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EDITOR: David Burchell. PRODUCTION EDITOR: Caroline Humphreys. BUSINESS MANAGER: Mike Ticher. REVIEWs: Caroline Humphreys and Ros Bragg. ACCOUNTs: Mike Ticher. DESIGN: Ros Bragg. TYPSETTING: Gloria Garton. ADVERTISING: Fiona Drury and Jill Segedin.

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVES - SYDNEY: Brian Aarons, Eric Aarons, Ros Bragg, David Burchell, Clare Curran, Kitty Eggerking, Gloria Garton, Tracy Goulding, Caroline Humphreys, Sue McCreddie, Peter McNiece, Mike Ticher, Gerry Treuren. MELBOURNE: Louise Connor, Jim Crosthwaite, Michael Dutton, David Ettershank, Kate Kennedy, Paddy McCorry, Rob McQueen, Pavla Miller, Ken Norling, Olga Silver, Janna Thompson.

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CORRESPONDENCE: ALR, PO Box A247, Sydney South 2000. PHONE: (02) 565 1855; (02) 550 3831. FAX: (02) 550 4460.

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Slow Progress

The 1992 federal Budget continues the staggered economic stimulus begun with the Hawke jobs statement in November 1991. The November statement, One Nation, and the July youth announcement together provided for around $2.4 billion in 1992-93 towards reducing unemployment. The Budget adds another $740 million in 1992/3 and a lesser amount for the following year. Yet in each case the economic statements have been more modest than necessary and have come too late to achieve their maximum effect. The job creation should have started in early 1991 and should have been of the order of $2 billion. If it had the recovery would have been in full swing by now.

The budget was accompanied by the usual public venting of myths concerning the dangerous size of the budget deficit, the effects on private investment of borrowing to finance the deficit, and the damage supposedly about to be inflicted by the amorphous international money markets were the deficit to be too high.

Yet the Budget stimulus represents a modest 1.1% of Gross Domestic Product in 1992/3. (It has also been carefully designed to taper away after that time; clearly the government has learnt a lesson from the 1983 recession, when spending was not reduced quickly enough, and the ground was laid for the current account disaster, the interest rate squeeze and ultimately this recession.) To those media pundits who trumpet that we are ‘throwing money at the problem’, as though this were a wastrel act, this writer would reply that this is exactly what demand-deficient unemployment requires — in this case, given the severity of the downturn, the stimulus could have been twice as big. Indeed, despite the media breastbeating, the post-Budget reaction from the international money markets has been zero. The budget and its ‘Keynesian’ stimulus have passed the market test.

The previous stimulatory statements emphasised training; the Budget targeted jobs instead. This reflects an abandonment of the long-held notion in policy circles that the unemployment problem is predominantly structural. The fact is that the main cause of the unemployment problem is deficient demand, and it will only be cured if spending increases. Further, it doesn’t really matter what type of jobs are created because the exercise is about restoring the spending power of the unemployed. The fact that local councils will utilise the funds to fulfil socially useful projects is a bonus.

It also doesn’t matter that the spending is finite. Dr Hewson warns that when the money runs out so will the jobs. That is true, and desirable, because by that time the economy will be moving again and absorbing the available workforce. Emergency job creation does not aim to generate permanent jobs. It merely aims to prime the spending stream in order to underwrite permanent employment elsewhere in the economy.

Taxation seems to have dominated the post-Budget analysis — and here the real drama has surrounded the spectre of future ‘hidden’ taxes. To cover the possibility that the Budget deficit will not recover enough to return to surplus by 1995/6, the government unexpectedly foreshadowed the possibility of new taxes at that time. As a political move this prophecy was fraught with danger. But in terms of responsible fiscal conduct the likelihood that taxation might occasionally have to be increased to accommodate changed fiscal conditions is uncontroversial. One of the biggest costs of the ‘rationalist’ legacy of the last decade was the widespread acceptance of the belief that taxes can only move downwards. The damage caused by our reliance on monetary policy in the late 80s to control the current account deficit is a reflection of the imbalance that has crept into the policy debate.

Fiscal and monetary policy both have a role to play. A discretionary fiscal deficit is perfectly appropriate when unemployment is high and economic activity is low. In these times public spending and/or tax cuts are desirable. But as the economy gains momentum the deficit should be curbed by spending cuts and/or tax increases. To constrain fiscal conduct by imposing the condition that taxes can only fall is myopic and irresponsible, and misunderstands the role of fiscal stimulus. The tax cut promise in One Nation was a case in point.

The one real worry about the Budget is that the dilemma of stop-go growth has not entirely been solved. Since 1983 reform has been occurring in our internationally competitive sectors. Exports of manufactures have grown much faster than those for primary commodities — albeit from a very low base. But it is unlikely that this growth in our export or import-competing potential has provided enough room for sustained growth to mop up unemployment. The expected low levels of activity in the world economy will only exacerbate this. Recovery requires investment — which increases our imports. And the growth rate necessary to provide sustained and significant reductions in unemployment still seems unsustainable in terms of our current account deficit. More needs to be done, and short-term import controls, for example, are worth considering — particularly in the luxury consumption goods area.

BILL MITCHELL teaches in the Employment Studies Centre at the University of Newcastle.
There are two schools of thought about Stuart Littlemore. One is that he is a pompous git. The other is that he may be a pompous git, but at least he's our pompous git. Even if you don't like his style, according to adherents of the second theory, you can't deny that he stands up for the right things in the media: accuracy, sensitivity on issues of race and privacy, a bias against sensationalism, and opposition to the concentration of ownership.

Well, up to a point. But in fact Littlemore’s paternalistic style is intrinsic to his point of view. His belief in Quality with a capital ‘Q’ leads inevitably to the assumption that it’s perfectly possible, indeed necessary, to make value judgements about what is and what is not ‘quality’. That’s a perfectly defensible position. What isn’t defensible is for those judgements to be raised to the level of objective fact. Everyone’s entitled to their opinion, but in this case it seems that some are more entitled than others.

Littlemore appears to be ‘our’ pompous git only to people who agree with his definition of quality—which most people in white middle-class, Left-liberal circles probably do. It’s a thoroughly elitist doctrine, because it implies not merely that ‘quality’ is superior to ‘trash’, but that people who watch ‘trash’ (that is the vast majority of the population) are morons. That may not seem like an unreasonable assumption when the program under discussion is something you don’t care for yourself—say Hinch. But Littlemore’s partiality becomes much more obvious when he ridicules something you yourself enjoy. Sport was the real eye-opener for me. He obviously despises it. What’s more, he professes not to be able to tell the difference between a rugby league State of Origin commentary by HG Nelson and the genuine Channel Nine article. If this is true it betrays an awe-inspiring absence of humour; if not, an extraordinary capacity for disingenuous snobbery. I suspect both.

For people who share Littlemore’s views on sport, perhaps the easiest way to avoid being seduced by his illusion of objectivity is to imagine his reaction to your favorite ‘downmarket’ American comedy. I find The Simpsons and Cheers particularly helpful in this respect. Better still is to place him actually in the bar at Cheers. Does the lip curl with distaste? I think so. It’s a salutary experience to find that contempt directed at you, rather than some hapless sub-editor on a provincial newspaper who can’t spell the name of the prime minister.

The problem with Mediawatch isn’t just that Littlemore demands a shared set of values. It’s also that too often he fails to put into practice the sceptical approach demanded of others, particularly when it comes to people and projects which he instinctively feels he should be in sympathy with. Three examples come to mind. The first was the spectacle of Littlemore and that other thoroughly civilised critic John Mortimer discussing the virtues of ‘quality British TV’ (ie Rumpole) as though it were fine wine or classical music. The second is his uncritical (even cringing) attitude to foreign publications such as the New Yorker and the Sunday Times. (The latter hasn’t been a quality paper in the sense that Littlemore imagines for at least ten years.) The third was a more recent feature on the remote communities satellite TV service, Imparja. By most accounts (Michael Meadows in ALR 134, for example), Imparja has been by no means an unqualified success. Yet Littlemore’s trip to the Alice produced nothing more than a puff for what he evidently saw as a good cause, rather than a story.

It’s a pity that the show demands such a conformist and essentially ABC-centred view from its audience, since many of its more detailed criticisms of the media are valid and important. The observation that a reporter from one of the commercial stations kitted himself out in a paramilitary-style jacket to report a car chase incident was a recent case in point.

But the value of such comment is vitiated by Littlemore’s acerbic (and too often downright petty) high-mindedness—a state which leaves no room for self-deprecation, or indeed any acknowledgement that he himself is part of the media. He presents the case against shoddy journalism like the barrister he is. What he is after is not so much an understanding of the media as a conviction. The presentation of the evidence may be cogent enough, and highly entertaining, but the overall effect is dulled by the knowledge that, when it comes to judging quality, it’s Littlemore himself who makes the laws.

MIKE TICHER is not part of the media. Rather, he is ALR’s business manager.

ALR : SEPTEMBER 1992
A Shot in Sarajevo

In one year in former Yugoslavia, 28 journalists have been killed—more than during the whole period of American involvement in Vietnam. A French journalist, Jean Hatzfeld, and I almost became numbers 29 and 30.

Jean—who works for the French Left-leaning daily Liberation—was driving as we sped down the road to Sarajevo airport. Two cracks rang out, followed by the sound of splintering metal. A third shot hit me in my left side, but the impact was so slight that I thought it was a mere flesh wound, and was distracted by the sight of Jean’s right leg exploding under the impact of the first two bullets. Up to 15 more rounds hit the car as I tried to steer us towards the cover of some garages on the left, over which I thought the shots had come.

With shots still ringing out, I flung open my door and ran around to Jean, lifting him out of the car and into the ditch that ran parallel to the road. Deep red blood was everywhere. “Save my leg please,” he pleaded. “I want to play football again.”

There was much confusion, but eventually a stretcher was found and Jean was carried off to an ambulance. My wounds were dressed by soldiers of the Bosnian Territorial Defence; I suspect it was they who accidentally shot us, taking us for Serb Chetniks, who frequently use that road, masquerading as journalists.

I arrived at the Kosevo hospital in Sarajevo in a private car about 20 minutes after we had been shot, to find Jean had only just arrived. Ambulances are prime targets for Chetnik snipers, so they are few on the ground and their journeys are hazardous and slow. After a two-hour operation on Jean’s leg, I was told that it had been completely shattered and there was a chance he would lose it below the knee. Still under the misapprehension that I had escaped virtually unscathed, I returned to my hotel. In fact, I had a bullet lodged in my pelvis and, after an agonising and sleepless night, made worse by the constant shelling around my hotel, I was rushed into hospital the next morning.

I remained in hospital for four days, during which time I was unable to sleep because of the pain, although the medical staff worked wonders with what equipment they had. The nurses and doctors are on 24-hour shifts in groups of eight for each department. During the two months of the war the traumatology department alone has seen 3,500 patients. More than 100 were admitted in less than an hour on 21 June, when a shell landed on a bank in the main street in Sarajevo, killing 20 pensioners who were queuing up for their pensions, and wounding many others. Professor Vranich, the head of traumatology, says 90% of the casualties have been civilians caught in the indiscriminate shelling and sniper fire from the Serbs. Even at the hospital, they are not safe. The staff there have no shortage of horror stories—the surgeon shot by a sniper while performing an operation; the old man admitted with his lower arm shot off who, 12 hours later, had the rest of it shot off by another sniper as he lay in his hospital bed.

In the bed next to me was another old man, aged 74, who had been one of 2,000 civilians imprisoned in Kovla, a former open prison for traffic and other minor offenders, near Sarajevo airport. He had been tortured until every bone in his fragile body was broken. He was finally released in an exchange of prisoners. The Serbs never release Bosnian fighters, he said, only women, children and the elderly, in exchange for their own fighters.

Four days before I was shot, a Spanish journalist and I had been driven into Dobrinja under heavy sniper fire. When we arrived in Dobrinja, we were shown the tiny ‘hospital’ consisting of 20 or 30 sleeping bags in two basement cellars, run by one doctor, Dr Smojek. By chance, he had been staying in the district with his two children after escaping the Serb destruction of his hometown of Vitezgrad, where his wife was still trapped. He had been working round the clock and hadn’t seen his children for 20 days, nor had any news of his wife for a month. A local pharmacy in Dobrinja had been the sole source of all the medical provisions for this hospital for two months.

A Serb, Bosko Reljic, who had left part of Serbian-controlled Dobrinja with his Muslim wife and daughter, told me: “The Chetniks came to our block and asked if we had any Muslims. The second day they returned and searched and looted every suspected Muslim apartment. The final straw came on the third day when an old Muslim man’s daughter was taken at gunpoint and the old man was told to bring a handful of gold jewellery to the Chetniks the next day or his daughter would die. Everyone in the block rallied round...
and enough gold was collected to save the girl.”

Sarajevo’s spirit of integration—Muslims, Serbs and Croats have lived harmoniously as neighbours for years, and intermarriage is commonplace—has galled the Serbian Chetnik fighters, and partly explains their relentless pounding of the city. This often extends to Sarajevo Serbs, too. I even met one Serbian woman whose husband had left to join the Chetniks to head their communications network at the beginning of the war. She had heard nothing of him since, despite making an impassioned plea on TV. Instead, her broadcast resulted in shelling being directed by Chetnik forces at her apartment block.

While I was in Dobrinja, the Chetniks captured part of the district and began ‘cleansing’ it of Muslims. In one incident, this meant cutting the throats of most of the men in front of their wives and children, and then leading the women, and the small number of surviving men, to a bridge that had been mined. There they were made to collect the dead Chetniks around it, before being told that they were free to run across the ruined bridge—and its mines—to freedom.

After I left Dobrinja, I spoke to a young Muslim man (D) and his Croat wife (J) who had undergone this barbaric treatment. They did not want their identities revealed for fear of reprisals. D told me: “There were 40 of us in our group. As soon as we started running, they began to shoot at us with machine guns. I saw a pregnant woman with a child fall in front of me—I don’t know what happened to the child. We all ran into a ditch but they shouted at us to get out or they would hand grenade us. So we came out and they began shooting us again. So we dived into the opposite ditch and began crawling the 450 metres to the other end.”

“We crawled over the rotting corpses of three Chetniks,” J continued, “and after about two hours we reached the other end of the ditch, but we still didn’t know where we were. They had said the TV cameras would be waiting for us, but there was no sign of them.” D picked up the story. “After three hours crouching in terror, one woman, whose husband had been murdered in front of her, finally crawled out and ran towards some buildings. The Chetniks shot at her, but missed and one by one we all followed her to safety. Out of 40 who started, only 26 of us made it.” There are stories in Dobrinja of Chetniks being found with documents on them saying they are a superior race descended from the inhabitants of the lost continent of Atlantis, which will soon rise to the surface and join with the Serbs in battle. Apocryphal or not, the stories fit easily with the behaviour of the besiegers of Dobrinja.

I was trapped in Dobrinja for a further two days because of the ferocity of the shelling. The previous day, a journalist from Associated Press had gone out in a convoy and his driver had been hit in the leg, while the two ambulances in front had been shot to pieces, killing four medics and two patients.

We had gone about 400 metres when a Chetnik machine gun, positioned on the hill above the road we had to cross to get into the hills, opened up with a terrifying burst that was returned by some Bosnian snipers. Tracer bullets flashed everywhere and a couple of green flares went up illuminating the ghostly scene. The hills that ring Sarajevo amplified the sounds of shelling and gunfire, while the echoes made it impossible to tell where the gunfire was coming from, or who was shooting at whom.

After a consultation, the Bosnian forces returned to the bunker. We would wait for an hour for the Chetniks to get thoroughly drunk, as is their wont, they said. At midnight, we crossed the road three streets further down. It seemed they were right about the Chetniks: we crossed into the hills without a single shot being fired. I didn’t know then that, having escaped Dobrinja, I would be cut down by a bullet on the road to the airport.

It has been remarked that it took just one bullet, the one that killed Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, to start the first world war, but it has taken a million bullets before the EC or UN will even consider military intervention in this one. Is it simply because there’s no oil in former Yugoslavia?

KEVIN WEAVER writes for New Statesman and Society, where a longer version of this piece was originally published.
Somehow it seems fitting to turn 30 in Canberra. It’s not the town one would choose to turn 18 or 21 in. Such occasions mark a triumphant assertion of adulthood which only makes sense when one takes youth for granted. They are about fun, full undeniable fun. They require cities dedicated to pleasure, or at least where one can get properly intoxicated, drive down freeways absolutely ripped and lose oneself in a vibrant crowd. But 30 is to 21 what superannuation is to any notion of anarchy.

30 marks the end of youth with an unarguable whimper. Government deems that youth ends at 26. But 26 really blends into the middle 20s quite unobtrusively. I thought I was 25 or so until I suddenly saw the three in 30 reaching out like a fist punching me. Or perhaps the three denotes the embryonic lines at the corners of my eyes, like the wings of the crow whose feet may soon caress the skin there.

I will never forget the comment of a 50 (or so) year-old woman in the waiting room of a plastic surgeon in Toorak, where I, at 26, found myself having a small blemish removed from my back. She ran her eyes over my face, and down my body before returning to the aforementioned magazine in its French edition. After flicking through a few pages she turned to her equally pinched face friend and said “Breasts seem to be back. I’ll have to get them done next.” The “them” made my flesh crawl then, as now, at the idea of going under the knife for aesthetic purposes. But let us leave the surgical strike of Toorak for the spreading hips of Canberra. Many would applaud the fact that there are very few images of women on billboards in the ACT. Advertising is all but absent. So, unfortunately, is any notion of the life of the body as a cause of celebration in itself. People who accept Canberra’s elevation of work above pleasure, tend to spread into their offices, to leave off concern about their physical life.

The fatness of the ACT tends to be a complacent stodgy fatness, rather than a revelling excessive fatness. It is mirrored by the obsessive jogging thinness of other public servants who slot exercise in as part of a busy day, to keep the body machine functioning smoothly. Respectable Canberra is the most body-hating place in Australia (how this ties in—or up—with the X-rated video industry is a question worthy of further study). It is perhaps because of my desire to define myself against the comfortable fat of Canberra that I enter my 30s 30 kilos lighter than I was at 28. Breasts, it seems are back.

The rituals of ageing have taken on a new rigour since the big three-oh loomed like a wrinkly unwelcome siren calling me towards the rocks of senility. What used to be a random purchase of moisturiser and miracle tonics has become more calculated. I wrinkle my brow considering which is the most effective de-wrinkler advertised among the flawless skins of the 18year-olds in Vogue. Exercise is approached as a necessity, not as a joy.

Now some readers may well be muttering about patriarchal oppression and the commodification of the female body, and the inability of women to display their (our) age openly in this society. Apart from pointing out to such readers that muttering causes unattractive lines around the mouth (not unlike the pursed vertical lines detectable on smokers’ skin) I would simply say that the intellectual explanation of anxiety bears very little relation to the lived experience of same. You can’t wish away the desire to stay young, or dissolve inequality like a nasty stain with the Omo of feminist awareness. There’s no neutral ground one can take up in terms of age. You either revel in it or deny it, or try to develop a way of embracing it stylishly, without looking desperate.

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Penelope Cottier.
Following the persistent and grim television pictures of starvation in Somalia, the industrialised world has rediscovered its charitable soul. The United Nations, the European Community, the US and the other developed nations have decided to provide relief assistance before the entire Somali community perishes. Australia has offered $3.5 million towards the effort. Some critics have understandably blamed the international community for acting too late.

The Somali tragedy has been apparent for several years, but the UN and the developed world did not pay much attention to it. Earlier in 1992 the UN was involved in a ceasefire arranged between the warring Somali factions. UN secretary-general Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has a longstanding interest in the Horn of Africa, despatched UN assistant secretary-general James Jonah to Somalia in January to try to persuade the warring factions to negotiate. In the same month the UN Security Council approved a resolution imposing an arms embargo on Somalia and calling on the combatants to permit humanitarian assistance to reach those most in need.

The warring factions did in fact accept a ceasefire in New York in February, but they immediately flouted it—as they had done other ceasefires. Prophetically James Jonah warned the various factions of the United Somali Congress (USC) in early March that the international community had tired of their ceasefire violations, and that Somalia might be abandoned altogether. By the end of March the Somali tragedy had been put on the backburner by the UN—largely because the permanent members of the UN Security Council (and especially the US, UK and France) were more interested in the equally serious crisis in the Balkans.

It has been estimated that between November 1991 and August 1992 more than 100,000 Somalis lost their lives either in the civil war or through starvation. If the international community had intervened nine months earlier many lives would have been saved and some major problems would have been alleviated. The trouble with the current gesture is not just that it is too late; it is also too little, and fails to address the root of the problem.

The UN has decided to send 500 troops to escort food convoys in the capital Mogadishu, where at least 200 people die of starvation every day. But even James Jonah admits that such a force is too small to be of any use outside Mogadishu. If the UN were serious about sending food to the starving people outside Mogadishu it would send not less than 15,000 troops to escort food trucks through the anarchic conditions of Somalia.

However, starvation in Somalia is just one symptom of the tragedy. In fact, it is a consequence of the civil war, and the civil war itself is a result of clan feuds and power struggles. For generations the single most important factor in Somali society has been the clan. Although all Somalis belong to one ethnic group and enjoy a sense of common identity based on a shared culture, clan loyalty often undermines the sense of shared nationhood. It was clan feuds which brought down the government of former dictator General Mohammed Siad Barre in January 1991. The octogenarian Barre, who had ruled Somalia with an iron fist since coming to power in 1969, had sought to transform Somali nationalism from its old segmentary state to a modern ‘organic’ mode. In

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Dr David Bennett, Co-ordinator of Cultural Studies,
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the process he banned clanism, and in the early 70s prohibited any reference to clans. He adopted the doctrine of 'scientific socialism' in an effort to unite the nation, but in practice lineage has continued to determine the course of Somalia's political development.

Clan and lineage affiliations are also vital in obtaining jobs, services and favours. Somalia's social and economic development, as well as political organisation, has traditionally stemmed from lineage systems based on one or other of the six major clan families—Darod, Digil, Dir, Hawiye, Issaq and Rahawein. The six family groups are further split into small clans and lineages; the Hawiye clan, for instance, has six sub-clans, two of which are sharply divided.

The carnage, chaos and sheer madness of the past few years stems from this structure of Somali society. By the time Barre was toppled in January 1991 the country had been sliding toward anarchy for more than three years. Barre had maintained a centralised and authoritarian regime that had literally ruined the country. The economy was in a shambles, political institutions had collapsed, corruption was rampant, morale in the civil and armed forces was low and clanism was very strong. The situation was so appalling that few people had any illusions that Barre's fall from grace would bring an immediate end to the suffering or restore normal services.

Moreover the resistance groups opposed to Barre's rule mirrored the anarchic condition of the regime, thereby ensuring that the post-Barre era would be chaotic. The main resistance forces were again based on clans: the Somali National Movement (SNM), established in 1981 by the Issaq of northern Somalia; the United Somali Congress (USC), formed in 1989 by the Hawiye of central Somalia; and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), created in 1988 by the Ogadenis. Increasingly every public issue in Somalia came to be defined in terms of lineage and clan. It was therefore hardly surprising that when Barre was toppled by the USC in January 1991 the country was plunged into even deeper problems.

After Barre's fall the fighting escalated and many Somalis fled, seeking asylum in neighbouring Djibouti, Ethiopia and Keyna. Barre's successor, Ali Mahdi Mohamed, supported by the local wing of the USC, had no resources with which to establish a functioning government. He did not even control the capital for more than a few months. At present there is no effective government in Mogadishu, as President Mahdi controls only the northern part of the capital. In the confusion which followed the overthrow of the Barre regime government offices and foreign embassies were looted, hospitals and schools were ravaged and water and power supply in Mogadishu were disrupted.

Since 1990 Somalia has been ungovernable. The overthrow of Barre was delayed until January 1991 simply because alliances between power-seeking clan leaders could not endure. Somalia's relative stability in the 70s and early 80s depended on Barre's skilful manipulation of domestic politics. He maintained power by regularly suppressing critics and detaining opponents, by playing on clan interests and rivalries and, occasionally, by buying out opposition groups with cash. However by the late 1980s his military muscle had been weakened by inter-clan rivalries. It had also become increasingly obvious that he had neither the skill to manipulate sectional interests nor the vision to lead the country quickly out of its political and economic crises.

Clan rivalry intensified in the late 1980s because of government corruption and the increasing economic malaise throughout the country. And
corruption was rampant because state structures in Somalia were underdeveloped and extremely weak. There were no democratic institutions, and there was no accountability on the part of political leaders. Somalia's economic problems were aggravated by Barre's misguided macroeconomic policies, by a lack of technical expertise, and by poor project selection and implementation. The foreign aid Somalia received was not invested in profitable ventures, and by the late 1980s the Somali economy had almost ground to a halt.

To make a bad situation worse, by the late 1980s Somalia had been deserted by all its friends and neglected by all but one of the Western powers. Washington terminated aid to Somalia in the wake of human rights violations in 1989. By 1990 Italy was the only Western power working with Somalia in the hope of containing the civil war, reforming the political system and putting the economy on a sound footing. It failed, largely because of Somalia's complex political problems, rampant corruption, and of course the feuding clans.

Barre's defeat in January 1991 accelerated the disintegration of Somalia. First, the anti-Barre opposition had only their interest in the defeat of Barre in common; other than that they hated each other almost as much as they did Barre. Second, when Barre was overthrown power was immediately assumed by the Hawiye, a clan that played virtually no role in the anti-Barre struggle until a few months before his fall. Third, President Mahdi was appointed by the USC without consulting the other groups. Since the overthrow of Barre there have been several clan-based civil wars in Somalia, and given the fragmentation of society it has been hard to gauge the direction of the fighting. Among the warring guerrilla groups now are Barre's own forces, which regrouped in southern Somalia and have been trying to topple the Mahdi regime. This is implausible, yet they are still capable of making life hard for the new government.

Around Mogadishu the USC has been fighting on several fronts—including against its own breakaway groups. On another front, the USC has had to deal with disaffection from the SPM and other political groups which have been dissatisfied with the post-Barre power-sharing arrangement.

After taking power Mahdi had proposed a 'conference of national reconciliation', but other groups refused to attend. The conference was finally convened in June and July 1991, but the various political groups were still so divided that it was hard to see how they would coordinate their programs.

Mediation efforts in Somalia have failed for several reasons: the various clans and sub-clans still hate each other vehemently; the clan leaders or warlords have virtually no legitimacy and can be abandoned by their supporters at any time; and the number of clan militias keeps rising. Somalia's inter- and intra-clan rivalry can be resolved only when clan leaders or warlords agree to unite and persuade their supporters to do the same. But without tangible political and economic rewards to show for years of fighting, the warlords have been unable to persuade their fighters to put down arms. In his heyday Barre succeeded in bribing clan leaders with political office and economic rewards, but the country is now so poor and disorganised that such rewards are no longer tenable. In the long term only strong state structures, efficient and accountable government and appropriate macroeconomic policies will save Somalia.

SAMUEL MAKINDA teaches in social sciences at Murdoch University.

Jaywalking

It was a momentous event in radio journalism. Brett Whiteley had been dead for less than a day and the JJJ reporter was hot on the case. Interviewing a gallery owner she got to the point: "Just how influential was he?"

That's rather typical of JJJ: in pursuit of shoehorning a perceived point of cultural interest into terms acceptable to their idea of a youthful point of view, JJJ boil Whiteley down to how much you should care he's dead. It's the sort of thing you're likely to find every day on the station: perhaps well-meaning, but often just crass. As Australia's one and only 'Youth Network' (though Sydney and Melbourne both have male youth-oriented, commercially successful MMMs) the station inhabits a curious place in radio. Mildly 'intellectual', it's designed for the 15-24 age group, the inheritors of a strange white liberal middle-class suburban landscape which can only be populated by the sort of 'typical' families of ABC dramas and sitcoms.

This is a far cry from the assumed JJJ audience of the 70s and early 80s: coffee/beer/coffee-skulling, trendy-haired, casually-university-attending, t-shirt-wearing, already-been-overseas-once-and-hope-to-go-again-next-year music fans. One might argue that it's better to cater for the odd suburban teen reject here and there as a Youth Network than to wallow in the Golden Oldies of the New Wave for the sake of an ageing band of 'Jays' lovers. Yet JJJ doesn't have many listeners these days anyway, probably because it doesn't play the music that the majority of kids really enjoy—it brings too much of its aged knowledge of what's gone before. Aussie MOR rocker Rick Price, for instance, is hardly likely to get a look in on JJJ because he's not a 30 year-old's idea of what a 15 year-old should like.
Yet his willowy ballads (and equally willowy long brown hair and meaningful gaze) probably make him the current favourite of the teen audience. It would not be too unfair to suggest that JJJ often takes a particularly patronising attitude to mainstays of teen life (TV soapies for instance) which serves as a policy compromise: while JJJ cannot condone mainstream teen culture, it can still mention it knowingly (if somewhat dismissively). Part of the problem is of course the difficulty of appealing both to 15 year-olds and their 24 year-old elder siblings—quite a stretch, when you think about it.

However, this ‘sophisticated’ attitude leads to curious (and irritating) consequences. One JJJ DJ recently announced that he would have a new track from Morrissey coming up in the next hour, adding sarcastically that he was “looking forward to that”. One wondered, if playing Morrissey is so stupid, why do it? And if JJJ plays Morrissey because some people in their audience like him, does that mean they’re saying parts of their audience are stupid? The DJ’s comment rather neatly encapsulated JJJ’s dilemma: despite its best (or worst) instincts, it cannot comfortably endorse any particular musical artist at any particular moment. Morrissey is cool to some people in the 15-24 age group; to others he is a wimp and a whinger. Mainstream radio—like the MMMs in Sydney and Melbourne—cannot easily make value judgements on music because they only play current hits and items from the ‘Heritage Rock’ canon (see John Potts on ‘Heritage Rock’ in Philip Hayward’s From Pop to Punk to Postmodernism, Allen and Unwin, 1992).

Which is not to say that JJJ does not have its own canon. Though many of the announcers who created the original Sydney 2JJJ are no longer there, JJJ still seems to adhere to a very inner-city Sydney-based view of music. There are certainly no garage bands on the station: the closest you’ll get are people with an ‘underground’ heritage, and even they are treated with some trepidation.

Again probably because of its Sydney base, JJJ has always had leanings towards the mainstream end of ‘alternative’, and its recent rejection of an ‘alternative’ audience has probably not made a huge difference to its music programming. DJs have little say in what they play and either apologise for or criticise sarcastically anything that’s unfamiliar. (Though it might not make a lot of difference if they did; when the BBC’s Radio One allowed their DJs to make a choice in the music they played a few years ago, they found the announcers played less new material than they had previously. Everyone has their ‘golden age’.) One listener reports calling up JJJ to congratulate a DJ for playing a particularly ‘different’ track, only to be told by the crestfallen announcer that “it was supposed to be a joke!”

On the whole, however, the new JJJ is not the unmitigated disaster that fear of the unknown might have led fans to expect. A breath of fresh air might have been just what the station needed—though the sackings in late 1990 which accompanied the ‘new look’ could have been handled better in almost any other way. And while the youth of Australia might have an inbuilt resistance to anything not including Coke ads and announcers who sound like they’re shouting through a megaphone, one can only assume that every few days, somewhere around Australia, some spotty adolescent accidentally flips their dial a few degrees to the left and hears a program or a song that changes their mind.

That, after all, was the cry of the new wave groups: “if we can change just one person’s attitude!” And that’s probably the most we can hope for from our Youth Network. Whether it’s worth using so much taxpayer’s money on such a tiny cause is debatable. But if it’s a toss-up for the ABC between JJJ or another drama in the Brides of Christ mould, I for one will be rooting for the Jays.

Just as long as I don’t have to listen to it more than once every three months.

DAVID NICHOLS writes for teen magazines, and is ambivalent towards Morrissey.
Casual Sex?

In July, the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO), the peak body representing the non-government and non-medical sector, formally proposed shifting resources in AIDS education to aim primarily at reinforcing behaviour changes in the frontline communities.

On the face of it, gay activists and AIDS workers have come to the same conclusion as the most conservative sectors of the medical elite: AIDS education should focus on sex between men.

However, this apparent unanimity disguises quite counterposed strategies. In the 'traditional public health' corner lurks a preference for a quarantine of AIDS-affected people—a preference based on generic distrust of patients. Following this approach, gay venues would be closed, the Sydney Gay Mardi Gras banned, sex workers rehabilitated, and drug addicts dosed with methadone daily. Conservative doctors, such as AMA head Bruce Shepherd, want to reassert medical control over AIDS prevention.

New HIV infections peaked in Australia in 1983-84, and are now estimated at 300-600 per year. Now, as then, the overwhelming majority of infections are made possible by unprotected anal sex between men. Of course, this is not to say that there are no infections outside that population—around 700 women are reported to be HIV positive—but rather that the pattern of infection in this country has remained much more localised than in comparable countries. However, while the general population in Australia has a high level of awareness of HIV transmission, there has been very little behaviour change by people outside communities specifically targeted for AIDS education.

Australia's relative success in lowering rates of new infections has been due to a number of factors: prevention efforts by the gay communities in the mid 1980s, the organisation of sex workers to insist on an industry standard of condom use, and the early introduction of needle and syringe exchange programs.

The co-operative and planned approach sponsored by Neal Blewett as federal health minister stands in stark contrast to the approach of many European and North American countries.

However, the new apparent consensus between doctors' groups and AIDS organisations is not the result of complacency. With almost 17,000 people notified as testing positive for HIV nationally, even if no new infections occur, the burden of illness, death and grieving will become more intense as asymptomatic infections mature.

While the cost and urgency of treatment and care increases, so too does the difficulty in sustaining behaviour changes in the frontline communities.

Ten years into the epidemic, gay men in Sydney may be finding it hard to remember always to use condoms and stay sober, to keep giving money and time to AIDS groups, and to keep up volunteer care programs when many or all of their friends have died. Young men coming onto the gay scene may feel that AIDS is old news and affects only the older, leather-clad set. Some Asian migrants, who make up perhaps 10% of the gay community in Sydney, may feel that, just as they are marginalised by racism, so too is AIDS a distant concern.

In an extremely youth-oriented culture, older gay men may feel that they cannot afford to say no to unsafe sexual opportunities. And the 10-13% of gay men who have used 'speed', cocaine, heroin or ecstasy in the last 12 months may shun unprotected sex but still share infected needles because they are 'not really junkies'.

And, of course, men involved and identifying with the gay community make up only a minority of men who have sex with men. Although paid or volunteer outreach educators work in most Australian cities, only a small percentage of the men who have anonymous sex in car parks or on beaches and parks have ever spoken to one.

Allocations to AIDS education and social research have very often been directed to people only marginally affected by the epidemic. If, as seems likely, AIDS money is to be devoted increasingly towards the international pharmaceutical companies for antiviral and preventive therapies, different community sector groups may compete for dwindling education resources. In this scenario, HIV positive people, gay men, ethnic and Aboriginal communities, drug injectors, sex workers, and women would increasingly stake their claims against each other, and against mainstream programs.

Within the Australian National Council on AIDS, as well as within AFAO, there have been strong arguments for a shift of research and education emphasis towards the communities where the major burden of infection has occurred and continues to occur. The national strategy proposal launched by AFAO in July also seeks faster action on the availability of treatment and on legislative changes to eliminate barriers to HIV health promotion programs: stronger anti-discrimination laws, tightening confidentiality laws, and the repeal of anti-homosexual laws, Summary Offences laws and laws penalising drug users and sex workers.

The national strategy developed under Neal Blewett in 1989 ends in mid-1993. The stakes are high in the debate on the shape of the strategy that will take Australia through the next five years—years when the burden of illness will be greatest, and when Australia's progress to date will be put to the test.

KEN DAVIS works on policy co-ordination for the AIDS Council of NSW.
At the end of the 1980s the old contest between social democracy and economic liberalism had ended in stalemate. Paul Hirst contends the debate’s run its course. What’s needed is a new conception of providing public services outside the state: it’s a matter of thick welfare, thin collectivism.

The 70s ended throughout the ‘anglo-saxon’ world with a determined intellectual and political assault on state bureaucracy, collectivism and the welfare state. In the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand, more or less sustained efforts were made to curb the growth in public spending on welfare and to rationalise provision along the lines of economic liberal doctrines. Tight budgetary controls, cuts in direct taxation, the privatisation of services and tax subsidies for market provision were intended to promote the primacy of private over public provision in welfare and to reduce state collective provision to a minimal safety net that only the poorest would use through dire necessity. By now it is clear that such economic liberal solutions to welfare problems are in ruins. They have not improved service delivery or quality; they have not tackled the perceived problem of an ‘underclass’ trapped in a ‘dependency culture’; and they have not contributed to increasing the rate of economic growth by reducing the overall tax burden on the mass of income earners.

The economic liberal agenda has lost its intellectual legitimacy, but the mass attitudes that provided political legitimacy for free market quick-fix solutions are still there. In the UK the Labour Party went to the polls in the April 1992 election with a determined effort to present itself as the party of welfare, to claim that the people had ‘seen through’ economic liberalism, and to suggest that higher income earners would accept proposed tax rises as fair. It failed. None of the presidential candidates in the US
proposes seriously to tackle the problems of poverty and urban decay, despite the spur of the Los Angeles riots.

J K Galbraith’s A Culture of Contentment has provided a straightforward and widely accepted explanation for the failure of redistributionist and welfare politics. According to Galbraith, the postwar mixture of sustained economic growth and welfare spending provided the means for the majority to escape into relatively comfortable and ‘middle class’ conditions. The consequence of this was that collectivist solutions began to seem to them steadily less necessary. In this scenario the new mass ‘middle class’ is reluctant to make major sacrifices for that socially containable and politically ineffectual minority which has not benefited in the same way. Welfare states are thus the victims of their own past successes.

There is an element of truth in this thesis, but it overstates the extent to which people are simply tax resistant, and it underplays the fact that they also have other good reasons not to support simply spending more on existing forms of bureaucratic state welfare. The real problem is that supporters of the extension of state welfare services have been unable to come up with a clear new strategy that encompasses reforms to both funding and service delivery. Rather they have sought to break down public resistance to ‘more of the same’ with moralising and with the patronage of possessing superior principles. Yet resistance to the expansion of state welfare will only be overcome by new ideas that inspire people, and not by schoolteacherly social democratic exhortation to be altruistic and pay up.

There are three main problems which limit public willingness to be taxed for welfare provision:

1. Throughout the ‘anglo-saxon’ world we find the deadly combination of low economic growth and high expectations of private consumption on the part of the mass of the employed. The result is resistance to taxation—even though survey evidence also shows that a substantial majority would prefer high standards of welfare services like education and health to be publicly provided at low direct cost to the consumer.

2. People are widely resistant to the bureaucratic deformations of mass welfare services (administrative discretion, low public accountability and the absence of a ‘consumer’ culture in the provision of services). People do not want to be supplicants, to have to wait and to be treated rudely in squalid circumstances.

3. The alleged benefits of national public services—fairness and equal treatment—are by no means apparent to consumers or available in fact. ‘National’ services are by no means uniform: there is considerable variability in the way services are delivered between regions and households in most countries. Nor are ‘universal’ benefits equally distributed or specific services and benefits effectively targeted at those most in need.

The problem that most supporters of a social democratic mass welfare ethic fail to accept is that bureaucracies do not empower citizens. The vast majority of citizens expect to be treated as articulate, sensible individuals in charge of their own affairs and not as objects of tutelage. Yet state welfare bureaucracies habitually patronise and at worst demean a high proportion of recipients of their services. In the UK, for example, post-1945 local authority housing involved many absurd and humiliating restrictions on tenants. One could not even paint one’s front door the colour one pleased. In the UK John Major has tried to exploit this dissatisfaction with ‘Citizen’s Charters’ which are supposed to specify the minimum service standards the public has a right to expect, and the mechanisms for obtaining relief if they are not met. Likewise, his administration has sought to improve the accountability of public servants. Yet measures such as these make little sense in conditions where service failure is largely determined by government underfunding, and where accountability is a ‘top-down’ process that reduces the autonomy of welfare personnel in relation to their senior managers but does not directly empower the public. John Major has tried to demoticise economic liberalism but, in the absence of major new ideas from his government about how to improve the funding and delivery of services, he is hardly likely to do more than marginally improve welfare provision.

The position is, therefore, one of stalemate. Social democrats have no new ideas and the public will not trust them to spend more on the old services. Economic liberals have failed to revitalise or transform those stagnant welfare states which survive, albeit in an underfunded and ineffective state. Indeed, mostly those welfare states subsist merely in the absence of anything better, and are run by rightwing rulers who have little sympathy for them. How can the deadlock be broken? The answer, I believe, can be summed up in two sentences. First, the provision of public welfare and other services should be devolved to self-governing voluntary associations. Second, such associations should be enabled to obtain public funds to provide such services for their members. The principle of social governance involved here is called ‘associationalism’. Its fundamental objective is to renew modern societies by transforming the private/public division; making the ‘private’ a sphere of social co-operation and collective governance, making the ‘public’ as far as possible nothing more than the mechanism for providing rules and funds that enable self-governing ‘private’ institutions to work.

Associationalism is a form of social organisation that can deliver all the political benefits economic liberals claim to seek from the market without the same scale of economic costs and injustices that unregulated markets impose. Associationalism simultaneously proposes solutions to the problems of funding, service delivery and citizens’ involvement. It is attractive to citizens seeking greater autonomy; it is easy to understand in principle; and it explodes the terms of the conflict between economic liberalism and welfare collectivism.

Associationalism offers, first of all, extended governance without big government. Economic liberalism fostered the delusion that the answer to over-extended and unaccount-
able government was deregulation. The result has been the unwanted and unintended consequences of 'free' markets. Governance is essential; modern industrial societies need extensive 'policing' to ensure that acceptable standards are set and complied with. This is true even in straightforward commercial transactions where consumers have to be able to trust the honesty of the vendor and be aware that they can obtain relief through public agencies if that trust proves to be unfounded. The problem is government not govern-

ance: government becomes too big, too multiform and too bureaucratic in struggling to cope with those diverse tasks that complex modern societies of necessity impose.

The advantage of self-governing voluntary agencies rather than state bureaucracies is threefold. First, personnel will be more committed to an agency with whose principles they are in agreement and which is chosen by them as a place of work for that reason. Second, self-governing voluntary associations will be internally accountable to their members; this ensures a first-line form of policing of service delivery by members, and reduces the load on the state. And third, the delivery of welfare services through voluntary agencies effects a separation between the service provider and the state as the 'governor of governors'. In contrast at present the state is in the contradictory position of providing services through its bureaucratic agencies and also acting as the guarantor of the standard of those services.

In the second place associationalism offers thick welfare with thin collectivism. Bureaucratic collectivist delivery of welfare typically entails high administrative discretion on the part of providers and low consumer choice. For that reason it is less and less attractive to the even moderately successful. However, market-based insurance schemes can hardly serve as the general answer to this problem. They can assure a high and uniform level of welfare provision only in a society of mass affluence—one that does not have a substantial pool of long-term unemployed or a significant underclass. Even then, market-based systems entail serious distortions in provision due to strong financial incentives for suppliers to over-deliver services.

Associationalism, by contrast, both promotes consumer choice and—because of the joint producer-consumer self-governance of associations—also provides a mutual check on the tendencies to overconserve and overproduce that are inherent in any form of decentralised welfare provision. In such a system individuals can craft the package of services they need. This is because of the high level of choice in the type and mode of services on offer, due to the fact that service providers are voluntary organisations in competition, and their provision is mainly demand-led. Consumers have a large element of choice in the services they receive, but also considerable discretion in determining the overall level of funding for them. Thus when it comes to paying for services, individuals will tend to behave differently from the way they do now. Employed consumers with a substantial disposable income will have high discretion in controlling what they get; therefore they will be willing to adjust expenditure to meet their own perceived needs. The poor will get minimum entitlements, but still will be able to choose which agencies should fulfil them. The system will not be inherently egalitarian, but it will tend to promote higher welfare spending and incline individuals toward meeting their needs through collective consumption. Welfare expenditures will tend to rise to the extent that consumers see they can control services and that they benefit from consuming collectively. Associationalist welfare systems thus have the potential to unblock the tax constraint on welfare spending. Because they take the responsibility for making spending decisions from the state and place it in the hands of consumers, they promote real consumer choice in any ways markets do not, and they ensure accountability to consumers in a way markets do not.

'People have good reasons not to support simply spending more’

Associationalism is a well-established idea and its principles are easy to understand. Why, then, has it not already gained widespread acceptance as the new basis for welfare systems? The answer: it is not a technical quick-fix solution. It requires fundamental changes in the forms of authority predominant in both state and civil society. Social democrats, for example, tend to be hostile to associationalism on the grounds that it lessens the power of the state. They remain committed to their perception that only the state can offer true welfare, because it is supposed to be able to deliver universal and uniform benefits. Yet this is an illusion; no system of welfare can reliably and over the long run ensure equality and uniformity in the way desired by classic social democracy.

An associationalist welfare system involves a quite different political principle. It offers greater empowerment, rather than equality of outcomes, as its means to the goal of social justice. It recognises that such empowerment cannot come from state centralism and the inevitable bureaucracy that accompanies it, but only from decentralisation and a degree of popular control. Associationalism is based on the principle of federation—that is the principle that activities should be administered and controlled at the lowest level feasible, and that 'higher' authorities should be limited to their specific functions and unable to appropriate those of the agencies and authorities 'below' them. Associationalism is thus decentralising and pluralistic, and looks messy to statists because of the inherent weakness of top-down control in such a federative system.

The federalist and associationalist position is no longer the irrelevancy it appeared to be when the militaristic Keynesian welfare state was a going concern. The period of prolonged industrialised wars and cold wars between the great powers required the complete social mobilisation of populations. Then the welfare state had a clear rationale—as the locus of a pact with organised labour and as the
orchestrator of the welfare measures necessary to 'social efficiency'. Yet the rationale no longer holds. The problem for social democrats is that the national state has lost its centrality as the principal economic and social regulator and yet it is essential to their project. It has lost the capacity to determine the level of economic activity with the demise of 'Keynesian' strategies of national economic management.

Regional economic regulation and the regionalisation of economic activity have grown apace. The divisions in the levels of prosperity within nations are as substantial as those between them. National states are at once losing salience upwards, to economic blocs like the European Community, and downwards, to regionalist practices of economic regulation and regional sources of citizen identity. This suggests that in Europe at least the old project of a 'uniform' national welfare state is probably doomed. Italy and Germany offer clear examples of such regionalist rejection of national redistribution. The regional autonomist Northern Leagues, for example, protest that the south of Italy produces 25% of GDP and consumes 49% of it. German working class voters in the western Länder are unwilling to carry the main tax burden of integration of the east.

The only possible long-run answer to this crisis of national states in Europe is a 'federalist' solution in which EC, national and regional governments accept specific and partial functions in welfare. The EC would set minimum framework standards for social regulation and social welfare, and then ensure the supra-national redistribution between rich and poor regions to meet them. This project is itself problematic, since national governments are unwilling to concede such powers, and such common standards are currently quite low. Regions would then be free to determine welfare policies consistent with their explicit political objectives and their underlying economic performance.

Such a regionalised and federal system can in theory work either with associations or markets playing the main role in welfare. The real problem for economic liberals in accepting associationalism is not their addiction to the 'free' market. Rather, the real stumbling block is their commitment to a strong central state that protects market freedoms (and which in particular ensures that there is no political or social obstruction of the market from local government or voluntary associations like labour unions) as well as their commitment to corporate dominance of economic and social provision. In fact, contrary to economic liberal ideology, centralised state power and top-down corporate management go together. Decentralisation and the principle of self-governing voluntary associations are threats to economic 'liberals' (with a few honourable and genuinely libertarian exceptions), because the freedoms they really value are those for corporations to act in weakly-regulated markets. Modern economic liberalism is passionately addicted to 'management', and convinced that top-down authority and hierarchy are the only routes to social efficiency.

Associationalism would be a radical change from this managerial mentality. It would break up the current ossified private hierarchies that ensure that most of 'civil society' is a domain of authority and not of freedom. The citizen, at work and in purchasing private welfare (insurance), is at the mercy of largely unaccountable corporations. Associationalism, by beginning to restore citizen power, would threaten the corporate dominance of 'civil society'. The chief reason associationalism has not been seized upon as a solution to welfare problems is because it is radical. It is at once too decentralist for social democratic conservatives wedded to the nation state, and too democratic for corporate apologists in the guise of economic liberals. It might, therefore, appear to be marginal—except that existing doctrines of social organisation are bankrupt, the problems of welfare provision are very real, and it is implausible that sophisticated and individuated publics in industrialised societies will continue to accept passively the existing patterns of authority forever.

Associationalism, moreover, can appeal to and unite diverse social forces, break down the old opposition between Left and Right, and can profit from a variety of reform strategies. Indeed, one could argue that the one thing holding back the crystallisation of a variety of groups around an associationalist strategy has been the absence of a common concept that allow such diverse entities to communicate and to recognise one another as having shared interests. Thus the task of developing the concept is urgent, and the core of that development must be a credible model of social organisation.

That said, it is impossible to present in any depth the possible models of an associationalist welfare state within the compass of a short essay. We have suffered enough from the relentless organisational monism of economic liberalism, where there is no alternative and only one simple, comprehensive 'Year Zero' solution. Associationalism has the advantage that it can be added slowly and experimentally to existing welfare states as a principle of renewal and reform. It is not just another slick idea to attract funding, since it offers both recipients and providers of welfare a say in its governance and delivery. It is also compatible with a variety of methods of funding, and it can co-exist with those elements of collectivism and bureaucracy that are inevitable and inescapable in a complex contemporary society.

The easiest way to present a picture of such a welfare state is to state some basic principles:

* Provision is by voluntary self-governing organisations that are partnerships between the recipients and the providers of the service: such associations will be at least
formally democratic and recipients will have an annual right of exit.

* Such organisations are funded predominantly from public sources (possible methods are outlined below) and are subject to public inspection and standard-setting.

* Any voluntary organisation—Church, trade union, charitable trust—may establish as wide or narrow a range of services as its members choose (for instance, a Muslim charitable foundation may wish to establish schools, hospitals, old people’s homes and so on). It is assumed, therefore, that (at least in urban areas) there will be a range of competing services with which citizens may choose to register.

* All such organisations must meet conditions of registration to receive public funds. Among these would be compliance with public standards, acceptance of exit rights and recipient choice (for instance, to register with a Catholic school but with a ‘neutral’ trust hospital), and participation in the public/associational governance of the whole system. It is assumed here that the setting of standards, allocation of funding and inspection would be ‘consociational’—that is, governance as far as possible would be by representatives of associations acting either by service (such as education or health) or regionally.

"The model avoids the tendency for well-educated, articulate citizens to dominate"

Such a fully developed associationalist welfare state would be ‘confederal’ in that the core organisation of provision would be the region, at which level public funds (including inter-regional transfers) would be distributed. Associations would co-operate with one another in the public governance of the distinct services and of the whole system, sending representatives to public bodies which would perform the central regulative and distributory functions. Voluntary associations would thus enter into public governance in a decentralised state; the associationalist principle would not only renew welfare provision, but also the state and governance itself.

In this confederal welfare state the associations would be democratically self-governing internally and would also contribute to a system of federated indirect democracy in the governance of the regional welfare state. Representative democratic bodies would remain at central and regional level, and would be the standard-setters of last resort. Citizens would have several ‘votes’, as well as the crucial power of exit from direct service providers. The state would retain major reserve powers over welfare provision—for instance, power to curb excessive growth in aggregate spending and to challenge standards of provision—but it would not have the unilateral powers available to politicians and officials in bureaucratic collectivist systems. Welfare professionals would be subject to strong public pressure and yet have far more say in how their own unit and the service of which it is a part is run.

How might such a welfare state be funded? The answer is that it could use for different purposes and in different combinations all or any of the present methods: general taxation, public or private insurance, markets and private purchases, charitable donations and so on. A citizen’s entitlements would depend on the precise nature of this mix. I will assume for simplicity’s sake that all welfare spending is funded from general taxation. Another important element in funding such a welfare state would be a Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) scheme, in which every citizen has a (low) basic income assured by the state. This GMI would be exempt from taxation, so that it could be supplemented, for instance, from part-time or casual earnings without loss of benefit. The minimum level might be pitched at, say, A$500 per adult per month. Assuming current levels of unemployment (11%) this would still be economically sustainable.6 It would give citizens just sufficient income to pursue private activities the market does not value but which may be socially useful, or to undertake voluntary service. A GMI scheme would thus increase the potential personnel of the ‘welfare state’ at low cost. In an ageing society such a GMI scheme may become not only economically viable but essential. It may be more rational than collectivist welfare, if household/families are to be given the resources to care for elderly partners/relatives.

More specific entitlements would depend on needs and status (a school age child, a disabled person) and would relate to specific provision areas like health or education. The assumption here is that each citizen would be entitled to register annually with a service provider for each relevant service and receive a publicly specified quantity and quality of the service. Funding to associations would thus follow the election of citizens to use a particular service. I assume that the vast majority of citizens would re-register with the same service provider and that the annual public costs of turnover from one provider to another would be small. Inevitably, certain public services like policing, social work supervision of childrearing or compulsory psychiatry would not be at the citizen’s discretion and would be similar in form to bureaucratic collectivist welfare today, except that the service providers might be voluntary associations fulfilling public contracts (such as a co-operative of social workers or a private psychiatric hospital).

If the desire is to build in strong components of citizens’ choice in funding and to keep state discretion to a minimum, then the following methods might be used. Each service would develop (through the consociational machinery) a formula for funds per citizen election (dependent on age and status). Voluntary associations would thus receive annually funds proportionate to their previous years’ registered (and publicly audited) membership for a given service. This might make up the bulk of the welfare budget available to associations (say 70%). A number of objections need to be dealt with at this point. It might be argued, for instance, that associations would merely com-

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pete and not co-operate, that they would encourage inefficient duplication of expensive capital equipment, and that professionals would have little esprit de corps but be fragmented in specific associations. To meet these objections, two additional sources of citizens’ election or voluntary initiative might be available. First, taxpayers might be enabled to allocate a portion of their annual tax payments (amounting to, say, 5% of the total budget for associations) to a limited number of publicly registered associations of their choice (say 5). This would allow citizens to target issues of public concern through choosing on what to spend a portion of their taxes.

Again, about 25% of the budget for associations could be assigned to be spent through the consociational machinery on major new projects, on bids for extra funds or on co-operative ventures. This would give the consociational machinery real teeth, encourage associations to participate actively in it and provide professionals in a particular service with the means to co-operate across associations. It would both provide for major new capital spending and encourage associations to manage a particular service in a region as co-operatively as possible, developing common services with the means to co-operate.

The many other complexities and difficulties of such an associationalist system cannot be explored here. One in particular does need to be dealt with, however. The associative model may appear to favour the well-educated middle classes with a ‘consumer’ mentality and the skill to ‘work’ the self-governing component of the system, defeating the poor and unskilled by the complexity of choices required. Actually, by giving the power of ‘exit’, the system would empower the poor to a considerable degree. They could walk away from bad schools, for example—something that is difficult to do in a collectivist-bureaucratic system. And because it does not require them to participate extensively in the democratic machinery of an association, it avoids the tendency for well-educated articulate citizens to dominate, which bedevils, for instance, school committees. Likewise, because the system could easily be made open to campaigning associations, it would enable those groups actively concerned to improve the position of the poor to obtain public funds by persuading poor people to make elections on their behalf. It would also enable alternative groups and non-establishment groups to set their own welfare agendas in ways that current bureaucratic welfare states do not permit (for example, providing proper medical services for ‘travellers’). For these reasons it has a strong potential to attract radicals as well as those who favour consumer choice.

Associationalism could contribute to resolving the current impasse of both policy ideas and public attitudes in the area of welfare. It would, as we have seen, promote greater citizens’ choice and give citizens the initiative in funding rather than bureaucrats. It thus provides citizens with a rationale for spending more on welfare. Associationalism also offers a model that could be extended to other public and private services and their governance. Indeed, it offers a new model of governance: publicising the ‘private’ sphere of voluntary associations, and decentralising and democratising the public domain through self-governing associations.

Associationalism also has the immense advantage that it is tied to neither Right nor Left; likewise well-to-do and poor alike can exploit its possibilities. As such, it is the one social doctrine that spans the major divisions of our current politics and enables diverse groups, political and apolitical, to co-operate while pursuing their own several projects. It is neither utopian nor dependent on a single social ‘carrier’. Of all the current major doctrines of social organisation, it is the one that has not failed. Unlike the socialism of the traditional Left and the corporate apologists of the Right in that it gives the power of choice to the people, associationalism has a chance of becoming truly popular.

PAUL HIRST is professor of social theory at Birkbeck College, University of London. His Associative Democracy will be published by Polity Press later this year.

1. ‘Welfare’ is understood here in the broader sense (current in America) of that changing bundle of public services that the state determines is necessary for its citizens to lead a satisfactory life as members of the political community. This includes sectors such as health and education, as well as ‘welfare’ in the narrower British-Australian sense of the word.

2. This is by no means generous, and would be fiscally supportive under existing conditions. Indeed, it would probably cost less to administer than the existing structure of discretionary and program-specific benefits.
CIVIC Centre

The values of social citizenship are often seen as a democratic ideal for the 21st century.
Gary Wickham and Gavin Kendall demur. They argue that citizenship is in reality a technical device for government, and that the grand social claims for it need to be scaled down.

Citizenship is catching a lot more attention on the Left of the political spectrum these days. As hopes (and/or desires) fade for apocalyptic social change, many on the Left are turning to older ambitions traditionally associated with liberalism, and in particular liberal democracy. One of these ambitions is an expanded notion of social citizenship. In recent years, citizenship has been adopted as a key principle in the political armoury of many on the Left. This has given the term a deceptively ‘progressive’ tinge.

Yet we want to argue here that while citizenship as a value has its merits, the Left should not get carried away by it. While it is often seen by liberals and radicals alike as a means of guaranteeing certain political outcomes, we want to argue that it is better seen as a technical tool, a device used by government in managing populations, and one which guarantees no outcomes. If a government wants to improve the quality of life in a particular city, for example, or to promote the benefits of ethnic and cultural diversity, it will usually aim to do this by trying to make better citizens. It will try to make people proud to live and work in the city concerned and/or it will attempt to make a more tolerant body of citizens.

However, the role of citizenship is also rather more extensive than this. In being a technical device, citizenship involves governments actually ‘making’ citizens. That is, citizenship is concerned with forming certain types of persons as citizens—and, more particularly, as certain types of citizens, depending on the specific imperative of the particular government concerned. This actual formation of citizens involves definite administrative techniques on the part of governments—techniques, if you like, of citizen manufacture. The aim of these techniques is to identify needs and, at the same time, to begin to address these needs. This means constant calculation and assessment. These
techniques of calculation and assessment vary in form depending on the requirements of the specific government concerned, and on the mode of government involved. For example, there has been a shift in modern western countries from the middle of the 18th century onwards to a mode of government featuring much greater reliance on bureaucracy. This new 'modern' mode of government has involved the rise of certain bureaucratic techniques of calculation and assessment which concentrate on more detailed records ('statistics') about each member of the population. The specific practical techniques of calculation are closely related to the sort of 'citizen formation' a particular government can aim to produce.

This point can be reinforced by comparing techniques of citizen manufacture used in the ancient Roman census with these modern bureaucratic techniques. In republican Rome a census was held every five years.1 The site for the census was the *campus martius*, the military training ground. It was the responsibility of the censor to register each citizen. However, registration meant something quite different then: it was an audit of a citizen's wealth and of his (women were not citizens in ancient Rome) moral character. The census even involved a purifying act of sacrifice, the *lustrum*. Compare this with the modern techniques of citizen calculation and assessment we discussed above, which simply record information about citizens and render this information statistical, ready for a variety of purposes.
Alongside these administrative techniques of citizen manufacture we must, of course, locate more direct techniques aimed at the formation of the citizenry—that is, particular direct forms of citizen training (especially in the field of education). For example, in the west, attempts to develop literate populations through the techniques of mass education were at first tied to a desire to guarantee the piety of the individual. Over the last 100 years or so, however, the instilling of literacy into the population has become linked, rather, to a different double aim. The first aim is to try to allow the citizen to develop his or her potential to the full. The second is, as Ian Hunter has argued (ALR 136), to train individuals to take up specific social and economic roles in society at large. We would argue that this double aim has managed to remain intact despite the fact that these aims often pull in opposite directions, as Hunter has outlined.

However, when citizenship is considered as a tool of government the distinction between the governor and the governed starts to become blurred. Citizens are expected to be both governors of themselves, and at the same time, objects of government. This is how they are both objects and devices of government. The examples we have offered so far bear this out.

Again, in being a tool of government, citizenship is (as we hinted above) widely taken by its supporters to be an ideal, something to be achieved and something worth achieving. This appears to cut across our notion of citizenship as a technical device of government—it suggests that the technology must serve only ‘good’ democracy and its ideals, whereas we are suggesting it may serve any political project. This, as we shall outline below, is one of the reasons for dampening our expectations of the benefits of citizenship for the particular political aims of, for instance, social democrats.

So far so good for citizenship and government. The picture we have painted suggests government working well using citizenship as one of its keys. In the remainder of this article we aim to unsettle this picture of smooth efficiency. Consider, first, our previous idea that citizenship is an ideal and the proposition that this cuts across our notion of technical citizenship.

As a technical device of government, citizenship involves training people to understand citizenship as a good thing, a ‘natural’ way of behaving for advanced, civilised beings. Hence the technical nature of citizenship actually contains the ideal of citizenship, and the claims about it as an ideal are meaningless. Such claims have no grounds beyond this technical realm. Furthermore, this means citizenship can be equally well claimed as an ideal by any governmental system across the political spectrum. Fascists, communists and social democrats can each use the technical device of citizenship for their own ends if they each put in the necessary work. And each use will inevitably (if it is done properly) produce, as part of its technical operation,
citizens who see this use as an ideal. In other words, all claims about citizenship as an ideal should be treated with equal scepticism.

The point is that citizenship is not an automatic good deriving its goodness from some aspect of human nature to do with collective behaviour. Our scepticism here is supported by the practices of the ancient Greeks who actually invented the notion of citizenship. For them it was not an automatic good, but rather a technical invention used to achieve and to cement the outcome of a contest in which certain city states, particularly Athens, were victorious over other city states. These Greeks used the techniques of citizenship in their victory, in producing the personnel necessary for that victory; only subsequently did the idea of citizenship become an ideal. Because it is so widely seen as an ideal, an automatic good, the exclusionary character of citizenship is often overlooked. Citizenship entails membership of a particular community. Membership means, by definition, some persons must be excluded. All communities exclude certain categories from citizenship—whether women, children, slaves, the propertyless, prisoners, or foreigners (including the ‘guest workers’ of modern Sweden and Germany).

In other words, if activists are to consider citizenship an ideal, as many on the Left seem to, they should not conflate it with the ideal of inclusion (such as membership of particular communities or associations), as so often happens. This is to misunderstand the very nature of citizenship. Connected to this point, certain expectations of citizens as ideal subjects and objects of government may be completely unrealistic. We have in mind, particularly, expectations to do with tolerance of diversity associated with the institutions and beliefs of multiculturalism (discussed by Barry Hindess in ALR 140). One expectation of multiculturalism seems to be that good citizens will celebrate ethnic diversity as a desirable feature of citizenship—and that if they don’t celebrate it, ethnic diversity may become ethnic conflict and tear apart government programmes like multiculturalism.

It seems to us that this is a reasonable expectation of only a few highly trained citizens, and only at some times. In periods of extended peace, for instance, it may be possible to overcome the exclusionary character of citizenship and train a fair number of citizens to tolerate or even celebrate diversity. But in times of intermittent war (meaning the entire 20th century for most modern western countries), it is too much to expect more than a handful of citizens to overlook the exclusion which is a feature of citizenship in times of war. In wartime, a mark of good citizenship is to recognise the enemy as the definitely excluded enemy and to behave accordingly (there are extreme punishments for those who do not). It is a big step from here to celebrating diversity and concentrating on inclusion, especially when the step back is potentially always just around the corner.

These, then, are the problems which exclusion poses for citizenship seen as an ideal for ‘good’ politics. Moreover, these are underpinned by a difficulty with the sophistication of the citizen-forming administrative techniques we pointed to earlier. Administrative techniques which provide the necessary background for modern citizenship (identifying needs for governments and beginning to address them) are so sophisticated nowadays that they can analyse a body of citizens in terms of thousands, possibly millions, of different variables, including habits and attitudes. Identifying these variables and suggesting ways to begin to address them is one thing. Changing citizens by training them in (for instance) different habits or attitudes is a much slower and more difficult process. If this is the case, citizenship will not only struggle to serve as an adequate tool in the situations where the problem of exclusion rears its head—it will prove inadequate in many more situations. In other words, the sophisticated administrative knowledge techniques may be producing false expectations of what citizenship can deliver as a tool of government.

Another problem for modern citizenship is the sheer weight of numbers of citizens in the modern world. When citizenship was invented in ancient Athens it was never applied to more than 45,000 persons. Using citizenship as a governing device for only a small minority of persons resident in a community remained the norm right up to the modern era. But the modern era has involved both massive urbanisation and a dramatic increase in the sophistication and spread of calculation and assessment techniques. As a result the device of citizenship has come to be applied to a much, much higher proportion of residents of modern nations. The end result may not only be the fact that the newer type of citizenship (with its greater stress on self-government) differs markedly from the type used in the ancient world and the Renaissance. It may also be that the newer form doesn’t work very well.

Finally, one reason modern citizenship doesn’t work very well as a device of government might be because of resistance on the part of persons formed as citizens themselves—an irrational resistance both to being governed and to being governors. Perhaps there will always be too many citizens—for reasons which rational thought will never capture—who will not take the responsibility of citizenship seriously enough for it to bear the weight put on it by many of its advocates.

It is, of course, very easy to point to failures of citizenship as a governmental device. Yet the over-riding commitment by modern governments to the forms of government we’ve outlined in this piece (and in our last piece in ALR 141) suggests that such failures are virtually irrelevant. We need to do two things when thinking about government and citizenship. First, we need to think outside the concept of citizenship, to think beyond this ‘necessary’ governmental device, to examine the many instances of government where officials persist with techniques in the face of their blatant failure. And second, we need to lower our expectations about what citizenship can accomplish in the modern state.

GARY WICKHAM teaches in social sciences at Murdoch University. GAVIN KENDALL teaches in psychology at Lancaster University in England.
After Social DEMOCRACY

In an era of shattered utopias, social democracy is one of the few political philosophies left standing. David Burchell argues that it might form the basis of a new, post-social democratic strategy.

The 80s was a graveyard of doctrines. Not just Soviet-style socialism, but also the whole idea of a ‘system change’, of a successor to capitalism waiting to be born, finally passed away, as its death notice might put it, ‘after a long illness’. In this era of shattered utopias and a generalised scaling-down of expectations, social democracy, it seems, is one of the few among the major political ideologies to retain at least a semblance of its credibility.

Postwar social democracy’s stress on equality rather than ownership as the major preoccupation of reforming government, its insistence on democratic means and its robust contempt for the revolutionary mystique and all its works, have stood the test of time remarkably well. Moreover, as it becomes increasingly difficult to sum up exactly what it is that modern Labor reformism ‘stands for’, the blend of idealistic ends and pragmatic means which distinguishes postwar social democracy from its competitors on Left and Right may seem on the face of it peculiarly well-attuned to the times. So let’s hear two cheers for social democracy.

Why not three, you may well ask? And why, nevertheless, do I feel such ambivalence about the project and, yes, the temper of postwar social democracy? I suspect that I’m not alone in this. Postwar social democracy was always controversial: in postwar left-of-centre parties like the ALP, after all, it marked one side of the divide in the Cold War in the labour movement. Social democrats, it was tacitly understood, were those who in the last resort favoured liberal democracy over socialism, and who in the last resort backed Washington against Moscow, while socialists were those who held liberal democracy in less esteem than the supposed democratising capacity of socialism, and who in the final analysis were inclined (albeit with all sorts of qualifications and circumlocutions) to back Moscow
against Washington. To describe oneself as a social democrat was in these circumstances to pull on one’s team colours in a serious and very bitter political slugging-match.

Again, postwar social democracy in countries like Australia has been controversial in that, while having its roots in the vague labourist-socialist ethos of the anglo-saxon labour movements, it explicitly, and even dismissively, rejected much of that same ethos. Prior to the theoretical social democracy of British Labour thinker and politician Tony Crosland—the key figure in postwar ‘anglo-saxon’ social democracy—it had been an implicit assumption of both anglo-saxon labourism and marxian socialism that the measuring-rod for the advance of labour vis-a-vis capital was the size of the public sector in the economy as a whole. Postwar social democracy rejected that belief out of hand—and in that, in my opinion, it has decisively been proven right. But in so doing it started the process of unravelling that amalgam of instincts which comprised ‘traditional Labor values’—a process which has gone much further in recent years in the Hawke-Keating government and in similar, nominally social democratic, governments in Western Europe and elsewhere. It was social democracy, in other words, which set off the political vertigo and loss of direction which mark the reforming condition of our own age.

Yet nowadays one thing is clear: social democracy no longer feels novel, let alone controversial. On the contrary, it now (ironically) feels like precisely that amalgam of unstated labour movement assumptions which comprises our own contemporary definition of ‘traditional Labor values’—in effect a label for the theoretical and ethical status quo of the immediate past. But, unless I miss my guess it’s not just its lack of novelty which is the problem here. Social democracy, both as a doctrine and as an ethos, has evidently lost its capacity to inspire, to excite. It has also, and not unrelatedly, lost its capacity to mark out a strategic territory, to prepare a map of action, for the labour movement in particular and the wider and more diffuse reforming constituency in general.

This may seem to suggest that social democracy is a thing of the past, yet another part of the political baggage of the century of disappointments to be cast off in the search for new political themes for the new century. I don’t think so; rather, as I hinted above, it seems to me that the values and several of the guiding precepts of postwar social democracy are important links between the philosophy of the postwar labour movement and the new political ethos of our own age. Dennis Altman a few years ago called for a ‘reconstituted social democracy’. The somewhat laboured verb seems to me to highlight the problem: who nowadays could be cheerfully and enthusiastically gathered to the task of ‘reconstituting’ social democracy? Perhaps a more plausible project is a post-social democracy: a doctrine which tries to ‘go beyond’ the malaise of the actual procedures and practices of traditional social democracy, while at the same time readily aligning itself with important aspects of the ethos of that tradition. To adapt a phrase from Ernesto Laclau, post-social democracy would be post-social democracy, but it would also decidedly be post-social democratic in temper—it would come out of, and be informed by that tradition.

In order to envisage how to ‘go beyond’ social democracy, however, it’s necessary to understand precisely what it is, or was—what precisely constituted its air of novelty, and what were its sources of intellectual inspiration. The formative setting for postwar social democracy was the immediate postwar world, though of course its major reference points were the 30s Depression and World War Two. This context informed the new social democracy in two ways: in terms of its techniques, practices and ‘art’ of government, and in terms of its theoretical reference points. At the theoretical level the 30s had demonstrated to those who became the postwar social democrats that neither traditional instinctual labourism nor the then-fashionable mechanised marxism of the radical Left possessed the theoretical wherewithal to provide a practical programmatic response to the evident economic and social problems of capitalism.

Labourism, the traditional ethos of the labour movement, was in effect anti-theoretical; it held that the prime goal of the labour movement was to strengthen the power of the labour movement—the assumption being that a stronger labour movement would be in a better position to protect its constituents. Yet about what to do when the labour movement was in power labourism had remarkably little to say. In consequence the records of Australian and British labour governments in the Depression was mostly one of confused and meek acceptance of the status quo. The marxism of the radical Left, meanwhile, certainly did not lack a theory, but of course its guiding logic was that there had of necessity to be an apocalyptic change in politics, society and economy; by no means short of that would the deficiencies of the capitalist economy be remedied. Social democracy argued that on the contrary it was possible to have a theoretically consistent plan of action which insisted on the possibility of real and indeed irreversible change to capitalism short of social catastrophe.

At the governmental level the problem was rather similar. Labourism, in the absence of an alternative model of government, had been forced to rely on a half-hearted commitment to the logic of governance of economic liberalism as its raison d’etre in the 30s, with disastrous consequences. Marxism founded its conception of governance on Marx’s conviction in the hopeless anarchy of the market, and on the leninist belief in the efficacy of planning in a non-market economy. Social democracy broke this impasse. It saw that there were two key techniques available to postwar governments which enabled them to manipulate both economy and society, without the necessity for a recourse to the edicts of liberalism on the one hand or of an increasingly hypothetical insurrectionism on the other. In the realm of social policy this new technique went by the name of ‘the welfare state’; in the realm of economic policy the rubric was ‘Keynesianism’.

Of course, the new social democrats ‘invented’ neither the welfare state nor practical Keynesianism: both were techniques of government which had been introduced to some limited extent prior to World War Two, and then in much
more fullblown form during and immediately after the war. The novel role of social democrats in the 50s and 60s was to argue that these twin techniques of government enabled government to supervise and manipulate the capitalist economy and society in ways which previous 'arts' of government had thought impossible, and to conclude from this that this enabled social democrats to make fundamental and irreversible changes to capitalism within the mode of government—liberal democracy—proper to capitalism itself. Or, in Tony Crosland's words in his 1956 The Future of Socialism, 'the government can exert any influence it likes on income distribution, and can also determine within broad limits the division of total output between consumption, investment, exports, and social expenditure'.

The significance of this Croslandite argument on the reforming strategy of government was profound. It was 'now quite clear', claimed Crosland in 1952, 'that capitalism has not the strength to resist the process of metamorphosis into a qualitatively different kind of society'; and again, he contended, 'by 1951 Britain had, in all essentials, ceased to be a capitalist country'. Yet this new social state—which he referred to, significantly, as 'welfare statism'—was not in itself the goal towards which social democrats were heading. Neither the 'continued extension of free social services' nor the 'continued proliferation of controls', nor 'further redistribution of income by direct taxation' would in themselves get to that goal. Rather, they provided the governmental capacity to advance to social democracy by eradicating 'the sense of class', enabling a 'partnership in industry' and effecting a cultural transformation: 'We need not only higher exports and old-age pensions, but more open-air cafés, brighter and gayer streets at night, later closing hours for public houses, brighter and cleaner eating-houses, more riverside cafés, more pleasure gardens...more murals and pictures in public places...and so on ad infinitum.'

In its day this was a heady brew: a hard-headed and strategic view of the quite radical possibilities of government allied to a wholly new agenda of social reform unfettered by the old trench warfare of marxist-labourist 'class politics'. Its influence was deep, if not immediate; most thinking social democrats in the 60s and 70s were in effect Croslandites, whether they realised it or not—and Gough Whitlam was an eminently Croslandite leader of the ALP. Indeed when the twentieth anniversary of Whitlam's ascension to the prime ministership comes about later this year, it will be towards Croslandite-Whitlamite social democracy that much of the nostalgia will in effect be directed.

The reason is not difficult to understand. After all, the unstated premise behind the current liberal-social democratic revulsion against 'economic rationalism' is that there was another period, the 'Whitlam years', when nominally social democratic government had a raison d'etre and a conception of government of its own, and was not apparently parasitic on notions of the limits of government derived from classical economic liberalism. And it certainly would be difficult to define the Hawke-Keating years as 'social democratic' in temper; the modern Labor 'art of government' is at once too market-orientated and too novel in its blend of the interventionist (training, education) and the non-interventionist (industry policy, the financial system) to be subsumed within the accepted rubric of postwar social democracy.

Yet of course the story doesn't (or didn't) have a happy ending. The Whitlam government doesn't in fact provide a model for a revived social democratic ethos; on the contrary, as the current Labor government is only too well aware, it appears to provide an object lesson in how Croslandite social democracy failed utterly to cope with the new social and economic crises of the 70s and after. Nor were the problems of Whitlamite politics simply the failings of a particular individual or a particular government. Rather, their origins lay in several important founding assumptions of Croslandite-Whitlamite social democracy itself. In essence there were three crucial problems with Croslandite social democracy which have asserted themselves in the new political context of the 70s and after.

The first is its excessively optimistic view of the capacity of the state both to guide economic policy more narrowly and the 'strategy of equality' more broadly. As Barry Hindess has elsewhere noted, Crosland's belief in the capacity of the government 'to exert any influence it likes' on macroeconomic outcomes and income distribution was disputed at the time both by the marxist Left and the liberal Right. Nowadays it seems positively antique. We tend to take for granted, for instance, that in the contemporary liberalised world economy the capacity of national government to adjust policy settings in defiance of international trends is extremely limited.

Again, of course, there is now quite sufficient statistical and other evidence, both from Australia and overseas, to suggest that simply having the will to do so is hardly sufficient to influence the distribution of income in society to any marked extent. Rather, even when it has been the express intention of governments to do so, social inequality over the last decade had become markedly more pronounced. The reasons for this are obviously too complex to go into here, but one is of particular relevance to the immediate argument. The picture given by Croslandite social democracy of the 'machinery of government' was rather like that of a Bruce Petty cartoon: there are levers and pulleys everywhere; each lever connects to a pulley, and each lever pulled activates a different outcome.

One thing that seems clear now is that the activity of government is far more complex, and indeed contradictory, than this model allows. Policy actions often (maybe even usually) produce outcomes which are not strictly predictable, and which are very often in conflict with the outcomes of equally well-intentioned policy actions in related fields.
The picture we have nowadays of the activity of government is rather of a process of puzzled experimentation, and of an inclination not to rock society's boat too much too quickly for fear that it may lead to unpredictable consequences.

This leads neatly to the second problem of Croslandite social democracy. For the problem of social democratic governance is not simply a matter of government having become too complex to allow of adequate 'planning'. The problem is a deeper one; indeed, it goes to the heart of the Croslandite conception of the relationship between the state and civil society. And the mechanical metaphor I invoked above is at least part of the key. The British social thinker David Marquand has described the problem nicely:

Despite the humanity and generosity of its founders, [social democracy] degenerated, in practice, into a system of social engineering. The engineers could pull the levers in the knowledge that the machine would respond as they wished...Social democrats wanted to do good, but they were more anxious to do good to others than to help others do good to themselves. As they saw it, the role of public intervention was to provide, to manipulate, or to instruct, rather than to empower...Hand in hand with all this went a curiously simplistic attitude to the state and to the relationship between the state and the web of intermediate institutions and voluntary associations which make up a civil society. The state was seen as an instrument (or set of instruments) which social democratic ministers could use as they wished. Civil society was seen, all too often, not as an agent but as a patient: as an inert body, lying on an operating table, undergoing social democratic surgery.

Seen from this vantage-point, then, the problem of Croslandite social democracy is not just a governmental problem, a problem of technique. It is also a political problem: a problem of consent. One of the most sobering lessons of the Croslandite-Whitlamite experience has been that society, in Marquand's terms, is not just a patient on an operating table; society (in Marquand's words) 'has a mind (or minds) of its own'. This is a lesson which neo-liberalism has well-appreciated, and which was close to the heart of the Croslandite social democracy is not just a governmental problem, a problem of technique. It is also a political problem: a problem of consent. One of the most sobering lessons of the Croslandite-Whitlamite experience has been that society, in Marquand's terms, is not just a patient on an operating table; society (in Marquand's words) 'has a mind (or minds) of its own'. This is a lesson which neo-liberalism has well-appreciated, and which was close to the heart of the Croslandite-Whitlamite experience has been that society, in Marquand's terms, is not just a patient on an operating table; society (in Marquand's words) 'has a mind (or minds) of its own'.

However, this is only part—albeit a crucial part—of the political problem. Another part, as Crosland himself had realised by the early 70s, is that social democratic objectives require a redistribution of wealth and resources: and we shall not get this unless our total resources are growing rapidly'. For, as is now commonly conceded, the postwar historic compromise upon which modern social democracy was founded implicitly agreed that redistribution was politically feasible insofar as it was the fruits of strong economic growth which were being redistributed, rather than the existing incomes of ordinary working people. As Crosland insisted: 'In a utopia (or a dictatorship) perhaps we might transfer x percent of near-static GNP towards pensioners and better housing and clearing up pollution. In the rough democratic world in which we live, we cannot'.

A large part of the tragedy of Croslandite social democracy lay in this dilemma; for while social democracy was crucially dependent on the continuance of strong economic growth as the political underpinning of its social strategy, it was precisely that strong economic growth which it took for granted in its analysis of society, and in which it took the least policy interest. Here again the outstanding example was the 'Whitlam years': a social democratic government with an ambitious social agenda ran aground on economic problems which it was unable to comprehend, let alone solve. And because it was unable to comprehend the nature of those problems it gave the strong political impression of having no interest in them—an impression which quickly became electorally fatal.

This is the part of the story which most appeals to partisans of the current Labor government—and they are certainly right to insist on its importance. It is true, as Paul Keating and Bill Kelty have argued, that one needs to have an understanding of how to generate growth before one can hope to win political consent for redistributing it. It is similarly true that in a time of structural economic crisis the old social priorities of social democracy may have to be displaced by the more immediate concern of building an economic platform from which sustainable growth is once again possible. All of this is true—but it does not repel the reasonable criticism that in discarding 70s social democracy contemporary Labor has left itself with no clear 'art of government' other than that derived from neoliberalism, no obvious social strategy, and no clear conception of the goals and values of reforming government. It is here that the need for a post-social democracy I outlined above becomes pressing.

How would such a post social democracy define itself? First, it would have a new conception of the relationship between a social-democratic state and society. In short, it would see itself less as directing or 'planning', and more as 'enabling' and 'facilitating'—broadly along the lines of the 'associative' model Paul Hirst outlines elsewhere in this issue. Second, it would take that understanding of the state into economic policy, and particularly into industry policy, where it would be less interested in 'picking winners' than in creating the right environment, encouraging cooperation between firms, and providing necessary information and support—all the techniques, in fact, of the new wave of industry policy. Finally, it would of necessity adapt the values and principles of social democratic social policy—greater equality of income, of access, of opportunity—to the more complex contemporary understanding of a pluralistic society with its own demands and priorities. Such a model would still be identifiable as social democratic in temper, even if it was far in governmental technique from the old vision of Tony Crosland and Gough Whitlam. But that in itself might not be a bad thing.

DAVID BURCHELL is the editor of ALR. He once wrote a doctoral thesis about another British social democratic revisionist, John Strachey.
In the aftermath of the Cold War the shape of world politics is in a state of flux. How should we interpret the new face of the post-communist epoch? Stan Correy spoke to Fred Halliday about his views on the Gulf War in retrospect, the 'end of history', and the precarious state of democracy in the fin de siecle world.

Fred Halliday is professor of international relations at the London School of Economics. He is the author of numerous books on international relations, including The Second Cold War (Verso).

You surprised a lot of your left-wing colleagues by supporting the UN intervention in the 1991 Gulf War. What was the background to your position on the war?

The war started because Iraq was in trouble. They’d fought Iran for eight years, ending in 1988, and had very little to show for it. They’d lost a large number of men, and most Iraqis knew that Saddam had started the war. In addition, Iraq faced very serious economic problems. These were in part caused by the fact that Kuwait and Abu Dhabi were producing more oil than their OPEC quotas allowed. This was pushing down the price of oil, and as a result was depriving Iraq of the oil revenue it needed to rebuild. In that situation Saddam said: ‘we’re going to teach these parasites a lesson’. I think he had considerable support in Iraq and elsewhere in the Arab world for teaching the oil-rich states a lesson. And he believed the Arab world would accept the fait accompli.

So, in one sentence, Saddam thought he could solve the problems of Iraq by basically robbing his neighbour—and by posing as the champion of the Arab world in the process. He didn’t succeed and he was stopped. Now, many people said there could have been an alternative solution. Saddam could have been gotten out of Kuwait by Arab diplomacy. I don’t believe there ever was such a possibility. An Arab solution was no solution. They also said sanctions could have worked. Sanctions certainly were not given time, but I don’t believe they could have worked, for two reasons. First, the Middle East is very porous: Iraq has open borders with Turkey and Syria. They could have imported necessary goods for a long time to maintain their infrastructure and to meet some important technological needs of the regime. Second, they wouldn’t have worked because sanctions only work against nice
people. They work against governments which are not willing to inflict great suffering on their own people—like Salvador Allende in Chile. The Iraqi regime has no such compunction about its own people, as it showed after the war. They would have let the population starve and blamed it on the West, as they blamed subsequent problems on the West.

So the real choice in the Gulf was this. Do you let Saddam stay in Kuwait, or do you evict him by force? In those circumstances I favoured evicting him by force. I think there is a good argument against the Gulf War. But that argument involves saying that Saddam should have stayed in Kuwait: that the price of getting him out was too high—too high in terms of human life, too high in terms of American domination, too high in terms of Western intervention in the Third World. Therefore, he should have been allowed to stay. But to say that peace wasn't given a chance, or that there was another solution, is self-deception. There was no other solution to get him out of Kuwait.

Saddam thought people didn't like the rulers of Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, who were seen as greedy sheikhs. But a lot of people in the West also thought: why bother about them, what have they done for us?

The ruling family in Kuwait, the Al Sabah family, is a tribal oligarchy. They rule with some concessions to the population, but basically they keep power and they keep the money for themselves. But having said that, it's preferable—as most people in Kuwait thought—to be ruled by them than to be ruled by Saddam Hussein's government, which also took the money for itself, and was far more repressive than anything in Kuwait. Second, if there was going to be a change in Kuwait, it should have come about through the actions of the Kuwaiti people themselves. For me the clinching argument in the whole affair was that the Kuwaiti opposition itself opposed the Iraqi intervention. They favoured military action, not in order to restore the royal family, but to restore the sovereignty of Kuwait, so that they could get on with the job of trying to change the country—something they're busy now doing in the elections.

There's a lot of nonsense talked by people who say that because the royal family were undemocratic rulers, Kuwait should not have existed as a state. There are plenty of countries with dictatorial regimes, but it doesn't mean that people don't have the right to their own country. Moreover, many of the people who suffered most during the war were people who suffered at Saddam's hands. Hundreds of thousands of people were expelled from Kuwait in appalling circumstances by Saddam after 2 August, 1991, and distributed all over the Middle East. Particularly badly treated were the non-Arabs—people from Sri Lanka, from the Philippines, from the Tamil areas of India—who were thrown out by Saddam in a completely merciless way, on the grounds that they weren't Arabs. I think we tend to forget what that occupation meant. So faced with the dictatorship of the Al Sabah oligarchs or Saddam's military intervention, I still think that on humanitarian grounds the Al Sabah were preferable. And so does virtually all the population of Kuwait.

Now people may say: so what? The 'so what?', beyond the question of oil, is the democratic principle itself. The United States may well have intervened for the wrong reasons—they also fought against Japan and against Nazi Germany in the Second World War for the wrong reasons—but what they did had certain positive consequences, which were to stop one state being gobbled up by another. If the choice is fascism or imperialism, as it was in the Second World War, I'll choose imperialism with my eyes open. And I think that was the choice in the Gulf War.

Critics of the war, like Noam Chomsky for example, argue that the Gulf War was basically a classic example of US imperialism. Wasn't it simply a case of America throwing its weight around simply to protect its dearly beloved oil?

I would concede that in some respects America was throwing its weight around—not just against the Arab world, as George Bush saw it, but also against its major rivals in Europe and Japan. But the fact is that it didn't succeed. I challenge anybody to show me how America's bargaining position vis-a-vis the Common Market or Japan in trade negotiations, or in GATT, has been altered one per cent by what it did in the war.

Chomsky and the critics of American foreign policy are basically concerned with criticising the lies and hypocrisy in America's moral position. I would agree with them on this. But that does not mean that everything America does should be opposed. And I would add to this a second consideration, which I don't think Chomsky comprehends. Throughout the Third World many people fighting for various forms of democratisation and liberalisation look to the better side of America to do something for them—even if for the wrong reasons.

The PLO, for instance, are not saying that everything America does is dreadful. Rather, they're saying live up to your rhetoric, get on and support national self-determination, do in the Arab-Israeli context what you did in the Kuwait context. And, to Baker and Bush's credit, they've got on and tried to do it. Likewise, when Nelson Mandela went to the US Congress he said: Thank you for the sanctions you imposed on South Africa in 1986 which helped to change de Klerk's mind; now do more to encourage the peace process in South Africa. So the question is not whether everything America does is for pure motives, or whether everything America does is right. Under some circumstances it can assist the process of national self-determination. I think the critics are misreading the objective consequences, if not the subjective motives of American action by this, as it were, off-the-shelf critique.

You argue that not only critics of the war, but even George Bush, misread its significance.

They certainly saw it as more important than it was. First of all, there's no such thing as a New World Order; it's an ad-man's phrase. Bush himself doesn't use the phrase any more. So far as it meant anything, it meant that the Soviet Union and the United States would work together to
resolve some Third World problems: Namibia, El Salvador, and at least the beginnings of a Cambodian solution. Of course in other places, such as Afghanistan, they made a complete mess of it.

Chomsky says the New World Order means America trampling all over the world, dominating the world and playing the world policeman. The fact is, it hasn’t played the world policeman. The Europeans and the Japanese are not being pushed around by the Americans. The American public itself has shown much greater pacific—not pacifist—inclinations than most critics of American foreign policy gave it credit for. And the United States is now extremely reluctant to intervene anywhere—though I have my doubts whether they wouldn’t intervene in Cuba if there’s a crisis there.

In short, the Gulf War has not led to a new period of imperialism. It was not exactly a sideshow, but it was a secondary side-road on the evolution of the international system since the end of the Cold War. It hasn’t set precedents—except for the precedent, which I happen to endorse, that bigger states should not gobble up little states.

Yet the term New World Order, ad-man’s phrase though it may be, is still used quite a lot in trying to come to terms with how American foreign policy is being carried out throughout the world.

I’m not sure that the term New World Order is still being used by anyone except the critics of American foreign policy; in other words those who wish to impose on it a consistency and a coherence which I don’t think it has. Having said that, we are in a new international situation—one which concerns, among other things, America’s power and what it does with it. That does raise a number of important questions, but they’re not ones encapsulated by a ‘new world order’—not least because we don’t have a new international order, we have a new international disorder. And that’s something which the Americans on their own certainly aren’t going to solve, even if they were able to.

Before the Gulf crisis it was the Palestinian issue which had dominated Middle East politics for so long. Has the coming together of the Arabs and Israelis to talk about peace been a direct result of the war?

The decision by the Americans to put so much effort into getting talks going, and the willingness of the Israelis and Palestinians to talk, was in part a result of the Gulf War. It underlined the extent to which the Middle East is dominated by the Palestinian question; not because it’s the only question, but it is a central part of the problem, and things will not be solved elsewhere if there is no solution to that problem.

Other factors contributed to it. I think the Israelis feel, as indeed a number of other countries throughout the world feel, that the end of the Cold War has removed a protector from them. And certainly the strategic ground has moved under Israel’s feet. The factor which has most affected the Americans, however, is that the Gulf War underlined the extent to which the developed world depends on Gulf oil for its economic lifeblood. As long as people drive motor cars they’re going to need oil. And while there is some other oil around in the world, most of it in the future is going to be obtained from the Middle East. And in that sense, they intervened militarily to secure access to it: not to own it, to secure access to it. And they have moved on the Arab-Israeli question precisely to try to increase the probability of stability in the region. I don’t think they’ve achieved it, and I think that’s in part because the lessons of the Gulf War have not been learned.

Lesson number one is that if you play politics with the price of oil, you play politics with the stability of the region. The price of oil is too low at the moment and may lead to friction between oil-rich and less oil-rich states. The lesson that should have been learned is that a stable, but somewhat higher price of oil is a guarantor of long-term stability in the region.

Second, the security of the Gulf rests not just on a coalition of some Arab states, but on a coalition of the Arab states and Iran. Yet the Americans have excluded the Iranians, who are getting more and more confident, and at the same time more and more angry. If the Iranians start an arms race, then the Arabs are going to start an arms race, and the result is going to be greater instability.

But the most important lesson they didn’t learn concerns democracy. The issue of democracy lay at the heart of the Iraq-Kuwait dispute. Why? Because on the Iraqi side you have a dictatorial regime which rests upon theatrical and dangerous foreign gestures to keep up its momentum and legitimacy. On the Kuwaiti side—and this is a point often overlooked—the Kuwaiti government was resisting pressure for democratisation. They thought they could play a game of hard-line poker with Iraq as a means of maintaining a foreign threat to silence their domestic critics and to enable them to delegitimise them by calling them Iraqi agents. That’s why the Kuwaiti government miscalculated so much in dealing with Iraq.

I don’t believe Saddam was planning to invade Kuwait for six months beforehand. In the end he said: “I’ve had enough of negotiating with these people, I’m going to teach them a lesson, and I’ll get away with it.” Well, he did teach them a lesson, but it’s not a lesson they seem to have learned for long. The lesson is that lack of democracy in the Gulf states is a contribution to instability.

The people who have learned the democratic lesson least are the Saudi Arabians, who are playing around with non-
sense like ‘special kinds of Islamic consultation’ and so-called consensus in Islam. Frankly, these are just apologetic terms, like people who use terms like ‘the different nature of Asian politics’ to justify their own dictatorships. This is garbage. There are certain general, universal criteria for democracy. There are cultural variations—the British have their Queen, America everyone owns a handgun, and so on—but basically the criteria for democracy are the same. They’re not being met in the Gulf, and this is another cause of instability, because the rulers are going to remain frightened of the ruled.

**What about the Kurdish revolt after the Gulf War. What was the significance of that, the way it came about and the way it is resolving itself?**

The great difference between Iraq’s war with Iran and its war with America was that in the first war they were able to mobilise patriotic sentiment inside Iraq against the enemy. In the second war, much to the surprise of everyone outside, they were not able to mobilise great patriotic support against the Americans or against the Kuwaitis—even though initially people were glad that these rich, corrupt Kuwaitis had been taught a lesson. The result of that was that with the defeat in Kuwait, there was an insurrection inside the country.

But because of the limited nature of the Americans’ destruction of Iraq’s military potential, the Iraqi regime had the potential to put down this uprising, and the outside world did nothing. I have to say that they should have done something. Not so much because they gave false expectations to the Kurds that they would come in—they didn’t. Rather they should have done something because this was a chance to get rid of Saddam, and a chance that was in keeping with the evident aspirations of the majority of the Iraqi people.

They didn’t do so for reasons that are not entirely pernicious. In part, they didn’t want to get into a situation of manufacturing a new political regime in Iraq. In part, they weren’t sure whether some of the elements in revolt among the Shiites were preferable to Saddam—and given what such people have done in Iran, that’s again an open question. In part they didn’t do so because they wanted to stick within the UN resolutions, which did not encompass, even at the most stretched interpretation, going into Iraq and getting rid of Saddam. But having said that, I think they should have done it. The uprising happened and Saddam defeated it, very bloodily. Many more people were killed in that uprising and its suppression than were killed in the war itself, certainly many more civilians. And it has certainly meant that any of the other people planning an insurrection will think twice before doing so. So an opportunity was missed, and it was missed through a combination of timidity and legitimate scruple.

You’ve commented that it was “the T-shirt and not the gunboat” that destroyed the old Soviet Empire and broke down the resistance to global capitalism. Ronald Reagan would probably disagree with you; he would see America’s tremendous arms build-up as having been the decisive factor. What did you mean by that?

I don’t have much time for Ronald Reagan as a commentator on international affairs. The simple explanation as to why the Soviet Union collapsed—one which is espoused both in the United States and in the former Soviet Union—is the arms race. The West, we are told, outspent them. I don’t think that explains what happened, for a number of reasons. First of all, even if the Soviet Union spent 20% or 25% of its GNP on military production, that doesn’t explain the inefficiency of the rest of the economy. It doesn’t explain why they couldn’t harvest more than two-thirds of their crops, or the levels of inefficiency in the provision of consumer goods. Moreover, it doesn’t explain the lack of spinoff between the military and civilian sectors, which you’ve got in the West. So the failure of the Soviet Union was not to do with the amount of money spent on military production, but with the very structure of the economy, which was increasingly unable to grow, and increasingly unable to incorporate new forms of technology.

Where I think the arms race did have an effect was in the realisation by the Soviet military leadership—who after all were the core of the whole story—that not only could they not keep up with the West, but that they could never imitate the West. Once you’re talking about precision-guided rockets and bombs, once you’re talking about precision engineering to a thousandth of a millimetre; they were into a league they could never compete in as they’d competed before. And that not only had military and security implications, it had ideological implications. It meant that the West was moving further and further away from them, and that they were never going to be able to overtake them. That demoralised them.

But beyond that, what demoralised them, and led people to abandon hope in communism, was the rise in consumer standards in the West, the growth of youth culture, all these things which affected the elite, their families, and the larger class of educated people who were created by the very successes of the Brezhnev period.

Added to which is one other fact: there was no halfway house, no third way. Dubcekism, ‘socialism with a human face’, was simply not a viable option for them in the 1980s, if it ever was. Gorbachev tried to find a middle way; it didn’t work. The real pressure came not from Western military spending, but from the success of western consumer society. And in that sense, the Common Market did as much to demoralise them as anything else.

Fukuyama’s term ‘the end of history’ has been criticised by both Left and Right as an oversimplification. What do you believe the term means?

I have annoyed a lot of people by saying that to a considerable extent I agree with Fukuyama. I agree with him to the extent that there has been a period of history—the 200 years since the French Revolution—in which the western capitalist model of economy and politics has been challenged by an alternative, whether out of power or in power: an alternative in which people believed. Even strategies for radical Third World development which weren’t explicitly communist—like Nasser’s Egypt, Sukarno’s Indonesia, or
for that matter Khomeini’s Iran—were parasitic on the communist belief that there was an alternative.

Fukuyama is saying there is no longer a global competitor. He is not saying that there aren’t going to be wars, he’s not saying that this is a perfect society—in fact he has some very interesting arguments as to why it’s an imperfect and unstable society. But he is saying that there’s no global alternative, and I agree with him. Communism after seventy years hasn’t worked; it’s discredited. It so happens that 1.4 billion people in China and elsewhere are still ruled by Communism, but it looks like it’s on the way out. And I don’t think that the Islamic movement in its political form is a challenge—not least because economically these societies are a disaster, and also because they greatly underestimate their ability to challenge the West. The Islamic movements haven’t been a challenge to the West since the battle of Lepanto in the early 16th century.

I also agree with Fukuyama when he says that we can make judgements about the progress of history. In other words, we don’t have to simply say we don’t know. We’re surrounded these days by what is loosely termed postmodernity, which in my view is a kind of liberal feeble-mindedness. People say: We don’t really know if we believe in this value or that value. There are no grand narratives in history. I think this leads to all sorts of pernicious consequences. And Fukuyama’s saying: No. There are certain criteria by which we evaluate human progress. These are they. He’s also right in saying something that liberals have a lot of problems in saying, particularly in the States—that the United States won the Cold War. Many Americans don’t like to hear this; they say “Look at our schools and our roads. Look at crime; look at southern Los Angeles”, and so on. First of all nobody ever won a war without costs. The Americans have won a war; of course they’ve paid a price for it. Second, to say that the US is in the same kind of trouble as the Soviet Union is plain silly. It’s a solipsism. It’s thought polite to say it, but it’s simply not true.

However, I do think Fukuyama is wrong in several respects. First of all, what he doesn’t acknowledge sufficiently is that the idea of an end of history itself has a history. And of course it isn’t just Hegel or Marx; all the great religions have a belief in the end of history, in the coming of a Messiah or some kind of grand resolution. So it’s part of an aspiration for something. And behind every idea of the end of history lies an idea of historical agency. In other words, who’s bringing it about? It could be the Messiah, it could be the market, it could be the working class, it could be Reason, as Hegel believed. But Fukuyama won’t acknowledge what his theory of agency is. And of course in his case it is ideas. He seems to think ideas solve history.

Yes, but many people on the Left, as well as a lot of liberals, worry that if you adopt Fukuyama’s conviction that liberal capitalism has won, that means there’s no other alternative. You’ve studied revolutionary movements around the world for many years. Does this mean that you’re saying there’s no form of radical economic or social action possible any more, because capitalism’s won, the market’s won?

First of all, I don’t think capitalism and the market are the same thing. I think that’s a particular interpretation which Thatcher and Reagan put on events. But the success of capitalism in East Asia, like the success of British and German capitalism in the 19th century, didn’t rely primarily on the market at all. It relied on state intervention, often of a quite coercive kind, to mobilise resources, channel education, and so forth. I’ve just been in Singapore, where the success of capitalism certainly doesn’t rely on the market. The two main agencies in Singapore are Singapore Airlines and the Port Authority—both of which are run by the state. So this equation of capitalism with the market is not something which equates with much of the history of capitalism.

Second, to say that liberal capitalism has won is not to say that that particular current definition of it is the only one. There is already a wide range of interpretations between, say, Sweden on the one hand and the United States on the other. There’s an immense amount of variation there.

Third, there are new potentialities, both for the worse and for the better. There are trends in the international system which negatively affect the ability of democratic societies to survive even as they now do. I would include in that the lack of control over economic processes by governments, something you certainly see here in Australia, but also in Britain; increasing abilities for surveillance and monitoring offered by new technologies; and the new rise in chauvinism associated with the rise in migration. On the other hand, there are a whole range of areas where democracy can be enhanced. What I’m saying is that they can’t be enhanced by Bolshevik-style revolution or Islamic revolution—by throwing everything out the window.

What I would stress is that there is no reason to think that this model is going to prevail, and here is my greatest difference with Fukuyama. First of all, we should remember that if one-person, one-vote is the criterion, then democracy didn’t come to Britain or the United States until the late 1960s. Prior to that, in Northern Ireland and in the southern United States, there were quite a lot of disenfranchised people. Democracy is in fact a very recent development. It’s precarious, even in the most developed countries. And you can only be reasonably confident that it operates once it’s been up and running for at least a generation. The Weimar republic had democracy, Liberia, Lebanon and Sri Lanka have all had democracy—but it was taken away again. We’re talking about at most a couple of dozen countries out of the 180 in the world who’ve had secure democracies.

Given that fact, and given its precariousness, the greatest mistake is to be complacent about liberal democracy and to say that it has solved all human problems. It has not. You don’t have to live in southern Los Angeles to see just how imperfect the system is. So, yes, radical, revolutionary alternatives to it have failed, while it itself is both precarious and capable of both positive and negative development.

STAN CORREY is a producer for ABC Radio National’s Background Briefing, where a longer version of this interview was first broadcast.
FUTURES
Market

We no longer have faith in the future. We’re no longer even able to imagine a single future. Hans Magnus Enzensberger ponders a political method for an epoch without faith in historical destiny.

pluralism spares nothing. The future too is not proof against it. As if it were self-evident, it is a singular noun in all natural languages, just like the past and the present, which most of us continue to believe only occur once. If, however, we think about what is in store for us, our heads grow dizzy. We have lost the capacity to subsume what is not yet there in the singular. In this sense we don’t have too little future before us or even none at all, as the dusty slogan, No Future, would have us believe, but too much, which is to say: too many. The future has become unthinkable as an homogeneous idea. Every consideration which is devoted to it, splits in the manner of an endlessly proliferating flow diagram and brings forth a diversity which we can neither evade nor master.

All these possible futures compete with one another and rub each other’s elbows raw in the crush. Presumably the much-lamented disappearance of utopia has its basis in this relativisation of the possible. It’s not because nothing occurs to us any more than the available projects, irrespective of whether utopia or dystopia appear banal to us and no longer binding, but because the supply of phantasms of the future exhausts our power of comprehension.

Futurology is the science of tea leaves. It ascribes the patterns and structures which it wants to interpret to its material, in order to read them from it: Mars got its canals like this and the moon its face. This psychedelic procedure can rely on a tacit correspondence with our everyday projections. It is amusing to observe that the mathematical term intersects with the psychoanalytic one without anything dawning on either discipline.

This future pluralism has by now become part of the interior furnishing of normality. Anyone who ‘thinks more than one day ahead’—and which of us is spared that?—un-
avoidably develops whole series of scenarios which are not only incompatible with one another, but are mutually exclusive. The very same person, who is convinced that a worldwide catastrophe is imminent, signs a 30-year life insurance policy without batting an eyelid. The oscillation between Age of Aquarius and Apocalypse, New Age and profit calculation, nirvana and investment consultancy became a mass phenomenon long ago. It's easy to poke fun at the crude scenarios in which superstition is at home; but the future has its trends whose rise and fall, even among people who consider themselves to be models of reason, would be difficult to explain rationally. Nuclear war in Europe, an obsessive nightmare only a few years ago, has as good as disappeared from the collective imagination. Countless versions of ecological catastrophe are evoked in its place. Thus the unimaginable appears as a mere variation, the extinction of the species as interchangeable play material.

Even the ‘visions’ of catastrophe obey the realisation cycle of the media. Their totality is spurious, the finality which they claim makes way for others, which emerge with just as much exclusivity: everything will be completely different, because the world economy is about to break down, because artificial intelligence is replacing the subject, because incurable diseases will make all other catastrophes superfluous, because genetic engineering will put an end to mankind, and so on.

But pessimism cannot be trusted either. It's not only the monthly mortgage interest payment which presents a silent but tenacious reservation. The same articulate citizen who is convinced of the unstoppable poisoning of the planet, of the melting of the polar ice caps, of the exhaustion of all natural resources, simultaneously holds on to the ideology of the technological fix and awaits the redeeming invention, the rescuing serum, the gentle trick which will solve all the energy problems once and for all.

The incompatible also exists among the experts. The economists can be considered the pioneers of modern fortune telling. For as long as anyone can remember, they've been solemnly providing the economy with their horoscopes, completely unaffected by every refutation by reality. The orthodox marxist calculates the day on which capitalism will finally collapse; in glossy brochures the dubious investment consultant predicts the next stock exchange boom. Both find a credulous public. Their prognoses have only one thing in common: the unshakeable conviction with which they are delivered. On this point the Club of Rome is in agreement with the nuclear power lobby, just as much as the climate researchers are with the demographers: each has put a claim on the future, his future.

The addressee of these efforts is on a see-saw. The media subject him to a constant alternation of apocalyptic and tranquillising slogans, and there remains little else for him to do, except get used to the unstable balance of panic and apathy. The common sense, which believes in muddling through, in the long run immunises itself against the instructions which are concealed in both positive and negative prophecies. Anyone who looks back at the future scenarios of the 50s, 60s and 70s will have to admit that common sense with all its limitations has not come off any worse than all the think tanks of the world.

The experiences which have pulled the rug out from under the philosophy of history are, therefore, very tangible ones. The naivety of all theories—which are ultimately only secularised versions of the history of salvation—has become blatant even for someone who has little interest in speculative thought. Irrespective of whether they appear in ‘progressive’ or ‘conservative’ guise, their self-confidence has suffered greatly, and it's easy to see that they are now only concerned with administering their own assets. It is surprising and remarkable that in fact a certain fraction of the ‘hard’ sciences have new suggestions to offer in this situation and, precisely because it is leaving behind its own tradition, the dogmatism of exact calculation. There have been developments in thermodynamics, evolutionary theory, systems theory, but also in mathematics and in theoretical physics that could perhaps lead out of the old dead ends.

They are concerned with new paradigms of self organisation, with dissipative structures and non-linear logics. One thing at least has become clear beyond any doubt: the evolution of complex systems cannot, in principle, be precisely predicted. Their course is decisively influenced by singular events, often of a very high degree of improbability. Minute inputs can cause very large ensembles to collapse while, on the other hand, enormous determining variables can be dynamically absorbed without uncontrollable turbulences resulting. Of course, that can also be expressed more simply. One could say that science is well on the way to reinstating chance to its old metaphysical rights. However, nothing would be gained by regression to a world of pre-scientific concepts.

More interesting is the question whether such new modes of thinking can also be applied to social processes. Their inventors have nothing to say in this respect—presumably not only because they don't feel themselves to be competent, but also because they recoil from the ideological implications of such a transposition. They have no interest in falling victim to politics. Equally, ever since their victorious polemic against Social Darwinism a hundred years ago, sociologists and social critics take it for granted that there is nothing to be learned from the natural sciences. This prejudice long ago hardened into a leftwing ban on thinking.

Yet the condition of the wealthiest contemporary societies suggests precisely such investigations. They have abandoned the idea of planning. The powerful and the weak, individuals and groups continue to pursue their own particular goals, but the movement of the whole evades their designs, and even their imaginative capacity. It would not occur to anyone to think up a ‘Five-Year Plan’ and to put it into action, to say nothing at all of more ambitious goals. The idea of proposing or prescribing development plans à la Rostow to others, third parties (the Third World, for example) has also been abandoned. With that the once-so-favoured conspiracy theories which saw the historical process as guided by secretive omnipotent centres have also
been disposed of and the search for a subject of history, whether revolutionary or evolutionary, has proved to be futile.

An instance which would be capable of such central direction can no longer be discerned in these ‘advanced’ countries at all; it could even be argued that these are societies without leaders—that would be the ironic resurrection of a condition which the anthropologists believe they discovered among pre-historic peoples. Of course that is very far from meaning that power, wealth, opportunities would be more equally or even justly distributed in such an ensemble. It means only that after the dissolution of firm hierarchical status and class relationships an unstable, dynamic fluid balance is forming, which constantly reproduces and changes itself without plan. Governments and parties in such a system have long ago ceased ‘to determine the guidelines of politics’, or even, as in the old physiological metaphors, to function as head, brain, central nervous system of the whole; they attempt, at most, to extend the metaphor, a kind of hormonal management, in order to prevent the turbulences building up into a catastrophe. Even this task seems too much for them. Where they attempt to tackle the results of the unplanned social process frontally, they regularly fail: ‘It is’, as the party officials then like to say, ‘politically unacceptable’.

But it's not only the state whose effectiveness has declined; economic power too, despite, perhaps even because of its high degree of concentration, no longer appears, as it once did, monolithic and permanent. The multinational companies of today are threatened to the point of bankruptcy by unpredictable disturbances, crises, break-downs, take-overs, unstable patterns of ownership, sudden predatory raids. Just as international capital is daily moved around the globe in uncontrolled billion-dollar transactions, so economic power, too, embodied in a vast but fragile jellyfish, is subject to an unrestrained floating, a rapid sequence of rise and fall, growth and decay.

But in a dynamic regime that is constantly transforming itself there are also zones of inertia and resistance which are systematically underestimated by politicians and technocrats. We have seen how within the shortest space of time societies transform themselves right down to their seeming incorrigible features, right down to their collective unconscious (should such a thing exist); we have, on the other hand, experienced how all attempts to level out their diversity have failed. Limits which evade calculability are also placed on change. So projects to abolish bread or writing, for example, encounter a resistance which is difficult to explain but evidently tenacious; sub-systems like the so-called nuclear family have proved, against all expectations, to be extremely resistant.

This movement between acceleration and inertia, liquefaction and persistence only makes the whole thing even more opaque. It is conceivable that such ambivalences make the process even more vulnerable to determining variables which are tiny in size, but appear at a significant moment and in the right place. The sudden passing of critical thresholds plays an ever more important role not only in ecology but also in politics. Consequently an old, embarrassing subject, which the marxists thought had been finished off a long time ago, appears in a new light: the ‘role of the individual in history’. The emergence of a Khomeini or a Pol Pot can cost millions of people their head; if an enlightened Tsar appears, the consequences are unforeseeable; if a madman should move into the White House, then we wouldn't need to go on worrying our heads about the future of pension systems; and we don't dare to think what would happen if a brilliant founder of a religious sect got control of the media. Even someone who still enjoys putting forward theses about the future must realise that every single one of them can at any time be upset by a minimal factor x, which triggers the flash point.

Most of us will probably find it quite easy to put up with the end of the philosophy of history. But that does not mean that we could get by without perspectives for our lives, strategies, ‘plans’. The result is that the scissors between theoretical understanding and the practice of life must open ever wider. If there is some truth to what I have tried (fairly casually) to suggest here, then there follows from that a behaviour which can no longer claim any general obligatoriness: each person is left to pursue his own conjectures, and even they are subject to an unspoken reservation: I act as if, among all the continuously oscillating futures, I could find my own.

At the risk of it being confused with a confession I would like to state such a conjecture. I believe the flexibility which is demanded and praised on all sides and which is gradually being elevated to the status of a cardinal social virtue, to be a bad strategy. The mere social automaton, who always only responds to current situations, not only loses the last remnant of control over his own fate, he will always also arrive too late. The hedgehog’s contempt for the hare, who is always panting behind him, is certain, but the opposite solution is also worth less every day. Anyone who believes that what matters is to assault ‘the system’ frontally, as a conservative or a revolutionary warrior, succumbs—if my description is not mistaken—to an illusion; because such an attitude is only then meaningful if one dispenses of an objectively stringent perspective for the future (knows ‘the meaning of history’).

The question whether it’s best to swim with the current or against it seems to me out of date because it presupposes an untenable simplification. The method of the yachtsman who tacks with the wind as well as against it seems more fruitful. Such a procedure applied to society demands stoic disbelief and the greatest attentiveness. Anyone who wants to reach even the nearest goal must expect, step by step, a thousand unpredictable variables and cannot put his trust in any of them. But presence of mind alone is not enough.

Hans Magnus Enzensberger is a German essayist, and author of Europe, Europe and Political Crumbs. This is an extract from his latest book, Mediocrity and Delusion, published by Verso. Copyright Verso Books 1992.
In recent years cultural theorists have been encouraged to hang up their critiques and roll up their sleeves for more mundane policy concerns. But is the turn from critique to policy all it's cracked up to be.

Reviewing a new book on the subject, both Meaghan Morris and Gay Hawkins have their separate doubts.

Four years ago, Tony Bennett (the director of Griffith University's Institute for Cultural Policy Studies) stirred the small world of cultural studies by declaring that "the grandstanding of the cultural critic" was no longer "an acceptable mode of intellectual work". He did this by issuing a manifesto, in vintage avant-garde style. As any good manifesto should, Bennett's "Culture: Theory and Policy" announced a plan of action—and a list of proscribed activities.

The plan was to develop cultural policy studies as an area where academics and policy professionals could interact. To make it work, academics would have to stop using cultural artefacts as vehicles for a "generalised form of social criticism", and start thinking about culture as "a set of institutionally inscribed processes". Cultural policy studies would therefore exclude those conservative and leftist forms of criticism "highly prone to denunciatory stances, in which positions are deduced from general principles and applied across different policy fields"—that is, it would exclude "Leonie Kramer" and "John Docker".

In a favourable climate of nationwide Labor dominance, cultural policy studies flourished. Critics worked with government, industry and community groups; the denunciatory 'ought-to' style of oppositional politics gave way to a 'can-do' ethic of social participation; it became acceptable to talk about 'engineering' and 'superintending' the culture of other citizens; svelte and sober business attire replaced the lumpy look of 1970s leftist; 'modesty' and 'pragmatism' were the slogans of the day.

But old grandstanding styles die hard. Under pressure to explain their position at academic conferences, some promoters of cultural policy studies have been moving back into a full-on denunciatory mode. Their object? Not "Leonie Kramer", just "John Docker"; not the cultural politics that we might expect from a Hewson government, but the leftist cultural criticism of the past; not the failures of the can-do policy culture of the 1980s, but the general principles of cultural 'critique' and how these ought to change. Perhaps it's a sign that the climate is changing, the flows of power shifting; once again, the radical vanguard is nuking the next-door neighbours.

Stuart Cunningham's Framing Culture is an uneasy mixture of these two moments in the history of the proselytising wing of cultural policy studies. The bulk of the book is made up of sensible, positive and useful accounts of particular policy issues, with tips on how textual critics could more effectively contribute to public debate. Cunningham wisely focuses on areas of "stubborn" controversy in broadcasting policy—Australian content regulation, advertising standards, pay television, violence in the media. This makes the book more durable and broadly appealing than policy documents need to be, and it allows him to discuss the differing expectations that we can or should bring to 'criticism' and 'policy' processes. He counsels critics to be more modest about what their work can achieve, and preaches a case-by-case practice of "piecemeal" reform that produces real results.

So far, so good. But the polemical framework of Framing Culture quite ignores this good advice. Cunningham is not happy to think that cultural policy studies might simply be added to the "smorgasbord" of approaches already used in cultural studies. Instead, cultural policy must utterly transform cultural studies, and our very idea of what counts as criticism must change. Cunningham argues that cultural critics should start producing "analysis of and for policy". That is, we should teach policy and write about policy with an aim of helping policy; our textual analysis and pedagogy must be subordinated to this end, and the state should set parameters for critical debate.

There is nothing modest about this proposal. It amounts to saying that, while "piecemeal reform" is the way to go in dealing with cultural policy, nothing less than a total revolution will suffice in cultural criticism. I am not sure why "piecemeal" is a positive term for Cunningham while "smorgasbord" is so negative, but I suspect that it has something to do with a return to the (Althusserian) repressed; insisting that cultural criticism must "get the settings right" is not so far from dreaming that it could be more 'scientific'. In any case, Framing Culture offers something wonderfully contradictory—a totalising, theory-driven account of the need for 'specific' and 'pragmatic' critical interventions.

It follows that Framing Culture is often more dogmatic than pragmatic in spirit. For example, the chapter on advertising picks up Bennett's rejection of "generalised social critique" as an aim for cultural policy studies—and turns critique into a generalised sin which any critics, whatever their aim, can be "guilty" of committing. Thus, feminist semiotic analyses of advertising are deemed "guilty" of not using "content analyses based on accepted..."
sampling techniques"—in other words, of using other techniques and of not being written directly for cultural policy workers. Since the study of representation now occurs worldwide across a vast range of fields from philosophy to literature to medicine, this is tantamount to demanding that all such study in Australia be carried out as amateur social science.

It's not on. However, the most curious feature of *Framing Culture* is how little effort goes into persuading cultural studies readers that something real is "on" in its polemic. The image of cultural studies in the book is very largely fantasmal; it is as though the text were addressed to someone who already thought that it was a wank but wanted some reassurance. For example, sinister claims are made that cultural studies may actually "deskill" some classes of student—a serious charge for which no evidence is supplied. (There is only a reference to a British text making similar claims but again supplying no evidence.)

The fantasy results partly from the book's argumentative structure (each chapter offers a parable about a critical text that fails a policy occasion), and partly from Cunningham's habit of attributing silly attitudes to a fictitious person whom he calls "the cultural critic"—a smug soul who despises policy workers and quails at words like "software". Since cultural studies in Australia has been strongly sustained by critics (many of them feminists) with a history of engagement in practical media work, it's hard to know just who or what these fictions refer to.

The basic problem is that Cunningham uses "cultural studies" as an all-purpose Bad Object condensing any vaguely leftwing analysis of culture that he disagrees with. His major political theme is the need to defend the national frameworks of cultural regulation currently allowing Australian critics to do the work that we do. Therefore his main bugbears are, on the one hand, the British-inspired theorists of "consumer appropriation" and "audience resistance" who, in the mid-1980s excluded political economy from cultural analysis and, on the other, leftist attacks on nationalism that deny all value to the nation-state.

I share Cunningham's views on these issues. But the consumer movement was only one strand of cultural studies, and (leaving aside John Dock- er, whose work derives from local libertarian sources) it was far more influential in Britain and the USA than in Australia—probably because it assumed a congruence between the "metropolitan" popular culture it promoted and everyday life in a Northern metropolis. Many cultural critics (including myself) working elsewhere in fact objected to this, and so it is quite inaccurate to represent
cultural studies as a hotbed of anti-nationalism.

One of our binding concerns is precisely the problem of cultural 'specificity' and 'difference'. This is why David Harvey can take the opposite tack to Cunningham and accuse us all, in his Condition of Postmodernity, of complicity with blood-and-fatherland nationalism. Beginning with the study of class, then gender and race as shaping forces in social experience, cultural studies 'frames' culture as a site of practice where we are always forced to negotiate material constraints—including the nation. (Homi Bhabha's anthology Nation and Narration (1990) addresses exactly this issue).

In the last chapter, Cunningham again makes sensible suggestions about putting policy into our pedagogy. I am not convinced that "the cultural critic" is inherently in need of basic teaching tips (like beginning with media articles rather than specialist journal essays), but still—it's good advice. Hopefully, these practical ideas will have more effect than the grandstanding denunciations which Framing Culture so wildly applies across different critical fields.


Framing Culture is a book with a Position—with a very large capital P. This is the source of its pleasure and its problems. After wading through so much postmodern writing where everything is unravelled and nothing is declared there is something very appealing about a book that takes a stand.

Put simply, Cunningham's argument is that cultural studies has lost its radical edge. Its claims to being a critical and political enterprise are becoming hard to sustain. Cultural studies' language of resistance is not only idealistic and abstruse, but also has little impact on public debates about media culture. The search for 'progressive' texts, resistant subcultures and active audiences is a long way from where the real action is. For Cunningham, cultural policy, that vast terrain of government, economics, technology and institutions, is the true heartland of the political. And this is where useful cultural studies should focus its energies: on research which engages with policy and which intervenes in debates that structure the management of culture.

The gulf between criticism and cultural policy (a gulf marked by different languages, methods and outcomes) provides the fundamental opposition which underpins Cunningham's whole argument. While the cultural critique is abstract, disinterested and academic, according to Framing Culture, studies of policy are relevant, instrumental and vocational. This opposition is read as symptomatic of the wider context of the reform of Australian tertiary education.

In an interesting interpretation of the 'Dawkins reforms' Cunningham reviews the debates about the future of the humanities. He argues it is no longer possible to rely on tired old defences of the humanities as a privileged field devoted to the production of well-rounded citizens skilled in critical reasoning. The time has come to establish a more productive relationship between critical ethical competencies and applied vocational education. These two approaches to humanities education are not necessarily incompatible. In fact, the incorporation of a policy focus into cultural studies could well signal precisely this type of renewal.

After establishing the outline of his argument Cunningham moves on to a series of case studies in cultural policy formation. The purpose here is not to offer detailed historical accounts but rather to explore the nature and effects of the gap between criticism and policy. The case studies selected are: the problems of identifying a national cultural policy framework in the era of global cultural markets; the role of advertising in national culture; the saga of pay TV; and violence on television. A recurring problem is identified in these case studies: the tendency for cultural critique to operate in a separate domain where policy is either ignored or deposed from the standpoint of Left idealism. In opposition to this, Cunningham urges an engagement with the terrain of policy which seeks to challenge and extend it to more progressive ends.

One of the great values of the case studies is their Australian content. This book is militantly local; global economic trends and imported theory are interpreted from the specific focus of Australian conditions. In this way Framing Culture rejects the cringe mentality. It is not seduced by the rhetoric of the 'global cultural takeover', nor does it uncritically defer to British or American cultural studies.

For example, Cunningham's discussion of violence on television is situated within a sophisticated critique of various paradigms for investigating media 'effects'. In this way competing discourses and methodologies are assessed in terms of their ability for understanding and influencing the policy process in Australia and for expanding the critical focus of cultural studies. This technique makes for a dynamic analysis that does not demand that cultural studies service public agendas and research, but explores the positive connections that could be made between critique and policy.
A second positive feature of Framing Culture is its relentless focus on broadcasting. In the broad sweep of cultural policy the mass media are politically and economically dominant. They are big industries with big audiences, administered through the powerful market-oriented Department of Transport and Communications. Cunningham focuses on this sector as a set of cultural industries; in consequence he is more interested in the politics of industry development and regulation than aesthetic outcomes. This also means that Framing Culture shifts the analysis of cultural policy in Australia way beyond the fairly limited focus developed in Tim Rowse's Arguing the Arts. In Rowse's book arts policy and the politics of subsidy and patronage were the focus. As interesting as this was, Cunningham's study reminds us of the profound marginality of the arts.

Yet, as someone working in the field of cultural policy studies I have an ambivalent response to this book. Of course it is pleasant to see your work getting a tick of approval as 'politically correct', but I am not sure that I want to accept the terms on which this approval is granted. The central problem as I see it is that the case for cultural policy studies is seriously overstated. Too much is dismissed or caricatured in the quest to establish the special value of policy studies and too many tricky political questions are sidestepped.

More particularly, I have a number of reservations about aspects of Cunningham's argument. The first concerns his representation of cultural studies. Framing Culture is part of a wider process of self-reflection within cultural studies, evident in the proliferating histories of the field and in the angst displayed at cultural studies conferences both here and overseas about the dilution of the radical agendas of the 70s and early 80s in the interests of survival and establishing credibility. Cunningham's foray into this process of review is marked by his identification of three dominant approaches within cultural studies: the 'Left humanities' position (including the search for progressive texts and resistant social practices, as well as postmodernism and deconstruction); the 'Right social sciences' position, which rejects rhetorical Leftism and argues for empirically grounded work freed from the constraints of ideology and grand theory; and a third 'centrist' policy position which is characterised by empirical studies of public policy unconstrained by academic discourse and which have a definite progressive and programmatic intent. No prizes for guessing which position Cunningham identifies himself with.

I think this appraisal of cultural studies seriously misrepresents the field. Cunningham tries to establish the superiority of policy studies by opposing it to the idealistic Left on one hand and the empiricist Right on the other. This trivialises the complexity of cultural studies' critical project by implying that a species of revolutionary neo-marxism still predominates. 'Left' cultural studies is accused of clinging to a "totalising and confrontational rhetoric" which isolates it from the public political arena.

A close look at any recent cultural studies anthology or conference program would contradict this. If there is one achievement to which cultural studies can lay claim, it is recognition of the multiple axes of social difference and the plurality of critical practices. Gender and sexuality studies, post-colonialism, studies of popular culture and textual studies are a few examples of areas where the investigation of politics and culture often involves other paradigms and has various progressive effects. Cultural critique stands for a lot more than Cunningham acknowledges.

Yet, Framing Culture is not just a book about what's wrong with cultural studies; it is also a book about the state. Cunningham avoids monolithic and deterministic accounts of how culture is administered. His case studies are generally attentive to the diversity of functions and power relations which shape public cultural institutions. His accounts of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's role in defining 'Australian content' and 'media violence', for instance, traces how these ideas were produced and contested through the interplay of different interest groups.

Underlying this specific analysis is a wider argument for the renewal of social democracy and the concept of citizenship. Cunningham argues that it is only through the rhetoric of citizenship that issues of cultural rights, access and equity can be raised. Framing Culture presents a case for the revitalisation and promotion of social democracy, especially in opposition to economic rationalism. But whether social democracy is up to the task is a crucial question that Cunningham rarely raises. Economic rationalism is not only teaching us to believe that we cannot rely on government for anything but also that policies based on social and cultural benefits are simply disguises for protectionism.

Tensions between the oppositions of consumers versus citizens, market forces versus regulation and culture versus economics have a very distinctive resonance in cultural policies. Framing Culture explores the effects of these tensions on policy processes—yet its social democratic 'solutions' sometimes seem ineffectual in the face of the economic forces shaping cultural production and consumption. The emergence of the consumer movement, for example, is cited as evidence of the triumph of consumers as citizens demanding their right to accurate information and safe products. But this is surely overshadowed by the might of an Australian advertising industry dominated by transnational corporations which have an ambiguous relation to national regulations, let alone local consumer groups.

The problem with Cunningham's wholesale endorsement of social democracy is that it excludes the possibility of imagining other futures. Alternative visions of intervention and policy are prohibited in the interests of realisable reforms. One way this 'other' space could be developed is through the production of more substantial research on the political economy of Australian cultural industries. We still know very little about industry structures and organisation in the cultural sector. For too long political economists have ignored this area because of their fascination with what they consider to be more properly productive sectors such as manufacturing and primary industries. Yet it is quite possible that some areas of local cultural production and consumption could prefigure new economic models which achieve both market success and positive con-
sumer identity and control (the Sydney Lesbian and Gay Mardi Gras is an example).

Another problem of *Framing Culture* is its definition of the relationship between intellectual practice and political change. *Framing Culture* constantly insists on intervention in policy as the correct political vocation for cultural studies. Cunningham berates cultural studies intellectuals for missing the opportunity of participating in discussions about policy. While they cling to the sanctity of disinterested scholarship, media industry bosses and conservative groups dominate public forums. It is impossible to disagree with the general call to unlock the academies, yet Cunningham’s vision of the academic as activist is more of a problem. The assumption is that the world of suits, shoulder pads, 7 am flights to Canberra and lunch with the minister is the site of ‘real’ politics.

I do not think policy studies is the source of a more authentic and effective political practice for cultural studies. It involves different intellectual practices and different political dynamics, but it is impossible to insist that these are superior to other forms of critical work. Again, Cunningham seems to ignore the dilemmas of applied intellectual work. In the case of consultancies, the lack of control over the research agenda, the inability to influence how the research is or isn’t used, and the constraints of the economic obligation are not simply problems of academic freedom but of contractual relations. Nor does he pay enough attention to the gap between formal policy formulation and the play of power that goes on in the senior management meetings of bureaucracies or in Cabinet. My experience as a consultant and academic leaves me a little sceptical. I can’t help thinking that joining the Labor Party or becoming a bureaucrat would be much more effective strategies for achieving specific reforms.

*Framing Culture* is a provocative book. The explorations of policy formation, the programmatic focus and the commitment to Australian content are important and valuable contributions to the already impressive body of cultural policy studies in Australia. But Cunningham’s dogmatic dismissal of cultural critique, his insistence on the concrete and the pragmatic as more properly political than other critical practices from teaching to textual studies, and his single-minded faith in social democracy can become infuriating. There is an almost evangelical subtext to the book: ‘policy is the way, the truth and the light’. Reading it I imagined a more appropriate cover cartoon—a Jenny Coopes image. Three women are peering into a pram admiring a new baby; one comments: “she’s got policy analyst written all over her”.

GAY HAWKINS teaches in leisure and tourism studies at the University of Technology Sydney. (Many thanks to Liz Jacka for her helpful suggestions.)
Paul John I


There he is: Prime Minister of Australia (at last), written about, interviewed and watched every day—and still an enigma. He is even an enigma to Edna Carew, despite a professionally researched and written biography by someone who has established herself as a leading finance writer and has the background to tackle Keating in precisely the arena where he excels: economic policy.

I had read Carew’s earlier version of this book, then titled Keating: A Biography, and enjoyed it—though I was a bit put off by the heavy concentration on Keating’s financial views; it was as though it were a book about Keating the Treasurer, rather than Keating the Man. This new edition is essentially an updating of the earlier one to take advantage of Keating’s accession to the prime ministership, and it has all the virtues and flaws of the original. In other words, it brings the Keating saga through to 1992 without really offering any new insights into the man or revising the style and tone of what was already a successful biography.

First, the virtues. This is an accessible and easily read book which follows Keating’s career in classic chronological order (first sentence: “Paul John Keating was born on 18 January 1944 in the suburb of Bankstown . . .”) and is mercifully free of economic jargon. It has the succinct clarity of mainstream feature journalism of the sort one has come to expect in the quality financial press in Australia, with lots of direct quotes, comments from other journalists, clips from contemporary newspaper reports and some useful scene-setting about what was happening in the politics of the nation at large as well as Keating’s role in it.

Carew gives a good deal of emphasis, rightly, to Keating’s working class/Irish/Catholic background, though without investigating very far just how much of this Keating has kept and how much he has discarded—a fascinating question, and one which, if she had been able to answer it, might have given her a more conclusive or at least central theme to wrestle with in the course of her narrative. She deals, briefly, with Keating’s wealth, his pursuit of style and good taste, his friendships with people like property developer Warren Anderson (“I like stars”). But it is all very circumspect, as though she felt she had to cover the ground without expecting to reveal anything insightful about Keating’s character.

It’s left to Keating’s own statements about his allegiances, especially in the later part of the book, to get across the commitment to his background which he still seems to feel so strongly—so much so that John Hewson accused him in parliament recently of “sounding like Jack Lang” (not realising that it might have been the greatest compliment he could pay his opponent). Carew’s quick description of Jack Lang reads uncannily like a description of Keating himself:

Born the son of a watchmaker, and forced to supplement the family income as a child by selling newspapers, Lang was determined to shake free of working class poverty. He became a successful accountant and a wealthy real-estate agent, His entrepreneurial streak and profitable business interests...

Since becoming PM Keating has let some of that personal ideology come through; his old-fashioned Bankstown nationalism, his republicanism, his Irish suspicion of the Brits. The book brings out, too, the personal elan and vivacity which charms even hardbitten Canberra press gallery commentators like Alan Ramsey.

Carew is good at charting Keating’s ambition, his rise from Young Labor star to a three-week minister in the dying days of the Whitlam government, to Hawke’s Treasurer to, eventually, Prime Minister (“He’s a fixer, he’s always been a fixer”—CRA chief economist John McLeod). The chapters on his years as Treasurer are detailed and illuminating, with the successive policy crises and changes documented with extracts from speeches, press conferences and newspaper columnists. There is also a chapter on “Old clocks and four-letter words” which lumps together a lot of human interest material about Keating, from his interest in French Empire antiques to his explosive verbal abuse to his one-eyed belief that you must be utterly for him or utterly against him. For Keating, the world is a jungle peopled by friends and enemies—nothing in between.

And yet, at the end, Keating the man seems as much a mystery as ever. It’s as though Edna Carew has recounted the outline of Keating’s character without ever trying to understand what the man is really like, what makes him run, what is bravura and what is real passion, what the hell he is doing it all for. This is no psychological portrait. There is virtually no attempt at interpretation. Even Keating’s economic policies are simply reported, without any attempt to link them with Keating’s persona or the political/personal/ideological changes which may have prompted them. I was disappointed that Carew didn’t even draw on her own expertise to ‘place’ her subject in the context of the economic debates which have dominated the political agenda in Australia for the last decade. Keating is clearly not just a pragmatist, but this biography reads as though that’s all he is.

So what is he? A technocrat? A moderniser? What’s his agenda—apart from the most difficult one of all, winning the next election and keeping John Hewson out of office? He’s certainly an activist, having pushed through the deregulation of the financial system and a series of tax reforms which typically combine progressive (capital}
gains and fringe benefits) and regressive (lower taxes for high income earners) features. He's won the admiration of good, solid Left ministers such as Brian Howe.

Biography is a difficult art, and Edna Carew's is the best one of Keating we have. Her task has been made doubly difficult by having someone as complex and elusive as Paul John to deal with. She doesn't seem to have had much direct access to the man himself. What we are left with is a cautious, impersonal report—at a distance, as it were—of one of the most dazzling figures in contemporary Australian politics. Whether he is as capable of dazzling the Australian electorate as he has the media we will know next year.

CRAIG MCGREGOR's Headliners is published by University of Queensland Press.

Ole Man History


Are we witnessing a "worldwide liberal revolution"? Are we living in the "old age of mankind"? Indeed, has History with a capital 'H' really ended? Francis Fukuyama thinks so—but, in the words of Mandy Rice-Davies, "He would say that wouldn't he".

Educated at the University of Chicago where one of his professors was Allan Bloom, author of The Closing of the American Mind, Fukuyama is a former deputy director of the US State Department's Policy Planning Staff, the intellectual powerhouse of American foreign policy since its establishment in 1948. He even wrote The End of History under the auspices of the RAND Corporation, a private enterprise equivalent of the Policy Planning Staff. In 1990 Fukuyama published The End of History?, the essay which led to this book, in The National Interest, an influential US neo-conservative journal. The End of History? of course, spawned an extensive intellectual debate throughout the Anglophone world.

Yet besides its tasty 'sound bite' of a title, how do we explain the success of Fukuyama's work? The End of History is a confused book, but it is a telling confusion. It captures the ambivalent mental state of America's conservative intelligentsia as it assesses the post-Cold War era. The End of History manages to be simultaneously triumphalist and pessimistic. No mean feat, but everyone admires a skilled acrobat.

If the revolutions in Eastern Europe and the recent break-up of the Soviet Empire have only been greeted with two cheers in the United States, it is because the Reagan-Bush years look more like the fin-de-siecle of the American century, and less like its zenith every day. In this sense Fukuyama's book is the first major neo-conservative response to Paul Kennedy's The Rise and Fall of Great Powers and the debate it spawned.

In the post-Cold War world geo-economics is replacing geopolitics as the dominant feature of international relations. Like a champion past its prime, the United States seems ill-equipped to win this new game. The United States, as we are constantly reminded, has 'won' the Cold War, only to find itself losing the economic 'peace'.

This is the dilemma of American neo-conservatism that Fukuyama tries to confront. As the taste of victory turns to ashes in their mouths, American conservatives want to be reassured that the two great tenets of their faith—liberal democracy and economic liberalism—have fulfilled their Manifest Destiny. They don't want to hear about the problems of actually existing liberal democracy—budget deficits, the need to raise taxes, the costs of imperial over-reach and the riots in LA. They want to hear about the inevitability of their creed's success.

This triumphalist reading of Fukuyama is simply stated:

As mankind approaches the end of the millenium, the twin crises of authoritarianism and socialist central planning have left only one competitor standing in the ring as an ideology of potentially universal validity: liberal democracy, the doctrine of individual freedom and popular sovereignty. Two hundred years after they first animated the French and American revolutions, the principles of liberty and equality have proven not just durable but resurgent.

Fukuyama chooses to support this claim with an eccentric thesis based upon the works of Hegel or, more exactly, upon the interpretation of Hegel of early 20th century French philosopher Alexandre Kojeve. According to Hegel-Kojeve-Fukuyama, History is one-directional, eschatological and susceptible to Universal laws. In a throwback to the 'modernisation' theories popular within American political science in the 1960s, The End of History argues that "the logic of modern natural science" ensures that all societies will eventually have access to the same level of technology, and hence the same level of economic development. In the wake of communism's collapse, all nations will therefore follow the most efficient path to economic success—economic liberalism.

In the book's major Hegelian twist, Fukuyama argues that human beings are driven by a "desire for recognition", what the Greeks called thymos. According to this view, "human beings seek recognition of their worth, or of their people, things or principles that they invest with worth". Thymos explains the urge of slaves to be free and consumers to spend. At the international level, thymos—or megalothymia, as Fukuyama
describes it—is the driving force behind war.

For Fukuyama, "recognition is the central problem of politics because it is the origin of tyranny, imperialism and the desire to dominate". And it can only ever be tamed by liberal democracy, the one system capable of satisfying this desire without self-destructing, because it confers upon each individual a sense of dignity. Further, in a world of interlocking liberal democracies Kant's ideal of a perpetual peace would finally come into being because liberal democracies do not go to war with each other.

Yet Fukuyama's whole enterprise stands on two, equally unstable supports: one theoretical, the other empirical. First, his arguments are based on a wilful misinterpretation of Hegelian philosophy. As Alan Ryan noted recently in the New York Review of Books:

Anyone who has read any Hegel knows that Hegel did not think that liberal democracy was where history would end. Hegel thought that the ultimate form of political association was a rational legal state, but it would be explicitly anti-democratic, and liberal only in its attachment to the rule of law. Crucially, Hegel had no time for the individualism that Americans regard as the very heart of liberalism.

Instead, a traditional reading of Hegel would seem to predict a bright future for the corporatist states of North East Asia. Maybe Fukuyama has never read his fellow American, Chalmers Johnson, on the operation of Japan's political economy. Johnson coined the phrase 'capitalist development model' to describe Japan and its fellow economic travellers—a model which sets economic liberalism on its head.

Fukuyama does muster the courage to argue, against the general thrust of his thesis, that the political economies of Asia are often authoritarian, despite being what he describes as "formally democratic". He squibs it entirely, though, when he explains their laudable economic success by singling out the 'Confucian work ethic' as the source of their dynamism.

Fukuyama has an admirable respect for the benefits of liberal democracy and a naive view of the efficacy of economic liberalism. For Fukuyama all liberal democracies must be capitalist economies, and all capitalist economies are free market economies. He never coherently explains the basis of Japan's economic success. Nor does he acknowledge the importance of social democratic ideas and policies in making the liberal democracies of the advanced industrial nations so stable.

In the opening stages of his book Fukuyama comes out swinging, but by its final round the champ is exhausted. After proclaiming boldly for most of the book that he has seen the future and it is liberal democratic, towards the end Fukuyama begins to equivocate.

The second half of Fukuyama's title is lifted from Nietzsche. History has ended and there they are—the last men: pampered, bourgeois, scions of a prosperous, stable liberal democracy, yet bored and dissatisfied. Much like the bond traders in Tom Wolfe's The Bonfire of the Vanities, argues Fukuyama:

as they sink into the soft leather of their BMWs, they will know somewhere in the back of their minds that there have been real gunslingers and masters in the world, who would feel contempt for the petty virtues required to become rich or famous in modern America. How long megalothymia will be satisfied with metaphorical wars and symbolic victories is an open question.

The book ends with a quaint metaphor. The flow of History is like a wagon train, Fukuyama says, struggling across the Rockies towards some west coast nirvana. Eventually, "enough wagons would pull into a town such that any reasonable person looking at the situation would be forced to agree that there had only been one journey and one destination". But who can tell, he asks, whether the town's "occupants, having looked around a bit at their new surroundings, will not find them inadequate and set their eyes on a new and more distant journey". History kickstarted again by a descendant of John Wayne?

BRETT EVANS works for the Evatt Foundation.

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which had been constructed to contain and eliminate dissidence.

Second, it is true that attempts to "unite the fragments" or reconstruct Left politics based upon traditional organisational forms (parties or alliances) have founded upon the inability, in an era of 'media culture' and more complex political allegiances, to build the bases from which even a modest form of political effectiveness could occur.

Further, pyramidal structures based upon branch networks which link up to centralised power systems have proved widely unappealing to many people who are, in a more general sense, politically 'on the Left', and may well be redundant in an era where 'networking' can take place through IT systems in a much less time-consuming and more effective way. In an era where the promotion of pluralism, diversity and difference are the goals of a revised left, and where there are no simple answers to increasingly complex questions, a return to the era of 'ideological correctness' or 'Unity Statement #242' is not helpful.

Third, Wark is right to say that media and cultural strategies have to be at the centre of alternative political strategies. In an era of increasingly 'mediated' communication, as much time in any campaign should be devoted to accessing the means of communication in a professional way as to building the number of supporters on the ground. This requires approaches which are media-literate, well targeted and professional in their look. No group has a natural constituency; alliances are always to be constructed, as much through the mass media as the mass meeting, and this requires a certain degree of media savviness in one's approach.

It is important to consider, however, what is lost if traditional political forms like parties are rejected. Wark makes clear the possibilities for communications technologies to create new forms of how groups and individuals interact and unite. But what is in danger of being lost in this discussion is the question of why they would, and who would initiate action around particular issues. One obvious example is the need for many groups to act co-operatively to oppose the Liberal-National Fightback! program. At present a campaign against Fightback! lacks an appropriate vehicle through which an alliance could be built.

Another problem is the absence of a political culture in the absence of political organisations. Strategies based around control over communications flows, rather than personal debate and interaction, face two real problems. The first is that they necessarily exclude that large proportion of the population who are most disadvantaged, but who don't have access to the IT systems required to participate in such a politics.

The second is that, even for those who can participate in such networking and exchanges, the experience is in many respects an individualising and alienating one. Further, there is no reason to believe that the high-tech hackers and networkers of yore; certainly they are less accountable for their actions. Wark's privileging of a politics based around information technologies and speed leaves an enormous gap in terms of attachment to real communities, localities and everyday life.

Wark's approach runs two risks. First, it strengthens the position of the political Right, who are not nearly as disorganised and who certainly see disorganisation as a weakness. Second, it runs the risk of leading Green and Left groups into both a political strategy which has no real connections to people's everyday lives, and a political practice which is ultimately alienating, individualising and elitist.
False Impressions

In ALR's June issue Michael Easson made an assertion about the consequences of the ADSTE-AMWU amalgamation which cannot go unanswered. In the articles under the general heading "Is the Left Brain-dead?" he wrote:

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

It is a worry that Michael Easson has not treated these issues seriously. He has also created a false and damaging impression of the consequences of the amalgamation of the ADSTE and the AMWU which formed the Metals and Engineering Workers Union (MEWU). The ADSTE-AMWU amalgamation was successfully completed on 19 November 1990 and amalgamation took effect on 1 April 1991. One year later the membership had dropped, but by less than 6%, in the worst economic recession in 60 years. A close monitoring of the resignations showed that redundancies in the public and private sector was the overwhelming cause of the loss. A small handful of individuals cited the amalgamation or its perceived effects as a reason for resignation. Interestingly in the ACT and Western Australia the membership of the Technical and Supervisory Division actually increased because of local factors. These were the two branches of ADSTE who most actively opposed the amalgamation and they had predicted dire consequences for our ability to recruit and maintain ADSTE membership.

The notion that the ADSTE-AMWU amalgamation has created a bureaucratic and unresponsive organisation is simply wrong. All the mechanisms for involving former ADSTE members in the management of their areas of industrial involvement have been maintained. Former ADSTE members have proportional representation on all governing bodies of MEWU. Our commitment to delegate training and involvement is as strong as ever. The amalgamation has allowed a rationalisation of resources in a difficult industrial and economic period. It has allowed the expansion of a union presence in many areas where ADSTE had not previously been able to gain access.

I do not think it was Easson's intention to be malicious. His is, rather, an uninformed and prejudiced view of the union rationalisation process. This is a shame as Michael Easson holds an important position in the movement and he has been far more willing to debate issues rationally than many of his predecessors. In fact, openness of debate is the thrust of his contribution to the question "Is the Left Brain-dead?"

Is the NSW Labor Council secretary braindead? No, but he needs to talk more to his leftwing colleagues and not just about them. These issues are of great importance to the movement and the ADSTE-AMWU amalgamation experience is one from which a number of positive lessons can be learned.

Brian Mason,
Acting Assistant State Secretary,
NSW,
Metals and Engineering Workers Union.

(Through a regrettable accident, Michael Easson failed to receive the edited copy of his talk prior to going to print. Nevertheless, as he readily acknowledges, what was printed was what he said.—Ed.)


Invitation for Papers and Expressions of Interest
National Conference in Labour History at Newcastle, New South Wales.

The next National Conference of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History is to be held in Newcastle, NSW, industrial city and seaport, 25th and 26th of June 1993.

Please write: Bob James, c/- History Department, Newcastle University, Callaghan, NSW 2308 or: c/- Hunter Labour History Society, 3/79 Tudor Street, Hamilton, NSW 2303

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emulate his 'can do' spirit. Even Deng
Xiaoping got in on the act and at-
tributed the Chinese team's outstanding
baptism at the Olympics to the
Chinese Communist Party agenda of
discipline, economic reform, and stick-
ing to the socialist road. Nevertheless,
one suspects that to Deng Xiaoping it
did not matter whether his athletes
wore red or blue so long as they cap-
tured the medals.

Similar sentiments prevailed in
Australia. To our couch potatoes, win-
nning medals was not simply a matter of
life or death—it was much more im-
portant. Even our own Iron Maiden,
Ros Kelly, on the mother of all junkets
attending the Olympiad, made a none-
too-veiled threat that if our athletes did
not measure up the funding to the
Australian Institute of Sport would be
cut. Paul Keating, who has a quiet con-
tempt for competitive sport, immedi-
ately vetoed the sports minister's
threat. Last year this funding
amounted to the princely sum of $77
million. It has not, however, escaped
the cudsng of the Fightback! razor
gang. Mr 'Can-do', John Hewson, who
once ran a marathon to prove to him-
self that anything was possible if you
turn your energy to it, expects our ath-
letes to compete on the smell of an oily
ragsweaty T-shirt).

Yet funding our athletes has proved a
remarkable example of strategic in-
vestment. Imagine in this most dire of
times the new blow to our national psyche if our athletes had returned
home empty-handed. Sure, our record
haul of medals since 1956 won't lead to
a medal-led economic recovery but we
did, for a start, cream the Kiwis.
Another plus is that Sydney's Olympic
bid was given greater (metallic)
weight. More seriously, the Olympics' world top performers on a per
capita/medal basis proved to be, yet
again, those countries with heavy state
funding of sport—namely the former
and the few remaining socialist states.
The much-maligned 'picking winners'
approach to state interventionism does
pay real gold, at least when it comes to
sport. So much for level playing fields
and leaving it to the lure of the lucre to
bring metallic success.

In any case, the playing fields of Bar-
celona were not as level as they
seemed. Allegations flew thick and fast
concerning the use of performance-en-
hancing drugs by some athletes. The
hard-to-prove drugs scam is analogous
to the non-tariff barriers that infiltrate
international trade. It is hard to prove
they exist, but the repetitive trade
surplus gives the off-enders away. So,
too, bulging biceps and powerful pec-
torals give away steroid users. Speak-
ing of bulk, Ben Johnson, silly enough
to have got caught in Seoul, looked a
mere shadow of himself, both literally
and physically. In the heats for the
100m. final he appeared to slip on a
discarded syringe left by some incon-
siderate on the track. Marathon runner
Lisa Ondieki was, according to her,
well and truly handed the poisoned
chalice. Swimmer Lisa Curry-Kenny,
drugged on self-worship and endless
self-promotion, failed to make the
grade. Bang goes that third book on
Bringing up Bozo!

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, our own
guiesome twosome could not resist
metal metaphors. John Dawkins
proclaimed our new inflation rate as
"Gold, Gold, Gold for Australia!" One
press scribe demurred, contending that
it was actually a silver medal perfor-
ance, since New Zealand's inflation
rate was lower. In any case, the flag-
ging Australian economy resembled
De Castella after his marathon—on a
saline drip and contemplating retire-
ment. John Hewson, whose vision of
the Olympic scoreboard resembles an
array of economic indicators, stirred us
up by claiming that New Zealand had
won the gold medal in the economic
reform decathlon. Possibly. But if New
Zealand is having an economic boom
at the moment it must be the worst one
in history.

ALEX MILLMOW teaches in economics
at Charles Sturt University, Riverina.

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