mistakes, which surely betray a rush to get it out in time for Barcelona. (One of names misspelt is that of Nicolae Ceausescu, who Samaranch presented with the Gold Olympic Order.) Simson and Jennings are at pains to stress that they are “not sports journalists” - indeed, although they repeatedly refer to the Olympics as “our games”, they give no evidence of being in the slightest bit interested in sport itself.

This might help to explain why the style of the book is so irritating. At times they seem to impose a strict limit of no more than 10 words per sentence. The excessive luxury surrounding the IOC members is chronicled in such excruciating detail that even Brett Easton Ellis might tire of it. The main argument isn’t so much driven home as nailed down and beaten un-
conscious. Take this imaginative account of Samaranch at the opening ceremony in Barcelona:

Watch the President’s right arm, is it stirring, is it twitching, is it taking on a life of its own, compelled by some visceral force to rise to an angle of forty-five degrees from his shoulder?

OK, we’ve got the message, he’s an old fascist. Either Simson and Jennings have got a very low opinion of the average intelligence of people who read sports books, or they’ve spent so much time investigating that they’ve forgotten how to write.

The tabloidese wouldn’t grate so much, however, if the argument itself was constructed on firmer foundations. The authors claim “privileged access to first-hand accounts by key insiders”. In fact, much of the first half of the book is little more than an extended interview with just one man, Horst Dassler’s former offside and marketing whizz-kid, Patrick Nally.

A lot more material comes from the 1991 IOC congress in Birmingham, where Simson and Jennings’ “key insiders” seem to have been the public relations manager and waitresses at the hotel where the IOC members stayed, who were able to supply them with the devastating evidence (yet again) of what was on their nightly menu. The book is littered with sentences which begin: “One commentator described it as...” or “As one observer remarked...”. Substantial quotes from newspapers and IOC publications add to the misleading impression that the authors have marshalled an overwhelming weight of evidence. They haven’t.

The Lords of the Rings is on even shakier ground when it comes to its interpretation of what has happened to the Olympic movement. It tells a simple and compelling story. Once, the Olympics were pure and amateur and clean. Then along came the fascist Samaranch and his henchmen and turned it into the bloated, commercial, drug-ridden carcass we see today. This is nonsense. The Olympics never were such a beacon of innocence and universal values. From the very beginning they have been sullied by pettymindedness, nationalism and hypocrisy. The Games were prostituted to Nazism in 1936. They accepted the ‘shamateurism’ of Soviet Bloc athletes for decades before Samaranch came on to the scene. Drug-taking was rife at least from the early 1970s. The medal ceremonies and parades (not to mention the lack of democracy in the IOC) which Simson and Jennings cite as a throwback to Samaranch’s fascist past are a long-established part of the Olympic scene.

What’s more, the fact that Samaranch was able to harness the voting power of the poorer members of the IOC, albeit for his own nefarious reasons, suggests that they had been pretty shamefully neglected by the previous incumbents from what the authors call “the more literate countries”. Their association of Samaranch’s IOC with fascism is as tendentious and laboured as the equivocation of the pre-commercial Olympics with freedom and democracy. There is no evidence to support their assertion that “the funding of voters [on the bids for the right to stage future Olympics] has offended the principles of those reared in the Western tradition of democratic politics”.

Simson and Jennings protest that “there was no need to turn the amateur Games into just another arm of show-business, just another entertainment staged by professionals”. But in the face of the huge sums of money generated by TV exposure and corporate sponsorship for all sports in recent years, it’s hard to see how the Olympics could have remained amateur in anything but a nominal, utterly hypocritical sense. Certainly the other old bastion of international amateur sport, rugby union, succumbed to exactly the same pressures.

All of which begs the question of whether an Olympics in which multimillionaire tennis and track stars compete has a point any more, except to enhance the prestige of a few old men and the sales of the biggest corporations in the world. The Lords of the Rings is a pretty shoddy piece of work, but at least it comes up with the right answer to that one. “Perhaps it is time to turn our backs on the Olympics as we know them”.

MIKE TICHER used to believe in the Olympics, and Santa Claus.

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I would like to clarify and answer some of the concerns raised by Peter Colley in his recent thoughtful but unduly pessimistic article on the greenhouse problems (ALR 138, April 1992).

His prognosis includes $53 billion in costs, loss of 50,000 jobs and 50% higher electricity tariffs for households. I wish to make a number of critical comments about such prognoses, the models which spawn them and the use made of them by commentators like Colley.

Colley’s interpretation of the figures, especially those of the Industry Commission (IC) upon which he mainly relies, is unduly negative and in some instances inaccurate. The IC’s forecast for the impact of the targets for emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) set by the 1988 Toronto conference includes—GDP 2.1% lower; wages 3.6% lower; employment 0.5% less; CPI 0.5% higher; electricity prices 16.2% higher; consumption 1.6% lower.

Colley does not seem to understand that these are cumulative costs running from about 1990 to 2005, so they are spread over 15 years. Thus, if evenly spread, GDP would decline by a mere 0.14% per annum, employment by 0.03% and so forth. These trends are only as a result of greenhouse policies and there is nothing to say that other growth trends will not counteract them. Furthermore, these figures are for unilateral action by Australia, so that the economic costs would be proportionately less the more other countries also adopted the Toronto targets. These latter considerations have led some commentators to conclude that there will be minimal impact on the economy.

The most optimistic of these is a series of studies by energy consultant, Deni Greene, for the Victorian government. Greene claims that the Toronto target can be met without any reduction in economic growth, through energy efficiencies, currently available ‘soft’ energy technologies, changes to farming and forestry practices to reduce methane emissions and full replacement of CFCs with halocarbons.

The IC and most other studies are sceptical that such ‘no regrets’ options (the latest US jargon for policies which will not damage the economy) can do the whole job.

It is difficult for the lay person to know who is right in such matters, but certainly governments around Australia are already implementing hundreds of Greene-type savings and estimate that many more are possible.

Most of the models used in greenhouse costing are riddled with neoclassical assumptions, one of these being that the only efficient way to reduce emissions is through a carbon tax (on fossil fuels) or tradeable emission quotas. In their quest for ‘efficiency’, none of the studies consider the adverse impact of this approach on lower income people, as Peter Colley has rightly pointed out. If a wider focus is taken, as in Greene’s work, and cost-effective efficiencies can be attained, then a much lower tax would be required, or could even be avoided.

Another assumption of most modellers is that energy markets are perfect and that if Greene-type energy efficiency measures were cost-effective they would already have been adopted by firms and consumers. However, Greene and others argue that energy markets are very imperfect and there are many blockages (lack of energy information, no incentive for long-term decisions, etc) which well-designed policy programs could rectify. Moreover, saving energy increases total factor productivity and, therefore, competitiveness.

Nor do models include the possibility of technological developments (such as new solar power systems), let alone improved carbon ‘sinks’ through tree-growing, revegetation and agro-forestry. Yet some technological breakthroughs do seem likely and tree planting, though slow, is already playing a role. One US estimate suggests that reforestation of 15% of the country would be enough almost to meet the Toronto target.

The conclusion of all this is that although most models purport to show some small adverse economic impact from GHG reduction policies, they may have overestimated these effects. Alternative energy-saving development models are available which could minimise or even avoid such costs for Australia.

I suggest that we should aim to reduce all GHGs by at least 20% by 2005 and 60% by 2020 through a combination of energy-saving measures in all sectors, encouragement of soft energy technologies, a national recycling and waste minimisation program, changes to agricultural and forestry techniques and a large-scale reforestation program. If Deni Greene is right, such measures would be enough, but otherwise tradeable emission quotas should be used to place a ceiling on GHGs, with minimal use of a carbon tax, avoiding it altogether if possible.

Such a program would probably not be entirely ‘no regrets’, particularly if the full range of other ecological problems was to be dealt with as well. It may ultimately reduce material living standards as we now know them, but there would be in-
numerable long-term ecological and cultural benefits.

Graham Dunkley, Victoria University of Technology.

(This is an extract from a longer article on the same subject.)

Crude and Gratuitous

On seeing the front cover of the June issue of ALR ("Is The Left Brain-dead?") I felt both upset and angry, which was not helped by the timing—just before displaying copies for sale at Wollongong's 'Politics in the Pub' night. I certainly didn't feel much enthusiasm for selling it, particularly when several people commented about the incongruity of a left journal apparently proclaiming the stupidity and hopelessness of the Left, especially via the crude and gratuitous graphic.

I am certainly not denying that the Left, generally, has been experiencing a difficult period of fragmentation, depression, lack of vision and cohesion, and that it has a 'credibility problem' in its inability to effectively counter the right's ideological and political dominance. However, there are also brighter indications that significant numbers of people on the Left are constructively trying to tackle the problems, rather than sinking into cynicism or despair.

I'm well aware that some would probably accuse me of over-reacting, lacking a sense of humour, refusing to recognise what's wrong with the Left, or not understanding the needs of promoting a Left journal on the news-stands. All I can say, as a long-time Left activist who still retains a sense of vision and the paralysis of all Left leaderships.

There is one area of 'silence' in the discourse of the Left that I would like to bring to your attention. This concerns our organisational perspectives. Among all Left publications there is a deafening silence on this issue. The question of our organisational inter-relations, the question of what shape and what power relations the ruling hierarchy of the Left will have with the rank and file have not been seriously addressed since Rowbotham, Segal and Wainwright's 1979 Beyond the Fragments. In the post-leninist era the Left must set aside the collective delusion that we can and should exist without hierarchy and without a structure of authority. The fantastic claim that 'we have no boss' is designed precisely to mask the rule of the bosses on the Left. We must make obvious and understandable what is hidden behind the mask posing as 'democracy' or 'democratic centralism'. I hope ALR will play a part in opening up the 'discourse of power and organisation' as well as it has opened up the discourse in so many other areas.

Beverley Symons, North Wollongong, NSW.

Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood

Due to some editing, my article "After Rationalism" (ALR 141) suggests a couple of things I would not wish to endorse. The following may serve to avoid misunderstanding and further clarify the issues. (All quotations are from p. 31.)

The article states that a persistent trade surplus—required for the pursuit of full employment and balance of foreign payments sustainability—"has definite and largely inescapable implications for the balance between public sector expenditure and revenue, and thus for the level of public expenditure itself" (italics added).

And further on: "if the current account is a primary target of government policy, the level of expenditure in the public sector is directly constrained by that policy objective" (italics added).

The italicised statements are false.

A trade surplus (and current account deficit) target do not have inescapable or direct implications for public expenditure as such: given private saving and investment, the external objective only has inescapable implications for the balance between public expenditure and revenue. This is consistent with rapidly rising public expenditure—if accompanied by an appropriately rapid rise in tax revenues (and/or public sector prices).

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This is why I said further on that "public sector budgetary restraint has become synonymous with expenditure restraint, not least because of the current government/opposition bidding war on tax cuts. But budgetary restraint could equally well be achieved through tax increases".

Budgetary restraint via rising public expenditure and revenues would impose the burden of restraint upon private (rather than public) consumption and/or investment. But placing the burden upon private investment is "economically unattractive unless it is somehow or other the result of efficiency gains" (italics added).

The italicised phrase may imply some flippancy, as if reducing investment (as a proportion of national output) via efficiency gains were a somewhat implausible possibility. But it is a very serious possibility. There is some evidence that relatively inefficient Australian methods of production, in the aggregate, contribute to the balance of payments problem insofar as inefficient capital utilisation relative to other countries means that larger investment expenditure is required for any particular level of employment growth.

Tony Aspromourgos, Department of Economics, University of Sydney.

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Daybreak.

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end. Very few people re-watch
videos of election night coverage,
for instance, because while such
entertainment has certain plastic
qualities, the colour-coded com­
puter graphics and interviews with
sweaty-lipped politicians are sub­
ordinate to the result. People read
detective novels, not just for the
end. Too many filmgoers
seem as pompous as SBS's David
Anthell, who played Methuselah in
some of the piquancy of our aes­
thetic experience by explaining
what is already perfectly clear.

More plausible-looking characters
offer nothing more worthwhile than
their own opinions and a few glean­
ings from standard film guides.

Recently Alien 3, a film I had been
looking forward to, was reviewed
on the Radio National program
Daybreak. The comments of the
reviewer, whose name I have happily
forgotten, were both banal and
pretentious. She is, of course, not
alone among film reviewers in pos­sessing these qualities. However, to
disclose the ending of a film of this
nature is not only arrogant, it is a
grotesque discoursely both to the
artists involved in its making and to
listeners who make up part of its
potential audience. I did see Alien 3
a few days later and was then able
to enjoy its cinematic features, but
the review had indeed managed to
poison my enjoyment of the plot.
Not the least irritating thing about
the incident is that she was actually
praising the film. If she thinks about
it at all, she probably rather smugly
feels that she has provided insights
which may help people like me to a
more perfect understanding of the
movie.

I know several otherwise sensible
people are guided in their entertain­
ment choices by reviews. To make
sure that we don't waste our time
seeing something we might not like,
we allow complete duds like the
Radio National reviewer to steal
some of the piquancy of our aes­
etic experience by explaining
what is already perfectly clear.

The poltroons who present movies
on television are no better. Bill Col­
lins is the most widely reviled of
these, but he is actually the best. The
comments that are often made about
the brightness of Collins' clothing
reflect more upon a certain mindless
conformity in Australian cultural
expectations than upon his (usually
rather smart) appearance. Collins
compliments his audience by as­
summing that they will be as inter­
ested as he is in the minutiae of
cinema history.

More plausible-looking characters
offer nothing more worthwhile than
their own opinions and a few glean­
ings from standard film guides.

John Hinde, on the ABC, does not
seem as pompous as SBS's David
Stratton, but Hinde tends to outline
even more of the plot. Channel
Seven's Ivan Hutchinson looks so
much like a sad but faithful old dog
that I can hardly bear to watch any
film that I know he is going to intro­
duce. However, I have to admit that
the 'Ask Ivan' column in TV Week
can be compelling reading, full of
questions like: "To settle a bet, is
Jana Wendt the sister of Hannah
Arendt?"; and "Is Gerontion de'­
Anthell, who played Methuselah in
the 1919 version of The Bible, still
alive?"

Bill, John, David and Ivan may be
amiable characters but most people
don't need a savant to anticipate the
details listed in the credits, or to
describe 'arresting visuals' or
'powerful performances'. They are
capable of seeing the virtues and
faults of a film, regardless of
whether it is given the imprimatur
of 'Movie of the Week'.

For those who do feel the need for
such interpretations, the standard of
film criticism in Australia is gener­
ally low. Take, for example, the fourth
paragraph of Evan Williams' recent
review of Batman Returns in The
Australian:

The most likely audiences
would appear to be imma­
ture adults, fans of Michelle
Pfeiffer, and those interested
in the silent German expres­
sionist cinema of the 1920s.

In the final paragraph of the same
review, he states:

Those most likely to enjoy it
will be penguin fanciers, ad­
mirers of Mussolini's ar­
chitectural style, fans of
Pfeiffer, sports car enth­
thusiasts, and everyone like­
ly to appreciate in-jokes
about German expressionist

To call such writing sloppy would
be a compliment.

An acquaintance of mine was a film
reviewer on the main newspaper of
a large Queensland city in the 1960s.
This person had no idea which films
he ought to praise and, since over­
seas films took months to arrive in
Australia at that time, he simply
consulted back issues of Time
magazine and borrowed its critical
stance. It may have been comical to
see him draw a salary for such
shameless plagiarism, but unthink­
ling assent to any point of view is
frightening. Too many filmgoers
differ from this person only in that
they are not paid for their failure to
use their critical intelligence.

MICHAEL CONATY would like to see
a media embargo on Lethal Weapon 3.
...Though we don’t exactly expect you to like it.

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